

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION-DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**

**Grade Truncation of 24Q125
from a 5-8 to a 6-8**

April 9th, 2014

5:30pm

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MS. MADELINE CHAN: --stand for the Pledge
3 of Allegiance and then we will begin the joint
4 public hearing. Please face the flag.

5 [PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE IS RECITED]

6 MS. CHAN: Good evening, everyone. This is
7 a joint public hearing of the Department of
8 Education, Community Education Council and
9 School Leadership Team for the proposed grade
10 truncation of IS125, Thom J. McCann Woodside,
11 24Q125, from a five through eight school to a
12 six through eight school beginning in the 2014-
13 2015 school year. I am the District 24
14 Community Superintendent, Madeline Chan. Thank
15 you all for attending.

16 We have the District 24 Community Education
17 Council and the School Leadership Team of IS 125
18 to participate in this joint public hearing. I
19 am joined tonight by Principal Mittler
20 [phonetic], Sable Vega [phonetic] and Judith
21 Glazer [phonetic] from the SLT, Mr. Bill Kregler
22 [phonetic] from the CEC as well as Assistant
23 Principals Dalton, Gneco [phonetic], Marino,
24 Jenetgo [phonetic] and our network leader, Diane
25 Foley [phonetic]. We also have Eleanor McNamee

1 [phonetic], our District Family Advocate in the
2 audience.

3 This hearing is being audio and video
4 recorded and I'd just like to remind everyone
5 again, if you would like to provide a comment
6 after the proposal is read, your name must be on
7 the sign in sheet. Miss McNamee, the sign in
8 sheet is?

9 MS. MC NAMEE: Right in the back.

10 MS. CHAN: Right in the back. So if you'd
11 like to make a comment, please sign up now.

12 The purpose of this hearing is for you to
13 provide comments about the proposal. Before I
14 describe the proposal, I want to make sure you
15 are all aware of the opportunity to provide your
16 input. All those who wish to speak must sign up
17 in the speakers sign up area located just
18 outside the auditorium. The sign up list will
19 close shortly. Speakers will be given the floor
20 in the order that they signed up. All comments
21 are limited to two minutes. There may be
22 elected officials who arrive at different times
23 throughout the evening. If they wish to speak,
24 we will do our best to accommodate them at the
25 first opportune moment. Those who are here at

1 the start of the public comment segment, will
2 be asked to speak first. All comments will be
3 mentioned in the analysis of public comments to
4 be published and provided to the panel for
5 educational policy the evening before the panel
6 votes. That vote has been rescheduled for May
7 29th, 2014. In addition, we welcome any
8 comments and feedback you may have at any time
9 before the panel votes on this proposal. The
10 email address and phone number where comments
11 may be made are D24Prosposals@schools.nyc.gov
12 and the phone number for comments, 212-374-7621.

13 And now the proposal - - . IS125 is an
14 existing zoned middle school that currently
15 serves grades five through eight in main
16 building Q125, mini building Q825 and
17 transportable classroom unit Q947 located at 46-
18 02 47th Avenue, Queens, New York 11377. IS125
19 serves 10 classes in the mini building. In the
20 spring of 2013, the school construction
21 authority, SCA, approved the removal of IS 125's
22 mini building following the 2013-2014 school
23 year in order to begin the construction of the
24 permanent addition to IS 125 with a designated
25 capacity of approximately 655 seats. The SCA

1 anticipates that the construction will take
2 approximately three years and it's expected to
3 be complete in the 2017-2018 school year.
4 During that time, there will be sufficient space
5 in main building Q125 and transportable
6 classroom unit Q947 to accommodate IS 125
7 students. The SCA anticipates that they will
8 also remove the transportable classroom units
9 when the building addition is complete.

10 In collaboration with school leadership as
11 well as myself, IS 125 has determined that
12 starting in the 2014-15 school year, truncating
13 grade five to align IS 125's grade span with
14 that of other middle schools throughout the
15 district and city will benefit the school
16 community.

17 Current students in grades five will
18 continue to be served at IS 125 as sixth grade
19 students in the 2014-2015 school year. The DOE
20 is also proposing a grade expansion for PS 199
21 so that PS 199 would serve students in
22 kindergarten through fifth grade beginning in
23 the 2014-2015 school year. This proposed grade
24 expansion, which was developed in collaboration
25 with the school leadership, provides the

1 opportunity for PS 199's elementary students to
2 remain at PS 199 across the elementary school
3 grades as well as transition into middle school
4 in the sixth grade along with their District 24
5 peers. If a current IS 125 fifth grade student
6 does not meet the promotional standards at the
7 conclusion of 2013-14 school year and is
8 required to repeat the grade in the 2014-15
9 school year, then the student will be served at
10 their zoned school. For most students, the
11 zoned school is PS 199 which the DOE has also
12 proposed to expand to serve fifth grade in 2014-
13 2015.

14 The DOE does not anticipate that this
15 proposal will prevent IS 125 from continuing to
16 offer any particular academic or extracurricular
17 programs currently offered at the school. With
18 respect to academics, IS 125 will continue to
19 offer all necessary classes to support current
20 students as they work to meet promotional
21 requirements. There will be no change to
22 existing transportation practices at IS 125 due
23 to this proposal.

