

EDUCATIONAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

The Proposed Grade Truncation of P.S. 144 Col Jeromus Remsen (28Q144) to a K-5 School

I. Summary of Proposal

P.S. 144 Col Jeromus Remsen (28Q144, “P.S. 144”) is an existing elementary school located at 93-02 69th Avenue, Forest Hills, NY 11375, in Community School District 28. It currently serves students in Kindergarten through sixth grade, and offers a Pre-Kindergarten program. This is a proposal to implement a “grade truncation,” meaning that the school would no longer enroll sixth graders after the current 2010-2011 school year.

At the close of the 2010-2011 school year, all fifth and sixth graders who meet promotional standards would graduate from P.S. 144. In September 2011, these students would enter middle school as sixth and seventh graders, respectively. Beginning in 2011-2012, P.S. 144 would serve students only in Kindergarten through fifth grade and offer a Pre-Kindergarten program. From that time forward, P.S. 144 students would participate in the middle school choice process during fifth grade and move on to middle school for sixth grade.

Prior to June 2010, students in District 28 could attend their zoned middle school or they could apply to choice middle schools on a school-by-school basis. In June 2010, the District 28 Community Education Council voted to adopt “Middle School Choice.” Now, students may apply to and rank middle schools throughout the District on a single application. They also have the opportunity to rank zoned middle schools outside the zone in which they reside. While zoned students still have priority for admission to those schools, other District 28 students are now eligible to attend those schools if they have remaining seats once zoned children are accommodated.

Middle schools typically enroll students beginning in sixth grade, and P.S. 144 students have the option to apply to start middle school as sixth graders. With the adoption of district-wide middle school choice, P.S. 144 students who wait until sixth grade to apply to middle school are limited to those schools that still have available seventh-grade seats. In particular, there are several unzoned, choice middle schools in District 28, and those schools rarely have open seventh-grade seats, which become available only if sixth graders leave the school. As a result, students who remain at P.S. 144 through sixth grade will have fewer options than their peers who start middle school a year earlier.

Additionally, P.S. 144 students who start middle school in seventh grade may face transitional challenges related to entering middle school a year later than most of their classmates and they remain in their new middle school for only two years before again transitioning to high school.

The DOE strives to ensure that all students in New York City have access to a high-quality school at every stage of their education. Having elementary schools that terminate in different grades (i.e., K-5 versus K-6) creates unequal levels of access for students based simply on the year they exit elementary school.

This proposed grade truncation will help standardize middle school application and entry grades in District 28, giving all P.S. 144 students access to the same range of middle school options as their peers throughout the District.

At the same time, this proposal will alleviate crowding pressures at P.S.144 and create additional K-5 seats in an area where demand for elementary school seats is high:

- P.S. 144 has a 104 percent target utilization rate¹, meaning that the school is overcrowded.
- Phasing out the sixth grade will free up approximately 75 seats in the building. Those seats could be used by lower-grade students or to meet other school needs (e.g., art room, resource center).
- Approximately 75 additional K-5 seats will be created in an area that has high demand for elementary seats.

II. Proposed or Potential Use of Building

The building where P.S. 144 is located, Q144, has the capacity to serve 671 students and a current target utilization rate of 104 percent. There are no proposed additional uses for the building after the grade truncation takes place. The additional space made available by phasing out the sixth-grade class at the school is intended to alleviate overcrowding at P.S. 144.

III. Impact of the Proposal on Affected Students, Schools, and Community

A. Students

In the past, many P.S. 144 students opted to remain at the school through sixth grade, while others chose to attend sixth grade at either a District 28 choice middle school or J.H.S. 190 Russell Sage, the middle school to which most P.S. 144 students are zoned. Specifically, approximately 25 percent of last year's fifth graders chose to exit P.S. 144 after fifth grade. This creates a small class at the sixth-grade level with limited resources to provide the types of extracurricular activities and enrichment opportunities available in a full-size middle school.

On June 23, 2010, the Community Education Council of District 28 ("CEC 28") voted to adopt a Middle School Choice enrollment process for the entire district. As a result, all District 28 students entering middle schools in 2011 and beyond now do so via the Middle School Choice process.

If this proposal is approved, P.S. 144 students would apply to middle school during fifth grade and start middle school as sixth graders. That would mean they would be applying when all seats in the District's middle schools were open, giving P.S. 144 students equal access to their top-choice schools.

Middle schools typically have extremely varied and rich instructional offerings, especially in the sciences and languages, as well as extra-curricular activities. Middle schools' space and facilities are also better aligned to support these programs. By entering middle school for sixth grade, P.S. 144 students will have more opportunities to take advantage of these enriching, high-school preparatory experiences. At the same time, they will avoid transitional challenges related to entering the school a year later than most of their classmates.

