

Public Comment Analysis

Date: October 29, 2013

Topic: The Proposed Opening and Co-location of New District High School (27Q314) with Existing Schools J.H.S. 226 Virgil I. Grissom (27Q226), J.H.S. 297 Hawtree Creek Middle School (27Q297), and P.S. Q233 (75Q233@Q226), a District 75 School in Building Q226 Beginning in the 2014-2015 School Year

Date of Panel Vote: October 30, 2013

Summary of Proposal

On September 12, 2013, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) issued an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) describing a proposal to co-locate a new district high school, 27Q314, that will serve students in grades nine through twelve, in building Q226 (“Q226”), located at 121-10 Rockaway Boulevard, Queens, NY 11420 in Community School District 27 (“District 27”), beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. 27Q314 will be co-located in Q226 with J.H.S. 226 Virgil I. Grissom (27Q226, “J.H.S. 226”), an existing middle school serving students in grades six through eight, J.H.S. 297 Hawtree Creek Middle School (27Q297, “J.H.S. 297”), a new middle school that opened in September 2013 and will serve students in grades six through eight when it reaches full scale in 2015-2016, and P.S. Q233@Q226 (75Q233@Q226, “P233@Q226”), one site of an existing multi-site District 75 (“D75”) school serving students in grades six through eight.

On March 20, 2013, the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”) approved the proposal to co-locate J.H.S. 297 in Q226 beginning in the 2013-2014 school year. J.H.S. 297 currently serves sixth grade and will add one grade per year until the school has reached full scale and serves students in sixth through eighth grade in 2015-2016. J.H.S. 297 will grow to serve approximately 315-345 students in sixth through eighth grade in the 2015-2016 school year. J.H.S. 297 currently admits students through the District 27 Middle School Choice Process, using a limited unscreened admissions method, offering priority to students living in the Q226 zone. The Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) describing the approved proposal to open and co-locate J.H.S. 297 in Q226 is available at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2012-2013/Mar202013Proposals.htm>. If this proposal is approved, beginning in 2014-2015, J.H.S. 297 will become a zoned middle school serving students residing in the Q226 zone.

J.H.S. 226 is a zoned middle school projected to serve 1,371 students in sixth through eighth grades in Q226 during the 2013-2014 school year.

P233@Q226 is an existing D75 program that serves students with an Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) classification of multiple disabilities and autism. P233@Q226 is projected to serve approximately 45 students in grades six through eight in the 2013-2014 school year.

Currently, the DOE is planning to reduce the enrollment at J.H.S. 226 over a period of three years beginning in September 2014. Beginning in September 2014, J.H.S. 226 will enroll 295-305 sixth grade students, as opposed to the 415-425 sixth grade students it has enrolled in recent years. This reduction of J.H.S. 226’s enrollment will enable 27Q314 to open in building Q226 and grow to scale. The DOE does not anticipate reducing J.H.S. 226’s enrollment if this proposal to co-locate 27Q314 is not approved.

The proposed opening and co-location of 27Q314 in building Q226 is part of the DOE’s central goal to create new school options that will better serve future students and the community at large and to provide a new high school option in the Q226 building. 27Q314 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 Queens.

According to the 2011-2012 Enrollment Capacity Utilization Report (“Blue Book”), Q226 has a target capacity of 2,034 students. In 2013-2014, the building serves approximately 1,524 students, yielding a building utilization rate of 75%. This means that the building is “underutilized” and has space to accommodate additional students.

If this co-location proposal is approved, 27Q314 will gradually phase into Q226 while J.H.S. 226 simultaneously scales back its enrollment. 27Q314 will serve students in ninth grade beginning in the 2014-2015 school year and will add one grade level every year until reaching its full grade span of ninth through twelfth grades in the 2017-2018 school year, when it will serve approximately 300-340 students. In 2017-2018, once J.H.S. 226 has completed its enrollment reduction and 27Q314 and J.H.S. 297 have reached full scale, it is projected that there will be approximately 1,600-1,706 students served in Q226, yielding an estimated building utilization rate of approximately 79%-84%.

Background on the DOE’s Decision-Making Process

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. J.H.S. 297 is currently open to students and residents of District 27 through a limited unscreened admissions method, offering priority to students living in the Q226 zone. If this proposal is approved, the admissions process at J.H.S. 297 will change in September 2014 to be a zoned middle school serving students residing in the Q226 zone. The change in the admissions process at J.H.S. 297 will allow for continued accommodation of Q226 zoned demand and provide an additional option to students and families in the Q226.

