



**Revised Notice**  
May 23, 2014

**Revised Notice: The Proposed Re-Siting of a Portion of Richmond Hill High School (27Q475) from Building Q636 to Building Q475 During the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 School Years, and the Temporary Co-location of a Portion of Richmond Hill High School (27Q475) with Epic High School – North (27Q334) in Building Q636 for the 2014-2015 School Year**

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

Richmond Hill High School (27Q475, “Richmond Hill”) currently serves a portion of its ninth grade in building Q636 (“Q636”), located at 94-25 117<sup>th</sup> Street, Queens, NY 11419 in Community School District 27 (“District 27”), and serves the remainder of its ninth grade, as well as its tenth through twelfth grades, in building Q475 (“main building Q475”) and temporary classroom units (“TCUs”) Q944, located at 89-30 114<sup>th</sup> Street, Queens, NY 11418, also in District 27. Q636 is located approximately 0.6 miles from Q475. Q475 also houses Partnership with Children, a community based organization (“CBO”). On October 11, 2013, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) issued an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) describing a proposal to re-site the ninth grade of Richmond Hill from Q636 to Q475 beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. A “re-siting” means students will attend classes in a different building than the one they attended the previous year. On November 26, 2013, the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”) approved that proposal.

In response to the Richmond Hill school community’s request to remove the TCUs, the DOE’s newly formed Campus Squad met with Richmond Hill’s principal in April 2014. The Campus Squad, which assists schools with programming issues and helps resolve co-location disputes, developed a plan for Richmond Hill to cease using the TCUs for core instruction beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, by gradually re-siting that school’s students from the Q636 building to main building Q475 over the course of two years. The DOE plans to remove the TCUs prior to the 2016-2017 school year.

The DOE has now substantially revised the original proposal. Under the revised proposal, a portion of Richmond Hill consisting of approximately 200 students will be served in Q636 during the 2014-2015 school year, and will be temporarily co-located with new high school Epic High School – North (27Q334, “Epic North”), which is opening in September 2014. 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.

Richmond Hill will continue to serve a portion of its students in Q636 during the 2014-2015 school year, re-siting its students from Q636 to Q475 over two school years (2014-2015 and 2015-2016). Actual enrollment and demand for Richmond Hill's three admissions programs (the zoned program, Choices Academy program, and Criminology and Forensics Institute program) will determine which Richmond Hill students and classes will be served in Q636.

All Richmond Hill students will be re-sited from building Q636 to main building Q475 by the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year. The DOE will work with Richmond Hill's leadership to ensure all of Richmond Hill's students have access to the full array of programming offered by the school.

This revised EIS also includes:

- An updated room count for main building Q475, which reflects planned construction that will increase the capacity of that building over the next two years
- An updated allocation of rooms for Richmond Hill in main building Q475 and the TCUs
- The allocation of rooms between Richmond Hill and Epic North in Q636 for the 2014-2015 school year
- Additional information about the implementation of the enrollment reduction at Richmond Hill
- Updates based on the most recent enrollment and performance data for Richmond Hill
- Information about the impact of recent amendments to Commissioner's Regulation 100.3 on admissions policies
- Updated information about the state approval status of Richmond Hill career and technical education ("CTE") Programs

Epic North is open to students through the Citywide High School Admissions Process and uses a limited unscreened selection method with priority for students residing in Queens. Epic North will open in Q636 with ninth grade, adding one grade annually until it reaches full scale, serving grades nine through twelve, in the 2017-2018 school year. Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, Epic North will be the only school organization in Q636.

The DOE plans to reduce the enrollment at Richmond Hill over a period of four years beginning in September 2014. By 2017-2018, enrollment at Richmond Hill will decrease by approximately 420-460 students so that it will serve approximately 1,570-1,610 students at scale in ninth through twelfth grades. The enrollment reduction is intended to provide an opportunity for Richmond Hill to concentrate on a smaller cohort of students, and allow for Epic North to open in building Q636. Moreover, the enrollment reduction is not expected to yield a net loss of high school seats in District 27. The approximately 420-460 seats that Richmond Hill will lose once its enrollment is fully reduced will be more than recovered through the phase-in of the new school in the Q636 building as well as the phase-in of another new high school, Epic High School – South (27Q314) at building Q226, which together will offer between 600-680 seats once they reach full grade span in the 2017-2018 school year.

According to the 2012-2013 Enrollment Capacity Utilization Report (the “Blue Book”), main building Q475 and the TCUs (collectively, “Q475”) have the combined capacity to serve a total of 2,165 students. During the 2013-2014 school year, Richmond Hill is serving approximately 1,794 ninth through twelfth-grade students in Q475. This yields a projected utilization rate of approximately 83%. This means that the building is “under-utilized” and has space to accommodate additional students.

If this revised proposal is approved, in 2014-2015, Richmond Hill is projected to serve approximately 1,763 ninth through twelfth-grade students in main building Q475 and the TCUs, yielding a projected building utilization rate of approximately 81%. In 2015-2016, once all Richmond Hill students have been re-sited from Q636, the school is projected to serve approximately 1,835 – 1,875 ninth through twelfth-grade students in main building Q475 and the TCUs, yielding a projected building utilization rate of approximately 85% - 87%. Because these utilization rates are based on the combined capacity of main building Q475 and the TCUs, they are subject to change upon the completion of planned construction in the main building, modified use of TCUs in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years, and eventual removal of TCUs once the rooms are no longer needed to support students.

