*I had the privilege of participating in a grass roots revolt of parents and other school stakeholders in Harlem against the NYC Department of Education’s irresponsible and dictatorial planning process. I served as policy and political consultant to the PS 36 Parent Association and made the following public statements opposing the NYCDOE’s proposal to “co-locate” another public school, Teachers College Community School (TCCS), in the same building as PS 36. The campaign was successful, as the Panel for Educational Policy, which normally rubber stamps the NYCDOE’s plans, sided with the stakeholders and voted on 28 February 2017 to “postpone” the proposal, effectively ending it in favor of an alternative proposal developed by TCCS.* –Brian D’Agostino, 28 February 2017

**STATEMENT TO THE NYC PANEL FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY**

**ON THE PS 36 / TCCS CO-LOCATION**

Prospect Heights Educational Campus, 28 February 2017, 6:00 PM

Brian D’Agostino, Ph.D.

[bdagostino.com](http://bdagostino.com/)

Chancellor Farina and members of the Panel for Educational Policy,

My name is Brian D’Agostino. I am a retired NYC public school teacher and hold a Ph.D. in political science. I currently do public interest research, and have published articles and book chapters on education policy. I am speaking tonight to urge you to vote “no” on the proposed co-location of Teachers College Community School (TCCS) and PS 36. I want to emphasize four inconvenient truths.

First, the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) has known for ten years that TCCS would need a larger building by Fall 2017 and has failed in its obligation to provide it. Then in January 2017, eight months before the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, the NYCDOE released a proposal to split TCCS and co-locate part of the school with PS 36, located half a mile away.

Second, the proposal claims that the PS 36 building is only 64% utilized, but this is not consistent with the school’s Organization Sheet, which shows actual utilization of the rooms. The co-location will almost certainly cause massive dislocation and disruption of instruction.

Third, the proposal claims that the co-location will last only three years, but does not commit the NYCDOE to finding a permanent space for TCCS in time to ensure that this will be the case.

Fourth, since the NYCDOE does not have a plan B for TCCS in the event the Panel for Educational Policy votes down this proposal, it is clear that the NYCDOE has already decided the matter and is asking the PEP to rubber stamp this eleventh hour, ill-conceived plan. Fortunately, TCCS has taken the initiative to create a plan B, presented earlier tonight by Laurie Kindred, and you have an opportunity to take a meaningful vote. I respectfully urge you to accept this plan B and vote “no” on the proposed co-location.

--Brian D’Agostino, Ph.D.

**STATEMENT TO JOINT PUBLIC HEARING ON PS 36 / TCCS CO-LOCATION**

Margaret Douglas School (PS 36), 7 February 2017, 6:00 PM

Brian D’Agostino, Ph.D.

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I will be building on what Ms. Silverman and Ms. Akoya and others have said and have a xeroxed handout that goes with my comments (see attached PS 36 “Tentative Organization Sheet, 2016-2017). I am a retired NYC public school teacher and currently do public interest research. I hold a Ph.D. in political science and have published articles and book chapters on education policy. I asked Ms. Valencia Moore, PS 36 PTA president, for a list of rooms in building MO36 and how they are currently being utilized. She gave me the school’s “Tentative Organization Sheet, 2016-2017;” which is the document I just handed out.

According to the Educational Impact Statement, there are 36 full-sized rooms in the building and this space is only 64% utilized. If the utilization formula bears any relationship to the actual space utilization in the building, this would translate into 13 empty rooms on the organization sheet, or 26 half-utilized rooms, or something equivalent. And yet a quick look at the organization sheet shows that every room is being utilized and in fact some are being put to multiple uses. In addition to the 36 full-sized rooms, the sheet also lists half-sized rooms and these are also utilized.

The focus of the EIS is regular classroom instruction. As the organization sheet shows, however, there are many other functions going on in a school other than regular classroom instruction, and all these functions require physical spaces in which they can be conducted.  Here are just a few examples:

1. The Reading Team uses rooms 351 and 357 during the course of the day.  This program provides essential instructional support for struggling readers at PS 36.  If this space is given to Teachers College Community School (TCCS), where will this activity occur?
2. The ESL teacher uses room 358.  If this space is given to TCCS, where will this instruction occur?
3. The science, music, computer, and physical education teachers currently use rooms 253, 480, 431, and 257 for their instruction.  If these rooms are given to TCCS, where are these cluster teachers going to be able to teach?

While the organization sheet may not be entirely accurate and some of the rooms may not be fully utilized, Ms. Moore has assured me that there are certainly not 7 empty full-sized rooms in this building or the equivalent—the space that the EIS would allocate to TCCS next fall—much less the 13 empty rooms claimed in the EIS. The utilization formula is therefore not a reliable guide for this co-location.

To evaluate this proposal, it is necessary to know which rooms will be assigned to TCCS and where PS 36 under the co-location will conduct the activities currently occurring in these rooms. This is not a matter of details to be determined *after* the proposal is decided; rather, this information is necessary to know whether the proposal itself can be viable, or even legal. Superintendent Reeves, do you have this information and if not, will you be sure it is collected before the community meeting that is being planned, so we can have an informed discussion at that meeting and the PEP can be properly informed in advance of their February 28th vote? Thank you.

*--Brian D’Agostino, Ph.D.*

**STATEMENT TO JOINT PUBLIC HEARING ON PS 36 / TCCS CO-LOCATION**

Teachers College Community School, 6 February 2017, 6:00 PM

Brian D’Agostino, Ph.D.

[bdagostino.com](http://bdagostino.com/)

Superintendent Reeves, I am a retired NYC public school teacher and currently do public interest research. I hold a Ph.D. in political science and have published articles and book chapters on education policy. I am trying to understand whether the Panel for Educational Policy is being asked to really decide on the proposal we are discussing tonight when they vote on February 28th or whether they are being asked to rubber stamp a decision that has already been made by the NYCDOE. There are just seven months before the fall 2017 academic term begins, so if the PEP votes down this proposal, what is plan B for TCCS? To convince all of us here tonight that this is a real decision and not something that has already been decided, can you please tell us: what is plan B? Thank you.

*--Brian D’Agostino, Ph.D.*