

AMENDED EDUCATIONAL IMPACT STATEMENT: The Proposed Grade Truncation of P.S. 197 The Ocean School (27Q197) to a K-5 School

I. Summary of Proposal

P.S. 197 The Ocean School (27Q197, “P.S. 197”) is an existing elementary school located at 825 Hicksville Road, Far Rockaway, NY 11691, in Community School District 27. It currently serves students in Kindergarten through sixth grade and offers a Pre-Kindergarten program. On October 15, 2010, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) published an educational impact statement (“EIS”) describing a proposal to implement a “grade truncation,” meaning that the school would no longer enroll sixth graders after the current 2010-2011 school year.

Under this proposal, at the close of the 2010-2011 school year, all fifth and sixth graders who meet promotional standards will graduate from P.S. 197. In September 2011, these students will enter middle schools as sixth and seventh graders, respectively. Beginning in 2011-2012, P.S. 197 will serve students only in Kindergarten through fifth grade and continue to offer a Pre-Kindergarten program. From that time forward, P.S. 197 students will move on to middle school for sixth grade. This amended EIS includes additional background information, but does not revise or modify the proposal itself.

The DOE strives to ensure that all students in New York City have access to a high-quality school at every stage of their education. Having elementary schools that terminate in different grades (i.e., K-5 versus K-6) creates unequal levels of access for students based simply on the year they exit elementary school.

This proposed grade truncation will help standardize middle school application and entry grades in District 27, giving all P.S. 197 students access to the same range of middle school options as their peers throughout District 27, and in particular their peers on the Rockaway Peninsula.

Currently, P.S. 197 students who wait until seventh grade to enter middle school are limited to their zoned middle school or those unzoned, choice middle schools that still have available seventh-grade seats. These choice schools rarely have open seventh-grade seats, which become available only in the rare cases when sixth graders leave the school. As a result, students who remain at P.S. 197 through sixth grade currently have fewer options than their peers who start middle school a year earlier.

Additionally, when students enter middle school at multiple entry grades (sixth and seventh), this creates challenges for both the students and the middle school as a whole. P.S. 197 students who start middle school in seventh grade may face transitional challenges related to entering middle school a year later than most of their classmates and they remain in their new middle school for only two years before again transitioning to high school. Similarly, having students enter in multiple years creates an instructional challenge for middle school teachers and leadership who are responsible for preparing all students for high school. Those students who enter the middle school at seventh grade will not have the benefit of a sustained educational experience in the middle years; this has the effect of depersonalizing the school experience when adolescents tend to need the most personal and supportive environments.

At the same time, this proposal will create additional space to be used for K-5 students at P.S. 197 or to meet other needs of the school or community.

- P.S. 197's building, Q197, has a 90 percent target utilization rate¹, yet enrollment at the school has continually increased over the last three years. We anticipate that K-5 enrollment will continue on this trend.
- Phasing out the sixth grade will free up approximately 59 seats in the building. This will help address the increasing enrollment P.S. 197 has seen over the past three years. If this proposal is approved, that additional space could be used by K-5 students or to meet other needs of the school or community.

Finally, many students at P.S. 197 already apply to middle schools during fifth grade and enroll at other middle schools for sixth grade. Specifically, approximately 17% of last year's fifth graders chose to exit P.S. 197 after fifth grade. This creates a small class at the sixth-grade level with limited resources to provide the extracurricular and enrichment opportunities available in a full-size middle school.

II. Proposed or Potential Use of Building

The building where P.S. 197 is located, Q197, has the capacity to serve 569 students and a current target utilization rate of 90 percent. The DOE currently has no specific plans for how to utilize the potential space at building Q197 which will be available after the grade truncation, and the intention is for space to be better utilized at the discretion of the Principal and school community. If this proposal is approved, the additional space could be used by K-5 students or to meet other needs of the school or community (e.g., art room, resource center, new or expanded programs for P.S. 197 students, D75 program for students who live on the Rockaway Peninsula but currently go to school elsewhere, etc.).

