

Fact Sheet: Proposed Closure of M.S. 45/S.T.A.R.S. Prep Academy (04M045)

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. 45/S.T.A.R.S. Prep Academy (M.S. 45) the school has struggled to meet basic requirements for student success.

On October 15, 2012, District 4 Community Superintendent Luz Cortazzo held meetings at the school with the School Leadership Team, staff, and parents to discuss what is working at M.S. 45, 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. 45 does not have the capacity to quickly improve and is proposing that the school be closed.

Proposing to close a school is the most difficult decision we make. We are proposing to close M.S. 45 because it is the right action for current and future students in this community. If the proposal to close M.S. 45 is approved, the school would close in June 2013.

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. 45 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 | 2009-2010 |
| 12% | 12% | C | C | D | “Proficient” |

- The overwhelming majority of M.S. 45 students remain below grade level in English Language Arts and Math. Only 12% of students were performing on grade level in English—putting the school in the bottom 4% of middle schools Citywide. Only 12% 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. 45 ranks at the bottom of District 4 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. 45 earned a D grade on its 2011-2012 annual Progress Report, including a D grade for Student Progress, a D grade for Student Performance, and an F grade for School Environment. This year’s Progress Report marks a further decline in M.S. 45’s performance after the school received C grades in the 2010-2011 and 2009-2010 school years.
- M.S. 45 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.
- 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. 45 in the bottom 4% of New York City middle schools.
- Safety issues have been a concern at the school. On the 2011-2012 New York City School Survey, only 4% of teachers believed that discipline and order were maintained at M.S. 45.

Despite our best efforts, the school has struggled

We recognize that M.S. 45 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. 45 including:

Leadership Support:

- Coaching the principal in the use of classroom observations and feedback to enhance teacher effectiveness.
- Supporting and training the principal in using accountability data to develop and implement a strategic action plan for school improvement.
- Assisting school leadership in the development of instructional plans and goals for the school year, in support of the school's Comprehensive Education Plan.

Instructional Support:

- Providing coaching and professional development for teachers on ways to strengthen instruction and improve academic outcomes for special education students.
- Facilitating collaboration among English Language Arts and math teachers from nearby schools to share best practices and deepen collective understanding of citywide instructional expectations.
- Providing professional development for math teachers in integrating technology into lessons to enhance instruction.

Operational Support:

- Training school staff in data systems used to track student attendance and academic programming.
- Advising the school on budgeting and human resources.

Student Support:

- Coaching the school in evidence based guidance and counseling strategies to build the school's capacity to offer social and emotional support to students.
- Providing coaching to school staff in the implementation of strategies for reducing suspensions and improving school environment and culture.
- Supporting the school in the implementation of a grant-funded high school readiness program for overage students in middle school grades, designed to help students accumulate high school credits and prepare for Regents Exams.

What would the proposal mean for current students?

If this proposal is approved by the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP), M.S. 45 would close in June 2013. Our top priority is ensuring that current M.S. 45 students are supported through graduation. Below are enrollment plans for current M.S. 45 students if the school were to be closed.

- The Office of Student Enrollment will work with current sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students who do not graduate to determine an appropriate placement in another District 4 middle school or a school in the district in which the students reside for those students to complete their middle school education.
- Current eighth-grade students will have the opportunity to graduate at the end of this school year.
- M.S. 45 will no longer enroll any students in 2013.
- If your child is not promoted at the end of this school year, he or she will remain in the same grade. If your child is repeating a grade, the Office of Student Enrollment will work with your family to determine an appropriate placement in another District 4 middle school or a school in the district in which the students reside.

If the proposal to close M.S. 45 is approved, the school would close at the end of the 2012-2013 school year. Current eighth-grade students who meet promotional standards at the end of the school year will graduate in June 2013. Current sixth- and seventh- -grade students and current eighth-grade students who do not meet promotional standards will be offered seats in another middle school.

Supporting Current Students

The DOE remains focused on helping M.S. 45 students succeed. If this proposal is approved, M.S. 45 would be provided supports 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, and
- Working with school staff to foster a positive culture.

Next Steps and What You Can Expect

In the next two months, the DOE will invite the M.S. 45 community to participate in a joint public hearing co-hosted by the DOE, the District 4 Community Education Council and M.S. 45'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 closure proposal. During the joint public hearing, community members, including parents and students, will be able to share their thoughts on the closure proposal. There will also be a separate proposal to expand the co-location of Harlem Village Academy Leadership Charter School. Feedback on this proposal can also be shared at this Joint Public Hearing.

The proposals to close M.S. 45 and to expand the co-location of Harlem Village Academy Leadership will be voted on by the Panel for Educational Policy ("PEP"), 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 closure proposal, M.S. 45 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 proposal. Please submit your comments to:

Phone: 212-374-3466

Email: D04Proposals@schools.nyc.gov

Online: <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/changes/manhattan/feedback?id=340>