

Public Comment Analysis

Date: May 28, 2014

Topic: The Proposed Co-location of Two District High Schools (02M280 and 02M282) with Existing Schools The Urban Assembly School for Emergency Management (02M135) and Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers (02M520) in Building M520 Beginning in the 2014-2015 School Year

Date of Panel Vote: May 29, 2014

Summary of Proposal

On March 4, 2014, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) issued an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) describing a proposal to co-locate two district high schools with existing schools The Urban Assembly School for Emergency Management (02M135, “UA-EM”) and Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers (02M520, “Bergtraum”) in building M520 beginning in the 2014-2015 school year.

On October 15, 2013, the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”) approved the proposal to co-locate the kindergarten through fourth grades of Success Academy Charter School – New York 1, a new public elementary charter school, in M520. However, upon further consideration, the DOE has concluded that this proposal will not be implemented. Instead, the DOE has determined that it is more appropriate to co-locate additional high schools in this building because schools serving the same grade levels have greater opportunities to collaborate on the use of shared spaces (such as science labs and libraries), and to provide expanded academic partnerships, shared relationships with community-based organizations (“CBOs”) that serve the same grade levels, and extra-curricular activities across the schools.

The DOE now proposes to co-locate Manhattan Early College School for Advertising (02M280, “MECSA”), a district Career and Technical Education (“CTE”)/early college high school, and Urban Assembly Maker Academy (02M282, “UA Maker Academy”), a district CTE high school, in building M520 (“M520”) with existing district high schools UA-EM and Bergtraum in the M520 building beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. M520 is located at 411 Pearl Street, New York, NY 10038, within the geographical confines of Community School District 2 (“District 2”).

If this proposal to open and co-locate MECSA and UA Maker Academy in M520 is approved, students will have access to two additional high school options in Manhattan. Both schools will be open to students through the Citywide High School Admissions Process and will have a limited unscreened selection method with priority for students residing in Manhattan.

If this proposal is approved, UA Maker Academy will open in the 2014-2015 school year and serve 105-115 students in the ninth grade. UA Maker Academy will add one grade each year until it reaches full scale in M520, serving 420-460 students in grades nine through twelve in the 2017-2018 school year and beyond.

UA Maker Academy will offer CTE programming. CTE programs integrate academic study with workforce skills in specific career clusters. Students receive instruction in an industry-related area and have the opportunity to graduate high school with industry-specific competencies and skills that lead to postsecondary education, further industry training and/or entry into the workforce.

UA Maker Academy will offer CTE programming in the Information Technology career cluster, with a specific program focus on interactive design, networking, and software development. Students will complete their high school graduation requirements and earn industry-recognized credentials (such as Adobe certifications) as they prepare a portfolio of work and develop a senior capstone project that meets a real business or social need.

If this proposal is approved, MECSA will open in the 2014-2015 school year and serve 75-85 students in the ninth grade. MECSA will add one grade each year until it reaches full scale in M520, serving 450-510 students in grades nine through fourteen in the 2019-2020 school year.

MECSA will be a CTE/early college school. CTE/early college programs provide students with a career-focused educational experience that prepares them for career-track employment within their field of study. Each CTE/early college high school program is developed and administered in close collaboration with the college that awards the associate's degree and a high-profile employer that can offer first-in-line hiring consideration for qualified students who complete the early college program. Students may also have the opportunity to earn a CTE-endorsed Regents diploma, associate's degree, and industry-recognized credentials through a six year program. Students will also engage in a progressive sequence of work-based learning experiences informed by industry partners. Students at CTE/early college programs can graduate high school in four years or less, or can choose to remain enrolled at the school for grades thirteen and fourteen in order to earn an associate's degree. The early college program at MECSA will be designed to give students the opportunity to earn an associate's degree free of charge, and to put them on a postsecondary pathway potentially leading to career-track employment within the advertising industry.

MECSA's program will focus on careers in the advertising industry, in partnership with the American Association of Advertising Agencies ("4A's") and the Borough of Manhattan Community College ("BMCC"). BMCC is one of twenty-three colleges within The City University of New York ("CUNY"), sharing CUNY's mission to preserve academic excellence and extend higher educational opportunities to a diversified urban population. BMCC is dedicated to providing general, liberal arts, career education and continuing education programs relevant to the needs, interests and aspirations of students of all ages. 4A's is a national trade association representing the U.S. advertising agency industry; its members produce eighty percent of total domestic advertising volume. MECSA students will study marketing and design inside the classroom, and have the opportunity to intern in areas such as advertising, media management, and creative technology at 4A's member agencies outside of school.

MECSA students will have the opportunity to complete an associate's degree awarded by BMCC at no cost to themselves or their families. MECSA students will also have the opportunity to begin earning college credit in ninth through twelfth grade. In addition to partnering with the 4A's, MECSA will build a network of strategic partnerships to offer opportunities related to its industry focus to its students. The partnerships supporting MECSA will facilitate access to career opportunities with some of New York City's most successful companies.

CTE programs empower students to complete high school and advance to higher education and career-track employment. The DOE strongly believes in the importance of CTE education and supports the opening of additional high schools in the M520 building that will offer CTE programming. The DOE has been eager to bring new CTE opportunities to M520 to serve the City's families and the co-location of MECSA and UA Maker Academy will help meet this goal. Additionally, MECSA will provide students with an early college educational option that will give them the opportunity to earn an associate's degree free of charge.

