

Public Comment Analysis

Date: December 10, 2013

Topic: The Proposed Temporary Re-siting and Co-Location of a Portion of One Grade Level of P.S. 92 Harry T. Stewart Sr. (30Q092) with P.S. 329 East Elmhurst Community School (30Q329) in Building Q329 Beginning in the 2014-2015 School Year

Date of Panel Vote: December 11, 2013

Summary of Proposal

The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) is proposing to temporarily re-site and co-locate a portion of the kindergarten of P.S. 92 Harry T. Stewart Sr. (30Q092, “P.S. 92”), an existing elementary school, with P.S. 329 East Elmhurst Community School (30Q329, “P.S. 329”), an existing elementary school, in building Q329 (“Q329”), located at 26-25 97th Street, Queens, NY 11369, in Community School District 30 (“District 30”) for a two-year period beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. A “re-siting” means students will attend classes in a different building than the one students have attended in previous years, and a “co-location” means that two or more school organizations are located in the same building and may share common spaces like auditoriums, gymnasiums, libraries, and cafeterias.

P.S. 92 is a zoned elementary school that currently serves students in kindergarten through fifth grades and offers a pre-kindergarten program in main building Q292 (“Q292”) and its adjacent transportable classroom units (Q997, “TCUs”), located at 99-01 34th Avenue, Queens, NY 11368, in District 30. In the Spring of 2013, the School Construction Authority (“SCA”) approved the construction of a permanent addition for P.S. 92, which necessitates the removal of the TCUs following the 2013-2014 school year. The permanent addition will add approximately 376 seats, and its construction will occur during the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years, with student occupancy anticipated starting in September 2016. During these two years, the students that would have been housed in the TCUs will be re-sited to the Q329 building. Building Q292 is approximately 0.8 miles from building Q329. P.S. 92 will not need to occupy space in Q329 after the completion of building Q292’s addition.

P.S. 329 is a new zoned elementary school that opened in September 2013 in Q329. P.S. 329 serves kindergarten students in 2013-2014. P.S. 329 will add one grade level every year until the school reaches its full grade span of kindergarten through fifth grade in the 2018-2019 school year.

As noted, this proposal only addresses P.S. 92’s kindergarten students. If this proposal is approved, a portion of P.S. 92’s kindergarten will be co-located with P.S. 329 in building Q329 for a two-year period starting in the 2014-2015 school year. During the two years of this proposal’s implementation, P.S. 92 will serve 90-100 kindergarten students in building Q329 in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years. P.S. 92 will continue to serve pre-kindergarten, a portion of its kindergarten, and its first- through fifth-grade students in Q292 during this period. In the 2016-2017 school year, kindergarten students of P.S. 92 in Q329 will relocate to main building Q292 or the new permanent site adjacent to building Q292 scheduled to be completed by September 2016, where P.S. 92 will serve kindergarten through fifth grades thereafter. P.S. 92 will also continue to offer a pre-kindergarten program, subject to continued demand

and the availability of funding.

Where possible, the DOE aims to utilize available space in other local school buildings to alleviate overcrowding or serve students during a temporary period of construction. Building Q329 has the capacity to serve 342 students. The DOE determined that building Q329 would have excess capacity during the 2014-2015 school year and for subsequent years as the new school P.S. 329 grows to scale. In 2013-2014, the building serves approximately 70 kindergarten students, yielding a utilization rate of 20%, indicating that the building has the capacity to accommodate additional students. If this proposal is approved, in 2014-2015, P.S. 92 and P.S. 329 will serve a total of 215-245 students in building Q329, yielding a building utilization rate of 63%-72%. In 2015-2016, during the final year of P.S. 92's temporary co-location in Q329, P.S. 92 and P.S. 329 will serve a total of 275-315 students in building Q329. This yields a projected target utilization rate of 80%-92%. Therefore, building Q329 has sufficient space to accommodate both schools during the period of this proposal.

This proposal is contingent on the completion of the P.S. 92 addition by September 2016. As noted, currently, the DOE plans to re-site P.S. 92's students to building Q292 or the new permanent site adjacent to building Q292 after the 2015-2016 school year. If P.S. 92's addition is not ready at that time, the DOE would issue a separate EIS describing an alternate siting plan for P.S. 92's kindergarten students.

The details of this proposal have been released in an EIS, which can be accessed here:
<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2013-2014/December2013SchoolProposals>.

Copies of the EIS are also available in the main offices of P.S. 92 and P.S. 329.

Summary of Comments Received

Joint public hearings regarding the proposal were held at P.S. 92 on December 2, 2013 and at P.S. 329 on December 3, 2013. At the hearings, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 30 members of the public attended the hearing at P.S. 92 and 6 people spoke. Present at that meeting were District 30 Community Superintendent Dr. Philip Composto; District 30 Community Education Council ("CEC 30") representative Valarie Lamour; Pasquale Baratta, Principal of P.S. 92; Martha Sanchez, Geri Ann Clark, Lorena Avila, Alicia Morales, Maria Diaz, Amanda Ramos, Francisca Eloa, Dulce Sosa, Rosalina Vilchis, Marisol Nunez, Allyson Rollo, Jessica Rosinsky, and John Gentile representing the P.S. 92 School Leadership Team; and Jillian Roland and Dean Guzman from the Office of Portfolio Management. Approximately 25 members of the public attended the hearing at P.S. 329 and 1 person spoke. Present at that meeting were Chancellor's Designee Meg Barboza; CEC 30 representative Michelle Noris; Pasquale Baratta, Principal of P.S. 92; Rachel Staroba-Hallenbeck, Principal of P.S. 329 representing the P.S. 329 School Leadership Team; Geri Ann Clark, Bryon Scheir, Marisol Nunez, Allyson Rollo, Cristen Ingino, Jessica Rosinsky, Lorena Avila, John Gentile, Francisca Eloa, Dulce Sosa, Rosalina Vilchis, Maria Diaz, and Martha Sanchez representing the P.S. 92 School Leadership Team; and Jillian Roland from the Office of Portfolio Management.

