



### **Public Comment Analysis**

Date: January 18, 2011

Topic: The Proposed Grade Expansion of P.S. 396 (10X396) to a K-5 School

Date of Panel Vote: January 19, 2011

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### **Summary of Proposal**

P.S. 396 (10X396, “P.S. 396”) is an existing elementary school located in building X026, at 1930 Andrews Avenue, Bronx, NY, 10453, in Community School District 10. P.S. 396 currently serves students in kindergarten through fourth grade and offers a pre-kindergarten program. P.S. 396 is co-located with M.S. 390, a middle school that currently serves students in grades five through eight. Currently, most P.S. 396 students attend M.S. 390 for middle school.

On December 3, 2010, the Department of Education (“DOE”) issued an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) describing a proposal to implement a “grade expansion” so that P.S. 396 will serve kindergarten through fifth grade. This means that P.S. 396 would continue to serve existing students as they are promoted to fifth grade in the 2011-2012 school year. P.S. 396 would complete its grade expansion in September 2011, at which point it would enroll students in kindergarten through fifth grade and continue to offer a pre-kindergarten program.

This proposal would allow P.S. 396 students to attend their zoned elementary school for grades K-5, the standard grade span in New York City. The proposed grade expansion will help standardize elementary school grade spans in District 10, giving P.S. 396 students the typical six years in elementary school and instructional continuity. Once P.S. 396 serves students in grades K-5 in 2011-2012, fifth-grade students will be able to attend their zoned middle school, M.S. 390, or apply to middle schools throughout District 10 via the Middle School Choice process.

In a separate EIS, the DOE also proposed to truncate M.S. 390 so that it would serve grades six through eight, the standard middle school grade span in New York City. This truncation will help to create grade alignment in District 10 and allow for greater access to middle school options for students at many District 10 elementary schools, including P.S. 396.

As a result of the proposal to expand the grades served by P.S. 396, there will be an increase of approximately 45-55 students. The building in which P.S. 396 is located has space to accommodate this expansion. School building X026 has a 2010-2011 target capacity of 1,121 and a target utilization rate of 71 percent. No further construction or facilities changes are necessary to implement the grade expansion.

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

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at M.S. 390/ P.S. 396 on January 4, 2011. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 120 members of the public attended the hearing, and 13 people spoke. Present at the meeting were District 10 Superintendent Sonia Menendez; Community Educational Council (“CEC”) 10 President Marvin Shelton and CEC representative Valerie Greaves; M.S. 390 Principal Robert Mercedes; M.S. 390 School Leadership Team representatives Belky Fermin, Elba Vasquez Ley, Elsie Cesario, Herminda Ortiz, George Swander, Marcus Escobar, Olga Torry, Madeline Echevarez, and Lynn Murray; P.S. 396 Principal Nicole Tine; School Leadership Team representatives Douglas Manzella, Elaine Ellison, Toni Rodriguez, Linet Gomez, Hilary Wolf, Carmen Ace, and Marilyn Morales.

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

1. Several commenters voiced support for the proposal, citing the success their children have had with P.S. 396’s ASD Nest program (which is designed to help higher functioning children with autism, or Asperger’s Syndrome), the opportunity for P.S. 396 to work with students in the ASD Nest program for an additional year, the feeling of acceptance and tolerance at P.S. 396, the strong parent participation at P.S. 396, and the desire to align grades with other schools in the City.
2. Two commenters also supported the expansion because they felt their child was not ready socially for middle school in fifth grade, and that they would have to look for a different middle school other than M.S. 390 if this proposal did not go through.

**The DOE also received three comments at the Joint Public Hearing which related to the proposed grade truncation of M.S. 390. These comments will be addressed in the separate Analysis of Public Comment concerning the M.S. 390 proposal.**

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

The DOE received 3 comments by e-mail and 1 comment by telephone.

3. All commenters expressed support for the proposal, citing their satisfaction with the ASD-Nest Program at P.S. 396.
4. One commenter also voiced concern that their child did not want to attend M.S. 390, and therefore supported the proposal to expand P.S. 396.

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

All comments express support for the proposal, and as such do not require a response.

#### **Changes Made to the Proposal**

No changes in the proposal were made in response to public feedback.