

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF  
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**  
**Truncation of PS 121 From a K-6 to  
a K-5 - November 2, 2011**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 [background conversation]

3 DR. BEVERLY FOLKS-BRYANT: Good evening.

4 Can everybody hear me? Okay. All right. Well,  
5 good evening. This is a joint public hearing of  
6 the Department of Education Community Education  
7 Counsel and School Leadership Team for the  
8 truncation of PS 121 from K-6 to a K-5 school.

9 I am Dr. Beverly Folks-Bryant [phonetic],  
10 Interim Managing Superintendent of District 28.  
11 We've asked the District 28 Community Education  
12 Counsel and the School Leadership Team at PS 121  
13 to participate in this joint public hearing. I  
14 am joined tonight by Principal Evelyn Battie  
15 [phonetic], Frank Soriente [phonetic], and  
16 Sandra Clark-Williams, the President from the  
17 CEC. This hearing is being recorded.

18 The purpose of this hearing is for you to  
19 provide comments about the proposal. Before I  
20 describe the proposal, I want to make sure you  
21 are all aware of the opportunity to provide your  
22 input. All those who wish to speak must sign up  
23 in the speaker sign-in area, located just  
24 outside the auditorium. The sign-up list will  
25 close in 15 minutes. Speakers will be given the

1 floor in the order that they signed up. All  
2 comments are limited to two minutes. There may  
3 be elected officials who show up at different  
4 times throughout this meeting this evening. If  
5 they wish to speak, we will do our best to  
6 accommodate them at the first opportune moment.  
7 Those who were here at the start of the public  
8 comment segment will be asked to speak first.  
9 All comments will be mentioned in the analysis  
10 of public comments to be published and provided  
11 to the Panel of Educational Policy the evening  
12 before the panel votes. This vote is scheduled  
13 for November the 17th.

14 In addition, we welcome any comments and  
15 feedback you may have at the time before the  
16 panel votes on both proposals. The email  
17 address and phone number where comments may be  
18 made is d28proposals--with an S at the end--  
19 d28proposals@schools.nyc.gov and 212-374-7621.  
20 Again, it's 212-374-7621.

21 Public school 121 is an existing zoned  
22 elementary school located in Buildings Q121 and  
23 transportable classroom unit, otherwise known as  
24 TCU, Q915 at 126-10 109th Avenue in South Ozone  
25 Park, New York, in Community School District 28.

1 It currently serves students in kindergarten  
2 through 6th grade and offers a pre-kindergarten  
3 program.

4 This is a proposal to implement a grade  
5 truncation, meaning that the school would no  
6 longer enroll 6th grade students after the  
7 current 2011-2012 school year. If this proposal  
8 is approved, at the close of the 2011-2012  
9 school year, all 5th and 6th grade students who  
10 meet the promotional standards from PS 121 would  
11 attend middle school. During the 2011-2012  
12 school year, PS 121 5th and 6th grade students  
13 would participate in the middle school choice  
14 process.

15 In September of 2012, PS 121 5th and 6th  
16 grade students who are promoted from PS 121  
17 would enter middle school as 6th and 7th grade  
18 students respectively. Beginning in September  
19 2012, PS 121 would only serve students in  
20 kindergarten through 5th grade, and would  
21 continue to offer a pre-kindergarten program  
22 subject to funding and demand.

23 Prior to June 2010, students in District 28  
24 could attend their zoned middle school or they  
25 could apply to middle schools that manage their

1 own admission processes on a school-by-school  
2 basis. In June 2010, the District 28 Community  
3 Education Council voted to adopt middle school  
4 choice. Zoned students still have priority for  
5 admission to the zoned school for the zone in  
6 which they reside. PS 121 students are also  
7 eligible to attend a zoned school outside of  
8 their zone in which they reside to the extent  
9 that space is available after the students  
10 within the zone in which the school is located  
11 have been admitted. Students are also eligible  
12 to attend non-zoned schools.

13 The New York City Department of Education,  
14 or the DOE, strives to ensure that all students  
15 in New York City have access to high quality  
16 schools at every stage of their education. The  
17 proposed grade truncation offers significant  
18 benefits to the students currently in the 5th  
19 grade at 121.

20 Middle schools typically enroll students  
21 beginning in the 6th grade. PS 121 students who  
22 wait until the 6th grade to apply to middle  
23 school are limited to those schools that still  
24 have available 7th grade seats. In particular,  
25 there are several unzoned middle choice schools

1 in District 28 that rarely have open 7th grade  
2 seats, because seats become available only if  
3 the 6th grade students leave the school.

4 Therefore, students who would remain at PS  
5 121 through sixth grade, if this proposal is not  
6 implemented, would have fewer opportunities to  
7 enter those choice middle schools than their  
8 peers who start middle school a year earlier.

9 The proposed grade truncation will provide  
10 PS 121 students access to the same range of  
11 middle school choice options as their peers  
12 through District 28. In addition, it addresses  
13 problems that exist for middle school students  
14 and the middle school as a whole when students  
15 start middle school through multiple entry  
16 grades--6th and 7th.

