



Public Comment Analysis

Date: April 27, 2011

Topic: The Proposed Co-location of a New DOE School, Brooklyn Frontiers High School (15K423), with an Existing DOE School, Pacific High School (15K520), in School Building K520

Date of Panel Vote: April 28, 2011

Summary of Proposal

The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) is proposing to co-locate a new school, Brooklyn Frontiers High School (15K423, “Brooklyn Frontiers”), in school building K520 (“K520”), located at 112 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201, within the geographical confines of Community School District 15 (“District 15”). If approved, Brooklyn Frontiers would be co-located in building K520 with Pacific High School (15K520, “Pacific”), an existing transfer school. A “co-location” means that two or more school organizations are located in the same building and may share common spaces like auditoriums, libraries, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

In a separate Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) posted on March 3, 2011, the DOE has also proposed to phase out and eventually close Pacific. Pacific currently enrolls students who are classified as tenth, eleventh and twelfth graders based on their credit accumulation and serves students who are 17 years of age and older and who have already completed at least one year of high school with a minimum of 10 academic credits. If the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”) approves the proposal to phase out Pacific, the school would no longer admit new students after the end of this school year. Pacific would continue to serve students enrolled in the school until it completes phasing out in June 2012. Please refer to the EIS for more details about this proposal at <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/changes/brooklyn/Pacific>. In the event that the phase-out of Pacific is not approved, the DOE would re-examine the availability of space in the building and may, as appropriate, revise its proposal to co-locate Brooklyn Frontiers in K520. Such a proposal would be described in a revised EIS.

If this co-location proposal is approved, Brooklyn Frontiers would open in building K520 in September 2011 and would serve students in grade nine. Brooklyn Frontiers would gradually phase in to K520 by adding one grade level every year until it reaches its full grade span of 9-12 in 2014-2015.

The proposed co-location of Brooklyn Frontiers in building K520 is part of the DOE’s central goal to create new school options that will better serve future students and the community at

large. Brooklyn Frontiers would serve students who have been retained or held back two or more years in elementary or middle school and who are entering the ninth grade for the first time. Brooklyn Frontiers would strive to create a safe, supportive and rigorous learning community and prepare students for success in post-secondary education, careers and life. Students interested in applying to Brooklyn Frontiers must be between 15-16 years of age and entering the ninth grade for the first time. Interested students must have already participated in the High School Admissions Process in order to be eligible to apply to Brooklyn Frontiers for the 2011-2012 school year.

Brooklyn Frontiers would be co-located with Pacific in 2011-2012 as Pacific phases out. Long-term, Brooklyn Frontiers would be the only school organization housed in building K520. The K520 building has adequate capacity to accommodate Brooklyn Frontiers and Pacific (as it phases out) at full operational capacity. Once Brooklyn Frontiers completes its expansion and Pacific completes phasing out, the building, which has the capacity to serve 252 students, would serve approximately 225-250 students in grades 9-12 in 2014-2015. This would yield an approximate building utilization rate of 99% of target capacity.

The details of this proposal are available in an EIS which can be accessed here: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2010-2011/Apr282011Proposals>. Copies of the EIS are also available in the main office of Pacific.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing

A Joint Public Hearing regarding this proposal was held at K520 on April 12, 2011. At the hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 32 members of the public attended the hearing and 6 people spoke. Present at the meeting were: Chief Academic Officer Shael Polakow-Suransky; Staten Island/Brooklyn High Schools Superintendent Aimee Horowitz; Community School District 15 Superintendent Anita Skop; Community Education Council (“CEC”) 15 President Jim Devor; CEC 15 representative Mark Kolman; Pacific Principal Laurie Harriton; Pacific School Leadership Team (“SLT”) representative Laura Kramer; and Jenny Sobelman from the DOE Office of Public Affairs.

The proposal to phase out Pacific was also addressed at this hearing. The analysis of comments concerning the phase-out proposal can be found at <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2010-2011/Apr282011Proposals.htm>.

The following comments and remarks were made at the Joint Public Hearing:

1. A CEC representative stated that:
 - a. The DOE wants to phase out and close Pacific because it would mean that the DOE has one less school on the State’s Persistently Lowest Achieving (“PLA”) schools list.
 - b. The DOE’s replacement school may become a PLA school in three years, but it will receive a grace period of three years before it can be put on that list.

- c. Instead of actually helping schools, the DOE makes its statistics look better by closing poorly performing schools.
2. A commenter stated that the DOE should provide more guidance to Pacific rather than opening another school that will likely fail as well.
3. Multiple commenters stated that the replacement school will not fare significantly better than Pacific.

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

No written or oral comments were submitted to the DOE.

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

- In response to comments 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 2 and 3 related to the DOE’s strategy of closing failing schools and replacing them with new small schools: The DOE notes that it is striving to create a system of great schools in NYC. To accomplish this goal, the DOE has replaced 91 of the lowest-performing schools with 474 new schools. Of the 474 new schools, 365 are traditional public schools (including 25 transfer schools) and 109 are public charter schools. The DOE believes that replacing failing schools with new small schools is the most effective way to quickly turn around student achievement. In Brooklyn, the new schools on the Bushwick Campus had a graduation rate of 71.7% in 2009-2010—nearly 50 percentage points higher than the former Bushwick High School’s graduation rate of only 22.7% in 2002.

For a discussion on the rationale related to the DOE’s decision to phase out Pacific please refer to the Public Comment Analysis on the phase-out proposal which is available at <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2010-2011/Apr282011Proposals>.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to this proposal as a result of the public comments received.