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Chancellor

Public Comment Analysis

Date: March 20, 2012

Topic: The Proposed Co-Location of New High School 08X558 with Herbert H. Lehman High School (08X405), Renaissance High School for Musical Theatre & Technology (08X293), and a District 75 Inclusion Program (75X721) in Building X405 Beginning in 2012-2013

Date of Panel Vote: March 21, 2012

Summary of Proposal

The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) is proposing to co-locate a new high school, 08X558 (“08X558”), in building X405 located at 3000 East Tremont Avenue, Bronx, NY 10461, within the geographical confines of District 8. The proposed new high school will offer a rigorous academic program and prepare students for post-secondary education and careers. If this proposal is approved, 08X558 will be co-located in building X405 with Herbert H. Lehman High School (08X405, “Lehman”), an existing high school currently serving students in ninth through twelfth grades, Renaissance High School for Musical Theatre & Technology (08X293, “Renaissance”), also an existing high school currently serving students in ninth through twelfth grades, and a District 75 inclusion program (75X721, “D75 inclusion program”). In addition, X405 houses a Young Adult Borough Center, Lehman YABC (X408, “YABC”) and a part-time GED Plus – Learning-to-Work program (X950, “GED Plus – LTW”). 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.

In an inclusion program, a student with special needs receives services in a general education classroom along with general education students. Students in the D75 inclusion program at Lehman are enrolled in general education classes at Lehman based on their Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) recommendations and receive Special Education Teacher Support Services (“SETSS”).

In consultation with the school’s leader, cluster and network support, and community, the DOE is planning to reduce the enrollment at Lehman over a period of four years. By 2015-2016, enrollment at Lehman will decrease by approximately 780-820 students so that it will serve 2,585-2,625 students at scale in ninth through twelfth grades. This reduction of Lehman’s enrollment will occur regardless of whether this co-location proposal is approved and will create space for 08X558 to open in a building that is currently overcrowded.

If this co-location proposal is approved, 08X558 will gradually phase into X405 while Lehman simultaneously scales back its enrollment. Enrollment at Renaissance and the D75 inclusion program

will remain stable over the course of this proposal. The new school will serve students in ninth grade in 2012-2013 and will add one grade level every year until the school reaches its full grade span of ninth through twelfth grades in the 2015-2016 school year, serving approximately 420-460 students.

08X558 will admit students through the Citywide High School Admissions Process and will have a limited unscreened admissions method with priority for students residing in the Bronx.

In 2011-2012, building X405 is serving 3,902 students, yielding a utilization rate of 112% of target capacity. This overcrowding is largely driven by the size of Lehman, which is serving 3,405 students in 2011-2012.

The X405 building will have adequate capacity to accommodate the new high school, Lehman, the D75 inclusion program and Renaissance at full operational capacity. Once 08X558 completes its phase-in and Lehman completes its enrollment reduction, the building will serve approximately 3,473 – 3,596 students in 2015-2016, yielding an approximate utilization rate of 100-103%.

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 Lehman’s main office.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at school building X405 on March 7, 2012. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 145 members of the public attended the hearing, and 24 people spoke. Present at the meeting were High School Superintendent Carron Staple; Assemblyman Michael Benedetto; Director of Education and Youth Services for the Bronx Borough President, Monica Major; Representative of Councilmember Vacca, Vicki Javier; Representative of Senator Klein, Mike Grubiak; Representatives from the Lehman School Leadership Team (“SLT”); Community Education Council (“CEC”) 8 Representatives Bob Franklin, Otis Thomas, Frank DiNardo, Lisa Mateo, Janet Bosch, and Altagracia Cruz; Nydia Portilla and Percy Forrest from the Office of Family and Community Engagement (“FACE”); and Amanda Cahn and Stephanie Crane from the Division of Portfolio Planning.

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

1. Multiple commenters voiced support for the staff, teachers, students and the general school community at Lehman. These commenters noted that teachers had done a good job teaching and many Lehman students have achieved academic and personal success.
2. Several commenters voiced general opposition to the proposal.
3. Multiple commenters noted that Lehman has historically performed well.
4. One commenter requested that the DOE give Lehman more time to improve before implementing this proposal.
5. Two commenters stated that the DOE Progress Reports and related data do not accurately depict the personal stories and successes of students. These commenters also stated that the DOE should use other qualitative data to more comprehensively understand what is happening at Lehman.
6. One commenter noted how Lehman received an influx of high needs students that it was not able to serve and how that created challenges for the school.

