



Notice
November 29, 2012

Dennis M. Walcott
Chancellor

The Proposed Grade Truncation of P.S. 126 Dr. Marjorie H. Dunbar (09X126) to a K-5 School in 2013-2014

I. Description of the subject and purpose of the proposed item under consideration.

P.S. 126 Dr. Marjorie H. Dunbar (“P.S. 126”) is an existing zoned elementary school located in building X126, at 175 West 166th Street, Bronx, NY 10452, in the Highbridge neighborhood of Community School District 9. It currently serves students in kindergarten through sixth grades and offers a full-day pre-kindergarten program. P.S. 126 is currently the only school located in building X126.

This is a proposal to implement a “grade truncation,” meaning that the school will no longer enroll sixth graders after the current 2012-2013 school year. If this proposal is approved, at the close of the 2012-2013 school year, all fifth- and sixth-grade students who meet promotional standards will graduate from P.S. 126. During the 2012-2013 school year, P.S. 126 fifth- and sixth-grade students will participate in the District 9 and 10 Middle School Choice Process. In September 2013, P.S. 126’s current fifth- and sixth-grade students will enter middle school elsewhere as sixth and seventh graders, respectively. Beginning in September 2013, P.S. 126 will only serve students in kindergarten through fifth grades and will continue to offer a pre-kindergarten program (subject to funding and demand).

Middle schools typically enroll students beginning in sixth grade, and P.S. 126 students already have the option to apply to middle school as fifth graders. However, P.S. 126 students who wait until sixth grade to apply to middle school are limited to those schools that still have available seventh-grade seats. There are several middle schools in Districts 9 and 10 that rarely have seventh-grade seats open because those seats become available only if sixth-grade students leave the school. As a result, students who remain at P.S. 126 through sixth grade have fewer options than their peers who start middle school a year earlier.

The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) strives to ensure that all students in New York City have access to high-quality schools at every stage of their education. Having elementary schools that end in different grades (i.e., K-5 versus K-6) creates unequal levels of access to middle school for students based simply on the year they exit elementary school.

This proposed grade truncation will help standardize middle school application and entry

grades in District 9, giving all P.S. 126 students access to the same range of middle school options as their peers throughout the District. Additionally, having students start middle school through multiple entry grades (sixth and seventh) creates challenges for students and the school as a whole. P.S. 126 students who start middle school in seventh grade may face transitional challenges related to entering middle school a year later than most of their classmates. They remain in their new middle school for only two years before moving on to high school, leaving them with less time to adjust to a new school environment and new academic expectations before facing another transition and adjustment. Multiple transitions in such close succession can have the effect of depersonalizing the school experience at a time when adolescents tend to need the most personal and supportive environments. Having students enter in multiple years is also challenging for middle school teachers and leadership from an instructional perspective.

Changing P.S. 126's grade span from K-6 to K-5 will reduce the school's enrollment by approximately 20-80 students, freeing up additional space that P.S. 126 could use to accommodate additional lower-grade students or to meet other needs (e.g., art room, resource center, etc.).

In addition to this proposal, the DOE anticipates opening a new middle school (09XTBD) in District 9's Highbridge neighborhood in September 2013. This new school will be housed in building X285, new construction being built at 200 West 167th St., approximately 0.3 miles away from P.S. 126. This new middle school, which will have an estimated capacity of 391 students, will admit students via the District 9 and 10 Middle School Choice Process, giving priority to students from several Highbridge area elementary schools including P.S. 126, thereby providing a new option for students who would have otherwise attended sixth grade at P.S. 126.

II. Information regarding where the full text of the proposed item may be obtained.

The Educational Impact Statement ("EIS") can be found on the Department of Education's Web site: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2012-2013/Jan2013Proposals.htm>

Copies of the EIS are also available in the main office of P.S. 126.

III. Submission of public comment.

Written comments can be sent to D09Proposals@schools.nyc.gov.

Oral comments can be left at 212-374-5159.

IV. The name, office, address, email and telephone number of the city district representative, knowledgeable on the item under consideration, from whom information may be obtained concerning the item.

Name: Henry Bluestone Smith
Office: Division of Portfolio Planning
Address: 52 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007
Email: D09Proposals@schools.nyc.gov
Phone: 212-374-5159

V. Date, time and place of joint public hearings for this proposal.

Thursday, January 3, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.
P.S. 126 Dr. Marjorie H. Dunbar Elementary School
175 West 166th Street
Bronx, NY 10452

Questions about the proposal should be directed as indicated in Section IV above.

Speaker sign-up will begin 30 minutes before the hearing and will close 15 minutes after the start.

VI. Should inclement weather or other unforeseen event or emergency prevent the January 3 hearing from taking place, the joint public hearing would take place (as feasible) on the alternate schedule noted directly below.

Alternate Date: Wednesday, January 9, 2013
Alternate Time: 6:00 PM
Alternate Where: P.S. 126 Dr. Marjorie H. Dunbar Elementary School
175 West 166th Street
Bronx, NY 10452

Please reserve both the original scheduled and alternate dates, times, and locations in your calendars. Should the hearing scheduled for January 3 or the alternate date of January 9 require rescheduling to accommodate the needs of the impacted School Leadership Teams and Community and/or Citywide Education Councils, the DOE will post notice here: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2012-2013/Jan2013Proposals.htm>

VII. Date, time and place of the Panel for Educational Policy meeting at which the Panel will vote on the proposed item.

January 16, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.
The High School of Fashion Industries
225 West 24th Street
New York, NY 10011