III. Impact of the Proposal on Affected Students, Schools, and Community

A. Students

If this proposal is approved, all fifth and sixth graders who meet promotional standards will graduate from P.S. 197 at the close of the 2010-2011 school year. In September 2011, those students will enter middle school as sixth and seventh graders, respectively. Beginning in 2011-2012, P.S. 197 will serve students only in Kindergarten through fifth grade and will continue to offer a Pre-Kindergarten program. From that time forward, all P.S. 197 students will move on to middle school for the sixth grade. All P.S. 197 graduates will have the same access to their top-choice middle schools as their peers in District 27, including those on the Rockaway Peninsula.²

If a current P.S. 197 sixth grader does not meet promotional standards and is required to repeat the grade, the DOE will seek to place that student in the sixth grade of the same middle school to which he or she has been matched for seventh grade through the Middle School Choice process. If such placement is not feasible, then the DOE will find an alternative Peninsula placement, or at a minimum a District 27 placement for that student.

It is important to understand that the unzoned, choice middle schools in District 27 generally only accept students as entering sixth graders. It is only in rare cases, when a space opens up due to a student leaving the school, that these schools admit new students into grade seven or higher. Additionally, although some of the choice middle schools in District 27 are K-8 schools that accept new incoming students into the middle school grades, these schools have very few available seventh-grade seats. As a result, families that

¹ The official target capacity and utilization rates for the 2010-11 school year are not yet available. All references to building utilization rates in this document are based on target capacity data from the 2009-10 Enrollment Capacity Utilization Report (the "Blue Book").

² Visit <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/Middle> for more information about middle school enrollment, including timelines and district directories.

would like their children to attend one of the District 27 choice middle schools or grades six through eight at a K-8 school should ensure that their children make the transition to middle school between the fifth and sixth grades.

The middle schools open to P.S. 197 students for 2011-2012 include:

School Name	Address	2010-2011 School Level	2010-2011 Grade Span
P.S. 197 ZONED PREFERENCE Option			
I.S. 53 Brian Piccolo (27Q053)	10-45 Nameoke Street	MS	6-8
Eastern Peninsula CHOICE PREFERENCE Options			
Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy (KAPPA) VI (27Q282)	8-21 Bay 25 th Street	MS	6-8
Village Academy (27Q319)	10-45 Nameoke Street	MS	6-8
Academy of Medical Technology: A College Board School (27Q309)	8-21 Bay 25 th Street	MS/HS	6-10*
P.S. 42 R. Vernam (27Q042)	488 Beach 66 th Street	ES/MS	K-8
P.S. 43 (27Q043)	160 Beach 29 th Street	ES/MS	PK-8
P.S. 105 The Bay School (27Q105)	420 Beach 51 th Street	ES/MS	PK-8
Goldie Maple Academy (27Q333)	3-65 Beach 56 th Street	ES/MS	PK-8
Additional Peninsula CHOICE PREFERENCE Options			
Channel View School for Research (27Q262)	100-00 Beach Channel Drive	MS/HS	6-12
Scholars' Academy (27Q323)	320 Beach 104 th Street	MS/HS	6-12
P.S. 47 Chris Galas (27Q047)	9 Power Road	ES/MS	PK-8
P.S./M.S. 114 Belle Harbor (27Q114)	134-01 Cronston Avenue	ES/MS	K-8
P.S. 183 Dr. Richard R. Green (27Q183)	2-45 Beach 79 th Street	ES/MS	PK-8
Waterside School for Leadership (27Q318)	190 Beach 110 th Street	MS	6-7**

*Academy of Medical Technology is currently phasing up to become a 6-12 school.

**Waterside School for Leadership is currently phasing up to become a 6-8 school.

Additionally, District 27 students may still apply to borough-wide and citywide middle schools as in the past.

