



**Dennis M. Walcott**  
*Chancellor*

### **Public Comment Analysis**

Date: March 20, 2012

Topic: The Proposed Co-Location of New Middle School 08X562 with J.H.S. 125 Henry Hudson (08X125) and P.S. 119 (08X119) in Building X125 Beginning in 2012-2013

Date of Panel Vote: March 21, 2012

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### **Summary of Proposal**

On January 26, 2012, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) proposed to co-locate a new middle school, 08X562 (“08X562”), in building X125, located at 1111 Pugsley Avenue, Bronx, NY 10472, in District 8. If this proposal is approved, 08X562 would be co-located in building X125 with J.H.S. 125 Henry Hudson (08X125, “J.H.S. 125”), an existing middle school currently serving students in sixth through eighth grades, and P.S. 119 (08X119, “P.S. 119”), an existing elementary school currently serving students in kindergarten through fifth grades, which also 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.

P.S. 119 serves most of its students in building X119, located at 1075 Pugsley Avenue, Bronx, NY 10472, but utilizes some space in building X125, which is located nearby, to accommodate students who cannot be served in building X119. Currently, P.S. 119 serves 15 class sections of students from kindergarten through second grades in building X125, while housing all of its other students, including its pre-kindergarten program and additional sections of kindergarten through second grades, in building X119. The DOE anticipates that P.S. 119 would continue to serve approximately 15 class sections of its students in building X125 in the coming years. P.S. 119 also serves some of its students in transportable classroom units located at its main site.

The DOE plans to reduce enrollment at J.H.S. 125 as an academic intervention strategy to help J.H.S. 125 improve student performance because in recent years, J.H.S. 125 has received poor Progress Report grades. This planned enrollment reduction of J.H.S. 125 would also permit a new school, proposed to be 08X562, to be co-located in the X125 building. The DOE is planning to reduce the enrollment at J.H.S. 125 by 295-300 students over a period of three years.

If this co-location proposal is approved, 08X562 would gradually phase into X125 while J.H.S. 125 would simultaneously scale back its enrollment. 08X562 would serve students in sixth grade in 2012-2013 and would add one grade level every year until the school reaches its full grade span of sixth

through eighth grades in the 2014-2015 school year, when it would serve approximately 300-330 students at full scale.

If this proposal is approved, J.H.S. 125 and 08X562 would both be zoned campus choice middle schools that would serve students in sixth through eighth grades. Both schools would admit students through the District 8 Middle School Choice process and offer priority to students residing in the X125 zone through a campus choice admissions method, in which all students zoned to the X125 building would have priority for a seat in the building and would have the opportunity to rank 08X562 and J.H.S. 125 in order of preference on their application. Students would then be matched to one of the two schools through a zoned campus choice matching process operated by the Office of Student Enrollment (“OSE”).

In the current 2011-2012 school year, building X125 is serving 1,050 students, yielding a utilization rate of 83%. If this co-location proposal is approved, there would be sufficient space to accommodate J.H.S. 125, 08X562, and a number of sections of P.S. 119 students consistent with that of recent years. In the 2014-2015 school year, when 08X562 completes its phase-in and J.H.S. 125 completes its enrollment reduction, the X125 building would serve approximately 1,005-1,095 students, yielding an approximate utilization rate of 79-86%.

The details of this proposal have been released in an EIS which can be accessed here:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2011-2012/Mar212012Proposals.htm>

Copies of the EIS are also available in the main offices of J.H.S. 125 and P.S. 119.

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

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at school building X125 on March 1, 2012. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 500 members of the public attended the hearing, and 29 people spoke. Present at the meeting were District 8 Community Superintendent Timothy Behr; State Senator Ruben Diaz; Senator Diaz’s Chief of Staff Luis Sepulveda; Council Member Annabel Palma; Education Unit/Community Liaison from the Office of The Bronx Borough President, Erica Veras; Assembly Member Peter Rivera’s Chief of Staff, Daniel Figueroa; Community Board 9 Representatives Francisco Gonzalez, Julia Rodriguez and Mohamad Amir; J.H.S. 125 School Leadership Team Representatives Paul Brush, Anthony Martin; P.S. 119 School Leadership Team Representatives Sandra Mohabir, and Beatrice Alonso; Community Education Council (“CEC”) 8 Representatives Bob Franklin, Lisa Mateo, Janet Bosch, Sajo Touray, and Nicholas Marini, Toby Shepard, and Stephanie Crane from the Division of Portfolio Planning.

