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Public Comment Analysis

Date: April 25, 2012

Topic: The Proposed Closure of Alfred E. Smith Career and Technical Education High School (07X600) and the Opening and Co-Location of New School (07X576) with Bronx Design and Construction Academy (07X522) and Bronx Haven High School (07X381) in Building X600 Beginning in 2012-2013

Date of Panel Vote: April 26, 2012

Summary of Proposal

On March 5, 2012, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) issued a proposal to close Alfred E. Smith Career and Technical Education High School (07X600, “Alfred E. Smith”), an existing district high school in building X600 (“X600” or “Smith Campus”), located at 333 East 151st Street, Bronx, NY 10451, within the geographical confines of in Community School District 7. It currently serves students in grades nine through twelve. The DOE also proposed to immediately replace Alfred E. Smith with New School (07X576, “New School”), a new district high school serving students in grades nine through twelve in building X600.

On April 20, 2012, the DOE issued an amended EIS correcting the state approval status of several CTE program offerings at Alfred E. Smith and at New School and some typographical errors. However, the changes did not significantly revise the proposal itself.

If this proposal is approved, Alfred E. Smith will close at the conclusion of the 2011-2012 school year. All current students who have not graduated before the start of the 2012-2013 school year will be guaranteed a seat and automatically enrolled in New School.

Alfred E. Smith is co-located with: Bronx Design and Construction Academy (07X522, “BDCA”), an existing district high school, which currently serves students in ninth grade and is phasing in to X600 gradually by adding one grade level every year until reaching its full grade span of 9-12 in 2014-2015; and Bronx Haven High School (07X381, “Bronx Haven”), an existing transfer high school which currently serves students in ninth through twelfth grades. 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. In addition, the Smith campus houses a Young Adult Borough Center (“YABC”).

Alfred E. Smith currently offers five Career and Technical Education (“CTE”) programs to eleventh- and twelfth-grade students and two CTE programs to ninth- through twelfth-grade students. Both Alfred

E. Smith and BDCA admit students through the Citywide High School Admissions Process; Alfred E. Smith through a Screened method and BDCA through a Limited Unscreened method. Bronx Haven has a rolling admissions policy, accepting students throughout the year who are 16 years of age and older and who have attended another New York City high school for at least one year.

The DOE strives to ensure that all students in New York City have access to a high-quality school at every stage of their education. By closing Alfred E. Smith and replacing it with New School, the DOE is seeking to expeditiously improve educational quality on the Smith Campus. If this proposal is approved, New School will develop rigorous, school-specific competencies to measure and screen prospective staff – including Alfred E. Smith staff who apply to work at New School. Based on these criteria, and in accordance with the staffing requirements in Article 18-D of the DOE’s existing contract with the United Federation of Teachers (“UFT”), New School will put in place a process aimed at hiring the best possible staff, thus immediately improving teacher quality and, by extension, improving the quality of learning. New School plans to develop new programs and school supports that are intended to improve student outcomes. Doing this important work to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school, will also maximize New School’s chance of receiving up to \$2,000,000 in supplemental federal funding under the federal School Improvement Grant (“SIG”) program. New School will build on the strongest elements of Alfred E. Smith and incorporate new elements, including new talent designed to better meet student needs. Thus, the immediate closure and replacement of Alfred E. Smith with New School should give students access to a higher-quality educational option while they continue to attend school in the same building.

The details of this proposal have been released in an amended EIS which can be accessed here: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2011-2012/April2012Proposals.htm>.

Copies of the amended EIS are also available in the main offices of Alfred E. Smith, BDCA, and Bronx Haven.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at school building X600 on April 16, 2012. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 49 members of the public attended the hearing, and 18 people spoke. Present at the meeting were Deputy Chancellor Laura Rodriguez; Alfred E. Smith School Leadership Team (“SLT”) representatives Thomas Newton and Principal Rene Cassanova; Bronx Haven SLT representatives Steve Jarrett and Principal Lucinda Mendez; BDCA SLT representative Principal Matthew Williams; Citywide Council for High Schools representative Evelyn Rodriguez; Borough President Appointee to the Panel for Educational Policy, Wilfredo Pagan; CSA representative Juanita Bass. Community Education Council (“CEC”) 7 was invited to the hearing and confirmed attendance but did not attend.

The following questions, comments, and remarks were made at the joint public hearing:

1. Thomas Neton, SLT member and union delegate, stated:
 - a. Alfred E. Smith enables students to obtain prestigious internships, and asks if Smith is closed, where future craftsmen would be trained.
 - b. The school did not know the date of the hearing had been selected and the DOE would not change the date. This date—the day after spring break when there is not full attendance—was selected on purpose in an attempt to prevent people from coming.
 - c. Students were promised certification from Alfred E. Smith.

- d. The visit to the school by the proposed leader for the proposed new school and the letter then sent home to families was insulting.
 - e. There should be a parent on the 18-D Personnel Committee.
 - f. It is insulting to teachers that they have to reapply for jobs they already hold.
 - g. The teachers at Alfred E. Smith are dedicated and do the best they can.
 - h. The school has raised its graduation rate.
 - i. This process is political.
2. Principal Lucinda Mendez of Bronx Haven stated that Alfred E. Smith is a family and is more than a number or name. She voiced general support for the school.
 3. Wilfredo Pagan, representative of the Bronx Borough President, stated:
 - a. The DOE should better utilize its funding by providing it to the schools proposed for closure.
 - b. Teachers shouldn't be fired.
 - c. There is no evidence that this process is necessary, and the DOE has not made a sufficient case that this change is needed.
 - d. This process will destabilize the community.
 4. Sterling Roberson, UFT Vice President for Career and Technical high schools, stated:
 - a. The EIS gives several reasons the school should close, including data, but the DOE has said nothing about what it is doing to close the achievement gap.
 - b. The EIS does not list anything about internships the DOE will create in the Bronx for students when they graduate.
 - c. It is disrespectful to talk about data when there are real students walking through these doors.
 - d. The DOE's plans to close and replace a number of PLA schools is only a tool to negotiate principal and teacher evaluations.
 - e. The DOE does not have a plan for these CTE schools, but if they did he would help implement that plan.
 - f. The DOE is also closing two other schools in the area.
 - g. When schools are closed and the names are changed, alumni cannot prove they went to that school or have access to their records.
 5. Janella Hinds, representative of the UFT, stated the following:
 - a. She expressed general opposition to the closure of Alfred E. Smith.
 - b. Closures of schools in any situation are devastating to the community and should only be used as the final step in a series of interventions, which is not the case here.
 - c. The EIS shows the school has made progress.
 - d. This plan is political and is not about providing better opportunities for students.
 - e. The commenter asked that the input from this hearing be taken into consideration in the decision about whether to close Alfred E. Smith.
 6. Juanita Bass, representative of the CSA, stated:
 - a. The DOE's plans to close a number of PLA schools is a political maneuver, and that there is nothing educationally sound about this plan.
 - b. This is a ploy to get a new evaluation system, but closing and reopening schools will not contribute to sound principal and teacher evaluation systems.
 - c. This plan will destabilize schools throughout the school system.
 - d. This plan will cost the DOE \$1.8M annually by adding so many teachers to the Absent Teacher Reserve pool.
 7. One commenter, a student, stated that he chose to attend Alfred E. Smith for the vocational program that provides construction trade certifications, which provide students the opportunity to learn about a trade and have more job opportunities.
 8. Several commenters expressed support for Alfred E. Smith.

