COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 24

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Resolution on Improving the Use of Random Numbers for Admissions Placement,

Resolution # 160

Sponsor of resolution, Matthew J Crescio

WHEREAS, random numbers are assigned to an applicant when the application process is initiated for admissions to 3- K, pre-K, kindergarten, middle schools, or high schoolsi; and

WHEREAS, the random numbers are long strings of hexadecimal numerals that are used to determine the priority in receiving offers where the number of applicants exceeds the number of available seats at a given programii; and

WHEREAS, an ascending order of the random numbers (0, 1, 2 ... 9, A, B, C, D, E, F) is used to determine placement priority, such that smaller numbers, e.g. - those that start with a zero, are most favorable versus large numbers, e.g. - those that start with the letter F, are least favorable; and

WHEREAS, an applicant can list up to 12 programs on an application, and the same randomly assigned number is repeatedly used in the algorithm to determine placement priority; and

WHEREAS, an applicant saddled with an unfavorable randomly assigned number is very unlikely to receive offers from any program that uses a random assignment method, because the unfavorable number is propagated to each of the applicant's choices in determining placement; and

WHEREAS, placement on waitlists using the same ascending order of random numbers in determining priority replicates the acute inequity in the placement process for applicants who draw an unfavorable randomly assigned number; and

WHEREAS, reversing the priority order used in the process for placement on waitlists, e.g. – using the same randomly assigned number but prioritized in descending order (F, E, D, C, B, A, 9 ... 2, 1, 0), can partially counteract the inequity of being assigned an unfavorable and immutable number; and

WHEREAS, the algorithm to reverse the priority order of placements on waitlists should be relatively simple to implement. For example, calculating and using the "two's complement" of the hexadecimal randomly assigned number effectively provides a quick and easy method to administer a descending order of priority without significant refactoring of code; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Community Education Council 24 (CEC 24 urges the Chancellor to direct the Office of Student Enrollment to alter the use of randomly assigned numbers such that a descending order of priority is used for placements on waitlists, while retaining the use of an ascending order of priority for the initial placement process.

September 13, 2023 https://www.schools.nyc.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/enrollment/2023-nyc-public-schools-admissions-guide ii https://www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/enroll-grade-by-grade/how-students-get-offers-to-doe-public-schools/random-numbers in-admissions

Voted and adopted by CEC24 on _____