P.S. 197 has a dual language program which serves students in Kindergarten through third grades. The program is conducted in English and Spanish. This program will not be impacted by the truncation of P.S. 197's sixth grade.

P.S. 197 will continue to meet the needs of its students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs) in grades K-5. Current fifth and sixth graders with IEPs or requiring ELL services will continue to receive appropriate services at the middle school to which they are matched.

Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) will participate in the middle school admissions processes in the same manner as their non-disabled peers. Middle schools will be supported by the DOE in

reviewing students' IEPs to focus on addressing the needs of students with disabilities by providing individualized service models that ensure students have access to the general education curriculum to the greatest extent possible. It is expected that the middle school to which a student is matched will develop a program to meet the students' needs. This process will apply to students with IEPs currently in fifth and sixth grades at P.S. 197 in the same manner as it applies to all other students.

In accordance with DOE policy, ELLs participate in the middle school admissions processes in the same manner as their peers who are not English Language Learners. Information regarding the type(s) of ELL programs historically offered by the middle schools available to impacted students can be found in the Middle School Directory for District 28 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/Middle/Publications>). Students who are ELLs are placed according to the same placement criteria as their English-speaking peers. The student support staff at P.S. 197, in consultation with the Office of Student Enrollment and the Office of English Language Learners, will assist students with identifying services for ELLs offered at middle schools as they select programs that will meet their specific needs.

Currently, the leadership in P.S. 197's student council is comprised of fifth and sixth graders. If the school truncates its sixth grade, adjustments will be made to ensure the student council continues and is adjusted for the existing student body in the school.

P.S. 197 currently operates one section of full day Pre-Kindergarten. Barring unforeseen circumstances, we expect Pre-Kindergarten to continue being offered at P.S. 197.

B. Schools

No other schools are co-located in Building Q197, which houses P.S. 197. Consequently, there will be no impact on other schools in the building.

The proposed grade truncation will reduce the number of students enrolled in building Q197 by approximately 59 students. After this proposal is implemented, there will be sufficient space to serve P.S. 197 students in Building Q197 pursuant to the Citywide Instructional Footprint (the "Footprint"). Please visit the New York City Department of Education website to access the Instructional Footprint, which guides space allocation and use in City schools: http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/8CF30F41-DE25-4C30-92DE-731949919FC3/87633/NYCDOE_Instructional_Footprint_Final9210TNT.pdf

C. Community

As a result of this proposal, approximately 67 P.S. 197 fifth graders will be entering middle school a year earlier than previously was the case. There are more than enough seats to accommodate those students at middle schools open to P.S. 197 graduates.

On October 1, P.S. 104 The Bays Water, the only other K-6 school on the Rockaway Peninsula, posted a proposal to truncate its sixth grade.

If both the P.S. 104 and the P.S. 197 grade truncation proposals are approved this year, there will continue to be sufficient middle school capacity on the Rockaway Peninsula. There are 4,552 total seats in middle schools or in grades six, seven, and eight at 6-12 schools on the Peninsula. There are 3,635 students projected to be enrolled for these same seats. If the P.S. 104 and P.S. 197 proposals are both approved, there will still be 760 available seats remaining in middle schools or grades six, seven, and eight at 6-12 schools in District 28, and therefore the addition of these 67 fifth graders who traditionally would not have

moved on to middle school for sixth grade will have a minimal impact on the availability of middle school seats in District 27.³

This proposal addresses many needs of the P.S. 197 community:

