

October 31, 2014

Dear Mayor de Blasio –

At your request, this spring and summer we convened a working group comprised of education leaders and experts from New York City’s district and charter schools, advocacy organizations, foundations, community councils, faith-based organizations, parent groups, labor organizations, elected officials and the real estate sector. The School Space Working Group gathered to share their expertise, make recommendations, and put on paper values and principles that should guide space utilization and planning moving forward.

The School Space Working Group met regularly between April and August for a total of eight two hour sessions. Additionally, City Hall and DOE staff were frequently in communication with working group members between sessions, soliciting feedback and additional ideas.

There are many factors that will impact space and capacity across the system moving forward, including the administration’s priority to reduce overcrowding and remove Transportable Classroom Units (TCUs), the mayor and chancellor’s education initiatives like pre-Kindergarten and Community Schools, and district needs for new schools and programs. An additional consideration is the passage in March 2014 of a new state law that requires the City to provide space in public school buildings for new or expanding charter schools that request it, or to contribute to the cost of private space. This law will have at least some, possibly significant, impact on space availability going forward.

The group focused its efforts on developing recommendations to improve current and future co-locations. The narrowed scope was an effort to develop a set of meaningful recommendations in the limited time before the beginning of the new school year. It has become the reality that the majority of schools in New York City – two-thirds of them, in fact – are co-located. These schools must address the challenges of sharing space as part of their daily existence.

The recommendations presented in this paper are the result of that work. These recommendations come from a diverse set of stakeholders and, while there was not consensus on every recommendation, there was broad overall agreement born from a respectful process.

We believe the recommendations in this paper can have a positive impact on students across New York City and we are grateful to the working group for the time and energy they invested in this work.

Sincerely,

Richard Buery, Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Recommendations

Members of the working group make the following recommendations, all of which are explained in more detail below.

- Take Extra Steps to Support Space Requirements of Students with Special Needs
- Increase Transparency and Community Engagement
- Support Co-Located Schools and Campuses
- Be More Creative in the Use of Space and Time to Ease Space-Related Challenges in Schools

By tackling the space challenges that go hand-in-hand with the current configuration of public schools in New York City and the mayor and chancellor’s vision for schools moving forward, the working group believes the administration has an opportunity to not only rebuild trust but also better use space for improving schools and increasing opportunities for students.

The goals reflected in all the recommendations apply to both district and charter schools, though implementation will vary based on the different governance structures and regulations associated with each. By state law, charter schools are generally exempt from laws, rules, regulations or policies governing public or private schools other than those requirements relating to health and safety, civil rights, and student assessment requirements.¹ It is the working group’s hope that all schools work together to implement these recommendations.

In the recommendations, the working group makes reference to schools, campuses and school buildings. In cases of co-location, the working group defines a school as a single, independent educational organization, not a physical space; multiple schools can exist on one campus or in one building.

TAKE EXTRA STEPS TO SUPPORT THE SPACE REQUIREMENTS OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Members of the working group chose to begin their recommendations with this section to reinforce their strong belief that our most vulnerable students, including students with disabilities, English Language Learners, students with mental health needs, and students who are performing well below grade level, should continue to be a top priority for this administration. The administration has an obligation to use space to meet students’ needs and to keep kids at the center of all space decisions.

Students with special needs – regardless of their classroom setting - who receive support services like counseling, small group reading instruction, speech and language support services, physical therapy and occupational therapy outside of their classrooms often require additional space to receive those services. Additionally, students in programs with lower student teacher ratios, in District 75 programs or self-contained classes in community schools, require somewhat more and more-specialized space than their general education peers in larger classes.

¹ New York State Education Law 2854(1)(b)

Space allocated to District 75 schools has been impacted by some recent co-locations. Space changes can be disconcerting to any student, but may be particularly disruptive to students with a range of special education needs profound enough to require supports through District 75. Space changes can also be particularly challenging for certain members of this student population because of the need to ensure that DOE buildings are physically accessible for people with mobility impairments; many DOE buildings were constructed before federal requirements for accessibility for people with disabilities were issued. Members of the working group felt strongly that this vulnerable group should be shielded to the greatest extent possible from upsets that may be caused by forced site changes.

The Department of Education is currently convening principals of all grade levels and school models in focus groups to review the Instructional Footprint² and its application. These groups have been discussing the unique needs of their individual school models and their student populations and are shaping suggested modifications to the Instructional Footprint. Recommendations from those focus groups will be made later this year. Members of the working group commend the DOE for engaging school leaders in decisions about space strategy.