17 The proposal also addresses some  
18 disadvantages that students may be experiencing  
19 while they remain at PS 121 for 6th grade after  
20 their grade size has been reduced by the number  
21 of students who exercise the option to enter  
22 middle school in 6th grade. By entering middle  
23 school in 6th grade rather than 7th grade,  
24 students at PS 121 will have more opportunities  
25 to take advantage of the enriching high school

1 preparatory experiences offered at our middle  
2 schools.

3           Finally, if this proposal is implemented, PS  
4 121's grade span from K-6 to K-5 will reduce the  
5 school's enrollment by approximately 164  
6 students, freeing up additional space that PS  
7 121 could use to accommodate additional lower  
8 grade students or meet other needs in the  
9 school. PS 121 is also overcrowded. And  
10 truncating PS 121's 6th grade will reduce the  
11 building's utilization rate and alleviate  
12 overcrowding.

13           We have now finished our formal  
14 presentations. We will now open the floor up  
15 for public comments. Speakers will be given the  
16 floor in order that they signed up. All  
17 comments are limited to two minutes. Our first  
18 speaker is Nancy Northrop [phonetic].

19           MS. NANCY NORTHRUP: - - any hearing - -  
20 school - - . I think that's to the - - . But I  
21 want to verify the following points. Did the  
22 SLT request - - --

23           MALE VOICE 1: [Interposing] Can we use the  
24 mic?

25           DR. BRYANT: Please use the mic so that

1 your...

2 MALE VOICE 1: Thank you.

3 MS. NORTHRUP: Hi. I'll try again. - -  
4 President of the Student Council. That's the  
5 Council of all the PA presidents of the  
6 district. We had various discussions at various  
7 times, so I distributed - - process has been  
8 violated in the - - schools in the truncation  
9 process. So I would like to air my - - . Did  
10 the SLT--not the principal, but the SLT--request  
11 that the DOE come in and begin discussion about  
12 truncation, because that's part of the process.  
13 And if that didn't happen, the process was  
14 violated. Did - - , I'm sorry - - --

15 DR. BRYANT: [Interposing] You're the SLT,  
16 so you can respond.

17 MALE VOICE 2: I am the School Leadership  
18 Team, I'm the Chapter in this school and we did  
19 follow protocol--

20 MS. NORTHRUP: [Interposing] I'm sorry. - -  
21 ?

22 MALE VOICE 2: Yes. They came in last year  
23 and we did open up a discussion, and they were  
24 present with us.

25 MS. NORTHRUP: - - at the SLT meeting?

1 MALE VOICE 2: Yes, they were there, yes.

2 MS. NORTHRUP: - - at the SLT - - --

3 MALE VOICE 2: Yes, we did, yes.

4 MS. NORTHRUP: - - . And did everyone know  
5 that the SLT included all parents - - ?

6 MALE VOICE 2: Yes.

7 MS. NORTHRUP: Okay. Were parents made  
8 aware of this - - study - - schools that shows  
9 that for children who leave middle school - -  
10 school in 5th grade rather than staying in  
11 elementary school - - 6th grade, rather than  
12 staying in elementary school in 6th grade, they  
13 will underperform on state tests in 6th, 7th,  
14 and 8th grade. And that was the main - - in  
15 elementary school in the - - grade, you will  
16 outperform those children - - on all - - . Was  
17 the SLT aware of that - - ?

18 MALE VOICE 2: Well, various things were  
19 discussed. And one of the issues that was  
20 discussed was that if the children stay--can I  
21 answer this?

22 DR. BRYANT: You're the SLT.

23 MALE VOICE 2: If they stay till 6th grade,  
24 their choices will be limited on what schools  
25 they can get into it. And many of the parents

1 have an understanding that a lot of them  
2 didn't want to limit their children, especially  
3 to School 8, which they were concerned about.  
4 But studies were brought up. I can't remember  
5 the specific names of the studies, but many  
6 issues were brought up that addressed the  
7 concerns and the issues of children staying  
8 longer in the elementary school or leaving. And  
9 we had our guidance counselor, if you don't mind  
10 me saying, she was there present and part of  
11 this discussion. And if anyone knows better  
12 about this, because she even brought up the  
13 issues that we were talking--

14 MS. NORTHRUP: [Interposing] - - she or  
15 anybody else have anything to say about New York  
16 City Public Schools - - --.

17 MALE VOICE 2: [Interposing] But it was one  
18 particular study. There were other studies.

19 MS. NORTHRUP: - - .

20 MALE VOICE 2: Excuse me. First of all, I'm  
21 a junior high school teacher, too. I have a  
22 Junior High School license, which they no longer  
23 grant. And there's always been an issue and  
24 studies made on do children benefit if they stay  
25 within the elementary school or if we have a

1 separate junior high school. But various  
2 things were brought up to the parents. They  
3 were able to ask their questions last year.  
4 Many concerns were brought up. The major  
5 concern the parents had was the limit of  
6 choices. If their child stayed in this school  
7 up until 6th grade, they would not be able or a  
8 seat would not be held for them in another  
9 school--that they would be limited.

