



Public Comment Analysis

Date: April 27, 2011

Topic: The Proposed Temporary Re-siting and Co-location of a Portion of One Grade Level of an Existing School, P.S. 16 (24Q016), with Existing School P.S. 330 (24Q330) in Building Q269 for the 2011-2012 School Year

Date of Panel Vote: April 28, 2011

Summary of Proposal

P.S. 16 (24Q016, “P.S. 16”) is an existing elementary school that currently serves students in kindergarten through fifth grade in Building Q721 (“Q721”), located at 41-15 104th Street, Corona, NY 11369, in Community School District 24. P.S. 330 (24Q330, “P.S. 330”) is an existing elementary school that currently serves students in kindergarten and is temporarily located in Building Q269 (“Q269”), located at 86-37 53rd Avenue, Elmhurst, NY 11373, also in Community School District 24.

The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) is proposing to temporarily “re-site” and “co-locate” a portion of the fifth grade of P.S. 16 in Building Q269, where they would be “co-located” with P.S. 330 for the 2011-2012 school year. Q721 is 1.5 miles from Q269. A “re-siting” means students will attend classes in a different building than the one they have attended in previous years. 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.

P.S. 330 is a new zoned district elementary school that is temporarily sited in Q269 until it moves to its permanent site. P.S. 330 currently serves 209 students in kindergarten. In 2011-2012, P.S. 330 will expand to serve students in first grade, and the school will continue to expand one grade per year until it reaches “full-scale” in 2015-2016, when it will serve students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Several elementary schools in the Corona neighborhood of District 24 in Queens currently enroll more students than their target capacity levels. P.S. 16, in particular, is very overcrowded. During the 2009-2010 school year, high kindergarten enrollment at P.S. 16 resulted in average kindergarten class sizes which were one student over the UFT contracted class-size limit. During the 2010-2011 school year, to prevent the same issue, five sections of P.S. 16 fifth graders were re-sited for one year to another school building in Corona to relieve overcrowding.

Where possible, the DOE aims to utilize available space in other local school buildings to alleviate overcrowding. Building Q269 is expected to be underutilized in the 2011-2012 school year if this proposal is not implemented, and therefore it presents a good opportunity to relieve overcrowding at P.S. 16. Solutions for P.S. 16 overcrowding beyond the 2011-2012 school year are not within the scope of the proposal which the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”) is considering at this time.

The details of this proposal have been released in an Educational Impact Statement 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 offices of P.S. 16 and P.S. 330.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearings

Two joint public hearings regarding this proposal were held, one at P.S. 16 on April 7, 2011 and one at P.S. 330 on April 13, 2011. At the hearings, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal.

On April 7, approximately 40 members of the public attended the hearing and 3 people spoke. Present at the meeting were: District 24 Superintendent Madelene Chan; District 24 CEC members Peter Vercessi and Maria D’Amico; District 24 CEC President Nick Comaianni; P.S. 16 SLT members Danielle Coyne, Petita Castellanos, Silvia Martinez, Cristina Gonzalez and Maria Roa; P.S. 16 Assistant Principal Lisa Zuccalmaglio; P.S. 16 Principal Elaine Iodice; and CCSE member Maria Uruchima.

On April 13, approximately 10 members of the public attended the hearing and 4 people spoke. Present at the meeting were: District 24 Superintendent Madelene Chan; District 24 CEC members Lamgen Leon and Jeanne Forster; P.S. 16 SLT member Miriam Landi; P.S. 330 SLT member Regina Lorentz; P.S. 16 Assistant Principal Joan Weber; and P.S. 330 Principal Lashawna Harris.

The following comments and remarks were made at the joint public hearings:

1. Nick Comaianni, President of CEC 24, described the proposal as a temporary solution and asked for the community’s feedback.
2. Elaine Iodice, principal of P.S. 16, described her school’s enrollment growth and capacity and explained how overcrowded P.S. 16 is. She stated that the proposal to re-site a portion of P.S. 16’s fifth grade next year would provide P.S. 16 with breathing room.
3. Lisa Zuccalmaglio, one of P.S. 16’s assistant principals, stated that P.S. 16’s administration has discussed the proposal at length with teachers and parent representatives and decided that it represents the only viable way to continue providing full services to P.S. 16 students. She assured parents that the students annexed to Building Q269 would receive the same quality of education that they would receive in P.S. 16’s main building.

4. Marge Kolb, president of the District 24 President’s Council, expressed concern about the possibility of early bus pick-up times for annexed students. She pointed to other busing schedules in the district that require students to board a bus at 6:30am. Ms. Kolb also asked when new schools would be opened in District 24 and where they would be located. She encouraged parents to express their concerns around overcrowding to their local elected officials.
5. One speaker expressed concern about overcrowding in Corona and asked where students in Corona would be sent to play outside.
6. One parent of P.S. 16 students expressed support for the annexation process happening earlier this year than it did last year, but she asked how the students annexed to Building Q269 would be made to feel a part of the P.S. 16 community.
7. One speaker expressed concern about fifth graders from P.S. 16 riding on the same buses as kindergarteners and first graders from P.S. 330 and asked if separate buses would be provided for each of the schools. The speaker also asked if all of the students would gather together in the cafeteria after classes end, and if so, how the older students would be separated from the younger students.
8. One speaker expressed concern that she would be unable to reach P.S. 330 in the event of an emergency due to P.S. 330’s distance from P.S. 16. She asked if there were provisions for moving students to P.S. 16 during the school day in the case of emergencies. She also asked if P.S. 330’s cafeteria also serves as its art room and gym.
9. One speaker asked if her child would have to look for another school for first grade if he is currently in kindergarten at P.S. 330.
10. One speaker asked if the students from P.S. 16 would wear their own uniform or P.S. 330’s uniform.

