



## **Public Comment Analysis**

Date: November 16, 2011

Topic: The Proposed Re-siting of P.S. 267 (02M267) in Building M267 Beginning in the 2012-2013 School Year

Date of Panel Vote: November 17, 2011

---

### **Summary of Proposal**

The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) is proposing to re-site P.S. 267 East Side Elementary (02M267, “P.S. 267”), an existing zoned elementary school that serves 131 students in kindergarten and first grade. P.S. 267 is currently located in building M158 (“M158”) at 1458 York Avenue, New York, NY 10075 in Manhattan’s Community School District 2. If this proposal is approved, P.S. 267 would be re-sited to school building M267, located at 213 East 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, New York, NY 10065, also in Manhattan’s Community School District 2, beginning in the 2012-2013 school year. This relocation was anticipated in the initial proposal to open P.S. 267 in the 2010-2011 school year. On March 23, 2010, the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”) approved a plan to temporarily place new school P.S. 267, which would eventually expand to serve kindergarten through fifth grade, in building M158. In the EIS describing that proposal, the DOE indicated that it planned to move P.S. 267 to M267 in September 2012 in order to allow P.S. 267 to grow to scale. Under the plan approved by PEP, P.S. 267 was intended to be the permanent school in M267. This proposal is designed to implement that plan, and provide P.S. 267 with a permanent location.

P.S. 267 is currently co-located in M158 with P.S. 158 Bayard Taylor (02M158, “P.S. 158”), an existing zoned elementary school that serves students in kindergarten through fifth grade and offers a pre-kindergarten program. A “co-location” means that two or more school organizations are located in the same building and may share common spaces like auditoriums, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. The temporary incubation of P.S. 267 in the M158 building was approved by the Panel for Educational Policy on March 23, 2010.

M267 currently houses P.S. 59 Beekman Hill International (02M059, “P.S. 59”), an existing zoned elementary school that serves kindergarten through fifth grade. P.S. 59 is temporarily sited in M267 while the construction on its own facility is being completed. P.S. 59 is expected to move to its new facility in September 2012, at which time M267 will become available for P.S. 267. If this proposal is approved,

P.S. 267 would not be co-located with any other schools in building M267 when it is re-sited there in September 2012. This proposal is contingent on P.S. 59's re-siting to its new facility beginning in September 2012. If for any reason P.S. 59's relocation is delayed beyond the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, P.S. 267 would remain co-located with P.S. 158 in M158 until P.S. 59 relocates to its new facility, thus making M267 available. If this proposal is approved, P.S. 267's current kindergarten and first grade classes will be re-sited to M267 beginning in September 2012. Pursuant to the plan approved by the PEP on March 23, 2010, P.S. 267 will add one grade each year until it reaches the full grade span of kindergarten through fifth grade.

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

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at building M158 on November 9, 2011. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 40 members of the public attended the hearing, and 19 people spoke. Present at the meeting were District 2 Community Education Council ("CEC 2") representative Simon Miller; CEC 2 Representative Tamara Rowe; P.S. 267 Principal Medea McEvoy; P.S. 267 School Leadership Team ("SLT") Representative and PTA Co-president Matthew Chook; P.S. 158 SLT Representative Cynthia Wong; P.S. 158 SLT Representative Sharri Berg; Community Board 5 Representative Asa Somers; and Office of Portfolio Management Chief of Staff Michael Nolan.

The following comments and remarks were made at the joint public hearing on November 9, 2011:

#### **A. Comments supporting the proposal**

1. P.S. 267 SLT Representative and PTA Co-president Matthew Chook asserted that the re-siting is of great importance, and there are several important factors highlighting the need for the resiting. The first factor identified by Mr. Chook was busing. He noted that the school's zone was created based on the location of building M267. Almost the entire kindergarten lives more than 10 blocks away from M158, which he believes is detrimental to students. The distance makes drop-off and pickup logistics difficult. Additionally, parental involvement is limited due to the distance. If the school doesn't move after this year, nearly 80% of students would be bused. The second factor identified by Mr. Chook is the challenge of having two schools being in same building, especially two K-5 schools. There are competing needs: lunchtime is early and space in the gym, library, and yard is limited. The third factor is building a school community. During the first year that the school was opened, it was not zoned. P.S. 267 is grateful for zoning, but the physical location of the school outside the zone has hindered community. Parents of future kindergarteners are hesitant to attend the school because of distance, even despite its quality. Therefore, Mr. Chook urged the DOE to re-site P.S. 267 to M267.
2. P.S. 267 Principal Medea McEvoy asserted that the school is excited about the move, which will hopefully take place next summer. She noted that co-location has challenges, but P.S. 267 thanks the P.S. 158 community for its cooperation. However, similar schools together create difficulties with time and space. She further noted that P.S. 267 hasn't been able to vary the ending time of school day and or have multiple lunch periods because of scheduling conflicts with P.S. 158, and asserted that the school having its own space will eliminate those difficulties. She also noted that the P.S. 267 community was excited to hear that the building will be ready on time.

