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Chancellor

Public Comment Analysis

Date: March 20, 2012

Topic: The Proposed Co-Location of a New Charter High School, New Visions Charter High School for the Humanities II (84XTBD), with Samuel Gompers Career and Technical Education High School (07X655) and New Transfer High School 07X557 in School Building X655, Beginning in 2012-2013

Date of Panel Vote: March 21, 2012

Summary of Proposal

On February 3, 2012, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) issued an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) to propose that New Visions Charter High School for the Humanities II (84XTBD, “HUM II”) be co-located in the X655 building with Samuel Gompers Career and Technical Education High School (07X655, “Samuel Gompers”) and 07X557, a new transfer high school, beginning in the 2012-2013 school year. Building X655 is located at 455 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, NY 10455, within the geographical confines of Community School District 7 (“District 7”). 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.

In a separate EIS, originally posted on December 22, 2011 and amended on February 3, 2012, the DOE proposed to phase out Samuel Gompers, an existing Career and Technical Education (“CTE”) high school currently located in building X655, after an extensive review of data and community feedback indicating that the school lacks the capacity to turn around quickly to better support student needs. The phase-out of Samuel Gompers was approved by the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”) on February 9, 2012. Thereby, Samuel Gompers will no longer admit new ninth-grade students after the conclusion of the 2011-2012 school year. The school’s enrollment will decrease gradually over the next three years, and the school will complete its phase-out in June 2015.

The proposed opening and co-location of HUM II in building X655 is part of the DOE’s central goal to create new school options that will better serve future students and the

community. HUM II will offer CTE programs, which will train students with workforce skills in specific careers—and will thus, help meet the DOE’s goal of providing new CTE options for the community. The school’s charter was approved by the New York State Education Department on September 12, 2011. Under this charter, HUM II will admit students through a charter lottery, giving preference to students who reside in District 7.

If this proposal is approved, HUM II will be co-located in building X655 with Samuel Gompers (as it phases out) and with 07X557 (as it phases in). HUM II will open in September 2012 serving approximately 120-130 students in the ninth grade. HUM II will gradually phase into the building by adding one grade at a time in each subsequent year through the 2015-2016 school year. At that point, the school will serve all grades (nine through twelve).

Building X655 has a target capacity of 1,348 students. In the current 2011-2012 school year, the building is serving a total of 630 students, yielding a target utilization rate of 47%. In the 2017-2018 school year, once Samuel Gompers has completed its phase-out and both HUM II and 07X557 have reached full scale, there will be approximately 810-910 students served in the building. This yields a projected target building utilization rate of approximately 60-68%.

The details of this proposal have been released in an EIS and Building Utilization Plan (“BUP”) which can be accessed here:

[http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2011-](http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2011-2012/Mar212012Proposals.htm)

[2012/Mar212012Proposals.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2011-2012/Mar212012Proposals.htm). Copies of the EIS and BUP are also available in Samuel Gompers’ main office.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing

A Joint Public Hearing regarding this proposal was held at school building X655 on March 8, 2012. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 30 members of the public attended the hearing, and 7 people spoke. Present at the meeting were: Yolanda Torres, District 7 Community Superintendent; Susan Megna, New York State Education Department Representative; Tracy Woodall and Neyda Franco, Community Education Council (“CEC”) 7 Representatives; Joyce Mills Kittrell, Samuel Gompers Principal; Yira Salcedo, Samuel Gompers Assistant Principal; Jayne Godlewski, Children’s First Network Leader for Samuel Gompers; Evelyn Rodríguez, President of the Parent-Teacher Association for Samuel Gompers and a representative from the Citywide Council for High Schools (“CCHS”); Helen Rodney, United Federation of Teachers (“UFT”) Chapter Leader for Samuel Gompers; John Highlander, President of the Samuel Gompers Alumni Association; Ron Chaluisan and Jennie Soler-McIntosh, Representatives from New Visions for Public Schools; Amanda Cahn, Rosa Fernández, Scott Torres, and Jessica Fredston-Hermann from the Division of Portfolio Planning; and Percy Forrest from the Division of Family and Community Engagement.

The following comments and remarks were made at the Joint Public Hearing

1. Several commenters (including Evelyn Rodríguez, President of the Parent-Teacher Association for Samuel Gompers and CCHS Representative, and Neyda Franco, member of CEC 7) asked whether Samuel Gompers students would receive admissions priority into the new charter school.
2. Several commenters (including Helen Rodney, UFT Chapter Leader for Samuel Gompers, and CEC 7 representative Neyda Franco) asked whether the new charter school would serve special needs students.
3. Several commenters asked whether the new charter school would provide similar CTE programs to those currently being offered at Samuel Gompers, particularly in the areas of information technology, plumbing, and construction. They further stated that it is crucially important to provide CTE programs in the Bronx.
4. Ron Chaluisan and Jennie Soler-McIntosh from New Visions for Public Schools spoke in support of the proposal. They stated that New Visions has opened many small schools throughout the City, including two new charter schools on the John F. Kennedy Campus, both of which serve special education students and English Language Learners (“ELLS”). They further said that New Visions, whose mission is to prepare students for college and careers, is deeply committed to partnering with District 7 community organizations and is particularly excited about opening a new school in District 7 because the area greatly needs better schools. They also shared general information about the school’s admissions priorities, application process, and deadlines. In closing, they stated that the new charter school will offer CTE programs and that they look forward to working with families and the CEC in determining what kinds of programs would best meet the needs of students.

