



Public Comment Analysis

Date: February 28, 2011

Topic: The Proposed Extension and Expansion of the Co-location of Bronx Success Academy 1 (84X493) with P.S. 30 Wilton (07X030) in Building X030 for the 2011-2012 School Year

Date of Panel Vote: March 1, 2011

Summary of Proposal

Bronx Success Academy 1 Charter School (84X493, “BSA 1”) is an existing elementary charter school located at 510 East 141 Street, Bronx, NY 10454 in Community School District 7, in building X030 (“X030”). BSA 1 currently serves students in Kindergarten through first grade. This is a proposal to extend the duration and expand the scope of the “co-location” of BSA 1 in X030, where it is currently sited with P.S. 30 Wilton (07X030, “P.S. 30”), an existing zoned elementary school, for the 2011-2012 school year. P.S. 30 currently serves students in Kindergarten through fifth grade and offers two sections of pre-kindergarten. A “co-location” means that two or more school organizations are located in the same building and may share common spaces like auditoriums, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

The Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”) approved the proposal to co-locate BSA 1’s kindergarten and first grade with P.S. 30 on May 18, 2010, and BSA 1 opened in X030 in August 2010. Under the original proposal approved by the PEP, BSA 1 was expected to be co-located with P.S. 30 for grades kindergarten and 1 only. After diligent efforts, the Department of Education (“DOE”) has not been able to identify a permanent location for BSA 1. Therefore, the DOE proposes that BSA 1 remain in X030 for an additional year as it continues to phase in and adds a second grade, and as the DOE continues to search for an alternative site. This would mean that BSA 1 would continue to be co-located with P.S. 30 and would serve kindergarten through second grade in the 2011-2012 school year.

The Office of Space Planning reviewed the X030 school building in October 2010. Based on that office’s evaluation, there is a sufficient number of rooms to permit P.S. 30 to continue operating at full organization capacity and to accommodate BSA 1 for an additional school year. Importantly, each school will continue to receive their respective baseline allocation.

BSA 1 is chartered to serve grades kindergarten through five. The DOE recognizes there is not sufficient space in X030 for BSA 1 to grow to full scale based on its chartered enrollment plan. The DOE will consider all long-term options to accommodate the anticipated growth of BSA 1,

including re-siting BSA 1, requesting that BSA 1 revise its enrollment plan, and/or siting certain of BSA 1's grades in X030 permanently and siting other grades in a different location. Any proposal to extend or make the co-location of BSA 1 with P.S. 30 permanent for all or some of BSA 1's grades would be the subject of a subsequent EIS.

The details of this proposal have been released in an Educational Impact Statement ("EIS") and Building Utilization Plan ("BUP") which can be accessed here: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2010-2011/Mar12011Proposals.htm>. Hard copies of the EIS and BUP are also available in the main offices of P.S. 30 and BSA 1.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at X030 on February 16, 2011. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 60 members of the public attended the hearing and 12 people spoke. Present at the meeting were: District 7 Community Superintendent Yolanda Torres; District 7 Community Education Council ("CEC 7") representatives Tanya Jones, Almata Trammel, and Gloria Cruz; P.S. 30 Principal Jeanene Worrell-Breden and School Leadership Team ("SLT") representatives Carlos Lopez and Jaqueline Smith; and BSA 1 SLT and Success Charter Network representative Nicole Foster. Remarks were also given by Frederico Perez on behalf of Congressman José E. Serrano.

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

1. P.S. 30 SLT representative Carlos Lopez said P.S. 30 has a long-standing history as a community school, with several partnerships in the community, associations with local businesses and college organizations, and a commitment to keep drugs away from the neighborhood. The school accepts all kinds of children, including children with special needs. Despite significant struggles and changed scoring guidelines, P.S. 30 has remained an "A-rated" school.
2. Mr. Lopez also expressed the following concerns about the proposal:
 - a. BSA 1 wants to take space that is currently occupied by the Lutheran Dental Center, which sees over 135 P.S. 30 students every year.
 - b. The Division of Portfolio Planning needs to revisit its formulas; he contends that an administrative room (half-size classroom) cannot house a 12:1:1 class when special needs children need more space to function and learn.
 - c. The Success Network spreads misinformation. They also solicit and send advertisements via flyers and phone calls to parents of high-scoring children, which are violations of privacy.
 - d. Charter schools are fine when they serve the same amount of special needs kids that district schools do, or when they start in their own building.
 - e. The DOE is trying to dismantle public education. The answer is not to close schools, but to talk to community residents and see how problems can be fixed.
3. Frederico Perez expressed the following concerns about the proposal:

- a. The proposal is part of a larger game by the DOE to dismantle the public school system of New York City. There are more charter schools in the Bronx than in any other borough. Congressman Serrano does not support the charter schools coming into the Bronx.
- b. BSA 1 will continue to take three rooms away from P.S. 30 every year.
- c. BSA 1 takes rooms that are being used to provide community services.
4. CEC 7 representative Gloria Cruz stated her opposition to the proposal because the Success Charter Network has done things without advising the P.S. 30 community and has made her daughter feel “less than.” She said BSA 1 made P.S. 30 change its school colors and disrespected the community by parking buses in the street that blocked traffic. She also said her daughter feels “less than” because she will get in trouble if she expresses her opinion about BSA 1.
5. Multiple commentators stated their opposition to the proposal because it would take space away from P.S. 30.
6. Multiple commentators stated that BSA 1 was trying to take over the X030 building. A commentator also stated that BSA 1 has not helped P.S. 30 and is working against P.S. 30 students.
7. Multiple commentators stated that BSA 1 should have their own school building.
8. Multiple commentators expressed their support for the proposal because it will benefit children in the community and throughout the Bronx. A commentator said the proposal will not displace P.S. 30 and that as a tax-paying citizen and a member of the community, her child also has the right to have a classroom. Another commentator said that BSA 1 is based on a model that has a record of success.
9. A commentator stated that the data does not show what teachers have to deal with in regard to their schedule and the resources that have been taken away from P.S. 30. As evidence, the commentator explained that a math teacher has to walk around with portable boxes and that the music teacher no longer has access to pianos and violins. The commentator said that P.S. 30 students have suffered cuts in resources and space.
10. A commentator questioned whether BSA 1 students were actually from the P.S. 30 school zone. The commentator felt that the proposal was displacing families from the P.S. 30 zone.
11. Multiple commentators stated that BSA 1 does not enroll or help students with special needs.

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

No written or oral comments were received by the DOE in regards to the proposal.

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

- Comment 1 refers to P.S. 30’s history and stature in the community. The DOE acknowledges P.S. 30’s role in the community and commends its achievements.

- With respect to comments 2(a) and 3(c), as indicated in the BUP, Lutheran Dental Center, a Community Based Organization which operates in the building, will continue to be allocated the same amount of space in 2011-2012 as it is currently allocated.
- With respect to comment 2(b), it is, in fact, generally appropriate to use half-size rooms to serve 12:1:1 classes. However, as indicated in the BUP, school leaders may draw upon the expertise and guidance of the Office of Special Education, which is dedicated to promoting positive educational outcomes for students with disabilities, to ensure that students with disabilities are served in appropriate spaces.
- Comments 3(b), 5 and 6 refer to the allocation of space between P.S. 30 and BSA 1 in the X030 building and the P.S. 30 community's opposition to sharing space with BSA 1. Sharing space is central to New York City's strategy for school improvement. The DOE now has over 800 schools and programs co-located with at least one other district or charter school in multi-school campus buildings. The Office of Space Planning reviewed the X030 school building in October 2010. Based on that office's evaluation, there is a sufficient number of rooms to permit P.S. 30 to continue operating at full organizational capacity and to accommodate BSA 1 for an additional school year. As indicated in the BUP, each school will continue to receive its respective baseline allocation of space. Although P.S. 30 will be allocated three fewer rooms in 2011-2012 than it currently uses, it will continue to receive rooms in excess of its adjusted baseline allocation. With respect to shared spaces, the DOE's Director of Space Planning will work with P.S. 30 and BSA 1 to come up with a schedule to ensure students from each school have equitable access to shared spaces. The assignment of individual spaces to a particular school will be determined by the Director of Space Planning in consultation with the Building Council. Each principal must make decisions about how and where students will be served within the space allocated to the school. The DOE, however, will provide support to the schools to ensure that the schools use the space efficiently in order to maximize capacity to support student needs and maintain appropriate delivery of special education and related services to students. Where appropriate, school leaders will have an opportunity to draw upon the expertise and guidance of the Office of Special Education, which is dedicated to promoting positive educational outcomes for students with disabilities.
- Comment 2(c) claims the Success Charter Network spreads misinformation and violates the privacy of P.S. 30 families by recruiting high-scoring students from P.S. 30. The DOE is not aware of these practices. The DOE will investigate these claims.
- Comments 2(e) and 3(a) contend that the DOE is trying to dismantle public education, that closing failing schools is not the answer and that there are more charter schools in the Bronx than in any other borough. The DOE has no plans to close P.S. 30. The DOE supports both public district schools and public charter schools throughout the city. BSA 1 gives preference to residents of District 7 and offers a choice to families who are looking for an option other than their zoned school. In 2009-2010, 56% of District 7 residents enrolled their general education kindergarten children into a school other than their zoned school. This demonstrates a significant demand for additional school options