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

1. Several commenters (including Senator Ruben Diaz; Senator Ruben Diaz’s Chief of Staff, Luis Sepulveda; and CEC 8 President Bob Franklin) voiced general opposition to the proposal. Several commenters also pointed out that the high attendance at the joint public hearing is indicative of the general opposition to this proposal within the community at large.
2. Several commenters (including Council Member Annabell Palma; Senator Ruben Diaz’s Chief of Staff, Luis Sepulveda; Community Board 9 Representatives, Francisco Gonzalez and Julia Rodriguez) stated that the proposal was not shared with the community members (parents, elected officials, community residents) or was not done so in a timely manner.

3. Community Board 9 Representatives Francisco Gonzalez, Julia Rodriguez, and Mohammed Amir stated that the proposal was not shared with the community board and the DOE did not adequately involve the community board in the creation of this proposal and others like it.
4. Several commenters (including Senator Ruben Diaz; Councilmember Annabell Palma; Senator Ruben Diaz's Chief of Staff, Luis Sepulveda; Assemblymember Rivera's Chief of Staff, Daniel Figueroa; and Community Board 9 Representative, Julia Rodriguez) questioned the use of community feedback in creating proposals and/or questioned the impact of community feedback on proposals that have already been presented.
5. Multiple commenters (including Senator Ruben Diaz's Chief of Staff, Luis Sepulveda) stated the belief that the Panel for Educational Policy ("PEP") had already made its decision to approve the proposal.
6. Daniel Figueroa, Chief of Staff for Assemblymember Rivera, noted that the public comment analysis is not shared with the PEP until 24 hours before the PEP vote and voiced his opinion that this is not sufficient time for the PEP to review the community's feedback.
7. Two commenters questioned the validity and integrity of the DOE's statistics and data.
8. Several commenters stated that J.H.S. 125 would benefit more if the DOE provided additional resources to the school instead of reducing the enrollment and bringing another school into the building, and many commenters questioned the DOE's decision to proceed in this way.
9. One commenter acknowledged that there are performance issues at J.H.S. 125.
10. One commenter asked how the admissions policy will change and whether students will be able to remain at J.H.S. 125 if the co-location proposal is approved.
11. One commenter asked about what will happen to kindergarten, first, and second grade students who currently take classes in the X125 building.
12. One commenter raised concern about what will happen to the teachers and staff at J.H.S 125 as the enrollment in the school decreases.
13. One commenter asked how the DOE could put an additional middle school in building X125 without taking another school out.
14. Several commenters asked how the co-location of a new school organization will help improve academics at J.H.S. 125.
15. Several commenters voiced opposition to having to share spaces with other school organizations and raised the following concerns regarding the scheduling of shared spaces:
  - a. Students have to eat lunch at earlier times.
  - b. P.S. 119 will lose space and instructional time.
  - c. School organizations will struggle to reach agreements about how to share spaces within the building.
16. Two commenters voiced concerns about the bathrooms and whether they could accommodate all students. These commenters said that it currently takes a long time for children to use the bathroom facilities because they are inadequate for the schools' needs.
17. Several commenters stated that P.S. 119 and/or building X125 is very overcrowded. Multiple commenters also stated that the overcrowding at P.S. 119 needs to end soon. They also voiced the belief that their concerns about overcrowding have been ignored over the past several years.
18. One commenter stated that the Educational Impact Statement does not detail the accurate enrollment numbers for P.S. 119. The commenter also stated that the projections for P.S. 119 are inaccurate.
19. One commenter stated that students from the outer boroughs are bused to the schools here. The commenter stated that this practice leads to overcrowding and reduces the availability of seats for local community members.
20. One commenter stated that the X119's building's capacity is 500 but that it holds 1,000 students.

21. Several commenters stated that there is no room for an additional school to be co-located in building X125 because P.S. 119 is already overcrowded.
22. Multiple commenters stated that the space that will be allocated to the new middle school should instead be allocated to P.S. 119.
23. Several commenters expressed concern that P.S. 119 students attend a split-sited school where they have to travel between the two buildings throughout the course of the school day. Many commenters said that this is an unsafe practice that is unfair for students. Some commenters voiced their concern that traveling between the two facilities could negatively impact student performance.
24. Two commenters raised concern about the Transportable Classroom Units (“TCUs”) located at P.S. 119’s main site and stated that they are not in the appropriate condition to serve students.
25. Two commenters voiced their concerns that co-locations are an ineffective practice that can cause student performance to decline.
26. Several commenters voiced support for the teachers and staff at P.S. 119
27. Multiple commenters praised student achievement at both P.S. 119 and J.H.S. 125.

