



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Notice
October 8 2014

The Proposed Grade Expansion of P.S. 251 (29Q251) from a K-3 to a K-5 School Beginning in 2015-2016

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

The purpose of this proposal is to expand the grades served by P.S. 251 (29Q251, “P.S. 251”). P.S. 251 is an existing elementary school that serves students in kindergarten through third grade and offers two sections of a full-day pre-kindergarten program. The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) believes that P.S. 251 families will benefit if students continue to be served at P.S. 251 for fourth and fifth grades. Currently, P.S. 251 students must transition to a new elementary school in fourth grade. These students may face transitional challenges as they remain in their new school for only two years before moving on to middle school, leaving them with very little time to adjust to a new school environment and new academic expectations before facing another transition and adjustment. This community-initiated proposal is intended to create a more stable environment for students and reduce the number of transitions students must make in their formative years.

P.S. 251 is a choice elementary school located in building Q251 (“Q251”) at 144-51 Arthur Street, Queens, NY 11413, in Community School District 29 (“District 29”). Building Q251 is tandem to building Q231 (“Q231”), located at 145-00 Springfield Boulevard, Queens, NY 11413, which houses Collaborative Arts Middle School (29Q355, “Collaborative Arts”) and Community Voices Middle School (29Q356, “Community Voices”), two existing district middle schools that serve students in sixth through eighth grades. “Tandem buildings” are two separate buildings with separate entrances which are joined by a central core containing large shared spaces, such as auditoriums, gymnasiums, and/or cafeterias. P.S. 251 is co-located in tandem buildings Q231 and Q251 (“Q231/Q251”) with Collaborative Arts and Community Voices. 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. Q231/Q251 also houses a community-based organization (“CBO”), KJK Tutoring Center. If this proposal is approved, P.S. 251 currently plans to serve students in building Q251 and Collaborative Arts and Community Voices currently plan to serve students in building Q231 throughout the duration of the grade expansion. P.S. 251, Collaborative Arts, and Community Voices leadership may decide to site students in either building Q231 or Q251 throughout the grade expansion, based on the discretion of the Building Council.

If this proposal is approved, students at P.S. 251 will have the opportunity to continue in the school for fourth grade beginning in the 2015-2016 school year and fifth grade beginning in the following year. P.S. 251 will reach its full grade span in the 2016-2017 school year, when it will serve students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

As mentioned above, P.S. 251 currently offers two sections of a full-day pre-kindergarten program. This proposal will not impact P.S. 251's ability to offer pre-kindergarten. The DOE's pre-kindergarten programs are maintained based on available funding, student enrollment, and space availability, and the DOE anticipates that pre-kindergarten will continue to be offered at P.S. 251 in 2015-2016 and beyond, subject to continuing funding, demand and space availability.

The proposal to expand P.S. 251 was initiated by the school community. In Fall 2013, the P.S. 251 leadership team submitted an application for a grade expansion. The application included the principal's rationale for expansion, which cited evidence of P.S. 251's academic success, and a letter of support from P.S. 251's network leader. That application was further supported by parents, the broader school community, the Community Education Council of District 29, and multiple elected officials. This suggests a high level of satisfaction within the school, its parent body and the broader community, and the expectation that an expanded P.S. 251 will meet the needs of children. Additionally, DOE officials visited P.S. 251 and conducted interviews with the applicant team, concluding that the school is well positioned to begin a successful grade expansion. Based on the school's record of academic success, the DOE approved P.S. 251's grade expansion request, pending approval of this proposal by the Panel for Educational Policy ("PEP").

The DOE strives to increase quality options for students. As part of the provisional approval process, the DOE evaluates each school's instructional capacity to serve the expanded school level by working in close collaboration with the superintendent to develop clear benchmarks focused on multiple areas; including curriculum, instructional leadership, and staff and family engagement to demonstrate the school's capacity to expand.

The DOE is planning to reduce the incoming kindergarten enrollment at P.S. 251 beginning in September 2015 in order to accommodate the proposed grade expansion. Beginning in September 2014, P.S. 251 will enroll 45-55 kindergarten students, as opposed to the 70-80 kindergarten students it has enrolled in recent years. The DOE does not anticipate reducing P.S. 251's enrollment if this proposal is not approved.

According to the 2013-2014 Enrollment, Capacity, Utilization Report ("Blue Book"), building Q231 has the capacity to serve 1,214 students, building Q251 has the capacity to serve 336 students, and Q231/Q251 has a combined capacity to serve 1,550 students. In the 2014-2015 school year, building Q231 is projected to serve a total of approximately 916 students, yielding an estimated utilization rate of 75%, and building Q251 is projected to serve a total of 350 students, yielding an estimated utilization rate of 104%. The buildings combined are projected to serve a total of approximately 1,266 students, yielding a combined utilization rate of 82%. If this proposal is approved, in 2016-2017 when P.S. 251 reaches full scale serving students in kindergarten through fifth grade, building Q251 is projected to serve a total of 451-511 students, yielding a utilization rate of 134%-152%, and building Q231 is projected to serve a total of approximately 855-915 students, yielding an estimated utilization rate of 70% -75%. The buildings combined will serve approximately 1,306-1,426 students and have an estimated utilization rate of 84%-92% in the 2016-2017 school year. Although P.S. 251 will reach full scale in 2016-2017, its enrollment and utilization rate will decline in future years as the school

enrolls smaller kindergarten cohorts and graduates the larger, current cohorts. P.S. 251's enrollment will not stabilize until the 2020-2021 school year when it will serve 381-441 students in kindergarten through fifth grade, yielding an estimated utilization rate for building Q251 of 113%-131%. The buildings combined will serve approximately 1,236-1,356 students and will have an estimated utilization rate of 80%-87%.

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/2014-2015/November2014SchoolProposals>.

Copies of the EIS are also available in the main offices of P.S. 251, Collaborative Arts, and Community Voices.

III. Submission of public comment.

Written comments can be sent to D29Proposals@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: D29Proposals@schools.nyc.gov
Phone: 212-374-7621

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

Monday, November 17 at 6:00 p.m.
Building Q251
P.S. 251
144-51 Arthur Street
Queens, NY 11413

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.

November 25, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.
The High School of Fashion Industries
225 West 24th Street
New York, NY 10011