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At Bankrupt NYC Private School, a Bold Expansion Plan Went Awry.

Manhattan Country School, founded in 1966, is on the brink of closing

In the hyper-competitive landscape of New York City's private schools, Manhattan Country School bore all the hallmarks of success.

It boasted a valuable campus on a leafy Upper West Side block and a farm in the Catskills where generations of students have learned how to milk cows, weave and plant squash and beans. It also had a dedicated community of families and alumni dating to the progressive institution's founding in 1966 at the peak of the civil rights era.

But behind the brick facade of its six-story main building on West 85th Street, where roughly 250 kids from kindergarten through eighth grade started the school year, MCS was in dire financial straits, strained in part by the same demographic forces plaguing small private schools and colleges nationwide.

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