9. Several commenters expressed support for the CTE programs at Alfred E. Smith.
10. Several commenters stated they want to earn CTE-endorsed diplomas. Several commenters also stated that closing the school will take away the ability for students to learn a trade and contribute to their community.
11. Several commenters expressed concern about students in eleventh and twelfth grades in CTE programs phasing out. They asked if students would be able to receive CTE-endorsed diplomas.
12. Multiple commenters stated that many current and former students are employed as a result of a partnership with the automotive program, both with internships and career paths continuing at the post-secondary level and beyond.
13. One commenter voiced general opposition to the closure and replacement of Smith and asked for more time for the administration to improve automotive technology programs.
14. One commenter, a student, stated that he does not want the closure of his school to affect his opportunity to go to college and succeed.
15. One commenter stated that this plan is not about education but about business.
16. One commenter stated that the Alfred E. Smith allows students to complete credit recovery, and it is an injustice for this opportunity to be taken away.
17. A representative of Student Activists United stated that students are standing up against the closures with action, not just this hearing, which is useless.
18. Multiple commenters stated that the decision to close and replace Alfred E. Smith has already been made.
19. One commenter stated that it hopes the DOE follows through on the commitment to keep the automotive department, and that the teachers who teach this program will be kept and given a fair chance.
20. One commenter stated that the DOE never gave Alfred E. Smith an opportunity to improve and this is a violation of their agreement.
21. One commenter stated this it does not make sense to have teachers reapply for their own positions or to blame teachers for the DOE's mismanagement, and this blame shows a lack of respect for the school community by the DOE.
22. One commenter stated that the name of the school is significant and represents a family.
23. One student stated:
 - a. With this proposal, the DOE representatives at the hearing are saying that a South Bronx education does not equate to the equivalent education elsewhere in the City.
 - b. The commenter asked about the probability that current students at Alfred E. Smith would be accepted into the new school, and stated that selecting students in the top quartile for the school is not adequate.
 - c. This proposal is a political move, but the South Bronx is not the Mayor's playground, and these plans are playing with children's futures.
 - d. Find another location to site the charter school in this proposal.
24. One commenter stated that Alfred E. Smith is a good option for students who have special needs and may be better suited for vocational training than going to college after high school. The commenter also stated that this plan does not take into account what is best for students, and in particular for students with Individualized Education Programs.
25. Multiple questions submitted asked about the status of CTE programs moving forward, specifically whether students will be able to earn CTE-endorsed diplomas in the construction and automotive trades.
26. One question submitted asked about the possibility of withdrawal of the proposal to close and replace Alfred E. Smith, and if that happens, how long before the PEP meeting would the school be informed.

27. One question submitted asked how quickly the new school would be able to provide CTE-endorsed diplomas.
28. One comment submitted stated that there should be a parent on the 18-D personnel committee.
29. One question submitted asked whether there is a provision for an automotive school, and whether there are any other schools in the public school system offering training in automotive trades.

The following questions, comments, and remarks were made at the Joint Public Hearing and are not related to the proposal:

30. Thomas Neton, SLT member and union delegate, stated:
 - a. Alfred E. Smith is named after a legendary politician known for his honesty, whereas the Tweed building where DOE central is located is named after an infamous figure, Boss Tweed.
 - b. Mayoral Control should be ended.
31. One commenter stated that schools are being privatized.
32. Of the students in the charter school that was originally supposed to be placed in Smith as a replacement to the school in 2009, 30% left in the first year.
33. One commenter stated that it was a travesty when several trades were taken out of the school two years ago.

Summary of Comments Received at other public meetings

An information session was hosted by the Bronx Borough President at the Morris Educational Campus on March 15, 2012. The DOE attended that meeting to provide information to community members and answer questions.

The following questions, comments, and remarks were made at the meeting:

34. One commenter asked about the requirements for leadership change pursuant to the Turnaround model.
35. One commenter asked about SIG funding in relation to Educational Partner Organizations (EPOs). Specifically, since there are no EPOs in turnaround, who gets the equivalent money given to EPOs in restart, and who agreed to keep on the EPOs for these schools?
36. One commenter asked about the procedure for new schools to select the networks that will support them.

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

The DOE received the following written and oral comments through the dedicated Web site and phone line for this proposal.

37. Several commenters voiced support of Alfred E. Smith, the CTE trade programs, the teachers, and the athletic teams, and voiced opposition to the proposal to close the school.

38. One comment, submitted by New York Assembly Member Catherine Nolan, expressed the following:
 - a. General opposition to the proposal to close Alfred E. Smith, and to the Turnaround model more generally.
 - b. Concern about the effect that this sudden change will have on the students, believing that it will particularly negatively effect outgoing seniors and incoming freshmen.
 - c. The proposal to close the school as well as the general announcement that it could be closed will negatively impact the school and decrease student enrollment.
 - d. Transformation is intended to be a long-term plan over three years and five months of work will be wasted.
39. Multiple commenters stated that the school should not be closed because teachers deserve to keep their jobs and Alfred E. Smith is the only high school in the Bronx that provides automotive classes.
40. One commenter expressed concern that automotive credits from Alfred E. Smith will not transfer over and will not be worth anything.
41. One commenter wrote that the proposal will ruin physical education at the school because with new coaches, the teams will be very different and, as a result, much less successful.
42. One commenter wrote that the school has low grades because the students make it look bad, and instead the school should screen students by requiring a test to show their abilities and interest in the school.
43. One commenter asked where current students will go if the school is closed.
44. One commenter wrote that the school is failing because of the education students receive in middle school.
45. One commenter expressed support for the principal and the credit recovery options she makes available to students so that they don't have to spend so many extra years in high school.
46. One commenter stated that the school should not be closed, but that some of the teachers who do not know how to teach properly or make learning fun (not including any shop teachers) should be replaced. They are the reason students are failing.
47. One commenter asked if there will be delays in the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards as a result of these proposals.
48. One commenter asked about the DOE's engagement process for proposing to close the existing school and open a new school, and what part students, parents, and the community have in the process.
49. One commenter stated that all of the closure/replacement proposals will result in the shuffling of teachers from one school to the other.
50. One commenter asked about which schools have implemented the 18-D process successfully, how this was done, and how the success was measured.
51. One commenter asked about what evidence the DOE has that this approach works, and whether a short-term measuring tool can be part of the model.
52. One commenter asked what supports are being offered to schools being closed and replaced.
53. One commenter asked what measures will be used to evaluate the progress of the new schools, apart from progress reports and quality reviews. The commenter also asked about what evaluations the DOE has done to assess progress made under previous interventions (i.e., transformation and restart).
54. One commenter asked about the timeline for the implementation of the new model.
55. One commenter asked about the supports that networks and other entities have provided to the schools that are in PLA status.
56. One commenter asked about how summer school will be implemented.

