

A mock debate

**Students must enrolled in High School based on their performance**

**Proposition:** Spyros Babas, Nikos Layios, Konstantinos-Rafael Panos

**Opposition:** Sophocles Papadopoulos, Konstantinos Boros, Andreas Manolopoulos

**Teachers:** Alexis Alexiou, Stella Sarmi

**Speaker 1:**

Honorable Principal, esteemed teachers and dear friends!

Imagine schools with happy and high achieving students!

Imagine an education system that works for everyone!

Is it time to reconsider our educational system and create a new one that could meet the needs of our society?

My name is Spyros Babas and I'll try to convince you that enrolling students based on their performance in High School would be effective and worthwhile.

But first, I'm going to define the topic.

There are four keywords in this topic:

- High School student
- Must
- Enrolling

And

- Performance

According to the dictionaries:

**High School student** is a student aged between 12 and 15 who studies in High School, a school for students intermediate between elementary school and Lyceum.

**Must** means should.

**Enroll** means officially register as a student of a High School .

Finally,

**Performance** is the success in High School's entrance examination on a scale of 0 to 20. The passing score is 15 or greater.

I base my position on two main arguments.

First, elementary school is the foundation where children acquire the knowledge and the skills necessary for their future.

Students in primary school not only build their personality by developing valuable soft skills such as creative thinking, collaborative attitude, effective communication, careful comprehension, time management but also absorb basic encyclopedic knowledge by attending a significant number of classes.

Specifically, its curriculum includes lessons in language, reading and writing, environmental studies, maths, and foreign languages.

On the other hand, Gymnasium strongly emphasizes academic learning. Subjects from various academic topics such as Ancient Greek, Algebra, Chemistry, Biology etc. are directed mainly to high achieving students. The lower achieving students, who fail to follow a demanding pace, block their classmates from moving forward.

Secondly, the practice of enrolling students in High School on the basis of their performance is actually the practice of placing students with similar academic level in one classroom. Teachers can concentrate on teaching the students at the pace of that particular level, thus enhancing their learning process.

Otherwise, in a diverse classroom, the better students would have to wait for the others to understand a particular topic. The result of that is losing time and decreasing the pace of their growth and development.

For the reasons that I exposed earlier, elementary education develops children's skills and basic knowledge that they will need in the future, while lessons of High School are addressed mainly to high achieving students. The practice of inserting students by performance in High School helps students with high achievement to improve their academic level.

Thank you!

## **Speaker 2**

A very cheerful good morning to all of you!

My name is Sophocles Papadopoulos and I would like to outline our team's views opposing the topic "Pupils must enroll in the High School based on their performance". First of all, we will accept the definition given by the first speaker, but we 'll try to prove that students must not be enrolled in High School based on their performance

Psychologists support the idea that during adolescence, teens try to find their place in society as well as their personal identity. To successfully pass through this stage, teens need guidance, acceptance and understanding in a protected environment. And what is the place that prepares adolescents to find their role in society?

High School is the answer to this question. 12-year-old students are still immature people, who search for their character. Therefore, they should continue to receive basic training and learn skills such as solving complex problems, critical thinking, creativity, adaptability and emotional intelligence. Skills that only students of High School have the maturity to acquire.

After High School, children over 15 years old have the option to choose between Lyceum - a high school which is academically oriented - and Vocational Training. Many psychologists and pedagogists support that this age is a critical period for a student to start discovering their own academic path.

In addition, the implementation of entry exams in High School is just another form of racial segregation since students are divided on the basis of achievement at such an early age, and this means that they can be also divided by race or economic status.

Educational systems that categorize students should not be acceptable in democratic societies. Such systems are met only in authoritarian regimes.

Democratic schools should provide students with rights, such as freedom, justice and equal opportunities.

The criterion of enrolling in schools should not be the performance level or any level but the desire for knowledge and the sense of belonging.

Students must choose schools, not schools choose students!

In summary, High School is the first cycle of studies of secondary education and every child must be attend in order to build up social skills, at the age of 15 students should have the choice to be educated according to their needs. Educational systems in democratic societies should be flexible and open to all!

Thank you!

### **Speaker 3**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen!

My name is Nikos Layos.

The topic for today is “Pupils must enroll in the High School based on their performance”.

The opposition said that students at the age of 12, students need adaptability and understanding in a protected environment.

How can a teenager feel accepted and free to find their identity in an education system that they cannot succeed in?

Continuous failures and low grades could affect adolescents’ emotions and could create feelings of inferiority in them. This situation, on a daily basis, can promote frustration in students because it is a constant reminder that others are more skilled than they are.

And now, I will continue with our arguments.

Entrance in High Schools without exams is one of the major problems in our educational system.

Classes of students with different performance profiles affect the weaker ones. Low performance students sometimes have low self-confidence due to the presence of more intelligent students who occupy the upper ranks in class.

It’s not fair for any student to be labeled academically deficient!

But in the case of a homogeneous classroom in High School , the students would be at the same level. That practice improves students’ achievement, boosts their self-confidence and determination, and maintains their interest.

Furthermore, till 1982 in Greek education, entrance examinations from primary to lower secondary level (High School) existed without many objections

In summary, low performance at school causes issues of self-esteem, students with the same level feel more comfortable and sufficient, and students who study in High School should be students who want to be there and succeed in their studies.

Thank you!

### **Speaker 4**

Hello ladies and gentlemen!

My name is Konstantinos Boros and I would like to begin by saying that the right to education is a fundamental human right!

Could there ever exist a fair and equitable educational system which divides students?

The classroom has been described as: “a vital and psychological space where a group of individuals with different experiences, background knowledge and expectations live together”.

Classroom interaction is considered important for the socialization of new generations in modern societies. Socialization refers to the process of interiorizing beliefs, norms and social values, of learning to be part of society and to perform our role in it.

School is not just the place where academic knowledge is transmitted, it is also the place where the child learns to socialize with non-family members. Undertaking of responsibilities, collaboration, empathy, free expression of opinions and democratic decision-making are most important skills which should be provided by schools.

The entry exams in High School can also set up a kind of "caste system" within our educational system, causing unnecessary division and arguments. Another point we would like to underline is that students with

slower progress would not have anybody in their class to emulate. Likewise, higher level students don't get the intrinsic joy of assisting others.

This is not an arena, we are talking about schools.

To sum up, the entry exams in High School would be a tremendous mistake in the educational system. The educational system should focus on justice, educational equity and the right of all students to a good education, regardless of their characteristics. It should also focus on the role of education in practicing diversity and equal opportunities.

Thank you!

### **Speaker 5**

Good morning!

My name is Konstantinos-Raphael Panos and my duty is to summarize the views of my team.

We argued that the elementary school is good enough to provide the fundamental knowledge to students and that High School should be a more demanding school, suitable only for those with a high level of knowledges and skills. Let the rest pursue some kind of manual labour. Next, we argued in favor of the homogenous class, which helps all students progress at the same pace. And, finally, we will end with a theological expression: we have to separate the chaff from the wheat as soon as possible.

Thank you

### **Speaker 6**

I am Andreas Manolopoulos and as the last speaker of my team I will summarize our points. Our main point is that High School is not a place only for acquiring knowledge and an arena of distinction, but a place for socialization. It is essentially a miniature of society. And in society everyone fits- should fit - regardless of knowledge and abilities. Societies are never homogenous, so a high school should not be homogenous. Within such an environment, solidarity between more advanced and less advanced students can flourish. High school is a place for all teenagers and not only for those who have a privilege to acquire knowledge.

Thank you.