



## **Public Comment Analysis**

Date: November 16, 2011

Topic: The Proposed Grade Expansion of P.S. 236 Langston Hughes

Date of Panel Vote: November 17, 2011

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### **Summary of Proposal**

P.S. 236 Langston Hughes (09X236, “P.S. 236”) is an existing choice elementary school split-sited in buildings X236, located at 499 East 175 Street, Bronx, NY 10457, and X173, located at 1871 Walton Avenue, Bronx, NY 10453, in Community School District 9 (“District 9”). P.S. 236 is an early childhood center (“ECC”) that currently serves students in kindergarten through second grade and offers a pre-kindergarten program. ECCs are small elementary schools that focus on early childhood education, typically kindergarten through second grade.

This is a proposal to implement a “grade expansion,” whereby P.S. 236 would expand to serve students in kindergarten through fifth grade at full scale.

If this proposal is approved, students currently enrolled in kindergarten, first, and second grades would be able to continue at the school for third, fourth, and fifth grades. In 2012-2013, P.S. 236 would begin to serve third grade. P.S. 236 would grow to serve one additional grade level each subsequent year until September 2014, at which point the school would reach full scale and serve students in kindergarten through fifth grade. The Department of Education (“DOE”) does not anticipate that the proposed expansion of P.S. 236 would affect its pre-kindergarten program.

The proposal to expand P.S. 236 is supported by the school community (i.e., students and their families) currently served by P.S. 236, as well as P.S. 236’s school leadership team. It is expected that P.S. 236 will be able to serve the instructional needs of all elementary school students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Moreover, buildings X236 and X173, the two buildings in which the school is split-sited, have appropriate facilities and sufficient space to support this proposed grade reconfiguration.

P.S. 236 currently shares space at X173 with the La Peninsula Community Organization, a non-profit development program that operates several Head Start centers in the Bronx. This proposal would not impact La Peninsula’s Head Start center at X173, and La Peninsula’s Head Start center at X173 would continue to operate out of the same number of rooms it is currently allocated.

The DOE strives to ensure that all students in New York City have access to a high-quality school at every stage of their education. The DOE is proposing to expand P.S. 236 because having elementary schools that terminate in different grades (i.e., K-2 versus K-5) creates challenges for students who must leave elementary schools after second grade and move to other elementary schools for third through fifth grades. In addition, matriculating second graders are limited to those schools that still have available third grade seats. As a result, some P.S. 236 students may not be able to enter their preferred elementary school after they leave P.S. 236. The proposed grade expansion at P.S. 236 would allow the school to provide its students with a continuous elementary school experience from kindergarten through fifth grade, reduce the number of transitions P.S. 236 students are required to make during the elementary school years, and provide P.S. 236 students with similar access to elementary school options as compared with their district peers.

Currently, elementary students in District 9 can attend their zoned elementary schools, apply to P.S. 236 through a school-based random selection process, or apply to Citywide or district-wide Gifted and Talented programs through the Gifted and Talented application process. Under this proposal, P.S. 236 would remain a choice school, and elementary students in District 9 would retain all of the above options.

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

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at P.S. 236 Langston Hughes on November 9, 2011. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 56 members of the public attended the hearing, and one offered comments on the proposal. Present at the meeting were District 9 Superintendent Dolores Esposito; District 9 Community Education Council President Marilyn Espada; Beverly Ellis, Principal of P.S. 236 Langston Hughes; Alicia Vasquez, SLT Chair; Marina Davis, UFT Representative; Molly Johnson, Deborah Wright, and Jillian Patterson, teachers from P.S. 236 Langston Hughes representing the School Leadership Team; Maria Quail, Children's First Network 109 Leader; Juan Rosales, Associate Planner, Office of Portfolio Management; Nydia Portilla, Ruth Aybar, and Lidia Nunez, Division of Family and Community Engagement.

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

1. Marilyn Espada, president of Community Education Council 10 thanked parents for attending the hearing and for being actively involved in their school.
2. Alicia Vasquez, SLT Chair also commented that there was a great response from parents about the proposal, and that parents support the expansion.
3. Beverly Ellis, Principal of P.S. 236 stated that she supports the plan to expand the school and that she was pleased with the number of community members who attended the hearing.

4. Alicia Perry, a parent of a student at P.S. 236, voiced her support of the school and hearing attendance and encouraged parents to remain involved and supportive throughout the implementation of the proposal.

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

No written or oral comments regarding this proposal were submitted to the DOE.

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

All comments received at the hearing were in support of the proposed grade expansion at P.S. 236 and therefore do not need to be addressed.

**Changes Made to the Proposal**

No changes have been made to this proposal.