



## **Public Comment Analysis**

Date: November 15, 2010

Topic: The Proposed Temporary Re-siting and Co-location of a Portion of One Grade Level of an Existing School, P.S. 16 (24Q016), with an Existing School, Pioneer Academy (24Q307) and a D75 School, P255Q, in Building Q260 for the 2010-11 School Year

Date of Panel Vote: November 16, 2010

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## **Summary of Proposal**

P.S. 16 (24Q016, “P.S. 16”) is an existing elementary school located at 41-15 104th Street, Queens, NY, 11369, in Community School District 24, in Building Q721 (“Q721”). It currently serves students in Kindergarten through fifth grade. On October 1, 2010, the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) published an educational impact statement (“EIS”) describing a proposal to implement a temporary “re-siting” of some P.S. 16 classes into Building Q260 (“Q260”), at 40-20 100th Street, Queens, NY, 11368, where these students will be “co-located” with Pioneer Academy (24Q307, “Pioneer Academy”), an existing elementary school and a D75 school, P255Q (“P255Q”), for the 2010-2011 school year. On November 8, 2010, the DOE published an amended EIS, which includes additional information regarding the provision of English Language Learner programming and clarifies data concerning the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced price meals, but which does not modify or revise the proposal itself.

Pioneer Academy currently serves students in Kindergarten through third grade and offers a pre-Kindergarten program. P255Q currently serves students with autism in Kindergarten through second grade. A “re-siting” means some students will attend classes in a different building than the one that they attended last year. 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.

Several elementary schools in the Corona, Queens neighborhood of District 24 currently enroll more students than their target capacity levels. P.S. 16, in particular, is quite overcrowded. During the 2009-2010 school year, high-kindergarten enrollment at P.S. 16 resulted in average kindergarten class sizes which were one student over the UFT contracted class-size limit. Where possible, the DOE aims to utilize available space in other local school buildings to alleviate overcrowding. Pioneer Academy is a new elementary school in Corona that is currently in the

process of phasing in one grade per year in Q260, and which has underutilized space available for use by P.S. 16 during the current school year only.

On September 2, 2010, Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein issued an emergency declaration implementing the temporary re-siting of a portion of P.S. 16's current fifth-grade class into building Q260. On September 8, 2010, the first day of school, a total of five P.S. 16 fifth-grade homeroom sections, collectively enrolling approximately 150 students, reported to Q260. As a result, Q260 currently houses half of P.S. 16's fifth-grade students, as well as Pioneer Academy and P255Q.

The temporary co-location of these P.S. 16 students into the building has resulted in a few logistical changes for the organizations in the building, but has not negatively impacted the students of Pioneer Academy or P255Q. Temporarily relocating some fifth-grade students to Building Q260 freed up classrooms in the main P.S. 16 building, permitting P.S. 16 to stay within contracted Kindergarten class size limits and to re-purpose other rooms for various instructional uses. This proposal immediately relieves overcrowding at Q721 and results in more efficient use of space at Q260. In addition, the temporary co-location may present opportunities for Pioneer Academy and P.S. 16 to share resources and implement special programming benefiting both schools.

### **Summary of Comments Received at the Joint Public Hearing**

Joint public hearings regarding this proposal were held at Q016 on November 8, 2010 and at Q260 on November 12, 2010 and all interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal. There were collectively approximately 15 members of the public in attendance at the hearings, and 4 speakers. Speakers made the following comments:

1. One P.S. 16 parent stated that she was shocked at the change in school location for her daughter this year, expressed concern for next year and years to come, and expressed hope that P.S. 16 students would not have to continue to move around.
2. One commenter expressed concern about whether the situation adversely affects special education services.
3. One commenter stated that parent involvement is high at P.S. 16, but there was low attendance at the hearing held at P.S. 16's main building due to the fact that the re-siting and co-location were implemented at the beginning of the school year. This commenter felt that the hearing occurred too late to be helpful.
4. One commenter suggested that P.S. 16 students be integrated into Pioneer Academy, to ease any issues related to differences in rules, uniforms, etc.

### **Summary of Issues Raised in Written and Oral Comments and Significant Alternatives Suggested**

Below is a summary of the comments received:

5. The District 75 Council expressed general support for the proposal as long as parents are in agreement, the change is temporary and the DOE provides a permanent plan for P.S. 16 students at the November 16, 2010 PEP meeting (which does not include keeping the fifth grade of P.S. 16 at Building Q260).

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

With respect to comments 1, 3 and 5, as stated in the EIS, this proposal is for a temporary re-siting and co-location to ease overcrowding at P.S. 16 for this year only. After the DOE conferred with leadership at all impacted schools and determined that, because Q260 is currently underutilized, the temporary co-location and re-siting was feasible, it was implemented by an emergency declaration. Emergency declarations do not require a joint public hearing prior to issuance. The emergency declaration was publicly posted on the DOE's website, and a letter was sent to all impacted parents advising them of the temporary re-siting and co-location. A meeting was held at P.S. 16 in early September, and P.S. 16 parents were given an opportunity to tour Building Q260. In the 2011-2012 school year, P.S. 16 students will not attend class in Building Q260. The DOE continues to seek solutions to overcrowding at P.S. 16, but a plan will not be made available at the November 16, 2010 PEP meeting. As of now, P.S. 16 students will all be served at the main P.S. 16 building next year. The DOE will share information as soon as alternative solutions are identified.

With respect to comment 2, all students with disabilities are appropriately served in both buildings. In particular, for the 2010-2011 school year, both Pioneer Academy and P255Q are using the same number of classrooms in Q260 that they would have used even if the P.S. 16 students were not in the building. As indicated in the EIS, P225Q students receive gym instruction in the multipurpose room rather than the gymnasium, however their instructional experience is unchanged, and they still have access to the gymnasium to engage in structured team sports as well as exercising.

With respect to comment 5, the proposal affects space usage only; the enrollment status of P.S. 16 students will not be changed, and, therefore, they will not be integrated into Pioneer Academy.