



**Notice**  
December 12, 2011

**Dennis M. Walcott**  
*Chancellor*

## **The Proposed Phase-out of Middle School for the Arts (17K587) Beginning in 2012-2013**

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

The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) is proposing to phase out and close Middle School for the Arts (17K587, “MS for the Arts”), an existing middle school housed in Building K391 (“K391”), located at 790 East New York, Brooklyn, NY 11203, in Community School District 17, because of its low performance and its inability to turn around quickly to better support student needs. MS for the Arts currently serves students in sixth through eighth grades and admits students through the District 17 Middle School Choice Process through a screened academic selection method,<sup>1</sup> with priority to students residing in MS for the Arts’ residential zone. If this phase-out proposal is approved, MS for the Arts would no longer admit sixth grade students after the conclusion of the 2011-2012 school year. One grade will then be phased out in each subsequent year and MS for the Arts will close after June 2014. Current sixth and seventh grade students, and eighth grade students who do not meet promotional standards at the end of this school year, will continue to be served and supported by MS for the Arts as they progress toward completion of middle school. Current eighth grade students who meet promotional standards at the end of this school year will be supported as they select a high school through the Citywide High School Admissions Process for enrollment in the 2012-2013 school year.

MS for the Arts is currently “co-located” in K391 with the kindergarten through eighth grade classes of Achievement First Crown Heights Charter School (84K356, “AF Crown Heights”), an existing charter school. AF Crown Heights is phasing in to serve students in ninth through twelfth grade in separate private space in another building. AF Crown Heights is managed by the charter management organization (“CMO”) Achievement First Network (“AF”). K391 also houses two community-based organizations (“CBOs”), CAMBA and Brooklyn Center. A “co-location” means that two or more school organizations are located in the same building and may share large, common spaces like the auditoriums, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

In a separate EIS posted in December of 2011, the DOE has also proposed to open and co-locate a new middle school (17K722, “I.S. 722”) in K391, which would serve students in sixth through eighth grade when it reaches full scale in 2014-2015. This new middle school would give priority to students residing in MS for the Arts’ zone, and then admit sixth grade students through the District 17 Middle School Choice Process through a limited unscreened selection method.<sup>2</sup> If both this proposal and the proposal to co-locate I.S. 722 in K391 are approved, I.S. 722 will provide a new middle school option for District 17 families and replace the seats lost by this proposed phase-out of MS for the Arts. I.S. 722 would be co-located in K391 with MS for the Arts and AF Crown Heights as MS for the Arts phases out and I.S. 722

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<sup>1</sup> Selection criteria for a screened academic program includes: a review of student’s attendance and punctuality, in addition to a review of an essay/writing sample.

<sup>2</sup> Limited unscreened programs give priority to students who demonstrate interest in the school by attending a school’s Information Session or Open House events or visiting the school’s exhibit at any one of the Middle School Fairs.

phases in. The DOE does not anticipate that the proposed phase-out and replacement of MS for the Arts will impact the permanent co-location of AF Crown Heights in K391 or the two CBOs.

### *Background on the DOE's Decision-Making Process*

Schools are identified for possible phase-out for the following three reasons: (1) they received poor grades on their annual Progress Report; (2) they received a poor rating on their annual Quality Review; or (3) they have been identified by the New York State Education Department (“SED”) as Persistently Low Achieving (“PLA”). Specifically, under the DOE’s accountability framework, all schools that receive a D or F, or a third consecutive grade of C or lower on their annual Progress Report and all schools that received a rating of Underdeveloped on their most recent Quality Review are evaluated for intensive support or intervention, including the possibility of phase-out.<sup>3</sup> Progress Reports are released by the DOE each fall and evaluate schools based on Student Progress, Student Performance, and School Environment, which includes attendance and survey feedback from parents, teachers, and sixth- to twelfth-grade students, where applicable. During Quality Reviews, experienced educators visit a school over several days, observe classrooms and talk with students, staff and families. Schools are rated on a four-point scale, with “Underdeveloped” as the lowest possible rating and “Well Developed” as the highest. A school’s Progress Report and its Quality Review may initially suggest a school should be considered for intervention, but no single criterion leads to a phase-out decision.

To identify the appropriate action that will best serve the student community, the DOE reviews school data, consults with superintendents and other experienced educators who have worked closely with the school, as well as gathers community feedback.

MS for the Arts earned an overall D grade on its 2010-2011 Progress Report. On the 2009-2010 Progress Report, MS for the Arts earned a C grade, and on the 2008-2009 Progress Report, MS for the Arts earned an A grade.<sup>4</sup>

As a result, the DOE initiated a comprehensive review of MS for the Arts with the goal of determining what intensive supports and interventions would best benefit the MS for the Arts community. During that review, the DOE looked at recent and historical performance, consulted with superintendents and other experienced educators who have worked closely with the school, and gathered community feedback.

After completing that review, the DOE believes that only the most serious intervention—the gradual phase-out and eventual closure of MS for the Arts—will best serve students and the community. Phasing-out and closing MS for the Arts will allow for new school options to develop in K391 that are intended to provide better options for families.

## **II. Information regarding where the full text of the proposed item may be obtained.**

The EIS can be found on the Department of Education’s Web site:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2011-2012/Feb2012Proposals>

Copies of the EIS are also available in MS for the Arts’ and AF Crown Heights’ main office.

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<sup>3</sup> Elementary and middle schools that have average math and English Language Arts (“ELA”) proficiency rates that are higher than the district average, which earned a Well Developed or Outstanding rating on the quality review, which received an A or B on the 2010-2011 Progress Report or which are receiving a Progress Report for the first time are not considered for phase-out.

<sup>4</sup> 84% of elementary/middle schools Citywide received an A (97% received an A or B) on the 2008-09 Progress Report. This school’s 2008-09 Progress Report overall score was in the bottom 45% citywide.

### **III. Submission of public comment.**

Written comments can be sent to [D17Proposals@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:D17Proposals@schools.nyc.gov)

Oral comments can be left at (212) 374-0208.

### **IV. 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: Lily Haskins  
Office: Division of Portfolio Planning  
Address: 52 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007  
Email: [D17Proposals@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:D17Proposals@schools.nyc.gov)  
Phone: (212) 374-0208

### **V. Date, time and place of joint public hearings for this proposal.**

January 12, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.  
Middle School for the Arts—Building K391  
790 East New York Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11203

Questions about the proposal should be directed as indicated in section IV above.

Speaker sign-up will begin 30 minutes before the hearing and will close 15 minutes after the start.

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

February 9, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.

Brooklyn Tech High School  
29 Fort Greene Place  
Brooklyn, NY 11217