



Public Comment Analysis

Date: February 2, 2011

Topic: The Proposed Co-location of 11X508 with Christopher Columbus High School (11X415), Global Enterprise High School (11X541), Collegiate Institute for Math and Science (11X288), Astor Collegiate Academy (11X299), Pelham Preparatory Academy (11X542), and a District 75 High School Inclusion Program (P010X@Columbus) in School Building X415

Date of Panel Vote: February 3, 2011

Summary of Proposal

The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) proposes to co-locate 11X508, a new high school, in school building X415 (“X415”) located at 925 Astor Avenue, Bronx, NY 10469, within the geographical confines of Community School District 11. If this proposal is approved, 11X508 would be co-located with five existing high schools: Christopher Columbus High School (11X415, “Columbus”), Global Enterprise High School (11X541, “Global Enterprise”), Collegiate Institute for Math and Science (11X288, “Collegiate Institute”), Astor Collegiate Academy (11X299, “Astor Collegiate”), Pelham Preparatory Academy (11X542, “Pelham Prep”), and a District 75 school’s high school inclusion program (“P010X@Columbus”). P010X students are enrolled in Columbus’ general education classes, and, depending on their individual needs, receive Special Education Teacher Support Services (“SETSS”). X415 also houses a Young Adult Borough Center (“YABC”) at Columbus. 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. The YABC program X415 would not be impacted by the co-location of 11X508. The educational impact statement (“EIS”) describing this proposal was published on December 20, 2010 and is available at the following link: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2010-2011/Feb32011Proposals>. Hard copies of the EIS are also available in the main offices of the schools located in X415.

In two separate EISs published on December 20, 2010, the DOE also proposed to gradually phase out and eventually close Global Enterprise and Columbus High School due to their chronic low performance. As part of the replacement strategy for Global Enterprise and Columbus, the DOE is proposing to phase in two new district high schools, 11X508 and 11X509, in the X415 building beginning in 2011-2012. The EISs describing all of these proposals can also be found at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2010-2011/Feb32011Proposals>

In the event that the phase-out of Global Enterprise and/or Columbus is not approved, the DOE would re-examine the availability of space in the building, and may, as appropriate, revise its proposals to co-locate 11X508 and/or 11X509 in X415.

In 2010-2011, the total enrollment for all schools in the building is projected to be 3,039, which would yield a utilization rate of 99%. This means that the building is nearly fully utilized. If the proposals to phase-out Columbus and co-locate 11X508 are approved, in 2014-2015, once Columbus and P010X@Columbus have completed its phase out and 11X508 has completed its expansion, the building would serve approximately 2,200-2,450 students in grades 9-12, which would yield a building utilization rate of 81% of target capacity. If the proposals to phase-out Global Enterprise and co-locate 11X509 are also approved, building X415 would serve approximately 2,150-2,400 students in grades 9-12 in 2014-2015, at which point Columbus and Global Enterprise would have completed their phase out and the two new schools would have completed their expansions. This would yield an estimated building utilization rate of 79%.

The proposed co-location of 11X508 is part of the DOE's central goal to create new school options that will better serve future students and the community at large. The new school would open during the 2011-2012 school year and is expected to reach full-scale in 2014-2015, serving approximately 400-450 students in grades nine through twelve.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing

A joint public hearing regarding this proposal was held at X415 on January 20, 2011. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 340 members of the public attended the hearing, approximately 35 people spoke and approximately 36 questions were submitted. Present at the meeting were District 11 Community Education Council ("CEC") member Petra Poleon; Columbus Principal and School Leadership Team ("SLT") member Lisa Fuentes; Pelham Prep SLT member Theresa Garcia; Collegiate Math and Science Principal Estelle Hans; Astor Academy Principal Sandra Burgos; P010X Principal and SLT member Barbara Hanson; Citywide Council on High Schools ("CCHS") member Constance Asieudo; Panel for Educational Policy ("PEP") member Monica Major; State Senator Jeff Klein; Ritchie Torres, a representative from Council member James Vacca's office; Deputy Chancellor Santiago Taveras; Superintendent Geraldine Taylor-Brown; and Executive Director of School Programs and Partnerships Gregg Bethel. Global Enterprise Principal Michelle Joseph committed that an SLT member would be present; however, none attended and did not provide notice that they would not attend.

