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Chancellor

Public Comment Analysis¹

Date: March 8, 2013

Topic: The Proposed Opening and Co-location of a New Middle School (11X355) with Existing Schools M.S. 142 John Philip Sousa (11X142), One World Middle School (11X529) and Baychester Middle School (11X532) in Building X142 Beginning in 2013-2014

Date of Panel Vote: March 11, 2013

Summary of Proposal

On January 11, 2013, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) issued an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) proposing to co-locate a new middle school, 11X355 (“11X355”), in building X142 located at 3750 Baychester Avenue, Bronx, NY 10466, in Community School District 11 (“District 11”). If this proposal is approved, 11X355 will be co-located in building X142 (“X142”) with M.S. 142 John Philip Sousa (11X142, “M.S. 142”), One World Middle School at Edenwald (11X529, “One World”) and Baychester Middle School (11X532, “Baychester”), three existing middle schools serving students in grades six through eight (One World and Baychester are currently serving grades six and seven but will be at full scale in 2013-2014 serving grades six through eight). 11X355 will serve students in sixth through eighth grades and will admit students through a Campus Choice Admissions method through the District 11 Middle School Choice Process, offering priority to students residing in the building X142 residential zone. If this proposal is approved, 11X355 will begin enrolling sixth grade students in 2013-2014 and will add one grade per year until it is at full scale and serves students in sixth through eighth grades in 2015-2016.

On February 5, 2013, the EIS describing this proposal was amended to include updated information regarding the availability of School Improvement Grant funding. The updated information, which was provided in a Notice of Amendment, did not substantially revise this proposal.

In a separate Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”), posted on January 11, 2013, the DOE proposed to gradually phase-out and eventually close M.S. 142 because of its low performance and inability to improve quickly to better support student needs. If the phase-out proposal is approved, M.S. 142 will no longer admit sixth grade students after the conclusion of the 2012-2013 school year. One grade will then be phased-out each subsequent year. During the 2013-2014 school year, M.S. 142 will serve students in seventh and eighth grades and, in 2014-2015, it will only serve students in eighth grade. M.S. 142 will

¹ The DOE will continue to accept comments concerning this proposal up to 24 hours prior to the Panel for Educational Policy’s (“PEP”) vote on March 11, 2013. Those additional comments will be addressed in an amended Public Comment Analysis which will be provided to the PEP before it votes on this proposal.

close in June 2015.

If this proposal is approved, 11X355, One World, and Baychester will be zoned campus choice middle schools that will serve students in sixth through eighth grades. 11X355, One World, and Baychester will admit students through the District 11 Middle School Choice process and offer priority to students residing in the X142 zone through a Campus Choice Admissions method, in which all students zoned to the X142 building would have priority for a seat in the building and would have the opportunity to rank the three schools in order of preference. Students will then be matched to one of the three schools, or another District 11 middle school through the District 11 middle school choice process operated by the Office of Student Enrollment (“OSE”).

According to the 2011-2012 Enrollment, Capacity, Utilization Report (“Blue Book”), X142 has a target capacity of 1,214 students. During the current 2012-2013 school year the building serves approximately 866 students, yielding a building utilization rate of 71%.

In 2015-2016, once M.S. 142 has completed its phase-out and 11X355 is at full scale, it is projected that there will be approximately 1,020-1,110 students served in X142, thereby yielding an estimated building utilization rate of approximately 84%-91%.

If this proposal is approved, 11X355 will provide a new educational option for families in District 11 and replace the middle school seats that will be lost as a result of the phase-out and eventual closure of M.S. 142. As explained in an EIS approved by the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”) on February 17, 2011 (posted on the DOE web site here: http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/50D0EA27-11B7-4F3C-9E53-4ACED95E34C6/0/EIS_NewSchools142_final.pdf), M.S. 142 is in the process of reducing its overall enrollment as two district choice middle schools phase into the X142 building. As such, 11X355 will have an enrollment that more closely aligns with the proposed enrollment for M.S. 142, as detailed in the EIS posted in February 2011, than with M.S. 142’s current enrollment.

Copies of the EIS are also available in the main offices of M.S. 142, One World, and Baychester.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearings

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at the X142 building on February 13, 2013. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 40 members of the public attended the hearing, and 9 people spoke. Present at the meeting were M.S. 142 Principal Lajuan White; One World Principal Patricia Wynne; Baychester Principal Shawn Manger; District 11 Community Superintendent Elizabeth A. White; Community Education Council (“CEC”) 11 President Petra Poleon and CEC Member Pamela Johnson; DOE Deputy Chancellor Corinne Rello-Anselmi; a Representative from Councilmember Andy King’s Office; a representative from Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson’s office; Jesse Collins, a representative of the Council of Negro Women; Stephen Bennett, union representative from the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (“CSA”); DOE External Affairs Representative Jenny Sobelman; and Yael Kalban and Stephanie Crane from the DOE’s Division of Portfolio Planning.

