

## **Public Comment Analysis**

Date: December 19, 2012  
Topic: The Proposed Co-location of a New Public Early Childhood Program, Educare, with Existing School P.S. 41 Francis White (23K041) in Building K041 Beginning in 2013-2014  
Date of Panel Vote: December 20, 2012

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## **Summary of Proposal**

On October 25, 2012, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) proposed to site Educare (“Educare NYC”), a new full-day, year-round public early childhood program that will serve children from ages six-weeks to five-years-old in Building K041 (“K041”), located at 411 Thatford Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11212, in Community School District 23 beginning in the 2013-2014 school year. Educare NYC would be co-located in K041 with P.S. 41 Francis White (“P.S. 41”), an existing zoned district school that serves students in kindergarten through eighth grades<sup>1</sup>. A “co-location” means that two or more organizations are located in the same building and may share common spaces like auditoriums, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

The amended EIS clarifies information regarding the kindergarten admissions process for Educare NYC students to P.S. 41. The amended information does not significantly revise the proposal.

Educare NYC is a new year-round, public early childhood program. The Educare Learning Network (“Educare”) is a partnership between the Ounce of Prevention Fund, the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, and other national philanthropies and public-private partners. Educare currently serves over 2,600 children at 17 schools across the United States. The Educare model draws from a wide range of research-based practices that foster learning environments that support infants, toddlers and young children who are growing up in high-needs communities.

Educare NYC will be the Educare Learning Network’s first pilot program in New York City and will provide full-day and year-round early childhood services for children and their families based on their residence and family income. Educare NYC will be supported by a local public-private partnership and will provide children and families with programming and instructional support which increases school readiness and strengthens the ability of families to support their children’s learning in K-12.

If this pilot proposal is approved, Educare NYC would open in September 2013 in K041 and would serve approximately 35-55 children from ages six-weeks to five years-old. Educare NYC would reach full scale in 2014-2015, at which point it would serve approximately 115-135 children. The program would admit children based on their zip code and their family’s income. A percentage of seats will likely also be reserved for the students from the most vulnerable families, as described in further detail in Section III below. K041 would also house Educare NYC’s Leadership Institute, which will serve as a training hub for aspiring and current directors of early childhood education programs in Brownsville and across New York City.

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<sup>1</sup> The EIS describing that proposal can be found here: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2012-2013/Dec2012Proposals.htm>.

The DOE and the Administration for Children’s Services (“ACS”) conducted a search for a local community-based organization (“CBO”) to provide the day-to-day services at Educare NYC. That search was completed in December 2012 and SCO Family of Services was chosen as the local CBO.

K041 has been identified as an under-utilized building.<sup>2</sup> K041 has the capacity to serve 885 students, but in 2012-2013,<sup>3</sup> P.S. 41 is projected to serve 642 students in kindergarten through eighth grades.<sup>4</sup> This yields a building utilization rate of approximately 73%, which demonstrates that the building is “under-utilized” and has space to accommodate additional students. If this proposal is approved, in 2014-2015 when Educare NYC is fully phased in, K041 would serve approximately 115-135 children from Educare NYC and 585-675 students from P.S. 41, which yields a projected utilization rate of 79%-92%. Thus, K041 has sufficient space to accommodate the proposed co-location.

Copies of the EIS describing the proposed co-location of Educare are available in the main office of P.S. 41. It is also available on the DOE’s website at:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2012-2013/Dec2012Proposals>.

### **Summary of Comments Received**

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held on Thursday, December 6, 2012 at K041. At the joint public hearings, participants had the opportunity to provide input on the proposal.

Approximately 25 members of the public attended the hearing. Present at the meeting were:

- Community School District 23 Superintendent Ainslie Cumberbatch
- Community Education Council 23 (“CEC” 23”) members: Rose Laney, Milton Bolton Williams, Lannetta Jeffers, Nedra Robinson, and Sherryann Farrell
- Principal Theresa Siegel of P.S. 41;
- Songa Hill of P.S. 41’s School Leadership Team (“SLT”), and
- Stephen Demers and Sophia Pappas from the DOE.

The following comments and remarks were made at the joint public hearing on December 6, 2012:

1. Theresa Siegel, Principal of P.S. 41, expressed enthusiasm for the opportunity to be part of a process that will bring an early education opportunity to Brownsville. Principal Siegel stated she is looking forward to a positive working relationship with the Educare NYC program and believes that both programs can learn from each other.
2. Milton Bolton Williams, CEC 23, is hopeful that the new program will be good for the community.
3. Multiple commenters inquired about the metrics in place to determine if the Educare program is successful after the first year.
4. One commenter asked about the required qualifications of Educare staff.
5. One commenter inquired about Educare’s interest in opening a program in New York City.

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<sup>2</sup> The 2012-2013 Under-Utilized Space Memorandum and List was published on the DOE’s website on October 24, 2012. It can be accessed at <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/6D8EA76A-82FA-4740-9ED1-66BCABEE8BFB/132938/UnderutilizedSpaceMemorandum102412.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Based on the 2011-2012 Enrollment Capacity Utilization Report (the “Blue Book”)

<sup>4</sup> Based on the 2012-2013 budgeted projections.