- Phasing out the sixth-grade class at P.S. 197 creates 59 additional K-5 seats, which may be used to accommodate the anticipated continuing increase in elementary enrollment within P.S. 197's zone, or to meet other needs of the school or community.
- Establishing P.S. 197 as a K-5 school will align the school's grade span with other District 27 and Rockaway Peninsula schools. In particular, if the P.S. 104 proposal is approved, P.S. 197 would be the last remaining K-6 school on the peninsula.
- When schools' exit and entry grades are standardized across elementary schools within a single district, access to middle school enrollment is equal for all students. If this proposal is approved, P.S. 197 students would apply to middle school during fifth grade and start middle school as sixth graders, meaning that they would be applying when all seats in the District's middle schools were open, giving P.S. 197 students equal access to their top-choice schools.
- The proposal will establish better academic and social transition points for students between grade levels. P.S. 197 students who currently start middle school in seventh grade may face transitional challenges related to entering the school a year later than most of their classmates, and they remain in their new middle school for only two years before again transitioning to high school.
- By entering middle school one year earlier, sixth graders will have more opportunities to take advantage of enriching high-school preparatory experiences. Middle schools typically have extremely varied and rich instructional offerings, especially in the sciences and languages, as well as extra-curricular activities. The schools' space and facilities are also better aligned to support these varied options.
- This proposal is not expected to impact the ability of community members and organizations to obtain school building use permits at Q197.

There is one after-school program sponsored by a community-based organization (CBO) currently hosted at P.S. 197: the YMCA Virtual Y. This program serves all grades in the school and would continue to serve K-5 if the school truncates its sixth grade. Virtual Y also runs a summer program out of the building after the school year; the school's truncation would not affect this either.

IV. Enrollment, Admissions and School Performance Information

The only impacted school in this proposal is P.S. 197.

Admissions Data

Current Admissions	Pre-K: Standard Universal Pre-K Admissions K-6: Zoned
Admissions after Grade Reconfiguration in 2011-2012	Pre-K: Standard Universal Pre-K K-5: Zoned

³ Total middle school seats on the peninsula reflects the number of seats designated for middle school students in middle school buildings or middle school grades of K-8 and 6-12 schools.

Enrollment Data

Current Grades Served	K-6
Projected 2010-2011 Enrollment	525
Grades Served after Grade Reconfiguration in 2011-2012	K-5
Projected 2011-2012 Enrollment:	441-491

Demographic Data

Percentage Special Education Students ⁴	15%
Percentage English Language Learner Students	12%
Percentage of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch	99%

School Performance Data

	2008-2009	2009-2010	Website
Progress Report Scores	A	A	http://schools.nyc.gov/OA/SchoolReports/2009-10/Progress_Report_2010_EMS_Q197.pdf
ELA Score (% Level 3 or 4)	57.5%	29.0%	http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/27/Q197/AboutUs/Statistics
Math Score (% Level 3 or 4)	74.4%	44.7%	http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/27/Q197/AboutUs/Statistics
Accountability Status	In Good Standing	Not Available	http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/27/Q197/AboutUs/Statistics
Average Attendance	93.8%	92.3%	http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/data/stats/attendance/default.htm

V. Initial Costs and Savings

No initial costs or savings are expected due to the P.S. 197 grade truncation.

⁴ Special Education students as percentage of total students. Special Education count does not include SETSS or students receiving speech or language services.

VI. Effect on Personnel Needs, Costs of Instruction, Administration, Transportation and Other Support Services

A. Personnel Needs

Some current P.S. 197 staff positions may be excessed due to declining enrollment associated with the elimination of the sixth-grade classes at P.S. 197. It is difficult to precisely predict the number of affected positions.

Any excessing that might be necessary would be conducted in accordance with existing labor contracts. For example, the current United Federation of Teachers (UFT) contract would require excessing to take place in reverse seniority order within each given teaching license area. Most teachers working in grades 1-6 hold a “common branches” license, regardless of their students’ age. Barring system-wide layoffs, excessed teachers would be eligible to apply for other City positions, and any teacher who did not find a permanent position would be placed in the Absent Teacher Reserve pool, meaning that they would continue to earn their salary while serving as substitute teachers in other schools in the district. Should there be a vacancy in the school in a teacher’s license area within one year of the teacher being excessed, the teacher would have a right of return to the school consistent with applicable contract provisions and law regarding teachers’ seniority.

