

Fact Sheet: Proposed Phase-out and Replacement of Washington Irving High School (02M460)

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 Washington Irving High School (“Washington Irving”), the school has struggled to meet basic requirements for student success.

On November 10, 2011, DOE Chief Academic Officer Shael Polakow-Suransky and Manhattan High School Superintendent Tamika Matheson met with Washington Irving’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 Washington Irving 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 Washington Irving because it is the right action for current and future students in this community. If the proposal to phase out Washington Irving 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 September 2012 in the building where Washington Irving 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 Washington Irving 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
2010-11 (4-year rate)	2010-11 (6-year rate)	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2010-11
48%	46%	C	C	F	Proficient

- Graduation rates at Washington Irving have remained at or below 55% for the last ten years. Last year, Washington Irving High School’s four-year graduation rate (including August graduates) was 48%— well below the Citywide average of 65.1% and in the bottom 7% 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 Washington Irving would drop to just 41%, 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 2010-11, 72% of first-year students at Washington Irving High School earned at least 10 credits. (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. Washington Irving earned an overall F grade on its 2010-11 annual Progress Report, with D grades on Student Progress and School Environment, and an F grade on Student Performance. Additionally, in 2010-2011 the school was designated by the State as Persistently Low Achieving and is currently implementing the Federal SIG model, Transformation.
- Only 30% 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, 20 percentage points below than the Citywide average of 50%.

- The school's attendance rate remains below most other high schools. The 2010-2011 attendance rate was 74% compared to the Citywide high school average of 86%, putting Washington Irving in the bottom 3% of all high schools Citywide in terms of attendance.
- Demand for Washington Irving has fallen steadily over the past few years. Washington Irving High School has four Educational Option programs and two Screened programs to which students apply as part of the High School Admissions Process. Between 2009-10 and 2010-11 demand for its Educational Option programs decreased significantly and remains well below the Citywide average of 8.5 applications per seats across all school programs.

Overview of Past Strategic Improvement Efforts at Washington Irving High School

Staff members have worked hard to improve Washington Irving 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.
- Supported leadership and staff in generating meaningful strategies for improving the quality of classroom visitations and instructional feedback, as a way to raise teacher practice and improve student outcomes.

Instructional Support:

- Supported and trained teachers in collaborative teaching and classroom engagement strategies as a way to deepen instructional expectations, student interest, and classroom rigor.
- Supported the school in assessment design, lesson planning, and curriculum mapping as tools aimed at meeting the necessary standards and expected student outcomes.
- Offered training for staff on successful ways to implement an inquiry team and using protocols to analyze student progress and performance as a way to understand teacher effectiveness and student outcomes.

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 and creating strategies for targeting attendance concerns.
- Supported school staff in the implementation of the School Improvement Grant as a way to raise student outcomes and generate improved levels of teacher effectiveness.
- Supported the development of a Small Learning Communities Grant (SLC) and assisted in writing a grant that allowed the school to participate in the Performance-Based Assessment /Learning Site Pilot.

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.
- Facilitated comprehensive training to implement a rigorous advisory program that offers college advising and social and emotional supports to students.
- Worked closely with the school to facilitate enrichment activities including a Junior Night, Senior Night, and College Visits.

What would the proposal mean for current students?

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

- **Current, first-time ninth grade students** would have the option of completing high school at Washington Irving 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 Washington Irving 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 Washington Irving 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 Washington Irving or consider applying to a transfer high school.

If the proposal to phase out Washington Irving is approved, the school would not admit new ninth grade students after the end of this school year. Washington Irving 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 Washington Irving students succeed. If this proposal is approved, Washington Irving 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 the Washington Irving and Manhattan Community

As we work together to create better options for the Washington Irving community and the Manhattan community, we will keep in mind what has worked at Washington Irving 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 a replacement school.

Next Steps and What You Can Expect

In January, the DOE will invite the Washington Irving community to participate in a joint public hearing co-hosted by the DOE, the District 2 Community Education Council, and Washington Irving'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 Washington Irving 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, Washington Irving would not accept new students next school year. If the proposal to open a new high school in the building where Washington Irving 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: 212-374-3466

Online: <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/changes/manhattan/proposal?id=80>