



Analysis of Public Comment

Date: April 19, 2010

Topic: Proposed Co-location of a New School, P.S. 452 (03M452), with I.S. 44, The Computer School, The Anderson School and West Prep Academy in School Building M044

Date of Panel Vote: April 20, 2010

Summary of Proposal

In the 2010-2011 school year, 03M452 (hereinafter referred to as “P.S. 452”), a new school that will serve grades Kindergarten-5, will open in school building M044 (“M044”), located at 100 West 77th Street, Manhattan in Community School District 3 (“District 3”). P.S. 452 will open with approximately 60-75 Kindergarten students in 2010-2011 and add one grade each year. At scale, P.S. 452 will serve approximately 400-450 students in 2015-2016. The opening of P.S. 452 addresses the growth in demand for zoned elementary school capacity on the Upper West Side in District 3.

In 2010-2011, P.S. 452 will be co-located with I.S. 44 William O’Shea (03M044, or “I.S. 44”), The Computer School, (03M425, or “The Computer School”), The Anderson School (03M334, or “Anderson”) and West Prep Academy (03M421, or “West Prep”) in M044.

I.S. 44 is a District 3 middle school that began phasing out in 2009-2010. In 2009-2010, it serves grades 7-8. In 2010-2011, it will serve grade 8; in June 2011, the phase-out of I.S. 44 will be complete.

The Computer School is a District 3 middle school choice school serving grades 6-8. It is currently at scale and will continue operations at the same scale in M044.

Anderson is a city-wide Gifted and Talented (“G&T”) program serving grades K-8. In 2009-2010, it moved to M044 from M009. When Anderson moved to the M044 building in 2009, the DOE had planned to expand the school from two sections per grade in grades K to 5 to three sections per grade and, in fact, had added a third section to the kindergarten and first grades in 2009-2010. However, in order to accommodate P.S. 452 in M044, Anderson can no longer continue this growth plan. Going forward, Anderson will admit just two sections of Kindergarten students each year rather than three. All students currently enrolled at Anderson will be able to remain at the school through grade 8.

West Prep is a new District 3 middle school that began operations in 2009-2010, and it currently serves grade 6. In 2010-2011, it will serve grades 6-7. In 2011-2012, it will serve grades 6-8.

In the long-term, P.S. 452 will be co-located only with The Computer School and Anderson. I.S. 44 will complete its phase out in school year 2010-2011. In order to accommodate the growth of P.S. 452, West Prep will eventually relocate in 2011 or 2012 to another site, which has not yet been determined. West Prep’s relocation will be proposed in a separate educational impact statement at a future date.

The 2008-2009 target capacity of M044 was 1,253 students. Future enrollment at M044 is projected as follows:

School	2009-10	2010-11 Projected	2015-16 Projected
IS 44	165	60	0
The Computer School	395	395	395
Anderson	563	563	563
West Prep	74	140	0
PS 452	0	75	425
Total	1,197	1,233	1,383

After Anderson’s current three sections of Kindergarten and grade 1 students graduate in 2018 and 2017, respectively, Anderson’s enrollment will be approximately 522 students, and the total enrollment across the three remaining schools will be 1,342.

Additional capacity required in M044 for P.S. 452 will be created by combining adjacent pairs of half-size classrooms to create full-size rooms. Target capacity of the building may change due to changes in room configurations or function. P.S. 452 will open on the second floor of M044, which is currently occupied by I.S. 44 and West Prep.

The co-location of P.S. 452 in M044 addresses the need to relieve overcrowding in neighboring zoned elementary schools, such as P.S. 87. P.S. 87 currently has a waiting list of 110 zoned Kindergarten applicants. Neighboring schools, such as P.S. 9 (03M009) and P.S. 199 (03M199) do not have the capacity to handle all of P.S. 87’s excess demand. It is imperative that capacity be made available at M044 to meet this demand.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing

A joint public hearing was held at M044 on April 13, 2010, and all interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. One hundred sixty-two members of the public, Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer, Council Member Gale A. Brewer, and representatives of Assembly Member Linda B. Rosenthal and State Senator Thomas K. Duane attended the hearing. Fifty-seven people spoke. Twenty-two speakers opposed the proposal and stated the following:

- Anderson should neither shrink nor be moved because it was moved last year and because it is a high-performing school. If Anderson were allowed to continue its expansion, this would help address overcrowding by attracting more students to Anderson and away from their zoned schools.
- West Prep should not be moved in order to site P.S. 452.
- P.S. 452 should not be located on the 2nd floor of M044 where I.S. 44 and West Prep middle school students are located.
- P.S. 452 should be only two sections per grade and a choice elementary school, rather than a zoned elementary school, in order to ensure that Anderson is not crowded out again due to the growth of zoned demand.

