

### Public Comment Analysis

Date: November 18, 2015

Topic: The Proposed Grade Truncation of Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy (09X215) from a 5-8 School to a 6-8 School Beginning in the 2016-2017 School Year

Date of Panel Vote: November 19, 2015

### Summary of Proposal

In an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) posted on October 2, 2015, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) proposed to implement a grade truncation of Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy (09X215, “KAPPA”) so that it will no longer serve fifth grade, beginning in the 2016-2017 school year. KAPPA is an existing district middle school that serves students in fifth through eighth grade in building X148 (“X148”), located at 3630 Third Avenue, Bronx, NY 10456 in Community School District 9 (“District 9”). Building X148 also houses I.S. 219 New Venture School (09X219, “I.S. 219”), which serves students in grades six through eight, and Frederick Douglass Academy III (09X517, “FDA III”), which serves students in grades nine through twelve. In addition, building X148 houses the Community-based Organization (“CBOs”) Children’s Aid Society and Directions for Our Youth.

The proposal was developed in collaboration with the Community Superintendent for District 9 and KAPPA leadership, who believe that the truncation of the fifth grade will benefit the KAPPA and District 9 communities. KAPPA is currently the only district middle school in the Bronx that serves students in grades five through eight. If the proposal is approved by the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”), KAPPA will no longer offer fifth grade after the conclusion of the 2015-2016 school year and will then serve students in sixth through eighth grade. Though it performs well on state English Language Arts (“ELA”) and math assessments compared to schools across District 9 and the city, KAPPA’s enrollment has decreased by approximately 31% since the 2009-2010 school year, with the largest decline in the number of students choosing KAPPA for fifth-grade; this proposal is expected to help address declining enrollment.

The proposed truncation is expected to help address declining enrollment, in part, because it will bring KAPPA into full alignment with the grade spans of other district middle schools across New York City, which typically serve students in grades six through eight. Although KAPPA has historically used a school-based admissions process, beginning with admission for the 2016-2017 school year, KAPPA will now be a part of the centralized middle school admissions process and will admit students from Districts 9 and 10 through a screened admissions method.<sup>1</sup> KAPPA’s grade span alignment and its participation in the centralized middle school admissions process will benefit families by making it easier for students to apply to KAPPA, which is a quality option for middle school in the community.

If approved, KAPPA will no longer enroll fifth-grade students after the conclusion of the 2015-2016 school year. In 2016-2017 and beyond, KAPPA will continue serving students in sixth through eighth grades. Current students in

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<sup>1</sup> KAPPA’s change from school-based admissions to the centralized middle school admissions process is not contingent on the approval of this proposal by the PEP.

grade five who are eligible for promotion will continue to be served at KAPPA as sixth-grade students in the 2016-2017 school year. There may be some current fifth-grade students who do not meet promotional requirements and must repeat the fifth grade, which will no longer be offered by KAPPA in the 2016-2017 school year. If a KAPPA student does not meet the promotional standards at the conclusion of the 2015-2016 school year and is required to repeat fifth grade in the 2016-2017 school year, the student will be served at his or her zoned elementary school or a choice option should the student choose to apply. The DOE believes there is a sufficient amount of fifth grade seats in District 9 to accommodate any KAPPA students who are required to repeat the fifth grade in the 2016-2017 school year, as well as all future fifth-grade students who would have been served at KAPPA.

Although the truncation will eliminate the fifth grade at KAPPA in the 2016-2017 school year, the enrollment of KAPPA's incoming sixth grade is projected to increase. Therefore, overall enrollment at KAPPA is projected to increase despite the truncation. According to the 2013-2014 Enrollment, Capacity, Utilization, Report (the "Blue Book"), building X148 has the capacity to serve 1,556 students. In the 2015-2016 school year, the X148 building serves approximately 1,040 total students, yielding an estimated utilization rate of 67%. If this proposal is approved, the schools in X148 are projected to serve approximately 960-1,060 students in 2016-2017, yielding an estimated building utilization rate of 62%-68%. Once KAPPA's enrollment stabilizes by the 2018-2019 school year, building X148 will serve approximately 1,060-1,160 students, yielding an estimated building utilization rate of 68%-75%.

I.S. 219 is one of a cohort of 94 schools that have been designated by the DOE as Renewal Schools. This proposal will not impact I.S. 219's participation in the School Renewal Program. As a part of the School Renewal Program, I.S. 219 adopted a Community School model beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, with deepened support from CBO partnership, expanded learning time, mental health services, more robust family engagement, additional resources for school leadership and instruction, and increased accountability for improvement. The DOE does not expect this proposal to impact any tailored ancillary services, extended instruction time, or other additional resources that I.S. 219 may receive as a result of the School Renewal Program and the school's designation as a Community School. If this proposal is approved by the PEP, the DOE will continue to work closely with the school community to ensure all students receive the individualized support they need.

The details of this proposal have been released in an EIS, which can be accessed online at:  
<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2015-2016/November2015SchoolProposals>.

Copies of the EIS are also available in the main offices of KAPPA, I.S. 219, and FDA III.

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

A Joint Public Hearing was held at building X148 on November 9, 2015. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 11 members of the public attended the hearing, and no members of the public spoke. Present at the meeting were Leticia Rodriguez-Rosario, the Superintendent for District 9; Sheri Warren, the Principal of KAPPA, representing the School Leadership Team ("SLT") of KAPPA; Dominic Cipollone, the Principal of I.S. 219, representing the SLT of I.S. 219; Jamel Carlos, the Principal of FDA III, representing the SLT of FDA III; John Heneghan, a representative of the SLT of FDA III; and Frank Cassidy, the Assistant Principal of FDA III. The District 9 Community Education Council ("CEC 9") confirmed acceptance of an invitation to attend the hearing, but no CEC 9 members were in attendance due to an unexpected scheduling conflict.

No questions, comments, or remarks were made at the Joint Public Hearing.

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

The DOE did not receive any comments through the dedicated email address or the dedicated phone line for this proposal.

**Changes Made to the Proposal**

- No changes have been made to this proposal.