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Chancellor

Public Comment Analysis

Date: June 25, 2012

Topic: The Proposed Expansion of the Co-Location of South Bronx Classical Charter School (84X346) with the School of Performing Arts (12X217) and Entrada Academy (12X384) in Building X116, Beginning in 2013-2014

Date of Panel Vote: June 26, 2012

Summary of Proposal

The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) is proposing to expand the grades served by South Bronx Classical Charter School (84X346, “Bronx Classical”) in school building X116 (“X116”), from kindergarten through fifth grades to kindergarten through eighth grades. Building X116 is located at 977 Fox Street, Bronx, New York 10459, in Community School District 12 (“District 12”).

Bronx Classical, an existing public charter school currently serving students in kindergarten through fifth grades in X116, has been approved to expand to serve kindergarten through eighth grades. If this proposal is approved by the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”), Bronx Classical will begin serving sixth grade in X116 in 2013-2014 and will add seventh and eighth grades in the subsequent two years, thereby completing the expanded co-location in the 2015-2016 school year.

Bronx Classical is currently co-located in X116 with School of Performing Arts (12X217, “Performing Arts”), an existing district middle school that serves students in sixth through eighth grades, and Entrada Academy (12X384, “Entrada Academy”), also an existing district middle school that serves students in sixth through eighth grades. A “co-location” means that two or more school organizations are located in the same building and may share common spaces like auditoriums, gymnasiums, libraries, and cafeterias. Building X116 also provides space to three community-based organizations (“CBOs”): the Beacon program, Simpson Street Development Association (“SISDA”), and Montefiore Medical Center. The DOE anticipates that the Beacon program, SISDA, and Montefiore Medical Center will not lose any space or reduce the services offered as a result of this proposal.

Bronx Classical was originally authorized under its charter from the DOE to serve students in kindergarten through fifth grades. The school applied to and was approved by the DOE’s Charter School Office on December 14, 2011, and the State Education Department (“SED”) at its February

13-14, 2012 meeting, to expand to serve middle school grades. Bronx Classical sought this expansion in response to families' requests for a middle school.

Bronx Classical, whose mission is to prepare kindergarten through fifth-grade students to excel in college-preparatory high schools, currently admits students through a charter lottery application, giving preference to students who reside in District 12.

According to the 2010-2011 Enrollment, Capacity, Utilization Report (the "Blue Book"), X116 has the capacity to serve 1,321 students. Currently, the building serves 981 students, yielding a target utilization rate of 74%. This means that the building is underutilized and that the space could be used more efficiently to serve more students. Bronx Classical is serving 322 students in kindergarten through fifth grades in the 2011-2012 school year. In the 2012-2013 school year, Bronx Classical—and the X116 building as a whole—is projected to serve a comparable number of students as it is serving in 2011-2012.

If this proposal is approved, Bronx Classical will begin its grade expansion in the X116 building during the 2013-2014 school year. In 2013-2014, the first year of implementation, Bronx Classical will serve a total of approximately 330-370 kindergarten through sixth-grade students in X116. In the 2015-2016 school year, the third and final year of the proposed expansion, Bronx Classical will serve approximately 340-430 kindergarten through eighth-grade students in X116. At this time, the projected target utilization rate of building X116 is 77-88%, which means there is sufficient space to accommodate all three schools at scale.

This proposal is not anticipated to have an impact on the admissions processes, enrollment, instructional programming, partnerships, or extra-curricular offerings of Entrada Academy or School of Performing Arts.

The details of this proposal have been released in an Educational Impact Statement ("EIS") and Building Utilization Plan ("BUP") which can be accessed here:
<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2011-2012/June2012Proposals.htm>

Copies of the EIS and BUP are also available in the main offices of Entrada Academy, School of Performing Arts, and Bronx Classical.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing

A Joint Public Hearing regarding this proposal was held at the Bronx Lighthouse Charter School building on June 20, 2012.¹ At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. Approximately 18 members of the public attended the hearing, and 3 people spoke. Also present at the meeting were: Myrna Rodríguez, District 12 Community Superintendent; Socorro Díaz, Principal of Entrada Academy; Thomasina Moore, representing Entrada Academy's School Leadership Team; Maiysha Etienne, Principal of School of Performing Arts; Marisol Rozon, representing the School of Performing Arts' School Leadership Team; Lester Long, Principal of South Bronx Classical Charter School; Gabrielle Mosquera, Keisha Womack, and Rosa Fernández

¹ Due to a water issue in building X116, the location of the hearing was changed to the Bronx Lighthouse Charter School building, located a few blocks away from X116. Students and parents were notified of this change though a letter backpacked home with every student. In addition, a DOE staff member was stationed at X116 to direct parents and students to the new location.

from the Office of Portfolio Management. The president of CEC 12, Winifred Coulton, confirmed that she would attend the hearing but due to illness, was unable to be present.

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

1. Two commenters, including the principal of Bronx Classical, spoke in favor of the proposal. They said that the expansion would benefit their students as they would be able to stay at the school through the eighth grade. The principal mentioned that the expansion will start in two years (2013-2014), thus allowing the schools in the building ample time to prepare.
2. Superintendent Myrna Rodríguez, speaking on behalf of CEC 12, said that the CEC representatives support the expansion of Bronx Classical.
3. The Entrada Academy parent coordinator expressed concern about the facilities. He said that the building has poor air circulation and several classrooms have non-working air conditioners and no windows. He further stated that he supports the co-location and looks forward to working with all parents.

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

The DOE received no written or oral comments via the dedicated e-mail address, voicemail, and website for this proposal.

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

Comments 1 and 2, as well as a portion of comment 3, support the proposal and therefore do not require a response.

With regard to the portion of comment 3 concerning problems with the facilities: While this comment does not speak to the proposed expansion of the co-location of Bronx Classical, the DOE notes that it is currently working with all principals in X116 to determine what facilities updates might be needed in the building.

Changes Made to this Proposal

No changes have been made to this proposal.