57. One commenter asked about how quickly new replacement schools will receive progress report grades, what short-term benchmarks are built into the Turnaround plan, and whether performance goals are built into the Turnaround plan.
58. One commenter asked about the impact of the new schools and implementing the closure/replacement approach.
59. One commenter asked about who makes up the planning team for each school.
60. One commenter asked if the state mandates a JIT review for every school that is Restructuring, Year 1; Restructuring, Advanced; and Persistently Lowest Achieving.
61. One commenter asked if a JIT review was done for each of the 25 high schools on the turnaround list before the earlier intervention model (transformation or restart) was selected and before the Turnaround model was selected.
62. One commenter asked if the JIT reports are available to the public.
63. One commenter asked if the proposed new school will receive over-the-counter, ELL, and over-age under-credited students.
64. One commenter asked if rising ninth-grade students can opt out of a turnaround school.
65. One commenter asked about the \$58 million designated to New York City schools as SIG funding. Does this figure represent what was suspended as of January 3, 2012, or does it date back further?
66. One commenter asked if a school goes into turnaround, does it automatically get funding or is there a competitive process that takes place afterwards. The commenter also asked about how much funding each school would receive.
67. One commenter asked if the DOE will have to repay the funding spent on the contracts for restart schools.
68. The DOE received a petition opposing the proposals to close and replace schools, which was signed by approximately 1,300 people, on the following grounds:
 - a. The DOE should not close schools and instead support them, including providing proven programs and curricula, professional development, health services for students, and additional student time for tutoring and enrichment.
 - b. End the policy of sending large concentrations of high needs students to schools then targeted for closure.
 - c. End the policy of co-locating charter schools in buildings with struggling district schools or district schools assigned large numbers of high needs students.
 - d. Create a new chancellor's district to support struggling schools and schools with large populations of high needs students, such as the one in place before the current administration.

The following written questions, comments, or remarks were submitted to the DOE and are not related to the proposal:

69. One commenter asked if a new school replacing a restart school can choose not to keep its EPO.
70. One commenter asked about the supports that networks and other entities have provided to the schools that are in SINI status or have declining progress report grades.

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

Comments 1(a), 1(c), 10, 11, and 25 refer to whether the CTE programs at Alfred E. Smith would be replaced and offer CTE-endorsed diplomas to students. Comment 27 asks about quickly the new school will be able to issue CTE-endorsed diplomas.

As stated in the amended EIS, all programs currently offered at Alfred E. Smith will continue in New School. This includes the Automotive Technician and Collision Repair programs whose state-approval status is currently “in development.” The Office of Postsecondary Readiness (“OPSR”) will support the leadership of New School to gain state approval for the Automotive Technician and Collision Repair programs. However, students may not graduate from New School with a CTE endorsement if the program is not approved by the time they graduate.

The programs currently being phased out from Alfred E. Smith will continue being offered in New School to Alfred E. Smith students currently enrolled in the programs; however these programs will continue to phase out at New School. These programs include the state-approved Carpentry, Electrician, Heating Ventilation/Air Conditioning, and Plumbing programs and the Pre-Engineering program that is currently in development. New School will not seek state approval for the Pre-Engineering program. However, it will seek approval for the four state-approved programs that are phasing out so that those students currently enrolled in the program can obtain CTE-endorsed diplomas. The DOE has been informed by SED that approved CTE programs in schools proposed for closure and immediate replacement, will continue to be approved provided the factors underlying approval, such as CTE curriculum, partner relationships, postsecondary articulation agreements, and certain other elements contributing to program quality, are incorporated in the new replacement schools. The Office of Postsecondary Readiness (“OPSR”) will support the leadership of New School to maintain approval for the Carpentry, Electrician, Heating Ventilation/Air Conditioning, and Plumbing programs, and students enrolled in these programs are expected to graduate with CTE endorsed diplomas from New School, provided that they graduate by June 2013 as laid out in previous plans. OPSR will support New School in gaining state approval as quickly as possible. Students in the Pre-Engineering program will not graduate with a CTE endorsement because New School will not be pursuing State approval for this program.

Further, comments 1(a) and 10 inaccurately suggest that closing the school will take away the opportunity for CTE education. As described above, the opportunities for students to obtain CTE education in Alfred E. Smith will be exactly replicated in New School.

Comments 1(a), 2, 7, 8, 9, 12, and 37 voice general support for Alfred E. Smith, the CTE instruction offered at the school, and the internships available to students through the CTE programs. Comments 1(g) and 37 also voice general support for the school’s teachers, and Comment 37 also supports the school’s athletic teams. Comment 45 expresses support for the current principal. The DOE commends and acknowledges the students and staff at Alfred E. Smith for their hard work and successes. However, the DOE believes that the students in this community will be better served by New School.

Comment 1(b) states that the school did not know the date of the hearing, the DOE would not change the hearing date, and that it was selected on purpose to be the day after spring break to discourage attendance.

The DOE worked with the school community to select a date for the joint public hearing, and thus the DOE did not schedule this hearing on April 16, 2012 in an attempt to avoid public attendance of the hearing. An email to the school's stakeholders was sent on March 2, 2012, confirming the scheduling of the hearing for April 16, 2012. In this email, the principal was asked to confer with the other members of the SLT. The principal of Alfred E. Smith confirmed via email on March 22, 2012 that all correspondence had been distributed and shared.

Comment 1(d) voices opposition to the introduction of the proposed leader for New School. In introducing the proposed leader for the new school, the DOE was responding to community feedback concerning who would be selected to lead New School. In order to best solicit and incorporate community feedback into the planning for the new school, the DOE believes that the community and the proposed leader should have sufficient, early opportunities to meet with each other so as to inform the new school planning process. It is important to note that in no way did the DOE intend this to be insulting or disrespectful to the community.

Comments 1(e) and 28 state that there should be a parent on the 18-D Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee for Alfred E. Smith will consist at minimum of the following five representatives: the school principal, two designees of the UFT President, and two designees of the Chancellor. This is consistent with how the 18-D personnel committees have functioned in previous situations.

Comments 1(f) and 21 state that it is disrespectful for teachers to have to reapply for jobs they already hold, and Comment 3(b) states that teachers should not be fired. As described above, the DOE believes that this proposal allows the creation of a new school which will better meet the needs of students in Alfred E. Smith and will more quickly improve the educational outcomes for these and future students. The 18-D process, through which teachers and other pedagogical staff of the existing school apply for positions in the new school, is the contractual method used for all phase-out and closure replacements.

