September is right around the corner and that means it’s time for kids to head back to school. For hundreds of 8th graders who are aspiring artists in the New York City metro area it also means its time to ask their guidance counselors for a “ticket” to let them audition for the prestigious Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, better known as the school that was the basis for the beloved 1980 classic “Fame.”

However, many of these 8th graders will find their dreams may have been in vein, all due to the new principal’s strict and controversial new admission process that places more than 2/3 of the decision on a student’s academic performances instead of their talent and audition.

The new admission practice requires students to have scored 80% or higher in all of their core academic subjects. Not only does this place the most disadvantaged students at an even greater deficit, but it is also in violation of the 1971 Hecht-Calandra Act. For more information about the changes in admissions and the violations, please see the attached press release.

The LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts is the alma matter of some of the biggest names in entertainment including actress Sarah Paulson, NPR’s Susan Stamberg, SNL comedian Michael Che, and comedian Marlon Wayans. Imagine if these stars never had the opportunity to learn and hone their craft at such a prestigious school?

Just listen to how this school changed the lives of so many people:

*“This school changed my life.”* – Sarah Paulson, Actress & Alumni

*“Society desperately needs artists and it is incredibly misguided to turn away extraordinary talent due to academic performance. There are different types of intelligence. Academically oriented students have many other options. LaGuardia has always been a one of a kind place for fostering the most promising young artists in the city. Please keep it that way.”* – Molly Ranson, Broadway Actress & Alumni

*“This school used to be opportunity for anyone who had talent to succeed. The new admissions criteria limits city kids' options to make a better life for themselves and learn and grow in their artistic pursuits.”* – Keith Nobbs, Actor & Alumni

*“As a successful professional actor whose son graduated from La Guardia's acting program, the idea of this wonderfully impressive school moving away from recognizing talent as an important deciding factor in admissions, I am deeply saddened.  It will inevitably severely damage this important and wholly unique institution.  A disaster in the making.”* – Jay O. Sanders, Actor & Parent of LaGuardia graduate

These are just a few of the quotes from successful artists who were all positively impacted by LaGuardia. This school matters and is so important to so many people that we must not sit quietly and watch as the school is changed and molded into a school that is unrecognizable. We must act and convince Principal Mars to reconsider her admissions process.

To get involved, or just to get more information please contact:

Beata Santora

LaGuardia Class of 1998

917-776-0733

beata.santora@gmail.com