10 MS. NORTHRUP: - - middle school that  
11 they're not guaranteed a seat - - .

12 MALE VOICE 2: Right. Because we have other  
13 elementary schools within this vicinity. So  
14 that was a major concern. But many parents did  
15 not have a problem with their child leaving the  
16 school. The problem was the vicinity and how  
17 long it would take their children to travel to a  
18 middle school.

19 MS. NORTHRUP: Okay. They should have been  
20 that they were guaranteed a seat at a local  
21 zoned middle school - - .

22 DR. BRYANT: They were always told that they  
23 could.

24 MALE VOICE 2: They were always told that.  
25 They were told that.

1 MS. NORTHRUP: - - .

2 MALE VOICE 2: No, they were told. You  
3 didn't hear what I said. I'm sorry. Excuse me.  
4 Let me reiterate.

5 MS. NORTHRUP: - - .

6 MALE VOICE 2: No, that's okay. They were  
7 told it was MS 8. Many of them don't want their  
8 children to go there.

9 DR. BRYANT: Ms. Northrop...

10 MALE VOICE 2: They wanted more choices.

11 DR. BRYANT: ...do you have one more  
12 question? Your time is up.

13 MS. NORTHRUP: Okay. - - .

14 MALE VOICE 2: Sure.

15 MS. NORTHRUP: At - - high performing  
16 school. One of the arguments that - - was that  
17 they wanted the option of 5th grade to go in  
18 their choice school. But since 70%, 80% of  
19 children who end up going to their locally zoned  
20 - - school, they're very, very high to having  
21 options--

22 MALE VOICE 2: [Interposing] They have more  
23 choices up there in - - , too.

24 MS. NORTHRUP: -- - - .

25 MALE VOICE 2: Thank you.

1 DR. BRYANT: Thank you. Joanne Franco.

2 MS. JOANNE FRANCO: Hi.

3 DR. BRYANT: Please go to the mic since it's  
4 being recorded. Thank you.

5 MS. FRANCO: Good evening, everyone. My  
6 name is Joanne Franco. Actually, I think I  
7 signed the wrong sheet. I thought I was signing  
8 the attendance sheet.

9 MALE VOICE 2: Oh, I see.

10 DR. BRYANT: Okay.

11 MS. FRANCO: - - was the truncation based on  
12 what this motion stated. I would comment on  
13 certain things, because I am a person who had -  
14 - who was a 5th grader moved over to the 6th  
15 grade at junior high school. The transition for  
16 some children - - , others were not. That's - -  
17 . But the parents should be fully aware and  
18 really need to understand what they're getting  
19 themselves into. Because just only this year,  
20 my - - were together grade school. - - and  
21 getting - - . Unfortunately, I - - my - - a  
22 little confusion, because - - the other students  
23 were not permitted - - at certain times of the  
24 year. Having new ones who were going off to  
25 school - - put a child - - more experience

1 traveling by themselves - - danger and  
2 everything else other than that - - along the  
3 way. That was the problem with that. They  
4 usually don't think that the fears that us, as  
5 parents, have - - school and with the  
6 truncation. I understand that the reason why we  
7 have truncation is because of the junior highers  
8 were complaining that they would not have the  
9 students long enough in order to get them  
10 prepared to go into the 9th through 12th.  
11 However, looking at from pre-K to 6th, I think  
12 the children need a little bit more - - in order  
13 for the transition into that area. But because  
14 the DOE feels that it's better for our children  
15 to truncate and go over and start from that, a  
16 lot of thought had to be put into that. And  
17 that's why we need to really, really reach the  
18 parents and talk to them a lot more. Because I  
19 understand that from an education point of view  
20 or educator point of view you're looking at - -  
21 . As a parent, we're looking at - - that are  
22 safety, transition, psychologically and  
23 physically and everything else. So those are  
24 some of my points that I have experienced with  
25 parents going through truncation and what we

1 were facing with them. And, please, take that  
2 into consideration when you do make a decision.  
3 And I am a member of an SLT and I am a member of  
4 community. I - - . And those are - - in our  
5 meetings. Thank you for your time.

6 MALE VOICE 2: Thank you.

7 DR. BRYANT: Thank you. Okay.

8 MALE VOICE 2: Is that it?

9 DR. BRYANT: The speaker list is now  
10 exhausted. Again, we welcome any comments and  
11 feedback you may have at this time. Before the  
12 Panel for Educational Policy votes, November  
13 17th at their November 17th meeting, if you have  
14 any comments once you leave and you may have  
15 thought of something that you weren't on the  
16 speaker list, it's d28proposals, plural,  
17 @schools.nyc.gov or 212-374-7621. Again, 212-  
18 374-7621. Thank you for your participation.  
19 And the public hearing is now closed.

20 MALE VOICE 2: Thank you.

21 [END RECORDING]

22

23

24

25

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

The prior proceedings were transcribed from audio files and have been transcribed to the best of my ability.

Signature *Melissa Strickland*

Date November 8, 2011