



The Computer School
Environment for Advanced Learning
100 West 77th Street
New York, NY 10024
Phone: (917) 441-1236 Fax: (212) 678-5908
Henry Zymeck, Principal

A Computer School Guide: Preparing for the High School Process



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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the high school admissions process!

We recognize that this process can be confusing; please don't worry! We have created this information packet with the hopes of supporting you and your child as you search for high schools.

For your child, the high school admissions process will begin during the summer. It is very important that you take this time to research the high schools and become familiar with each school and their admissions criteria. All of this information can be found in the High School Directory—which your child will receive before the end of the school year—or on the school websites.

As part of the search process, plan to attend high school fairs, tours, and open houses, and to be aware of upcoming assessments and interview dates. To make the most of the help and guidance that we offer, please be sure to come to our scheduled information sessions held at school, beginning with Curriculum Night.

Please understand that this information packet is intended only as a starting point and not as the sole source of information for your research on high schools. For more resources please refer to the inside cover of the High School Directory.

We look forward to a successful school year. See you in September!

Best regards,

Erin Hill

Lisa Mifflin

Lisa deMauro

School Counselor

School Secretary

School Counselor

www.computerschoolcounselors.org

BEING PREPARED FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL PROCESS

I. What you will need to apply to high schools:

- Several copies of your child's final 7th grade report card. You will receive a copy of your child's 7th grade report card at the beginning of 8th grade. Please make 8-10 copies of the report card at that time. (Some schools may also ask for 8th grade report cards)
- 7th grade assignments and projects that demonstrate your child's strengths (Math, Science, Social Studies, ELA)
- Standardized test scores—make a few copies of the report when you receive it at the end of the school year
- Accurate attendance records. Please check report cards for attendance and lateness tallies; these cannot be changed after June.
- Calendar to keep track of important dates. (We will list meetings and deadlines on our counseling website: www.computerschoolcounselors.org)

II. *Please be aware that you must contact schools directly for ALL arrangements for attending interviews and tours.* All contact information can be found in the High School Directory along with dates and times of open houses, interviews, tests and auditions. **Please be extremely mindful of potential conflicts when scheduling interviews and auditions; different schools may schedule these events at the same time.**

Obviously there are many high schools conducting tours and open houses so make sure to check this information by contacting the schools directly or by consulting www.insideschools.org. Tour as many schools as possible. The more schools you rank on your application, the better chances you have to be matched to a school.

If your child attends a tour or interview during school hours, s/he must get a letter from the high school verifying the attendance to present to our school secretary. (High schools routinely supply these letters and will not be surprised by the request.)

III. Accurate address information:

It is essential that you inform The Computer School if your address changes. Your place of residence can affect high school acceptances and we must have an up-to-date record by **September 15th**. Please bring proof of address change to Ms. Mifflin in the main office. Acceptable documentation includes: a utility bill (gas, electric, or water) that lists home address; a deed to a house; or a document from the City Housing Authority or the Human Resources Administration. Other proofs of address include: a medical or insurance card with home address or a statement that verifies your address from an employer, a social service agency, a community-based organization or a religious institution. A telephone bill or driver's license is not an acceptable proof of address. A lease by itself is not acceptable.

IV. Protocol for letters of recommendations:

As a rule, teachers may agree to write letters of recommendation at their own discretion and are under no obligation to do so. That being said, our teachers are generally happy to help as long as they are given appropriate advance notice. The suggested timeframe is to allow a minimum of three weeks, since many students will be requesting these letters. Students—not parents—should make requests for recommendations.

Recommendations are confidential; they will be mailed directly to schools, rather than being given to students or parents. Students are responsible for providing an addressed, stamped envelope for each recommendation.

Teachers write their recommendations based on an accurate assessment of academic progress and behavior. To do otherwise would compromise the relationship that The Computer School has with high schools and would jeopardize the chances of future applicants from our school. Please consider this when choosing teachers to ask for recommendations.

*** Please refer to the high school selection chart to see which schools require recommendation letters.**

V. Specialized High School & Audition Tickets:

Students will be asked during the first week of September to indicate whether they intend to audition for a high school and/or take the specialized high school test. It would be beneficial if you discuss this decision with your child prior to September.

Once your child has indicated his/her decision, it is his/her responsibility to notify the counselors of any changes (i.e. to take the specialized exam or not).

All tickets are given out one week prior to the exam.

*** Please reference high school selection chart to see which schools require audition tickets.**

Specialized High Schools:

Bronx High School of Science

Brooklyn Latin School

Brooklyn Technical High School

High School for Mathematics, Science and Engineering at City College

High School of American Studies at Lehman College

Queens High School for the Sciences at York College

Staten Island Technical High School

Stuyvesant High School

LaGuardia High School (audition school – does not require a test)

VI. Testing Modifications

Students who require test modifications must also indicate whether they intend to take the specialized high school test. Typically, the specialized test for students with test modifications takes place within two weeks of the test for students without modifications. It is important that all students with 504 forms (for test modifications) have their paperwork filled out properly and delivered to our school for approval by September.

Also, if your child has an IEP due for an annual review in September or October, please check to see that it is completed on time (earlier, if possible). This will ensure that the specialized high school admissions people will have all the necessary and updated information that is required.

VII. TeacherEase:

During the year, you will receive a great deal of information via TeacherEase, which usually supports what is sent home by backpack. It is important not only that you check with your child for notices, but make certain that the school has accurate email information for your family.