If this proposal is approved, this year's fifth- and sixth-grade students at P.S. 144 will all apply to middle school by participating in the Middle School Choice process during the current school year. At the close of the 2010-2011 school year, all fifth and sixth graders who meet promotional standards will graduate from P.S. 144, and in September 2010, those students will enter middle schools as sixth and seventh graders,

¹ The official target capacity and utilization rates for the 2010-11 school year are not yet available. All references to building utilization rates in this document are based on target capacity data from the 2009-10 Enrollment Capacity Utilization Report (the "Blue Book").

respectively. Beginning in 2011-2012, P.S. 144 will serve students only in Kindergarten through fifth grade and offer a Pre-Kindergarten program. From that time forward, P.S. 144 students will participate in the Middle School Choice process during fifth grade and move on to middle school for sixth grade. If a current P.S. 144 sixth grader does not meet promotional standards and is required to repeat the grade this year, the Department of Education will seek to place that student in sixth grade at the same middle school to which he or she has been matched for seventh grade through the Middle School Choice process. If such placement is not feasible, then the Department of Education will find an alternative District 28 placement for that student.

Under Middle School Choice, students rank their preferences from among all District 28 middle schools. These options include:

- choice middle schools with a screened application process (entrance is based on criteria designated by the school);
- choice middle schools with an unscreened or limited-unscreened application processes (Note: limited-unscreened schools admit students on the same basis as unscreened schools except that they give preference to students who have attended a school information session);
- the zoned middle school in the zone where the student resides; and
- zoned middle schools in District 28 outside the zone in which the student resides.

P.S. 144 students who wait until sixth grade to apply to middle school are guaranteed a seventh-grade seat at their zoned school, but are otherwise restricted to other District 28 middle schools (zoned and choice) that still have remaining seventh-grade seats. As discussed in greater detail below, there are typically few such seats available, meaning that P.S. 144 sixth graders have limited access to the choice process compared with students who apply to middle school during fifth grade. If this proposal is approved, all P.S. 144 students will apply to middle school in fifth grade. This will give P.S. 144 students greater access to their top-choice middle schools.

Through the Middle School Choice process, students receive priority admission into their zoned middle school only when they rank that school on their District 28 Middle School Choice application. If students do not rank their zoned school at all, they lose their zoned-student priority status. After a zoned school admits all zoned students matched during the middle school choice process, the school's remaining spaces are open to out-of-zone District 28 students who indicated a preference for that school.

It is expected that zoned middle schools will try to fill all remaining sixth-grade spaces available after accepting zoned students. Those spots would be filled with any out-of-zone students who indicated a preference for that school during the sixth-grade middle school application process. Very few spaces will be available in later years to out-of-zone students wishing to enter as seventh graders. Such seats will only be available if spaces open up due to students leaving the school.

In addition, there are several unzoned, choice middle schools in District 28. Those schools generally only accept students as entering sixth graders. Again, it is only in rare cases, when a space opens due to a student leaving the school, that choice middle schools admit new students into grade seven or higher.

As a result, families that would like their children to attend one of the District 28 choice middle schools, or a zoned middle school outside their school zone, should ensure that their children make the transition to start middle school as sixth graders.

The District 28 middle schools open to P.S. 144 students, along their peers throughout the District, include:

School Name	Address	2010-2011 School Level	2010-2011 Grade Span	Grade Span at Scale (if different)
P.S. 144 ZONED PREFERENCE Option*				
JHS 190 Russell Sage (28Q190)	68-17 Austin St	MS	6-8	
CHOICE PREFERENCE Options				
Queens Collegiate (28Q310)	167-01 Gothic Dr	MS/HS	6, 9-11	6-12
York Early College Academy (28Q284)	108-35 167 th St	MS/HS	6-9	6-12
Young Women’s Leadership School (28Q896)	150-91 87 th Rd	MS/HS	6-12	
Metropolitan Expeditionary Academy (28Q167)	91-30 Metropolitan Ave	MS/HS	6-7	6-12
Queens Gateway to Health Sciences Secondary School* (28Q680)	160-20 Goethals Ave	MS/HS	7-12	6-12
Other ZONED PREFERENCE Options				
JHS 157 Stephen A. Halsey (28Q157)	63-55 102nd St	MS	6-8(9)	
JHS 217 Robert A. Van Wyck (28Q217)	85-05 144th St	MS	6-8	
JHS 72 Catherine & Count Basie Middle School (28Q072)	133-25 Guy Brewer Blvd	MS	6-8	
JHS 8 Richard S. Grossley (28Q007)	108-35 167 th St	MS	6-8	

* Most, but not all, of P.S. 144’s students are zoned to J.H.S. 190 Russell Sage.

Additionally, District 28 students may still apply to borough-wide and citywide middle schools as in the past.

