



Public Comment Analysis

Date: April 25, 2012

Topic: The Proposed Re-siting and Co-location of Renaissance School of the Arts (04M377) with P.S. 155 William Paca (04M155) in Building M155 Beginning in the 2012-2013 School Year

Date of Panel Vote: April 26, 2012

Summary of Proposal

The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) has published an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) proposing to re-site Renaissance School of the Arts (04M377, “Renaissance”), an existing district middle school that serves students in grades six through eight, to building M155 (“M155”), which is located at 319 East 117 Street, New York, NY 10035 in Manhattan’s Community School District 4, beginning in the 2012-2013 school year. Renaissance would be co-located in M155 with P.S. 155 William Paca (04M155, “P.S. 155”), an existing zoned elementary school that serves students in kindergarten through fifth grades. Renaissance is currently located in building M099 (“M099”) at 410 East 100 Street, New York, NY 10029 in Manhattan’s Community School District 4. If this proposal is approved, Renaissance would be re-sited and co-located with P.S. 155 in M155 beginning in the 2012-2013 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.

Renaissance is currently co-located in M099 with M.S. 224 Manhattan East School for Arts & Academics (04M224, “Manhattan East”), an existing middle school that serves students in grades six through eight; Academy of Environmental Science Secondary High School (04M635, “AES”), an existing high school which currently serves students in grades ten through twelve; and The Renaissance Charter High School for Innovation (84M433, “Renaissance Charter HS”), an existing public charter high school that currently serves students in grades nine through ten. The phase-out of AES was approved by the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”) on February 1, 2011. AES no longer admits new students and will close in June 2014. Renaissance Charter HS is currently phasing-in, adding a new grade of students each year until it reaches full scale and serves students in grades nine through twelve in the 2013-2014 school year.

Renaissance currently admits sixth graders through the District 4 Middle School Choice Process, through a limited unscreened process. Admissions procedures are discussed in more detail in Section III.A of the EIS.

M155 currently houses P.S. 155 and P169M@M155 (75M169, “P169M@M155”), one site of a multi-site District 75 school. On December 1, 2011, the DOE published a proposal to re-site P169M@M155 to building M488 (“M488”), located at 233 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022, in Manhattan’s Community School District 2, beginning in the 2012-2013 school year. The PEP voted to approve that proposal on January 18, 2012. This proposal to re-site Renaissance is contingent on P169M@M155’s re-siting to M488. If for any reason P169M@M155’s re-siting is delayed beyond the beginning of the 2012-

2013 school year, the DOE would consider alternate options and address the re-siting in a new or revised proposal.

If this proposal is approved, Renaissance will be re-sited to M155 beginning in September 2012. In the 2011-2012 school year, Renaissance serves 193 students. M155 has a target capacity of 588 students. In 2010-2011, 443 students were served in M155, including pre-kindergarten students, yielding a utilization rate of 76%. Currently, 418 students, including students at P169M@P155M, students at P.S. 155, and pre-kindergarten students, are enrolled in M155, yielding a target building utilization rate of 71%. Utilization rate is discussed in more detail in Section II of the EIS. Of these 418 students, 63 students attend P169M@M155. As noted above, the DOE will re-locate these students. Thus, there will be additional space available in the building in the 2012-2013 school year.

The details of this proposal have been released in an EIS, which can be accessed here:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2011-2012/April2012Proposals.htm>

Copies of the EIS are also available in the main offices of Renaissance, Manhattan East, AES, and Innovation.

I. Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearings

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at building M155 on March 29, 2012. Approximately 35 members of the public attended the hearing and 3 people spoke. Present at the meeting were Community School District 2 Superintendent Luz Cortazzo; District 4 Community Education Council (CEC4) President Hector Nazario; Renaissance School of the Arts Principal Tammy Pate; Renaissance School of the Arts School Leadership Team (“SLT”) Representative Lauren Kellner; P.S. 155 William Paca Principal Lillian Ortiz; and P.S. 155 William Paca SLT Representative Lucy Irace.

