



Notice
December 22, 2011

Dennis M. Walcott
Chancellor

The Proposed Grade Expansion of P.S. 249 The Caton (17K249) to a K-5 School Beginning in 2012-2013

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

P.S. 249 The Caton (17K249, “P.S. 249”) is an existing zoned elementary school located in building K249 (“K249”) at 18 Marlborough Road, Brooklyn, NY 11226, in Community School District 17. P.S. 249 currently serves students in kindergarten through third grade (“K-3”), and it also offers a half-day pre-kindergarten program. This is a proposal to implement a “grade expansion,” whereby P.S. 249 would expand to also serve students in fourth and fifth grades. P.S. 249 would thus serve students in kindergarten through fifth grade (“K-5”) at full scale, and its grade span will be aligned with other elementary schools in District 17.

If this proposal is approved, P.S. 249 would begin enrolling fourth grade students in the 2012-2013 school year. Beginning that year, in order to have sufficient space in K249 to expand to serve K-5 students, P.S. 249 will monitor its incoming kindergarten enrollment to limit out-of-zone enrollment.

P.S. 249 would then expand to scale to serve fifth grade students in the 2013-2014 school year. P.S. 249’s grade expansion would create approximately 230-250 additional fourth and fifth grade seats in District 17. The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) does not anticipate that the proposed expansion of P.S. 249 would affect its pre-kindergarten program.

Currently, elementary students in District 17 can attend their zoned elementary schools, apply to Citywide or district-wide Gifted and Talented programs through the Gifted and Talented application process, or apply to charter schools located in their district of residence or throughout the City. Under this proposal, elementary school students in District 17 would retain all of those options.

K249 has the capacity to serve 683 students. In 2011-2012, the building is serving 783 students, yielding a utilization rate of approximately 115%. Although a utilization rate in excess of 100% may suggest that a building will be over-utilized or over-crowded in a given year, this rate does not account for the fact that rooms may be programmed for more efficient or different uses than the standard assumptions in the utilization calculation. Section III.B. sets forth the baseline number of rooms to be allocated to each school pursuant to the Citywide Instructional Footprint (“the Footprint”), as well as the total number of rooms in the building, to provide a more complete picture of the availability of space in K249. In 2013-2014, when P.S. 249 has reached full scale and it will serve K-5 students and its half-day pre-kindergarten program, there would

be approximately 993-1,053 students served in the building, which would yield a projected utilization rate of 145%-154%. Once P.S. 249's enrollment has stabilized in 2017-2018, it is projected that the building will serve 708-768 students, yielding a projected utilization rate of approximately 104%-112%, which is lower than the building's current utilization rate.

Background on the DOE's Decision-Making Process

The DOE strives to ensure that all students in New York City have access to a diverse range of high-quality schools at every stage of their education. If this proposal is approved, P.S. 249's third grade students would benefit by being able to complete their elementary education at P.S. 249 because they would undergo fewer transitions between schools. Currently, third grade students at P.S. 249 must transition to another elementary school for fourth and fifth grade. Then, they must transition to a middle school for sixth through eighth grade. Expanding P.S. 249 would ultimately create a more cohesive K-5 educational experience for P.S. 249's students.

P.S. 249 is a high-performing school. In 2010-2011, 63% of its third grade students demonstrated proficiency on the New York State Education Department's English Language Arts assessment and 81% demonstrated proficiency on the math assessment. On both its 2009-2010 and its 2010-2011 annual Progress Reports, P.S. 249 received an overall "A" grade. For these reasons, the DOE believes that allowing P.S. 249 students to remain at the school for fourth and fifth grade would be beneficial to them.

In collaboration with the P.S. 249 leadership, the DOE explored alternate scenarios to avoid increasing K249's building utilization rate beyond the current utilization rate of 115%. This included consideration of a temporary split-siting and co-location of P.S. 249's fourth and fifth grades in an annex location, implementation of a more drastic enrollment reduction than the current proposal, and elimination of the pre-kindergarten program. After exploring multiple scenarios, the DOE and P.S. 249's school leadership concluded this proposal would enable P.S. 249 to maintain instructional continuity and provide a seamless elementary school experience, part of the original goal for a K-5 expansion. Therefore, the DOE has proposed the expansion within K249 as detailed in this EIS.

The DOE notes that the initial increase in building utilization rate over the short term results from the large number of out-of-zone students currently enrolled in the school, as described in more detail in Section III.A. As discussed throughout the proposal, P.S. 249 would limit the number of out-of-zone students in its incoming kindergarten classes, resulting in a long term enrollment reduction where, by the 2017-2018 school year, the building utilization rate is projected to decline to 104%-112%, which is below K249's utilization rate in 2011-2012.

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 P.S. 249's main office.

III. Submission of public comment.

Written comments can be sent to 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: Kim Wong
Office: Division of Portfolio Planning
Address: 52 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007
Email: D17Proposals@schools.nyc.gov
Phone: 212-374-0208

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

January 23, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.
P.S. 249 The Caton
18 Marlborough Road
Brooklyn, NY 11226

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 Technical High School
29 Fort Greene Place
Brooklyn, NY 11217