

Public Comment Analysis

Date: February 23, 2016

Topic: The Proposed Consolidation of Peace and Diversity Academy (12X278) with The Metropolitan High School (12X248) in Building X099 Beginning in the 2016-2017 School Year

Date of Panel Vote: February 24, 2016

Summary of Proposal

On January 7, 2016, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) issued an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) proposing to consolidate Peace and Diversity Academy (12X278, “PDA”), an existing high school that currently serves students in grades nine through twelve, with The Metropolitan High School (12X248, “Metropolitan”), an existing high school that currently serves students in grades nine through twelve, beginning in the 2016-2017 school year. A “consolidation” means that two or more existing school organizations are combined into one school to operate and serve students more effectively.

The DOE is proposing to consolidate PDA and Metropolitan because PDA has struggled with low enrollment, which creates budgetary and programmatic challenges, and because consolidation would support enrollment at Metropolitan. Proposals for consolidation seek to improve learning environments by combining the strengths and best practices of both schools and distributing resources to reinforce academic enrichment opportunities, interventions, and other supports. If this proposal is approved, PDA and Metropolitan will be combined such that students, staff, and resources of PDA will become part of Metropolitan, and PDA will no longer exist as a distinct school option as of the 2016-2017 school year.

Metropolitan and PDA are co-located in building X099 (“X099”), located at 1180 Reverend J.A. Polite Avenue, Bronx, New York 10459, in Community School District 12 (“District 12”), along with P723X (75X723, “75X723@X099”), a District 75 (“D75”) program that serves students in kindergarten through twelfth grade at multiple locations in the Bronx. A co-location means that two or more school organizations are located in the same building and may share common spaces, such as auditoriums, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

District 75 provides citywide educational, vocational, and behavior support programs for students who are on the autism spectrum, have significant cognitive delays, are severely emotionally challenged, are sensory impaired and/or are multiply disabled. District 75 provides services to students in a variety of settings, including elementary, middle, and high schools, students’ homes, hospitals, and agencies. These programs are located at more than 347 sites in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, and Syosset, New York. Please visit the DOE website for additional information about District 75 programs at <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/District75/default.htm>.

The 75X723@X099 program is an inclusive education program that serves students in grades nine through twelve and is affiliated with PDA. If this proposal is approved, 75X723@X099 will continue to serve students in grades nine through twelve in X099 and will be affiliated with Metropolitan. Building X099 also houses the following community-based organizations: Phipps Neighborhoods (“Phipps”) and Astor Services for Children and Families (“Astor”), which serve students at Metropolitan and PDA. If this proposal is approved, Phipps and Astor will

continue to provide services to students at the consolidated Metropolitan and maintain their space in X099.

The New York State Education Department (“SED”) assigns an accountability status to each district school—Good Standing, Local Assistance Plan, Focus, or Priority. Metropolitan has been identified as being in Good Standing, and PDA has been identified as a Focus school. If this proposal is approved, the newly consolidated school would retain Metropolitan’s “Good Standing” state accountability status.

PDA is one of a cohort of 94 schools that have been designated by the DOE as Renewal Schools. Schools selected to be Renewal Schools were assigned the state accountability status of Priority or Focus by SED, demonstrated low academic achievement (in 2012, 2013, and 2014), and scored “Proficient” or below on their most recent Quality Review. (In four instances, which did not include PDA, schools were selected to be Renewal Schools per the Chancellor’s discretion). PDA is currently a Renewal School. Metropolitan is not a Renewal School.

As a Renewal School, PDA is currently being transformed into a Community School. Community Schools are intended to be neighborhood hubs where students receive high-quality academic instruction, families can access social services, and communities congregate to share resources and address their common challenges. If this proposal is approved, the consolidated school would not be designated as a Renewal School, but it would be designated as a Community School.

Building X099 has the target capacity to serve a total of 673 students. If this proposal is approved, Metropolitan will absorb the enrollment of PDA and will serve a projected 485-525 students in ninth through twelfth grades in the 2016-2017 school year. 75X723@X099 will serve a projected 8-12 students in ninth through twelfth grades in the 2016-2017 school year. This will result in a total projected building enrollment of 493-537 students in building X099, yielding a building utilization rate of 73%-80%. Accordingly, the DOE believes there is sufficient space in building X099 to support this proposal.

The EIS can be found on the DOE’s website at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2015-2016/February242016SchoolProposals>.

Copies of the EIS are also available in the main offices of Metropolitan, PDA, and 75X723@X099.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing

A Joint Public Hearing was held at building X099 on February 11, 2016. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 5 members of the public attended the hearing and no members of the public spoke. Present at the meeting were: Josh Wallack, Deputy Chancellor of Strategy and Policy for the DOE; Michael Alcott, the High School Superintendent for Renewal Schools, who oversees PDA; Elaine Lindsey, the High School Superintendent for Districts 7, 10, 12, 24, 25, and 26, who oversees Metropolitan; Principal Madhusudha Narayanan, representing the Senior Leadership Team (“SLT”) of Metropolitan; Principal Michelle Noonan, representing the SLT of PDA; Principal Shante’ Chunn, representing the SLT of 75X723; and Ilka Rios, President of the Community Education Council for District 12. David Harrington, Jonathan Geis, Jacalyn Lee, and Bridget Mercier from the DOE were also present.

No questions, comments, or remarks were made at the Joint Public Hearing.

Summary of Issues Raised in Written and/or Oral Comments Submitted to the DOE

The DOE did not receive any comments through the dedicated email address or the dedicated phone line for this proposal.

Changes Made to the Proposal

- No changes have been made to this proposal.