Comment 1(h) states that the school has improved its graduation rate, and Comment 5(c) states that the school has made progress. The DOE notes that while the general trend of the school's graduation rate has increased, it has fluctuated. For example, the four year graduation rate was 46% in 2008-2009. In the next two years, it first dropped to 44% and then increased to 54%. The school's six-year graduation rate has also fluctuated, but has declined overall, starting at 57% in 2008-2009, dropping to 47% in 2009-2010, and increasing partially back to 54%. Further, as the EIS points out, the school has both positive and concerning elements to its achievement measures. While some progress has been made in some areas, the DOE believes that this is not sufficient, rapid, or consistent enough to meet the needs of the current students.

Comments 1(i), 4(d), 5(d), 6(a), 6(b), 15, 23(c), state that the closure and replacement plans are political maneuvers and are not aimed at improving educational outcomes. As stated above, the DOE believes that closing Alfred E. Smith and replacing it with New School will provide a better educational option to current and future students, which is expected to prompt student improvement more rapidly and with more certainty than previous interventions and supports, which have not led to adequate gains. Thus, this proposal is squarely aimed at improving student achievement. Further, to the extent that this proposal may help secure SIG funding for DOE students, this is an educational aim, not a political one, as these resources are crucial to helping students succeed. However, even if the DOE does not receive SIG funding as a result of this proposal, the DOE believes New School will be better positioned to promote student

achievement than is Alfred E. Smith, in light of Alfred E. Smith's inability to improve quickly enough.

Comment 3(a) states that the DOE should use the support, resources, and funds allocated for the closure and replacement proposal to improve Alfred E. Smith. Alfred E. Smith has been struggling to serve all of its students, and the DOE believes that the closure and replacement of the school would best serve the needs of the students in the school community. As stated in more detail in the EIS, the school's network has provided support in many ways, but even with this support, the DOE has determined that Alfred E. Smith does not have the capacity to quickly improve student achievement. Further, the new school will be funded in the same manner as Alfred E. Smith is funded. All schools are funded through a per pupil allocation, in which funding "follows" the student and is weighted based on students' grade level and need (incoming proficiency level and special education/ELL/Title I status).

Comment 3(c), 5(a), 13, 37, 38(a), 17, 39, and 46 voice general opposition to the proposal, and Comment 38(a) also voices general opposition to the federal turnaround model. Comments 5(b) and 38(b) suggests the closure will have a negative impact on students and the school community, and Comment 23(a) states that this proposal implies inferiority of a South Bronx education. The DOE notes that the schools proposed for closure and replacement, including Alfred E. Smith, have struggled to provide high quality outcomes to students, and the DOE believes that closing and replacing the schools will provide a better educational option to current students because the new schools will preserve the school elements that had previously been successful while making the changes needed to accelerate the pace of improvement. While the DOE recognizes that the school is a central element to the community and its closure and replacement causes concern and implies a significant change, the DOE also believes that the benefits of closing and replacing the school, namely improved educational outcomes for students, make the proposal the right decision for this school community. Further, the intention of this proposal is to improve the quality of the education that students at this school, and in the South Bronx, receive such that the educational outcomes of the new school provide students equitable outcomes to those achieved at higher-performing schools across the City.

Comment 3(d) states that this proposal will destabilize the community, and Comment 6(c) states all of the proposals will destabilize the school system. While closing a school may be a difficult experience for the community, the DOE believes that replacing Alfred E. Smith with a new school, which preserves the best elements of Alfred E. Smith but also puts the most effective educators in front of students, will allow the school's students to improve more quickly—and this will be a long-term stabilizing force for the school and the community. The DOE believes the same for all of the schools proposed for closure and replacement and their respective communities.

Comment 4(a) states that the EIS does not explain how this proposal will close the achievement gap. 97% of the students enrolled in Alfred E. Smith are black or Hispanic, and 80% of the school is eligible for free or reduced lunch. Inasmuch as this proposal aims to dramatically improve the educational outcomes for current students in Alfred E. Smith, this proposal will work to close the achievement gap.

Comment 4(b) states that the EIS is not explicit about the internships the DOE will create. It is anticipated that internship programs currently partnering with CTE programs will be maintained for those programs still accepting new ninth-grade students at Alfred E. Smith and planned to accept new ninth-grade students at New School. Additionally, several of the programs in the

construction trades which are in the process of being phased-out at Alfred E. Smith are part of the CTE instruction at BDCA, and the DOE anticipates that relevant internships would be developed at this school and would be available to students in these programs. Finally, the DOE's Office of Post Secondary Readiness ("OPSR") provides support to all CTE programs in developing partnerships, including ones that result in student internships.

Comment 4(c) states that it is disrespectful to talk about data when this proposal deals with real people. As mentioned earlier, the closure of a school can be very difficult for a school community; however, the DOE also believes that action cannot wait because a decision for significant intervention is difficult to deal with. The decision to propose to close and replace Alfred E. Smith was based on quantitative data (e.g.: student performance data) as one source of information, as well as qualitative reports about the quality of education being provided to students at the school. This wide array of information was used to come to the conclusion that the closure and replacement of Alfred E. Smith is best option for real people – namely the students in the school who are not currently receiving a high quality education.

Comment 4(e) states that the DOE does not have plans for the new CTE schools. On the contrary, the plan for the new school replacing Alfred E. Smith is laid out in the EIS, and with respect to the CTE aspect of the school, all of the plans for CTE programming at Alfred E. Smith will be continued in New School. Information about other new CTE schools being opened in the Bronx to replace schools approved for phase-out earlier this year, such as the schools replacing Samuel Gompers Career and Technical Education High School and Jane Addams High School for Academic Careers, both in the South Bronx, can be found in the Directory of New Schools on the DOE's Web site here: <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/784403CE-F3C7-46BC-AA95-454F24730C95/0/DirectoryofNewHighSchools.pdf>.

Comment 4(f) states that the DOE is also closing two other schools in the area. As mentioned above, the PEP approved the phase-out and replacement of Samuel Gompers Career and Technical Education High School and Jane Addams High School for Academic Careers, both in the South Bronx, at its February 9, 2012 meeting.

Comment 4(g) states that alumni cannot prove they attended schools that have been closed and do not have access to their records. While schools that are closed do not graduate any future students, the achievements of alumni who graduated from the school are not erased. Furthermore, in all closure and phase-out situations, one of the replacement schools in the building is designated to maintain the records and archives of the closing school.

Comment 5(b) also states that closure should only be used as the final step in a series of interventions, and Comment 55 asks about support given to PLA schools in the past. Comment 20 states that the DOE should have given Alfred E. Smith time to improve and not doing so is a violation of its agreement.