24 So that is the end of the proposal. At this
25 time I'm going to ask for the sign in sheet.

1 We are going to open the floor for public
2 comments. Speakers will be given the floor in
3 the order that they signed up. Again, all
4 comments are limited to two minutes. Our first
5 speaker is Miss Judith Glazer.

6 MS. JUDITH GLAZER: Thank you, Ms. Chairman.
7 Good evening, everyone. The question we are
8 faced with is do fifth graders belong in
9 elementary or middle school. In terms of
10 personal, social and physical characteristics,
11 research indicates and most educators would
12 agree that fifth graders aren't yet mostly ready
13 to be in a middle school and - - the elementary
14 experience. The reason is related to the onset
15 of puberty which has not begun for most fifth
16 graders. The pupils in fifth grade still
17 resemble children more than they do early
18 adolescence. Even though IS 125 does a great
19 job with keeping the fifth grade away from the
20 older kids and prepares them for sixth grade so
21 it is not such a shock changing classes and
22 having so many teachers, our main building will
23 be unable to accommodate the fifth grade in the
24 2014-15 school year due to the fact that the
25 mini building, which now houses our sixth grade,

1 is being torn down in the fall of 2015 in
2 preparation of building an extension. Therefore
3 having the fifth grade remain at PS 199 will
4 affect the least number of students. It is
5 really sad that the students have to grow up so
6 quickly and adopt a middle school mentality
7 though by remaining at PS 199, their needs are
8 greater met in an elementary school. That is
9 what is really fair and best for them. They are
10 still quite young when they enter IS 125 - - a
11 sea of teenagers. Let them remain children as
12 long as they need to.

13 We are the only five to eight building in
14 District 24 so our school is unique in that way
15 but it also gets us left behind when other
16 schools are implementing new programs. Just
17 last year IS 125 was informed that we were
18 ineligible for a \$20,000 middle school grant
19 because we have a fifth grade. And the
20 Department of Education defines middle school as
21 grades six through eight. Based upon research,
22 DOE structure and organization of their schools,
23 a six to eight grade organization would appear
24 to be more appropriate. With that said, at the
25 CEC meeting held on September 4th at PS 229, I

1 had informed the CEC and IS 125 presently
2 receives students from 13 schools, two
3 districts, 24 and 30, and three grades five, six
4 and seven. I had asked that IS 125 be rezoned
5 so that we only receive additional students in
6 grade six. If IS 125 is going to be truncated
7 to a six to eight grade middle school, then all
8 students should enter in the sixth grade,
9 allowing for continuity of instruction.

10 Presently there are 15 elementary schools in
11 District 30 that are pre-K to five or K to five.
12 The only elementary schools in District 30 that
13 are pre-K to six or K to six, are PS 11, PS 150
14 and PS 152 whose children attend IS 125
15 beginning in grade seven. If the Chancellor
16 proposed truncating IS 125 to be in alignment
17 with the other middle schools in district 24,
18 then PS 11, PS 150 and PS 152 should also be
19 truncated to pre-K five or K five so that there
20 would be aligned with all the other pre-K five
21 or K five schools in district 30.

22 Once again, I ask that the CEC consider a
23 proposal to rezone IS 125 so that we only
24 receive additional students in grade six and
25 that the DOE consider truncating the pre-K six

1 and K six schools in district 30 to pre-k five
2 and K five so that IS 125 will receive their
3 students only in grade six instead of grade six
4 and seven.

5 MS. CHAN: Thank you, Miss Glazer. Our next
6 speaker is Laura, is it Kayim [phonetic]?

7 MS. LAURA KAYAM: Kayam. [phonetic].

8 MS. CHAN: Kayam, sorry. Come on up.

9 MS. KAYAM: - - sorry, I have a cold today.
10 Good evening, everyone. What I have, what I
11 would like to say is, talk a little bit about
12 the day to day life at our school. And as Miss
13 Glazer had said, we have a very huge and unusual
14 feeder pattern. By limiting the fifth grade, we
15 still have a huge and unusual feeder pattern but
16 it's also quite chaotic. When we receive
17 students in the seventh grade, we cannot work
18 with them and do our best for them. In the
19 proposal you had said something about
20 benefitting the school community. Because of
21 our chaotic feeder program, we're not able to do
22 that or we won't be able to do that with those
23 students in the seventh and eighth grade. If we
24 can create a feeder pattern the way Mrs. Glazer
25 mentioned, that would give us the opportunity as

