

Public Comment Analysis

Date: November 18, 2014

Topic: The proposed re-siting of kindergarten and first grade of P.S. 112 Lefferts Park (20K112) to new building K768, beginning in the 2015-2016 school year.

Date of Panel Vote: November 25, 2014

Summary of Proposal

Community School District 20 (“District 20”) is currently one of New York City’s most crowded community school districts and is in need of additional seats across grade levels. The purpose of this proposal is to use new space that has become available at building K768 (“K768”) to re-locate the kindergarten and first grade of P.S. 112 Lefferts Park (“P.S. 112”) to the new space available at K768. This re-siting, together with a re-zoning approved on October 8, 2014 by the District 20 Community Education Council (“CEC 20”) which expands the P.S. 112 zone and reduces the zone of a neighboring elementary school P.S. 176 Ovington, provides District 20 with 256 additional elementary school seats. By enabling P.S. 112 to grow its enrollment across its current building and the new K768 building, the Department of Education (“DOE”) expects a reduction in overcrowded conditions at both P.S. 112 as well as neighboring elementary school P.S. 176 Ovington.

On October 9, 2014, the DOE issued an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) to re-site kindergarten and first grade of P.S. 112, an existing zoned elementary school that currently serves 539 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. P.S. 112 is currently located in building K112 (“K112”) at 7115 15th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11228 in District 20 and is the sole school organization in K112. If this proposal is approved, P.S. 112’s kindergarten and first grade will be re-sited to K768 at 7301 15th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11228 in District 20, located approximately 367 feet from K112. If this proposal is approved, P.S. 112 will serve kindergarten at K768 and grades one through five at its current location in 2015-2016. Once this proposal is fully implemented in 2016-2017, P.S. 112 will serve kindergarten and first grade at K768 and grades two through five at K112.

On October 8, 2014, CEC 20 approved a plan to increase P.S. 112’s zone to account for the proposed new capacity at K768 and P.S. 112’s ability to serve additional students when it moves part of its grades to K768. The change in zone lines and additional capacity will allow for a reduction of overcrowded conditions at P.S. 112 as well as P.S. 176 Ovington. Additional information about the approved re-zoning can be found on the DOE’s website at <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/changes/brooklyn/feedback?id=646>. Although the re-zoning was approved by CEC 20, implementation of this re-zoning is contingent upon the approval of this proposal to re-site P.S. 112 by the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”).

As a result of the re-zoning, P.S. 112’s future kindergarten classes are projected to be larger than its current kindergarten class. Therefore, P.S. 112 will reach stable enrollment in 2020-2021, when the first of these larger cohorts has reached fifth grade, with a total of 720-780 students in grades K-5.

K768 is a new leased space currently under renovation by the School Construction Authority (“SCA”) and construction is anticipated to be completed by September 2015. The re-siting of P.S. 112’s kindergarten and first grade is contingent upon completion of this new building. If K768 is not ready for student occupancy in 2015-2016, the DOE may issue a new proposal for an alternative siting plan in accordance with Chancellor’s Regulation A-190. Because it is a newly leased facility, no school organization currently uses K768. According to the SCA, K768 is projected to have the capacity to serve 256 students.

If this proposal is approved, in 2015-2016, K768 will serve P.S. 112's kindergarten and have an estimated building utilization rate of 47%-51%. In 2016-2017 and beyond, when K768 serves P.S. 112's kindergarten and first grade, it will have an estimated building utilization rate of 94%-102%.

If this proposal is approved, in 2015-2016, K112 will serve first through fifth grades of P.S. 112 and have an estimated building utilization rate of 125%-140%. In 2016-2017, when P.S. 112's second through fifth grades are served in K112, there will be an estimated building utilization rate of 100%-112%. Once the approved rezoning is fully implemented and P.S. 112 is at stable enrollment in 2020-2021, building K112 is expected to have an estimated building utilization rate of 141% - 153%.

The combined capacity across K112 and K768 is 596, yielding a combined building utilization rate of 121% - 131% for the school in 2020-2021, when enrollment is fully phased in and it serves students across two sites. This projected combined building utilization rate for K112 and K768 represents a decrease from K112's current utilization rate of 159% and an overall improvement in learning conditions at P.S. 112.

While the anticipated utilization rate is in excess of 100%, P.S. 112 will receive space that meets all of its instructional needs at both K112 and K768. Thus, the DOE believes that P.S. 112's kindergarten and first grade students can be served at K768 and P.S. 112's second through fifth grade students can be served at K112, if this proposal is approved.

The details of this proposal have been released in an EIS which can be accessed here:
<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2014-2015/November2014SchoolProposals>.

Copies of the EIS are also available in the main office of P.S. 112 Lefferts Park.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at the K112 building on November 18, 2014. At that hearing, interested parties had another opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 6 members of the public attended the hearing and 2 people spoke. Present at the meeting were District 20 Community Superintendent Karina Costantino; CEC 20 President Laurie Windsor; Principal of P.S. 112 Louise Alfano; P.S. 112 SLT representative Mary Kayser; and Tim Castanza and Kia Higgins from the DOE.

The following comments and remarks were made at the joint public hearing and community meeting on the proposal:

1. CEC 20 President Laurie Windsor stated the following:
 - a. CEC 20 was happy with the proposal and relived that P.S. 112 and P.S. 176 will be getting some relief. Additionally, she raised the following concern:
 - b. CEC 20 believes that, as a result of proposal, additional funding should be provided to the P.S. 112 budget for staffing in the K768 building such as a new school secretary and school aides.
2. P.S. 112 SLT representative Mary Kayser stated that she was aware of the proposed re-siting and was in support of the proposal.

Summary of Issues Raised in Written and/or Oral Comments Submitted to the DOE

No written or oral comments have been submitted.

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

Comments 1(a) and 2 were in support of the proposal and thus do not require a response.

Comment 1(b) is related to increases in funding for P.S. 112 as a result of the proposed re-siting.

In New York City, schools are funded through a per pupil allocation. As the enrollment of a school increases, the school's budget increases proportionally.

As stated in the EIS, the proposed re-siting is not expected to significantly alter the duties of current staff at P.S. 112. P.S. 112 is expected to hire additional teachers during its re-siting as the total number of students enrolled in the school begins to increase in 2015-2016. The precise number of positions needed for the 2015-2016 school year would be determined once annual enrollment projections are released in the spring of 2015. District schools follow the hiring process consistent with the procedures set forth in the collective bargaining agreement between the DOE and UFT. The necessary P.S. 112 kindergarten teachers would maintain current assignments but report to building K768 beginning in 2015-2016 rather than to building K112 for regular teaching duties. In the event that P.S. 112 students being served in building K768 require special services, the necessary service providers may need to travel from building K112 to building K768 to cover the student mandate. Additional staff may work in both buildings, and the P.S. 112 leadership and staff will work to program appropriately.

Administrative staff and non-pedagogical positions at P.S. 112 may also be added as P.S. 112 grows to full scale in 2020-2021. Those decisions would be made at the school based on need and budgetary considerations.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes were made to the proposal