PLA schools, including Alfred E. Smith, have been supported by their Children First Networks, as well as their EPOs, in the case of restart schools.

For the past several years, the DOE has sought to support Alfred E. Smith in order to ensure that it was equipped to provide a quality education for its students

Leadership Support:

- Provided leadership training, coaching, and mentoring for the principal and assistant principals to help them set clear goals for the school, including designing plans to improve instruction and develop teacher practice.
- Provided ongoing professional development for Special Education staff to support the Compliance Assurance Plan designated by SED.

Instructional Support:

- Trained leadership on implementing plans in support of Citywide instructional initiatives, including implementing Common Core Learning Standards and supporting college and career readiness.
- Supported school staff in special education compliance issues, including timely writing of Individualized Education Plans (“IEPs”), alternative assessments and other supports, and strategies for improving instruction and plans for students with disabilities.
- Offered training for staff on successful ways to assess student progress through rigorous tasks and use the information to inform and improve teacher practice.

Operational Support:

- Advised school staff on budgeting and human resources issues.
- Provided ongoing support to improve attendance.

Student Support:

- Facilitated comprehensive supports to review disciplinary and procedural protocols targeted at improving the school learning environment and impacting student outcomes. The ultimate impact of these protocols would be more time spent in the classrooms thus increasing a student’s instructional time and a safer school environment.

Additionally, during the 2009-2010 school year, the DOE engaged with the Alfred E. Smith community to discuss potential significant interventions for the school. Due to poor performance, the DOE initially proposed to phase out the school. However, after further discussions with the school community, the DOE withdrew the phase out proposal and instead worked with the school to reduce enrollment and eliminate several CTE programs, so that the school could focus on improving academic outcomes by focusing on a smaller cohort of students, and strengthening itself around the two remaining CTE programs.

At the same time, the DOE worked with community partners to develop and site a new school on the Smith Campus. BDCA was approved by the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”) at its March 1, 2011 meeting and opened in September 2011 to offer some of the CTE programming that was eliminated from Alfred E. Smith. The proposal to co-locate BDCA can be found here:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2010-2011/Mar12011Proposals.htm>

Even with these supports and structural interventions, however, the DOE has determined that Alfred E. Smith does not have the capacity to quickly improve student achievement. Rather, the DOE believe that the most expeditious way to improve the educational program for the students currently attending Alfred E. Smith is to close the school and replace it with New School next year. This will allow the DOE to put in place a process to screen and hire the best possible staff for New School, giving all non-graduating students currently attending Alfred E. Smith access to an improved faculty.

Finally, the DOE evaluates all schools annually. In some cases, an intervention or series of interventions implemented in prior years is not sufficient and has not resulted in adequate and quick enough improvement. In these cases, further action is warranted to ensure that students are given the best opportunity to meet academic expectations. In the case of Alfred E. Smith, the DOE believes that at this

time, closure and replacement is the best way to both keep the strong elements of the existing school and allow for rapid improvement in areas that are currently lacking in the existing school.

Comment 5(e) asks that student input from the joint public hearing be taken into consideration, Comment 18 states that the decision to close Alfred E. Smith has already been made, and Comment 48 asks about the engagement process and what part students, parents, and the community play in the process.

Last Spring, the Department held meetings to begin or continue conversations with PLA schools and their communities about the schools' performance and possible improvement strategies. In January 2012, after taking into account a number of factors, the DOE decided to implement different, more intensive interventions at some PLA schools. At that time, Superintendents and Children First Network staff met with school communities to talk about the DOE's proposal to close and replace the school.

The DOE issued proposals to close and replace a number of PLA schools between February 27 and March 5, 2012, consistent with applicable New York State law and Chancellor's Regulations. The proposal for Alfred E. Smith was posted on March 5, 2012 and was later amended on April 20, 2012. The DOE solicited feedback from parents through the Joint Public Hearings, which for Alfred E. Smith was held on April 16, 2012, as well as through voicemail and email. Parent feedback is incorporated throughout this document, which is presented to the PEP to help inform their decision about this proposal. The DOE also considered feedback received from the community in deciding whether to continue with the proposal.

The DOE also attended several meetings hosted by elected officials throughout the City. For example, the DOE attended a parent forum in the Bronx, held at Morris Educational Campus on March 15, 2012, which many community members attended. Feedback received at this forum is also incorporated throughout this document.

While the DOE understands that some stakeholders disagree with the proposal, the DOE believes it is the right decision for students.

Comment 6(d) states the plan will cost the DOE \$1.8 million due to the ATR pool. The estimate described depends upon several inaccurate and improbable assumptions: First, it assumes that 50% of the staffs in the 33 schools originally proposed will be replaced. However, the DOE has since withdrawn several proposals. Furthermore, Comment 6(d) does not take into account that new schools may in fact hire back more than 50% of current staff. Second, the comment assumes that all teachers who are not rehired at New School will join the ATR. Yet, it is highly likely that some members of the teaching staffs at the schools proposed for closure who do not apply or are not rehired at the new schools may choose to retire or leave the system to find jobs in other districts or paths. In such cases, these staff members will not enter in the ATR nor add to the costs to the system.

Comment 13 also requests more time for the administration to improve the automotive programs. New School will include both the Automotive Technician and Collision Repair programs currently offered at Alfred E. Smith. As a result, the new school will be able to work to improve these programs, as well as work to gain state approval (with the help of OPSR) with the goal of being able to endorse student's diplomas with a CTE designation.

Comment 14 states that the closure should not affect the ability for students to attend and succeed in college. In fact, the DOE believes that through this proposal, the education provided

to students in the school will be significantly improved. As a result, students' chances to get into and be successful throughout college should be increased.

Comment 16 and 45 support the credit recovery available to students at Alfred E. Smith and believes this opportunity will be taken away with the school's closure. First, it is important to note that the intention of this proposal is to rapidly improve outcomes for students, including the passing rates in classes. This would mean that fewer students would need credit recovery options. Second, the DOE notes that New School would also make credit recovery available to students, consistent with the citywide academic policy reference guide for high schools found here: <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/27BF8558-B895-407A-8F3F-78B1B69F030A/0/AcpolicyHighSchoolAcademicPolicyReferenceGuide.pdf>.

Regarding the portion of Comment 19 which states that the DOE should maintain its commitment to continue the automotive program and that the teachers in this program be kept in the new school. As stated in the EIS, the plan for the new school is to be a CTE high school with programming in Automotive Technician and Collision Repair.

Regarding the portion of Comment 19 asks that the teachers in the automotive programs be kept, and Comment 49 which suggests these plans will result in teachers moving between PLA schools. The guiding principle of this is work is to effectively match teacher capacity to the needs of the students in a specific school along with structural changes to the new school that will enhance the its ability to best serve our students. This means that the new replacement schools will only hire those teachers they believe will be effective and well-matched to their new missions.