In order to best use space to help students with special needs succeed, members of the School Space Working Group recommend that the DOE:

1. Continue to build in flexibility to the Instructional Footprint, ensuring that all schools have adequate space to provide all necessary special education supports and services to students with disabilities in appropriate spaces within their school buildings.
2. Minimize movement between buildings for students in District 75 programs and make the physical accessibility of DOE buildings for people with mobility disabilities a consideration in terms of planning, resource allocation, and need assessment related to space.
3. Utilize more sophisticated data to identify space needs for students with disabilities, including numbers of students receiving special education supports and related services and the space needs (breakout rooms, ground floor requirements, etc.) that accompany their Individualized Education Program (IEP). This will help schools and communities more accurately predict space needs in schools.

² The Enrollment-Capacity-Utilization Report (The Blue Book) remains the city-wide standard for assessing capacity within NYC DOE buildings; the NYC DOE Instructional Footprint (The Footprint) is an instructional translation of the information in the Blue Book, and is meant to assist school managers and staff in efficient programming of space. Key stakeholders throughout the Department of Education including the School Construction Authority, the Division of Portfolio Planning, Office of Space Planning, the Division of Accountability, Performance & Support, along with the Division of Special Education and school Principals were involved in developing these parameters. The Footprint is a tool to be used by all stakeholders in the analysis and assessment of space usage in NYC DOE buildings. In co-location arrangements, the parameters outlined in The Footprint should serve as a guideline for making decisions about the allocation of space, while empowering building occupants to make decisions that best meet the needs of all students in the building. The Footprint represents a baseline for space allocation and, where possible, additional space should be allocated.

4. Allocate space for mental health services for students in schools and ensure that such space is appropriate in size and design for the needs of the school or campus community. The area used for these services should include confidential space for client interviews, group sessions, school staff consultations, and meetings of mental health providers. They should be designed with features that support patient privacy, increase safety, foster family involvement, and reduce stress. This is a key piece of the Community Schools model.

INCREASE TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Schools are valuable neighborhood assets that not only support, but actually create and sustain community. The communities may be the families who choose to live nearby so that their children and grandchildren may attend the school, the businesses throughout the region that hire student interns, or the local businesses and restaurants whose customers are students and school staff. All have an interest in a school's success and all are contributors.

Schools need to be places that offer a wide array of services to address individual academic, social and emotional needs of students; communities are crucial sources of information and support in this effort. We must include community voice and we must engage in comprehensive planning.

Community needs, aspirations and assets must be a core consideration in school space decisions. Whenever possible, school design should incorporate the assets of a community (for example, CBOs, youth development organizations, health clinics and civic organizations), to enhance student experience, meet student needs, promote positive youth development and contribute to strengthening communities and families. Schools should be the anchor of neighborhoods, particularly at the elementary and middle school level and draw on the rich assets of New York City regardless of their location.

Communities have a rich and varied knowledge that can and should inform and improve decisions about school sitings and building utilization. Communities bring new skills, perspectives and resources to the challenge of educating students that, combined with the expertise of educators, create schools that are capable of better serving students and their academic, social and emotional needs. In addition, communities bring a sense of urgency and relevance that needs to be fully captured in the decision-making process. The DOE should include students, parents and community groups in the planning process as early as possible.

Members of the working group encourage the administration to make the school siting process more accessible, transparent, and user-friendly for all families and communities, take their input seriously before decisions are made, and continue to engage them after schools have been sited. The DOE should make translation services available at all meetings so all parents can participate.

Under Chancellor Fariña, the DOE has already begun this work, committing to include more stakeholders from school communities in dialogue around proposed changes to school utilization and to provide parents with more information about co-locations. Specifically, the DOE has pledged to do the following:

- Prior to posting a proposal related to a significant change in school building utilization which will result in a new or extended co-location, the DOE will conduct a walkthrough of impacted building(s) led by a Deputy Chancellor or other Senior Leadership representative. The DOE will also invite the president of the PA/PTA (or, alternatively, another appropriate parent representative from the school), a parent representative from the CEC, and a representative from the PEP. Following the walkthrough, the Deputy Chancellor or Senior Leadership representative will engage with the impacted School Leadership Team(s), Principal(s) and CEC and PEP members in attendance to discuss the proposal, rationale, and reaction to the proposal.
- After a proposal has been posted, and before the legally required Joint Public Hearing (JPH), the DOE will host a community meeting to obtain additional community feedback so that potential amendments or revisions to the proposal can be made before the JPH to address concerns.
- If and when a new co-location proposal has been approved by the Panel for Educational Policy, the DOE will host a meeting for the school community to discuss next steps regarding implementation of the proposal. This will provide parents and educators with an opportunity to raise logistical concerns and identify additional solutions to space sharing within their building. The working group believes the DOE should encourage all impacted schools to participate in this meeting.