As mentioned above, beginning in September 2014, J.H.S. 226 will enroll 295-305 sixth grade students, as opposed to the 415-425 sixth grade students it has enrolled in recent years.

The enrollment reduction of J.H.S. 226 is driven by J.H.S. 226’s performance and demand. J.H.S. 226 received an overall C grade on its Progress Report in 2011-2012 for the third consecutive year. Additionally, in 2011-2012, the school received D grades in both Student Progress and School Environment, and a C grade in Student Performance.

At this time, the DOE believes that reducing the enrollment of J.H.S. 226 beginning in September 2014 and providing a new option for high school students in the Q226 building will benefit current and future students at building Q226 and in Queens. The enrollment reduction is intended to provide an opportunity for J.H.S. 226 to concentrate on a smaller cohort of students, and allow for a new high school option to develop in building Q226.

The DOE believes that the District 27 community and Queens as a whole will benefit from having an additional option in the Q226 building.

The details of this proposal have been released in an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”), which can be accessed here: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2013-2014/Oct30SchoolProposals>.

Copies of the EIS are also available in the main offices of J.H.S. 226, J.H.S. 297, and P233@Q226.

Summary of Comments Received

A joint public hearing regarding the proposal was held at Q226 on October 23, 2013. At this hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 75 members of the public attended the hearing, and 4 people signed up to speak. Present at the meeting were District 27 Superintendent Michele Lloyd-Bey; DOE Representative Jenny Sobelman; District 28 Community Education Council (“CEC 27”) representative and representative from the office of State Senator James Sander Michael Duvalle; J.H.S. 226 School Leadership Team (“SLT”) representative Principal Rushell White; J.H.S. 297 SLT representative Principal Maureen Hussey; P233@Q226 SLT representative Principal Debbie Edmonds; Olga Defilippis from the District 25 office; Benjamin Goodman from the Office of Public Affairs; and Dean Guzman from the Division of Portfolio Planning.

The following comments and remarks were made at the joint public hearing on October 23, 2013 on the proposal:

- 1) CEC 27 representative and representative from the office of State Senator James Sander, Michael Duvalle, expressed opposition to the proposal and made the following statements:
 - a) He strongly opposes the co-location of 27Q314 in building Q226.
 - b) He believes the new high school's students will bring safety concerns to the building.
 - c) He believes there will be problems with the shared spaces such as the gym, cafeteria, and library if the new high school is co-located.
 - d) He states that the DOE has said there was not enough space in the building to increase the number of classrooms and decrease class size, and that the DOE is now going back on that statement.
 - e) He believes the DOE's space allocation for the building is not correct.
- 2) Multiple commenters expressed their opposition to another school in the building.
- 3) Two commenters stated that J.H.S. 226 needs more space to grow.
- 4) One commenter stated that the building is overcrowded.
- 5) One commenter expressed concern on how the co-located schools will share common spaces such as the auditorium, cafeteria, library, and bathrooms.
- 6) One commenter believed the building capacity calculations are incorrect.
- 7) One commenter questioned if the specialty rooms were considered in this proposal.
- 8) One commenter questioned if the Temporary Classroom Units ("TCU") were considered in this proposal.
- 9) One commenter recommended that the new school should open in a new building.
- 10) One commenter expressed concern over the safety of both middle and high school students as a result of this co-location.
- 11) One commenter expressed that additional funds should be spent on school resources and not added security.
- 12) One commenter expressed that there is not enough room in the building.
- 13) One commenter expressed opposition to the current administration's educational plans.
- 14) One commenter believed the DOE is co-locating new schools to acquire additional funding and privatize education.
- 15) One commenter expressed her support for the current principal at J.H.S. 226.
- 16) One commenter expressed opposition to having a high school co-located with two middle schools.
- 17) One commenter questioned why a school has to close for another school to open in the building.
- 18) One commenter suggested that the DOE should reduce class sizes at J.H.S. 226 instead of co-locating another school.

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

There were two written comments and one voicemail submitted to the DOE regarding this proposal.

- 19) Queens High School Presidents' Council submitted a letter requesting that the PEP vote against co-locations in Queens:
 - a) The letter asserted that co-locations are being rushed and do not adequately engage communities.
 - b) The letter expressed support for construction of new schools with additional seats.
 - c) The letter expressed concern that the cost of additional administrative staff for a new school takes funding and classrooms away from students.
 - d) The letter expresses concern that small schools have a limited number of academic and extra-curricular offerings.
 - e) The letter encourages the DOE to assess the impact of co-locations on students.
- 20) Two commenters expressed the need for an additional high school option in the community.