A separate joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at building M099 on April 4, 2012. Approximately 295 members of the public attended the hearing, and 26 people spoke. Present at the meeting were Community School District 2 Superintendent Luz Cortazzo; District 4 Community Education Council (CEC4) President Hector Narario; CEC4 Member Leslie Eaton; Manhattan East Principal Lillian Sarro; Manhattan East SLT Representative Ramona Frasier; Manhattan East SLT Representative Trudy Elins; Manhattan East SLT Representative Kelly King Lewis; Renaissance School of the Arts Principal Tammy Pate; Renaissance School of the Arts SLT Representative Lauren Kellner; Renaissance Charter High School for Innovation Principal Nicholas Tishuk; City Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito; Kenya Lee, representing New York State Assembly Member Robert Rodriguez; Damaris Olivo, representing New York State Senator Jose Serrano.

The following comments and remarks were made at the joint public hearing on March 29, 2012:

1. Lillian Ortiz, Principal of P.S. 155 William Paca, stated that she is excited about the proposal and she is eager to collaborate with Principal Pate.
2. Tammy Pate, Principal of Renaissance School of the Arts, stated that she is excited about the tremendous opportunity to collaborate with Principal Ortiz and P.S. 155. She said she is eager to hear about the incredible things happening at P.S. 155 and to learn how best to serve the joint P.S. 155/Renaissance community.

Oral comments made at the joint public hearing:

3. A commenter stated that Renaissance seems like a good choice for a school to be co-located with P.S. 155, but expressed the opinion that the Educational Impact Statement is not particularly community friendly. The commenter asserted that it is disingenuous to say there is no impact on

students and she expressed concerns about the projected utilization rate of 111% described in the EIS.

4. Multiple commenters expressed support for the proposal and voiced excitement for a middle school arts program coming to the neighborhood.

The following comments and remarks were made at the joint public hearing on April 4, 2012:

5. Lauren Kellner, Renaissance School of the Arts SLT member, noted that while Renaissance currently operates with 14 classrooms, the proposal to re-site the school would allocate them 11 classrooms, which is not enough space for the school to offer its arts curriculum. She voiced concern that without the additional space, the school would be unable to conduct the same level of rigorous instruction in the new space.
6. Tammy Pate, Principal of Renaissance School of the arts, asserted that:
 - a. Renaissance's current space can accommodate additional arts programming beyond the standard requirements for all schools. However, if the school loses space, it would no longer be able to provide the same level of arts programming and would effectively cease to be a school of the arts.
 - b. The conversion of a regular classroom at M155 to a middle school science demonstration room may not be completed by the beginning of the 2012 schools year, which is cause for concern.
7. Hector Nazario, President of CEC 4, voiced support for the proposal to re-site Renaissance School of the Arts from M099 to M155.
8. New York City Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito stated that Renaissance's concerns are legitimate and the DOE ought to respond to them.

Oral comments made at the joint public hearing:

9. A commenter asserted that the arts can serve as an outlet for students to succeed in an environment that does not require paper or pencil and we need to make sure the arts are serviced.
10. A commenter asserted that the DOE cannot give equal amounts of space and say it is enough; we need it to be equitable.
11. A commenter questioned how students can have a rich experience when they just get the basics, when they do not have access to ancillary classes.
12. Multiple commenters asserted that Renaissance will not have enough space to support the school's arts programming.

II. Summary of Issues Raised in Written and Oral Comments Submitted to the DOE regarding the proposal

The DOE did not receive any additional comments via email or telephone regarding the proposal.

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

Footprint/Building Utilization

- Comment 3 expresses concern about the utilization rate in M155 as a result of this proposal.
- Comments 5, 6a, 8 and 12 assert that there is not enough space in M155 for the Renaissance to continue its arts programming.

Although a utilization rate in excess of 100% may suggest that a building will be over-utilized or over-crowded in a given year, this rate does not account for the fact that rooms may be programmed for more efficient or different uses than the standard assumptions in the utilization calculation. In this case, the target capacity of M155 is based upon a portion of the building being occupied by a District 75 program. District 75 programs have maximum class sizes of 12

students, compared to a target class size of 28 students for middle school general education classes. As a result, the target capacity of the building would be higher with Renaissance co-located in M155 instead of P169M@M155. The DOE expects the capacity of M155 to increase as a result of rooms that currently serve students in a District 75 program being re-programmed for use by students in a general education setting.

Some of the comments incorrectly state that the proposal limits Renaissance to 11 full-size rooms. As described below, those 11 rooms represent the baseline allocation Renaissance will receive. After each school has received its baseline, there will be a further 5 full-size rooms which the Building Council will allocate among the schools.