7. One commenter stated that the resources that would be used for the co-location of the new school should instead be given to Lehman to help improve the school's performance.
8. Several commenters stated that the X405 building is already overcrowded and the classes within Lehman are also overcrowded. Several commenters voiced the belief that the school did best when it was the only school organization and the building.
9. Several commenters stated that the additional overcrowding that will take place as a result of this co-location proposal will lead to performance and behavioral issues within the building.
10. Multiple commenters voiced opposition to the practice of co-location and stated the belief that adding another school to the building will negatively impact Lehman.
11. Multiple commenters referenced the co-locations with other school organizations in building X405 that were not successful in the past and stated the belief that this will also happen in the case of the current proposal.
12. Several commenters voiced their concerns that the co-location will both reduce and negatively impact Lehman's academic programming and the availability of electives for Lehman students.
13. One commenter stated his concern that he will not be able to continue to take Advanced Placement classes if this co-location proposal is approved.
14. Multiple commenters voiced the concern that the co-location will disrupt the school organizations in the building and cause stress for the students enrolled in those school organizations.
15. One commenter asked how the co-location will impact Lehman's funding.
16. Several commenters stated that the co-location will cause resources to be even more limited, especially with respect to how space is allocated to each school organization in building X405.
 - a. One commenter also noted that students currently do not have storage space for their personal belongings and how that creates challenges for the students.
17. Many commenters stated that co-locations cause scheduling challenges for all school organizations co-located in one building. These commenters noted that the school organizations currently in the building already have challenges with scheduling time in the shared spaces, particularly with regard to the library, gymnasiums, and auditorium.
18. Two commenters stated the belief that the PEP had already made a decision about this proposal as evidenced by the publication of the article that included the name of the proposed new school and the name of the proposed new school's principal.
19. One commenter inquired as to why Lehman parents don't have more power in making the decision about this proposal.
20. One commenter raised the following questions about how the admissions process would change under this proposal:
 - a. If the proposal is approved, what are the chances of my son being able to remain enrolled in Lehman?
 - b. Will admissions be determined by a lottery?
 - c. If so, where will this lottery take place?
21. One commenter voiced concern about the teachers that would be hired in the proposed new school, suggesting that the new school will hire inexperienced teachers who also have less expensive salaries.
22. One commenter raised concern about how this proposal would impact teacher morale, specifically with the consideration that some teachers may be excessed as student enrollment decreases at Lehman.
23. Several commenters referenced similar campuses that used to have one large school and now have multiple small schools, such as the Morris, Stevenson, Kennedy, Columbus, Evander Childs, Walton, and Roosevelt campuses. The commenters noted the belief that these changes

were unsuccessful and that the same thing will happen to Lehman if this proposal is implemented.

24. Two commenters asked that individuals at the hearing use the “people’s mic” and one commenter asserts that if the “people’s mic” was utilized, the statements would not be counted as public comment nor would the hearing be considered official.
25. One commenter noted that the process for proposing and voting on changes in school communities is undemocratic.

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

26. Multiple commenters voiced general opposition to the turnaround proposal for Lehman and the prospect of turning over 50% of the staff, and stated the belief that this would negatively impact the Lehman community.
27. Two commenters (including Assemblyman Michael Benedetto) noted that the young people are doing a good job organizing and voicing their concerns about the impact this proposal and others like it will have on their school and larger communities.
28. A representative of Lehman’s SLT encouraged students to keep working hard at school, graduate from college and continue to do work involving educational justice.
29. One commenter raised concern about the level of parental involvement at Lehman.
30. One commenter noted that the football field is 80 yards long and that is not regulation field size.
31. One commenter noted that 1,500 people were present at the February PEP meeting and opposed the phase out proposals presented but the all the proposals were still passed.
32. One commenter noted that issues of educational inequality disproportionately impact students of color and economically disadvantaged communities.
33. One commenter asked that the mayor and elected officials listen to the stories of the students and speakers at Lehman and throughout New York City.
34. Multiple commenters discuss historical events that took place in New York City and how the mayoral administration responded to these events.
35. Multiple commenters voice general opposition to the current mayoral administration and policies that had been enacted during the time of the administration.
36. Multiple commenters inquired as to why Mayor Bloomberg was not at that hearing and stated their belief that he should be at the hearing.
37. One commenter noted that former Chancellor Joel Klein received an educational grant and that he did not know why he received this when he no longer work at the DOE.
38. Multiple commenters voiced opposition to a separate turnaround proposal that was posted on February 28, 2012.
39. Multiple commenters voiced general opposition to the turnaround policy.
40. One commenter noted that the DOE should be staffed only by teachers and educators.
41. Assemblyman Michael Benedetto noted that he will be communicating with other elected officials about turnaround policy and its legality.
42. One commenter noted that the scheduling for his son in the previous school year had led to his son needing to take extra gym this school year, and therefore he is unable to take an elective which is scheduled at the same time.