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

Comment 20 is in support of the proposal and thus does not require a response.

Comment 14 concerns privatizing education.

The DOE is proposing to open and co-locate a new, district high school in building Q226; at this time, the DOE does not have any other plans for the use of building Q226.

Comment 13 and 19(a) concern the current administration's education plan.

This proposal represents a continuation of DOE's strategy to increase access to high quality schools in communities that need better options for the 2014-2015 school year.

This timeline is not new. The PEP already approved 23 proposals for September 2014 implementation during the May and June PEP meetings.

The development of 2014-2015 proposals reflects the DOE's extensive strategic planning to advance our proven strategy of bringing high quality district and charter schools online, as well as the DOE's desire to allow the maximum allotment of time for communities and educators to work towards their successful implementation.

Forward planning allots more time for:

- School/leaders to meet each other; and
- The Office of Space Planning to plan school placement and implement any needed facilities upgrades; and
- Charters to submit proposals for facilities matching; and
- Division of Facilities to review and conduct work on approved proposals.

Comment 15 supports the current principal at J.H.S. 226.

The DOE acknowledges these comments and recognizes the collaborative role that principals partake in developing schools. In addition, schools throughout the city are not just educational institutions, but rich and tight-knit communities. The DOE expects that all schools will be fully engaged with the community and will continue to play a vital role as an anchor for the community.

Comments 1(e), 3, and 12 concern the overall space in building Q226. Comment 6 concerns the calculations of building capacity. Comment 4 expresses that building Q226 is overcrowded.

As described in more detail in the Blue Book, which is available at http://www.nycsca.org/Community/CapitalPlanManagementReportsData/Enrollment/2011-2012_Classic.pdf, a building's target utilization rate is calculated by dividing the aggregated enrollment of all school organizations in the building by the aggregated "target capacities" of those organizations. Each school organization's "target capacity" is calculated based upon the scheduled use of individual rooms as reported by principals during an annual facilities survey, the DOE's standards for maximum classroom capacities (which are lower than the United Federation of Teachers ("UFT") contractual class sizes and differ depending on grade level), and the efficiency with which classrooms are programmed (i.e., the frequency with which classes are scheduled in a given classroom).

The most recent year for which target capacity has been calculated for buildings is 2011-2012. As described earlier in the EIS, the DOE's utilization rates for the 2013-2014 school year and beyond are based on the 2011-2012 target capacity, which assumes that the components underlying that target capacity (scheduled use of classrooms, maximum classroom capacity, etc.) remain constant. Thus, projected utilization rates for 2013-2014 and beyond provide only an approximation of a building's usage because each of the factors underlying target capacity may be adjusted by principals from year to year to better accommodate students' needs. For example, changing the use of a room from an administrative room to a homeroom at the high school level will increase a building's overall target capacity because for high schools administrative rooms are not assigned a capacity. Holding enrollment constant,

this change would result in a lower utilization rate. Similarly, if a room previously used as a kindergarten classroom is subsequently used as a fifth grade classroom, the building's target capacity would increase because we expect that a fifth grade class will have more students than a kindergarten class. This is reflected in the fact that the DOE's goal for maximum classroom capacity is higher for fifth grade classrooms than for kindergarten classrooms. In this example, as well, assuming enrollment is constant, the utilization rate would decrease.

The building capacity assigned to Q226 in the 2011-2012 Blue Book is based on middle school use of the space. If this proposal is approved, J.H.S. 226, J.H.S. 297, P233@Q226, and 27Q314 will receive their baseline allocation pursuant to the Citywide Instructional Footprint.

As stated in the EIS, Q226 has been identified as an under-utilized building and the building has capacity to accommodate J.H.S. 226, J.H.S. 297, P233@Q226, and 27Q314. Q226 has the capacity to serve 2,034 students. In the 2013-2014 school year, the building is serving approximately 1,524 students, yielding a utilization rate of 75%. If this proposal is approved, there will be approximately 1,600 – 1,706 total students served in Q226 in 2017-2018. In 2017-2018, when 27Q314 will complete its expansion and reach full scale, the projected utilization for Q226 as a result of the co-location will be approximately 79% - 84%. Therefore, the building has adequate capacity to accommodate the co-location of J.H.S. 226, J.H.S. 297, P233@Q226, and 27Q314. Projected enrollment figures and anticipated utilization rates for Q226 are based on target capacity data from the 2011-2012 Blue Book and enrollment data from the 2013-2014 budget register projections. This methodology is consistent with the manner in which the DOE conducts planning and calculates space allocations and funding for all schools.

