

Public Comment Analysis

Date: December 15, 2015

Topic: The Proposed Re-Siting of Frederick Douglass Academy IV Secondary School (16K393) to Building K057 and Co-location with J.H.S. 057 Whitelaw Reid (16K057), M.S. 385 School of Business, Finance, and Entrepreneurship (16K385), and the Brooklyn Academy of Global Finance (16K688) Beginning in the 2016-2017 School Year

Date of Panel Vote: December 16, 2015

Summary of Proposal

On October 30, 2015, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) issued an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) describing a proposal to re-site Frederick Douglass Academy IV Secondary School (16K393, “FDA IV”) to building K057 (“K057”), located at 125 Stuyvesant Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11221 in Community School District 16 (“District 16”) in the 2016-2017 school year. A “re-siting” means that students will attend classes in a building different from the building in which they currently attend classes. FDA IV currently serves students in grades 9-12 in building K026 (“K026”) located at 1014 Lafayette Ave Brooklyn, NY 11221, 0.2 miles away from K057 and also in District 16, where it is co-located with elementary school P.S. 26 Jesse Owens (16K026, “P.S. 26”) and Madiba Prep Middle School (16K681, “Madiba Prep”). A “co-location” means that two or more school organizations are located in the same building and may share common spaces such as the auditorium, gymnasium, library, and cafeteria. If this proposal is approved, FDA IV will be re-sited to K057 where it will be co-located with J.H.S. 057 Whitelaw Reid (16K057, “J.H.S. 057”), M.S. 385 School of Business, Finance, and Entrepreneurship (16K385, “M.S. 385”), and The Brooklyn Academy of Global Finance (16K688, “BAGF”). Concurrently with this proposal, the DOE is proposing to consolidate J.H.S. 057 with M.S. 385. J.H.S. 057 and M.S. 385 are district middle schools currently co-located in K057 and serving students in grades six through eight. A “consolidation” means that two or more existing school organizations are combined into one school to operate and serve students more effectively. This proposal and the consolidation proposal are not contingent on one another and will be voted on separately by the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”). In the event that the PEP approves both proposals, M.S. 385 will cease to exist as a distinct school option and FDA IV would be co-located with BAGF and the consolidated J.H.S. 057 in K057. If the proposal to consolidate J.H.S. 057 and M.S. 385 is not approved, FDA IV would be co-located in K057 with BAGF, J.H.S. 057, and M.S. 385.

The re-siting of FDA IV to K057 will provide the school with access to resources that support high school students. The co-location of FDA IV with BAGF in K057 will provide increased opportunities for the two high schools to collaborate. Currently, FDA IV and BAGF students take Advanced Placement courses together, share college programming, and engage in end of school year activities. FDA IV students travel from K026 to K057 to participate in the above programming and activities. This re-siting of FDA IV into the same building as BAGF is intended to enhance these existing efforts and increase opportunities for such collaboration. Should this result in increased demand for FDA IV, the school will have sufficient space in K057 to increase its enrollment.

FDA IV is one of a cohort of 94 schools that have been designated by the DOE as a Renewal School. Schools selected to be Renewal Schools were assigned a “Priority” or “Focus” accountability status by the New York State Department of Education, demonstrated low academic achievement (in 2012, 2013, and 2014), and scored “Proficient” or below on their most recent Quality Review.

In August 2015, FDA IV’s accountability status changed from “Priority” to “Good Standing.” This change does not impact FDA IV’s participation in the Renewal Program.

As a Renewal School, FDA IV has transformed into a Community School. Community Schools are intended to be

neighborhood hubs where students receive high-quality academic instruction, families can access social services, and communities congregate to share resources and address their common challenges. FDA IV will remain a Community School in the 2016-2017 school year and beyond if re-sited to K057.

