

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

**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING
Co-Location Extension
of MS 311 at Q744**

October 1, 2013

5:30 p.m.

1

2 [START RECORDING]

3 MS. MADELINE CHAN: So we're just going to
4 wait for one more member of the panel. I'd like
5 to just introduce myself, Madeline Chan. I'm
6 the Community District 24 superintendent. And
7 if we can just go across, and everyone can
8 introduce themselves, that would be great.

9 MS. DENISE VAZQUEZ: My name is Denise
10 Vazquez.

11 MS. CONNIE PARTINICO: I'm Connie Partinico,
12 CEC District 24 council member.

13 MS. BETH HERT: Beth Hert, interim acting
14 principal of MS311, CASA.

15 MS. PHOUNG NGUYEN: Phong Nguyen, principal
16 of Civic Leadership Academy.

17 MR. NICHOLAS MERCHANT-BLEIBERG: Nicholas
18 Merchant-Bleiberg, interim acting principal of
19 Voyages Prep.

20 MS. DONNA ATKINS: Donna Atkins, unit
21 coordinator at District 75, QTC.

22 MR. GILBERTO GOMEZ: I'm Gilberto Gomez.
23 I'm vice president from Parents Association for
24 Pan American International High School.

25 MS. GLORIA CORSINO: Gloria Corsino, CEC

1 District 75 president.

2 MS. MINERVA ZANCA: Minerva Zanca, principal
3 of Pan American.

4 MS. CHAN: So I do thank everyone in advance
5 for coming out this evening for our joint public
6 hearing. We also have Katrina Palazzo
7 [phonetic], who's the network leader for CASA.
8 Thank you, Miss Palazzo. We have our district
9 family advocate in the audience, Eleanor
10 McNamee, - - Eleanor. I'm sure a lot of parents
11 know Eleanor. So I'm going to officially begin
12 the joint public hearing. This is a joint
13 public hearing of the Department of Education,
14 Community Education Council, and School
15 Leadership Team for the proposed expansion and
16 extension of the co-location of Corona Arts and
17 Sciences Academy, 24Q311, with Civic Leadership
18 Academy, 24Q293, Pan American International High
19 School, 24Q296, Voyages Preparatory, 24Q744, and
20 Queens Transition Center, 75Q752, in Elmhurst
21 Educational Campus, in Building Q744, for the
22 2015-2016 school year, and the proposed re-
23 siting and co-location of MS 311, with a
24 District 75 school, in new building Q311,
25 beginning in the 2016-2017 school year. As I

1 said before, I am the District 24
2 superintendent, Madeline Chan, and I thank you
3 again for coming this evening. We have asked
4 the District 24 Community Education Council and
5 the school leadership teams in the building to
6 participate in this joint public hearing.
7 Everyone on the panel will have a chance to
8 speak after I read the proposal. This hearing
9 is being recorded. The purpose of this hearing
10 is for you to provide comments about the
11 proposal. Before I describe the proposal, I
12 want to make sure you are all aware of the
13 opportunity to provide your input. All those
14 who wish to speak must sign up in the speaker
15 signup area located just outside the auditorium.
16 The signup list will close in 15 minutes.
17 Speakers will be given the floor in the order
18 that they signed up. All comments are limited
19 to two minutes. It is possible that elected
20 officials will arrive at different times
21 throughout the evening. If they wish to speak,
22 we will do our best to accommodate them at the
23 first opportune moment. Those who are here at
24 the start of the public comment segment will be
25 asked to speak first. All comments will be

1 mentioned in the analysis of public comment, to
2 be published and provided to the Panel for
3 Educational Policy the evening before the panel
4 votes. That vote is scheduled for October 30th.
5 In addition, we welcome any comments and
6 feedback you may have at any time before the
7 panel votes on this proposal. The email address
8 and phone number where comments may be made are
9 D24proposals@schools.nyc.gov, and the phone
10 number is (212) 374-7621. The proposal summary
11 is as follows. On December 20th, 2012, the Panel
12 for Educational Policy approved the temporary
13 co-location of MS 311, Corona Arts and Sciences
14 Academy, in Building Q744, Elmhurst Educational
15 Campus, and the re-siting and co-location of MS
16 311, with a District 75 school, in new building
17 Q311, beginning in the 2015-2016 school year.
18 MS 311 is a new district middle school that is
19 co-located temporarily in Q744, with Civic
20 Leadership Academy, Pan American International
21 High School, Voyages Preparatory, and P752@Q744.
22 A co-location means that two or more school
23 organizations are located in the same building
24 and may share common spaces, like auditoriums,
25 gymnasiums, and cafeterias. The New York City