To create an even more inclusive and transparent process that maximizes community input to achieve success for students, members of the School Space Working Group recommend that the DOE:

5. Be more transparent about how school siting decisions are designed to improve the educational experience and outcomes of children. The rationale for a school placement or the creation of a new school or program should be clearly articulated in an Educational Impact Statement or other appropriate document. The DOE should articulate the impact it hopes to have on student outcomes through its placement decision (for example, by placing a given school/ program in a given building, we hope to increase CTE training, improve graduation rates, address special education needs, or test a new innovative strategy).
6. Respond to community input and feedback in a way that shows respect for the value of communities' knowledge. For example, at the Joint Public Hearing, representatives from the Department of Education should directly address the questions and concerns raised during community meetings held as part of the Chancellor's enhanced engagement process.
7. Begin analysis of the written comments submitted online during the public comment period required by Chancellor's Regulation A-190 as soon as comments are posted; the DOE should begin sharing that analysis with members of the Panel for Educational Policy well in advance of the 24-hour response window mandated by state law.³

³ Chancellor's Regulation A-190 governs significant changes in school utilization and procedures for the management of school buildings housing more than one school. It is available at <http://docs.nycenet.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-341/A-190%20FINAL.pdf>

8. Make information about changes in school building utilization easier for community members to access and understand by:
 - Providing summaries of new Educational Impact Statements and Building Utilization Plans that are concise (1-2 pages), clear (free of jargon and acronyms) and inclusive of the DOE's goals, rationale, and aspirations for selecting and siting a school or program;
 - Making the summaries available in languages and formats appropriate for the community;
 - Holding public hearings related to building utilization decisions only during the school year;
 - Distributing the summaries to teachers and school staff from both existing and new/co-locating schools; and
 - Posting a visual timeline of the A-190 process on the DOE and/or PEP website.
9. Hold an annual campus-wide space meeting, hosted jointly by all co-located principals or their designees, every year on every campus. This will create a forum where students, parents, and other community stakeholders can have input on the use of space in their school and the other schools with which they are co-located.
10. Begin the process earlier - encourage Community Education Councils (CECs) to conduct community engagement meetings in the spring before school siting decisions are made to gather input from students, parents, and other community members on the needs of individual community school districts and use that information to inform the DOE's school siting process.

SUPPORT CO-LOCATED SCHOOLS, CAMPUSES AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS OR SERVICES

To make a co-location work well, the principals of all schools on a campus must invest time and resources in co-location-related work, taking time away from the other work of a school, especially instructional support. In a June 2014 report, the Campaign for Educational Equity noted that in some co-located schools, principals spend a significant amount of time on building and co-location issues. Additionally, because all school leaders want what's best for their school, decisions about space can become personal and emotional.

It's difficult to manage all of the moving parts involved in sharing spaces within a physical plant, including cost sharing, staffing, managing equipment and repairs, and scheduling. As a result, resources may be used inefficiently and inequitably on many campuses.

Additionally, the organizational structure of the DOE has not been set up well to support campuses that are struggling with co-location challenges. There is a feeling that principals have largely been left on their own to work out space issues in their building; many working group members noted that enforcement of space sharing agreements can be challenging. The Department of Education's current protocol sends schools to networks for support in resolving space allocation and shared space disputes, but on some campuses each school works with a

different network or Charter Management Organization (CMOs)⁴, making resolving disputes through those channels difficult.

In early 2014, the DOE announced the creation of Campus Squads to support campus principals in implementing best practices that create a safe and supportive learning campus environment for all students within a building. Campus Squads also aim to help principals seek opportunities to increase campus collaboration and resource sharing amongst schools in an effort to maximize instructional opportunities for all students.

An additional layer of resources for district schools co-located with charter schools comes from the DOE's facilities matching funds policy. Beginning in 2010, State law requires that in all co-located buildings where more than \$5,000 is spent on capital improvements or facility upgrades to accommodate a charter school co-location, improvements or upgrades in an equal amount must be made for each non-charter school within the public school building.

