



Public Comment Analysis

Date: January 18, 2011

Topic: The Proposed Grade Reconfigurations of P.S. 182 Samantha Smith and P.S. 86 to K-5 Schools

Date of Panel Vote: January 19, 2011

Summary of Proposal

P.S. 182 Samantha Smith (28Q182, “P.S. 182”) is an existing Early Childhood Center (“ECC”) in Community School District 28. It currently serves students in kindergarten through second grade and offers a pre-kindergarten program. P.S. 182 is “split-sited,” which means it is currently located in three buildings:

- Q882, located at 90-36 150th Street, Jamaica, NY, 11435
- Q883, located at 85-40 150th Street, Jamaica, NY, 11435; and
- Q278, located at 88-13 Parsons Boulevard, Jamaica, NY, 11432.

P.S. 86 (28Q086, “P.S. 86”) is an existing elementary school located at 87-41 Parsons Boulevard, Jamaica, NY, 11432, in Community School District 28. It currently serves students in third through sixth grade and is located in building Q086. At this time, P.S. 182 and P.S. 86 share a zone, and students from P.S. 182 typically enroll in P.S. 86 for third grade.

The Department of Education (“DOE”) is proposing “grade reconfigurations” at both schools. Specifically, the DOE is proposing to:

- (1) expand the grades served by P.S. 182 so that this school will serve grades K-5; and
- (2) add grades K-2 at P.S. 86, but eliminate grade six at that school (called a “truncation”), so that it will also serve K-5.

This means that P.S. 182 would begin enrolling third graders in the 2011-2012 school year, in addition to maintaining its kindergarten, first, and second grades, and continue to offer a pre-kindergarten program.

P.S. 182 would then grow to serve an additional grade in each subsequent year. In 2011-2012, P.S.182 would serve students in Kindergarten through third grade. In 2012-2013, P.S. 182 would serve students in Kindergarten through fourth grade. P.S. 182 would complete its grade

expansion in September 2013, at which point it would enroll students in kindergarten through fifth grade and offer a pre-kindergarten program.

P.S. 86 would no longer enroll sixth graders after the current 2010-2011 school year. In 2011-2012, P.S. 86 would begin enrolling kindergartners, in addition to maintaining its third, fourth and fifth grades. P.S. 86 would then grow to serve an additional grade in each subsequent year. In 2012-2013, P.S. 86 would enroll kindergartners and first graders, in addition to maintaining its third, fourth, and fifth grades. P.S. 86 would complete its grade reconfiguration in September 2013, at which point it would enroll students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

P.S. 182 currently serves six sections of a half-day pre-kindergarten program. It is anticipated that the principals at P.S. 86 and P.S. 182 will divide the existing six pre-kindergarten sections between the two schools. Barring unforeseen circumstances, the current zone of the two schools will continue to be served by the same number of half-day sections.

The DOE has been working with a group of community members, including leaders and teachers from the two schools, called the Hillside Community Partnership, in order to solicit community feedback around several issues pertaining to these schools and this neighborhood. The idea to reconfigure the two schools into K-5 schools came out of these meetings, and it is supported both by the DOE and by the P.S. 182 and P.S. 86 parents and broader communities surrounding the schools.

The grade expansions at P.S. 182 and P.S. 86 would allow both schools to provide their students with a continuous elementary school experience from kindergarten through fifth grade, rather than having to transition schools after second grade and again after fifth (or sixth) grade into middle school. Additionally, P.S. 86 has been serving students in testing grades without the opportunity to serve them in earlier grades. This proposal would enable P.S. 86 to work with its students for three years prior to those important tests.

The DOE has confirmed that the two schools are able to serve the instructional needs of elementary students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Both schools' Children First Networks are prepared to support and assist their respective schools as they make the transition to serve additional grades. The two principals have also committed to work together to meet the needs of these expansion grades.

The DOE worked with CEC 28 to create two elementary zones for the schools out of the current single zone. The DOE and the CEC 28 presented a proposed rezoning plan on December 2, 2010 at the CEC 28's monthly meeting. On January 13, 2011, CEC 28 approved the rezoning proposal.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearings

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at P.S. 86 on January 6, 2011. At the hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 15 members of the public attended the hearing, and one person offered comments about the proposal. Also present at the meeting were P.S. 86 Principal Karen Zuvic; P.S. 86 School Leadership Team representatives Nicole Ortiz, Michael H, Angelica G. Mejia, Maci Fuentes; and Gaby Fighetti from the Division of Portfolio Planning.

