



Public Comment Analysis¹

Date: October 11, 2013
Topic: The Proposed Re-Siting and Co-Location of Success Academy Charter School – Crown Heights (84K741) with Existing School P.S. 161 The Crown (17K161) in Building K161 Beginning in 2014-2015
Date of Panel Vote: October 15, 2013

Summary of Proposal

In an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) posted on August 30, 2013, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) proposed to re-site and co-locate Success Academy Charter School – Crown Heights (84K741, “SA – Crown Heights”) and site it in Building K161 (“K161”) located at 330 Crown Street, Brooklyn, NY 11225 in Community School District 17. SA – Crown Heights would be re-sited from Building K167 and be co-located in K161 with P.S. 161 The Crown (17K161, “P.S. 161”) beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. A “co-location” means that two or more school organizations are located in the same building and may share common spaces like auditoriums, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. The Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”) will vote on this proposal on October 15, 2013.

SA – Crown Heights is a public charter school that opened in 2013-2014 school year and is currently serving kindergarten and first grade students in Building K167. If this proposal is approved, SA – Crown Heights will be re-sited and co-located with P.S. 161 beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. SA – Crown Heights will add one grade per year until it reaches full scale in K161 serving kindergarten through fifth grades in 2017-2018.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearings

A joint public hearing regarding the proposal was held at the K161 building on October 7, 2013. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the original proposal. Approximately 26 members of the public attended the hearing, and one person spoke. Present at the meeting were Michael Johnson, Principal of P.S. 161 and member of the School Leadership Team (“SLT”), and E. McLean, a staffer at P.S. 161. Community Education Council

¹ This Analysis of Public Comment reflects those public comments received to date. The DOE will continue to accept public comments until Monday, October 14 at 6 p.m. If any additional comments are received, they will be addressed in an amended analysis.

17 was invited but did not participate. Amanda Cahn and Vicki Javier from DOE's Division of Portfolio Planning were also present.

The following comment was made at the joint public hearing on October 7, 2013 regarding the proposal:

1. E. McLean, staff member at P.S. 161, noted that the school's SLT had requested that she make the following comments:
 - a. The SLT cannot participate in this joint public hearing.
 - b. The SLT has not had the opportunity to consider this proposal.
 - c. The DOE scheduled the date for the hearing despite opposition from the CEC and, as such, the SLT cannot take part in the hearing.
 - d. The SLT has not been properly consulted.

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

2. The DOE received a letter from Community Board 9 requesting that the DOE postpone the joint public hearings at buildings K161 and K320 in relation to this proposal in order to allow for additional input from interested parties.
3. The DOE received multiple letters requesting that the DOE postpone the Panel for Educational Policy ("PEP") vote date to allow for more community input.

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

Comments 1(a-d) state that the DOE did not adequately engage with the community and other key stakeholders.

The DOE provided notice to all requisite stakeholders as required by law, and will continue to listen to all community feedback consistent with Chancellor's Regulation A-190. The SLT and CEC were invited to participate in the joint public hearing on this proposal.

Prior to the hearing, the DOE began engagement with Principal Johnson in June 2013 to discuss under-utilized space and the plans to develop a proposal to re-site and co-located Success Academy – Crown Heights at K161. Upon finalizing the proposed scenario, the DOE updated the principal in August 2013 with proposal-specific space and enrollment planning details. Furthermore, the DOE discussed this proposal with members of the CEC and provided relevant updates via email. In addition, the DOE offered to meet with the entire SLT on several occasions to explain the DOE's rationale for co-locating another school in the building and to further collect feedback. The SLT did not grant the DOE an opportunity to engage in that conversation. The proposal was additionally presented in September 2013 at the Brooklyn Portfolio briefing for elected officials and at the monthly Superintendent meeting.

Although various members of the SLT chose to not attend the hearing on this proposal, Principal Johnson, who is a member of the P.S. 161 SLT, was present at the hearing and was invited to make a statement. The DOE notified the CEC that it may offer advice on selecting a date for the hearing because it was a mandated party. The CEC declined to offer dates of its availability for the hearing, and therefore on August 30, 2013 the DOE confirmed a hearing date that suited the principal and other relevant parties. But, the DOE informed the CEC that it would continue to welcome CEC participation in the hearing.

The DOE appreciates all feedback from the community regarding a proposal. Copies of the EIS and BUP regarding this proposal were made available at P.S. 161's main office, and on the DOE's Web site. In addition, the DOE dedicated a proposal-specific email address and voicemail to collect feedback on this proposal. Furthermore, all schools' staff, faculty and parent communities are invited to the Joint Public Hearing to solicit further feedback.

Comments 2 and 3 requested that the DOE postpone the public hearings to allow for additional input.

As mentioned above, the DOE provided notice to all requisite stakeholders as required by law, and has and will continue to listen to community feedback consistent with Chancellor's Regulation A-190. Although not a required participant, Community Board 9 was notified of the joint public hearing.

In compliance with applicable state laws and Chancellor's Regulation A-190, the community had 42 days from the issuance of the proposal to the joint public hearing during which time it could have reviewed the proposal and offered feedback.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to this proposal.