When addressing the proposal’s impact on personnel, it is important to recognize that the sixth-grade students who would otherwise have enrolled in P.S. 197 will now be enrolled in other District 27 middle schools, and those schools might need to hire new teachers to serve their larger sixth-grade student population.

B. Cost of Instruction

Most funding in school budgets is allocated on a per-pupil basis. For each student no longer on the P.S. 197 roster after the truncation is completed, the school is expected to receive approximately \$4,384.81 less annual base funding. These estimates are based on current Fair Student Funding (FSF) per capita allocation levels and are subject to annual variation. FSF covers basic instructional expenses and FSF funds may, at the school’s discretion, be used to hire staff, purchase supplies and materials, or implement instructional programs. As a result of the truncation, the total number of students enrolled at P.S. 197 will decline, meaning that the school will need fewer teachers and fewer supplies to meet the needs of its smaller student population. If, for some reason the overall school enrollment grows again, the overall budget will increase accordingly. In any case, funding will be provided in accordance with enrollment levels, allowing the school to meet the instructional needs of its student population. This is how funding is awarded to all schools throughout the City, with budgets naturally increasing or decreasing as enrollment fluctuates from year to year.

In addition, FSF awards supplemental allocations on a per-pupil basis to students who have additional needs and therefore cost more to educate. For example, during the 2010-2011 school year, schools received an additional \$2,031 per pupil for each English Language Learner they enrolled. It is difficult to project the impact of this proposal on the total supplemental funding that P.S. 197 will receive because future students’ achievement levels and needs cannot be predicted for each of the next three years, but the school will be awarded supplemental funding for higher-need students according to the same formula as all other schools citywide, ensuring that funds are in place to meet those students’ needs.

As with all other schools citywide, P.S. 197 may receive additional “categorical” funding based on student characteristics and needs. For example, federal Title I funding is awarded to schools based on the proportion of low-income students they enroll. P.S. 197 is currently a Title I school. Assuming that the school continues to meet Title I criteria, the school’s Title I funding award will adjust as the size of the school population changes.

While schools do receive supplemental support for special education students through FSF, that only represents part of the funding provided to support those students. Schools are budgeted to meet the needs of their special education students as defined by their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). After the truncation is completed, funding will continue to be provided to meet the needs of all special education students in accordance with their IEPs.

Please note that increased or reduced per capita funds allocated to the school as a result of this proposal do not represent net/incremental system costs. All dollar amounts are based on FY10 allocations and are subject to annual variation based on adjustments to the DOE's overall operating budget.

C. Administration

No change in school supervisory or administrator positions is expected as a result of the grade truncation at P.S. 197.

D. Transportation

Transportation will be provided according to Chancellor's regulation A-801:
<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/21A1B11A-886B-4F74-9546-E875EE82A14C/40303/A801.pdf>.
 There will be no change to existing transportation practices at P.S. 197 due to this proposal.

E. Other Support Services

Other support services will continue to be provided consistent with citywide policy.

VII. Building Information

Type of Building	Elementary School
Year Built	1963
Overall BCAS rating	2.67
Target Utilization	90%
Target Capacity	569
FY 2009 Maintenance Costs	Labor: \$28,352 Materials: \$16,132 Maintenance and Repair Contracts: \$26,686 Custodial Operations Costs—Materials: \$5,385 Custodial Operations Costs—Custodial Allocation: \$237,653
FY 2009 Energy Costs	Electric: \$60,248 Gas: \$3,075 Oil: \$42,305
Projects completed during the current or prior school year	Reso A desktop computers
Projects proposed in the capital plan	No projects identified
Accessibility of the building	Building is not functionally programmatic accessible
Building attributes	Art room, Auditorium, Cafeteria, Computer room, Gymnasium & Library