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

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

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

Comments 1, 3, and a portion of comment 5 discuss the achievements of students and faculty at Lehman. The DOE commends and acknowledges the students and staff at Lehman for their hard work and for creating a positive learning environment in the school. However, the DOE believes that the students in this community would be well-served by an additional school option.

Comment 2 voices general opposition to the proposal. The DOE notes there is a need for increased options for high school students in the Bronx, including those students in District 8. This proposal aims to provide a new high quality option for these students.

Comment 4 requests giving Lehman more time to improve before implementing this proposal, and Comment 7 states that the resources which would be given to the new school should instead be given to Lehman. Lehman has struggled for several years. Although three and four years ago, the school received B grades on its overall progress report, the school's graduation rate has been between 48-51% for the past five years. As a result, the DOE believes that it is important to provide another option to students now. Lehman will continue to receive funding based on per pupil allocations weighted based on students' grade level and need.

In addition to the above, Comment 5 also addresses the DOE's use of qualitative data to understand the full picture of Lehman performance. The DOE uses both types of data, quantitative and qualitative. Some of the qualitative data points used include the Quality Review and consultations with superintendents and other experienced educators who have worked closely with the school. The DOE also gathered community feedback during engagement in the fall as part of a comprehensive review to determine what intensive supports and interventions would best benefit the students and school community; as part of this, the DOE gathered feedback from parents, students, staff, and the School Leadership Team. All of these pieces of qualitative information were taken into account when the DOE decided to propose the co-location of a new school on this campus.

With regard to Comment 6, which discusses the large influx of high needs students that create challenges for the school, the DOE notes that Lehman has served a relatively consistent percentage of students with disabilities and ELL students over the last three years. Specifically, in the last three years, the percentages of students at Lehman who have IEPs were 19%, 20%, and 22%; although this is an increase, it does not represent a large influx or dramatic change to the type of students Lehman serves. In the last three years, the percentages of ELL students at Lehman were 9%, 10%, and 10%. The DOE notes that the graduation rate remained between 48-51% , which is similar to what it had been in prior years.

The DOE also notes that Lehman is currently a zoned school, and as such is required to serve any zoned students who request to be served in the school. This means that if zoned students choose to attend Lehman, whether or not they are ELL students, have IEPs, or present with any other unique circumstances, Lehman commits to serve these students.

Comments 9, 16, 17 and part of Comment 8 question the overcrowding at Lehman and the impact of this proposal on that overcrowding. The X405 building is overcrowded, as measured by both the utilization rate of 112% and the need for split-scheduling in Lehman. However, regardless of whether this proposal is approved, the DOE is reducing the enrollment of Lehman over the course of the next four years which will create space in the X405 building. The DOE projects that at the end of this proposal, the building will be approximately 100-103% utilized, which represents a significant reduction in overcrowding. As a result, the DOE disagrees that this co-location will increase the overcrowding in the X405 building. Comment 16 also questions the limited resources such as space for students to store their personal belongings. Schools are not required to provide students with space to store their personal belongings, although it is convenient for students to do so. The DOE notes that providing students with storage space may continue to be a challenge with co-location, but also notes that there will be a reduction in the number of students served in building X405 throughout the course of this proposal.

With regard to concerns about how co-locations impact shared spaces, the Building Council, consisting of principals from all co-located schools, works together to determine appropriate scheduling. The Office of Space Planning will support the Building Council as necessary. The DOE believes that the reduction in the number of students served in the X405 building throughout the implementation of this proposal and after will also assist the Building Council to alleviate previous scheduling challenges.

Comments 10 and 14 and the other portion of Comment 8 express support for having only one school in the building. The DOE disagrees that having only one school in a building provides that school with greater opportunity for success than if it were to be co-located with another school. Roughly half of DOE schools share space in a building. Because of co-locations, the DOE is able to use its limited facilities efficiently while simultaneously creating additional high-quality options for New York City families. This is necessary because there are scarce facilities and a demand for more high-performing options.

Comment 11 states that other co-locations have been unsuccessful in the building. The DOE notes that previous co-locations in the X405 building have had varying outcomes, but no school re-sitings were the result of negative co-location relationships. Renaissance has been in the building successfully for several years, as has the District 75 inclusion program. The schools and programs which were moved from the campus were re-sited due to a variety of factors, such as the increasing enrollment at Lehman. However, the co-locations, including the sharing of space and working relationship of the building councils, functioned successfully. In addition, there is no indication that the co-locations negatively impacted performance at Lehman. The DOE believes the current positive relationship between the Building Council members will continue despite the introduction of a fourth organization into the building.

