

Fact Sheet: Proposed Phase-out and Replacement of Manhattan Theatre Lab High School (03M283)

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 Manhattan Theatre Lab High School (“Manhattan Theatre Lab”), the school has struggled to meet basic requirements for student success.

On November 9, 2011, Manhattan High School Superintendent Tamika Matheson met with Manhattan Theatre Lab’s School Leadership Team and parents to discuss what is working at the school, 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 Manhattan Theatre Lab does not have the capacity to quickly improve and is proposing that the school be phased out.

Proposing to phase out a school is the most difficult decision we make. We are proposing to phase out Manhattan Theatre Lab because it is the right action for current and future students in this community. If the proposal to phase out Manhattan Theatre Lab is approved, the school would phase out gradually over the next several years. The school would close in June 2015 after its phase-out is complete. A new high school will be proposed to open in the building where Manhattan Theater Lab 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 Manhattan Theatre Lab staff and families to ensure that all students receive the support they need to succeed in school.

Performance Summary

Graduation Rate		Progress Report Grade			Quality Review Rating
2010-2011 (4 year rate)	2010-2011 (6 year rate)	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2010-11
46%	78%	B	C	F	Developing

- Graduation rates have steadily declined since 2008-09. Manhattan Theatre Lab’s four-year graduation rate (including August graduates) was 46% in 2011—well below the Citywide average of 65.1% and in the bottom 6% of high schools Citywide. (Citywide average is based on the 2010 New York State reported graduation results for NYCDOE students.)
- If Regents diplomas alone counted toward graduation—as will be the case next school year—the four-year graduation rate at Manhattan Theatre Lab would drop to just 22%, putting Manhattan Theatre Lab in the bottom 1% of high schools Citywide and well below the Citywide average of 60%.
- First year credit accumulation is a key predictor of student success because students who fall behind early on in high school often have trouble getting back on track to graduate. In 2010-2011, only 65% of first-year students at Manhattan Theatre Lab earned at least 10 credits. This rate of credit accumulation puts Manhattan Theatre Lab in the bottom 15% of high schools Citywide. (The Progress Report defines students earning at least 10 credits as students who earn at least 6 of those 10 credits in 3 of the following 4 subject areas: Math, English, Science, and/or Social Studies.)
- 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. Manhattan Theatre Lab earned an overall F grade on its 2010-11 Progress Report, with F grades on Student Progress, Student Performance, and School Environment. This overall progress report score puts the school in the bottom 2% of high schools Citywide.
- Only 41% of students in the Class of 2010 (students who entered high school four years earlier) enrolled in a two- or four-year college by December 31, 2010, 9 percentage points below the Citywide average of 50%.

Overview of Past Strategic Improvement Efforts at Manhattan Theatre Lab High School

Staff members have worked hard to improve Manhattan Theatre Lab High School 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:

- 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.
- Trained and supported leadership in systems and strategies for increasing graduation and monitoring credit accumulation.
- Trained leaders in strategic interventions around college and career readiness.

Instructional Support:

- Supported and trained teachers in improvement strategies for addressing the various needs and learning styles of English Language Learners and students with disabilities.
- Facilitated training for teachers in assessment design, curriculum mapping, and student feedback as tools aimed at meeting necessary standards and expected student outcomes.
- Provided professional development opportunities for teachers on best practices for addressing the needs of various learners through differentiated instruction and co-teaching.
- Offered professional development opportunities for school leaders on strategies for connecting with struggling readers and various interventions around supporting student learning in English language arts.
- Offered training for staff in 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.

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.

What would the proposal mean for current students?

If this proposal is approved, Manhattan Theatre Lab would gradually phase out over the next several years. Our top priority is ensuring that current Manhattan Theatre Lab students are supported through graduation. Below are enrollment plans for current Manhattan Theatre Lab students if the school were to be phased out.

- **Current, first-time ninth grade students** would have the option of completing high school at Manhattan Theatre Lab if they continue to earn credits on schedule. They may also apply to attend a different high school as a 10th grader for September 2012 by participating in the second round of the High School Admissions Process.
- **Current, repeating ninth grade students** would complete high school at Manhattan Theatre Lab as long as they earn credits on schedule. As the school becomes smaller, these students would receive more individualized attention to support them toward graduation and to help them prepare for post-secondary education and/or career plans. Students would also be encouraged to meet with their guidance counselor to review progress toward graduation.
- **Current 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students who are on track to graduate** would complete high school at Manhattan Theatre Lab if they continue to earn credits on schedule. As the school becomes smaller, these students would receive more

individualized attention to support them toward graduation and to help them prepare for post-secondary education and/or career plans. Students would also be encouraged to meet with their guidance counselor to review progress toward graduation.

- **Current 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students who are not on track to graduate** should meet with their guidance counselors to review their progress toward graduation and to discuss their options. Students could complete high school at Manhattan Theatre Lab or consider applying to a transfer high school.

If the proposal to phase out Manhattan Theatre Lab is approved, the school would not admit new ninth grade students after the end of this school year. Manhattan Theatre Lab would continue to serve students currently enrolled in the school. The school would close in June 2015 after its phase-out is complete.

Supporting Current Students

The DOE remains focused on helping Manhattan Theatre Lab students succeed. If this proposal is approved, Manhattan Theatre Lab 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 Schools for Manhattan

As we work together to create better high school options in Manhattan, we will keep in mind what has worked at Manhattan Theatre Lab 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 organizations that are offering valuable services to the school community; and
- We will consider what elements of the school structure are working and do our best to include those features in new schools in Manhattan.

Next Steps and What You Can Expect

In January, the DOE will invite the Manhattan Theatre Lab community to participate in a joint public hearing co-hosted by the DOE, the District 3 Community Education Council, and Manhattan Theatre Lab'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 phase-out proposal. During the joint public hearing, community members, including parents and students, will be able to share their thoughts on the phase-out proposal.

The proposal to phase out Manhattan Theatre Lab will be voted on by the Panel for Educational Policy, 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, Manhattan Theatre Lab would not accept new students next school year.

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: 212-374-3466

Online: <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/changes/manhattan/proposal?id=79>