Further, if this proposal is approved, there will be sufficient space to accommodate J.H.S. 226, J.H.S. 297, P233@Q226, and 27Q314 pursuant to the Citywide Instructional Footprint (the "Footprint"), throughout the period in which 27Q314 phases in. Please visit the DOE's Web site to access the Footprint, which guides space allocation and use in City schools: http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/78D715EA-EC50-4AD1-82D1-1CAC544F5D30/0/DOEFOOTPRINTSConsolidatedVersion2011_FINAL.pdf.

The Footprint sets forth the baseline number of rooms that should be allocated to a school based on the grade levels served by the school and number of classes per grade. For existing schools, the Footprint is applied to the current number of classes and class size a school has programmed and is confirmed by a walk-through of the building by the Borough Director of Space Planning and the school's principal. Class size is primarily determined by how principals choose to program students at their school within their budget.

For grades six through twelve, the Footprint assumes that students move from class to class and that classrooms should be programmed at maximum efficiency. The Footprint does not require that every teacher have his or her own designated classroom. Principals are asked to program their schools efficiently so that classrooms can be used for multiple purposes throughout the course of the school day. The Footprint allocates the number of baseline classrooms for student support services, resource rooms, and administrative space based on the grades a school serves and its enrollment at scale. Any space remaining beyond the baseline shall be allocated equitably among the co-located schools. In determining an equitable allocation, the DOE may consider factors such as the relative enrollments of the co-located schools, the instructional and programmatic needs of the co-located schools, and the physical location of the excess space within the building.

The Q226 building currently has an excess of 18 total full-size classrooms over J.H.S. 226, J.H.S. 297, P233@Q226's allocations of full-size instructional rooms per the Footprint. If this proposal is approved, the Q226 building would still have 21 full-size excess classrooms in 2014-2015, 19 full-size excess classrooms in 2015-2016, 22 full-size excess classrooms in 2016-2017, and 19 full-size excess classrooms in 2017-2018, when 27Q314 will complete its expansion and reach full scale.

Comment 1(d) and 18 relate to class sizes at J.H.S. 226.

Class size is primarily determined by how principals choose to program students at their school within their budget. Thus, no particular proposal, in and of itself, necessarily impacts class size. The Citywide Instructional Footprint relies upon the current programming at a school (number of sections) to determine the baseline footprint allocation.

Decisions to co-locate schools are not based solely on the utilization figures in the Blue Book. The DOE also considers the total number of classrooms in the building and the number of sections currently programmed at all schools in the building or projected to be programmed to determine the availability of excess space and the baseline footprint for each school.

The DOE acknowledges that there are some members of the schools' communities that are opposed to the proposal, and/or prioritize smaller class sizes. However, given the current utilization in Q226 and the available classroom space, we believe that co-locating a new school will best serve the families in this community.

Comments 1(a), 2, and 19(e) express general opposition to co-locations. Comment 9 and 20(b) express that the new school should open in a new building.

Co-location is the everyday experience of more than half the schools in New York City. Of all district schools, approximately two-thirds are co-located with another school, most with another district school. Less than one quarter of buildings have a charter school in them.

Co-locations allow us to use our limited facilities efficiently while simultaneously creating additional educational options for New York City families. This is necessary because we have scarce resources and a demand for more options.

Comments 1(b) and 10 relate to safety in Q226 if this proposal is approved.

Pursuant to Chancellor's Regulation A-414, every school/campus is mandated to form a School Safety Committee, which is responsible for developing a comprehensive School Safety Plan that defines the normal operations of the site and what procedures are in place in the event of an emergency. The School Safety Plan is updated annually by the Committee to meet changing security needs, changes in organization and building conditions and any other factors; these updates could also be made at any other time when it is necessary to address security concerns. The Committee will also address safety matters on an ongoing basis and make appropriate recommendations to the Principal(s) when it identifies the need for additional security measures.

