



Date: March 22, 2010

Topic: Proposed Re-Siting of Bronx Haven High School (08X381) to School Building X600 and Co-location of Bronx Haven High School and Alfred E. Smith Career and Technical Education High School in School Building X600

Date of Panel Vote: March 23, 2010

Summary of Proposal

On January 27, 2010, the Department of Education (DOE) issued an educational impact statement setting forth a proposal to re-site both Bronx Haven High School (“Bronx Haven”) and the NYC Charter High School for Architecture, Engineering and Construction Industries (“AECI”) and co-locate both schools with Alfred E. Smith Career and Technical Education High School (07X600, “Alfred E. Smith”) in school building X600. Based on the feedback from the community, the DOE revised the original proposal. The DOE has decided that rather than re-site and co-locate both Bronx Haven and AECI, only Bronx Haven will be co-located with Alfred E. Smith in the X600 building. A revised educational impact statement was issued on March 3, 2010.¹

Before the start of the 2010-2011 school year, Bronx Haven will move from its current location in school building X140, located at 916 Eagle Avenue, Bronx, in Community School District 8 (“District 8”) to X600, located at 333 East 151 Street, Bronx, in Community District 7 (“District 7”). Bronx Haven and Alfred E. Smith will be co-located in X600.

Bronx Haven is a high performing transfer school that currently serves approximately 100 students in grades 9-12. Transfer schools are small, academically rigorous, diploma granting high schools designed to re-engage students who are over-age and under-credited or who have dropped out of high school. Interested students apply directly to the transfer school through its

¹ In December 2009, the DOE announced a proposal to phase-out and eventually close Alfred E. Smith and, on December 11, 2009, issued an Educational Impact Statement on the proposal. Subsequently, the DOE revised its proposal to phase-out and close Alfred E. Smith, announcing that instead of phasing out the school completely, the DOE would instead phase out only the school’s construction trades and architectural engineering career and technical education (“CTE”) programs and retain its Automotive Technology CTE program. On January 27, 2010, the DOE published a Revised Educational Impact Statement on the revised proposal. Because the DOE revised its proposal to co-locate both Bronx Haven and AECI in X600, the DOE also issued a revised educational impact statement for the proposal to phase down Alfred E. Smith.

school-based process. The move of Bronx Haven to X600 will allow the school to grow to its intended size of 175-225.

The 2008-2009 target utilization rate of X600 was 75%, and its target capacity was 1,562. There is sufficient space in X600 for Bronx Haven and Alfred E. Smith's automotive technology program to operate at full organizational capacity after Alfred E. Smith's phase-down is complete. Moving Bronx Haven to X600 will allow the school to grow to its intended size so that it can continue to provide high quality transfer school options to students in the Bronx.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearings

Two joint public hearings were held regarding this proposal. The first joint public hearing was held in school building X600 on March 19, 2010, and all interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 30 people attended the hearing. There were 6 speakers. Four members of the public spoke in opposition to the proposal, citing concerns about space sharing when there is already limited space. Two members of the public spoke in favor of the proposal, stating that Bronx Haven will provide excellent options for students.

The second joint public was held in school building X140 on March 22, 2010. Three people attended the hearing and no one signed up to give public comments.

No alternatives were proposed.

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

One written and no oral comments regarding the proposal to re-site Bronx Haven and co-locate it with Alfred E. Smith in school building X600 were submitted to the phone line and e-mail address designated for public comment. The comment received opposed the co-location noting that merging an overage school with freshmen would create a dangerous situation.

In public comments regarding the original proposal to phase-out and close Alfred E. Smith and the revised proposal to phase down Alfred E. Smith, comments were submitted by individuals expressing concern that AECI would not meet the student demand for a continued architecture program in X600 because it lacked the New York State Education Department certification that Alfred E. Smith's architecture program had obtained.

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.

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

Smith has a longstanding history of providing inadequate academic support to its students, which has resulted in unacceptably low graduation rates at the school. The DOE

recognizes, however, that Smith offers the only automotive CTE program in the Bronx and has developed strong partnerships with leading automotive companies that would take time to re-establish in a new automotive program. Based on these considerations and feedback from the community about the value of Smith's automotive program to students in the Bronx, the DOE has proposed to phase out the school's other CTE programs, focusing efforts to improve academic instruction and student achievement for automotive students. Reducing the school's total enrollment to the student population in the automotive program alone will enable the school to offer the same sort of personalization available in our new, small schools, which have achieved academic outcomes surpassing citywide averages even while serving some of the City's highest-need students.

Bronx Haven will provide an option for over-age and under-credited students in the Bronx, including those already in the building who will have the opportunity to apply. Bronx Haven is a transfer school that opened in 2008 in P.S. 140 in District 8. Moving to Smith will allow the school to grow to scale. Transfer schools have a strong track record of helping over-age, under-credited students get back on track to earn their diplomas. Historically, the over-age, under-credited population completes high school at a rate of 19%; however, overage-undercredited students who attend transfer schools are roughly 2.5 times more likely to graduate. The claim that co-locating a transfer school at Smith will cause a dangerous situation is unfounded.

As explained above, the DOE responded to community concerns about AECI and determined that the school would not best replace the construction trades and architectural engineering pathways in the Smith building. The DOE is working with construction industry leaders in the community to develop a proposal for a new school to open in X600 for the 2011-2012 school year. Any new school sited in the building will offer architecture, construction and/or engineering pathways.

A copy of the educational impact statement for this proposal can be obtained at http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/ronlyres/676176D9-06BC-42A9-9C45-C5D3C5110CD3/78563/X600_BronxHavenrevisedEIS_3310_Final.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.