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Chancellor

Public Comment Analysis

Date: January 17, 2012

Topic: The Proposed Co-location of Icahn Charter School 6 (84XTBD) with Existing Schools P.S./M.S. 4 Crotona Park West (09X004) and Leadership Institute (09X276) in Building X004 Beginning in 2012-2013

Date of Panel Vote: January 18, 2012

Summary of Proposal

On December 1, 2011, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) issued a proposal to co-locate grades kindergarten through four of Icahn 6 Charter School (84XTBD, “Icahn 6”), in building X004 (“X004”), located at 1701 Fulton Avenue, Bronx, NY 10457, in Community School District 9 (“District 9”) beginning in 2012-2013. If this proposal is approved by the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”), Icahn 6 will be co-located in building X004 with an existing district K- 8 school, P.S./M.S. 4 Crotona Park West (09X004, “P.S./M.S. 4”), and Leadership Institute (09X276, “Leadership Institute”), an existing high school. A “co-location” means that two or more school organizations are located in the same building and may share common spaces like auditoriums, gymnasiums, libraries and cafeterias. P.S./M.S. 4 is split-sited in building X004 and building X171 (“X171”), located at 1717 Fulton Avenue, Bronx, NY 10457, but under this proposal, Icahn 6 will not utilize any space in building X171.

On January 3, 2012 the DOE issued an amended Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) to correct an error in the original proposal which indicated that Icahn 6 was authorized by the New York State Department of Education (“NYSED”). As reflected throughout the amended EIS, Icahn 6’s charter to serve students was authorized by the State University of New York (“SUNY”).

Icahn 6 is a new public charter school that is authorized to serve students in kindergarten through fifth grades at scale. Icahn 6’s charter was authorized by SUNY in September 2011. Under this charter, Icahn 6 is approved to serve the kindergarten through fifth grades. However, this proposal deals only with the kindergarten through fourth grades of Icahn 6.

If this proposal is approved, Icahn 6 will begin serving a total of 96-123 kindergarten, first, and second grade students in 2012-2013 in building X004. In the 2013-2014 school year, Icahn 6 will expand to serve third grade and will serve a total of approximately 128-164 students. In the 2014-2015 school year, Icahn 6 will expand to serve fourth grade and serve a total of approximately 160-205 students in its third and final year of expansion.

At that point and beyond, Icahn 6 will serve approximately 160-205 students in the kindergarten through fourth grades at this location.

In its first year, Icahn 6 will enroll kindergarten, first, and second grade students through a lottery, giving preference to students who reside in District 9; students who are not admitted will be placed on a waitlist through the same lottery process. In the event that a vacancy occurs during the school year, children will be admitted in the order in which they were placed on the waitlist. Beginning in the school's second year of operation, Icahn 6 will only operate a lottery for kindergarten admission.

Building X004 has the capacity to serve 949 students and building X171 has the capacity to serve 213 students. In the 2010-2011 school year, buildings X004 and X171 collectively served only 684 students, yielding an average utilization rate across the two buildings of just 59%. Currently, buildings X004 and X171 serve approximately 632 students in P.S./M.S. 4 and Leadership Institute, yielding a utilization rate of 54%. Once Icahn 6 has completed its expansion, there will be a total of 700-870 students served collectively by P.S./M.S. 4, Leadership Institute, and Icahn 6. This will yield an estimated utilization rate between 60% and 75% across buildings X004 and X171.

The DOE believes in Icahn's record of success and supports the placement of an Icahn charter school in District 9 in order to continue providing excellent educational opportunities for students and families.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearings

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at the X004 school building on January 9, 2012. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 50 members of the public attended the hearing, and 4 people spoke. Present at the meeting were

Executive Director for the Charter Schools Office Recy Dunn; Representative of the State University of New York ("SUNY") Charter School Institute Maureen Murphy; Principal of P.S./M.S. 4 Vincent Resto; Leadership Institute Principal Marta Colon; Community Education Council ("CEC") 9 President Marilyn Espada; CEC 9 Representative Carmen Ramos; P.S./M.S. 4 School Leadership Team President Ria Bush; P.S./M.S. 4 School Leadership Team Representatives Wendy Trantham and Rosie Fetter; District Family Advocate Barbara Moderal; Children First Network Leader Bob Cohen; Superintendent of Icahn Charter Schools Jeffrey Litt; Icahn 6 Charter School Principal Brian Galen; and Stephanie Crane from the Division of Portfolio Planning

The following comments and remarks were made at the joint public hearing:

1. Jeff Litt, Superintendent of Icahn Charter Schools, made a presentation in which he informed the public about the Icahn charter network and specific plans for Icahn 6. Mr. Litt shared the following information:
 - a. Mr. Litt started the Icahn Charter management organization in in 2001 in the Bronx and served as founding principal; There are now five Icahn schools in the Bronx: two are in District 9 and three are in District 11.
 - b. Icahn schools have an extended school day that lasts from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.; they hold after-school tutorial programs until 6:00 p.m. and Saturday Academy 19 – 20 Saturdays per year from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; The school year continues through to mid-July and Icahn schools also host a summer camp program for their students.