The working group believes that there are many additional opportunities for the DOE to support the development of strong relationships between principals, teachers, and students across co-located schools. There are numerous benefits to proactively investing in the development of healthy interpersonal relationships on a campus, including increased opportunities for collaboration, decreased time spent on conflict resolution, and the creation of a school community that a neighborhood can unify around and take pride in. Some examples of schools that demonstrate the range of possibilities for effective and positive co-locations are available in Appendix A.

It is the responsibility of the DOE and of school leaders first and foremost to ensure that every individual school in the system provides a high-quality education to students and is rooted in its own identity. But improving the health of a campus can make each individual school stronger and, thus, must also be a priority of the DOE.

To create stronger campuses that function to promote student success, members of the School Space Working Group recommend that the DOE:

11. Establish clear guidelines for structured, supported interactions between the leaders and communities of schools and programs that have been approved for co-location. These meetings should begin soon after the PEP has approved a new co-location and should be designed to build trusting relationships between school leaders, teachers, staff, students,

⁴ As of spring 2010, all district schools receive their instructional and operational support from a team called a network. Network teams are made up primarily of educators and professionals who bring expertise in specific areas such as instructional support, special education, school budgets, attendance, and student safety. Network teams support schools both in the field and from their offices around the city.

Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) are non-profits that operate multiple charter schools. They provide wide-ranging support including management and coaching of school leaders, professional development, staff recruitment, and fundraising. Charter schools do not have to be affiliated with a CMO or network.

families and other members of schools' communities, develop baseline expectations around safety on a campus, create structures to ensure frequent communication between schools, and identify ways to preserve and celebrate each school's individual identity and culture while fostering a harmonious campus environment. As always, ensure that there are translation resources available for parents and community members at all meetings.

12. Create a Guidebook to Effective Co-Location. The Guide should include strategies to increase equitable resource sharing on campus and reduce the time principals spend on campus issues. For example, it should include guidelines for entrance announcements and the use of the public announcement systems, models of successful Building Council structures and standardized templates for Building Council minutes, and information about grants co-located schools are eligible to apply for together.
13. Provide professional development tools and opportunities for Building Councils⁵ on conflict resolution, negotiation, effective meeting facilitation, and campus operations. Ensure that all principals new to co-located buildings are aware of and have easy access to these resources.
14. Establish a clear process for resolving impasses among co-located schools. For disputes on campus that cannot be resolved by the Building Council or through intervention and support from Campus Squads, appoint an arbiter who can make a final, binding decision on the issue. The arbiter should not be affiliated with networks or other support organizations, unless all schools on a campus are affiliated with the same support organization. Issues should be quickly resolved.
15. In new co-locations where a Building Utilization Plan⁶ isn't required, create shared space agreements that propose which rooms will be used by each school in the first year of the co-location, throughout the phase-in of a new school as its enrollment increases each year, and finally at scale. This will provide co-located principals with a baseline they can use to facilitate conversation and resolve conflict. The shared space agreements should include a plan for potential use of shared spaces. It is crucial that Building Councils have the opportunity to revise, amend and update space plans based on the needs of the schools.

⁵ School leaders on all co-located campuses must establish and actively participate in a Building Council, a structure for administrative decision-making for issues impacting all schools in the building. The Building Council is responsible for resolving all issues related to the smooth daily operation of all schools in the building and the safety of the students they serve.

⁶ When the Chancellor proposes to close a school or make any significant change in school utilization he or she shall prepare an educational impact statement ("EIS"). For any proposal to locate or co-locate a charter school in an existing public school building, an EIS must also include a building utilization plan (BUP), which must include information about the allocation and sharing of classroom and administrative space between the charter and non-charter school(s), a proposal for the collaborative usage of shared resources and spaces between the charter school and the non-charter schools, justification of the feasibility of the proposed allocations and schedules, building safety and security, communication strategies to be used by the co-located schools; and collaborative decision-making strategies to be used by the collocated schools.

