

Public Comment Analysis

Date: March 17, 2014

Topic: The Proposed Temporary Partial Re-Siting and Co-Location of P.S. 056 Norwood Heights (10X056) with New School (10X077) and a District 75 School (75XTBD) in New Building X177 for Two Years Beginning in the 2014-2015 School Year

Date of Panel Vote: March 18, 2014

Summary of Proposal

On December 6, 2013 the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) issued an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) describing a proposal to temporarily re-site and co-locate five grade levels of P.S. 056 Norwood Heights (10X056, “P.S. 56”) with a new district elementary school (“10X077”) and a District 75 school (75XTBD) in building X177 (“X177”), located at 3177 Webster Ave, Bronx, New York, 10467, in Community School District 10 (“District 10”), for a two-year period beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. Building X177 is currently under construction and will be completed prior to the 2014-2015 school year. A “re-siting” means that students will attend classes in a different building than 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 such as auditoriums, gymnasiums, libraries, and cafeterias. If this proposal is approved, the grade levels of P.S. 56 served in new building X177 will be co-located for two years with 10X077, a new zoned district elementary school that will open with kindergarten in the 2014-2015 school year and serve grades kindergarten through five at full scale, and a yet-to-be determined District 75 school (“75XTBD”).

P.S. 56 is an existing zoned elementary school that serves students in kindergarten through fifth grades. P.S. 56 primarily serves students in building X056 (“X056”), located at 341 East 207th Street, Bronx, New York 10467, in District 10. As described in a separate EIS issued on October 11, 2013 and approved by the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”) on November 26, 2013, one grade of P.S. 56 is currently co-located in the St. Brendan Building with St. Brendan School, a private parochial school. That re-siting and co-location was initially effectuated by an emergency declaration signed by the Chancellor in order to alleviate immediate overcrowding resulting from the loss of a leased annex. The October 11, 2013 proposal extends the duration of that co-location through the 2015-2016 school year and will not be impacted if this proposal is approved.

Building X056 is undergoing construction that will substantially increase the capacity of the building as a whole by creating an addition to expand it; the construction of that addition is anticipated to be completed prior to the start of the 2016-2017 school year, at which time the grade level served at St. Brendan Building will return to X056. As described in the October 11, 2013 EIS, additional construction is needed on the main portion of X056, which can only take place when no students are being served in the main building; as explained in the previous EIS, it was originally the DOE’s intention to serve all P.S. 56 students in the building’s new addition while construction was to proceed on the main building. However, the DOE has since found an alternate site for P.S. 56 students—new building X177. By re-siting the students there in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years, the entire construction project on X056 will be expedited, rather than being completed for the 2018-2019 school year (as stated in the previous EIS). If the remaining grades of P.S. 56 are re-sited to X177, the entire project (main building and addition) can be completed in time for the 2016-2017 school year. The DOE believes that completing the construction on this timeline, accelerated by two years, is in the best interests of the community, as it will reduce disruptions and provide a quicker solution for P.S. 56’s overcrowding, as well as increase elementary capacity in District 10 more quickly.

Building X177, where some P.S. 56 grade levels will be re-sited, is being constructed with the intent of serving 10X077 and 75XTBD. 10X077, a new, zoned district elementary school, will admit students according to standard

zoned admissions priorities as described in Chancellor's Regulation A-101. 75XTBD is a yet-to-be determined District 75 program. 10X077 will begin phasing into the X177 building in the 2014-2015 school year with kindergarten and will add one grade each subsequent year until it reaches full scale to serve kindergarten through fifth grades in the 2018-2019 school year. 10X077 will serve approximately 95-100 kindergarten students in its first year of phase-in and approximately 190-210 kindergarten and first-grade students in its second year of phase-in. 75XTBD will serve 30-60 students beginning in the 2014-2015 school year and beyond.

Building X177 will have a target capacity of 640 students. Without this proposed co-location during 10X077's and 75XTBD's phase-in, X177 is projected to be significantly underutilized, with a maximum utilization rate of 26% in 2014-2015 and a maximum utilization rate of 42% in 2015-2016. If this proposal is approved, during the first year of its implementation, in 2014-2015, there will be a total of 645-735 students served collectively by 10X077, 75XTBD, and P.S. 56 in building X177. This yields a projected target utilization rate of 101%-115%. During the second and final year of this proposal, in 2015-2016, 10X077, 75XTBD, and P.S. 56 will serve a total of 735-835 students in building X177. This yields a projected target utilization rate of 115%-130%. These rates are comparable to other schools serving elementary grades in the surrounding neighborhoods within District 10, where utilization rates are projected to range from 99%-145%, indicating a need for additional capacity in this area of District 10, which the construction of building X177 and expansion of building X056 are intended to help create.