P.S. 144 will continue to meet the needs of its special education students and English Language learners (ELLs) in grades K-5. Current fifth and sixth graders with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or requiring ELL services will not be affected by this plan. In both cases, they will be appropriately served by their middle schools after transitioning to seventh grade.

P.S. 104 currently operates two sections of a Pre-Kindergarten program. Barring unforeseen circumstances, we expect Pre-Kindergarten to continue being offered at P.S. 144.

B. Schools

No other schools are co-located in Building Q144, which houses P.S. 144, so there will be no impact on other schools in the building.

By phasing out the sixth-grade class, the proposed grade truncation will reduce the number of students enrolled in Building Q144 by approximately 75 students, thereby reducing overcrowding. After this proposal is implemented, there will be sufficient space to serve P.S. 144 students in Building Q144

pursuant to the Citywide Instructional Footprint (the “Footprint”). Please visit the New York City Department of Education website to access the Instructional Footprint, which guides space allocation and use in City schools: http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/8CF30F41-DE25-4C30-92DE-731949919FC3/87633/NYCDOE_Instructional_Footprint_Final9210TNT.pdf

Last year, approximately 25 percent of the fifth-grade class left P.S. 144 after fifth grade. As a result of this proposal, all of the 75 rising sixth graders at P.S. 144 will be participating in the middle school choice process this year. There are more than enough seats to accommodate those students at middle schools open to P.S. 144 graduates. In total, there are currently 7,913 middle school seats in District 28, yet only 5,786 students are enrolled in District 28 middle schools. Even with the addition of 75 fifth graders from P.S. 144, only 5,861 students will be enrolled in District 28 middle schools, leaving over 2,000 seats of available capacity.²

C. Community

P.S. 144 is an arts-focused school, with students in each grade participating in different arts “residencies.” Traditionally, sixth-grade students at the school have participated in a theater residency. While specific details remain in development, the Principal at P.S. 144 anticipates adapting the arts residency program to include the theater residency in an earlier grade. Barring unforeseen circumstances, the expectation is that students will still have the opportunity to participate in a theater residency even if this proposal is approved and the school no longer enrolls sixth-grade students.

This proposal addresses many needs of the P.S. 144 community:

- Phasing out the sixth-grade class at P.S. 144 creates 75 additional K-5 seats in an area where demand for elementary-school seats exceeds available capacity.
- District 28 has a high demand for a limited number of elementary seats. District 28 middle schools, however, have unused, available capacity. By serving sixth-grade students in middle schools, we open up much needed elementary seats and space to younger students, while using space more efficiently in District middle school buildings.
- Phasing out the sixth-grade class at P.S. 144 will align the school’s grade span with other schools in District 28.
- There are currently 25 schools serving elementary-grade students in District 28, including 14 that terminate in fifth-grade. Of the 14 remaining elementary schools that enroll sixth-grade students, 11 are candidates for grade truncation this year.
 - If all 11 potential truncations move forward and win approval, the vast majority of D28 elementary-school students will apply to middle school during fifth grade and enter middle school in sixth grade, giving those students equal access to the choice process. With over 2,000 seats of available middle-school capacity, there is sufficient space to serve all of these students in middle schools.
 - At the same time, creating a single entry grade helps schools build and foster stronger school cultures. Taken collectively, these proposed changes would enable schools to better support students throughout the District 28 community.
- This proposal is not expected to impact the ability of community members and organizations to obtain school building use permits at Q144.

² Total middle school seats in District 28 reflects the number of seats designated for middle school students in middle school buildings or middle school grades of 6-12 schools.

IV. Enrollment, Admissions and School Performance Information

The only impacted school in this proposal is P.S. 144.

Admissions Data

Current Admissions	Pre-K: Standard Universal Pre-K Admissions K-6: Zoned
Admissions after Grade Reconfiguration in 2011-2012	K-5: Zoned

Enrollment Data

Current Grades Served	K-6
Projected 2010-2011 Enrollment	680
Grades Served after Grade Reconfiguration in 2011-2012	K-5
Projected 2011-2012 Enrollment:	580-630

Demographic Data

Percentage Special Education Students³	13%
Percentage English Language Learner Students	6%
Percentage of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch	32%

School Performance Data

	2008-2009	2009-2010	Website
Progress Report Scores	A	B	http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/32/K045/AboutUs/Statistics
ELA Score (% Level 3/4)	84.1%	64.5%	http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/32/K045/AboutUs/Statistics
Math Score (% Level 3/4)	92.4%	77.3%	http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/32/K045/AboutUs/Statistics
Accountability Status	In Good Standing	Not Available	http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/32/K045/AboutUs/Statistics
Average Attendance	95.6%	95.8%	http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/data/stats/attendance/default.htm

V. Initial Costs and Savings

No initial costs or savings are expected due to the P.S. 144 grade truncation.