The following questions, comments, and remarks were made at the Joint Public Hearing and are not related to the proposal

28. One commenter stated that the PEP members are unfairly selected and its membership does not allow the community to have impact on the proposals for changes in schools.
29. Daniel Figueroa, Chief of Staff for Assembly member Rivera, voiced his opinion that the DOE webpages that include information about the proposals and the PEP are challenging to navigate and are not easily accessible.
30. One commenter noted that P.S. 119 serves as an overflow school.
31. Multiple commenters stated that the DOE needs to construct an annex for P.S. 119 to meet the demand for seats at the school and alleviate overcrowding.
32. One commenter stated that the process for voting on changes in schools is not democratic.
33. One commenter noted that there is often fighting and disunity among young people in today’s schools.
34. One commenter stated that a similar proposal was previously issued for the P.S. 102 community and the PEP approved that proposal.
35. One commenter noted that issues of educational inequality disproportionately impact students of color and economically disadvantaged communities.
36. Daniel Figueroa, Assemblymember Rivera’s Chief of Staff, noted that he and other elected officials recently presented a bill to require CEC approval for significant changes in schools to be implemented.
37. Multiple commenters (including Senator Ruben Diaz; Senator Ruben Diaz’s Chief of Staff, Luis Sepulveda; Assemblymember Rivera’s Chief of Staff, Daniel Figueroa; and Community Board 9 Representative, Julia Rodriguez) expressed the importance of community members continuing to work together and voice their opinions on this proposal and other similar decisions made regarding their school(s) and/or community.

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

The DOE received one written comment and no oral comments through the dedicated Web site and phone line for this proposal.

38. The written comment submitted voiced general opposition to the proposal and asked the following questions:

- a. What assessment was made to confirm there is a need for another middle school in the area?
  - b. How will the new middle school address the low performance of the current school? Aren't the same children going to attend this school?
  - c. If P.S. 119 is overcrowded, why are students bused into the school? Shouldn't children that reside within walking distance be assigned to this school?
  - d. What measures are being taken to address the overcrowding in P.S. 119?
  - e. Rather than co-locate P.S. 119 would it be possible for J.H.S. 125 and P.S. 119 (in its main site) to switch buildings since enrollment at J.H.S. 125 has declined?
39. One oral comment submitted to the DOE states that P.S. 119 is overcrowded. The commenter also expressed concern about P.S. 119 students traveling between the two different buildings. The commenter also voiced concern about the TCUs that are allocated to P.S. 119.

The following written questions, comments, or remarks were submitted to the DOE and are not related to the proposal

40. One written comment asked if there is insufficient space at P.S. 119, can children be sent to another school?

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

Comment 1 and 38 voice general opposition to the proposal.

While many members of the J.H.S. 125 and P.S. 119 communities object to the possibility of reducing the enrollment at J.H.S. 125 and co-locating a new middle school in building X125 with P.S. 119 and J.H.S. 125, the DOE's reduction to the school's enrollment over the course of three years aims to focus academic instruction and school support services on a smaller number of students. When the school reaches its planned enrollment level at the end of three years, the school will transition from serving 627 students in 2011-2012 to serving approximately 300-330 students. This targeted focus on a smaller student body is intended to better position the school to improve student achievement, particularly for struggling students and students with disabilities.

This planned enrollment reduction of J.H.S. 125 will also permit a new school, proposed to be 08X562, to be co-located in the X125 building. The co-location of 08X562 in building X125 is intended to provide an additional option to students and families in District 8 and the Bronx. The creation of a new middle school will allow J.H.S. 125 to enroll a smaller student body as outlined above, while simultaneously ensuring that there are sufficient middle school seats for students zoned to X125 and meeting parent demand for more school options. Further, the campus choice model encourages co-located middle schools to develop distinct school models to complement each other and attract students with varying needs and interests.

Comments 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 concern community involvement and engagement in the creation of DOE proposals for significant changes in school utilization. These comments also question the impact of community feedback on proposals.