According to the Program of Requirements (“POR”) from the School Construction Authority (“SCA”), building Q636 has the capacity to serve 402 students. During the 2013-2014 school year, Richmond Hill is serving approximately 400 ninth-grade students in building Q636. This yields a projected utilization rate of approximately 100%. If this revised proposal is approved, in 2014-2015, Richmond Hill is projected to serve approximately 200 students and Epic North is projected to serve approximately 81 ninth-grade students in Q636, yielding an estimated projected building utilization rate of 70%.

## **II. Identification of all revisions, including substantial revisions to the original item.**

This revised EIS include the following modifications:

- An updated room count for main building Q475, which reflects planned construction that will increase the capacity of that building over the next two years
- An updated allocation of rooms for Richmond Hill in main building Q475 and the TCUs
- The allocation of rooms between Richmond Hill and Epic North in Q636 for the 2014-2015 school year
- Additional information about the implementation of the enrollment reduction at Richmond Hill
- Updates based on the most recent enrollment and performance data for Richmond Hill
- Information about the impact of recent amendments to Commissioner’s Regulation 100.3 on admissions policies
- Updated information about the state approval status of Richmond Hill CTE Programs

### **III. Summary of all public comment regarding the original proposal received to date.**

A joint public hearing regarding the original proposal was held at Richmond Hill on November 14, 2013. At this hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 60 members of the public attended the hearing, and 13 people signed up to speak. Present at the meeting were Tamika Matheson, High School Superintendent for Districts 15, 22, 23, 27, 30, and 32; DOE representative Elaine Gorman; District 27 Community Education Council (“CEC 27”) Member Michael Duvall; Richmond Hill School Leadership Team (“SLT”) representatives Principal Neil Ganesh, Vishnu Mahadeo, and Edith Rivera; Citywide Council on High Schools (“CCHS”) Queens Representative Alleyne Hughley; Community Board 9 Member Seth Welins; and Jillian Roland and Dean Guzman from the DOE.

The following comments and remarks were made at the joint public hearing on November 14, 2013 on the proposal:

- 1) CCHS Queens Representative Alleyne Hughley had the following comments:
  - a) CCHS opposes this re-siting proposal.
  - b) She asked that the DOE postpone the re-siting until after the new administration has taken office.
  - c) She asked that the DOE give more time for the current Richmond Hill principal to improve the school.
  - d) She stated that Richmond Hill would lose more programs because of the re-siting.
  - e) She stated that the ninth grade annex is working well for the school culture.
- 2) CEC 27 member Michael Duvall stated that CEC 27 does not get high school updates as they deal with kindergarten through eighth grade in the district.
- 3) Richmond Hill SLT member Vishnu Mahadeo had the following comments:
  - a) He expressed concern about the history of proposal for Richmond Hill stating that the DOE is proposing yet another change to the building.
  - b) He stated that the DOE did not take into account the rising demand for high school seats in Queens.
  - c) He believes the DOE did not accurately project the enrollment in the EIS.
  - d) He requested the DOE to amend the EIS so it reflects the true enrollment.
  - e) He believes this proposal will put students back into the TCUs on the main campus.
  - f) He expressed concern that this proposal prevents Richmond Hill from using the playground because of the presence of the TCUs.
  - g) He expressed concern that the DOE is unaware of the partnership Richmond Hill has with the United States Tennis Association to build tennis courts on the main campus.
  - h) He stated that the DOE did not connect with Richmond Hill parents or the SLT to propose this change.
  - i) He stated that the DOE did not consult with any elected officials about this change.
  - j) He stated that according to the Borough President, the DOE does not have the authority to propose changes to Richmond Hill because of the new administration change.
  - k) He believes the DOE purposely decided to schedule the joint public hearing at the same time and date as the middle school fair.
  - l) He stated that Q636 was a solution to overcrowding at Q475.
  - m) He expressed that the DOE has ignored all input from the community.