The schools will accomplish this through the staffing process set forth in Article 18-D of the DOE's existing contract with the United Federation of Teachers ("UFT"), which will allow a Personnel Committee to determine the best staff for the new school. The Personnel Committee consists of the following five representatives at minimum: the school principal, two designees of the UFT President, and two designees of the Chancellor. The school-based Personnel Committee will evaluate applicants' qualifications. The Personnel Committee should strive to seek consensus in its hiring decisions; however, if consensus cannot be reached, decisions are made by majority vote. Regarding Comment 19, provided that the teachers in the automotive program are deemed qualified and are selected by the Personnel Committee, these teachers could be part of the automotive program in New School.

In this way, the DOE believes that only those teachers who will be most effective will be hired by the new schools. As stated in the EIS, current teachers from Alfred E. Smith who are not hired at New School will remain in excess.

Barring system-wide layoffs, excess teachers will be eligible to apply for other City positions, and any teachers who do not find a permanent position will be placed in the Absent Teacher Reserve ("ATR") pool, meaning that they will continue to earn their salary while serving as substitute teachers in other City schools. This will not count as a cost or savings to New School, but could increase overall ATR costs to the DOE.

Comment 22 concerns the importance of the school's name. The DOE acknowledges this and notes that the building will continue to be named the Alfred E. Smith Educational Campus. However, the new school needs a name and school identification number (DBN) that is different from the existing school. Consistent with Chancellor's Regulation A-860, parents and community members associated with the proposed new school will be able to make suggestions for the name of the new school. As with all school names, the Chancellor retains final decision-making authority. While the school number and

name is an important symbol, this proposal is an opportunity to create an improved organization that will better serve more students, rather than incrementally adjusting a school that is graduating only 54% of its students simply to retain historical ties for alumni or those who have a strong affinity for the schools' name.

Comment 23(b) asks about the chances for students in the existing school to be accepted in New School, and Comment 43 asks where the current students will attend school if Alfred E. Smith is closed. As stated in the EIS and by Deputy Chancellor Rodriguez at the hearing, all students currently enrolled in Alfred E. Smith who does not graduate before the start of the 2012-2013 school year, as well as rising ninth-grade students who would have otherwise been matched to Alfred E. Smith, are guaranteed a placement in New School.

Comment 23(d) states that the DOE should find another location to site the charter school in this proposal. The DOE notes that the commenter was incorrect, and that this proposal does not include any plans to site a charter school in the Smith building.

With regard to the portion of Comment 24 which states that the proposal does not take into account what is best for students with Individualized Education Programs, in fact the DOE believes that this proposal will better position New School to serve these students than Alfred E. Smith is currently. For example as stated in the EIS, New School will seek to improve the ICT model by providing professional development and training for all teachers, to ensure effective and collaborative instruction by both teachers in the classroom. Additionally, a push-in resource model, in which ESL teachers work with ELLs in their regular classrooms, will be implemented in order to provide academic support while allowing students to maximize credit accumulation and take full advantage of the CTE programs being offered.

Comment 26 asks about potential withdrawal of the proposal. The DOE has withdrawn proposals in all stages of the public review process. In general, this can be done at any point up until the PEP convenes its meeting or, if the PEP puts forth and votes to approve a motion, during the meeting. When proposals are withdrawn, the DOE works to promptly notify the school leadership and community. However, at this time, the DOE plans to move forward with the proposal to close and replace Alfred E. Smith.

Comment 29 asks whether there is a provision for an automotive school at New School or in the City, and Comment 39 also states that Alfred E. Smith is the only high school in the Bronx that offers automotive classes. New School will continue the programming in the automotive trades. Additionally, other schools or options which offer CTE programming in the automotive trades are Automotive High School, Transit Tech Career and Technical Education High School, and William E. Grady Career and Technical Education High School in Brooklyn, Ralph R. McKee Career and Technical Education High School and Tottenville High School in Staten Island, Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School in Queens, and the District 79 program School for Cooperative Technical Education in Manhattan. Although both Automotive High School and William E. Grady Career and Technical Education High School are also proposed for closure and replacement, both New Schools proposed to replace these two school will offer automotive programming.

Comment 34 asks about requirements for leadership change under the federal Turnaround model. In this model, if a principal has been in his or her role fewer than three years, then the principal may become the principal of the proposed new school, subject to a waiver by SED. If the individual has served as principal at the school for over three years at the time of the school's initial implementation of a SIG model, then the Turnaround model requires that he or she must be replaced.

Comment 35 asks about SIG funding and EPOs. Though it is strictly required as part of Restart, Education Law 211-e allows for Educational Partnership Organizations (EPOs) to work with any persistently lowest-achieving school, under any School Improvement Grant model.

The decision whether or not to partner a new school with an EPO will be made on a case by case basis by the DOE.

Comment 36 asks about how new schools select networks. During the spring, new schools and networks have opportunities to learn about one another, after which new schools are asked to request networks (this occurs during at the same time as any requests from existing schools to change networks). Final decisions about school and network matches are expected in May.

Comment 38(c) states that both the labeling of the school as PLA and this proposal will cause the school's enrollment to decrease. The DOE acknowledges that schools labeled PLA by the state have an additional obstacle for recruiting students. However, the DOE anticipates that the plans for the new school and how it will be an improvement upon Alfred E. Smith will actually be helpful to the school in increasing student interest long-term.

Comment 38(d) states that the current model is intended to be a long-term plan and work until now has been wasted. In fact, Alfred E. Smith was not placed in the Transformation model for this current school year. As stated in the EIS, existing efforts to improve performance at Alfred E. Smith were underway, including the phasing out of some existing CTE programs and a strategic reduction of enrollment in order to improve Alfred E. Smith's learning environment. Alfred E. Smith's most recent Progress Report was released at the end of October 2011, after the DOE's decision to not implement a model at the school. Alfred E. Smith's overall performance did not improve adequately during the 2010-2011 school year and based on this most recent data, the DOE believes that students at Alfred E. Smith would be better served by implementation of a more intensive intervention. Thus, the DOE decided to propose that Alfred E. Smith be closed and replaced with a new school that would incorporate the strongest elements of Alfred E. Smith, while also allowing new staff to be put in place.

By closing Alfred E. Smith and opening a new school, the DOE will (1) align the DOE's intervention strategy with the school's most recent performance data and the DOE's intervention strategy with the DOE's most recent assessment of the steps which must be taken to improve performance at the school and (2) be able to immediately increase the quality of teachers serving students currently attending Alfred E. Smith.

Comment 40 concerns the transfer of credits from Alfred E. Smith to New School. All credits earned by students while attending Alfred E. Smith will count towards graduation for students who would be enrolled in New School if this proposal is approved.

Comment 41 concerns physical education and athletic teams at Alfred E. Smith. Physical education will continue, as will all athletic teams. Although the staff supporting these classes and teams may be different, the DOE anticipates that the success of these teams will not be affected by the proposed closure and replacement of the school.