Building K057 has the capacity to serve a total of 1,076 students. If this proposal is approved, in the 2016-2017 school year, FDA IV will serve a projected 55-95 students per grade in ninth through twelfth grades in K057. Based on the projected enrollments of FDA IV, BAGF, and the consolidated J.H.S. 057, if the proposal to consolidate M.S. 385 with J.H.S. 057 is approved, in the 2016-2017 school year, K057 will have a total projected building enrollment of 380-490 students, yielding a projected building utilization rate of 35%-46%. If the proposal to consolidate J.H.S. 057 and M.S. 385 is not approved, J.H.S. 057 will have a projected enrollment of 150-180 students and M.S. 385 will have a projected enrollment of 45-75 students in the 2016-2017 school year; this will result in a total projected building enrollment of 365-505, yielding a projected building utilization rate of 34%-47% in the 2016-2017 school year.

The details of this proposal have been released in an EIS, which can be accessed here:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2015-2016/December2015SchoolProposals>

Copies of the EIS are also available in the main offices of FDA IV, P.S. 26, and Madiba Prep.

Summary of Comments Received

Public engagement was conducted by the DOE in the course of creating this proposal, which included:

- On October 21, 2015, a Deputy Chancellor from the DOE conducted a walkthrough of K057 and a School Leadership Team (“SLT”) debrief was held. At the debrief, DOE representatives were available to answer questions and address concerns from representatives of the impacted school communities in advance of the PEP vote. Participants included representatives from the DOE’s Office of District Planning and Office of Space Planning, the District 16 Community Education Council (“CEC 16”), J.H.S. 057’s SLT, BAGF’s SLT, FDA IV’s SLT, and M.S. 385’s SLT.

The DOE also held two Joint Public Hearings regarding this proposal: one at K057 on November 30, 2015, and the other at K026 on December 10, 2015. At the meeting at K057 on November 30, 2015 interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on both the proposal to consolidate J.H.S. 057 and M.S. 385, and the proposal to re-site FDA IV to K057. Approximately 80 members of the public attended the hearing. There were seventeen (17) speakers. Individuals present at the meeting included: Deputy Chancellor of Operations and Chancellor’s Designee, Elizabeth Rose; District 16 Superintendent, Evelyn Santiago; Brooklyn High Schools Superintendent, Karen Watts; CEC 16 President, NeQuan McLean; CEC 16 representatives, Ralph Yozzo and Susana Clarke; J.H.S. 057 Principal, Celeste Douglas; J.H.S. 057 SLT member, June Boyd; M.S. 385 Principal, Anne Marie Malcolm; M.S. 385 SLT member, Keshelle Cudjoe; BAGF Principal, Dannielle Darbee; BAGF SLT member, Pauline Brown; FDA IV Principal, Elvin Crespo; FDA IV SLT member, Alexander Bodas; and Jonathan Geis, Jyoti Folch, and Greg Whitten from the DOE.

At the meeting at K026 on December 10, 2015, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal to re-site FDA IV to K057. Approximately fifteen (15) members of the public attended the hearing. There were seven (7) speakers. Individuals present at the meeting included: Chancellor’s Designee and Brooklyn High Schools Superintendent, Karen Watts; District 16 Superintendent, Evelyn Santiago, CEC 16 President, NeQuan McLean; FDA IV Principal, Elvin Crespo; FDA IV SLT member, Maria Acedo; P.S. 26 Principal, Cynthia Celestine; P.S. 26 SLT member, Debra Ellison; Madiba Prep Principal, Sharon Stephens; Madiba Prep SLT member, Jean-Claude Dorelus; and Albery Melo and Greg Whitten from DOE.

The following comments and remarks were made at the Joint Public Hearing on November 30, 2015:

1. CEC 16 president, NeQuan McLean, commented that the CEC 16 supports both proposals, and CEC 16 representative Ralph Yozzo will read the resolutions passed in support of these proposals at the November 17, 2015 CEC 16 public meeting.
2. CEC 16 representative, Ralph Yozzo, commented as follows:

- a. CEC 16 passed a resolution in support of the proposal to consolidate J.H.S. 057 and M.S. 385, based on the understanding that District 16 continues to experience declining academic enrollment, that low enrollment will eventually cause the schools to close, and that the proposed consolidation is necessary to ensure that students receive the quality educational services that they deserve.
 - b. CEC 16 passed a resolution in support of the proposal to re-site FDA IV to K057, based on the understanding that high school aged students should not be located in the same buildings as elementary school students, that there is sufficient space in K057 with other schools serving students in the same age group, and that K057 will provide FDA IV students with needed high school facilities.
 - c. CEC 16 feels that information in both proposals could have been communicated in a more forthright and transparent way, and the CEC 16 requests that the DOE work to improve how information is communicated to parents and improve transparency in such practices, and work to improve how proposals can better involve parent input.
3. FDA IV SLT representative, Alexander Bolas, commented that he supports the proposal to re-site FDA IV, as FDA IV is a small school without many resources, and this proposal allows FDA IV students to have access to more classes, resources, and extra-curricular activities.
 4. Dannielle Darbee, Principal of BAGF, commented that she welcomes the opportunity for FDA IV to join building K057. BAGF also has low enrollment, so she is looking forward to combining resources and opportunities with students in FDA IV.
 5. Anne Marie Malcolm, Principal of M.S. 385, commented that M.S. 385 has had issues providing enough resources for students due to low enrollment; consolidating schools is a great approach to ensure that students have the best options academically.
 6. Celeste Douglas, Principal of J.H.S. 057, commented that J.H.S. 057 has low enrollment and is excited for the opportunity to consolidate with M.S. 385. She does not want to let this opportunity pass by.
 7. Elvin Crespo, Principal at FDA IV, commented that he supports the proposal to re-site FDA IV and looks forward to receiving the decision soon.
 8. A student commented that she feels that both schools should consolidate because the school could then offer more activities and classes for students, which would make it more popular for future students.
 9. A student commented as follows:
 - a. He feels that it is a good idea for the schools to consolidate because it means that the school could offer more classes and there would be more students to meet and interact with, which would help with learning overall.
 - b. He questioned the effect of consolidation for teachers, staff, and faculty, and was concerned that the consolidation would lead to people losing their job.
 10. Multiple commenters stated that they felt the decision had already been made regarding the results of the consolidation proposal.
 11. Multiple commenters stated that they felt more engagement should have been done with the school communities, and that engagement should have occurred earlier in the process.
 12. Multiple commenters expressed support for the consolidation proposal, stating that low enrollment in both schools has led to a lack of resources and opportunities for current students.
 13. Multiple commenters questioned what would happen to faculty and staff if the consolidation occurs.
 14. One commenter expressed sentiment that the PEP meeting discussing these proposals should be held in Brooklyn, rather than Manhattan.
 15. One commenter expressed concern that the proposal to consolidate would lead to large class sizes.
 16. One commenter questioned how this proposal might impact safety and security in the consolidated school.
 17. One commenter expressed support for the principal of M.S. 385.
 18. One commenter asked about the composition of PEP members.

The following comments and remarks were made at the Joint Public Hearing on December 10, 2015:

19. CEC 16 president, NeQuan McLean, commented that the CEC 16 submits the same resolution as that submitted at the K057 Joint Public Hearing in support of this proposal. Generally, the CEC supports this proposal because it moves a high school out of an elementary school building, which is a process that the CEC 16 supports. He stated that this is a great decision by the DOE.
20. Sharon Stephens, Principal of Madiba Prep, commented that she is in support of this proposal. From her understanding after speaking with Principal Crespo, FDA IV and BAGF are already in the process of sharing resources and students travel between both sites. This proposal seems beneficial for students of FDA IV and is

a good idea.

21. Jean-Claude Dorelus, Madiba Prep SLT member, commented that he is in favor of this proposal. He supports this proposal because the schools can share resources, and it is appropriate for the high school students from FDA IV to be in a building with other high school students.
22. Elvin Crespo, Principal of FDA IV, commented that he supports this proposal. He and Principal Darbee from BAGF have already started sharing resources, and students already travel between both sites. This proposal allows both schools to share best practices and to bring their different focuses together to give students at both schools more enriched academic opportunities.
23. Maria Acedo, FDA IV SLT member, commented that she is in support of this proposal. She stated, that the current low enrollment at FDA IV causes challenges in providing students with enough resources, and the sharing of resources between both schools will be beneficial for the students of FDA IV and BAGF.
24. Cynthia Celestine, Principal of P.S. 26, commented that she is in support of this proposal. It has been difficult at times to co-exist with an elementary school and high school in the same building, and she strongly supports this proposal to site FDA IV in a building with other high school students.
25. Debra Ellison, P.S. 26 SLT member, commented that she is in favor of this proposal and wishes the students of FDA IV much success in their new school site.