Comments 12 and 13 question whether academic programming, electives and Advanced Placement (“AP”) courses will be impacted by this proposal. First, the DOE notes that the enrollment reduction at Lehman is not contingent on this proposal and will be occurring in the upcoming four school years regardless of whether this co-location proposal is approved. Secondly, that reduction is not expected to impact programming, electives, or AP classes, given that after the reduction, the school will still serve well over 2,000 students, enabling it to offer all of the same options it does now. Finally, the co-location of a new school will not impact the academic programming or availability of electives either. It is difficult to predict if any changes might be implemented, as decisions rest with school administrators and are made based on student demand as well as staff and budget conditions at the school. However, the size of Lehman will be sufficient to continue offering the same array of programming.

Comment 15 asks about whether the co-location will impact Lehman's funding. The co-location is not expected to impact Lehman's funding. As stated earlier, the enrollment reduction, which will impact the school's funding, will occur regardless of whether this proposal is approved.

Comment 18 questions whether a decision has been made by the PEP because information about the proposed new school has already been shared publicly, including the name of the principal and the name of the school. Consistent with practice for new schools proposed to open in September 2012 that will not be voted on by the PEP until March or later, the school proposed to open in the X405 building, 08X558, has begun to recruit for new students. This is because applications for the second round of the High School Admissions Process were due on March 15, 2012. In acknowledgment of the misaligned timelines, this school is listed in all materials as "pending PEP approval." Despite these early recruiting efforts, the school will only open in September 2012 in the X405 building if the PEP approves this co-location proposal at its March 21, 2012 meeting.

Comment 19 asks about parents' impact on the decision about this proposal and Comment 25 suggests the process is undemocratic. The DOE solicited feedback from parents through the Joint Public Hearing on March 7, 2012, as well as through voicemail and email since the proposal was posted on February 3, 2012. Parent feedback is incorporated throughout this document, which is presented to the PEP to help inform their decision about this proposal. While some parents disagree with the proposal, the DOE believes it is the right decision for students.

Further, the DOE follows the process set forth by New York State law to propose significant changes in school utilization, such as co-locations.

Comment 20 asked several questions about the impact of the co-location on enrollment and admissions at Lehman. All students who are currently enrolled in Lehman will continue to be enrolled in Lehman. This proposal will not impact current students' ability to remain in Lehman. In terms of future admissions impact, the DOE recently added a screened program to Lehman which will begin admitting students for September 2012. This program, as well as the zoned and educational option methods of admission, will remain intact and will not be impacted by the proposed co-location, and Lehman will continue to admit students through these three programs through the Citywide High School Admissions Process. The new school will admit students through the Citywide High School Admissions Process through a limited unscreened method. Neither school will admit students through a lottery. The High School Admissions Process matches students centrally and then shares results with families, so there is no requirement to be present at any lottery drawing.

Comment 21 expresses concern about the quality of teachers who would be hired into the co-located school. All teachers would be appropriately licensed and certified. The proposed new school, 08X558, 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 Lehman due to the planned enrollment reduction will be included in this process for 08X558.

Comment 22 voices concern about how the enrollment reduction and resulting excessing of teachers will impact teacher morale. This proposal is not expected to impact the number of teachers employed at Lehman. However, as a result of the separately planned enrollment reduction, it is likely that some Lehman teachers will be excessed. The DOE recognizes that the excessing of teachers is difficult for school communities.

Comment 23 suggests that similar campuses that used to hold large schools and now house multiple small schools are unsuccessful. To the contrary, the campuses referenced by the commenter actually have seen dramatic increases in student outcomes.

Specifically, the below represent the increase in percentage points between 2002 graduation rates of some of the phased-out schools in the Bronx (four of which were mentioned by the commenter) and the average graduation rates on those campuses in 2010:

- Morris: 33.7 percentage point increase
- Evander Childs: 38.4 percentage point increase
- Walton: 25.6 percentage point increase
- Roosevelt: 11.0 percentage point increase
- Taft: 20.2 percentage point increase
- South Bronx: 16.6 percentage point increase

Comment 24 suggests that by not using the microphone, comments made at the hearing would not count and therefore the Joint Public Hearing would not be official. On the contrary, regardless of whether commenters used the “people’s mic” or a traditional microphone, all comments were recorded and are accounted for in this Public Comment Analysis. Further, the DOE clarified after this comment was made that the comments made by attendees of the hearing would be included in the feedback and the hearing would be recognized as an official Joint Public Hearing.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to this proposal.