



# Community Education Council For District One

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Daniella Philips – District 1 Superintendent

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Many thanks to everyone who helped to arrange for, and participate in, a recent (1/31/14) walk through of UNHS which is slated for colocation by a new CTE (media graphics) next September (2014).

Three people from DoE's OPM (Sarah Kaufman, Drew Patterson, Jennifer Peng) and one OSP planner (Rich Bocchicchio) arranged the walk through, which was attended by the UNHS PTA President (Haydee Felix Rodriguez) the UFT District Rep for District 1 (Donna Manganello), the CEC 1 President (Lisa Donlan) and Yume Kitasei from the office of Council Member Margaret Chin. The UNHS Principal and AP were both present for the walk through and discussions.

Community advocates asked for this walk through when we learned last week that the new CTE School was going to be walking through the school with SCA/space planners to look at the space. We originally asked to be part of that visit for two reasons:

- It makes sense to have all stakeholders share and exchange information. The UNHS Principal and the new CTE Principal have a collegial relationship (he was employed by the UNHS CFN Network previously). The community has not raised any opposition to the school model- just its proposed colocation.

- Throughout the colocation process which began last August, we have asked to see physical plans for sharing the building by the two schools at scale. Our concern is that, given the building's antiquated and limited infrastructure, there is not sufficient access to resources for one high school never mind two.

DoE's EISs never look beyond the first year of impact, leaving principals to address all space sharing issues, as if the problems are a mere matter of negotiation and compromise, and not real physical constraints based in brick and mortar limitations.

While an open exchange of information and facts took place before, during and after the walk through, OPM has made clear since August they believe in the merits of the proposal, despite our concerns. "We must just agree to disagree" is the explanation given for not heeding our input no matter how reasoned or rational..

According to OPM, if the citywide footprint that has been used in hundreds of colocations for nearly a decade in NYC indicates there is space, then the colocation is "a go". Apparently there are no lessons to be learned from either the past success or failures of hundreds of colocations, or more troubling, directly from the advocates and community members directly affected.

Use of citywide, one-size-fits-all metric, with no acknowledgement of the individual merits and circumstances of each school building and school community, is a problem. When that footprint has

proven in many dozens of instances to fail to provide adequate resources to students throughout the city by over crowding buildings, pushing up class sizes, limiting opportunities for enrichment and intervention, etc., there is a systemic problem.

Because the footprint has been used throughout the past administration to justify ill-founded colocations is not a reason to continue to do so.

The DoE's Footprint was changed in 2009. Previously, class rooms under 600 square feet were considered half sized rooms. Now, rooms over 500 square feet are considered full size, with a capacity of 27 students (34 for Blue Book capacity). Many rooms at UNHS are just over 500 square feet (based on counting 12 inch floor tiles, 22x 23). Often UNHS classes are supported by 3 adults (a gen ed teacher, a special ed teacher and para) plus an additional 4-6 NYU student teachers.

In 2014-15 the CTE school= will occupy the 5<sup>th</sup> floor which is manageable. In 2015-16 the CTE school will expand to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, leaving UNHS the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (3 rooms) and 3 floor (8 rooms) only in Year 2.

Currently UNHS runs 15-18 classes at one time, making it clear in our discussions that this colocation is only possible if the UNHS enrollment is cut to 200 from the current and growing nearly 300 students on register.

Yet, UNHS receives, in keeping with the citywide HS average, approximately 10 times the number of applications as projected seats. Recent trends in applications and enrollment are increasing with the rising Progress report grade, as the threat of closure recedes in the collective memory. There is a possibility that the growing enrollment at UNHS would continue if not capped by DoE's projections and colocation.

According to the EIS, the building capacity was 694 in 2011-12. OPM and OSP had no idea what current capacity is listed at in the current Blue Book. Despite the official EIS proposal calling for 510 additional students by year 6 of the CTE school, OPM now maintains that no more than 350 students will ever be in the CTE school at one time, since the school's year 13 and 14 are designed for students to obtain an AA degree at BMCC. There will be two classroom rooms set aside for the year 13 and 14 students, according to OPM.

UNHS student demographics:

Register: 293

58 or 20% of students are overage and under credited students.

68 students or 23% of students live in Temporary Housing

76 students or 26% are classified as Students with Disabilities

94 students or 32% are categorized as current ELLs, while a number of former ELLs are current students.

Only 7 students are classified as both SWD and ELL.

At scale, all the services for these students will be provided for in a single ½ sized resource room, according to the OPM plan.

There is no room for the school to continue its support system of “ pull out” interventions since the 12 sections of UNMS will be working in 12 classrooms, which now include an art room, a music room, a computer lab and teacher center.

According to OPM, the school leaders will need to decide what services and programs they can offer in the limited space the colocation allows them. Yet clearly a school leader cannot decide to continue to offer the current programs and services that have allowed this school leader and staff to bring the school form “pre-engagement” discussions of closure (based on a Progress report grade of D) to the current thriving school community with high rates of graduation and academic achievement ( an A this year).

Since the sole science lab will be shared (2 days/week for UNHS and 3 day for CTE School), the school leader must seriously limit the hands-on instruction time that UNHS currently affords its nearly 300 students, now. Student in the CTE School will have access to labs at BMCC ONLY IF they are enrolled in BMCC science classes offering lab hours.

No new bathrooms will be built. Current staff bathrooms will be instead used by students, so students will have access to facilities on floors 1, 2, 5 and staff on floors 3 and 4. All are single toilet, one person occupancy facilities, creating a safety hazard should students lock themselves in a room alone. The 5<sup>th</sup> floor boys bathroom is simply too small to be practical for students use.

Since there is no gymnasium in this 108 year-old building, the proposal calls for the current classroom converted to a Fitness Room to become the Dance Room-, with new flooring. The Dance Room (also a converted classroom) will become the new Fitness Room-equipped with ACs and new machines. UNHS has spent discretionary tax levy money on AC units that they cannot run due to poor wiring- and no one knows when wiring will be completed. At least the colocation will bring adequate electricity to the school!

These much appreciated upgrades should not require a colocation to happen. All students deserve basic safety and comforts, and all school should be able to meet mandates for gym and academics.

This proposed colocation is problematic for both schools- UNHS and the CTE School.

It is not clear how the 14-20 year old CTE students will commute to BMCC from Monroe Street, how they will meet their gym credit requirements (since they cannot take gym at BMCC which has no separate locker rooms for HS kids), how they will learn the technical arts and skills of their trade without adequate facilities and technology platforms.

We sincerely hope that the administration and Panel for Education Policy will take a fresh look at the multiple problems that the proposed UNHS /new CTE colocation present, as raised by the school community members who will be directly affected once the OPM and OSP teams return to their central offices.

A previous letter from CEC 1 and CEC leaders suggest placing this CTE school in Murray Bergtrum in lieu of the proposed Success Academy Charter school which may be better suited for a long term lease in private space. i.e.:

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/st-patrick-school-italy-sale-29m-article-1.1558489>

Sincerely,

Lisa Donlan

CEC 1 President