VIII. Filling out the high school application:

When completing the application, the code, the program name and high school name must all be filled in. Please check the back of the application to see that personal information listed there is accurate. There is no need to fill in the grade portion of the application as those will be entered into the system automatically.

All students should list no fewer than eight schools on their applications to increase the odds of getting into a school of their choice.

Make sure that you are comfortable with the schools you list and that you have done as much research on them as possible. If you are guided by the selection criteria of each school, the chances that your child will have a successful match will increase. Also remember that the more schools you list, the greater the chance of receiving a match. However, do not put down a school to which you would not consider sending your child. It is also important to realize that, unfortunately, there are NO strategies, gimmicks, or tricks to listing choices. You simply rank each school in order of preference.

IX. Notification Process:

a. First Round:

Students who take the Specialized High School Exam or audition for LaGuardia will find out the results in early February. Those students who gained acceptance to a high school will also find out at that time if they received an offer from one of their regular choice high schools. Students who do **not** gain acceptance to a specialized high school or LaGuardia—and those who did not take the Specialized High School Exam or audition for LaGuardia—will not learn about their regular choice high schools until the Main Round.

b. Main Round:

Students will find out the results of their applications to high schools in late March.

c. Supplementary Round:

If your child was not matched to a high school, the Department of Education will provide you with a list of schools that have vacancies. From this list you will again be asked to rank schools based on your preference.

d. Appeals Process:

You may appeal only **after** your child has been accepted into a high school. If you appeal, you will be asked to write a short (1000 character) explanation. **Very few appeals are granted.** The Department of Education has a narrow definition of acceptable reasons for appeal. These include health issues or a recent move. Appeals based on where a sibling attends school, perceived safety of the school's neighborhood, or personal preference for a specific school will not be accepted. This is why it is essential to be realistic about admissions criteria when choosing high schools.

X. Absence and Lateness Issues:

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY COUNT!!!

Many parents and students underestimate the importance of 7th and 8th grade attendance and punctuality in the high school admissions process. If you are hoping that your child will gain admission to a selective high school, you must understand that high schools give great weight to a student's record of attendance and punctuality. There have been several heartbreaking instances within the last two years in which high schools have rejected high-achieving students solely based on latenesses and absences. Therefore, we strongly urge that you consider your child's attendance history when ranking schools.

XI. Deadlines:

Your child will be receiving time-sensitive information throughout the admissions process. It is **CRITICAL** that all deadlines be adhered to; missing deadlines can negatively affect the outcome of your child's high school match. Please make sure that you communicate to your child the importance of being responsible about bringing home notices and returning them on time.

XII. Setting up meetings with the School Counselor:

Parent meetings will be scheduled AFTER Curriculum Night in September.

Please understand that scheduling a meeting with the counselor is not always necessary. In most cases, if you have done the research and discussed choices with your child, an email or phone call consultation will suffice. As you can imagine, the more time we spend with parents, the less time we have to work with your children.

If you need to schedule a meeting with a counselor, we ask that you come prepared with a list of at least five schools that you have already done some research on and are thinking of pursuing, in order to make the best possible use of time. Meeting times may also be scheduled for phone consultations. If parents are unable to make a meeting, students are most welcome to set up a meeting time on their own.

Interviewing Skills

Here is a list of potential questions that your child may be asked during an interview. Please take a moment to go over these questions and brainstorm possible answers in order to help your child feel more comfortable.

Standard Interview Questions

This is a sample of possible questions. Schools may ask many other things. Look over these questions and practice answering them so that you can feel relaxed and confident in an interview.

The interviewer wants to get a sense of who you are as a person and how engaged you are as a student and a member of the community. In forming your answers, think about the impression you want to make. What kind of student and what kind of person do you want the school to see when they look at you? If you have something on your record that needs explaining—for example, a high number of latenesses or one very low grade—be prepared to give a reason for it.

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. How would you describe your ideal school?
3. Why do you want to come to this school?
4. What goals do you have while in high school?
5. How do you plan to achieve these goals?
6. How do you evaluate success?
7. Describe a situation in which you were successful.
8. Are you a team player?
9. What motivates you?
10. Why should we accept you into this school?
11. Tell me about some of your recent goals and what you did to achieve them.
12. Have you ever had a conflict with another student or teacher?
How did you resolve it?
13. What is your greatest strength?
14. What is your greatest weakness?
15. If I were to ask one of your teachers to describe you, what would he or she say?
16. What changes would you make at your middle school?
17. How has middle school prepared you for high school?
18. What were your favorite classes? Why?
19. Who were your favorite teachers? Why?
20. Why do you have unsatisfactory marks on your report card?
21. What do you know about our school?

Student Name: _____

Final 7th Grade Grades: Math _____ Eng _____

7th Grade total attendance: # times late _____
times absent _____

Sci _____ SS _____
Standardized Test Scores: (circle one)

ELA: 1 2 3 4

Math: 1 2 3 4

High School Planning Chart

Name of School	School #1	School #2	School #3	School #4	School #5	School #6	School #7	School #8
Do I meet the school's admissions criteria? (grades, attendance, test scores)								
Does the school require an interview?								
Does the school require a portfolio or audition?								
Is the school diverse?								
Does the school hold tours? When?								
Does the school require a test? When?								
Does this school require a teacher recommendation?								

1. How many copies of my 7th grade report card and standardized test scores will I need to make? _____
2. Have I asked my teachers (at least 2 weeks in advance) for recommendations? _____
3. Have I begun to schedule tours? _____
4. Who will help me with my art portfolio if necessary? _____
