

Fact Sheet: Proposed Phase-out and Replacement of I.S. 296 The Anna Gonzalez Community School (32K296)

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 best efforts of the community and the DOE to support I.S. 296 The Anna Gonzalez Community School, the school has struggled to meet basic requirements for student success.

On October 13, 2011, District 32 Community Superintendent Lillian Druck held a School Leadership Team and parent meeting at the school to discuss what is working at I.S. 296, 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 I.S. 296 does not have the capacity to improve quickly 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 I.S. 296 because it is the right action for current and future students in this community. If the proposal to phase-out I.S. 296 is approved, the school would phase out gradually over the next several years. The school would close in June 2014 after its phase-out is complete. A new middle school will be proposed to open in September 2012 in the building where I.S. 296 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 I.S. 296 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 Rating
English	Math	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2010-2011
14%	20%	A	C	F	“Developing”

- The overwhelming majority of students at I.S. 296 remain below grade level in English and Math. Last year, only 14% of students were performing on grade level in English, putting the school in the bottom 14% of middle schools Citywide in terms of English proficiency. Only 20% of students were performing on grade level in Math, putting the school in the bottom 6% of middle schools Citywide in terms of Math proficiency.
- I.S. 296 is not helping students to make adequate progress. The school is in the bottom 1% of middle schools Citywide in terms of learning growth in English and the bottom 9% of middle 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 those outcomes persist, 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. On the 2010-2011 Progress Report, I.S. 296 received an overall grade of F, including F grades for Student Progress, Student Performance, and School Environment. Additionally, in 2010-2011 the school was designated by the State as Persistently Lowest Achieving, which means that I.S. 296 was in the bottom 5% of Title I schools in the State in terms of student performance.
- The school’s attendance rate remains below most middle schools. The 2010-2011 attendance rate at the School was 88%, compared to the Citywide middle school average of 92.6%, putting I.S. 296 in the bottom 11% of all middle schools Citywide in terms of attendance.

- 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. I.S. 296 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.
- Safety issues have been a concern at the school. On the 2011 New York City School Survey, only 22% of teacher respondents believed that order and discipline are maintained at the school and only 50% of student respondents believed that they were safe in the hallways, bathrooms, and locker rooms.

Overview of Past Strategic Improvement Efforts at I.S. 296

Staff members have worked hard to improve J.H.S. 296 Anna Gonzalez Community 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:

- 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 and teacher effectiveness.
- Coached leaders on the implementation of curriculum mapping, strategies for language development for English Language Learners, integrated co-teaching models, data analysis as a tool for instructional improvement, and methods for identifying and sharing best practices.

Instructional Support:

- Trained and coached teacher teams on creating rigorous and standards-based assessments.
- 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 English Language Arts teachers in the development of discussion and guided writing techniques aimed at increasing student interest, developing teacher practice, and raising student achievement.
- Offered training to staff on technology integration and utilizing technology to improve teacher practice, raise student interest, and increase achievement.
- Coached teachers in content-specific instructional improvements across disciplines, with a focus on ELA, Math, and Social Studies.
- Provided training for teacher teams in various data driven tools, supports, and measures aimed at improving student achievement through developing data analysis as a best practice.

Operational Support:

- Coached school staff on budgeting, human resources issues, teacher recruitment, and building management.
- Provided leadership support and training in monitoring progress and meeting compliance regulations for English Language Learners and Special Education students.
- Supported school with grants and other funding opportunities such as the Center for Arts Education SASI grant.

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.
- Trained staff in family engagement and methods for analyzing, monitoring, and improving student attendance in an effort to increase student academic readiness.

- Developed and supported meaningful and beneficial school partnerships with the Hispanic Coalition, Brooklyn College, and the Beacon Program.

What would the proposal mean for current students?

If this proposal is approved by the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP), I.S. 296 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 I.S. 296, and would be supported through graduation.

In school year 2012-13, I.S. 296 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 2014 after its phase-out is complete.

Supporting Current Students

The DOE remains focused on helping I.S. 296 students to succeed. If this proposal is approved, I.S. 296 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.
- 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 the I.S. 296 and the District 32 Community

As we work together to create better options for the I.S. 296 community and all District 32 students, we will keep in mind what had worked at I.S. 296 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 community; 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 I.S. 296 community to participate in a joint public hearing co-hosted by the DOE with the District 32 Community Education Council and I.S. 296'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 I.S. 296. 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 I.S. 296 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, I.S. 296 would not accept new students next school year. If the proposal to open a new middle school in the building where I.S. 296 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=72>