



Public Comment Analysis

Date: October 22, 2013

Topic: The Proposed Re-Siting and Grade Expansion of M.S. 260 Clinton School for Writers and Artists (02M260) from a 6-8 to a 6-12 School in Building M868 Beginning in the 2015-2016 School Year

Date of Panel Vote: October 30, 2013

Summary of Proposal

Clinton School for Writers and Artists (02M260, “Clinton”) is an existing district middle school currently located in building M933 (“M933”) at 425 West 33rd Street, Manhattan, New York 10001, in Community School District 2 (“District 2”). Clinton currently enrolls students in sixth through eighth grade into its screened middle school program. Clinton is the only organization in M933.

The School Construction Authority (“SCA”) is presently constructing building M868, (“M868”) located at 10 East 15th Street, New York, NY 10003, with an expected occupancy date of September 2015. M868 has been designed to serve students in middle school and high school grades. The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) temporarily sited Clinton in M933 in anticipation of its move to M868 and committed to an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) that would re-site Clinton to M868 following construction of the building. This EIS fulfills that commitment. A “re-siting” means that students will attend classes in a different building than the one in which they attended classes the previous year. If this proposal is approved, Clinton will be re-sited to M868 and will grow to utilize both the middle school and high school seats in M868 beginning in 2015-2016.

This is a proposal to implement a “grade expansion” and a re-siting whereby Clinton will be re-sited from M933 to M868 prior to the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year. At M868, Clinton will gradually grow to serve students in sixth through twelfth grade beginning in the 2015-2016 school year. If this proposal is approved by the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”), Clinton will enroll its first ninth grade cohort in September 2015 during the school’s first year at M868 into its high school screened program.

The DOE also strives to ensure that all students in New York City have access to high-quality schools at every stage of their education. The DOE believes that the grade expansion of Clinton will increase access to high-quality high school seats in Manhattan. Such an expansion will build upon the growing success of Clinton, which has demonstrated a strong record of student performance in District 2. For example, the percent of students at Clinton scoring at Levels 3 and 4 on State English Language Arts (“ELA”) tests in 2011-2012 was in the 93rd percentile Citywide.

The proposal to expand Clinton was initiated by the school community. In March 2013, Clinton’s leadership team submitted a letter of intent to apply for a grade expansion, and in May 2013 a team composed of teachers and administrators submitted a formal application to the DOE. That application was supported by parents, the broader school community, the Community Educational Council of District 2, and multiple elected officials. This suggests a high level of satisfaction within the school, its parent body and the broader community, and the expectation that an expanded Clinton will meet the needs of children. In June 2013, DOE officials visited Clinton and conducted interviews with the applicant team, concluding that the school is well positioned to begin a successful grade expansion.

The DOE strives to increase quality options for students. As part of the provisional approval process, the DOE evaluates each school’s instructional capacity to serve the expanded school level by reviewing school expansion applications, conducting site visits, and facilitating panel interviews. Schools interested in expanding must have received at least a "C" on their most recent Progress Report to be eligible to apply to the grade reconfiguration process. Schools provisionally approved for expansion must receive at least a "C" in the Progress Report(s) released prior to their expansion in order to remain eligible. In the event that Clinton does not receive a C or better on the Progress Report(s) prior to its expansion, this proposed expansion will not be implemented. If this proposal is approved, the re-siting will occur even if the proposed expansion is not implemented. If the expansion is not implemented, the DOE may propose an alternate use of space in M868 that involves a significant change in school utilization, which would be the subject of a future EIS in accordance with Chancellor’s Regulation A-190. For the purposes of this proposal, it is assumed that Clinton will be able to expand its grade levels from 6-8 to 6-12. This proposed re-siting will provide Clinton with facilities that are fully functionally accessible.

If this proposal is approved, Clinton will move to M868 and begin serving students in ninth grade in the 2015-2016 school year. Clinton will expand gradually, adding one grade level each year over a four-year period. The school will reach its full grade span of grades six through twelve in the 2018-2019 school year.

Secondary schools (offering grades six through twelve) typically serve three sections of students per grade. In the 2015-2016 school year, the first year of this proposal, Clinton will serve approximately 315-355 students in total, with three sections per grade in grades six through nine. At full scale, Clinton is expected to serve 555-625 students in total, with three sections per grade in grades six through twelve.

Students who reside in District 2 currently have the opportunity to select from a variety of

middle schools and secondary schools within District 2 through the middle school application process. Students may also choose to apply to a range of middle schools with borough-wide or Citywide admissions priority. In addition, they may apply to charter schools in District 2 and throughout Manhattan through the charter lottery application process. Under this proposal, middle school students in District 2 will retain all of those options. If this proposal is approved, students will apply for enrollment in the high school grades of Clinton through the Citywide High School Admissions Process.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearings

A joint public hearing regarding the original proposal was held at building M933 on October 22, 2013. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the original proposal. Approximately 81 members of the public attended the hearing, and 5 people spoke. Present at the meeting were District 2 Superintendent Mariano Guzman; District 2 Community Education Council (“CEC 2”) Members Shino Tanikawa, John Keller, and Tamara Rowe; Jonathan Levin, principal of Clinton and member of the Clinton School Leadership Team (“SLT”); Drew Patterson and Jennifer Peng from the DOE’s Office of Portfolio Management.