- c. Icahn works closely with parents, has active parent-guardian associations, holds parent meetings regularly, and provides academic workshops for parents and their children in the subject areas of math and science.
 - d. In its first year, Icahn 6 will have six class sections, including two kindergarten sections, with eighteen children in each (for a total of thirty-six students per grade) and a total first year enrollment of 108 students.
 - e. Enrollment will be conducted through a lottery; siblings are given priority and a waitlist will be created in the event that slots open up.
2. The principal of Icahn 6, Brian Galen, introduced himself and said he looked forward to being principal of the school and working with the other schools in the building.
 3. Ria Bush, president of P.S./M.S. 4's School Leadership Team asserted that the Building Utilization Plan places Icahn 6 on the 5th floor of the X004 building. Since the shared space will be utilized by all schools and Icahn will be moving younger students (between the ages of five and seven into the building), it would be more beneficial for the school community to place Icahn 6 in the Early Childhood Center ("ECC") building attached to the school and place the entire P.S. 4 school community in the main building together.
 4. K. Sullivan, a parent at P.S./M.S. 4, asserted that the students currently enrolled at P.S./M.S. 4 are not meeting their proficiency levels. While he appreciates and welcomes a new school coming into the building, he thinks the school as a whole should get the students currently enrolled settled and meeting performance standards before bringing new things onto the campus.
 5. Rosie Fetter, a parent at P.S./M.S. 4 asserted that charter schools are positive and would like to enroll her children in one, but students from all over will be able to enroll in the charter school and it will not benefit her students.
 6. A commenter asked why the school is starting with kindergarten through second grade and not opening with all grades.

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

The DOE received no written or oral comments through the dedicated phone line and Web site for this proposal.

Analysis of Issues Raised, Significant Alternatives Proposed and Changes Made to the Proposal

Comments 1 and 2 are in favor of the proposal and do not require a response.

Comment 3 questions why Icahn 6 is being placed in the main building instead of the annex building, currently used by P.S./M.S. 4.

In order to minimize disruption to the younger P.S./M.S. 4 students already attending classes in the Early Childhood Center (“ECC”) or the annex building (building X171, “X171”), the DOE and the leadership of P.S./M.S. 4 together decided to allow kindergarten through second grade class sections to remain in the building X171 and to place Icahn 6 charter school on the 5th floor of the main building X004. The leadership of Icahn 6 has also expressed approval of this arrangement.

Comment 4 raises concern regarding P.S./M.S. 4’s academic performance and the allocation of resources to assist the school in improving.

The DOE recognizes that not all students at P.S./M.S. 4 are currently meeting proficiency standards. The proposed co-location is not expected to impact student performance at P.S./M.S. 4 and rather is intended to provide an additional school option to students in District 9.

Throughout the course of the proposed co-location, P.S./M.S. 4 will continue to receive support from its Children First Network and superintendent to ensure that the school community is working with students to assist them in meeting their proficiency standards.

As of spring 2010, all NYC public schools receive their primary support from a team of about 15 staff members called a Children First Network. Each network team provides expert support, technical assistance, and quality control for a group of approximately 25 schools: they offer training and coaching for principals and teachers, share instructional resources to meet each school’s needs, and help schools across the network collaborate with each other. Network teams also help schools recruit and hire teachers, spend their budgets effectively, conduct all daily operations, use data and technology, and cultivate partnerships with community-based organizations and cultural institutions. In addition, networks help schools deliver effective services to students with disabilities and English language learners. Because the same team supports each school in all of these different areas, principals can feel confident that every decision will be made

In addition to the support provided through the network structure, each school is supervised by a superintendent, who is determined based on the community school district in which the school is located or, in the case of high schools, the borough. Network leaders and superintendents work closely together to provide coherent support and supervision for schools. Superintendents play critical roles related to principal selection and evaluation, teacher tenure decisions, community engagement, and the resolution of issues and complaints.

Comment 5 raises concern that Icahn 6 would serve students from other geographic areas and not immediately benefit students in the area.

Icahn 6 offers first priority to students currently residing District 9. Details of the admissions process are outlined below.

If the proposal to co-locate Icahn 6 in building X004 is approved, students will have the opportunity to enter the charter application lottery to enroll in kindergarten, first, and second grades at Icahn 6 for September 2012. Icahn 6’s lottery preferences, in order, are as follows:

- Returning students (not applicable in 2012-2013)
- Siblings of currently attending students (not applicable in 2012-2013)
- Students residing in District 9
- Students residing outside of District 9

In 2013-2014 and all later years, Icahn 6 will only accept applications via the kindergarten lottery. However, the school may admit students in other grades from the school's waitlist if seats become available.

Comment 6 inquires as to why the school is starting with grades kindergarten through second instead of opening with all grades to better serve a broader range of students immediately.

Typically, all new schools, including charter schools, begin with only a portion of their full grade span, and then phase in until they reach full scale. This allows schools to create a strong school culture and begin with a narrowed instructional focus, allowing them to be successful both in their first and in following years. Further, students who are farther along in their elementary school careers tend to have a more challenging time transitioning mid-elementary school than younger students.

Icahn Management Organization in particular approaches the school opening process by starting with kindergarten through second grades and phasing up to full scale.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to this proposal.