



Notice
December 22, 2011

Dennis M. Walcott
Chancellor

The Proposed Phase-out of Washington Irving High School (02M460) in Building M460 Beginning in 2012-2013

I. Description of the subject and purpose of the proposed item under consideration.

The New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) is proposing to phase out Washington Irving High School (02M460, “Washington Irving”), an existing high school in building M460 located at 40 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, within the geographical confines of Community School District 2. It currently serves students in grades nine through twelve. The DOE is proposing to phase out Washington Irving based on its poor performance and the DOE’s assessment that the school lacks the capacity to turn around quickly to better support student needs.

If this proposal is approved, Washington Irving will no longer admit new ninth-grade students after the conclusion of the 2011-2012 school year. The school will continue to phase out one grade level at a time until it closes following the 2014-2015 school year. Current students will be supported as they progress towards graduation while remaining enrolled at Washington Irving. In cases where students do not complete graduation requirements by June 2015, the DOE will help students and families identify alternative programs or schools that meet students’ needs so that they may continue their education after Washington Irving completes phasing out.

Washington Irving is co-located with Gramercy Arts High School (02M374, “Gramercy Arts”), an existing high school that serves students in ninth through twelfth grades; the High School for Language and Diplomacy (02M399, “Language and Diplomacy”), an existing high school that currently serves students in grades nine through eleven; and International High School at Union Square (02M438, “International”), an existing high school that currently serves students in grades nine through ten. Language and Diplomacy and International are both currently phasing in, gradually growing to full scale as they each add a new grade of students annually. They both will serve students in grades nine through twelve at full scale. 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. In addition, M460 houses a Young Adult Borough Center (“YABC”).

Washington Irving offers eight Career and Technical Education (“CTE”) programs. It admits students in ninth and tenth grades through the Citywide High School Admissions Process in screened and educational option programs. Additional information about CTE programming and the High School Admissions Process is contained in Sections III.A and III.C of this proposal.

If this proposal is approved, Washington Irving will begin phasing out one grade at a time beginning in September 2012 and complete its phase-out after the 2014-2015 school year. In separate Educational Impact Statements (“EISs”), also posted on December 22, 2011, the DOE is proposing to open two new high schools, 02M533 (“New School 1”) and The Academy for Software Engineering (02M546, “Software”), both of which will offer CTE programs, in building M460 in September 2012. The proposals can be found at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2011-2012/Feb2012Proposals>.

The new schools are proposed to open with ninth grade, adding one grade annually and reaching full scale in the 2015-2016 school year with a grade span of nine through twelve. International and Language and Diplomacy will continue to phase in as planned, and Gramercy Arts will continue at its current grade span in the building.

Background on the DOE Decision-Making Process

The DOE strives to ensure that all students in New York City have access to a high-quality school at every stage of their education. Continuing to allocate space and resources to schools that are unable to significantly improve student performance is neither efficient nor equitable. The DOE has concluded that phasing out Washington Irving is appropriate due to the school’s history of poor performance.

Schools are identified for possible phase-out for the following three reasons: (1) they received poor grades on their annual Progress Report; (2) they received a poor score on their most recent Quality Review; or (3) they have been identified by the New York State Education Department (“SED”) as Persistently Low Achieving (“PLA”). Specifically, under the DOE’s accountability framework, all schools that receive a grade of D, F, or a third consecutive C grade or lower on their annual Progress Report and all schools that receive a rating of Underdeveloped on the Quality Review are evaluated for intensive support or intervention, including the possibility of phase-out. Progress Reports are released by the DOE each fall, and evaluate schools on a scale of A through F based on Student Progress, Student Performance, and School Environment (which includes attendance and survey feedback from parents, teachers, and sixth- through twelfth-grade students, where applicable). During Quality Reviews, experienced educators visit a school over several days, observing classrooms and talking with students, staff, and families. Schools are rated on a four-point scale, with “Underdeveloped” as the lowest-possible rating and “Well Developed” as the highest.

In addition, all schools identified by the SED as PLA, regardless of the school’s Progress Report grade and Quality Review scores, are considered for more intensive support or intervention including the possibility of phase-out. In December 2010, SED identified 67 PLA schools across the State, including 43 in New York City. High schools are identified as PLA based on the school’s graduation rate and/or their state test performance.