The DOE is committed to engaging with the community, including its elected representatives, for all proposals requiring a significant change in school utilization, as detailed in Chancellor's Regulation A-190. Chancellor's Regulation A-190 sets out the public review and comment process that the DOE must undertake with respect to all such proposals by the Chancellor (e.g., grade reconfiguration, re-siting, co-location of schools, or phase-out.)

Prior to posting the aforementioned proposal on January 26, 2012, representatives of the DOE had conversations with the district community superintendent, network leaders, and leadership of both school organizations regarding plans to propose a change in their school communities. DOE representatives also met with the School Leadership Teams (“SLTs”) of the school organizations co-located in building X125. At the meetings with the SLTs of each school organization (which for J.H.S. 125 included two CEC members), the DOE encouraged the SLTs to share the information presented at the meeting with their larger communities and provide any additional feedback, questions or concerns to the DOE through the email address, [D08proposals@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:D08proposals@schools.nyc.gov), or the phone line, 212-374-5159.

The goal for these engagement meetings was to conduct conversations with schools and their communities about their performance and potential interventions that may improve it. The DOE gathered feedback – to understand what is working, what is not working, and general community feedback – before making a decision about whether or not to create a proposal, how to implement a proposal and, if needed, how to create a proposal that would best support the community. This type of engagement is above and beyond what is mandated by State law.

On March 1, 2012, a Joint Public Hearing was held for this proposal and public feedback was collected at this hearing and through the dedicated email and phone numbers. The DOE’s analysis of public comment will be given to the PEP for review no later than 24 hours prior to the PEP voting on the proposal. This allows community members to continue to give feedback until the PEP vote while still allowing the PEP time to review the proposal before voting on it. If the DOE were to give the PEP an analysis of public comment prior to this 24-hour period, the DOE would not give the J.H.S. 125 school community the full benefit of the public comment period. The analysis of public comment will also be made available on-line prior to the vote. The PEP has not made a decision yet on this proposal. The PEP is expected to vote on this proposal at its meeting on March 21, 2012.

Here, and with respect to all proposals for changes in school utilization, the DOE considers all of the feedback received during the community engagement process and the Joint Public Hearing. In the past, in reviewing this community feedback, the DOE has both revised and withdrawn phase-out proposals in response to this input. The DOE took this approach during the current school year when it withdrew a proposal to truncate Wadleigh Secondary School for the Performing & Visual Arts (03M415) and a proposal to phase-out Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VII Middle School (13K596). Last year the DOE withdrew its proposal to phase-out P.S. 114 Ryder Elementary in Brooklyn (18K114).

Comments 7 and 18 question the accuracy and integrity of the statistics and data that the DOE used to create this proposal and others like it.

The DOE makes every effort to ensure its data is carefully checked and true to its sources, especially with regard to the data used for Progress Reports. The data used in Progress Reports goes through an extensive verification and vetting process by both the school being evaluated, in this case J.H.S. 125, and the DOE. Schools input their data into DOE source systems throughout the year and have the opportunity to review and update data, subject to certain documentation requirements and system limitations, throughout the school year. At the end of each school year, schools verify the academic and demographic data of their students, and principals certify that the data is accurate for use in State accountability. DOE staff spend the summer months and the early fall reviewing the data schools provide, calculating Progress Report results, and checking underlying data and calculations. In the early fall, schools have at least two additional opportunities to review the data used in their Progress Reports.

Though the commenter may disagree with which data is used or how it is used, this does not mean the data is incorrect.

Comment 8 voices the belief that J.H.S. 125 would be better served if the resources that will be given to the new school were instead given to J.H.S. 125 to help the school improve.

While every school across the city receives funding via the same formula, some schools have been less successful in serving students than their peer schools that serve similar populations.

New schools are funded in the same manner as other schools: funding follows the students and is based on need (incoming proficiency level and special education/ELL/Title I status). While it is true that new schools do receive start-up funding averaging \$30,000 per year over the first five years for an elementary or middle school and \$34,000 for a high school, the difference in funding between a new school and an existing school is marginal – the annual amount of startup funding is not even large enough to cover the salary of a first-year teacher.

Because J.H.S. 125 has struggled to use its funds to successfully serve all students currently enrolled, the DOE feels that some resources—which are not substantially more for a new school than for an existing school—would be better allocated to a new school option.

Comment 9 acknowledges there are performance issues at J.H.S. 125.