Thirty-five people spoke in favor of the proposal, noting that:

- The proposal to create P.S. 452 was formed in collaboration between members of the community, the District 3 Community Education Council, and the DOE.
- The proposal addresses the need for a zoned elementary school in District 3.

Summary of Issues Raised in Written and Oral Comments and Significant Alternatives Suggested

Approximately 177 written comments regarding this proposal have been received from parents of Anderson students, parents of students who had been waitlisted at P.S. 87, members of the District 3 community, and the P.S. 199 Parent-Teacher Association. Three oral comments have been received, all in opposition to the proposal. One hundred and forty-seven comments were in opposition to the proposal and stated as follows:

- Anderson should neither shrink nor be moved because it was moved last year and because it is a high-performing school.
- M044 is not an appropriate site for P.S. 452 because there are potential safety concerns arising from middle school students interacting with and using the same facilities as elementary school students.
- The proposed size of P.S. 452 is not adequate to address demand, and the DOE should consider opening additional Kindergarten sections at P.S. 452;
- There is insufficient middle school capacity in the area, a problem which will be exacerbated by the relocation of West Prep.
- Continued growth of zoned student demand on the Upper West Side of District 3 will force the DOE to relocate either Anderson again or the Computer School in the future.
- There is not sufficient space in M044 to accommodate P.S. 452.

Thirty-one comments were in favor of the proposal, and they noted that:

- The proposal addresses the need for an additional zoned elementary school in District 3, particularly in the P.S. 87 catchment area.
- The President of the Community District Education Council 3 sent a letter expressing “CDEC3 unequivocally supports the establishment of P.S. 452 with 3 classes within the 044 building starting in September 2010.”

The written comments included the following alternative proposals:

- P.S. 452 be co-located with other schools, such as P.S. 145, P.S. 75, or P.S. 163, which are further north of M044 on the Upper West Side.
- PS 452 be limited to two classes and become a District 3 choice school rather than a catchment school; or
- PS 452's co-location would only be temporary until a more appropriate elementary school space can be found in District 3.
- Waitlisted students at P.S. 87 be diverted to P.S. 9, rather than opening a new school.
- Overcrowding at P.S. 87 could be reduced with stricter residence verification rather than opening a new school.
- An additional story could be added to P.S. 87 in order to expand that school.

In addition to the written comments a petition was received from The West Prep Academy. The petition said the following:

We, the undersigned, believe:

- The DOE must plan for the future for the children and families of The West Prep Academy.
- These children and families are entitled to the same certainty and level of detail that all students in this District are.
 - They are entitled to know where they will be going to school from one year to the next.
 - They are entitled to stability, consistency and consideration in the planning that applies to them.
- Putting the lives of West Prep's kids in wait-and-see mode for a year or more is NOT ACCEPTABLE.
- Families who might choose to go to West Prep also need sufficient detail about the school's future to be able to make the choice to go there and to embrace the school.
- Moving a school is hard. West Prep must be given adequate time, resources and support to make its move to any new location.
- The DOE must be accountable for its decision to move these children.

THEREFORE:

- A new location for this school must be found as a top priority of the DOE, with all due speed and without excuses.
- A site for their new home should be identified before the start of the next school year, and even earlier than that, if possible.

- Information on this new home should be publicized to the community so that West Prep can begin to embrace a concrete future.

The petition had 64 signatures.

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

Below are responses to the concerns raised during the public comment process:

Need for P.S. 452 to accommodate more students than currently proposed: While the DOE understands that the demand for zoned elementary schools on the Upper West Side in District 3 has grown, the space available in M044 cannot accommodate more than three Kindergarten sections. However, the principals of P.S. 75, located at 735 West End Avenue at 96th Street, and P.S. 163, located at 163 West 97th Street, have communicated their interest in offering seats to students who are waitlisted at P.S. 87.

