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Chancellor

Public Comment Analysis

Date: October 10, 2012

Topic: The Proposed Temporary Re-siting and Co-Location of P.S. 96 Richard Rodgers (11X096) with New School (11XTBD) in Building X292 in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015

Date of Panel Vote: October 11, 2012

Summary of Proposal

The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) is proposing to temporarily re-site and co-locate grades one and two of P.S. 96 Richard Rodgers (11X096, “P.S. 96”) from their current location in main building X096 and its adjacent transportable classroom units (“TCUs”) to building X292, where they will be co-located with New School (11XTBD, “11XTBD”), for a two-year period starting in the 2013-2014 school year.¹ A “re-siting” means students will attend classes in a different building than the one they have attended in previous years, and a “co-location” means that two or more school organizations are located in the same building and may share common spaces like auditoriums, gymnasiums, libraries, and cafeterias. P.S. 96 is an existing, zoned elementary school serving students in kindergarten through fifth grades, located at 650 Waring Avenue, Bronx, NY 10467. If this proposal is approved by the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”), sections of P.S. 96 will occupy the space available in building X292 that is not being used by 11XTBD as it phases in; 11XTBD will not lose any of the space that has been designated for it. 11XTBD and P.S. 96 will both use shared spaces in the X292 building for the two years of the co-location.

Building X292 is a new school building currently under construction at 800 Lydig Avenue, Bronx, NY 10462, in Community School District 11 (“District 11”), approximately one mile from X096, which is also in District 11. X292 is being constructed with the intent of serving 11XTBD, a new, zoned district elementary school, that will begin phasing into the X292 building in the 2013-2014 school year with kindergarten and first grades and will add one grade each subsequent year until it reaches full scale to serve kindergarten through fifth grades in the 2017-2018 school year. 11XTBD will serve approximately 90-110 kindergarten and first grade students in its first year of phase-in and approximately 135-165 kindergarten, first and second grade students in its second year of phase-in. At full scale, 11XTBD will serve approximately 270-330 kindergarten through fifth-grade students. This proposal is not anticipated to have an impact on the school’s admissions process, enrollment, instructional programming, partnerships, or extra-curricular offerings.

¹ For the purposes of the Educational Impact Statement, we have projected that all first and second grade students will be co-located in building X292 for the duration of the proposal; however, the leadership of P.S. 96 may decide to send fewer students or portions of these grades to X292 during the period of the co-location.

P.S. 96 currently serves 1,059 students in buildings X096 and the adjacent TCUs. In late 2011, P.S. 96 was approved by the School Construction Authority (“SCA”) to have its TCUs removed and replaced by a permanent addition with the capacity to serve approximately 408 students. The construction of the addition is anticipated to take two years, during which the number of students that would have been housed in the TCUs will be re-sited to the X292 building. Where possible, the DOE aims to utilize available space in other local school buildings to alleviate overcrowding or serve students during a temporary period of construction. Building X292 is expected to be underutilized in the 2013-2014 and 2014- 2015 school years if this proposal is not implemented because 11XTBD will still be growing to scale; therefore X292 can serve the students of P.S. 96 while its addition is being constructed. P.S. 96 will not need space in X292 after the completion of the building’s addition.

As noted, this proposal only addresses P.S. 96’s first and second grades. If this proposal is approved, P.S. 96 will be co-located with 11XTBD in building X292 for a two-year period starting in the 2013-2014 school year. During the two years of this proposal’s implementation, P.S. 96 will serve 340-360 first and second-grade students in the X292 building. P.S. 96 will be located in building X292 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year, at which point the first and second grade sections of P.S. 96 will relocate to main building X096 and its new addition scheduled to be completed by September 2015, where P.S. will serve kindergarten through fifth grades thereafter. A more detailed discussion of long-term planning for P.S. 96 is detailed in the Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”).

Building X292 is currently being constructed and will have a target capacity of 379 students. Without a co-location during 11XTBD’s phase-in, X292 is projected to be significantly underutilized, with a maximum utilization rate of 29% in 2013-2014 and a maximum utilization rate of 44% in 2014-2015. If this proposal is approved, during the first year of its implementation, in 2013-2014, there will be a total of 430-470 students served collectively by 11XTBD and P.S. 96 in building X292. This yields a projected target utilization rate of 113-124%. During the second and final year of this proposal, in 2014-2015, 11XTBD and P.S. 96 will serve a total of 475-525 students in building X292. This yields a projected target utilization rate of 125-139%. These rates are comparable to other elementary schools in District 11 where utilization rates are projected to range from 81-162%, indicating a need for additional capacity in this area of District 11. The school represented by the high end of this range, P.S. 105, with its building utilization of 162%, is located next to building X292; in fact, X292 is being constructed, and new elementary school 11XTBD is being created, to help alleviate overcrowding in this portion of District 11 and particularly at P.S. 105.