The DOE recognizes that J.H.S. 125 has struggled to successfully serve all of its students. The school received a C on its most recent Progress Report with a D grade in the School Performance sub-section and C grades on the Progress and Environment sub-sections. The school received an Underdeveloped on its most recent Quality Review for the 2010-2011 school year. The DOE is working with the J.H.S. 125 community to gradually decrease the school's enrollment by approximately 295-330 students over a period of three years. The DOE is committed to supporting J.H.S. 125 as it reduces its enrollment and focuses on improving.

Comment 10 inquires about how J.H.S. 125's admissions policies will change if the proposal is approved and asks whether current students will be able to remain at J.H.S. 125.

Currently, J.H.S. 125 is a zoned middle school, which means the school provides admissions preference to students who reside in the X125 zone. Students in the zone who rank the school on their District 8 Middle School Choice application have priority for a seat in J.H.S. 125.

The proposed co-location will impact the admissions methods of J.H.S. 125 in the following way. J.H.S. 125 will change from a zoned middle school to a zoned campus choice middle school. If this proposal is approved, 08X562 will also be a zoned campus choice middle school, and both schools will admit students through the District 8 Middle School Choice process. (This means that students zoned to the building will retain their preference to a seat in the building.) Through this process, fifth-graders zoned to the X125 campus will have the opportunity to rank their middle school preferences between the two X125 campus schools on a centralized application and will then be matched to either J.H.S. 125 or 08X562 through a computer-based matching process. Students zoned to the X125 building will also continue to have the option to apply to other District 8 choice middle schools through the District 8 Middle School Choice process.

If this proposal is approved, J.H.S. 125 and 08X562 will admit zoned students through an unscreened admissions method. Any remaining seats at these schools would be filled through the over-the-counter ("OTC") placement process, described in detail in the EIS for this proposal at:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2011-2012/Mar212012Proposals.htm>

Additionally, the DOE acknowledges that this proposal will be voted on by the PEP in March 2012, after the deadline to submit middle school choice applications has already passed. However, if this proposal is approved by the PEP, students zoned to the X125 building will have the opportunity to submit a “new schools” application, which would permit students to apply to 08X562 for 2012-2013, at which time it would begin enrolling students, and fewer students would be admitted to J.H.S. 125.

Regarding the second portion of the comment, all students currently enrolled at J.H.S. 125 will have the opportunity to remain enrolled in the school until they graduate.

Comment 11 inquires about what will happen to P.S. 119’s kindergarten, first, and second grade students that are currently served in the X125 building.

P.S. 119 will continue to be allocated classrooms in the X125 building. The class sections currently served in building X125, which serve kindergarten, first, and second grades, can continue to be served in building X125 should the leadership of P.S. 119 elect to continue serving these class sections in building X125.

The Citywide Instructional Footprint (the “Footprint”) sets forth the baseline number of rooms that should be allocated to a school based on the grade levels served by the school and number of classes per grade. For existing schools, the Footprint is applied to the current number of sections per grade, assuming class size remains constant. The Borough Director of Space Planning then confirms both the baseline and current space allocation totals during a walk-through of the building, where he or she is accompanied by a school’s representative.

For elementary schools serving grades K-5 and offering a pre-kindergarten section, the Footprint assumes that classes are self-contained, meaning that each class remains in their homeroom throughout the day except for when they are scheduled for a cluster activity (i.e., art) or lunch, recess, etc. Further, this assumes that at those times the homeroom classroom remains empty. Therefore, the Footprint allocates one full-size classroom for each general education (“GE”) or Integrated Co-Teaching (“ICT”) section and a full-size or half-size classroom to accommodate each Self-Contained special education (“SC”) section served by the school. In addition, schools serving grades K-5 receive an allocation of cluster or specialty classrooms proportionate to the number of students enrolled. These classes can be used at the principal’s discretion for purposes such as art and/or music instruction, among other things.

For grades six through twelve, the Footprint assumes that students move from class to class and that classrooms should be programmed at maximum efficiency. The Footprint does not require that every teacher have his or her own designated classroom. Principals are asked to program their schools efficiently so that classrooms can be used for multiple purposes throughout the course of the school day. The Footprint allocates the number of baseline classrooms for student support services, resource rooms, and administrative space based on the grades a school serves and its enrollment at scale. Any space remaining beyond the baseline shall be allocated equitably among the co-located schools. In determining an equitable allocation, the DOE may consider factors such as the relative enrollments of the co-located schools, the instructional and programmatic needs of the co-located schools, and the physical location of the excess space within the building.