Despite the fact that the building utilization rate is projected to be over 100%, the DOE believes the building has sufficient space to accommodate P.S. 56, 10X077, and 75XTBD. 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. Therefore, the DOE believes that the X177 building has the capacity to accommodate P.S. 56, 10X077, and 75XTBD throughout the duration of temporary re-siting.

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/SchoolProposalsMar18PEP>.

Copies of the EIS are also available in the main office of P.S. 56.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at the X056 building on January 14, 2014. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the original proposal. Approximately 19 members of the public attended the hearing and 4 people spoke. Present at the meeting were District 10 Community Superintendent Melodie Mashel; Community Education Council 10 ("CEC 10") President Marvin Shelton and member Valerie Greaves; Principal of P.S. 56 Norwood Heights Priscilla Sheeran; P.S. 56 School Leadership Team ("SLT") representatives Maureen O'Neill, Mary Ramirez, Mary Finn, and Carrie Rivera; and Adrien Siegfried and Annabelle Eliashiv from the DOE.

The following comments and remarks were made at the joint public hearing on January 14, 2014 on the proposal:

1. Priscilla Sheeran, Principal of P.S. 56 asserted that:
 - a. She supports this proposal, as temporarily re-siting P.S. 56 in new building X177 will expedite construction on the X056 building.
 - b. Construction on P.S. 56 will significantly alleviate overcrowding in the building and allow P.S. 56 to serve its zone.
 - c. She appreciates the support and flexibility of her staff and community throughout the construction.
2. Marvin Shelton, President of CEC 10, voiced his support for this proposal.
3. Valerie Greaves, a member of CEC 10, voiced her support for this proposal.
4. One parent voiced her approval of this proposal.
5. Superintendent Mashel voiced her support of the proposal on the grounds that the temporary re-siting would speed up the construction of P.S. 56's addition, which will substantially increase P.S. 56's capacity.

A second community meeting was held on March 12, 2014 on the proposal:

At a separate community meeting, interested parties had another opportunity to provide input on and ask questions about the proposal. Approximately 9 members of the public attended this meeting and 3 people spoke. Present at the meeting were CEC 10 President Marvin Shelton; Principal of P.S. 56 Norwood Heights Priscilla Sheeran; P.S. 56 SLT representatives Maureen O'Neill, Ada Cortes, Carmen Lugo, and Carmen Garcia; and Juan Rosales and Jesse Mojica from the DOE. Additionally, a walkthrough of the X056 building was conducted by Juan Rosales and Jesse Mojica from the DOE before the community meeting on March 12, 2014.

The following questions were asked at the community meeting on March 12, 2014 on the proposal:

6. Multiple commenters asked how student pick-up would be facilitated for parents of students who are split-sited between the X177 building and St. Brendan Building.
7. One commenter asked whether students would have to re-enroll in P.S. 56 as a result of this re-siting.

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

The DOE also received the following written comment via email.

8. A student at P.S. 56, shared that:
 - a. He and his family support the proposal to temporarily re-site the remaining grades of P.S. 56 to the X177 building.
 - b. He is very satisfied with the staff at P.S. 56.
 - c. He needs assistance with the middle school application process.

No oral comments were submitted.

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

Comments 1(a, b, c), 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8(a) are in support of this proposal and thus do not require a response.

Comment 6 pertains to pick-up procedures for P.S. 56 at the X177 building and St. Brendan Building.

Principal Sheeran explained that when P.S. 56 moves into the new X177 building, it will continue to have staggered dismissal times as it currently does to accommodate the split-siting between the X056 building and St. Brendan Building. The staggered dismissal times will allow parents to pick up students from the St. Brendan Building first and then pick up students from the X177 building.

Comment 7 pertains to the potential impact on enrollment procedures for P.S. 56 due to the re-siting.

This proposal will not have an impact on P.S. 56's admissions or enrollment procedures. Principal Sheeran of P.S. 56 explained that even though P.S. 56 will be serving students in a new location, parents will not have to go through the admissions process again to enroll their children in P.S. 56.

Comment 8(b) expresses satisfaction with P.S. 56's staff.

The DOE acknowledges and commends the staff members of P.S. 56 for their hard work, dedication, and passion for the school.

Comment 8(c) is not directly related to the proposal; however, the DOE connected the student with the Bronx Enrollment Office, which offered him assistance with the middle school application process.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes were made to the proposal.