The following comments and remarks were made at the joint public hearings on December 2, 2013 and December 3, 2013 on the proposal:

1. CEC 30 representative Valarie Lamour expressed support for the proposal stating that the CEC supports the proposal as it is.
2. Principal Staroba-Hallenbeck expressed support for the proposal stating that she welcomes the P.S. 92 community and that she'd be happy to help arrange a tour of Q329.

3. A commenter asked where P.S. 92's kindergarten graduation will be held next year.
4. A commenter asked whether P.S. 92 students will move back to the main building when the construction is finished, and asked for clarification as to when the construction will be complete.
5. A commenter asked how children entering kindergarten will register for P.S. 92.
6. A commenter asked if she can get a tour of Q329.
7. Multiple commenters asked how P.S. 92 students attending school in building Q329 will get from one building to another, and whether transportation will be provided.

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

The DOE received no written and/or oral comments through its dedicated phone line and e-mail for the proposal.

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

Comments 1 and 2 are in favor of the proposal and do not require a response.

Comment 3 concerns P.S. 92's kindergarten graduation.

During the joint public hearing at P.S. 92, Superintendent Composto shared that the current intention of P.S. 92's leadership is to hold P.S. 92's kindergarten graduation in P.S. 92's main building.

Comments 4 and 6 concern the logistics of the re-siting proposal.

As mentioned in the EIS, P.S. 92's permanent addition will add approximately 376 seats, and its construction will occur during the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years, with student occupancy anticipated starting in September 2016.

If this proposal is approved, a portion of P.S. 92's kindergarten will be co-located with P.S. 329 in building Q329 for a two-year period starting in the 2014-2015 school year. During the two years of this proposal's implementation, P.S. 92 will serve 90-100 kindergarten students in building Q329 in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years. P.S. 92 will continue to serve pre-kindergarten, a portion of its kindergarten, and its first- through fifth-grade students in Q292 during this period. In the 2016-2017 school year, kindergarten students of P.S. 92 in Q329 will relocate to main building Q292 or the new permanent site adjacent to building Q292 scheduled to be completed by September 2016, where P.S. 92 will serve kindergarten through fifth grades thereafter. P.S. 92 will also continue to offer a pre-kindergarten program, subject to continued demand and the availability of funding.

This proposal is contingent on the completion of the P.S. 92 addition by September 2016. As noted, currently, the DOE plans to re-site P.S. 92's students to building Q292 or the new permanent site adjacent to building Q292 after the 2015-2016 school year. If P.S. 92's addition is not ready at that time, the DOE would issue a separate EIS describing an alternate siting plan for P.S. 92's kindergarten students.

During the joint public hearings at P.S. 92 and P.S. 329, both Superintendent Composto and Principal Staroba-Hallenbeck shared that families could tour the Q329 building, and that they could help arrange the tour if necessary. Building Q329 is located at 26-25 97th Street, Queens, NY 11369, in District 30.

Comment 5 concerns kindergarten registration.

During the joint public hearing at P.S. 92, Superintendent Composto clarified that families should apply for P.S. 92 through Kindergarten Connect either online, over the phone, or in person at an enrollment office, as is standard across the City. Additionally, he clarified that P.S. 92 students attending school in building Q329 would be students of P.S. 92 and would be supervised by the P.S. 92 staff. Specifically, as stated in the EIS, if this proposal is approved, a portion of P.S. 92's kindergarten will be co-located with P.S. 329 in building Q329 for a two-year period starting in the 2014-2015 school year. All students currently enrolled in P.S. 92 could continue to attend P.S. 92. Students in the pre-kindergarten program, a portion of students in kindergarten, and students in first through fifth grades would attend P.S. 92 at Q292. Some students entering kindergarten at P.S. 92 during the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years would attend P.S. 92 at Q329. These students would be supervised by the P.S. 92 staff. This means that in each of these years, some kindergarten students entering P.S. 92 would attend school in Q329 for kindergarten, and would attend school in Q292 for first-grade.

Comment 7 concerns transportation to building Q329 for P.S. 92's kindergarten students attending school in that building.

Once students are enrolled in P.S. 92 for the 2014-2015 school year, the Office of Pupil Transportation will work with P.S. 92 to determine and address the need for busing or shuttle service to Q329. All students traveling to Q329 will be provided with transportation according to Chancellor's Regulation A-801.

During the joint public hearing at P.S. 92, Superintendent Composto responded that the P.S. 92 administration and the Office of Pupil Transportation will work with families if there are any concerns.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to the proposal.