Amended Notice
May 13, 2011

Dennis M. Walcott
Chancellor

The Proposed Co-location of Democracy Prep 3 Charter School with Existing School P.S. 154 (05M154) Harriet Tubman in Building M154 in 2012-2013

I. Description of the subject and purpose of the proposed item under consideration.

On February 18, 2011, the New York City Department of Education ("DOE") issued an Educational Impact Statement ("EIS") describing a proposal to open a new public charter middle school, Democracy Prep 3 Charter School ("Democracy Prep 3"), and site it in Building M154, located at 250 West 127 Street, New York, NY 10027 in Community School District 5. Democracy Prep 3 would be co-located in M154 with P.S. 154 Harriet Tubman ("P.S. 154"), an existing DOE zoned elementary school that serves grades kindergarten through five, and also offers a pre-kindergarten program. 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.

On March 17, 2011, the DOE published an amended EIS to correct a typographical error contained in the original EIS. On May 10, 2011, the DOE published a revised EIS and revised Building Utilization Plan ("BUP"), which would push back the start date of the co-location by one school year. The revised proposal is described in more detail in Section II below.

This amended notice provides an updated date and location for where the Panel for Educational Policy ("PEP") will meet to vote on this proposal.

P.S. 154 is a zoned district elementary school that serves 360 students in kindergarten through fifth grade, and also offers a pre-kindergarten program that enrolls 36 students.

The New York State Education Department has authorized the creation of Democracy Prep 3, a new public charter school that would open with sixth grade, and then expand one grade per year until it serves sixth through eighth grades. Democracy Prep 3 would admit students at all grade levels through a lottery, and give preference to students residing in District 5. If this proposal were approved, Democracy Prep 3 would serve 100-110 students in sixth grade in 2012-2013. In 2013-2014, Democracy Prep 3 would serve 200-220 students in sixth and seventh grades. At full scale, in 2014-2015, Democracy Prep 3 would serve 300-330 students in sixth through eighth grades in M154.

The opening of Democracy Prep 3 would create 300-330 high-quality middle school seats in

District 5. Democracy Prep 3 would be operated by Democracy Prep Public Schools, a charter management organization that currently operates two public charter schools in District 5, Democracy Prep Charter School (84M350, "Democracy Prep") and Democracy Prep Harlem (84M481, "Democracy Prep Harlem"), which opened in 2010-2011. In 2009-2010, Democracy Prep was the highest rated middle school in the City on the Progress Report.

The M154 building has the capacity to serve 790 students. In 2010, the building only served 396 students, yielding a utilization rate of 50%. Once Democracy Prep 3 has completed its expansion to eighth grade in building M154, there would be approximately 670-760 students served in the building by both P.S. 154 and Democracy Prep 3, yielding a building utilization rate of 85-96%.

II. Identification of all revisions, including substantial revisions to the item.

On May 10, 2011, the DOE published a revised EIS and revised BUP, which made the following changes:

- As discussed in more detail in the attached EIS, the proposal to open and site Democracy Prep 3 in building M154 has been postponed by one year, to the 2012-2013 school year instead of the 2011-2012 school year; and
- The proposed shared space schedule on page 11 has been adjusted and the DOE has clarified the rationale for the amount of time that each co-located school is allocated in the shared spaces under this proposal.

No other substantive changes have been made to the proposal. Since the initial posting of this proposal, Democracy Prep Public Schools – the charter management organization that manages Democracy Prep schools – has taken on a school turnaround project – Harlem Prep Charter School - in Community District 4. Postponing the opening of Democracy Prep 3 until 2012-2013 will allow Democracy Prep to focus more on the management of Harlem Prep beginning next year. It will also provide additional planning time for P.S. 154 and Democracy Prep 3 to collaborate in developing plans for this proposed co-location.

III. Summary of all public comments received to date.

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at P.S. 154 Harriet Tubman on March 22, 2011. At the hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 218 members of the public attended the hearing and 38 people spoke. Present at the meeting were: Community District 5 Superintendent Gale Reeves; P.S. 154 Harriet Tubman Principal Elizabeth Jarrett and School Leadership Team ("SLT") representatives Almeish Hobson, Leslie McDonald, Annie Jones, Corina Johnson, Catrice Davis, and Margaret Diakite (Chair); Democracy Prep Campus Director Bill Cook; Community Education Council (CEC) 5 representative Ramik Williams; and Safiyah Raheem, the Community Liaison for New York City Councilmember Inez E. Dickens.

