



Date: March 22, 2010

Topic: Proposed Co-location of Challenge Leadership Academy with Goldie Maple Academy in School Building Q198

Date of Panel Vote: March 23, 2010

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### **Summary of Proposal**

In the 2010-2011 school year, Challenge Leadership Academy (“Challenge Charter”), a new charter school that will open in 2010-2011, will be temporarily located in school building Q198 (“Q198”) at 3-65 Beach 56 Street, Queens, in Community School District 27 (“District 27”) until the end of the 2011-2012 school year. Challenge Charter will be co-located with Goldie Maple Academy (27Q333, “Goldie Maple”), a school serving grades Pre-K – 7 that will grow to its full Pre-K – 8 grade scale in 2010-2011, in Q198. Challenge Charter will open with approximately 80-120 K-1 students in 2010-2011 and add grade 2 in the 2011-2012 school year. At the end of the 2011-2012 school year, Challenge Charter move into a private facility and scale up to grades K-8.

There is sufficient space in Q198 to house Goldie Maple and Challenge Charter’s K-2 grades. The 2008-2009 target utilization rate of the building was 52%, and its target capacity was 1,043, with enrollment of 541.<sup>1</sup> Q198 has sufficient space for Challenge Charter grades K-2 and Goldie Maple to operate at full organizational capacity.

The co-location of Challenge Charter with Goldie Maple in Q198 will create more K-8 school options for parents and families in District 27, particularly those that live on the Rockaway Peninsula. Given the Peninsula’s geographic location, families in this part of the district have historically had limited educational options due to travel limitations.

An educational impact statement on this proposal was posted on the Department of Education’s Web site on February 2, 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> The educational impact statement incorrectly cited the 2008-2009 target utilization and target capacity figures as 1,080 and 50 percent, respectively. The correct figures provided above, 1,043 and 52 percent were used by the DOE in making the decision to propose this co-location. The educational impact statement has been updated to reflect the correct figures.

### **Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing**

A joint public hearing was held at Q198 on March 4, 2010, and all interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. There were 90 members of the public that attended the hearing. Ten members of the public spoke in opposition to the proposal. Most of the speakers in opposition to the proposal were parents of current Goldie Maple students. They expressed concerns about the two schools sharing space and about the impact of the charter school on the quality of Goldie Maple. Some of them also questioned the accuracy of the space data used to inform the proposal. They supported the idea of additional high-quality options for D27 students, but felt that Goldie Maple was not the right school to incubate the charter school.

Three members of the public spoke in favor of the proposal. One of these speakers was Rev. Mullings of the Challenge Charter School organization and one of his board members. They all spoke about the need for more high-quality schools and promised that Challenge Charter would be a good partner with Goldie Maple while the two organizations shared space. They also promised that all students would benefit from any shared space arrangement.

### **Summary of Issues Raised in Written and Oral Comments and Significant Alternatives Suggested**

A total of ten written and five oral comments regarding this proposal have been received; comments were received from Goldie Maple parents and members of the community. Eight written comments were against the proposal and two were in support of the proposal. Those in opposition to the proposal stated their belief that Goldie Maple is a growing school and the co-location of a charter school would be unfair to both schools. Those in support of the proposal included Goldie Maple's daughter, Desiree Maple. She stated that the school would afford the community more educational opportunities.

In addition a letter petition was received with 93 signatures from Goldie Maple parents. The letter stated that allowing 120 additional students into the building would cause overcrowding and uproot Goldie Maple's early childhood classes in Pre-K, kindergarten and first grade. The letter further noted that note that Goldie Maple is growing and in September 2010, the school will add an 8<sup>th</sup> grade class. The letter claimed that the figures used to justify this proposal were over 2 years old. In addition, the letter stated that the proposed co-location would result in a loss of needed instructional space for Goldie Maple.

One advocacy organization submitted general comments objecting to all proposed co-locations of schools being considered by the Panel on March 23, 2010. A summary and analysis of these comments is included in the attached appendix.

No significant alternatives were proposed.

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

At both the public hearing and in the comments received, the community expressed concern that the utilization figure used by the DOE in making its proposal to site Challenge Charter in Q198 is incorrect. The school has asked the DOE to determine if the building's capacity figured should be adjusted for its current PreK-8 configuration and the DOE has agreed to look into this; however, it is important to note that this proposal and space allocations are based on a building's available rooms as compared to the school's number of sections, not simply the utilization. The utilization figure simply serves as a "snapshot" of a building's usage.