As in other situations where schools are co-located, the schools would need to share large common and specialty rooms in the building, such as the cafeteria, the gymnasium, and the library. Specific decisions regarding the allocation of the shared spaces would be made by the Building Council, consisting of principals from all co-located schools, in conjunction with the DOE’s Office of Space Planning.

According to the Footprint, P.S. 119's current allocation should be 18 full-size instructional rooms, 6 instructional half-size rooms, and the equivalent of 1.5 full-size spaces for administrative use. If this proposal is approved, P.S. 119 would continue to be allocated the same amount of space in the X125 building. The phase-in of the new district school, 08X562, will not impact the space that P.S. 119 currently has in building X125.

Comment 12 voices concern about what will happen to teachers as student enrollment decreases at J.H.S. 125.

As a preliminary matter, the DOE notes that this proposal seeks approval for the co-location of new middle school 08X562, not for the enrollment reduction at J.H.S. 125, which is a change in school utilization that does not require PEP approval. However, as described in this proposal, the DOE does plan to reduce enrollment at J.H.S. 125. As a result of this enrollment reduction, the total number of students enrolled at J.H.S. 125 will decline each year, meaning that the school will need fewer teachers and fewer supplies to meet the needs of its smaller student population. Funding will be provided in accordance with enrollment levels, allowing the school to meet the instructional needs of its student population. This is how funding is awarded to all schools throughout the City, with budgets naturally increasing or decreasing as enrollment fluctuates from year to year.

Some school supervisory and/or administrative positions assigned to J.H.S. 125 may be excessed once the school's registers have been reduced in all grades. Some positions may be excessed as enrollment at the school gradually decreases, as administrative needs will decrease as the school serves an increasingly smaller student population. All excessing will take place in accordance with applicable law and labor contracts.

Additionally, the proposed new school, 08X562, will hire new teachers based on article 18-D of the teacher contract, through which a minimum of 50% of the positions in the new school are reserved for the most senior applicants from the impacted school who meet the new school's qualifications. Therefore, any teachers excessed from J.H.S. 125 due to the planned enrollment reduction will be included in this process for 08X562.

Comment 13 inquires as to how it is possible to add a new school into the building without removing one of the schools currently located in the building.

The DOE is working with the J.H.S. 125 community to gradually decrease the school's enrollment by approximately 295-330 students over a period of three years. When the school reaches its planned enrollment level at the end of three years, the school would transition from serving 627 students in 2011-2012 to serving approximately 300-330 students in 2014-2015. In this same year, when 08X562 is at full scale, it would serve approximately 300-330 students in sixth through eighth grades.

By reducing J.H.S. 125's enrollment it is possible to introduce a new school into the building without removing a school from the building. The total number of students served in X125 is expected to remain constant; rather students will be split between two smaller middle schools rather than being served by one larger middle school.

Comment 14 and 38(b) ask about the strategy of adding a new middle school to the building and how that will improve student performance at J.H.S. 125.

Reducing a school's enrollment is an academic intervention strategy the DOE has initiated with other schools, and its application here reflects the DOE's continued focus on assisting J.H.S. 125 to improve student

performance. The DOE hopes that by enrolling a smaller student body, it will be able to apply a more targeted focus to its students and better help them improve.

The campus choice model is also anticipated to benefit students in that it encourages co-located middle schools to develop distinct school models to complement each other and attract students with varying needs and interests.

In the interim, this strategy also allows the DOE to provide an additional option to families zoned to the X125 building.

Additionally, the DOE would like to acknowledge that decisions around the future of a school in no way reflect on the students who attend the school. Whenever the DOE makes the decision to move forward with a proposal to phase out a school, it is because students deserve a better option.

Comments 15 (a,b,and c) voice concern about scheduling and space allocation challenges that may be encountered when multiple school organizations are co-located in one building.

As mentioned in the above response to comment 11, P.S. 119 will maintain its current space allocations. As such, the instructional time in classrooms will remain the same should the leadership choose to maintain its current instructional scheduling. The leaders of the school organizations co-located in the X125 building will serve on the Building Council in order to determine the scheduling and use of the building's shared spaces.

Principals from each school organization co-located in a building serve on a Building Council to make decisions about overall use of the shared space and shared space schedules including the use of the cafeteria and scheduling of lunch periods for students in each co-located school organization. If the Principals are unable to agree upon a schedule for shared spaces, there is a mediation process outlined in the Campus Policy Memo, which is available at <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/campusgov>.