Desire for Anderson to grow: While there is certainly demand for Anderson, admissions to Anderson are city-wide. Therefore, allowing Anderson to increase its enrollment would not directly address the needs of elementary school students living in the P.S. 199 and P.S. 87 catchment zones. Furthermore, M044 is the only building in the area with the capacity to accommodate a new school.

As was noted in the amended educational impact statement,¹ there are several options for Upper West Side families who seek a G&T program. In District 3, there are four district-wide G&T programs serving grades K-5, including P.S. 9, P.S. 166, P.S. 163, and P.S. 145, all located on the Upper West Side. Moreover, the number of total citywide G&T seats will still be greater than its 2008-2009 level due to the conversion of P.S. 185 in District 30 into a city-wide G&T program and the opening of Brooklyn School for Inquiry in District 20 in 2009.

Inadequate middle school capacity on the Upper West Side: Admission to middle schools in District 3 is by choice, and students are expected to travel some distance to their chosen school. The most highly sought after middle school program in District 3, which spans from West 59th Street to 122nd Street, from Riverside Drive to Central Park West below 110th street, and from Riverside Drive to 5th Avenue above 110th Street, is located on West 107th Street, demonstrating that Upper West Side families are willing to travel outside their immediate neighborhoods for strong middle school programs. Also, the proposed location for West Prep has not yet been identified, and could be another Upper West Side location.

¹ In response to public comments submitted to the DOE, the educational impact statement for this proposal was amended on April 13, 2010 to add information clarifying how the DOE determines target capacity, target utilization, and the citywide instructional footprint, as well as greater detail on the proposed co-location's impact on West Prep, room allocation, the cost of combining half-size rooms in M044, and the special education students served by the schools in the building.

Insufficient space in the M044 building: Again, as was noted in the amended educational impact statement, all schools will have sufficient instructional space to serve their students in M044 as per the citywide instructional footprint. M044 has a total of 63 full-size rooms and 22 half-size rooms, not including the custodial office or nurse's suite. According to the Footprint, Anderson should receive 23 full-size rooms, 2 half-size rooms, plus administrative space. The Computer School should receive 12 full-size rooms, 3 half-size rooms, plus administrative space. P.S. 452 will require, at scale, 21 full-size rooms, 2 half-size rooms, plus administrative space.

Combined, the schools require 56 full-size rooms and 7 half-size rooms for instructional purposes. Each school should also receive the equivalent of 4 full-size rooms for administrative uses for a total of 12 full size administration rooms across all three schools. After accounting for all classroom needs and the library, there are 13.5 full-size equivalent rooms (i.e., 2 half-size rooms count as one full-size equivalent) available for administrative or other uses.

The number of rooms on each floor does not align perfectly with the space requirements of each school, thus, the schools may benefit from sharing cluster spaces or other resources to help delineate shared from individual school space and maximize utilization of the building to the benefit of all schools. In addition to combining half-size rooms to create full-size classrooms as previously noted, there may also be an opportunity to split room 205, which is oversized, to enable better usage and overall planning for how the schools will be located in the building.

Proposed location of P.S. 452 on the 2nd Floor with I.S. 44 and West Prep: Early in the discussion of opening a new elementary school in M044, Anderson sought and received the DOE's commitment to allow Anderson to continue to exist in the space it currently occupies in the building, and not to relocate Anderson within the building in order to accommodate the new school. The DOE's commitment was in recognition of the disruption that Anderson had just undergone in moving to a new building, and the substantial work it has put into the cleanliness and physical appearance of their rooms.

In light of this commitment, and since Anderson occupies all of the ground and first floor of M044, the new school must be located on the 2nd floor. I.S. 44 will complete its phase out in 2010-2011, and West Prep will relocate in either 2011 or 2012, so P.S. 452 will share the 2nd floor with middle schools for only one to two years. School leaders will work with the Office of Space Planning, and with each other, to develop a site plan for the schools that adequately separates P.S. 452's students from I.S. 44 and West Prep's students, and protocols to address sharing bathrooms as needed.

Concern that a zoned elementary school will crowd out Anderson and/or the Computer School: Finally, the DOE recognizes that Anderson has recently moved and will not propose moving Anderson again. The DOE also recognizes the importance of offering strong middle school choices in all neighborhoods and is committed to the Computer School continuing in M044. The DOE will work with the District 3 CEC to rezone elementary schools to better utilize the available elementary school capacity north of P.S. 87.