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

1. A representative from Councilmember King’s office voiced support for the changes taking place at the school and offered support for any community members facing challenges during the transition period. She also emphasized that the school building will remain open and the students will still have a place to attend classes in the X142 building.

2. Many commenters voiced the need for increased parental and community involvement with M.S. 142, as well as all schools generally, and referenced larger education issues in the community.
3. Jesse Collins, a representative of the Council of Negro Women, inquired as to why her organization was not consulted for input about the new school replacement, particularly in consideration of the new school staff and the name of the new school. She mentioned that she would like the new school to be named after Arthur Thomas.
4. Pamela Johnson, a CEC 11 member and a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (“NAACP”) School Board, inquired as to what the new school will do differently to ensure student success and improved performance overall.
5. One commenter expressed confusion about the strategy of replacing one school with a new school and how that can help improve student outcomes.
6. A representative for Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson voiced concern about the lack of continuity for students since they may attend multiple schools in the case of a phase-out, in addition to the typical transition points for students between kindergarten and graduating high school. She noted the importance of being surrounded by the same community throughout one’s educational process.
7. Stephen Bennett, a representative of the CSA, voiced general opposition to the practice of phasing out schools and voiced concern that struggling students are turned away from new schools and “warehoused” in schools that are failing.

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

8. Many commenters referenced prior interventions implemented at M.S. 142 and asked why these interventions were not implemented in such a way to prevent the necessity of school phase-out.
9. Many commenters expressed support for M.S. 142 and acknowledged the important history of the school in the community.
10. Many commenters noted M.S. 142’s many student achievements and success stories.
11. Many commenters asked what would happen to the students who remained at the M.S. 142 during the phase-out and what supports would be provided to them.
12. Many commenters asked what would happen to the teachers and staff of M.S. 142 during and after the phase-out.
13. Many commenters voiced the preference that the DOE spend more time and resources improving M.S. 142, rather than phasing it out.
14. Stephen Bennett, a representative of the CSA, voiced general opposition to the practice of phasing out schools:
 - a. He noted that more than two dozen schools are currently slated for closure and that these schools have different performance grades, state statuses, and received different quality review scores.
15. Jesse Collins, a representative of the Council of Negro Women, voiced her opposition to the proposal for the phase-out of M.S. 142 and noted the following:
 - a. She expressed concern that M.S. 142 lacks needed resources. In particular, she noted that the X142 library is not functioning and none of the three schools in the building have access to the library.
 - b. She expressed concern that her organization and the community were not more involved in the decision to propose the phase-out of M.S. 142.
16. A representative from Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson’s made the following comments:
 - a. She noted the positive performance of M.S. 142 in previous years and asked what changes took place that impacted the performance so negatively.

- b. She expressed concern about M.S. 142’s principal and assistant principal and how that impacts student performance and student resources.
 - c. She expressed concern about short timeline given to schools to improve student performance.
17. Pamela Johnson, a CEC 11 member and a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (“NAACP”) School Board, stated the following:
- a. She inquired as to how the students in the school during the phase-out will be supported.
 - b. She asked what would happen to the teachers and staff at M.S. 142 and what opportunities they would have after the school completes its phase-out.
 - c. She commented that her family had a long history in the community and with M.S. 142 in particular.
 - d. She expressed concern about the differences in school performance among the three co-located schools. She noted that the two schools co-located with M.S. 142 have been successful while M.S. 142 has continued to struggle and inquired as to how that can happen on the X142 campus.
 - e. She expressed concern about the network support given to the M.S. 142.
 - f. She expressed concern about the lack of community and parental involvement in M.S. 142, with the school’s parent association being particularly weak.
18. One commenter voiced concern that all students attending M.S. 142 would not be able to continue attending M.S. 142 and that students would be “knocked out” of the school because of seat limitations.
19. One commenter expressed concern that the data and statistics referenced regarding the school’s performance do not reflect the experiences of the students who attend the school.
20. One commenter asked if the DOE considers the population of students served by the school—for example, students who are over-age and under-credited—in evaluating the overall performance of a school. She further asked if the DOE is aware of the additional economic and social barriers faced by students and families in the communities.
21. One commenter noted the importance of not blaming the students or the community but evaluating what is happening inside of the school community that prevents students from succeeding.
22. One commenter expressed interest in having more comprehensive after-school programming instead of phasing out M.S. 142.
23. One commenter asked how the DOE is going to support the parent association and increase parental involvement in the school community and parent association meetings.
24. One commenter submitted a question asking why the school is proposed for phase-out after all the success stories that came out of M.S. 142.
25. One commenter expressed support for President Obama’s plan to increase the availability of pre-kindergarten programming throughout the United States.
26. One commenter noted that the differences between the unions and Mayor Bloomberg are all about adults and do not serve the best interest of children.
27. One commenter voiced concern about students attending schools in the community who are not from the community.