3. CEC 2 Representative Simon Miller noted the plan for P.S. 267 was conceived to address issues of overcrowding across many different communities and zones in the Upper East Side and the whole district. It was one piece of the puzzle that needed to be put in place to increase elementary capacity as well as the burgeoning need for new middle school seats. Mr. Miller characterized this proposal as an important step in the process of creating capacity for all students in the district.
4. A teacher at P.S. 267 asked when the physical move of the school will take place. The commenter asserted that what is in the classroom is important, and it takes years for a teacher to develop that physical setting. Such a thing can't be made in a rush or without several drafts. The commenter expressed concern that without enough time to create space, teachers could lose valuable teaching opportunities. She expressed hope that she will have walked into the building before September 2012.
5. Approximately six commenters associated with the P.S. 267 community expressed their desire for the re-siting to be approved, saying it is important for a school to have its own building. The commenters asserted that the move will eliminate many of the negative circumstances P.S. 267 has faced by being located outside of its zone and co-located with another elementary school, including chaotic drop-off and pickup times, busing, and difficulties in building a school community, and expressed the opinion that if the move does not take place before next year, then things will only get worse.
6. A commenter said that P.S. 267 is facing a problem with low enrollment, and in the new building, it should be able to take in students who are unable to be accommodated at nearby crowded schools, like P.S. 116.

*B. Comments suggesting possible future uses of available space in M158 and M267*

7. P.S. 158 SLT Representative Cynthia Wong stated that though the main impact of the proposal is on P.S. 267, P.S. 158 is impacted by what happens after they leave. She has heard unanimous feedback that everyone wants a middle school to fill the empty space. Another elementary school would make sharing the space very difficult.
8. P.S. 158 SLT Representative Sharri Berg expressed thanks to P.S. 267 for cooperating well during the co-location. The SLT has been hearing from the community about what should happen on the upper floors after P.S. 267 moves, and she read a statement from another P.S. 158 parent. With a second elementary school in the building, the narrow hallways and drop-off and pickup situations would create serious safety issues for both schools. Sharing important space, like the library, for similar programs would create academic problems. Ms. Berg asserted that the lack of options for middle school in District 2 is glaring. Adding elementary schools to the area has been great, but the district doesn't need more now—at least any that are created in place of new middle school seats. It would make sense to add a middle school to the building to add options for community.
9. Community Board 5 Representative Asa Somers asserted that the DOE should also incubate a new elementary school in building M267 beginning in September 2012 while P.S. 267 is still phasing in. Ms. Somers asserted that P.S. 116 is severely overcrowded, and enrollment has reached dangerous, unacceptable levels. The Community Board 5 Education Committee, along with an Upper East Side coalition of elected officials, has called for an incubation of a new school to relieve the overcrowding in P.S. 116 beginning next year. The space available in M267 while P.S. 267 reaches full scale is a perfect fit, and the Community Board 5 Education Committee will

urge the DOE to consider this. Ms. Somers expressed the opinion that incubation is a low-impact, high-reward step that the DOE should take.

10. Multiple commenters associated with the P.S. 116 community asserted that the DOE should incubate a new elementary school in building M267 while P.S. 267 grows to full scale because a new elementary school would relieve severe overcrowding at P.S. 116, which they assert has reached dangerous, unacceptable levels.
11. A commenter associated with the P.S. 116 community asserted that a new elementary school should be incubated in M267 as P.S. 267 grows to full scale because the overcrowding at P.S. 116 cannot be relieved any other way. Space constraints in the cafeteria already require lunchtimes at 10:30, and the school continues to take in more students each year than graduate the year before. P.S. 116 will not get rid of its specialty rooms because there is not enough capacity in the cafeteria, gym, and hallways. The commenter asserts the building has a capacity of 680 students, but enrollment is already over 800 students.
12. Multiple commenters asserted that the space vacated by P.S. 267 in M158 as a result of the move should be used to open a new middle school. The area is in great need of increased middle school capacity, and the DOE should address it by opening that middle school, and a middle school's operations would coexist more smoothly with P.S. 158 than another elementary school would because of the competition for similar resources that takes place between schools of the same grade levels.

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

#### **C. One commenter emailed the DOE supporting the proposal**

13. A commenter asserted that the current location of the school has made getting to school a logistical nightmare and caused her to feel disconnected from her daughter's school environment and activities. Sharing a building has also been very difficult in building M158. The commenter further asserted that allowing a new school to incubate with P.S. 267 as it grows in building M267 would negatively impact P.S. 267. The commenter expressed the belief that her daughter's education has already been compromised, and though she appreciates P.S. 116's hardships, P.S. 267 has looked forward to having its own building. P.S. 267 students should be allowed to strengthen their school experience by having their own building.

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

Comments 1-3 and 5-6 support the proposal and do not require a response.

Comment 4 supports the proposal, but raises concerns about when P.S. 267 teachers will be able to set up their classrooms. Although the EIS states September 2012, the date is a reference to when school will begin. School moves typically take place during July and August. The timing of the relocation of P.S. 267 will depend upon the timing of the relocation of P.S. 59 to its new building, but both are expected to occur before September 2012.

With respect to comments 7-12, these comments present suggestions that would not impact the current proposal to re-site P.S. 267 to building M267, and thus do not require a response. Any significant change to school utilization, such as opening a new school in M267 or M158 would be proposed in a separate Educational Impact Statement and would be subject to approval by the Panel for Educational Policy.

Comment 13 supports the proposal and does not require a response.

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

No changes have been made to the proposal in response to public feedback.