

Fact Sheet: Proposed Truncation and Replacement of Frederick Douglass Academy IV's Middle School Grades (16K393)

Overview

In a concerted effort to ensure that all students have high-quality educational programs, the Department of Education (DOE) annually reviews the performance of all schools Citywide. Over the past several years, despite the best efforts of the community and the DOE to support Frederick Douglass Academy IV ("FDA IV"), the school has struggled to meet basic requirements for student success in grades 6-8.

On November 2, 2011, High School Superintendent Karen Watts held a School Leadership Team and parent meeting at the school to discuss what is working in the middle school grades at FDA IV, what needs to be improved, and how the community can work together to better serve students.

Based on an extensive review of qualitative and quantitative data and community feedback, the DOE has determined that FDA IV does not have the capacity to quickly improve on behalf of students in grades 6-8 and is proposing truncation of the school's middle school grades.

Proposing to truncate a school is a difficult decision. We are proposing to truncate FDA IV because it is the right action for current and future students in this community. If the proposal to truncate FDA IV is approved, the middle school grades would phase out gradually over the next several years. The truncation of the middle school grades would be complete in June 2014. A new middle school will be proposed to open in September 2012 in the building where FDA IV is located.

We hope you share our view that we can—and must—do better for students. The DOE will continue to work closely with FDA IV staff and families to ensure that all students receive the support they need to succeed.

Performance Summary – Middle School Grades

Proficiency: % of Students on Grade Level		Progress Report Grade			Quality Review
English	Math	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2010-2011
22%	32%	C	F	F	Underdeveloped

- The majority of Frederick Douglass Academy IV students in grades 6-8 remain below grade level in English and Math. Last year, only 22% of students were performing on grade level in English and only 32% of students were performing on grade level in Math – putting the school in the bottom 37% of middle schools Citywide in terms of English proficiency and in the bottom quarter in terms of Math proficiency.
- Frederick Douglass Academy IV is not adequately helping students in grades 6-8 to make progress. The school is in the bottom 3% of middle schools Citywide in terms of learning growth in English, and the bottom 6% in terms of learning growth in Math. Learning growth measures annual student growth on State ELA and Math tests relative to similar students. If these outcomes persist, Frederick Douglass Academy IV students will fall further behind their peers in other schools.
- The Progress Report measures the progress and performance of students in a school as well as the school environment, compared to other schools serving similar student populations. Frederick Douglass Academy IV middle school earned an overall F grade on its 2010-11 annual Progress Report, including an F grade for Student Progress, a D grade for Student Performance, and a C grade for School Environment. Its overall score put it in the bottom 1% among middle schools Citywide.

- The Quality Review uses a four-tiered rubric (well-developed, proficient, developing, underdeveloped) to measure how well a school is organized to support student achievement. FDA IV's middle school was rated "Underdeveloped" on its most recent Quality Review in 2010-2011, indicating deficiencies in the way that the school is organized to support student learning.
- Safety issues have been a concern at the school. On the 2011 New York City School Survey, only 45% of middle school teacher respondents agreed that discipline and order were maintained at Frederick Douglass Academy IV. Only 77% of student respondents agreed that they felt safe at Frederick Douglass Academy IV.
- Demand for Frederick Douglass Academy IV has declined steadily over the several years. Student enrollment in the middle school has declined 18% since 2006-07, suggesting that families are seeking better options.

Overview of Past Strategic Improvement Efforts at Frederick Douglass Academy IV

Staff members have worked hard to improve Frederick Douglas Academy IV but even with support the school has not produced adequate outcomes for students. To help the school's efforts to improve performance, the DOE offered numerous supports including:

Leadership Support:

- Provided extensive leadership training and mentoring for the principal and assistant principals to help them set clear goals for the school while developing the school's Comprehensive Education Plan and Language Allocation Plan.
- Coached and trained leadership on implementing plans in support of citywide instructional initiatives.
- Supported leadership and staff in generating meaningful strategies for improving the quality of classroom visitations, instructional feedback, and teacher reflections, as a way to raise teacher practice and improve student outcomes.