in this community. The claim that there are more charter schools in the Bronx than in any other borough is not correct. Brooklyn has the highest number of charter schools in the 2010-2011 school year: http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/50117A5B-DB95-4231-82CC-16C853A8EE2B/0/CharterSchoolDirectory_English.pdf

- Comment 4 expresses the view that BSA 1 makes P.S. 30 students feel inferior because they don't attend the charter school. The DOE supports both district and charter schools and believes that BSA 1 offers an additional option to District 7 parents, who have demonstrated a demand for unzoned school options. The commenter also felt that BSA 1 was inconsiderate by parking buses in the street prior to the February 1 Panel for Educational Policy meeting and changing some school colors in the building. Concerns relating to P.S. 30 students feeling inferior and the changing of colors within the building can best be addressed through the Building Council.
- Comment 7 contends that BSA 1 should have its own building. As discussed above, sharing space is central to New York City's strategy for school improvement. The DOE now has over 800 schools and programs co-located with at least one other district or charter school in multi-school campus buildings. The DOE believes that schools can successfully share space if they work together. There are no available DOE spaces in the Bronx to house BSA 1 in the 2011-2012 school year on a stand alone basis. Moreover, as indicated in the BUP, P.S. 30 will continue to receive rooms in excess of its adjusted baseline allocation in the 2011-2012 school year.
- Comment 8 supports the proposal.
- Comment 9 states that the co-location has caused scheduling, space and resource challenges for P.S. 30. The Footprint allocates schools serving grades K-5 cluster or specialty classrooms proportionate to the number of students enrolled. These spaces can be used at the principal's discretion for purposes such as art and/or music instruction, among other things. With respect to shared spaces, the DOE's Director of Space Planning will work with P.S. 30 and BSA 1 to come up with a schedule to ensure students from each school have equitable access to shared spaces. Both schools will have sufficient cluster rooms, pursuant to the Footprint to maintain dedicated specialty rooms (for music instruction, among other purposes) if the principals decide to program them for these purposes.
- Comment 10 queries whether BSA 1 is serving students from the P.S. 30 community. BSA 1 gives preference to residents of District 7 and offers a choice to families who are looking for an option other than their zoned school. As mentioned above, in 2009-2010, 56% of District 7 residents enrolled their general education kindergarten children into an unzoned school other than their zoned school. This demonstrates a significant demand for additional school options in this community.
- Comments 1(d) and 11 contend that BSA 1 does not enroll or help students with special needs. BSA 1 admits students through a charter school lottery which offers priority for District 7 students. While demographic data is not available for BSA 1 since the school

opened in the 2010-2011 school year, the school does serve students with disabilities and ELL students.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to this proposal as a result of public comment.