The DOE received a comment at the Joint Public Hearing that did not directly relate to the proposal and therefore will not be addressed.

1. One speaker suggested that the DOE consider closing P.S. 330 and returning its students to their zoned schools.

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

The DOE did not receive any written or oral comments regarding this proposal.

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

With respect to the portions of comments 4 and 7 regarding busing to Building Q269 under this proposal, busing plans for the students served in Building Q269 would be developed by the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) in compliance with the guidelines that inform the development of all bus routes across the city. OPT guidelines provide that students in grades K-5 ride together on elementary school buses. However, given that most of the students annexed

from P.S. 16 live in a cluster around P.S. 16, it is possible that they will be served by a unique bus route separate from the students who attend P.S. 330. Should safety issues arise on any bus route, parents may contact OPT to request a transportation variance to provide alternate accommodations for their child or children. With respect to the comment concerning pick-up times, pick-up times are determined based on each school's start time. Buses are permitted to arrive at the school no earlier than 30 minutes before a school's start time and no later than 5 minutes after a school's start time. OPT develops the most efficient route to transport all qualifying students to the school. While a route may be no longer than 5 miles, pick-up times depend on a student's placement along the route as well as the average travel speed for the bus along the route.

With respect to the portion of comment 4 regarding the need for additional seats in District 24, there are currently five buildings in development scheduled to open in September 2014. These five buildings will collectively offer 3,008 seats.

With respect to comment 5 regarding the availability of outdoor play space to students in Corona, access to outdoor play spaces at P.S. 330 and P.S. 16 will not be impacted by this proposal. Currently, P.S. 16 has a schoolyard where students are taken during their lunch period and P.S. 330 students have access to a blacktop during their lunch period.

With respect to comment 6, the students annexed to Building Q269 will remain enrolled at P.S. 16. They will be taught by teachers from P.S. 16 who will travel with them to Building Q269 and they will attend classes with other students from P.S. 16. The P.S. 16 students served in Building Q269 will also have year-long access to P.S. 16's popular after-school Extracurricular Clubs program which, due to space and staffing constraints, is only offered for 12 weeks a year to students in P.S. 16's main building. P.S. 16's leadership will work to ensure that the students annexed to Building Q269 continue to feel invested in the culture of P.S. 16.

With respect to the portion of comment 7 regarding the dismissal process for students in Building Q269, as is the practice with all co-located school organizations in the city, the building council—including the principal of P.S. 330 and P.S. 16's on-site administrator—will work to coordinate a dismissal schedule that is mutually beneficial for both schools.

With respect to the portion of comment 8 regarding the distance between the P.S. 16 annex at Q269 and P.S. 16's main building, the DOE is unable to make provisions for transportation between the two buildings during the day. If parents of rising fifth graders believe it would be a hardship for their child to attend classes in the annex, they should speak with the P.S. 16 administration. A portion of P.S. 16's fifth grade students will remain in P.S. 16's main building and, given extenuating circumstances, parents may request to have their child be among that group.

With respect to the portion of comment 8 regarding the use of the multi-purpose room at P.S. 330, which can function as a cafeteria, gym and auditorium, P.S. 330 currently uses separate dedicated spaces for its physical education and art classes. P.S. 330 will share the multi-purpose room with P.S. 16 and the room will function as the cafeteria for both schools. P.S. 16 may elect to hold physical education classes in the multi-purpose room or in a reconfigured classroom, as is

P.S. 330's current practice. P.S. 16 will not have a dedicated art room but will be able to hold art classes in classrooms.

With respect to comment 9, students currently enrolled in P.S. 330 have the right to remain at P.S. 330 as the school expands one grade per year. Current kindergarten students at P.S. 330 will attend first grade at P.S. 330 next year.

With respect to comment 10, decisions around school uniforms for the P.S. 16 students served in Building Q269 will be made by the P.S. 16 administration. It should be noted that the portion of P.S. 16 served in Building Q269 will be completely independent from P.S. 330 with its own teachers, classrooms and administration. The P.S. 16 fifth graders currently annexed to Building Q307 with Pioneer Academy wear the uniforms required of Pioneer Academy's students. This is because Pioneer Academy has a strict uniform policy and their principal asked that the P.S. 16 students in the building wear the same uniforms so as not to create conflicting expectations for dress code in the building. P.S. 16's principal agreed with this proposal for the 2010-2011 school year and will work with P.S. 330's principal to determine the best policies for students attending at the new annex in Building Q269 next year.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to this proposal.