The DOE seeks to fully utilize all its building capacity to serve students. In all cases, the DOE seeks to provide high quality education and allow parents/students to choose where to attend. There are currently hundreds of schools in buildings across the City that are co-located and some of these co-locations involve multiple DOE schools. In all cases, the Footprint is applied to ensure equitable allocation of classroom, resource, and administrative space.

As described above, 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 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).

Comment 16 raises concerns about sharing the bathroom facilities in the building.

In many buildings where schools are co-located, each school is assigned bathrooms on the floors or hallways of their classrooms and specific stairways for students to use. If the assignment of specific bathrooms is not working or is inadequate, the Building Council can discuss an alternative arrangement. However, it is important to note that under this proposal, no additional students will be added to the X125 building and the scheduling system currently used for use of shared facilities, including bathrooms, should continue to be used by the same

amount of students. The Building Council will make the final determination about how these facilities are best used to serve the student population in the building.

Comments 17, 20, 21, 38(d) and 39 raise concerns that P.S. 119 is overcrowded and does not have sufficient capacity to house the students currently enrolled. These comments further suggest that there is not sufficient space to co-locate an additional middle school in building X125.

According to the audited enrollment of October 31st, 2011, P.S. 119 currently enrolls 968 students in grades kindergarten through eight. While the number of students enrolled exceeds the building capacity of X119, P.S. 119 has been allocated space in building X125 and the adjacent TCUs to meet the demand for elementary seats in the community. P.S. 119 has a combined organizational capacity of 948 across its three sites/buildings. Including the pre-kindergarten programs that P.S. 119 maintains, the total enrollment at P.S. 119 is 1,004, generating an organizational utilization rate of approximately 106%. (Pre-Kindergarten is a program that can be offered both half-day or full-day. This projection figure represent the full day equivalency). Thus, the capacity of building X119 does not accurately reflect the amount of space P.S. 119 has available to serve its students. Nonetheless, this proposed co-location does not impact the capacity or building utilization rates of building X119, as it involves a co-location in building X125.

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.

In recent years, the DOE, District 8 Community Superintendent, Community Education Council and members of the community have met to discuss issues of overcrowding in this region of District 8, including considering rezoning, but have not yet come to a resolution on the optimal next step. The DOE will continue to engage with the CEC and community members to determine the best way to alleviate overcrowding in this region and provide high-quality educational options for all students in the community.

As to building X125, in 2014-2015, once J.H.S. 125 has reached stable enrollment and 08X562 has reached full scale, there would be approximately 1,005-1,095 total students served in the building. The projected utilization for X125 at that point is approximately 79-86% This means that X125 has adequate capacity to accommodate the new middle school. Again, the DOE reiterates that the total number of students served in X125 is not expected to change as a result of this proposal.

There is sufficient space in building X125 to accommodate all three schools as J.H.S. 125's enrollment is reduced and 08X562 phases in. After each school has received its baseline footprint allocation, there would be 8 excess full-size spaces remaining in the building. Each school would continue to receive at least its baseline footprint allocation, and any excess space above the space allocated by the Footprint would be divided equitably among the schools as decided by the Building Council in conjunction with the DOE Office of Space Planning.

Comments 19 and 38(c) assert that students from the outerboroughs are bused to school here and this practice leads to a reduction in seat availability for local students.

This assertion is false. According to the audited enrollment from October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011, 93.8% of students enrolled in P.S. 119 are residents of District 8. A total 0.3% of students in enrolled in P.S. 119 are residents of boroughs other than the Bronx.

Comment 22 asserts that the space proposed to be allocated to the new middle school, 08X562, instead be allocated to P.S. 119.

Under this proposal, P.S. 119 will not lose any of the space it is currently allocated in the X125 building. The proposal involves a redistribution of space from J.H.S. 125 to new middle school 08X562—as a strategy to help J.H.S. 125 improve its performance by focusing on a smaller number of students—and is not anticipated to impact P.S. 119 at all.

As mentioned in the response to comments 17, 20, 21, 38(d) and 40, the DOE will continue to work with the CEC and community members to resolve issues of overcrowding in this geographic region of District 8. Specifically with respect to Comment 20, building X119 does not hold 1,000 students. Across its space in three buildings, X119, X125, and X915 (the transportable classroom units), P.S. 119 serves 977 students. However, building X119 itself only serves approximately half of the students enrolled in the school, with X125 and the transportable classroom units serving the rest of the school's students.