Safety concerns from having elementary and middle school students in the same building:

M044 currently serves both elementary and middle school students because Anderson serves grades K-8, while I.S. 44 and The Computer School serve middle school grades. Many buildings in District 3 serve both elementary and middle schools, including the following partial list District 3: M191 – P.S. 191 (grades PK-5) and Hudson Honors middle school; M084 – P.S. 84 (grades PK-5) and Dual-Language Middle School; M075 – P.S. 75 (K-5) and West Side Collaborative Middle School; M009 – P.S. 9 (K-5) and Center School (grades 5-8); M118 - Manhattan School for Children (grades K-8) and Academic & Athletic Excellence and Community Action middle schools. Additional District 3 buildings house K-8 schools, and the M113 building houses P.S. 241 K-5 and Opportunity Charter School which serves grades 6-12.

West Prep should not be moved or, in the alternative, the DOE should identify a new site for the school before the start of the 2010-2011 school year: The DOE is in the process of locating an appropriate site for West Prep and is committed to finding a location for the school as soon as possible. The DOE will convene a relocation task force, including parent and staff representation from West Prep, to ensure communication throughout the process to identify and propose an alternate site, and to ensure community input to the potential alternatives identified.

Limit P.S 452 to two sections and make it a choice school: P.S. 87 currently has 110 Kindergarten applicants on a waitlist. P.S. 199 to the south has 47 K applicants on a waitlist. Even after making seat offers to fill available seats at P.S. 191, and taking into account the 65 general education seats at P.S. 452, there will still be 55 students zoned for P.S. 87 requiring an alternative seat offer. Based on current seat availability, most of these students will be offered seats approximately one mile north of their zoned school. While students choosing G&T programs or other choice programs in the district may address some of this demand, limiting P.S. 452 to two sections would require 25 additional children to travel well beyond their zone to attend Kindergarten.

Making P.S. 452 a choice school would not directly address the issue of zoned demand. A choice school would be open equally to all students living in District 3, and could not accept only students who live in the area or are waitlisted for local zoned schools.

Make P.S. 452 siting temporary: The DOE and SCA do not have sufficient capital funds to build new capacity in all locations where it is desired. In District 3, there is under-utilized capacity further north in the District, and we intend to propose rezoning in order to better utilize the existing capacity. At this time, we project that District 3 can accommodate K-8 enrollment demand without adding a new building. Enrollment projections are adjusted annually, and the capital plan is amended as conditions require. We believe the need for additional elementary capacity in this location is not temporary.

Divert waitlisted P.S. 87 students to P.S. 9, rather than open a new school: P.S. 9 is located at 100 West 84th Street, one zone north of P.S. 87. P.S. 9 serves both zoned students and a district-wide G&T program. In discussing options for addressing overcrowding, the DOE raised the possibility of relocating the G&T program to another school. This was not acceptable to the community. P.S. 9 has capacity for 75 zoned students; as of April 15, 2010, they have 72 zoned applicants. While some of these students will accept G&T seats or other choice seats, there is

not sufficient capacity at P.S. 9 to accommodate all the growth in the P.S. 87 zone. Even if G&T programs were relocated from P.S. 9, adding 50 additional seats to the General Education capacity, this would not be enough to fully address the P.S. 87 zoned demand growth.

Use stricter residence verification to reduce overcrowding at P.S. 87: P.S. 87 complies with the requirements for residence documentation. While there may be some families falsifying their addresses, this would not address the waitlist of 110 students.

Expand P.S. 87 by building an additional story on building: Similar to the suggestions of building a new building, the capital plan does not currently have a project for District 3, and we do not have the capital funds available to build new capacity in all locations where it would be beneficial. Further, projects to add stories on top of existing buildings are significantly disruptive, and would require relocating part or all of P.S. 87 enrollment during the time of construction, which would be significantly longer than a summer. As a result, adding stories would further exacerbate overcrowding in the short-term.

The proposal will be presented to the Panel for Educational Policy as it is currently posted. A copy of the amended educational impact statement for this proposal can be obtained at http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/BD228776-71B2-459E-93C9-BCEEE02F65F5/81049/M044PS452AmendedEIS_Final_41310.pdf.