



## **Public Comment Analysis**

Date: February 2, 2011

Topic: The Proposed Co-location of 12X511 with Performance Conservatory High School (12X262), Explorations Academy (12X251), and J.H.S. 098 Herman Ridder (12X098) in School Building X098

Date of Panel Vote: February 3, 2011

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## **Summary of Proposal**

The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) is proposing to co-locate 12X511, a new high school, in school building X098 (“X098”) located at 1619 Boston Road, Bronx, NY 10460, within the geographical confines of Community School District 12 (“District 12”). Please refer to the Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) describing this co-location proposal, which was posted on December 20, 2010 and amended on January 27, 2011, available on the DOE’s website at <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/changes/bronx/performance>.

If the proposal to co-locate 12X511 in X098 is approved, 12X511 would open in September 2011, gradually phasing in by adding one grade level per year until the school reaches its full grade span of 9-12 during the 2014-2015 school year. The proposed new school would be co-located with Performance Conservatory High School (12X262, “Performance Conservatory”), an existing 9-12 school, Explorations Academy (12X251, “Explorations Academy”), an existing 9-12 school, and J.H.S. 098 Herman Ridder (12X098, “J.H.S. 098”), an existing 6-8 school. X098 also offers free childcare and support services for student parents through the Living for the Young Family through Education program (“LYFE”).

In a separate EIS posted on December 20, 2010 and amended on January 27, 2011, the DOE has also proposed to phase out and eventually close Performance Conservatory. If the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”) approves this proposal, Performance Conservatory would no longer admit new ninth-grade students after the end of this school year. However, Performance Conservatory would continue to serve students currently enrolled in the school. Performance Conservatory’s enrollment would decrease gradually over the next three years and would complete phasing out in June 2014. This EIS can be accessed in the main office of each impacted school and on the DOE’s website at <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/changes/bronx/performance>.

In 2009-2010, building X098 had a target capacity to serve 1,678 students, and the building enrolled 1,225 students, yielding a target utilization rate of 74%. In 2010-2011, the schools in building X098 are projected to enroll 1,290 students, yielding an estimated building utilization rate of 77% of target capacity. This means that the building is “under-utilized” and has capacity to serve additional students.

The proposed co-location of 12X511 in building X098 is part of the DOE’s central goal to create new school options that will better serve future students and the community at large. The proposed new school would strive to set high standards and create a positive learning environment for its students. Students would be challenged to think critically and creatively, and explore new academic interests and extracurricular activities.

### **Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing**

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at X098 on January 28, 2011. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 14 members of the public attended the hearing, and 1 person spoke regarding this proposal. Present at the meeting were: Performance Conservatory School Leadership Team (“SLT”) representatives Sucy Batista and Patricia Delaney; Explorations SLT representative Raul Garcia; J.H.S. 098 SLT representative Elka Rios; Community Education Council (“CEC”) President for District 12 Carmen Taveras; President of the President’s Council for District 12 Wilfredo Pagan; District 12 Community Superintendent Myrna Rodriguez; Network Leader Maria Giacone; Deputy Chancellor Laura Rodriguez; Olivia Ellis from the DOE’s Office for Family Information and Action (“OFIA”); and Paymon Rouhanifard from the DOE’s Division of Portfolio Planning.

The proposal to phase out Performance Conservatory was also addressed at this hearing. The analysis of public comments concerning that proposal can be found at <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/changes/bronx/performance>.

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

1. Wilfredo Pagan, President of the President’s Council for District 12, raised the following questions:
  - a. What are the DOE’s plans to replace Performance Conservatory?
  - b. How will students benefit from these changes?
  - c. What social and cultural resources are going to be available for parents to help change the school environment?

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

No oral or written comments were received on this proposal.

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

With regard to comment 1(a) concerning the DOE’s replacement plans: As detailed in the EIS describing the proposed co-location of 12X511 in X098, which was posted on December 20,

2010 and amended on January 27, 2011, the DOE is proposing to open a new high school in X098 as part of the replacement strategy for Performance Conservatory. Admissions to 12X511 would be open to any New York City student, with a priority to Bronx residents. The school is proposed to have a Limited Unscreened admissions method, which is the same selection method exercised by Performance Conservatory. Limited Unscreened programs give priority to students who demonstrate interest in the school by attending a school's Information Session, Open House event or visiting the school's exhibit at any one of the High School Fairs.

In addition, the DOE is proposing to open six other new high schools in the Bronx in September 2011. If approved by the Panel for Educational Policy ("PEP"), these seven new schools are expected to serve approximately 830 new 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2011-2012.

Information regarding the new schools that will be proposed to open in 2011-2012 will be provided in the winter for students who may be interested in applying to these schools through the High Schools Admissions Process. Detailed information about all City high schools is published annually in the High School Directory, available in print at DOE middle schools and Borough Enrollment Centers or on the DOE's website at <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/High/Directory/default.htm>.

With regard to comment 1(b) concerning the anticipated benefits of this proposal for future students: The DOE's central goal is to create a system of great schools. Every child in New York City deserves the best possible education. This starts with a great school led by a dedicated leader with a vision for student success. To ensure that as many students as possible have access to the best possible education, since 2003 the DOE has replaced 91 of New York City's lowest-performing schools with better options and opened 474 new schools: 365 district schools and 109 public charter schools. As a result, we've created more high-quality choices for families.

In the Bronx, Evander Childs High School graduated only 30.7% of students in 2002-2003, its final year before phasing out. The new schools on the Evander Childs Campus are getting tremendous results with the same student population, graduating 80.3% of students in 2009-2010. The DOE anticipates that the co-location of 12X511, which will strive to set high standards and create a positive learning environment for its students, will offer a similar high quality option for future students and the broader community.

The DOE believes this to be the best strategy to address failing schools and provide better educational options for future students and the broader community.

With regard to comment 1(c) related to parental involvement in changing the school environment: Parents have the opportunity to shape a school's culture, create opportunities for their children, and influence school policies through the School Leadership Team. Every school has a School Leadership Team which is comprised of instructional and non-instructional school personnel as well as parents and members of the community. The School Leadership Team advises and assists in the development of the educational programs and in preparation and evaluation of any improvement plans for the school. This allows parents to be directly involved in setting priorities and making decisions that will impact their children's future.

Another way parents can actively participate in their children's schools is through the Parent-Teacher Association ("PTA"). Parent-Teacher Associations are school-based organizations open to all parents of children attending New York City public schools. Pursuant to the Chancellor's Regulation A-660 (available at <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/493A12F9-FC9F-4567-B820-096AB3D55427/81684/A660FINAL.pdf>), the PTA's responsibilities include electing parent members to serve on the School Leadership Team and Community Education Councils. The PTA is an excellent way for parents to be involved in school life and supporting school activities.

### **Changes Made to the Proposal**

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