Comment 42 states that the school's low grades are a result of the students, and Comment 44 states that the school is failing because of the poor education students receive in middle school. The DOE believes that all students can achieve at the highest levels, and that it is the responsibility of all of our schools to meet this expectation. Schools within Alfred E. Smith's peer group, whose students enter with similar levels of average proficiency on state tests and

which have similar numbers of English Language learners, students with disabilities, and students receiving free and reduced lunch, achieve significantly higher outcomes for their students. For example, Harry S. Truman High School in District 11 in the Bronx received a B grade on its overall Progress Report, with B grades on the Progress and Environment sub-sections and an A grade on the Performance sub-section. Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School in District 12 (also in the South Bronx) received an A grade on its overall Progress Report, with A grades on the Performance and Environment sub-sections and a C grade on the Progress sub-section.

Regarding the portion of [Comment 42](#) stating that the school should have a screened admissions method, the DOE notes that the school actually does admit students through a screened method.

Screened schools rank students based on their academic record, standardized test scores, attendance, and punctuality. Schools may also use other criteria to evaluate applicants such as an interview, essay, additional diagnostic test, or other criteria.

Currently, Alfred E. Smith's NATEF Automotive Technology program screens for:

- English (75-100), Math (75-100), Social Studies (75-100), Science (75-100)
- Standardized Test Scores: Math Levels 3-4, English Language Arts Levels 3-4
- Review of Attendance and Punctuality

Currently, Alfred E. Smith's Bilingual Spanish NATEF Automotive Technology program screens for:

- Language
- English (75-100), Math (75-100), Social Studies (75-100), Science (75-100)
- Standardized Test Scores: Math Levels 3-4, English Language Arts Levels 3-4
- Review of Attendance and Punctuality

However, as noted in the EIS, as part of this proposal the DOE is proposing to convert this admissions program from a screened method to a limited unscreened method, thereby encouraging a larger group of students to apply to the school. This change will also build on efforts to focus CTE programming at Alfred E. Smith by allowing New School to welcome and serve a wider range of students who might be interested in the kind of focused CTE programming the school will provide.

Similarly, the second program through which Alfred E. Smith admits students is the Bilingual Spanish NATEF Automotive Technology program, also in the Engineering Interest Area. This program admits students through a screened method that selects students based on both language and academic criteria. New School will continue the Bilingual admissions program, but the program will only screen for language and will otherwise be limited unscreened. Again, this is to allow the school to serve students regardless of their academic outcomes during middle school.

[Comment 46](#) also states that those teachers who are ineffective should be replaced instead of the school being closed. The DOE believes that this proposal will allow ineffective teachers to be replaced; however, it is the combination of the ability to screen the staff and the elements of the new school plan which drive the ultimate goal of this proposal and will lead to success for students at New School.

[Comment 47](#) asks about delays in implementation of Common Core as a result of these proposals. This proposal will not delay the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards into curriculum and classroom instruction. In fact, the DOE believes that by closing and replacing the school, the Common Core will be implemented in a more thoughtful and substantial way. In particular, as part of

this process, the new school has the opportunity to determine where there were instructional gaps in the old school's curriculum, and develop a plan to support teachers in implementing the Common Core Learning Standards effectively in the new school.

Comments 50 and 51 ask about past implementation of the 18-D process, and specifically which schools have done this successfully, how, and what measurements of success were used. As described above, the hiring process for new schools replacing a closing/phasing out school is implemented according to Article 18-D of the existing contract between the DOE and the UFT. All teachers from the current school are eligible to apply for positions at the new school.

Since 2002, the DOE has opened approximately 200 new high schools as replacements for high schools that have been phased out or closed. Each of these new schools has hired its teachers through the 18-D process. As a group, these new schools have outperformed the schools they have replaced.

Below are a few examples:

- The new schools located on the Springfield Gardens Campus in Queens had a graduation rate of 68.0% in 2010, compared to Springfield Gardens High School's graduation rate of 41.3% in 2002.
- The new schools located on the Evander Childs Campus in the Bronx had a graduation rate of 69.1% in 2010, compared to Evander Childs High School's graduation rate of 30.7% in 2002.
- The new schools located on the Park West Campus in Manhattan had a graduation rate of 70.4% in 2010, compared to Park West High School's graduation rate of 31.0% in 2002.
- In 2010, the schools on the Van Arsdale campus in Brooklyn had a graduation rate of 82.9%—nearly 40 points higher than the former Harry Van Arsdale High School's graduation rate of only 44.9% in 2002.
- The Erasmus Hall Campus graduated only 40.7% of student in 2002. The new schools on the Erasmus campus are graduating 75.8% of students in 2010, a 35 percentage point increase over the closed school.

Comment 52 asks about the supports offered to the existing and new schools.

The existing schools will continue to be supported by their networks through the end of the school year. The students will also be supported through the efforts of the Office of Student Enrollment to ensure that students have a guaranteed seat in the new school and receive a clear understanding of their enrollment options.

Replacement schools are being supported through several coordinated measures. Proposed principals for the replacement schools began working with the Division of Portfolio Planning, in February and March, as part of the Turnaround Principal Institute. In this intensive workshop, principals have been supported in planning for their schools along a wide spectrum, including such elements as mission-creation, curriculum planning, scheduling, and hiring, among other topics.

Proposed leaders also continue to be supported by their Children First Network in this work.

If these proposals are approved, during the 2012-2013 school year and beyond, as they implement the plans being made this spring and summer, new schools will be supported by their networks, the Division of Portfolio Planning, and, where relevant, their EPOs.

Comment 53 asks about the measures that will be used to evaluate new schools in addition to progress reports and quality reviews. The Division of Portfolio Planning will work with the Networks that support each school to monitor each school's improvement plans and progress in these plans.

Comment 53 also asks about the evaluation of progress under previous interventions. For the first cohort of SIG schools, identified in the 2009-2010 school year, the DOE used the progress report grades and quality review scores through the spring of 2011 to evaluate the progress of these schools. For the second cohort of SIG schools, identified in the 2010-2011 school year, the DOE made qualitative assessments about the schools through visits to the school by Networks, superintendents, other DOE senior staff, and representatives from SED.

Comment 54 asks about the timeline for implementation of this proposal. This proposal will be presented to the Panel for Educational Policy on April 26, 2012. If it is approved, the school will then begin the 18-D process. The new school, with its planned new elements and staff (made up of returning teachers and teachers new to the school), would open in September 2012 and would serve all students currently in the school who have not graduated by that time, as well as any new students who would have otherwise begun attending the closed school.

Each school has unique elements in its new school plan, many of which will be implemented at the start of the 2012-2013 school year. However, some schools have plans to phase in the new elements more gradually. For more information about the specific plans of the new school, please see the EIS posted here: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2011-2012/April2012PEP.htm>.

