

Public Comment Analysis

Date: April 19, 2016

Topic: The Proposed Grade Truncation of P.S. 327 Dr. Rose B. English (23K327) from a K-8 School to a K-5 School Beginning in the 2016-2017 School Year

Date of Panel Vote: April 20, 2016

Summary of Proposal

On March 1, 2016, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) issued an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) to truncate the grades served by P.S. 327 Dr. Rose B. English (23K327, “P.S. 327”) beginning in the 2016-2017 school year so that it will no longer serve grades six through eight at scale. P.S. 327 is an existing district school serving students in grades kindergarten through eight and offering a pre-kindergarten (“Pre-K”) program in building K327 (“K327”), located at 111 Bristol Street, Brooklyn, NY 11212 in Community School District 23 (“District 23”). K327 also houses P.S. K396 (75K369, “P396K@I327K”), one site of an existing multi-sited District 75 program, serving students in an inclusion program in kindergarten through fifth grades. If this proposal is approved by the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”), P.S. 327 will no longer enroll sixth-grade students after the 2015-2016 school year, seventh-grade students after the 2016-2017 school year, and eighth-grade students after the 2017-2018 school year. In the 2018- 2019 school year, P.S. 327 will only serve students in kindergarten through fifth grades.

As discussed further in Section III of the Educational Impact Statement for this proposal, this proposed truncation was developed in collaboration with the District 23 Community Superintendent and P.S. 327 leadership, who believe that the truncation of grades six through eight will benefit the P.S. 327 and District 23 communities.

If this proposal is approved, P.S. 327 will have the opportunity to focus exclusively on its elementary school grades. This truncation will enable P.S. 327 to continue building a high quality elementary school option for the District 23 community.

Last year, approximately 50% of fifth grade students did not choose to remain in P.S. 327 for middle school. Given this low demand, the school community has requested the truncation of its middle school grades by the DOE. If this proposal is approved, the truncation will allow the school community to focus exclusively on the elementary school grades and will no longer offer seats to its middle school grades that are not in high demand.

In addition, this proposal is expected to help reduce the excess of 1,500 middle school seats in District 23, by decreasing the number of seats at P.S. 327 and supporting the enrollment at other middle schools across the district that will enroll future students who may have otherwise attended middle school at P.S. 327.

The details of this proposal have been released in the EIS which can be accessed here:
<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2015-2016/April202016SchoolProposals>.

Copies of the EIS are available in the main offices of Brownsville Academy and Unity Prep.

Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing

The DOE held a Joint Public Hearing (“JPH”) regarding this proposal at the K327 building on April 11, 2016. At that hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on this proposal. Approximately 29 members of the public attended the hearing. There were 5 speakers. Individuals present at the hearing included: District 23

Community Superintendent, Mauriciere DeGovia; P.S. 327 Principal and SLT member, Kimberly Chance-Peart; P.S. 327 School Leadership Team (“SLT”) member and CEC 23 Member, Frank Chiclana; Principal P.S. K396 Nira Schwartz-Nyitray; CEC 23 President, Melanie Mendonca; and Tyeshia Smith and Albery Corona from the DOE.

Below is a summary of the comments received at the JPH:

1. P.S. 327 Principal, Kimberly Chance-Peart, expressed the following comments:
 - a. She supports the truncation of P.S. 327, because this is what is best for the students.
 - b. When the P.S. 327 stakeholders that included the PTA President, Community Boards members, and SLT evaluated the state of P.S. 327 there was a unanimous decision to truncate the middle school grades and focus on the expansion of their early education classes.
 - c. The school strengths and expertise lie in the elementary school grades and it would be in the best interest of the students to truncate the schools. We want to allow our elementary students to have more space and focused resources, and allow them to broaden their horizon at a middle school in another environment.
2. SLT Member and CEC Member, Frank Chiclana, expressed the following comments:
 - a. Our school community has discussed the truncation of P.S. 327 for three years. We have tabled this idea in many meetings and we felt as a team this is the best decision to be made for the interest for our students.
 - b. I am glad that everyone was able to come together to make this decision for our students.
3. CEC 16 President, Melanie Mendonca, expressed the following comments:
 - a. My son was a part of the first 6th grade class and the first graduating 8th grade class and I had firsthand experience that the middle school was a challenge for P.S. 327.
 - b. Our school has a monthly SLT Meeting that evaluates the progress of the schools and in these meetings, each stakeholder agreed that we needed to truncate the school.
 - c. Once a child is in a school environment for eight years, this may result in children becoming complacent in a learning environment and leading to them acting out.
 - d. On behalf of the CEC, we support the proposal.
4. Principal Nira Schwartz-Nyitray, expressed the following comments:
 - a. We are happy to support P.S. 327 during this truncation. We have worked well with each other for many years.
 - b. If this is what is best for the students, we fully support the proposal as we have faith that they will continue to provide the highest quality for the students in the inclusion program.
5. A Parent and Community Member expressed the following comments:
 - a. When P.S. 327 was proposed to become a K-8 school, it was met with opposition by the some of the stakeholders, because we felt it would create an unsafe environment for the younger kids.
 - b. My daughter did not like her time in middle school grades of P.S. 327 because she was confined to one building for too long, and needed a change in environment.
 - c. When children are confined in an environment for too long this can cause misbehavior in the middle school students. If this type of behavior becomes constant, the younger students will learn and their actions will begin to mirror the middle school students’ behavior.
 - d. I support this truncation because it will allow for P.S. 327 to support their elementary school students with a quality education and make them into prosperous middle school students.

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

The DOE received zero (0) voicemails through the dedicated phone number for this proposal.

The DOE received zero (0) emails through the dedicated email address for this proposal.

Analysis of Issues Raised and Significant Alternatives Proposed

Comments 1(a-c), 2(a-b), 3(b,d), 4(a-b), 5(d) all stated support for the proposal with the rationale that it was a unanimous decision by all stakeholders, and do not require a response.

Comments 3(a), 3(c), 5(a-c) express support for the proposal and discusses the concerns and challenges with students staying in one school environment for elementary school and middle school. These does not require a response.

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to this proposal.