Moreover, although a utilization rate in excess of 100% may suggest that a building will be over-utilized or over-crowded in a given year, this rate does not account for the fact that rooms may be programmed for more efficient or different uses than the standard assumptions in the utilization calculation. Section III.B. of the EIS sets forth the baseline number of rooms to be allocated to each school pursuant to the Footprint as well as the total number rooms that are in the building to provide a more complete picture of the availability of space in a building. Therefore, the buildings have sufficient space to accommodate both schools during the period of this proposal. As noted above, P.S. 96 will vacate building X292 and return to its main building X096, by September 2015 when the addition will be completed.

The details of this proposal have been released in an EIS which can be accessed here:
<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2012-2013/Oct2012Proposals>

Copies of the EIS are also available in P.S. 96’s main office.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearings

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at the X096 building on October 3, 2012. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 106 members of the public attended the hearing, and 13 people spoke. Present at the meeting were District 11 Community Superintendent Elizabeth A. White; Community Education Council 11 representatives Petra Poleon and Jamie Matthews; P.S. 96 School Leadership Team (“SLT”) representatives Audrey Morotollo and Tania Keros; and Jean-Pierre Jacquet and Stephanie Crane from the Division of Portfolio Planning.

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

1. Many commenters asked questions about which grades and students will be placed in new building X292.
2. Two commenters asked why the first and second grade students were selected to be sited at the new school building instead of the fourth and fifth-grade students.
3. Several commenters asked questions about sibling placement, particularly where one sibling is in a grade that will be sited in building X292 and another sibling would remain sited in building X096.
4. Two commenters asked when they would know which second-grade students will be sited in building X292.
5. Several commenters raised the following concerns about special education students:
 - a. Will be special education children be placed in building X292?
 - b. If special education students are placed in building X292, will they continue to receive mandated services?
6. One commenter expressed concern about current kindergarteners having to adjust again next year when sited at the new building, X292, after they just became familiar with the current building, X096.
7. One commenter raised concern about a specific child who is at risk for becoming a runaway and requested that the child not be sited in the new building because the student will be unfamiliar with the surroundings.
8. Many commenters asked if transportation will be provided for the students sent to new building X292.
9. One commenter asked if members of P.S. 96’s administration will be placed in building X292 along with the children.
10. One commenter asked if the current rules at P.S. 96 will also apply at the new school building where the students will be temporarily co-located.
11. One commenter asked when the lunch periods will be at the new school and expressed concern about lunch time being scheduled too late in the day for the young students.
12. One commenter asked what schools will be co-located in the X292 building.
13. One commenter asked what the options are if she does not want to place her student in the new building and asked if she could place the student in a different school.
14. One commenter asked what date this change will be implemented.
15. One commenter expressed her belief that the addition is not something to be celebrated because it is only correcting the mistake of using TCUs at the expense of the children.

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

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

16. Marcy Gross, of the Bronx's Community Board 11, submitted a written comment voicing general disapproval of the proposal and challenging the reasons behind the proposal, questioning specifically the economic efficiency of the re-siting.
17. One oral commenter voiced concern about how siblings would be placed, particularly in the case where one sibling is in a grade that is slated to be placed at the new school building and another sibling in older grade is to remain in the main building X096.

Summary of Comments and Remarks Made That Were Not Related to the Proposal

18. Marcy Gross suggested that the DOE refocus its efforts from after-school programs for students to educational initiatives for adults with Alzheimer's Disease.

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

Comments 1 and 2 inquire as to which grade levels will be sited at building X292 during the temporary co-location, and how these grade levels were selected.

In this proposal, the DOE is proposing to temporarily re-site and co-locate grades one and two of P.S. 96 from their current location in main building X096 and its adjacent TCUs to building X292 for a two year period starting in 2013-2014. For the purposes of the EIS, the DOE projected that all first and second grade students will be co-located in building X292 for the duration of the proposal; however, the leadership of P.S. 96 may decide to send fewer students or portions of these grades to X292 during the period of the co-location. At the joint public hearing, the school leadership expressed their desire to send all of the first grade class sections and only a portion of the second grade class to new building X292 during the temporarily re-siting and co-location of P.S. 96. The decision to send first and second-grade students was made by, and will be finalized by, the school leadership of P.S. 96.

Comments 3, 4, 5(a), and 17 inquire as to which students will be sent to new school building X292 and when they will be informed about this, referencing specifically: second grade students, special education students, and families with siblings who may be located in different buildings.

The principal and school leadership will work with families regarding the specific needs of children who may be sited at building X292 throughout the upcoming year. The principal will inform all families of the students who will be sited at X292 by the end of the 2012-2013 school year. It is possible that special education students will be sited in the X292 building, but in that case, they would have their needs met just as they would in the X096 building, as discussed in greater detail below in the response to Comment 5(b).

Comment 5(b) inquires as to whether special education students will received the appropriate services if sited in the X292 building.

Special education students will continue to receive all mandated services. P.S. 96 currently serves general education students and students requiring special education services, including students enrolled in Integrated Co-Teaching ("ICT") classes and Self-Contained ("SC") special education classes, as well as students receiving Special Education Teacher Support Services ("SETSS").