Washington Irving earned an overall F grade on its 2010-2011 annual Progress Report, with D grades on Student Progress and School Environment and an F grade on Student Performance. Washington Irving has been identified as a PLA school by the State since January 2010.

As a result, the DOE initiated a comprehensive review of Washington Irving, with the goal of determining what intensive supports and interventions would best benefit its students and the

Washington Irving community. During that review, the DOE looked at recent historical performance and demand data from the school, consulted with superintendents and other experienced educators who have worked closely with the school, and gathered community feedback.

The DOE initiated and completed a similar comprehensive review of Washington Irving during the fall of 2010, after Washington Irving earned a C on its 2009-2010 Progress Report and had been named a PLA school. Upon completion of the review in the fall of 2010, the DOE believed that, at the time, phase-out was not the appropriate intervention for the school.

Additionally, in May of 2011, the DOE assigned several PLA schools to one of four federally approved intervention models. Washington Irving became a Transformation school. This model's interventions aim to change the school by augmenting instructional and student support services and by creating new teacher incentive and teacher evaluation systems to build and retain quality staff.

The 2011-2012 school year is only the second in which the DOE has implemented Transformation at any school, and the DOE is still evaluating the degree to which the supports and interventions included in the model are supporting students and improving student achievement. In May of 2011, the DOE submitted applications for School Improvement Grants ("SIG") to the SED for most of its PLA schools, including Washington Irving. Washington Irving was approved for \$1,200,000 in SIG funding to support the Transformation model.

However, recent performance at Washington Irving, as demonstrated in the school's most recent Progress Report released at the end of October 2011, suggested the need to further investigate Washington Irving to determine if Transformation is still the best model for the school and is enough to enable the school to turn around quickly, or if a more significant intervention might be required to increase student performance. For example, the school's Overall Progress Report letter grade was consistent between 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 at a C, but declined to an F in 2010-2011. Similarly, the school's graduation rate in 2009-2010 rose to 55% (including August graduates), but declined in 2010-2011 by 7 percentage points to a graduation rate of 48%.

The stabilization of these significant measures between 2008 and 2010 suggested the possibility that supports like those in the Transformation model could increase student achievement. However, the dramatic decline in these metrics during the 2010-2011 school year suggests that the core supports in the Transformation model will not have a quick enough impact to meaningfully improve student outcomes.

As a result, after this year's investigation, the DOE no longer believes that the Transformation model will be an adequate intervention to assist Washington Irving to improve quickly enough to support current students to graduate and to support new students to progress to graduation. The Transformation model is the least aggressive of the available SIG models. The DOE believes that only the most serious intervention—the gradual phase-out and eventual closure of Washington Irving—will address the school's longstanding and declining performance struggles and allow for new school options to develop in building M460 that will better serve future students and the broader community. Given Washington Irving's declining performance, the DOE is now proposing to phase out the school and submit a SIG application to the New York State Education

Department to implement the Turnaround model. In New York State the Turnaround model allows for a school to be phased out and replaced by a new school over time.

II. Information regarding where the full text of the proposed item may be obtained.

The EIS can be found on the Department of Education's Web site:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2011-2012/Feb2012Proposals>.

Copies of the EIS are also available in Washington Irving High School's, Gramercy Arts High School's, High School for Language and Diplomacy's, and International High School at Union Square's main office.

III. Submission of public comment.

Written comments can be sent to D02Proposals@schools.nyc.gov

Oral comments can be left at 212-374-3466.

IV. The name, office, address, email and telephone number of the city district representative, knowledgeable on the item under consideration, from whom information may be obtained concerning the item.

Name: Benjamin Taylor
Office: Division of Portfolio Planning
Address: 52 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007
Email: D02Proposals@schools.nyc.gov
Phone: 212-374-3466

V. Date, time and place of joint public hearings for this proposal.

January 31, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.
Washington Irving High School
40 Irving Place
New York, NY 10003

Questions about the proposal should be directed as indicated in section IV above.

Speaker sign-up will begin 30 minutes before the hearing and will close 15 minutes after the start.

VI. Date, time and place of the Panel for Educational Policy meeting at which the Panel will vote on the proposed item.

February 9, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.
Brooklyn Technical High School
29 Fort Greene Place
Brooklyn, NY 11217