Once P169M@P155M is relocated to its new space, and the District 4 administrative offices move to new space in building M007, M155 will have additional space. As explained in the EIS, there will be sufficient space to accommodate P.S. 155 and Renaissance, pursuant to the Citywide Instructional Footprint (the “Footprint”). The Footprint sets forth the baseline number of rooms that should be allocated to a school based on the grade levels served by the school and number of classes per grade. For existing schools, the Footprint is applied to the current number of sections per grade, assuming class size will remain constant.

The Footprint assumes that classrooms should be programmed at maximum efficiency. The Footprint does not require that every teacher have his or her own designated classroom. Principals are asked to program their schools efficiently so that classrooms can be used for multiple purposes throughout the course of the school day. The Footprint allocates the number of baseline rooms for student support services, resource rooms, and administrative space based on the grades a school serves and its enrollment at scale.

As described in the EIS, M155 will have 40 full-size rooms, 6 half-size rooms, 3 quarter-size rooms, and the equivalent of 2.5 full-size rooms of designed administrative space available to be allocated to the two schools. Per the Footprint, and as described in the EIS, in 2012-2013, Renaissance should be allocated 11 full-size rooms, 2 half-size rooms, and the equivalent of 2.5 full-size rooms for administrative use. Renaissance’s total footprint allocation will increase by one full-size room for the 2014-2015 school year and beyond, as the school’s total student enrollment is projected to reach three sections per grade that year.

Per the Footprint, in 2012-2013, P.S. 155 should be allocated 21 full-size rooms, 3 half-size rooms, and the equivalent of 3.0 full-size rooms for administrative use. P.S. 155’s baseline allocation has been adjusted to account for a lack of half-size rooms contiguous to the space currently used by P.S. 155. P.S. 155’s current adjusted baseline allocation is 22 full-size rooms, 2 half-size rooms, and the equivalent of 3.0 full-size rooms for administrative use. P.S. 155’s total footprint allocation will remain constant as the school’s total student enrollment is projected to remain constant.

Thus, in 2012-2013, after each school has received its adjusted baseline Footprint allocation, there will be 5 excess full-size rooms, 1 excess half-size room and 1 excess quarter-size room remaining in the building. Excess rooms will be divided among the schools by the Building Council in consideration of such factors as the instructional and programmatic needs of the co-located schools, the physical location of the excess space within the building, and the amount of space currently used by Renaissance in M099.

Importance of Arts Programming

- Comments 9 and 11 express the importance of maintaining Renaissance’s arts programming in considering space allocation.

The DOE acknowledges the value of the arts and applauds the arts instruction at schools across the city, many of which have been remarkably successful at providing students with a rich educational experience while operating with their baseline allocation of rooms. As previously stated, Renaissance’s allocation of space in M155 would be expected to remain in excess of its baseline. Renaissance could continue to use its excess full-size rooms to provide additional arts programming to students.

Adequate Facilities

- Comment 6b expresses concerns that Renaissance may not have access to appropriate middle school science facilities.

If this proposal is approved, the Office of Space Planning will work directly with the Renaissance in converting a regular classroom at M155 to a middle school science demonstration room. The DOE will ensure that Renaissance is equipped with adequate tools to provide required science instruction to its students until the permanent science demonstration room is constructed.

Fairness and Equitability of Proposal/Impact on Schools

- Comments 10 assert that the need to ensure equitable distribution of space.

The proposal applies the same standards for all elements of this proposal to Renaissance’s re-siting as it does to P.S. 155 and as it does in all proposals. The calculation of the capacity of M155 was made according to the same formulas applied to all buildings in the City, and the application of the Footprint to the schools impacted by the proposal was applied the same way it is to all schools in the City impacted by proposals for significant changes to utilization. These standardized methods account for the specific features of each school’s enrollment and ensure equitability for schools impacted by proposals such as this one.

If this proposal is approved, as noted in the EIS, the P.S. 155 and Renaissance would continue to receive space for student support services, resource rooms, and administrative space. Both schools in M155 will be allocated additional excess full-, half-, or quarter-size spaces above footprint requirements, though the schools may not necessarily receive as many excess rooms as they have in the past. Because the schools may no longer receive as many classrooms above their baseline allocation as they have in the past, the school management teams may choose to adjust their programming in order to utilize space more efficiently.

Support for Proposal

- Comments 1, 2, 4 and 7 express support for the proposal and do not require a response.

V. Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to the proposal in response to public feedback.