Instructional Support:

- Supported and trained teachers in instructional improvement strategies related to English Language Learner students and interventions available to increase achievement.
- Supported the school in assessment design, curriculum mapping, and student feedback tools aimed at meeting the necessary standards and expected student outcomes.
- Offered training for staff on successful ways to increase student outcomes through data analysis and various tools to understand student progress.

Operational Support:

- Advised school staff on budgeting, human resources, teacher recruitment and building management.
- Supported school staff on developing strategies and practices for improving student attendance and creating strategies for targeting attendance concerns.
- Supported school staff on improving the learning environment and deepening a culture of academic rigor through school wide protocols and procedures.

Student Support:

- Trained the School Based Support Team in comprehensive guidance programs and evidence based counseling strategies targeted at developing and improving the capacity for social and emotional supports at the school level.
- Facilitated student transcript and attendance analysis as a way to improve academic, structural, and organizational supports offered to students.
- Supported the school in developing and maintaining relationships with various organizations including Teen Action, a Department of Youth Community Development (DYCD) program aimed at increasing civic engagement.

What would the proposal mean for current students?

If this proposal is approved, FDA IV the middle school grades would be phased out gradually over the next several years and would not admit new sixth grade students after the end of this school year. All currently enrolled students would have the opportunity to continue their education at FDA IV, and would be supported through graduation.

In 2012-2013 school year, FDA IV would serve students in grades seven through twelve. Then, during the following school year, it would serve students in grade eight through twelve. FDA IV would cease to offer middle school grades in June 2014 after its middle school phase-out is complete, but the school would continue to serve students in grades nine through twelve.

Supporting Current Students

The DOE remains focused on helping FDA IV students to succeed. If this proposal is approved, FDA IV would be provided targeted, customized and intensive supports aimed at the unique needs of the school and its students. This support would be in the areas of budget, staffing, programming, community engagement, guidance and enrollment including, but not limited to:

- Helping the school provide students with options that support their advancement, and fully prepare students for their next transition point;
- Working with school staff to foster a positive culture; and
- Supporting school leadership in efficiently and strategically allocating resources to ensure a consistent and coherent school environment focused on student outcomes.

Plans for New Middle Schools for the FDA IV Community

As we work together to create better options for the FDA IV community, we will keep in mind what has worked at FDA IV and do our best to incorporate those positive elements into the plans for a replacement school. For example:

- We will work with the community to retain partnerships with community based organizations that are offering valuable services to the school; and
- We will consider what elements of the school structure are working and do our best to include those features in a replacement school.

Next Steps and What You Can Expect

In January, the DOE will invite the FDA IV community to participate in a joint public hearing co-hosted by the DOE, the District 16 Community Education Council, and FDA IV's School Leadership Team. As soon as the hearing has been scheduled, we will notify you of the date and also share with you the formal proposal to truncate FDA IV. During the joint public hearing, community members, including parents and students, will be able to share their thoughts on the truncation proposal.

The proposal to truncate FDA IV will be voted on by the PEP, which is composed of members appointed by Mayor Bloomberg and the five Borough Presidents, during a public meeting scheduled for **February 9, 2012**. During this meeting, the public will have another opportunity to comment on the proposal. If the PEP approves the proposal, FDA IV would not accept new sixth grade students next school year. If the proposal to open a new middle school in the building where FDA IV is located is approved, the new school would open in September 2012.

Sharing Your Concerns and Questions

The DOE is seeking your feedback on the proposal. We will record your comments and include them in our Analysis of Public Comment, which is presented to the PEP prior to the vote on the proposal. Please submit your comments at:

Phone: 212-374-0208

Online: <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/changes/brooklyn/proposal?id=88>