6. Multiple commenters asked about Educare NYC's impact on P.S. 41's enrollment and sections.
7. One commenter inquired if the Educare NYC program will result in a truncation of P.S. 41's middle school grades.
8. Multiple commenters asked about the status of the selection process of a local provider to partner with Educare NYC.

**The DOE received a number of comments at the joint public hearing which do not directly relate to the proposal, and therefore will not be addressed. Those comments are summarized below.**

9. Milton Bolton Williams, CEC 23, expressed disappointment that more parents are not active and present at joint public hearings.
10. One commenter stated that mayoral control has been harmful for New York City schools.

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

Comments 1 and 2 are in favor of the proposal and do not require a response.

Comment 3 inquired about the metrics that will be used to evaluate the Educare program.

The Educare Learning Network uses valid and reliable tools to evaluate classroom and program quality that align with those used by NYC early education agencies and the NYS Early Childhood Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), known as QUALITYstarsNY (QSNY).

Researchers from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill have been tracking program quality and child and family outcomes at Educare programs across the country. Beginning with two Educare programs in 2005 and now covering 12 programs, the FPG study shows that low-income children (including children with limited proficiency in English), who enroll in Educare as infants or toddlers enter kindergarten with the same skills as their middle-income peers.

Comment 5 asked about qualifications teachers must have to work at Educare NYC.

Educare NYC teachers will be required to hold a NYS Certification in Early Childhood Education.

Comment 6 asked about the origin of Educare's interest in NYC.

The Educare Learning Network currently serves over 2,600 children at 17 programs across the United States. The Educare model draws from a wide range of research-based practices that foster learning environments that support infants, toddlers and young children who are growing up in high-needs communities. In an effort to draw from existing models for high quality birth-5 programming that build on strengths and best practices within the existing NYC early childhood system, DOE engaged Educare the Educare Learning Network in collaboration with ACS to explore how to bring the model to New York, with a local community-based provider administering the program.

Comments 7, 8 questioned whether the proposal would impact P.S. 41's enrollment, grades served, and sections.

The DOE's enrollment projections are based on the current enrollment at P.S. 41 in the entry point grade level (i.e. kindergarten) and further assume that the same number of students will age up and continue with their education at P.S. 41. Therefore, there is nothing that currently leads the DOE to believe that the proposed co-location will have an impact on P.S. 41's enrollment. As noted, P.S. 41 will continue to serve students in kindergarten through eighth grades.

The Citywide Instructional Footprint (the "Footprint") is the guide used to allocate space to all schools based on the number of class sections they program and the grade levels of the school. The number of class sections at each school is determined by the principal based on enrollment, budget, and student needs; there is a standard guideline of target class size (i.e., number of students in a class section) for each grade level. At the middle school and high school levels, the Footprint assumes every classroom is programmed during every period of the school day except one lunch period. The full text of the Instructional Footprint is available at [http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/78D715EA-EC50-4AD1-82D1-1CAC544F5D30/0/DOEFOOTPRINTSConsolidatedVersion2011\\_FINAL.pdf](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/78D715EA-EC50-4AD1-82D1-1CAC544F5D30/0/DOEFOOTPRINTSConsolidatedVersion2011_FINAL.pdf).

Because the Footprint does not set a baseline for programs serving children before kindergarten, the DOE and Educare NYC are currently collaborating to address the amount of space that Educare will need to successfully run its program in building K041. Currently, Educare has the following staff to student ratios at its existing schools across the country: 3:8 per infant/toddler classroom and 3:17 per pre-school classroom.

The EIS details the number of class sections P.S. 41 is expected to have each year that Educare NYC phases into the building. The EIS demonstrate that there is sufficient space in the building to accommodate the proposed co-location of Educare NYC.

Comment 9 concerns the status of the local provider selection.

ACS and DOE selected the provider by

1. Identifying EarlyLearn providers in the zip code where DOE is proposing to establish Educare NYC.
2. Identifying those providers who had sufficient number of infant toddler and/or preschool seats with EarlyLearn.
3. Engaging those EarlyLearn providers to determine their
  - a. Ability to serve cohorts of children across the birth-5 spectrum with public resources (i.e., could come from state or federal grants, in addition to city EarlyLearn contracts)
  - b. Potential to serve as the leader of all aspects of the Educare model.

ACS and DOE conducted a search for a local CBO to provide the day-to-day services at Educare NYC. That search was completed in December 2012. SCO Family of Services was chosen as the local CBO because of its:

- existing programming through public funds for children ages six weeks to five-years-old and their families;
- staff structure to support high quality services for children ages six weeks to five-years-old and their families;
- experience managing a wide range of grants and public funding sources requiring a firm grasp of federal, state, and local early childhood standards and regulations; and
- administrative/management structures to support operation of all aspects of the Educare model.

SCO Family of Services has an existing relationship in the Brownsville community with a wide range of partnerships that support coordinated efforts to meet the needs of children and families. For example, SCO Family of Services has provided the following:

- zero to three programming since 2007;
- foster care since the 1980s; and
- local partnerships.

Moreover, SCO Family of Services has the potential to help spread the impact of Educare NYC beyond Brownsville through its network of partnerships and programming in other communities and areas of the city.

Comments 9, 10 do not relate directly to the proposed co-location and, therefore, have not been addressed.

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

No changes have been made to this proposal.