The Office of Safety and Youth Development ("OSYD") will regularly monitor the campus schools' DOE incident data and the NYPD building crime data for spiking trends. When there is evidence of spikes in incidents and crime, OSYD will schedule a review of the data with representatives from all the co-located schools and follow up with a safety walk or a full comprehensive safety assessment to identify areas of concern and re-establish safety and security systems for the campus, as appropriate. The DOE makes available the following supports to schools relating to safety and security:

- Providing "Best Practices Standards for Creating and Sustaining a Safe and Supportive School," as a resource guide;
- Reviewing and monitoring school occurrence data and crime data (in conjunction with the Criminal Justice Coordinator and the New York City Police Department);
- Providing technical assistance via the Borough Safety Directors when incidents occur;
- Providing professional development and support to Children's First Network ("CFN") Safety Liaisons;
- Providing professional development and kits for Building Response Teams; and
- Monitoring and certifying School Safety Plans annually.

Comment 16 suggests that students of different grade levels should not be co-located in one building.

Due to space limitations, it is not unusual for varying grade levels to be co-located in a building together. There are successful examples of mixed grade co-located school buildings or campuses in New York City.

These examples include:

- The Julia Richman Educational Complex, which houses four small high schools, a K-8 school, and a District 75 program;
- Building M092 currently houses three schools: St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School, a charter middle school serving students in grades fifth through eighth, P.S. 92, a district elementary school which serves students in grades K-5, and Democracy Prep Charter School, a charter middle school serving students in sixth through eighth grade;
- Building K324 currently houses three schools: M.S. 267, an existing middle school serving students in grades sixth through eighth, La Cima Charter school, a charter elementary school serving students in grades K-5, and Bedford Stuyvesant Collegiate, an existing charter secondary school, which is currently in the process of growing to serve students in grades 5-12. Members of the building council worked together to secure financing from KaBOOM to resurface the schoolyard and playground for all of the children at K324.

Comments 11 and 19(c) pertain to funding at J.H.S. 226.

The DOE funds schools through a per pupil allocation. That is, funding “follows” the students and is weighted based on students’ grade level and need (incoming proficiency level and special education/ELL/Title I status). If a school’s population declines from 2,500 to 2,000 students, the school’s budget decreases proportionally—just as a school with an increase in students receives more money. Even if the Department of Education had a budget surplus, a school with declining student enrollment would still receive less per pupil funding each year enrollment falls. Principals have discretion over their budget and make choices about how to prioritize their resources. New schools may choose to hire fewer administrative staff (e.g. only a single assistant principal) freeing up dollars to be directed toward other priorities.

As stated in the EIS, 27Q314 will need to hire additional teachers during each year of the phase-in as the total number of students enrolled in the school increases over each of the next three years. The precise number of positions needed for the 2014-2015 school year will be determined once annual enrollment projections are released in the spring of 2014. Similarly, the number of new positions created to serve students in sixth through eighth grade will be determined based on annual enrollment projections available as the schools grow to serve those grades.

New district schools follow the hiring process consistent with the procedures set forth in the collective bargaining agreement between the DOE and UFT.

New administrative staff and non-pedagogical positions will be created at 27Q314 over the course of the school’s phase-in. 27Q314 is expected to hire additional administrative and non-pedagogical staff as each new grade is added.

As student enrollment at J.H.S. 226 declines, the school’s staffing needs may be reduced. All excessing will be conducted in accordance with existing labor contracts. For example, the current UFT contract will require excessing to take place in reverse seniority order within each given teaching license area. Barring system-wide layoffs, excessed teachers will be eligible to apply for other City positions, and any teachers who did not find a permanent position will be placed in the Absent Teacher Reserve (“ATR”) pool, meaning that they will continue to earn their salary while serving in the capacity of a substitute teacher in other City schools. Should there be a vacancy in the school in a teacher’s license area within one year of the teacher being excessed; the teacher will have a right of return to the school, consistent with applicable contractual provisions regarding teachers’ seniority.

This proposal is not expected to impact personnel at P233@Q226.

J.H.S. 297 is expected to hire school supervisors and/or administrator personnel as needed throughout the course of the school’s phase-in.

As also stated in the EIS, 27Q314 is expected to hire school supervisors and/or administrator personnel as needed throughout the course of the school's phase-in. Some school supervisor and/or administrator positions at J.H.S. 226 may be excessed as student enrollment declines. Again, all excessing will take place in accordance with existing labor contracts. No change in school supervisory or administrator positions at P233@Q226 are expected as a result of this proposal. J.H.S. 297 is expected to hire school supervisors and/or administrator personnel as needed throughout the course of the school's phase-in.