³ Special Education students as percentage of total students. Special Education count does not include SETSS or students receiving speech or language services.

VI. Effect on Personnel Needs, Costs of Instruction, Administration, Transportation and Other Support Services

A. Personnel Needs

Some current P.S. 144 staff positions may be excessed due to declining enrollment associated with the 75 sixth-grade students that will no longer be enrolled at P.S. 144. It is difficult to precisely predict the number of affected positions.

Any necessary excessing would be conducted in accordance with existing labor contracts. For example, the current United Federation of Teachers (UFT) contract would require excessing to take place in reverse seniority order within each given teaching license area. Most teachers working in grades 1-6 hold the same “common branch” license, regardless of their students’ age.

Barring system-wide layoffs, excessed teachers would be eligible to apply for other City positions, and any teacher who did not find a permanent position would be placed in the Absent Teacher Reserve pool, meaning that they would continue to earn their salary while serving as substitute teachers in other City schools. Should there be a vacancy in the school in a teacher’s license area within one year of the teacher being excessed, the teacher would have a right of return to the school.

It is also important to understand that the sixth-grade students who would otherwise have enrolled in P.S. 144 will now be enrolled in other District 28 middle schools, and those schools might need to hire new teachers to serve their larger student populations.

B. Cost of Instruction

Most funding in school budgets is allocated on a per-pupil basis. For each student no longer on the P.S. 144 roster after the truncation is completed, the school is expected to receive approximately \$4,384.81 less annual base funding. These estimates are based on current Fair Student Funding (FSF) per capita allocation levels and are subject to annual variation. FSF covers basic instructional expenses and FSF funds may, at the school’s discretion, be used to hire staff, purchase supplies and materials, or implement instructional programs.

As a result of the truncation, the total number of students enrolled at P.S. 144 is expected to decline, meaning that the school will need fewer teachers and fewer supplies to meet the needs of its smaller student population. If for some reason the overall school enrollment grows again, the overall budget will increase accordingly. In any case, funding will be provided in accordance with enrollment levels, allowing the school to meet the instructional needs of its student population. This is how funding is awarded to all schools throughout the City, with budgets naturally increasing or decreasing as enrollment fluctuates from year to year.

In addition, FSF awards supplemental allocations on a per pupil basis to students who have additional needs and therefore cost more to educate. For example, during the 2010-2011 school year, schools received an additional \$2,031 per pupil for each English Language learner they enrolled. It is difficult to project the impact of this proposal on the total supplemental funding that P.S. 144 will receive because future students’ achievement levels and needs cannot be predicted for each of the next three years, but the school will be awarded supplemental funding for higher-need students according to the same formula as all other schools citywide, ensuring that funds are in place to meet those students’ needs.

As with all other schools citywide, P.S. 144 may receive additional “categorical” funding based on student characteristics and needs. For example, federal Title I funding is awarded to schools based on the proportion of low-income students they enroll. P.S. 144 is currently a Title I school. Assuming that the school continues to meet Title I criteria, the school’s Title I funding award will adjust as the size of the school population changes.

While schools do receive supplemental support for special education students through FSF, that only represents part of the funding provided to support those students. Schools are budgeted to meet the needs of their special education students as defined by their Individual Education Plans (IEP). After the truncation is completed, funding will continue to be provided to meet the needs of all special education students in accordance with their IEPs.

Please note that increased or reduced per capita funds allocated to the school as a result of this proposal do not represent net/incremental system costs. All dollar amounts are based on FY10 allocations and are subject to annual variation based on adjustments to the DOE's overall operating budget.

C. Administration

No change in school supervisory or administrator positions is expected as a result of the grade truncation at P.S. 144.

D. Transportation

Transportation will be provided according to Chancellor’s regulation A-801: <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/21A1B11A-886B-4F74-9546-E875EE82A14C/40303/A801.pdf>. There will be no change to existing transportation practices at P.S. 144 due to this proposal.

E. Other Support Services

Other support services will continue to be provided consistent with citywide policy.

VII. Building Information

Type of Building	Elementary School
Year Built	1930
Overall BCAS rating	2.32
Target Utilization	104%
Target Capacity	671
FY 2009 Maintenance Costs	Labor: \$18,279 Materials: \$25,488 Maintenance and Repair Contracts: \$ 27,847 Custodial Operations Costs—Materials: \$8,881 Custodial Operations Costs—Custodial Allocation: \$319,848
FY 2009 Energy Costs	Electric: \$102,223 Gas: \$1,096 Oil: \$65,058
Projects completed during the current or prior school year	N/A
Projects proposed in the capital plan	No projects identified
Accessibility of the building	Non-Accessible
Building attributes	Art room, Auditorium, Computer room, Gymnasium, Library, and Cafeteria/Multi-purpose room