Bergtraum is an existing district high school serving students in grades nine through twelve that admits students through the Citywide High School Admissions Process. Bergtraum also offers CTE programs in accounting, robotics, biomedical technology, law enforcement/legal studies, and marketing. The DOE is planning to reduce the enrollment at Bergtraum by approximately 137-147 students each year over a period of four years beginning in September 2014. By 2017-2018, enrollment at Bergtraum will decrease by approximately 546-586 students so that it will serve 785-825 students at scale in ninth through twelfth grades.

Bergtraum's enrollment reduction is intended to allow for new school options to develop in building M520. The reduction is also driven by Bergtraum's performance and by decreased applicant demand for the school. In 2011-2012, for the fourth consecutive year, Bergtraum received an overall D grade on its Progress Report and in 2012-2013, the school received an overall F grade on its Progress Report. Additionally, in the Progress Report's student progress metric, Bergtraum received a D in 2010-2011 and an F in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. Moreover, enrollment at Bergtraum has declined over the past six years with a 64% decrease in ninth grade enrollment, from 1,241 ninth grade students in 2008-2009 to 450 ninth grade students in 2013-2014. These figures indicate declining demand for the school.

UA-EM is an existing district high school that serves ninth grade and is currently located in building M625 ("M625"), located at 439 West 49th Street, Manhattan, New York 10019, also in District 2. UA-EM will move from M625 into M520 prior to the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, and will continue to add one grade per year until it reaches full scale in M520 and serves students in grades nine through twelve in the 2016-2017 school year. UA-EM will move into space in M520 that is currently occupied by the Stephen T. Mather Building Arts & Craftsmanship High School (02M139, "Mather"). On October 15, 2013, the PEP approved two related, separate proposals to re-site Mather from building M520 to building M625 beginning in the 2014-2015 school year and to re-site UA-EM from building M625 to building M520 in the 2014-2015 school year. These proposals are intended to ensure that Mather has appropriate facilities to offer its CTE programming. UA-EM offers a rigorous academic program with a CTE component and will continue to do so when it moves to M520 prior to the start of the 2014-2015 school year.

In addition, M520 houses CBOs Young Women's Christian Association ("YWCA NYC"), APEX Inc., Harlem Education Center, SPARK Drug Prevention, Baruch College and BMCC, as well as offices of the United Federation of Teachers ("UFT"). This proposal is not expected to impact the continued siting of the CBOs or the UFT offices. M520 also houses Hearing Education Services ("HES"), which is a self-contained program offered in consultation with District 75, serving students who are deaf or hard of hearing. This proposal is not expected to impact the hearing education services currently offered in the M520 building.

The details of this proposal have been released in an EIS. Proposal documents can be accessed here: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2013-2014/SchoolProposalsMay62014PEP>.

Copies of the EIS in English and Spanish are also available in the main offices of UA-EM and Bergtraum.

Summary of Comments Received

A walkthrough of the M520 building was conducted by Deputy Chancellor of the Division of Operations, Kathleen Grimm, on March 24, 2014 with Lottie Almonte, Principal of Bergtraum, and Larry Gabbard, Principal of Mather. Following the walkthrough, a community meeting regarding this proposal was held at the M520 building on April 4, 2014. At that meeting, interested parties had the opportunity to provide input on and ask questions about the proposal. Present at the community meeting were District 2 High Schools Superintendent Marisol Bradbury; Principal Almonte; Principal Gabbard; Paola DeKock, Senior Director of Parent Leadership of the Division of Family and Community Engagement; Deputy Chancellor Grimm; and Drew Patterson of the Office of District Planning (“District Planning”).

A joint public hearing regarding the proposal was held on April 8, 2014. At the joint public hearing, interested parties also had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 7 members of the public attended the hearing. Present at the joint public hearing were Superintendent Bradbury; Principal Almonte; Principal Gabbard; Rodolfo Elizondo, Principal of UA-EM; Community School District 2 Community Education Council (“CEC 2”) member Claude Arpels; Julian Cohen from the Office of New Schools; and Jennifer Peng and Drew Patterson of District Planning.

No comments and remarks were made at the community meeting on April 4, 2014 and/or the joint public hearing on April 8, 2014.

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

The DOE received 4 comments via the proposal-specific feedback email address and voicemail number:

1. A commenter asked how her child, a current ninth grade student, could enroll at MECSA or UA-Maker Academy for the 2014-2015 school year.
2. Three commenters inquired about employment opportunities at Bergtraum, UA-EM, MECSA and UA-Maker Academy.

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

Comment 1 concerns the admissions process for MECSA and UA-Maker.

If this proposal is approved, MECSA and UA-Maker Academy will both open in building M520 to serve ninth grade students in September 2014. Since MECSA and UA-Maker Academy will only serve ninth grade students in the 2014-2015 school year, students who are currently in ninth grade, including those students who will have to repeat ninth grade for the 2014-2015 school year, were not eligible to apply to MECSA or UA-Maker Academy for the 2014-2015 school year.

New high schools were available for students who are currently eighth graders and first-time ninth graders during Round 2 of High School Admissions. Round 2 applications were due on March 21, 2014.



More information about the High School Admissions Process is available at <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/High/default.htm>.

Comment 2 inquires about employment opportunities related to this proposal.

Employment opportunities at new schools proposed and/or approved for September 2014 can be accessed at the DOE's Web site: <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/newschools/newschooltypes/workatanewschool/default.htm>.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to this proposal.