The existing ICT, SC, and SETSS classes at P.S. 96 will continue to be provided and students with disabilities will continue to receive mandated services in accordance with their Individualized Education

Programs (“IEPs”), regardless of where they are sited. Services are tailored to meet the individual needs of the students with disabilities attending P.S. 96 and, as such, may vary from year to year.

Additionally, P.S. 96 serves English Language Learners (“ELLs”), students who are of limited English proficiency. ELL students at P.S. 96 receive English as a Second Language (“ESL”) classes. All current and future ELL students attending P.S. 96, across both sites, will receive ESL services in accordance with DOE policy.

Comment 6 expresses concern about the adjustment first-grade students will need to make in the new building after just becoming familiar with the X096 building during kindergarten.

While the DOE recognizes the challenges of placing students in new environments, the DOE is confident that the principal, school leadership, and staff of P.S. 96 will work extensively with the students and families of P.S. 96 to ensure a smooth transition to the new school environment during the course of this proposal.

Comment 7 expresses concern about a specific student who is at risk for becoming a runaway and requests for that student to remain in building X096 where the student is familiar with his or her surroundings.

The principal and school leadership will work with this family and student to determine the best site for the student and his or her needs.

Comment 8 concerns transportation for the students being temporarily co-located in building X292.

Building X292 is located approximately 1.0 miles from building X096. General education students in the elementary school grades may receive busing if they reside 0.5 miles or more from X292 in accordance with DOE transportation policy, though this may result in different students being eligible for busing than were eligible at P.S. 96.

Transportation will continue to be provided according to Chancellor’s Regulation A-801: <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/21A1B11A-886B-4F74-9546-E875EE82A14C/40303/A801.pdf>.

Comment 9 inquires as to whether P.S. 96’s administration will also be placed in building X292.

Members of P.S. 96’s administration, along with members of the staff, will be placed in building X292 to serve the needs of the students and school community. The principal of P.S. 96 will be spending time on both campuses to assist with all grades sited across the two buildings.

Comment 10 inquires as to whether P.S. 96’s rules will also apply to the students temporarily co-located in X292.

The rules in place at P.S. 96 will apply to all students and grades served at both the X096 and X292 buildings.

Comment 11 inquires as to what the lunch periods will be for students in the X292 building and expresses concern about lunches being scheduled late in the day.

The administration of P.S. 96 has not yet determined the lunch schedule for students at the X292 building. P.S. 96's leadership will work with the leadership of 11XTBD to determine reasonable lunch schedules for all students served in the X292 building.

Comment 12 inquires as to what schools will be co-located in the X292 building.

The P.S. 96 students served at X292 will be co-located with one new elementary school, which the DOE temporarily refers to as 11XTBD but which will have an official name when it opens in 2013-2014. 11XTBD will open with kindergarten and first grade and serve two sections per grade. 11XTBD will add one grade each year until it reaches full scale in the 2017-2018 school year. Grades one and two of P.S. 96 will only be co-located with 11XTBD while it serves kindergarten and first grade in the 2013-2014 school year and kindergarten through second grades in the 2014-2015 school year.

Comment 13 inquires as to what the options are if a parent would not like to place the student in the new school building and if he or she could place his or her child in a new school.

As per Chancellor's Regulation A-101, any student who requests a transfer must file a placement exception request ("PER") with the Office of Student Enrollment ("OSE"). OSE will review the request and work with the family to decide if an alternate placement is needed for the child.

Comment 14 inquires as to what date this proposal will be implemented.

The proposal will be voted on at the Panel for Educational Policy ("PEP") meeting on October 11, 2012. If this proposal is approved, it will be implemented at the start of the 2013-2014 school year.

Comment 15 expresses the view that the addition being created for building X096 is not cause for celebration. While the commenter opined that it took too long for the DOE to replace the TCUs with a permanent addition, the comment implies that the addition is preferable to the TCUs that P.S. 96 students are currently using. Accordingly, the comment is supportive of the proposal and requires no response.

Comment 16 voices general disapproval of the proposal and questions the economic efficiency of re-siting the students to the new construction while the P.S. 96 addition is being constructed.

Irrespective of what happens to P.S. 96 students, X292 will be built to house 11XTBD, a new elementary school planned to help alleviate elementary school overcrowding in District 11. During the first few years of 11XTBD's phase-in, there will be vacant space in X292 because the school will not yet have grown to scale. As described above, the DOE projects that with just 11XTBD in the building, its maximum utilization rate would be 29% in 2013-2014 and 44% in 2014-2015.

Since P.S. 96's TCUs will not be functional during the construction of the school's addition in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, P.S. 96 will not have capacity for all of its students on-site. Accordingly, the DOE believes the most cost-effective solution is to place P.S. 96 students in the empty space available in X292. Contrary to the view expressed in comment 16, this is an efficient way to match resources to needs.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to this proposal.