1 Department of Education is now proposing to
2 extend the co-location of MS 311 and expand the
3 scope of the co-location of MS 311 by adding
4 eighth grade in Elmhurst Educational Campus
5 Building Q744 for the 2015-2016 school year.
6 After the 2015-2016 school year, MS 311 would be
7 re-sited and co-located with a yet-to-be-
8 determined District 75 school, in new building
9 Q311, which is designed to accommodate a middle
10 school, and a District 75 school, and is
11 expected to be completed for occupancy by the
12 2016-2017 school year. Under the original
13 proposal approved by the Panel for Educational
14 Policy, MS 311 was expected to be co-located for
15 the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years only.
16 After two years in building Q744, MS 311 would
17 be re-sited to new building Q311, which was
18 expected to be completed for occupancy by the
19 2015-2016 school year. This co-location was
20 identified as temporary because MS 311 would be
21 re-sited to new building Q311, where it would
22 grow to scale as a middle school, serving
23 students in grades six through eight. However,
24 the construction of Q311 has been delayed. And
25 Q311 is now expected to be complete for the

1 2016–2017 school year, rather than the 2015–
2 2016 school year. Therefore, the DOE is
3 proposing that MS 311 stay in Q744 for one
4 additional year, and expand in Q744 to serve
5 students in sixth through eighth grade, in 2015
6 through 2016, as it continues to phase in. MS
7 311 would be re-sited for Q311 for the 2016–2017
8 school year. This year, MS 311 is serving
9 approximately 81 students in sixth grade. In
10 2014–2015, MS 311 will serve approximately 150
11 to 170 students in sixth, and seventh grades.
12 If this proposal is approved by the PEP, MS 311
13 will continue to be co-located in Q744 with
14 Civil Leadership, Pan American, Voyages, and
15 P752@Q744, and will expand to serve
16 approximately 225 to 255 students in sixth
17 through eighth grades in the 2015–2016 school
18 year. In 2016 through 2017, MS 311 will move to
19 a long-term location in new building Q311, where
20 it will be able to enroll a large cohort of
21 sixth grade students for the 2016–2017 school
22 year, and beyond. In 2018–2019, when the school
23 achieves full scale in building Q11, it will
24 serve approximately 780 to 810 students in sixth
25 through eighth grades. Q744 has the capacity to

1 serve 1,482 students. In the 2013-2014 school
2 year, the building is serving approximately
3 1,163 students, yielding a utilization rate of
4 78%. This means that the building is
5 underutilized, and has space to accommodate
6 additional students. If this proposal is
7 approved, there will be sufficient space to
8 accommodate all schools in Q744. In MS 311's
9 final year of co-location in 2015-2016, the Q744
10 building would serve approximately 1,251 to
11 1,395 students, yielding a building utilization
12 rate of 84 to 94%. The proposal is not expected
13 to impact current or future student enrollment
14 or instructional programming at Civil
15 Leadership, Pan American, Voyages, or P752@Q744.
16 The Office of Space Planning will continue to
17 work with the building council to ensure an
18 equitable allocation of the excess space. In
19 determining an equitable allocation, the Office
20 of Space Planning may consider factors such as
21 the relative enrollments of the co-located
22 schools, the instructional and programmatic
23 needs of the co-located schools, and the
24 physical location of the excess space within the
25 building. By temporarily co-locating MS 311 in

1 Q744, the DOE seeks to alleviate overcrowding
2 in Corona and Elmhurst, and add needed capacity
3 for zoned students to the area. This proposal
4 to expand and extend the co-location of MS 311
5 in Q744 would allow MS 311 to remain in Q744 for
6 the 2015-2016 school year, while building Q11
7 remains under construction, and would allow MS
8 311 to be re-sited to the new Q311 for the 2016-
9 2017 school year, when the construction of new
10 building Q311 is expected to be completed. So
11 that is the end of the summary. And I'm going
12 to ask anyone who would like to speak, to please
13 come up to the microphone. Is there a speakers
14 list? Okay. Yep, anyone on the panel who would
15 like to speak?

