

Your September Checklist

What families of 8th graders should do before the application opens October 6.

1 Start with your kid, not the schools

Before any school name goes on a list, get clear on what this particular kid needs.

- ☐ A commute your child will actually make, in February
- ☐ Big school or small
- ☐ Subjects, sports, arts or clubs that genuinely matter
- ☐ Structure or independence
- ☐ Academic and social support needs

2 Build a working list of programs

You apply to programs, not buildings. One school can hold several, each with its own admissions method and its own odds — 700+ programs across 400+ high schools.

- ☐ Start broad. This is not your final list
- ☐ Save programs, not just school names
- ☐ Note the admissions method for each one
- ☐ Don't rank anything yet

3 Check what actually moves your odds

For every program worth a closer look, find these before October:

- ☐ Admissions method
- ☐ Admissions priorities, and your priority group
- ☐ Screened group or Ed Opt category, where it applies
- ☐ General education or SWD seat group
- ☐ Applicants per seat

4 Visit, and ask better questions

- ☐ Track open houses and information sessions now
- ☐ Watch how students and adults speak to each other
- ☐ Ask what support actually looks like on a Tuesday
- ☐ Ask how kids get into clubs and electives
- ☐ Debrief with your child the same day

Not “a good school” — “a good school for my kid.”

5 IF YOUR CHILD HAS AN IEP OR A 504

Having an IEP does not automatically mean your child applies for a students-with-disabilities seat. NYC uses a specific threshold, and families find out in March when they should have found out in September.

- ☐ Check the GE / SWD designation on the application when MySchools opens
- ☐ The rule: more than 20% of the academic program in special education instructional programming
- ☐ ICT, Special Class and SETSS count toward that 20%
- ☐ Speech, OT and PT do not count toward it
- ☐ A 504 plan on its own does not qualify for an SWD seat
- ☐ If the designation looks wrong, start with your IEP team now — not in December
- ☐ Confirm documented SHSAT testing accommodations before October 30

KNOW THE DATES, THEN STOP PANICKING

OCT 6

Application +
SHSAT registration open

OCT 30

SHSAT registration
closes

NOV 18

School-day SHSAT,
eligible NYCPS 8th graders

DEC 4

High school + LaGuardia
applications close

MAR 3

Offers released
after 3pm

Your September goal is not a perfect ranked list. It is knowing your kid — and knowing which programs deserve a closer look.