1 a school community to best serve all our
2 students from the sixth, seventh and the eighth
3 grade. We would be able to create that stable
4 environment that they would need so that they
5 can succeed because that's what we do. And
6 quite frankly, that's what we do well here.
7 When we talk about many of our students, we also
8 talk about the part of the students that come in
9 to us in seventh grade, the bottom third. Fifty
10 per cent of our bottom third students come in in
11 the seventh grade in ELA. Forty-three per cent
12 of our bottom math students come in in the
13 seventh grade. There's nothing that you can say
14 or there's nothing that I can think of that
15 would benefit those students coming in at that
16 time. If we can stabilize our feeder pattern
17 because, you know, we're truncating the school,
18 proposed to truncate the school, it would
19 stabilize the feeder pattern and bring those
20 students in in the sixth grade. They have a
21 better opportunity. They have a better chance
22 to succeed. And I think that that's a part of
23 the conversation that we need to have as well.
24 Quite frankly, we have students that do go to
25 Stuyvesant. We have students that do go to Tech

1 and to Bronx Science but we can't do that
2 unless we get them and we have them with us. We
3 have continuity here. All of our teachers work
4 together through the fifth right now, sixth,
5 seventh and eighth grade. And so that's why our
6 students succeed, because we take the group of
7 students, they know what's expected of them, we
8 have a high standard and that high standard
9 moves on into the seventh grade and then on to
10 the eighth grade. If the feeder pattern remains
11 the same, that doesn't exist anymore and we
12 can't do our job and we can't, like the proposal
13 says, we cannot benefit the school community.
14 So that's what I wanted to say and I don't know
15 if I have any time left. So does anybody have
16 any questions? Thank you.

17 MS. CHAN: Thank you. Our next speaker is
18 Diane - - .

19 DIANE: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.
20 I've been a seventh grade teacher here at IS 125
21 for nine years. During this time I've had
22 students come to my classes, students who were
23 here from the fifth grade, others who came to us
24 in the sixth grade and others who came as new
25 seventh graders. As a teacher having students

1 who came to us on three grade levels, it's
2 kind of frustrating because the students are on
3 a wide variety of levels both socially and
4 academically. The students who come to IS 125
5 in fifth and sixth grade have a greater
6 advantage than the students who come to us in
7 seventh grade. This is because by the time the
8 students come to my seventh grade class from
9 fifth and sixth grade, they're familiar with the
10 policies, procedures and culture of the program.
11 They know the expectations and carry that
12 through their time at IS 125. They also begin
13 to develop bonds with the faculty and staff over
14 the years. I - - find it beneficial to be able
15 to talk to the fifth and sixth graders about
16 some of my seventh graders to know what's going
17 on. Many of my current seventh graders have
18 expressed that they feel like, or felt like
19 outcasts because the students who were here
20 longer knew everyone already. In terms of
21 academics, the students who come to us in
22 seventh grade feel that they're not as prepared
23 for middle school as their peers. For example,
24 many of the students come to us with little
25 knowledge of science and social studies - -

1 focused on ELA and math. They see this as
2 overwhelming them and they also feel that they
3 have struggled to get to know the school and the
4 new ways of doing things going from elementary
5 school to middle school. Often the students
6 have said that they wished that they came here a
7 year early because by the time they feel
8 comfortable, it's time to graduate.

9 As a teacher, I tend to agree with this and
10 I feel that by creating a new feeder pattern
11 that would have the students come in sixth
12 grade, it would benefit the students to have
13 them come to insure continuity here in the
14 middle school. Thank you.

15 MS. CHAN: Thank you. Evelyn Gomora
16 [phonetic] is our next speaker.

17 MS. EVELYN GOMORA: I just came to support.
18 I'm not speaking. Sorry. - - .

19 MS. CHAN: Cynthia Alvega [phonetic]

20 MS. CYNTHIA ALVEGA: Hi, good evening,
21 everybody. I'm so happy that so - - they could
22 make it. I mean, I was, wasn't able to - - with
23 the time but some of them do make it. Thank you
24 for coming. One of the things that I want to
25 say, I understand as a parent, many of us, we're

1 happy that some of our kids be here - - and I
2 know now that we're going to have it and it's
3 the best for our community and I understand
4 that. But really the thing that I want to say,
5 I hope that - - work together with PS 199 to
6 help the overcrowded school that is suffering
7 right now. So as parents our concern is that
8 the overcrowding over there or I would want
9 their program for our kids. I mean, really, I
10 would be so happy if the kids come over here to
11 get fifth grade. I know that we can. So but
12 really I hope the Department of Education work
13 together with Mr. - - at PS 199 and those kids
14 be benefit with all the programs that they
15 deserve because our kids, they deserve a better
16 education. And like I say, - - , our school is
17 IS 125, it is the best school over here. I
18 mean, nothing - - .

19 MS. CHAN: Thank you. The speaker list has
20 now been exhausted. Again, we welcome any
21 comments and feedback you might have at any time
22 before the Panel for Educational Policy votes on
23 this proposal May 29th, 2014. The email
24 address, once again, the phone number where
25 comments may be made are

1 District27Proposals@schools.nyc.gov, 212-374-
2 7621. Our district family advocate is also able
3 to take comments at our district office. Thank
4 you, everyone, for your participation and for
5 coming out this evening. This joint public
6 hearing is now closed.

7 [END RECORDING]

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

The prior proceedings were transcribed from audio files and have been transcribed to the best of my ability.

Signature: 

Date: April 11, 2014