



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

KLEIN, AVELLA, DINOWITZ, MOSLEY SECURE \$2M IN FUNDING TO INCREASE DIVERSITY IN SPECIALIZED HIGH SCHOOLS

JEFFREY D. KLEIN April 11, 2016

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Proposal receives wave of support from diversity initiatives, alumni groups

Albany, NY - State Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester), State Senator Tony Avella (D-Queens), Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz (D-Bronx) and Assemblyman Walter T. Mosley (D-Brooklyn) announced that the Independent Democratic Conference has secured \$2 million dollars in funding to increase diversity in New York City's Specialized High Schools.

New York City's Specialized High Schools have seen a shockingly low number of black and Latino students apply for and enroll in recent years. A survey from 2005-2013 showed that despite the fact that black and Latino students made up a majority of rising eighth graders - 71.6 percent - they made up only 52 percent of students who even took the Specialized High School Admission Test.

"A Specialized High School might be a great fit for so many of New York City's underrepresented students, but we will never know if we don't ensure that every student has the resources to prepare and apply. That is why I am thrilled that we have secured over \$2 million dollars in this year's state budget in order to establish outreach programs at every Specialized High School, enhance and expand free test preparation for New York City's

underrepresented students, and further support Brooklyn Tech’s successful STEM pipeline program for middle school students. By providing resources to these students early, and continuing throughout middle school, we can ensure that every child in the New York City public school system has the same opportunity to learn, grow, and potentially enroll in these prestigious schools,” **said Senator Klein.**

“Bridging the deep diversity gap that exists in our schools starts with strengthening our students’ foundations. With this funding, we can establish outreach coordinators, provide test prep to underrepresented areas, and support and enhance an already successful middle school pipeline program through the Brooklyn Tech Alumni Foundation’s STEM program. This is much more than just checking off a box, this is laying the foundation to ensure that every student has an opportunity to enter one of these esteemed schools,” **said Senator Avella.**

In their proposal released in March, the IDC laid out a plan to increase diversity in the schools’ enrollment, the “New York City Specialized High Schools Diversity Initiative and Gifted and Talented Program Expansion.”

Included in the 2016-17 budget is:

- **\$350,000 for Outreach Coordinators** at each school who will focus on ensuring that students in underrepresented middle schools.
- **\$650,000 for Test Prep for Middle School Students from Underrepresented Populations** to pay for test prep at each Specialized High School.
- **\$750,000 appropriation to NYC DOE** for test prep targeting free and reduced-price lunch students in New York City.

- **\$250,000 for the Brooklyn Tech Alumni Foundation** to enhance their current, successful middle school pipeline program.

“I am pleased that by working with Senator Klein we were able provide money to increase diversity in New York City’s Specialized High Schools in this year’s budget. The underrepresentation of some minority groups in New York’s Specialized High Schools is indicative of a larger set of challenges that face this city’s educational system today. I am proud to have fought for this proposal, and to be able to provide funding for students to take free test preparation classes, in addition to investing in outreach coordinators at each of the specialized high schools. This funding will go a long way in raising the numbers of potentially qualified minority applicants attending these schools, while maintaining the schools’ academic integrity without changing the objectivity of the entrance exam,” **said Assemblyman Dinowitz, a Bronx Science Alum.**

"I applaud Speaker Heastie and the Senate Democratic Conference for implementing the Diversity Initiative for New York City Specialized High Schools in this year's state budget. Assembly member Jeffrey Dinowitz (D-Bronx) and myself have championed this proposal in the Assembly. It is critically imperative that we expand the programs that prepare our youth to take the Specialized High School Admission Test. As a member of the Board of Regents My Brothers Keeper Blue Ribbon Panel on improving outcomes for boys and young men of color, we highlighted the need for more advanced programming in a report issued late last year," **said Assemblyman Mosley.**

The proposal has additionally received a wave of support coming from diversity groups and alumni.

“I applaud Senator Klein for taking these steps to increase diversity in our specialized high schools. Focusing on preparation and outreach to middle schools is key. Preparation opens the door to opportunities. And, I am pleased that we are heading in the right direction in this

much needed reform,” said **Reverend Que English, Stuyvesant High School Alumni Association Diversity Committee and Co-Founder, Bronx Clergy Roundtable, Stuyvesant HS, '81.**

"We applaud and thank Senator Klein, Senator Avella, the rest of the Legislature and the Governor for funding outreach and educational programs for middle school students. These programs address some of the root causes of underrepresentation at the city's specialized high schools by helping youngsters rise to meet the standards of these schools and thrive in them," said **Sharon Manewitz, Chair of the Alumni Association of the Bronx High School of Science.**

“When I attended Junior High School 118 (Joan of Arc) on the Upper West Side, I was assigned to a Gifted & Talented program. As a result, we were informed about the specialized high schools, we were prepared for the entrance exam, and many of us were invited to attend the specialized high schools. Otherwise, it is likely that we would not have attended the specialized high schools,” said **Thomas Mela, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, Managing Attorney (retired), Stuyvesant High School Class of 1961.**

“As a city it is imperative that we make the success of Black and Latino students our top priority. We have ignored the abysmal rates of admission for Black and Latino students at specialized high schools for far too long. It is time to stop the disparity in resources and provide high achieving Black and Latino students in Crown Heights and Bedford Stuyvesant the same access to gifted and talented education programs that we provide to students residing in Manhattan's Upper West Side,” said **Tanya Messado, Esq. Stuyvesant High School, '93, Yale University, '97, Georgetown Law, '04.**

“As a member of the Stuyvesant High School Black Alumni Diversity Initiative, I have spent the last six years conducting informal surveys of specialized high school Black and Latino alumni. I discovered that, like myself, all who attended public middle schools were in IGC/SP classes. Now, none of our middle schools have such academically rigorous programs

anymore. I am an advocate for students being taught to their potential and exposed to beyond. I hope that funds from the proposal are concentrated more in those districts where the fewest students have access to the type of gifted and talented programs that feed into the specialized high schools,” **said Carole Brown, member of Stuyvesant Black Alumni Diversity Initiative, Stuyvesant High School Class of 1981, Fordham University ’85, Columbia University ‘90.**

“Since 2013, Brooklyn Tech in collaboration with the Alumni Foundation and National Grid have had an innovative pilot pipeline program designed to reach out to underrepresented middle schools in Brooklyn and introduce promising students to the exciting world of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and preparing them to do well on the Specialized High School Admission Test. This program has proven tremendously successful – and children from underrepresented communities are today attending Brooklyn Tech and other specialized high schools. We thank our legislative leaders for providing additional funding in this year’s budget to expand this successful program to many more students in the city. The alumni believe in diversity. We are proud to help expand this successful program and government support for this effort will certainly allow more students to be reached and in-turn, touch more lives by increasing educational opportunity in New York City,” **said Larry Cary, president of the Brooklyn Tech Alumni Foundation.**