16 MS. NGUYEN: Thank you, good evening. My
17 name is Phong Nguyen, and I am the principal of
18 Civic Leadership Academy. First I wanted to
19 thank the principals of this campus for their
20 flexibility and cooperation in making the
21 addition of MS 311 seamless. Everyone is
22 working well together, and our campus is
23 peaceful and safe, which was two of our biggest
24 concerns when we first heard about the co-
25 location. However, I strongly urge the

1 Department of Education to look to the future,
2 and begin working on a long-term solution with
3 the stakeholders of this campus to address the
4 underutilized space once MS 311 moves to its
5 permanent location. Our campus is safe and
6 peaceful, because we're all working hard to keep
7 it so. But if this campus is subjected to
8 repeated short-term solutions, it will be
9 difficult to maintain the stability of the
10 campus. So please think about our community,
11 and how we can work together to ensure its long-
12 term success. Thank you.

13 MR. MERCHANT-BLEIBERG: Hello. I want to
14 echo Phoung's comments, and also just to say on
15 record that I think most school leaders agree
16 that co-location is a deeply flawed idea. And I
17 think that in particular, more so for the 311
18 community I think that it was a flawed idea
19 putting young children on a floor with our
20 school. Having said that, we're happy to share
21 the space with them, and we really look forward
22 to making this work for our whole campus. I
23 think also to me, at a hearing like this and
24 process like this, I think transparency is a big
25 issue for parents and school people. And I

1 would just hope that in the future, that when
2 new things are going to happen, that there's
3 real transparency in this process, that there's
4 a reason that this building was high-functioning
5 and is high-functioning. And I think that we
6 can't simply quantify how our schools work by
7 how much space they utilize. Our schools might
8 want to enhance or expand our own missions here,
9 and that should be factored into the decisions
10 as well. Thank you.

11 MS. ZANCA: Good evening, everyone. My name
12 is Minerva Zanca, and I am the principal of Pan
13 American International High School. And I agree
14 with my colleagues that our building is high-
15 functioning because we work very hard to make
16 sure that it remains that way. It is also a
17 safe place, a place where our children are
18 treated like, as if he or she were our own. And
19 we want to continue that. We want to continue
20 that tradition. Unfortunately, next year, when
21 my floor is co-located, my children, 375 of
22 them, will be squeezed to one side of the
23 building. That is going to create very
24 uncomfortable situations. Also unsafe
25 situations. I'm also concerned that when our

1 second floor is co-located, we will have
2 access only to the multi-purpose room but not
3 the to locker rooms and the bathrooms, and so we
4 are also concerned about where our children will
5 be changing in order to receive physical
6 education, which is a requirement for graduation
7 from high school. We welcome the young children
8 because many of them have siblings at my school.
9 And some day they may be my students, so this is
10 all part of the community. But I don't think
11 that a high school is the place for young
12 children, especially where the high school
13 students are going to be squeezed one on top of
14 the other, and we are going to lose valuable
15 space that we need to expand our growing
16 missions and our growing programs. Thank you.

17 MR. GOMEZ: My native language is Spanish,
18 so I feel more comfortable to speak in Spanish,
19 if somebody wants to translate my comments, I
20 really thank...

21 [Background conversation]

22 MR. GOMEZ: Okay. [Foreign audio 00:20:18-
23 00:20:27].

24 MALE VOICE: My name is Gilberto Gomez, and
25 I'm the - -.

1 MR. GOMEZ: [Foreign audio 00:20:36-
2 00:20:37].

3 MALE VOICE: The Vice President of - - of
4 Pan American.

5 MR. GOMEZ: Okay. [Foreign audio 00:20:43-
6 00:20:46].

7 MALE VOICE: Like as a leader and a
8 representative of the parents...

9 MR. GOMEZ: [Foreign audio 00:20:50-
10 00:20:53].

11 MALE VOICE: And as a parent worried about
12 the situation of the, of what's going on...

13 MR. GOMEZ: [Foreign audio 00:20:59-
14 00:21:02].

15 MALE VOICE: I want to put in example as my
16 son.

17 MR. GOMEZ: [Foreign audio 00:21:07-
18 00:21:09].

19 MALE VOICE: He is a child that since two
20 years ago he came to this country...

21 MR. GOMEZ: [Foreign audio 00:21:14-
22 00:21:22].

23 MALE VOICE: He has shown leadership skills
24 to the point that he's in the 10th grade and
25 they've moved him on to the 11th grade.