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

5. Several commenters (including Helen Rodney, UFT Chapter Leader for Samuel Gompers, and John Highlander, President of the Samuel Gompers Alumni Association) stated that Samuel Gompers has a high concentration of special needs students. Helen Rodney specifically stated that 25% of the student body receives special education services.
6. UFT Chapter Leader Helen Rodney noted that Samuel Gompers offers a number of CTE-certified programs in the areas of information technology, computer programming, and engineering. Additionally, Samuel Gompers is the only high school in the Bronx offering CISCO Networking, which is an information technology program that teaches students how to design, build, troubleshoot, and secure computer networks.
7. Several commenters stated that Samuel Gompers has been successful in preparing students for entering the workforce.

8. Several commenters expressed general opposition to the decision to phase out Samuel Gompers.

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

9. PTA President and CCHS Representative Evelyn Rodríguez submitted a written statement to the DOE that raised concern about the CTE programming that will be offered by the proposed New Visions Charter School. She also voiced concern about the publication of information about New Visions High School prior to the approval of this proposal by the PEP.

The Following Written and/or Oral Comments that were Submitted to the DOE were not related to the proposal

10. PTA President and CCHS Representative Evelyn Rodríguez submitted a written statement to the DOE that expressed general opposition to the decision to phase out Samuel Gompers.

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

- Comments 1 and 2 inquire about the new charter school’s admissions process and admissions priorities.

As described in the EIS concerning this proposal, HUM II will admit students through a charter lottery. HUM II will hold a lottery for ninth-grade seats for entry in September 2012, provided the number of applicants to the school exceeds enrollment capacity. A “lottery” is a system of random selection of applications that identifies students for enrollment. The lottery will be conducted by New Visions, the charter management organization, on a date publicized to all applicants. This lottery process will be audited by an individual or organization unaffiliated with the school.

Students who reside within District 7 will receive priority for admission into HUM II. Specifically, admissions preference in the lottery will be given to students in the following order:

1. Returning students (not applicable for 2012-2013); then
2. Siblings of currently attending students (not applicable for 2012-2013); then
3. Applicants residing in District 7 in the Bronx; and finally
4. New York City residents.

In response to the portion of comment 2 concerning special education students: HUM II is open to all students, including students with disabilities and ELLs. Students with disabilities and ELLs will be treated the same as any other charter lottery applicant. If admitted to the school, students with disabilities will have their needs met pursuant to their Individualized Education Programs. ELLs will also receive all mandated services.

Detailed information about charter schools in general and the charter lottery application process is available on the DOE's Web site at:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/charters/Directory.htm>.

For additional information about how to apply to HUM II, students should refer to the following Web site: www.newvisions.org/charter.

- Comment 3 and 9 express concern about the availability of CTE programs in the areas of information technology, plumbing, and construction, and inquire about the new charter school's CTE offerings.

The DOE strongly believes in the importance of providing high-quality CTE programs for students across the City. In response to conversations with industry and community partners, the DOE is committed to creating new CTE programs that will provide stability and opportunities for CTE-graduates in growing industries, particularly in the areas of science and engineering, business management, business administration, hospitality and tourism, and health professions.

As described in the EIS, HUM II plans to offer CTE programming in the two following career clusters: Business Management and Administration; and Hospitality and Tourism. The DOE will continue to work with industry and community partners to assess need and demand for new CTE programs. Finally, in the future, the DOE plans to create another educational option for students in the Samuel Gompers community assuming space becomes available in the building.

As described in the Analysis of Public Comment concerning the phase-out of Samuel Gompers, while CTE programming in information technology, manufacturing, and engineering will no longer be available in X655 due to the phase-out of Samuel Gompers, these educational options will still be offered at other high schools in the Bronx and throughout the City. Please refer to this Analysis of Public Comment, which is available on the DOE's Web site at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2011-2012/Feb2012Proposals.htm>.

- Comment 4 is in support of this proposal and does not require a response.
- Comment 9 expresses concern about the publication of materials about the proposed charter school prior to the PEP vote on the proposal.

No decisions have been made regarding this proposal. The PEP will vote on this proposal on March 21, 2012. Until then, the DOE will continue to collect community feedback on the proposal and this Analysis of Public Comment will be provided to the PEP prior to their vote.

Given the short turnaround for new schools to do outreach prior to the PEP approval, new schools often begin holding information sessions prior to approval. The DOE permits proposed new schools to do this, provided their printed materials say "pending the Panel's approval."

- Comments 5-8 and 10 are not related to this proposal as they concern the approved proposal to phase out Samuel Gompers. For a full discussion of the phase-out of Samuel Gompers, please refer to the Analysis of Public Comment available on the DOE's Web site at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2011-2012/Feb2012Proposals.htm>.

Changes Made to this Proposal

- No changes have been made to this proposal.