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

The DOE received zero (0) voicemails through the dedicated phone number for this proposal.

The DOE received zero (0) emails through the dedicated email address for this proposal.

Analysis of Issues Raised, Significant Alternatives, Significant Alternatives Proposed

Comments 1, 2(b), 3, 4, 7, and 19-25 are in favor of the proposal and do not require a response.

Comments 2(c) and 11 offer the opinion that the DOE should have more thoroughly engaged the communities impacted by this proposal.

The DOE is committed to engaging with the community for all proposals to implement a significant change in school utilization, as detailed in Chancellor's Regulation A-190. Chancellor's Regulation A-190 sets out the public review and comment process that the DOE undertakes with respect to all such proposals by the Chancellor, including co-locations and consolidations. In addition to the information about this proposed consolidation provided in the EIS, the DOE has also provided this information through public engagement for this proposal. The DOE provided parent letters for distribution to the J.H.S. 057, M.S. 385, BAGF, FDA IV, P.S. 26, and Madiba Prep school communities about the proposal after the EIS was posted, which described the proposal and included information about the upcoming Joint Public Hearing and PEP vote. Separate notices for the Joint Public Hearing and PEP vote were also provided to the school communities for distribution. Last, this proposal and notices for the Joint Public Hearing and PEP hearing have been posted to the DOE website since October 30, 2015, available at <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2015-2016/December2015SchoolProposals>.

In addition, on October 21, 2015 the DOE conducted a walkthrough and SLT debrief of building K057 led by a Deputy Chancellor where members of J.H.S. 057's, M.S. 385's, BAGF'S, and FDA IV's SLT were all present, in addition to individuals from CEC 16, the Office of District Planning, the District 16 Superintendent, and the Office of Space Planning. Last, the DOE offered each school impacted by this proposal the opportunity to request an optional community meeting to further discuss this proposal, though no schools requested that meeting.

In addition to the above-described events that took place before this proposal will be voted upon and those set out by Chancellor's Regulation A-190, the Office of District Planning attended the CEC 16 public meeting on November 17, 2015, where this proposal and other considered proposals for District 16 were discussed, and where representatives of the Office of District Planning and the District 16 Superintendent answered questions about this considered proposal and others from present District 16 community members.

Comment 14 expresses sentiment that since this proposal pertains to schools in Brooklyn, this PEP meeting should be held in Brooklyn.

At any given meeting, the PEP votes on several proposals impacting schools across the city and the monthly meeting locations vary from month to month. Throughout the school year, PEP meetings rotate amongst locations throughout all five boroughs. All boroughs host at least one PEP meeting per calendar year. Locations are chosen based on the school's ability to accommodate large public meetings and convenience to public transportation as well as accessibility.

Comment 18 inquired who comprises the PEP.

The PEP is comprised of 13 members: one (1) member is appointed by each borough President, and eight (8) members are appointed by the New York City Mayor. More information about the PEP, including its current members, bylaws, hearing schedule, and more, can be located at the PEP website, located at <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/default.htm>.

Comments 2(a), 5, 6, 8 – 10, 12, 13, and 15 - 17 pertain to the proposal to consolidate J.H.S. 057 and M.S. 385, which was also discussed at the November 30th Joint Public Hearing. As these comments relate to the separate proposal to consolidate J.H.S. 057 and M.S. 385, they will not receive comment in this Public Comment Analysis; instead, analysis of these comments can be found in the separate Public Comment Analysis released to accompany the proposal to consolidate J.H.S. 057 and M.S. 385. A link to the Public Comment Analysis discussing the proposal to consolidate J.H.S. 057 and M.S. 385 can be found at <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2015-2016/December2015SchoolProposals>.

Changes Made to the Proposal.

No changes have been made to this proposal.