1 MR. GOMEZ: [Foreign audio 00:21:30-
2 00:21:38].

3 MALE VOICE: And this is because of the
4 capacity, for they could, - -?

5 MR. GOMEZ: [Foreign audio 00:21:45-
6 00:21:48].

7 MALE VOICE: For the capacity for they could
8 develop in a better way.

9 MR. GOMEZ: [Foreign audio 00:21:56-
10 00:22:01].

11 MALE VOICE: I consider as a father and one
12 of the parents of the family..

13 MR. GOMEZ: [Foreign audio 00:22:06-
14 00:22:09].

15 MALE VOICE: If the Department of Education
16 takes this measure..

17 MR. GOMEZ: [Foreign audio 00:22:13-
18 00:22:17].

19 MALE VOICE: It will affect a lot, the
20 behavior of the children.

21 MR. GOMEZ: [Foreign audio 00:22:21-
22 00:22:23].

23 MALE VOICE: To the point that I have spoken
24 to my son over this topic.

25 MR. GOMEZ: [Foreign audio 00:22:29-

1 00:22:40].

2 MALE VOICE: And that he's okay with sharing
3 the space, but it can put in danger little
4 children and already in the space that's already
5 existing now.

6 MR. GOMEZ: [Foreign audio 00:22:50-
7 00:22:51].

8 MALE VOICE: Thank you very much.

9 MS. ATKINS: Yes, my name is Donna Atkins.
10 I'm just here in, I'm standing to represent my
11 principal of District 75, Miss Fritzy Sannon
12 Brown. And I just want to bring to the
13 forefront that as a District 75 school, we do
14 have students with multiple disabilities. We
15 have students in wheelchairs. We have students
16 who are noise-sensitive. Multiple concerns.
17 And so we are concerned that how this co-
18 location will impact our space. Because we do
19 need adequate space for our students. And as
20 one of the principals said before, we would want
21 to expand our programs. So having space doesn't
22 necessarily mean that we can co-locate. I'm
23 sure we all can agree there are spaces in the
24 cemetery, or doesn't mean that you're going to
25 build a house there because there is space. So

1 we need to take certain things into
2 consideration before we do that. Thank you.

3 MS. HERT: Good evening. My name is Beth
4 Hert. I'm the acting principal of MS 311. And
5 I just want to acknowledge first and foremost
6 that the concerns that the principals and also
7 the community has had with regards to the co-
8 location situation, myself included, had many of
9 those concerns coming into this situation. But
10 in the past weeks of school opening, I believe
11 that we truly have had the most successful
12 opening that we could've had or could've asked
13 for, and I am truly confident that moving
14 forward, we will be able to work out any co-
15 location situation issues amongst ourselves as a
16 building council. And I really do believe that
17 this is a safe place for all students, including
18 the middle school students. Thank you.

19 MS. CORSINO: Good evening. My name is
20 Gloria Corsino, and I'm the president of
21 District 75 Community Education Council. And as
22 a mom who has her children in District 75, and I
23 can respect that we co-locate in certain
24 buildings, our children, I think our biggest
25 concern is the formula that Portfolio uses in

1 determining what the adequate space is when
2 are they are determining to add another school,
3 or to downsize a program, because it's true. I
4 mean everybody has to co-exist. But it's not
5 fair to just single out where one is going to
6 lose more than the other. And I think that
7 we've addressed this with Portfolio, and they're
8 actually meeting with us next month. And we'd
9 love to have them here, or speak to us and let
10 us know what their formula is when they make
11 these decisions, that it's not fair to any of
12 the schools who are collaborating together, and
13 working to keep all of our children safe. But
14 the decisions have to be adequate.