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

1. CEC 5 representative Ramik Williams stated his disappointment in the way Charter Schools operate in Harlem, particularly in that there is a perceived lack of information regarding the application process. He also challenged the DOE to put forth more efforts and allocate more resources towards public schools and asked community members to attend the CEC meetings.
2. P.S. 154 SLT representative Leslie McDonald expressed her opposition to the proposal, stating that it does not make sense to put pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students in the same building as the junior high school students. She asserted that younger kids will mimic the older ones. In addition, she asserted that the building capacity stated by the EIS is incorrect.
3. P.S. 154 SLT representative Margaret Diakite expressed her opposition to the proposal. She asserted that the building was designed to serve elementary school and that co-locating a junior high school would change the dynamic of the school. She also noted that the DOE's enrollment projection only allots 34 more slots for P.S. 154 and that does not allow for growth. She also suggested that Democracy Prep find its own building to site the school.
4. Democracy Prep Campus Director Bill Cook thanked P.S. 154 for allowing Democracy Prep families to come to the school for the hearing. He also reminded everyone that the topic for discussion is sharing of a public space. He added that Democracy Prep has a strong record of success in the schools they're currently co-located with (P.S. 92 and P.S. 197) and noted that the schools should work together to ensure excellent education for all students in the building.
5. Safiyah Raheem, representing Council Member Inez E. Dickens, read a statement in opposition to the proposal which said that:
    a. Though the Council Member supports the work of Democracy Prep and believes in the vision, she thinks the co-location would undermine P.S. 154's ability to obtain resources.
    b. She is against the prevalence of school co-locations in Harlem, which cause large class sizes and safety issues.
    c. Democracy Prep should revisit their original concept of moving to a private building or consider a closed Catholic school as a possible location.
    d. DOE should listen to the concerns of all families and abandon the proposal.
6. Multiple commenters spoke about their positive experience at Democracy Prep and praised the school for incorporating parents' feedback and suggestions and helping students succeed. They noted that everyone deserves the same opportunity for high-quality education and asked the parents to be supportive of the proposal.
7. A commenter asserted that the charter schools are intruders that take over public school spaces. He also criticized charter schools for using their resources to advertise their school and suggested that they use their budget to get their own building.
8. A commenter stated that Democracy Prep will not embrace every student in the building since their application process is a lottery system, which selects students, compared to P.S. 154, which is a zoned school that has to take all students in the zone.
9. A commenter suggested that Democracy Prep look at Harlem Day Charter School's current location as a potential site.

10. A commenter expressed her concern that the co-location will create divisions in the building.
11. Multiple commenters asserted that co-locating pre-kindergarten with junior high school students does make sense.
12. A commenter pointed out that charter schools are also public schools and so they deserve public building space as well.
13. Multiple commenters asserted that the co-location will cripple the operational functions at P.S. 154.
14. A commenter pointed out an empty lot on 125th street, which he suggested be used by Democracy Prep to build its own school.
15. A commenter asserted that charter schools, which the commenter characterized as private entities, do not have to go to the Department of Education to get clearance for renovations and alterations.
16. A commenter asserted that when co-locations occur, charter schools always get better resources.
17. A commenter expressed her concern that charter school co-location will prevent special education children from receiving what they need, including mandatory gym time.
18. Ernest Bryant, PA President from Choir Academy of Harlem stated that co-location creates division among communities and should not be supported. He pointed out that there are more charter schools in Harlem than in any other place
19. A commenter noted that they had the same situation two years ago and the community rejected the proposal then and noted that the DOE should stop trying to co-locate schools in Building M154.
20. A commenter asserted that people should be blaming the DOE not Democracy Prep.
21. Multiple commenters expressed concern that children with IEPs will not get the services they need with the co-location proposal.
22. A representative from the District Family Advocate asked the parents to respect each other as they speak.
23. President's Council representative expressed his concern regarding safety issues and asked if other sites, if at all, were considered before the proposed co-location.
24. A staff member at P.S. 154 noted that P.S. 154 is a great school and has improved over the years. She also pointed out that the Democracy Prep came to the hearing to take over the space and not to share.

The DOE received a comment at the Joint Public Hearing that did not directly relate to the proposal and therefore will not be addressed.

25. Several commenters discussed other charter school co-location proposals, including P.S. 123/ Harlem Success Charter 5, and Choir Academy / Harlem Children's Zone.
26. A commenter noted that the proposal is part of a larger plan to kick residents out of the neighborhood.
27. A commenter expressed her opposition against the Mayor who has taken over the education system, which she claimed he lacks knowledge about.

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

28. A commenter inquired why the PEP meeting was being held in Queens for June when the proposal is in Manhattan. She also asked if she could make comments at the PEP.

IV. Information regarding where the full text of the proposed item may be obtained.

The revised Educational Impact Statement ("EIS") and revised Building Utilization Plan ("BUP") can be found on the Department of Education's Web site:
http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2010-2011/June2011Proposals

Copies of the revised EIS and revised BUP are also available in the main office of P.S. 154 Harriet Tubman.

V. Submission of public comment.

Written comments can be sent to D05Proposals@schools.nyc.gov.
Oral comments can be left at 212-374-3466.

VI. The name, office, address, email and telephone number of the city district representative, knowledgeable on the item under consideration, from whom information may be obtained concerning the item.

Name: Yoo Jin Cheong
Office: Division of Portfolio Planning
Address: 52 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007
Email: D05Proposals@schools.nyc.gov
Phone: 212-374-3466

VII. Date, time and place of joint public hearing for this proposal.

A joint public hearing regarding the original proposal was held at P.S. 154 Harriet Tubman on March 22, 2011. A full transcript of this hearing can be found here:
http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/changes/manhattan/M154

An additional joint public hearing will be held to gather further public comment on the revised proposal:

May 26, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.
P.S. 154 Harriet Tubman
250 West 127 Street,
New York, NY 10027

Questions about the proposal should be directed as indicated in section VI above.
Speaker sign-up will begin 30 minutes before the hearing and will close 15 minutes after the start. Interpretation services will be provided in Spanish. To request interpretation services in another language, please contact Ms. Cheong at the e-mail address or telephone number above.

VI. Date, time and place of the Panel for Educational Policy meeting at which the Panel will vote on the proposed item.

June 27, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.
High School of Fashion Industries
225 West 24th Street,
New York, NY 10011