No Written and/or Oral Comments Were Submitted to the DOE

Summary of Issues Raised in Written and/or Oral Comments Submitted to the DOE not related to this proposal:

28. One commenter voiced support for M.S. 142, its staff and administration, and acknowledged the successes the school has had over the years.

29. One commenter expressed his belief that the many leadership changes in recent years is the reason for the school's struggling performance.
30. One commenter voiced general opposition to the proposal to phase out M.S. 142.

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

Comment 1 voices support for this proposal and requires no response.

Comment 2 pertains to the importance of parental involvement in school communities in the Bronx.

The DOE acknowledges the efforts being made by teachers, staff, and community members (in the Bronx and Citywide) to increase parent involvement and encourages continued parental participation in the school community if this proposal is approved and new school, 11X355, is co-located in building X142. Many DOE schools have active SLTs or parent associations and the DOE anticipates that the replacement school will involve the parent community through these or other similar models.

Comments 3, 4, and 5 pertain to how the new school replacement plan is developed and how the name for a new school is determined.

The DOE can dramatically improve student achievement across the City by opening new schools in traditionally underserved communities that need high-quality educational options. There is an extremely detailed and rigorous process for creating new schools. The DOE's top priority is ensuring that the new schools that DOE opens have strong leaders with clear and visionary plans, and that these leaders are supported as they get their new schools up and running.

The DOE's new schools process is based on three core principles:

- A great school starts with a great principal. Over the past ten years, the DOE has learned the powerful role a principal can play as an agent for change. Through the DOE's new schools process, the DOE seeks principals who demonstrate the qualities of visionary and effective leadership and who are poised for the privilege and challenge of opening a new school.
- The DOE needs community partners to help the DOE develop great schools. The DOE has worked with local and national intermediary organizations to help develop and scale new schools. These partners provide critical start-up support and help push the thinking of the DOE's new school leaders.
- There isn't one "recipe" for what makes a great school. While there are conditions that contribute to an effective school – a mission; leadership; and great teachers devoted to student success, there are different ways of organizing a school to create these conditions, especially given the need to serve diverse student populations. The DOE encourages leaders to be entrepreneurial and to leverage their expertise to develop innovative models.

Additionally, the new school needs a name and school identification number (DBN) that is different from the existing school. Consistent with Chancellor's Regulation A-860, parents and community members associated with the proposed new school will be able to make suggestions for the name of the new school. As with all school names, the Chancellor retains final decision-making authority. While the school number and name is an important symbol, more significantly, this proposal marks an opportunity to create an improved organization that will better serve students.

The DOE appreciates all feedback from the community regarding a proposal. When an EIS is issued, it is made available to the staff, faculty and parents at all the impacted schools, on the DOE's Web site, and in each school's respective main office. In addition, the DOE dedicates a proposal-specific Web site and voicemail to collect feedback on this proposal. In the case of this proposal, the DOE solicited feedback from parents through the Joint Public Hearing held on February 13, 2013, as well as through voicemail and email since the proposal was posted on January 11, 2013. 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.

Comment 6 concerns the lack of continuity for students who may need to attend multiple schools as a result of the phase-out (as well as throughout the course of their elementary, middle, and high school education).

As indicated in the EIS regarding the proposal for the phase-out of M.S. 142, almost all students have the option of continuing their middle school education at M.S. 142, with the exception of students who may have to repeat a grade that M.S. 142 no longer serves as it phases out. In those instances, students will be enrolled in the new school which will be located in the same building. Because the majority of students will complete their education at M.S. 142, this proposal is not anticipated to cause substantially less continuity than is normally expected. In terms of changes that students encounter between the elementary and middle school grades and between the middle and high school grades, the majority of New York City schools operate in the elementary (serves students in kindergarten through fifth grades), middle (serves students in sixth to eighth grades), and high school (serves students in ninth through twelfth grades) models in order to provide choice for New York City families.

Comment 7 pertains to struggling students and how they enroll in schools across the city; this comment claims that all struggling students are "warehoused" in failing schools and are turned away from new schools.

New York City's new schools are serving the same or even higher-needs populations than the schools they replaced and are having an impact on students of every race, ethnicity, gender, and disability status. The two new schools phasing in on the X142 campus, One World and Baychester, are all serving similar populations. Of the students currently served at One World, according to the 2012-2013 audited register, 7% are ELL students, 63% qualify for free or reduced lunch and 18% of students have IEPs. At Baychester, according to the 2012-2013 audited register, 5% are ELL students, 53% qualify for free or reduced lunch, and 29% of students have IEPs. At M.S. 142, according to the 2012-2013 audited register, 5% are ELL students, 58% qualify for free or reduced lunch, and 21% of students have IEPs.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to this proposal.