- n) He expressed concern over the difficulty of scheduling shared spaces and classes for students if the ninth grade is re-sited back to the main campus.
  - o) He believes the DOE should change their focus to making Richmond Hill a better place.
  - p) He believes the TCUs are not the best solution for alleviating overcrowding in the building.
  - q) He believes Queens needs more high schools but not at the expense of Richmond Hill.
- 4) Richmond Hill SLT member Edith Rivera had the following comments:
- a) She recognized that Richmond Hill has been failing.
  - b) She does not approve of the rationale behind this proposal.
  - c) She stated that removing Richmond Hill's usage of the annex will cause the main building to be overcrowded.
  - d) She believes that the DOE should put more programs in Richmond Hill.
  - e) She does not believe in opening the new high school in the annex because she believes students of District 27 should have priority to the high schools in District 27.
- 5) Community Board 9 member Seth Welins opposed the proposal and read the Community Board 9 resolution:
- a) Richmond Hill's use of Q636 for incoming ninth grade students relieves overcrowding at Q475.
  - b) Richmond Hill's use of Q636 would allow the removal of the TCUs at Q475 and allow for the space occupied by the TCUs to be used as a physical education facility.
  - c) Building Q636 provides the incoming ninth graders with a small, contained, and personalized learning environment which would help these students better adjust to high school life and offer a real chance of success for the students and the school.
  - d) The DOE did not consult with Richmond Hill staff, parents, students, or community members on this proposal.
  - e) If the proposal is approved, the TCUs will have to remain in the playground in order to accommodate the current and anticipated students who will enroll at the school.
  - f) Although the DOE states that in the EIS that it hopes to reduce overall enrollment at the main building and TCUs by 400 students by the 2017-18 school year, according to the DOE enrollment projections in the EIS, enrollments will actually increase in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years.
  - g) These TCUs are at least three years old and many of these structures were leaking, had mold, and constituted a serious health hazard for students and staff.
  - h) These TCUs are now repaired and up to code, but because of their age, do not constitute reliably safe and healthy environments for students or staff.
  - i) Community Board 9 urges the DOE to keep their promise to the Richmond Hill community to continue to site the school's ninth-grade students in the current annex: building Q636.
  - j) Community Board 9 urges the DOE to ensure that the total enrollment of Richmond Hill does not exceed 1,600 students, which is the projected enrollment in the re-siting proposal for the 2017-18 school year.
- 6) Multiple commenters opposed the proposal.
- 7) Multiple commenters expressed that the annex builds positive school culture.
- 8) Multiple commenters stated that the annex is a good location for incoming Richmond Hill ninth graders to start their high school careers.

- 9) Multiple commenters stated that Q475 will become overcrowded if the annex space is removed from Richmond Hill's use.
- 10) Multiple commenters expressed concern over the difficulty of scheduling shared spaces and classes for students if the ninth grade is re-sited back to the main campus.
- 11) Multiple commenters expressed that the main campus and classes at Richmond Hill are currently overcrowded.
- 12) Two commenters stated that resources will be taken away from Richmond Hill as a result of this proposal.
- 13) Two commenters expressed that the school utilization stated in the EIS is wrong because it includes the use of TCUs.
- 14) One commenter stated that the TCUs should be removed from the main campus.
- 15) One commenter questioned why the DOE has proposed so many changes to Richmond Hill.
- 16) One commenter stated that this proposal will not be approved because the new administration will postpone it.
- 17) One commenter expressed that this proposal will ruin school culture.
- 18) One commenter expressed that overcrowded buildings require floating teachers, which is detrimental to the learning environment.
- 19) One commenter stated that Richmond Hill has many successful existing programs.
- 20) One commenter expressed concern that the DOE will take away programs if this proposal approved.

**Summary of Issues Raised in Written and/or Oral Comments Submitted to the DOE Regarding the Original Proposal**

There were multiple written comments submitted to the DOE regarding this proposal.

- 21) Community Board 9 member Seth Welins had the following questions:
  - a) He asked if the TCUs located at Q475 would continue to be utilized as classrooms.
  - b) He asked if the TCUs will be replaced with new units.
  - c) He believed that the purpose of building the current annex to Richmond Hill was to relieve overcrowding and eliminate the need for TCUs on the main campus.
  - d) He asked what the utilization rate of Q475 will be if the re-siting occurs and if the TCUs are removed.
  - e) He asked how the enrollment reduction will be accomplished.
  - f) He states that the population in Queens is expanding and the DOE should anticipate an increase in student enrollment in Queens.
  - g) He asked what type of school will be sited in Q636.
  - h) He asked if the DOE will provide funds for repairs and renovations in Q475.
- 22) One commenter expressed opposition to the proposal.
- 23) One commenter suggested that the DOE re-site the ninth grade once the TCUs are fully removed from the main campus.
- 24) One commenter believes the utilization and capacity of Q475 is not accurate because it includes the TCUs.
- 25) One commenter believes the DOE deliberately withdrew resources and academic support in an attempt to phase out the school in 2011.

The analysis of public comments regarding the original proposal is available at:  
<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2013-2014/Nov26SchoolProposals>.

**IV. Information regarding where the full text of the revised proposed item may be obtained.**

The revised EIS regarding this revised proposal can be found on the DOE's Web site:  
<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2013-2014/June2014PEPSchoolProposals>

Copies of the revised EIS are also available in the main office of Richmond Hill High School.

**III. Submission of public comment.**

Written comments can be sent to [D27Proposals@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:D27Proposals@schools.nyc.gov).

Oral comments can be left at 212-374-7621.

**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: Dean Guzman  
Office: Office of District Planning  
Address: 52 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007  
Email: [D27Proposals@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:D27Proposals@schools.nyc.gov)  
Phone: 212-374-7621

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

June 12, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.  
Building Q475  
Richmond Hill High School  
89-30 114<sup>th</sup> Street  
Queens, NY 11418

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

June 17, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.  
Taft Educational Campus  
240 East 172<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Bronx, NY 10457