The comments also claim that the charter school will cause Goldie Maple to lose needed classroom space and reduce its enrollment. This year's analysis of the building indicates that it has 48 full-size rooms and 17 half-size rooms. Based on that analysis and an enrollment projection indicating Goldie Maple will have 34 general education sections in the 2010-11 school year, there is excess space in the building (based on standard Citywide instructional footprint). Should the proposal be approved by the Panel for Education Policy, the space planner will re-visit the school and meet with the principal to devise a specific space plan for the two organizations – this will include the allocation of classrooms, administrative space and shared facilities for the two-year period. The siting of Challenge Charter in Q198 for two school years will not cause overcrowding in the building. Challenge Charter's enrollment will be limited in each of its two years at Q198 to the number of rooms that it is allocated in the plan. Challenge Charter will only be housed in PS/IS 333 for the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years, while it finalizes its private space agreement. At Goldie Maple, the early childhood grades of Pre-K, kindergarten and first grade will continue to function with classroom space based on the Citywide instructional footprint.

No changes have been made to the proposal. It will be presented to the Panel for Educational Policy as it is currently posted.

A copy of the educational impact statement for this proposal can be obtained at [http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/676176D9-06BC-42A9-9C45-C5D3C5110CD3/79804/Q198\\_ChallengeLeadership\\_AmendedEIS\\_Final\\_32210.pdf](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/676176D9-06BC-42A9-9C45-C5D3C5110CD3/79804/Q198_ChallengeLeadership_AmendedEIS_Final_32210.pdf).

## **Appendix: Response to General Comments Regarding Proposed Co-locations of Schools**

### **Summary of Issues Raised and Significant Alternatives Suggested**

One advocacy organization submitted general comments objecting to all proposed co-locations of schools. In opposing the DOE's proposed co-locations, the comments cited the following reasons: (1) the DOE did not use accurate data in analyzing the utilization and capacity of school buildings; (2) the utilization formula used by the DOE is inadequate and assumes inappropriate target class sizes; (3) charter schools and the DOE's new small schools enroll fewer high needs students than district and citywide averages, leading to higher concentrations of high needs students in district schools; and (4) the expansion of charters and new small schools has eliminated critical space from existing district schools.

The comments suggest a moratorium on any new co-locations until an independent review is conducted to assess the capacity in existing public school buildings and make determinations about the amount of space required to reduce class size to mandated levels.

### **Analysis of Issues Raised, Significant Alternatives Proposed and Changes Made to the Proposals**

The comments assert that the DOE did not use accurate data in analyzing utilization and capacity of school buildings. The data used in analyzing the utilization and capacity of school buildings comes from "The Enrollment, Capacity and Utilization Report" (also known as the "Blue Book"), which is the standard by which the DOE measures the maximum capacity of a school building compared to the enrollment. These calculations are based on information provided by principals in the Annual Facilities Survey conducted by the School Construction Authority. In addition to considering the Blue Book information, the DOE conducts a physical survey of school buildings and takes into consideration current programming prior to proposing a change in utilization.

With regard to the comment regarding the use of inappropriate target class sizes, the DOE does use aspirational targets for school buildings but feels that these goals are appropriate for ensuring a quality education for all students. The DOE understands that building usage varies by schools and leaves programming decisions to school leaders. However, it is important to have a standard means of assessing the use of our limited physical plant resources consistently across the city. The class size targets used for the 2008-2009 Blue Book calculations of target capacity and utilization are lower than those used for determining historical capacity and utilization.

Specific reference was made to targets in the City's Contracts for Excellence (CFE) class size reduction plan. DOE proposals for the co-locations of schools are based on current class sizes and the available space in each applicable building according to the citywide instructional footprint which prescribes the number of classrooms needed for each school. Proposals are not based on the space needed for a school to achieve class size reduction targets. The CFE targets are aspirational, are predicated upon levels of State CFE funding that may not occur due to the

national recession, and do not reflect current class sizes. The DOE does not believe that the proposed co-locations will increase class size.

The comments assert that charter schools and the DOE's new small schools enroll fewer high needs students than the citywide and district averages, thereby leading to higher concentrations of high needs students in district schools. It is important to note that charter school admissions are done by lottery as required by State Education Law. Charter schools do in fact serve the full range of public school students as do the DOE's new small schools. The new small schools that have been created over the last six years are serving English language learners and special education students at a higher rate than schools citywide, with better outcomes. On average the new schools have a graduation rate of 75%. During the 2008-2009 school year, ninth-grade enrollment at new schools included 14.2 percent special education students and 13.6 percent English language learners, compared to 12.8 percent special education students and 10.3 percent English language learners citywide. When looking across a school's entire population, they also serve more special education students and ELL students than the citywide average. In 2008-2009, new schools served an average of 12.3 percent special education students and 12.6 percent English language learners compared with 11.6 percent and 10.8 percent, respectively, citywide.