

Fact Sheet: Proposed Phase-out and Replacement of M.S. 203 (07X203)

Overview

We want every community to have high quality school options for families. Every fall, the Department of Education (DOE) reviews the performance of all schools Citywide. Over the past several years, despite the best efforts of the community and the DOE to support M.S. 203 the school has struggled to meet basic requirements for student success.

On October 25, 2012, District 7 Community Superintendent Yolanda Torres held meetings at the school with the School Leadership Team, staff, and parents to discuss what is working at M.S. 203, 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 M.S. 203 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 M.S. 203 because it is the right action for current and future students in this community. If the proposal to phase out M.S. 203 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.**

We hope you share our view that we can—and must—do better for students. The DOE will continue to work closely with M.S. 203 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			Most Recent Quality Review Rating
English	Mathematics	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2010-2011
7%	10%	C	C	D	“Developing”

- The overwhelming majority of M.S. 203 students remain below grade level in English Language Arts and Math. Only 7% of students were performing on grade level in English—putting the school in the bottom percentile of middle schools Citywide. Only 10% of students were performing on grade level in math—putting the school in the bottom 1% of middle schools Citywide. In both ELA and Math proficiency, M.S. 203 ranks at the bottom of District 7 middle 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. M.S. 203 earned a D grade on its 2011-2012 annual Progress Report, including a D grade for Student Progress, an F grade for Student Performance, and a C grade for School Environment. This year’s Progress Report marks a further decline in M.S. 203’s performance after the school received C grades in the 2010-2011 and 2009-2010 school years.
- M.S. 203 was identified by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) as a Priority school, defined by NYSED as one of the bottom 5% of schools in the state.
- M.S. 203 was rated “Developing” on its most recent Quality Review in 2010-2011, indicating deficiencies in the way that the school is organized to support student learning.
- The school’s attendance rate remains below most other middle schools. The 2011-2012 attendance rate was 88% compared to the Citywide middle school average of 93%, putting M.S. 203 in the bottom 5% of New York City middle schools.

Despite our best efforts, the school has struggled

We recognize that M.S. 203 staff members have worked hard to improve the 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 has offered numerous supports to M.S. 203 including:

Leadership Support:

- Assisting the principal and assistant principals in the development of instructional plans and goals for the school year, in support of the school's Comprehensive Education Plan.
- Facilitating on-going professional development opportunities for the principal and assistant principals aimed at improving the school leadership's capacity to develop strategic improvement plans for the school.
- Coaching the principal and assistant principals on the use of classroom observations and feedback to enhance teacher effectiveness.

Instructional Support:

- Providing training for school staff in research-based instructional practices aimed at increasing the academic achievement of English Language Learners.
- Providing direct coaching for teachers to improve instructional practice and enhance curriculum design in the subject areas of math, English Language Arts and Social Studies.

Operational Support:

- Advising school staff on student attendance tracking, budgeting and human resources.
- Training school staff on the use and implementation of data systems to track student performance and inform instructional planning.

Student Support:

- Assisting the school administration in the development of a school safety plan to reduce suspension rates, in order to help the school establish a school culture and environment conducive to high academic achievement.
- Coaching the school in evidence-based guidance and counseling strategies to build the school's capacity to provide social and emotional support to students.

What would the proposal mean for current students?

If this proposal is approved by the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP), M.S. 203 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 M.S. 203 and would be supported through graduation.

- Current sixth- and seventh-grade students will continue on to the next grade level at M.S. 203 in September 2013; these students may remain at M.S. 203 through their eighth-grade graduation.
- The Office of Student Enrollment Current will work with the families of current sixth-grade students who do not meet promotional standards to determine an appropriate placement in another District 7 middle school.
- Current eighth-grade students will have the opportunity to graduate at the end of this school year.
- If, in a future year, students attending M.S. 203 are held over in a grade that M.S. 203 will no longer serve, then the Office of Student Enrollment will work with these students' families to determine an appropriate placement in another middle school in District 7 or in the district in which the students reside.

Next school year, M.S. 203 would serve students in grades seven and eight. Then, during the following school year, it would only serve students in grade eight. The school would close in June 2015 after its phase-out is complete.

Supporting Current Students

The DOE remains focused on helping M.S. 203 students to succeed. If this proposal is approved, M.S. 203 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 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.

Next Steps and What You Can Expect

In the next two months, the DOE will invite the M.S. 203 community to participate in a joint public hearing co-hosted by the DOE with the District 7 Community Education Council and M.S. 203'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 phase out M.S. 203. During the joint public hearing, community members, including parents and students, will be able to share their thoughts on the phase-out proposal. There will also be a separate proposal to expand the co-location of Success Academy Charter School – Bronx 1 to serve middle school grades. Feedback on this proposal can also be shared at this Joint Public Hearing.

The proposals to phase out M.S. 203 and to expand the co-location of Success Academy Charter School – Bronx 1 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 **March 11, 2013**. During this meeting, the public will have another opportunity to comment on the proposals. If the PEP approves the phase-out proposal, M.S. 203 would not accept new students next school year.

Sharing Your Concerns and Questions

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

Phone: 212-374-5159

Email: D07Proposals@schools.nyc.gov

Online: <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/changes/bronx/feedback?id=345>