Another joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at P.S. 182 on January 11, 2011. At the hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 57 members of the public attended the hearing, and three people offered comments about the proposal. Also present at the meeting were District 28 Superintendent Beverly Ffolkes-Bryant; Community Education Council representative Emily Ades; P.S. 182 Principal Andrew Topol; and P.S. 182 School Leadership Team representatives Jorge Morales, Marie Ajax, Lolita Parbhu, Tania Gonzales, and Christine Hillard.

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

1. Community Education Council representative Emily Ades stated CEC 28's complete support for the proposal to reconfigure P.S. 182 and P.S. 86 since that would allow for an easy and uniformed enrollment process and also to re-site P.S. 182. She also stated that having worked with Hillside Community Partnerships and P.S. 182, the CEC is very happy to support the re-siting.
2. SLT member Christine Hillard inquired about the Parsons School (building Q278), where she currently serves as a Pre-Kindergarten teacher. Specifically, she asked whether Pre-Kindergarten was included in the grade reconfiguration and which grades would be housed in the Parsons school building.
3. A commenter asked if P.S. 86 had plans to build a new gym or a larger cafeteria in order to accommodate the anticipated increase in student population as a result of the grade reconfigurations.
4. A commenter asked what was going to happen to sixth graders at P.S. 86 when the grades reconfigurations are implemented at both schools.

The DOE received the following comments at the Joint Public Hearing which did not relate to the grade reconfiguration proposal and are addressed in the Analysis of Public Comments regarding the re-siting of P.S. 182.

5. P.S. 182 SLT member Marie Ajax expressed her support for the re-siting proposal.
6. A commenter expressed support for the proposal, but also noted concern that P.S. 182 may not be re-sited after the grade reconfiguration. The commenter stated that she does not believe that the expansion of grades will work in the current building if the re-siting is not approved.

7. A commenter stated that the re-siting of P.S. 182 is a big step for the school, which would not have been possible without the help of the CEC representative, Emily Ades.
8. A commenter inquired about safety since the new building is on Hillside Avenue where there's a lot of traffic and parking.

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

1. A commenter expressed support for the proposed grade reconfiguration, reasoning that the continuity will be beneficial for the students' social development and also will allow each school to better follow the progress of the children and work with the ones that need help. As part of the same comment, the commenter noted concern regarding the possibility of P.S. 182 not being able to move into the new building. The commenter expressed concern about the school being split-sited and also that the students at P.S. 182 share the cafeteria with the homeless population.

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

1. Comment 1 expresses support for the proposal and does not require a response
2. With regards to comment 2, P.S. 182 currently serves pre-kindergarten to second grades, but if this proposal is approved, it will expand gradually to serve pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. According to the Educational Impact Statement ("EIS") regarding the proposal to re-site P.S. 182, the DOE has not yet determined whether or how it will use the facilities vacated by P.S. 182's if the re-siting proposal is approved.
3. With regards to comment 3, P.S. 86 Principal Zuvic pointed out that the school currently uses the gym as a lunchroom for much of the day in addition to the designated lunchroom. She stated that the school's enrollment is expected to decrease in the 2011-2012 school year and thus she believes the lunchroom alone will be sufficient to support the students at the school. Nevertheless, she also noted that the school has applied for a new gym, playgrounds and science rooms through the Capital Plan. Gaby Fighetti from the DOE's Office of Portfolio Planning added that comments and requests regarding the Capital Plan and school facilities can be made at the Community Education Council meetings.
4. With regards to comment 4, according to the EIS regarding the grade reconfiguration of P.S. 86, "at the close of the 2010-2011 school year, all fifth and sixth graders who meet promotional standards would graduate from P.S. 86" and "use the District 28 Middle School Choice Process to enroll in a middle school of their choice for grades six and seven, respectively." The EIS also states that "from that time forward, P.S. 86 would no longer enroll sixth graders, and students would move onto middle school for sixth grade."
5. Written comment 1 expresses support of the proposal and does not require a response. The second part of the comment is an inquiry about the re-siting proposal regarding P.S. 182 and will be responded to in the Analysis of Public Comments regarding the P.S. 182 re-siting.

Changes Made to the Proposal

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