Comment 56 asks how summer school will be implemented. Summer school will continue to be implemented as in years past. Each year, a number of school buildings host summer school programs. Individual schools choose to affiliate to a particular building for summer school opportunities for their students, which may mean offering their own programs for their students, offering a summer school program in partnership with other schools.

Of the buildings that will be open to host summer school in 2012, some have schools which have been proposed for closure and replacement, though many do not. Regardless, all students currently attending a school proposed for closure and replacement will have the opportunity to attend summer school, either in their home building or in the one with which their school has affiliated. Students are typically assigned to summer school during June, and this same process will be in place this year for students in all schools, whether they attend one proposed for closure or not.

For more information about summer school, please see the DOE's Web site at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/SummerSchool/default.htm>.

Comment 57 asks about measurement of the new schools' student outcomes. Alfred E. Smith will receive its last Progress Report in fall 2012 reflecting its performance in the 2011-2012 school year; this Progress Report will not include a grade. Under current policy new schools in their first year receive Progress Reports with no grade. Under this policy, the new replacement school would receive an ungraded 2012-13 Progress Report. The Progress Report methodology is reevaluated each year and this policy is subject to change.

Comment 58 asks about the impact of the new schools and the closure/replacement approach.

The DOE believes that the strategy of closing and replacing PLA schools will provide a better educational option to current students more rapidly and with more certainty than current interventions,

which were simply not adequate in order to make the school an acceptable choice for current and future students. The closure/replacement strategy will preserve the elements of former school that have led to improvement, while giving the new school the wherewithal to build upon it and accelerate the pace of change.

By closing this school and replacing it with a new school, the DOE is seeking to quickly create a high-quality school environment that children need to prepare for success in college, work, and life. Schools that have historically undergone this process have track records of shifting the culture of the school further toward one that sets high expectations that support student learning and achievement.

For more specific information regarding the anticipated impact of a proposal, please refer to the Educational Impact Statement(s) (and Building Utilization Plan, where applicable) for the particular proposal.

Comment 59 concerns planning teams for the new schools. Planning teams for each school are composed of the proposed leaders for the schools, as well as the schools' Children First Networks, and EPOs (where applicable). These teams are also receiving support from the Office of School Development, in the Division of Portfolio Planning.

Comments 60, 61, and 62 concern JIT reviews for the schools proposed for closure and replacement. JIT reviews are performed after the state identifies schools which are failing to make sufficient progress. The DOE works with SED to conduct JITs for schools that become newly identified into one of the following categories:

- Restructuring, Year 1
- Restructuring, Advanced
- Persistently Lowest Achieving

JITs that were conducted during the 2010-2011 school year, including the one for Alfred E. Smith on February 8-9, 2011, can be found here:

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/School_Improvement/Reports/1011/1011JIT.html.

Comment 63 concerns whether the new school will serve over-the-counter, ELL and/or over-age under-credited students. As stated in the EIS, new schools replacing closed schools will serve all types of students, including over-the-counter ("OTC") students, English language learner ("ELL") students, students with disabilities, and over-age, under-credited students. For more specific information, please refer to the EIS describing the proposal.

Comment 64 asks about whether rising ninth graders can opt out of the replacement school. All students who currently attend the school, as well as all of those who would otherwise have attended the existing school for the first time, will have a guaranteed seat in the new school. The DOE believes that New School will support student success at a level that the current school cannot, and therefore all students are encouraged to take advantage of their guaranteed seat in the new school.

As indicated in the EISs, students who listed a school proposed for closure on their high school admissions applications had the opportunity to submit a new application during Round Two. Schools with available seats as well as some new high schools designated to open throughout the City for the 2012-2013 school year were available for these students to consider in that round. If a student already received a match in Round One (whether to a school proposed for closure, or any other school), that match will be nullified if the student receives a Round Two match, which are issued at the end of April.

In addition, all students in non-terminal grades who currently attend Title 1 Schools in Need of Improvement (“SINI”) Year 2 status or worse (including PLA schools), such as Alfred E. Smith, are also eligible to apply for a transfer to another non-SINI school through the DOE’s existing No Child Left Behind (“NCLB”) Public School Choice Process. More information about this process can be found at the DOE’s Web site at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/choicesenrollment/changingschools/default>.

Comment 65 and 66 concern the availability of SIG funding. New York City received \$58,569,883 in funding from SED for 2011-2012 to support implementation of School Improvement Grants in 44 schools (19 Transformation, 14 Restart, and 11 phaseout replacements funded under the Turnaround model). As discussed in more detail in the EISs, outstanding funding for the Turnaround and Restart schools was suspended by the New York State Education Department after the DOE and UFT were unable to reach an agreement on a new teacher evaluation system by January 1, 2012. The DOE is hopeful that this SIG funding will be restored to some of these schools based on the new SIG proposals submitted to SED in March 2012. If the State approves the DOE’s application to place New School into the Turnaround model, New School will be eligible for up to \$2M per year as part the School Improvement Grant program. However, the challenges in these schools are too great, and the need to overcome those challenges is too urgent, to not take immediate action to address key aspects of the school’s culture, systems, and staffing, whether or not SED ultimately authorizes funding.

Comment 67 asks about funding for restart schools. The DOE is currently working with six Educational Partnership Organizations (EPO)s to support 14 schools. The DOE has committed to provide funding for the EPO contracts through the conclusion of this school year. This commitment should ensure that the programmatic initiatives that EPOs have in place this year at Restart schools can be completed with fidelity. This commitment to fund the contracts regardless of SED’s reimbursement is only for this school year. The future work of EPOs may not continue if the Department unable to gain access to SIG funding.

Comment 68 refers to signed by approximately 1,300 people opposing the proposals to close and replace schools. As stated earlier, the DOE has provided several supports to the schools in question, but believes only their closure and replacement will accelerate the pace of change needed to achieve the desired improvement for current students in these schools.

The DOE does not have a policy of concentrating high needs students at specific schools. However, the DOE works to support schools which have above average percentages of students with high needs, including ELLs, students with disabilities, overage and under-credited students, students who come into schools “over-the-counter,” and others.

The DOE sites charter schools based on the availability of space, and these co-locations are not based on the quality of the schools already located within the buildings. The DOE believes that students should be provided with as many high quality options as possible.

The DOE currently supports struggling schools through the Children First Network selected by each school. In some cases, these schools work with the network to create an action plan for improvement. Also in some cases, such as for some of the schools approved for phase-out during the 2010-2011 school year, struggling schools are supported through a designated Transition Support Network. Additionally, schools are supported by the Division of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners, as well as the Office of Postsecondary Readiness.

Changes Made to the Proposal

This proposal was amended on April 20, 2012 to correct the state approval status of several CTE program offerings at Alfred E. Smith and at New School and some typographical errors. However, the changes did not significantly revise the proposal itself.