The proposal to phase-out Columbus was also addressed at this hearing. The analysis of comments concerning that proposal can be found at:
<http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/changes/bronx/Columbus>

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

1. Columbus Principal Lisa Fuentes and members of the SLT made a presentation about the history of Christopher Columbus High School, which opened 72 years ago in 1939, and presented an “alternative proposal” to convert the school into a charter high school.
2. Multiple commenters were under the misimpression that the DOE proposes to site a charter school in X415 and expressed concern for the students in the community who would be rejected due to the new charter school’s selective screening process. They fear that there will be no place in the new charter school for students who do not excel academically.
3. A Columbus teacher shared a list of several written questions:
 - a. How can a limited unscreened program provide the supports to all kinds of students that Columbus currently provides?
 - b. The new school is supposed to “offer new educational opportunities that better support student needs.” Will it be supporting non-diploma bound students, work study and internships, CTE training, ESL classes for all levels, ESL content area classes, art, music, AP, leadership, 15:1 classes; 12:1:1 classes, 12:1 classes, hearing support services and CTT? Will it follow IEPs as they are written or re-evaluate to meet programmatic needs?

The DOE received two comments at the Joint Public Hearing which did not directly relate to the proposal.

4. A comment made reference to the new Chancellor’s inexperience as an example of the education system being “under attack” and that millions of funds won in a lawsuit are being misguided by “our new governor” to private charter schools.
5. A comment was made that if the new Chancellor’s comment about “birth control” was said by a teacher, that teacher would be removed from the classroom, as per Chancellor’s Regulation A421 (defining verbal abuse).

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

No written or oral comments were received during the public comment period for this proposal.

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

With regard to comment 1, Principal Lisa Fuentes proposed to convert Columbus into a charter school rather than phase it out and replace it with a new DOE school. The process for a school to be come a charter school is as follows: a school submits an application to the NYC Department of Education Charter School Office. This office then reviews the application, and if the

application demonstrates a strong capacity for operating a high quality charter school, the applicant would be invited to a panel interview. If approved, the City would recommend to the Board of Regents to grant the charter to the school. The proposal to convert the school to a charter school must also be approved by a majority of the parents of current students at the school. The DOE sent Columbus a charter application in January 2011. At this time, Columbus has not yet completed the charter application or returned it to the DOE Office of Charter Schools. If the PEP approves the phase-out proposal for Columbus, Columbus would still be eligible to convert to a charter as it phases out, if the charter application is approved.

However, as discussed in the EIS describing the proposed phase-out of Columbus, the DOE feels that phasing out the school, rather than converting it to a charter school, best serves the community.

With regard to comment 2, currently there are no plans to co-locate a charter school in the X415 building. The DOE has proposed to phase in a new district school, 11X508, to replace the seats lost at Columbus. In addition, the DOE has separately proposed to phase out Global Enterprise in the X415 building and to replace seats lost at Global Enterprise with a new non-charter school, 11X509.

Admission to 11X508 would be open to any New York City student through the High School Admissions Process. The school is proposed to have a Limited Unscreened admissions method, giving priority to students who demonstrate an interest in the school by attending an Information Session or Open House event or visiting the school's exhibit at any one of the High School Fairs. 11X508 will also offer priority to Bronx residents and students.

11X509 is a new, non charter, high school that targets English Language Learners. The school will participate in the High School Admissions Process and will have a screened admissions method. The screening criteria are not academic; rather the school is intended to serve English Language Learners who have been in the country for less than 4 years.

Non-District 75 high school students with IEPs are admitted in the same manner as general education students. Schools are expected to create programs that meet the needs of all students ensuring the greater exposure to a general education curriculum. Therefore, placement for students with IEPs is the same process as that for general education students.

Comments 3(a) and (b) concern the students to be served and the programming to be provided by 11X508. As discussed above, admission to 11X508 would be open to any New York City student through the High School Admissions Process, and the school is proposed to have a Limited Unscreened admissions method, and will offer priority to Bronx residents and students. The specific academic programming to be offered by 11X508 has not yet been determined. There is a New Schools Fair on February 12 and 13 where students can learn about all New Schools opening across the City in September 2011. There will be a New Schools Directory that will be available in Borough Enrollment Offices and on the DOE website where students interested in the school can receive additional information.

Non-District 75 high school students with IEPs are admitted in the same manner as general education students. Schools are expected to create programs that meet the needs of all students ensuring the greater exposure to a general education curriculum. Therefore, placement for students with IEPs is the same process as that for general education students. 11X508 will provide all mandated services for ELL students and students with IEPs.

Changes Made to the Proposal

There have been no changes made to the proposal.