

# Predicting the Effect of Diversity Plans in New York City Elite Public High Schools

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September 29, 2019

## **Abstract**

New York City Specialized High Schools (SHS) consists of a small set of elite public high schools, which select students based on an admission exam. There have been concerns that these schools' student compositions do not adequately reflect the diversity in race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status of the city's population. This paper studies the impacts of two possible diversity plans by estimating students' underlying preferences and then simulating their actions under the two proposed policy changes. First, the plan to guarantee SHS seats to students who placed in the top seven percent (by academic performance) of each public middle school results in considerable inflows from regular public high schools and vice versa. In contrast, a tier-based plan similar to that in Chicago mostly gives rise to reshuffling within SHS. While only the former policy significantly changes racial composition of SHS as a whole, both plans increase the school-specific percentages of Black and Hispanics in all or most SHS.