Fair Student Funding ("FSF") dollars – approximately \$5 billion in the 2012-2013 school year based on projected registers – are used by all district schools to cover basic instructional needs and are allocated to each school based on the number and need-level of students enrolled at that school. All money allocated through FSF can be used at the principals' discretion, such as hiring staff, purchasing supplies and materials, or implementing instructional programs. As the total number of students enrolled changes, the overall budget will increase or decrease accordingly, allowing the school to meet the instructional needs of its student population. In addition to the FSF student-need based dollars a school receives, all schools receive a fixed lump sum of \$225,000 in FSF foundation and \$50,000 in Children First Network Support to cover administrative costs. Principals have discretion over their budget and make choices about how to prioritize their resources.

Comment 1(c) and 5 concern the shared space in the building, with particular concern for the gymnasium, cafeteria, library, and bathrooms. Comment 7 relates to the specialty rooms in building Q226.

As in other situations where schools are co-located, the schools will need to share large common and specialty rooms in the building, such as the cafeteria, the gymnasium, and the library. Specific decisions regarding the allocation of the shared spaces will be made by the Building Council, consisting of principals from all co-located schools, in conjunction with the DOE's Office of Space Planning.

Principals from each school organization co-located in a building serve on a Building Council to make decisions about overall use of the shared space and shared space schedules including the use of the cafeteria and scheduling of lunch periods for students in each co-located school organization. If the principals are unable to agree upon a schedule for shared spaces, there is a mediation process outlined in the Campus Policy Memo, which is available at <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/campusgov>.

If this proposal is approved, the Office of Space Planning will work with the Building Council to ensure an equitable allocation of the excess space. In determining an equitable allocation, the Office of Space Planning may consider factors such as the relative enrollments of the co-located schools, the instructional and programmatic needs of the co-located schools, and the physical location of the excess space within the building. In addition, the Office of Space Planning will work with the schools in building Q226 to ensure a smooth transition, if necessary, of any rooms currently being used above schools' footprint allocations. During the course of 27Q314's phase-in, the number of excess rooms will decrease as 27Q314's baseline footprint allocation increases to reflect its larger population.

Comment 8 relates to the TCU located adjacent to building Q226

As per school reported data, J.H.S. 226 currently does not use the TCU that is located adjacent to building Q226. The building capacity for 2013-14 and beyond is calculated for building Q226 only and does not include the TCUs.

Comment 17 suggests that a school located in building Q226 will be closed in order to co-locate the new high school.

As stated in the EIS, beginning in September 2014, J.H.S. 226 will enroll 295-305 sixth grade students, as opposed to the 415-425 sixth grade students it has enrolled in recent years. The DOE is not proposing to close J.H.S. 226.

The enrollment reduction of J.H.S. 226 is driven by J.H.S. 226's performance and demand. J.H.S. 226 received an overall C grade on its Progress Report in 2011-2012 for the third consecutive year. Additionally, in 2011-2012, the school received D grades in both Student Progress and School Environment, and a C grade in Student Performance.

At this time, the DOE believes that reducing the enrollment of J.H.S. 226 beginning in September 2014 and providing a new option for high school students in the Q226 building will benefit current and future students at building Q226 and in Queens.

The enrollment reduction is intended to provide an opportunity for J.H.S. 226 to concentrate on a smaller cohort of students, and allow for a new high school option to develop in building Q226.

The DOE believes that the District 27 community and Queens as a whole will benefit from having an additional option in the Q226 building.

Comment 19(d) relates to school offerings at small schools.

The central goal of the Children First reforms is simple: to create a system of great schools. Every child in New York City deserves the best possible education. This starts with a great school – led by a dedicated leader with a vision for student success.

To ensure that as many students as possible have access to the best possible education, under this Administration, New York City has replaced 140 of our lowest-performing schools with better options and opened 654 new schools: 478 districts schools, 3 District 75 schools, and 173 public charter schools. As a result, we’ve created more high-quality choices for families.

Further, a recently published report by MDRC found that our new, small schools, “which serve mostly disadvantaged students of color, continue to produce sustained positive effects, raising graduation rates by 9.5 percentage points. This increase translates to nearly 10 more graduates for every 100 entering ninth-grade student.”

There is more work to do, but the recently released MDRC report shows our policies are effective and serving those who matter most: our students.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to the proposal.