



Public Comment Analysis

Date: November 16, 2011

Topic: The Proposed Grade Truncation of P.S. 96 to a K-5 School in 2012-2013

Date of Panel Vote: November 17, 2011

Summary of Proposal

P.S. 96 (27Q096, “P.S. 96”) is an existing zoned elementary school located in building Q096 and a transportable classroom unit (“TCU,” also commonly known as a “trailer”), Q986, at 130-01 Rockaway Boulevard, Queens, NY 11420, in Community School District 27. It currently serves students in kindergarten through sixth grade and offers a pre-kindergarten program. P.S. 96 is currently the only school located in building Q096 and TCU Q986.

This is a proposal to implement a “grade truncation,” meaning that the school would no longer enroll sixth grade students after the current 2011-2012 school year. If this proposal is approved, at the close of the 2011-2012 school year, all fifth and sixth grade students who meet promotional standards from P.S. 96 would attend middle school. During the 2011-2012 school year, P.S. 96 fifth and sixth students would participate in the Middle School application process. In September 2012, P.S. 96 fifth and sixth grade students who are promoted from P.S. 96 would enter middle school as sixth and seventh graders, respectively. Beginning in September 2012, P.S. 96 would only serve students in kindergarten through fifth grade and would continue to offer a pre-kindergarten program (subject to funding and demand).

Students in District 27 currently attend their zoned middle school or apply to choice middle schools on a school-by-school basis. A student’s zoned school is determined by his or her home address. The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) and the District 27 Community Education Council (“CEC”) are currently discussing the possibility of implementing “Middle School Choice” for District 27. If Middle School Choice is adopted, zoned students would still have priority for admission to their zoned middle schools. Students would also be eligible to attend a zoned school outside of the zone in which they reside after students within the zone in which the school is located have been admitted. Students would continue to be able to apply to middle schools that have borough-wide and city-wide admissions policies. The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) strives to ensure that all students in New York City have access to high-quality schools at every stage of their education. The proposed grade truncation offers significant benefits to the students currently in fifth grade at P.S. 96.

Middle schools typically enroll students beginning in sixth grade. P.S. 96 students who wait until sixth grade to apply to middle school are limited to those schools that still have available seventh grade seats. In particular, there are several un-zoned choice middle schools in District 27 that rarely have open seventh grade seats because seats become available only if sixth grade students leave the school. Therefore, students who would remain at P.S. 96 through sixth grade if this proposal is not implemented

would have fewer opportunities to enter those choice middle schools than their peers who start middle school a year earlier.

This proposed grade truncation will provide P.S. 96 students access to the same range of middle school options as their peers throughout District 27. In addition, it addresses problems that exist for middle school students and the middle school as a whole when students start middle school through multiple entry grades (sixth and seventh).

This proposal also addresses some disadvantages that students may be experiencing while they remain at P.S. 96 for sixth grade after their grade size has been reduced by the number of students who exercised the option to enter middle school in sixth grade. By entering middle school in sixth grade rather than seventh grade, students at P.S. 96 will have more opportunities to take advantage of the enriching, high-school preparatory experiences offered at middle schools.

Finally, if this proposal is implemented, P.S. 96's grade span from K-6 to K-5 would reduce the school's enrollment by approximately 44 students, freeing up additional space that P.S. 96 could use to accommodate additional lower-grade students or to meet other needs in the school. P.S. 96 is also overcrowded, and truncating P.S. 96's sixth grade will reduce the building's utilization rate and alleviate overcrowding.

I. Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at P.S. 96 on November 14, 2011. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 8 members of the public attended the hearing, and no one spoke. Present at the meeting were District 27 Superintendent Michele Lloyd-Bey; District 27 Community Education Council Representative Raymond McNamara; Principal Joyce Barrett-Walker; Mr. Lewis representing the School Leadership Team; and Drew Patterson and Emily Ades from the Division of Portfolio Planning.

The following comments and remarks were made at the joint public hearing on [date]:

1. Principal Barrett-Walker remarked that she is in full support of this proposal and that truncation of the 6th grade will be beneficial to the school community.

II. Summary of Issues Raised in Written and/or Oral Comments Submitted to the DOE regarding the proposal

There were no written and/or oral comments submitted.

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

Comment 1 was a general comment expressing support for 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.