15 MS. PARTINICO: I will take all this
16 feedback to the CEC, and we'll discuss it, and
17 have a meeting about it.

18 MS. CHAN: So at this time I'd like to
19 welcome James Vazquez. He's the high school rep
20 for the UFT. Mr. Vazquez, would you like to say
21 something?

22 MR. JAMEZ VAZQUEZ: Sorry. Thank you very
23 much for giving me the time, and I apologize for
24 coming in a little bit late. We all know the
25 traffic in the area, so. You know, I've come

1 here to speak on the co-location. And you
2 know, and I hear the principals say, and I have
3 no doubt that the four school communities, the
4 five school communities, are really going to be
5 able to work all these details out. Because
6 they're professionals. There are kids already
7 here; the kids are involved. And we know that
8 they're going to be able to work this out. The
9 sad thing it is the Department of Education who
10 has created this situation. It is the
11 Department of Education who has created the
12 friction unnecessarily. They are the ones who
13 were here a year ago promising that they were
14 going to find this location. Everyone knew that
15 this neighborhood was already in a difficult
16 situation, but they went ahead anyway. We
17 warned them that the problem wasn't just going
18 to be the first year. The problems were going
19 to be created in the years afterwards. But as
20 is typical of this Department of Education, they
21 don't listen to this community. And everyone
22 has gotten the picture. And we're hoping that
23 the CEC will side, that the Department of
24 Education has made a mistake of co-locating yet
25 another school in a community, creating the

1 difficult situation here. The fact that these
2 rooms, this room right now is so sparsely
3 attended is clear that we understand that
4 they're only doing this because the law says
5 they have to have this hearing. We know that
6 they don't listen to the community. We know
7 they don't listen to the parents, to the
8 students, to the staff. They don't care. And
9 in the last 13 weeks, of this administration, we
10 are going to be here long after they are. And
11 we are going to have to sit there and fix all of
12 this mess that they've created. And we know
13 that these schools are going to be successful,
14 but it has nothing to do with them. It has to
15 do with the dedication of the staff, the school
16 communities, the parents, and the students. And
17 it's sad to see this yet again as they do this.
18 Thank you.

19 MS. CHAN: We will now take feedback from
20 the speaker list. Do we have that? No one's on
21 the speaker list? Okay.

22 MR. MERCHANT-BLEIBERG: You know, if I
23 could, I just wanted one thing to the parents of
24 311 families, that on behalf of my school, you
25 know, we want you to feel comfortable here. I

1 think Mr. Vazquez said it well. This is
2 certainly not about animosity toward your
3 community, and we want you to feel comfortable
4 and safe here. My name is Nicholas. If you
5 want to come into my office and speak to me
6 about any concern you ever have, you know we
7 want it to work for you. We understand that
8 you're the most important constituent in this
9 room, so thank you.

10 [Background conversation]

11 MS. MARYANN MATTUCCI: I just want to thank
12 all the parents that are here, because you're
13 extremely courageous, and as a teacher, I work
14 in the District 75 school here, I appreciate you
15 being here. And I only wish we had a room full
16 of parents. Like the gentleman said, they do
17 not listen to the community, much less the
18 teachers. However, for all children, and I feel
19 like not only am I advocating for my own
20 students, but yours as well, we do not have a
21 gym. We do not have an auditorium in the
22 District 75 school. So I'm sitting here saying
23 to myself what are they talking about? And as
24 the lady said, by nature, a youngster in a
25 District 75 program has certain needs, and by

1 federal law, should have certain
2 accommodations. So I hope you will understand,
3 as an educator, of course I want everyone
4 educated. But at what cost? Thank you.

5 MS. CHAN: Thank you very much. And I'd
6 like to thank everyone who added feedback today.
7 Parents, because you did not sign up and are
8 choosing not to speak now, that does not mean
9 that your feedback will not be taken. Up until
10 October 30th, we welcome any comments and
11 feedback you may have at any time before the
12 Panel for Educational Policy votes. And again,
13 that will be at the October 30th meeting. So if
14 you would like to email or phone, so that your
15 comments can be heard, once again the email is
16 D24proposals@schools.nyc.gov, and the phone
17 number is (212) 374-7621. Again, I thank
18 everyone for participating this evening. This
19 joint public hearing is now closed.

20 [END RECORDING]

21

22

23

24

25

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

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature 

Date October 3, 2013