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

1. Jonathan Levin, principal of Clinton, asserted the following:
 - a. The best schools are places of hope – students come excited and teachers come full of idealism.
 - b. The teachers work endlessly and the parents place incredible trust in us.
 - c. It was a troubled time in life of school when I arrived – morale was low. It wasn’t bad kids or bad teachers – just a place where I couldn’t see the hope. It was clear the passion of the Clinton community was intense. Parents wanted more communication, wanted to feel like they belonged, and teachers spoke with pride about their practice. We decided we would be strong in all subjects and become a place that would capitalize on all that our families could offer.
 - d. This is a banner time for Clinton – we’re full of artists, writers, mathematicians, historians, etc.
 - e. Our hope is for a 6-12 that can build on the rich academic successes of Clinton.
 - f. We have a clear point of view on teaching and learning and on fostering social and academic skills.
 - g. What schools will we look to? We’ll borrow best practices, but Clinton is a unique place and we’re not much for imitation.
 - h. Together we’re going to build a world class school that values true college and career preparation.
2. Shino Tanikawa, president of CEC 2, asserted the following:
 - a. As per CEC 2’s resolution from May 22, 2013, CEC 2 is in support of Clinton’s proposed expansion.
 - b. She is ecstatic to be here tonight and remembers when this journey began with Clinton’s move out of PS 11’s building. This is a large victory of securing a new building and then finding out there would be a high school there as well.

- c. This is a wonderful joint public hearing where the CEC is in support of the proposal.
 - d. Thank you for persevering and for all of your hard work to make this happen.
3. John Keller, member of CEC 2, asserted the following:
 - a. One of the things that drew him in was seeing the interest of families and communities in their schools.
 - b. He knows there's a wonderful PTA and SLT here at Clinton. He is committed to working with Clinton.
 4. Tamara Rowe, member of CEC 2, asserted the following:
 - a. All three of her daughters attended Clinton.
 - b. This proposed expansion is exciting.
 - c. Her mind is buzzing with the possibility and challenges of a 6-12.
 - d. It is amazing to see who's here today and how much the school has thrived.
 5. A member of the Clinton SLT asserted the following:
 - a. She has seen Clinton from many different perspectives. She is the parent of an 8th grader who will graduate in 2014, so her family members do not stand to benefit directly, but they are still excited to support such a great school.
 - b. Clinton has the support of a very invested parent body.
 - c. Principal Levin is, in her opinion, a good colleague and a good manager. He is respected by everyone. She values his sense of humor and the clear eye he has on academics in this community of writers and artists.
 - d. She is of the opinion that communication has really improved under Principal Levin's tenure.
 - e. Clinton has grown its arts partnerships significantly and they are proud.
 - f. We know this is a unique opportunity and we're excited about it.
 - g. We are ready to grow.
 - h. She is of the opinion that the City has been needing a 6-12 for artists and writers that is not audition-based.
 - i. Clinton is, to her, a place where students can explore before they focus on a single art.
 - j. All students are challenged to bring their art to bear on academics and vice versa.
 - k. She is the mother of a student with an Individualized Education Plan and she is of the opinion that Clinton works well with different community constituencies. Her son is fully a member of this community
 - l. This is exactly the kind of school we hope to see, and she is proud to be a parent in a public school and proud to be at Clinton.
 6. A commenter who is a student at Clinton asserted the following:
 - a. He is the deputy chair of the student council and is speaking on behalf of all Clinton students.
 - b. They love this school and think it deserves to be a high school.
 - c. He believes that Clinton is a safe and wonderful environment.
 - d. Instead of just focusing on one art, such as acting, students are able to focus on all arts.

- e. He believes that it is rare to be a small school and an arts school that is not audition-based.
 - f. Teachers are always willing to help students and because school is so small they can help students on a personal level.
 - g. The high school students will be great role models for the middle school students.
7. A representative from Assemblymember Richard Gottfried asserted the following:
- a. The process by which this expansion came to be represents the best of what can happen when everyone comes to gether to work to find a solution to a problem.
 - b. The problem was overcrowding at PS 11's current building.
 - c. Everyone worked hard to find an acceptable location for the middle school.
 - d. The parents drove the re-location and the parents are the ones drove this expansion.
 - e. He hopes this expansion is approved.
8. Multiple commenters who are parents of Clinton students or alumni asserted the following:
- a. To date there has been no small, arts-oriented high school with strong academics.
 - b. Clinton's proposed expansion will offer the city a wonderful new high school option.
9. A member of Clinton's SLT asserted the following:
- a. Clinton has a strong, positive community.
 - b. Arts are the entry for so many students.
 - c. Students who have had a huge problem dealing with education have been able to thrive through the arts.
 - d. He was at a school in NJ and he has seen how this kind of expansion can work and help to make the community even stronger.
 - e. He has seen the power of the Clinton community to support all students.

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

No comments were received via the DOE's feedback email address and phone line.

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

Comments 1a-h, 2a-d, 3a-b, 4a-d, 5a-l, 6a-g, 7a-e, 8a-b, and 9a-e are all in favor of the proposal and do not require a response.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to this proposal.