



Public Comment Analysis

Date: October 11, 2011

Topic: The Proposed Grade Expansion of P.S. 326

Date of Panel Vote: October 12, 2011

Summary of Proposal

P.S. 326 (22K326, “P.S. 326”) is an existing zoned elementary school located in building K852 at 1800 Utica Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11234, in Community School District 22. P.S. 326 is an early childhood center, and it currently serves students in kindergarten through first grade, and it also offers a pre-kindergarten program. Early childhood centers are small elementary schools that focus on early childhood education, typically kindergarten through second grade. This is a proposal to implement a “grade expansion,” whereby P.S. 326 would expand to serve students in kindergarten through second grade (“K-2”) at full scale. If this proposal is approved, P.S. 326 would begin enrolling second grade students for the 2012-2013 school year. The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) does not anticipate that the proposed expansion of P.S. 326 would affect its pre-kindergarten program.

Currently, elementary students in District 22 can attend their zoned elementary schools or apply to citywide or district-wide Gifted and Talented programs through the Gifted and Talented application process. Under this proposal, elementary school students in District 22 would retain all of those options.

P.S. 326 currently shares a zone with P.S. 119 Amersfort (22K119, “P.S. 119”), an existing zoned elementary school that serves students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Historically, the majority of first grade students enrolled in P.S. 326 enrolled in P.S. 119 for second grade. If this proposal is approved, first grade students enrolled in P.S. 326 would be able to stay at P.S. 326 for second grade, or they may choose to enroll at P.S. 119 for second grade because it is in the same zone. Other first grade students in District 22 could also enroll in P.S. 326 for second grade, but they would be enrolled depending on seat availability at P.S. 326 because priority would be given to P.S. 326’s first grade students.

The proposal to expand P.S. 326 initially came from the school community. In May 2011, a grade expansion team composed of P.S. 326 teachers and administrators submitted a formal application to expand the grades served by the school. This grade expansion would allow P.S. 326 to serve second grade, which most DOE early childhood centers serve.

The details of this proposal have been released in an Educational Impact Statement which can be accessed here: http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/ronlyres/1DA89B48-A59E-4A65-83A9-0C7A2F3B900F/109375/EIS_K326.pdf

Copies of the EIS are also available in the main office of P.S. 326.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at P.S. 326 on October 6, 2011. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 120 members of the public attended the hearing and 7 people spoke. Present at the meeting were: Principal of P.S. 326, Colleen M. Ducey; P.S. 326 School Leadership Team (“SLT”) representatives Michelle Bechels and Benita Hamilton-Smith; District 22 Community Education Council (“CEC”) President, Christopher Spinelli; and District 22 Community Superintendent Linda Waite

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

1. One SLT representative expressed support for the proposed expansion. The SLT representative is a parent of a student at P.S. 326 and feels that the school staff is friendly and approachable. The SLT representative believes that P.S. 326 provides a good foundation for its students and that expanding to serve second grade would build on that foundation.
2. Another SLT representative expressed support for the P.S. 326 expansion. She stated that the teachers are personable and the expansion would benefit the students because they could remain at P.S. 326 for another year.
3. A commenter expressed support for the expansion proposal stating that her child has always had a positive experience at P.S. 326 and the staff has been continually supportive.
4. A commenter expressed support for the proposal based on the opinion that there is no space at P.S. 119, an existing elementary school in District 22 where the majority of P.S. 326 students have historically attended second grade. Additionally, the P.S. 326 staff is courteous and expansion would permit the students to keep the same teacher from grade to grade.
5. A commenter expressed support for the expansion based on the fact that P.S. 326 teachers are wonderful and communicative, stating that P.S. 326’s teachers are true partners in the students’ education.
6. A commenter expressed support for the proposed grade expansion at P.S. 326 because the Principal, Parent Coordinator, and staff members are all passionate about educating students.

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

1. A District 22 CEC representative submitted a letter in support of the proposed expansion, which described P.S. 326 as a successful early childhood center and the staff as warm and inviting.
2. Two commenters expressed support for the proposal and described students' academic success at P.S. 326.
3. A petition in support of the proposal that contained 87 signatures was received by the DOE.

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

All comments received at the hearing were in support of the proposed grade expansion at P.S. 326 and therefore do not need to be addressed.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to this proposal.