16. In co-locations, consider giving principals, schools, and/or campuses additional resources to reduce their administrative workload, recognizing that the considerable additional work required to manage sharing space in a co-location takes time away from principals' activities that support instruction.
17. Develop a system for identifying, monitoring, and addressing high-risk school co-locations. The working group defines co-locations as high-risk if they include a school:
 - In crisis – for example, one with unstable leadership, high staff turnover, safety issues and high incident rates, or other similar concerns identified by superintendents or charter authorizers.
 - Viewed as a “bad neighbor” by the schools with which it shares space – for example, one that resists efforts to collaborate, encourages divisiveness in a community, or publicly disparages its co-located schools.
18. Assist principals in identifying ways in which sharing a campus can increase and enhance learning opportunities for students. Examples include the ability of high schools to offer advanced academics such as Advanced Placement courses or multiple foreign languages, or any school to offer common extracurricular programming whether during the school day where feasible or before and after school, on weekends, and during school vacations. Shared programming could include specific programs, services and trips aimed at opening new arenas for student experience, sustaining a positive campus culture, and building student skills and college and career readiness. It was important to some members of the working group to note that it should be a priority to first help individual schools develop a strong, coherent instructional program, one that provides students with a personalized learning environment conducive to academic and emotional success.
19. Develop fiscal rules and instruments to allow schools to share resources, enabling small co-located schools to have access to resources they would have insufficient numbers of students to afford alone. The Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) has a system in place to facilitate communications and shared costs among co-located schools that form a campus-wide athletic team. Each campus athletic program designates a PSAL Principal to act as the external leader; the PSAL Principal submits new team requests and is designated as the receiver of funding for the team. The Department of Education should create similar systems to ease the burden of sharing staff such as art, music, foreign language, and Advanced Placement teachers, librarians, school aides, after school staff, and community coordinators on a co-located campus.
20. Celebrate successful campuses and use them as models for improving co-locations across the system. The Department could do this by publishing case studies that highlight examples of best practices used by co-located schools, awarding a prize to campuses that do co-locations well, and by sharing strategies for establishing and maintaining successful co-located campuses through the Learning Partners program.

BE MORE CREATIVE IN THE USE OF SPACE AND TIME TO EASE SPACE-RELATED CHALLENGES IN SCHOOLS

Many students at schools across the city – both single-sited and co-located – eat lunch at very early or very late hours and find that there is limited social space in school buildings in which they can gather. Some schools have difficulty complying with state regulations in physical education, science, the arts, or other subjects, in part because of space challenges. More than a third of schools in the city are overcrowded. Related services for some students with disabilities are provided in hallways; some schools identify insufficient space to test students with modifications.

Compounding the space problems inherent to New York City is the sense that current implementation practices for co-locations may create inefficiencies. Different schools on the same campus rarely share space like libraries, cafeterias, and gymnasiums at the same time and not all principals and other administrators have the expertise to program their schedules for maximum efficiency.

Moreover, the numbers, formulas, and assumptions the DOE and SCA use to make space decisions could be more accurate, making it difficult at times for the public to trust the appropriateness of those decisions. For example, a June 2014 Class Size Matters report found that the published count of students in TCUs did not include thousands of students from 47 schools who took courses in these units.

Additionally, there is a huge space requirement associated with the mayor and chancellor's educational priorities. In just one example, to make pre-Kindergarten truly universal, the city will have to add 2,000 additional classrooms in public schools and community-based settings.⁷ All of these factors create challenges around time and space in schools.

To ease challenges around space and time in co-located schools, members of the School Space Working Group recommend that the DOE:

21. Recognize that scheduling in co-located schools requires substantial technical expertise and creativity. Schools must balance the need for their own identity through the effective use of contiguous space within a building with the need to share communal resources such as bathrooms, cafeterias and laboratories. Develop principals' capacity to successfully lead the planning and adoption of student and teacher schedules that serve school-wide learning goals and the special needs of specific subgroups of students, allow for teacher collaboration within and across co-located schools, foster a positive student culture, and maximize space efficiency which supports learning.
22. Provide principals with scheduling tools and samples of daily and school-year schedules, including options for schedules and calendars that span beyond the standard school day and year. In co-located schools, provide Building Councils with multiple examples of

⁷ Ready to Launch: New York City's Implementation Plan for Free, High-Quality, Full-Day Universal Pre-Kindergarten. January 2014. Page 12.

scheduling options for shared spaces like auditoriums, gymnasiums, and cafeterias to give principals flexibility to create student and teacher programs based on instructional goals and students' needs, not shared space.

