

Fact Sheet: Proposed Truncation and Replacement of P.S. 298 Betty Shabazz’s Middle School Grades (23K298)

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 P.S. 298 Dr. Betty Shabazz (“P.S. 298”), the school has struggled to meet basic requirements for student success in grades 6-8.

On October 11, 2011, District 23 Community Superintendent Ainslie Cumberbatch held a School Leadership Team and parent meeting at the school to discuss what is working in grades 6-8 at P.S. 298, what needs to be improved, and how the community can work together to serve students better.

Based on an extensive review of qualitative and quantitative data and community feedback, the DOE has determined that P.S. 298 does not have the capacity to improve its work quickly 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 P.S. 298 because it is the right action for current and future students in this community. If the proposal to truncate P.S. 298 is approved, the school would remain open, but 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, at which point the school would only serve students in kindergarten through fifth grade. A new middle school will be proposed to open in September 2012 in the building where P.S. 298 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 P.S. 298 staff and families to ensure that all students receive the support they need to succeed.

Performance Summary

Proficiency: % of Students on Grade Level		Progress Report Grade			Quality Review
English	Math	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2010-2011
15%	21%	A	C	F	“Developing”

- The overwhelming majority of P.S. 298 students remain below grade level in English and Math. Last year, only 15% of students were performing on grade level in English; the school was the lowest-performing K-8 school Citywide in terms of English proficiency. Only 21% of students were performing on grade level in Math – putting the school in the bottom 1% of K-8 schools Citywide.
- P.S. 298 is not adequately helping students to make progress. The school is in the bottom 7% of K-8 schools Citywide in terms of learning growth in English and in the bottom 11% of K-8 schools Citywide 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, P.S. 298 students will fall further behind their peers in other schools.
- The Quality Review uses a four-tiered rubric (well-developed, proficient, developing, and underdeveloped) to measure how well a school is organized to support student achievement. P.S. 298 was rated “Developing” on its most recent Quality Review 2010-2011.
- 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. P.S. 298 earned an overall F grade on

its 2010-11 annual Progress Report, including a D grade for Student Progress and F grades for Student Performance and School Environment. P.S. 298 has a history of underperformance. The school earned overall C grades on its 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2009-10 Progress Reports.

- Safety issues have been a concern at the school. On the 2011 New York City School Survey, only 24% of teacher respondents agreed that discipline and order were maintained at P.S. 298. Only 45% of student respondents agreed that they felt safe at school.

Overview of Past Strategic Improvement Efforts at P.S. 298

Staff members have worked hard to improve P.S. 298, but even with support the school's middle grades have 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.
- Coached and trained leadership on implementing plans in support of Citywide instructional initiatives and teacher effectiveness.
- Provided extensive support in assisting leaders to create a professional development plan to support teachers in curriculum development, instruction, and strategies to support struggling students to raise teacher practice and improve student achievement.

Instructional Support:

- Supported and trained teachers in creating curriculum maps, strategies aimed at addressing various students' entry points into content, and other instructional tools to raise teacher practice and improve student achievement.
- Facilitated training for teachers in assessment design and the creation of rigorous tasks and rubrics aligned with Citywide instructional initiatives.
- Provided professional development opportunities regarding best practices for staff on services and programming for students with disabilities.
- Worked with teacher teams to deepen practice and share best practices on utilizing data and technology in order to raise student achievement.

Operational Support:

- Advised school staff on budgeting, human resources, teacher recruitment, and building management.

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.
- Provided support for developing systems to review data and create clear expectations and interventions around attendance.
- Assisted in developing strategies to reach out to and support relationships with various community stakeholders and enrichment-programming providers, including 21st Century Community Learning Center, OASIS Children, and CAMBA.

What would the proposal mean for current students?

If this proposal is approved, P.S. 298's middle school grades would be phased out gradually over the next several years and the school would not admit new sixth-grade students after the end of this school year. Below are the enrollment plans for current P.S. 298 students, if the school were to phase out.

Grades K-5

- Current fifth-grade students may participate in the Middle School Choice process this year and enroll in sixth grade at a choice middle school for September 2012. If the new middle school is approved to open, all current fifth graders attending P.S. 298 will have an opportunity to submit a new school application in March. Additionally, the new middle school would provide a priority preference for elementary students residing in the P.S. 298 zone.
- Current kindergarten, first, second, third and fourth grade students will remain at P.S. 298 until the end of the school year and then would continue on to the next grade level at P.S. 298 in September 2012; these students can remain at P.S. 298 through fifth grade.

Grades 6-8

- Current eighth-grade students will have the opportunity to graduate at the end of this school year.
- Current sixth and seventh grade students will move on to the next grade at P.S. 298 in September 2012.
- P.S. 298 will not take in a new sixth grade class in 2012.

In school year 2012-13, P.S. 298 would serve students in kindergarten through fifth grade, seventh grade, and eighth grade. Then, during the following school year, it would serve students in kindergarten through fifth grade and eighth grade. The school will no longer serve middle school grades after June 2014; however, P.S. 298 would continue to serve students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Supporting Current Students

The DOE remains focused on helping P.S. 298 students to succeed. If this proposal is approved, P.S. 298 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 P.S. 298 and District 23 Community

As we work together to create better middle school options for the P.S. 298 community and all District 23 students, we will keep in mind what has worked at P.S. 298 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; 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 P.S. 298 community to participate in a joint public hearing co-hosted by the DOE, the District 23 Community Education Council, and P.S. 298'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 P.S. 298's middle school grades. During the joint public hearing, community members, including parents and students, will be able to share their thoughts on the proposal.

The proposal to truncate P.S. 298's middle school grades 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, P.S. 298 would not accept new sixth grade students next school year. If the proposal to open a new middle school in the building where P.S. 298 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=74>