Additionally, building X125 itself is not overcrowded. The building has a target capacity of 1,272 and currently serves 1,050 students. This means it has a utilization rate of 83%.

Comments 23 and 39 state opposition to the way P.S. 119 is split-sited and voices concern regarding students traveling between two building throughout the course of the school day.

The current zone for P.S. 119 has a larger need for seats beyond the number available in the X119 building, and the DOE makes every effort to enable students be served at their zoned school. As such, P.S. 119 has been allocated additional space in building X125 and the adjacent TCUs to better serve its zoned student population. The DOE will continue to discuss rezoning options with Community Education Council 8 in order to plan alternative ways to reduce the need for seats at P.S. 119.

To ensure student safety, teachers, staff, and parents volunteers assist students in traveling between the two school buildings. The campus policy memo further details the practices followed to ensure student and school safety on a daily basis:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/community/campusgov/KeyDocuments/CampusMemo.htm>

Further, pursuant to Chancellor's Regulation A-414, every school/campus is mandated to form a School Safety Committee, which is responsible for developing a comprehensive School Safety Plan that defines the normal operations of the site and what procedures are in place in the event of an emergency. The School Safety Plan is updated annually by the Committee to meet the changing security needs, changes in organization and building conditions and any other factors; these updates could also be made at any other time when it is necessary to address security concerns. The Committee will also address safety matters on an ongoing basis and make appropriate recommendations to the Principal(s) when it identifies the need for additional security measures.

Comments 24 and 39 raise concern about the condition of P.S. 119's TCUs and their ability to adequately serve P.S. 119's students.

The DOE believes TCUs can be used as educational facilities to adequately serve NYC students. In the event that school leadership files a complaint or communicates concern regarding the condition of these facilities to the DOE's Division of School Facilities ("DSF"), DSF will investigate the situation and respond accordingly.

In the case of the TCUs at P.S. 119, the concerns raised about flooring standards in the TCUs were addressed and the flooring has been repaired accordingly. Additional work will be done on the flooring in the TCUs over spring break while class is not in session.

Comment 25 voices general opposition to the practice of co-locating schools.

Roughly half of the DOE's schools share space in a building. Because of co-locations, limited facilities can be used more efficiently while simultaneously creating additional high-quality options for New York City families. The DOE has successful schools that are co-located and successful schools that are not co-located. The DOE also has struggling schools that are co-located and that are not co-located. The DOE does not believe the practice of co-location to negatively impact student performance.

Comments 26 and 27 voice support for teachers, staff and students at P.S. 119 and J.H.S. 125.

The DOE acknowledges and commends the students and staff of P.S. 119 and J.H.S. 125 for their hard work, dedication, and passion for the school.

While the DOE notes that some J.H.S. 125 students have achieved various positive outcomes, as noted above, J.H.S. 125 has been identified as among those schools having the most trouble serving all of their students. As noted in the EIS, the enrollment reduction and co-location strategy proposed is intended to help improve the overall performance of J.H.S. 125.

Comment 38(a) inquires as to what processes took place to determine that there is a need for an additional middle school in this region of District 8.

This co-location proposal was not initiated due to a need for additional middle school seat capacity; indeed, there is no net gain of middle school seats as a result of this proposal. Rather, the DOE believes it is necessary for J.H.S. 125 to improve its performance and an enrollment reduction is an intervention strategy intended to achieve that end. The new middle school will replace the seats lost as a result of J.H.S. 125's enrollment reduction.

Comment 38(e) voices opposition to the co-location proposal and suggests that P.S. 119 be allocated all of the space in building X125 and that J.H.S. 125 be re-sited into the X119 building.

The DOE again reiterates that P.S. 119 will not lose any space as a result of this proposal. However, the DOE continues to investigate ways to meet P.S. 119's space needs, including considering short-term solutions like capping and overflowing new students for September 2012. At this time, the DOE does not believe it is optimal to have J.H.S. 125 and P.S. 119 switch buildings.

Additionally, as mentioned above, long-term solutions like rezoning surrounding elementary schools or allocating additional space in X125 to P.S. 119. The DOE has begun to consult with the school community about these possibilities and will continue to do so in the coming months. Further, if this proposal is approved, there will be excess full-size spaces in building X125 which could potentially be allocated to P.S. 119 to help further alleviate crowding in building X119.

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

No changes have been made to this proposal.