23. Engage the office of enrollment in work with middle and high school principals to develop and enforce reasonable caps on enrollment. These caps should work to mitigate overcrowding, which negatively impacts students, and prevent schools from receiving inappropriately high concentrations of high-need students.
24. Support principals to responsibly use administrative space for themselves and others in the school in different ways. For example, many main offices in schools are as large as – or larger than – a classroom. Principals have the autonomy to use a smaller room as a main office or have different schools in the same building share administrative space, repurposing the original space for instruction.
25. Support principals in examining whether their schools could benefit from communal work spaces. Spaces that are designed to accommodate independent work, storage, and meetings could give schools more flexibility with space. At schools like Urban Academy in Manhattan and Leadership Prep Bedford Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, for example, teachers have desks in a shared teacher work room. This allows classrooms to be used for student instruction every period of the school day while still providing a private work space for teachers during prep periods.
26. In buildings where there are spaces that have become unusable and obsolete, work with principals to determine the needs of the school community and develop a renovation plan that would repurpose the space to meet those needs.
27. Work with schools to develop plans where appropriate to reduce the total number of lunch periods on a co-located campus and alleviate scheduling problems that can cause children at co-located schools to eat lunch very early or late in the school day. Provide schools with strategies to share the cafeteria and ways they can increase supervision.
28. Continue working to improve utilization and capacity data as soon as possible, and continue to make reducing overcrowding and removing TCUs priorities when assessing space availability and siting new schools.

Next Steps

The members of the School Space Working Group hope that the administration will seriously consider all of the recommendations presented in this paper and look forward to hearing the DOE's response.

There is still work that could be done by this group, both alone and in conjunction with the Blue Book Working Group. Most urgent is work around overcrowding and TCU removal, which were original charges of this group but which were not addressed because of the time constraints. Members of the working group believes that the DOE and communities have levers at their

disposal, including redrawing of school zone lines and creating more seats in target neighborhoods that could be better explored. Group members surfaced a variety of ideas that could be developed in greater detail, like seeking a longer time period for capital improvements and facility upgrades in district schools co-located with charter schools.⁸ Members of the working group recommend that the DOE continue to think about and refine options like this.

As the Department of Education makes changes to school space processes, the working group plans to meeting again next in December 2014 to monitor and assess the DOE's progress on any of the recommendations the administration chooses to implement. Moving forward, members of the School Space Working Group hope to have the opportunity to continue to advise the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Chancellor on school space policies in continued service of New York City's schools, communities, students and families.

⁸ In 2010, the State Education Law and Chancellor's Regulation A-190 were amended to require that for any Chancellor-approved proposed capital improvement or facility upgrade in excess of \$5,000 made to accommodate the co-location of a charter school, capital improvements and facility upgrades in an amount equal to the expenditure of the charter school must be made for each non-charter school within the public school building. Chancellor's Regulation A-90 states that "matching capital improvements or facility upgrades shall be made... within three months of such improvements or upgrades."

Appendix

APPENDIX A – EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE AND POSITIVE COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN CO-LOCATED SCHOOLS

John F. Kennedy High School Campus

The principals of the eight high schools on the John F. Kennedy campus in the Bronx worked together to create a shared curriculum based on Ishmael Beah's book *A Long Way Gone*. At the end of the unit, Beah came to the campus to speak to 600 students about his experiences as a child soldier in Sierra Leone.

PS 50 Campus

Students at the New York Center for Autism Charter School (NYCACS) in Harlem take advantage of peer mentoring from students at their co-located schools. NYCACS students spend time in kindergarten classes at DREAM Charter School and PS 50 for select periods as they become better able to function in a larger setting. Additionally, DREAM's teachers consult with NYCACS teachers on best practices for students with special needs.

Jerome Parker Educational Campus

At the Jerome Parker Educational Campus on Staten Island, high school students share athletic teams, clubs like cheerleading and SING!⁹, and, often, CollegeNow¹⁰ classes. College counselors at the two high schools on the campus organize joint college visits and jointly run an annual college fair; the larger size of the fair created by combining the two student populations makes it more attractive for colleges to send representatives to the campus. To foster a college-going culture across all grades, one of the high schools and the middle school co-located in the building collaborate on a college celebration day where 12th grade students celebrate that they have "mailed" their college applications by ceremoniously walking to a postal truck while the middle school students cheer them on. Moreover, the other high school on campus partners with the middle school and District 75 school they share space with to provide internship opportunities for students.

⁹ SING! is an annual student-run musical competition in some high schools in the Greater New York City area.

¹⁰ College Now is CUNY's largest collaborative program with the New York City secondary public school system. The program offers dual enrollment and college-readiness programs in more than 350 NYC high schools and enrolls close to 20,000 students annually. In all, there are seventeen campus-based College Now programs which are overseen by a central office.