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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**
J.H.S. 022 Jordan L. Mott - 4/3/12

1 [START 290_214]

2 FEMALE VOICE: " - - " same method. We are
3 not stupid. That's all I've got to say.

4 [Applause]

5 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Thank you very much. Ms.
6 Harrison? And then " - - " from 25 " - - ".

7 MS. CAROL HARRISON: Okay, good afternoon,
8 everyone. I'm Carol Harrison, the " - - ".

9 [Applause]

10 MS. CAROL HARRISON: Vanessa, this is not
11 you. And " - - ", this is not " - - " you. But
12 the rest of the town, let's be serious. Okay?
13 We're putting all these proposals in for this
14 new school " - - " number " - - " street. Why
15 couldn't we put " - - " this new-coming school
16 into " - - "? " - - ". And we can establish a
17 rapport for a number of years. I mean, at some
18 point, let's think about the children, District
19 Nine. Let's offer them some stability. Thank
20 you.

21 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Thank you " - - ".

22 [Applause]

23 MR. RICHARD FARKAS: Good evening. I'm " -
24 - " Farkas. I'm the " - - ". First of all, I
25 want to thank the school " - - ". I'm really

1 discouraged because we're not here because of
2 the failure of the students or parents, or
3 administration " - - ". We're here because of "
4 - - " administration " - - " the Board of
5 Education. We have to understand what's
6 happening here. And the truth really is that
7 this community, this school, is being held
8 hostage to a political game. That game, this
9 school is-

10 [Applause]

11 MR. RICHARD FARKAS: This school was never
12 on the posing list. Every year we get a list of
13 posing schools. Last year this school and 32
14 other schools were cited by the State Education
15 Department as persistently low-achieving. And
16 as a result, there was an agreement. The
17 agreement was between Chancellor, the Department
18 of Education, Chancellor Wallpack [phonetic],
19 and the United Federation of Teachers to, along
20 with the State Education Department, to turn
21 these schools into a restart and transformation,
22 to fund these schools, to get this school going
23 in a direction. The Deputy Chancellor said the
24 principal is doing a wonderful job here. And
25 the programs are working. Well, I don't

1 understand the conflict. If the administration
2 is doing their job and the programs are taking
3 place, then why are we closing the school? And
4 whose fault is it if the school is being closed?
5 And if the school is being closed and teachers
6 are being let go, then why was the
7 administration being let go as per what the
8 requirements are in transformation and restart?

9 [Applause]

10 MR. RICHARD FARKAS: So the real issue was
11 and still is, is that we and the Department of
12 Education were involved in a process to talk
13 about an evaluation system. And when we
14 couldn't agree, the Department of Education
15 walked away from that. And then the mayor said,
16 well, you know what? If you could not agree on
17 that evaluation system, we're going to close
18 these 33 schools. And that's exactly what's
19 happening. Now as in the interim, the UFT and
20 the city and the state have agreed to an
21 evaluation system. And the Department of
22 Education doesn't want to sit down and negotiate
23 that so that these schools are not held hostage.
24 And that's the absolute truth.

25 [Applause]

1 MR. RICHARD FARKAS: And everyone has to
2 understand what this is about. So yesterday,
3 out of the 33 schools, all of a sudden, seven
4 schools just got off the list. Now, what are
5 the politics of those seven schools? So this
6 school, and everyone has to understand, is being
7 played in a political game. And we have to
8 understand that your kids and our teachers and
9 our parents and our community should not be held
10 accountable for that. It should be the
11 Department of Education.

12 If the Department of Education wants to come
13 in here and fund this school and create the
14 programs necessary to do it, they have the state
15 money, the " - - " grants that we got through
16 the federal program. And they have the ability
17 to do so. They don't want to do it because they
18 want to play this game of closing schools down.
19 And that's what all this is about, is trying to
20 create a legacy. And that legacy is, we'll
21 close as many schools as we can, re-open new
22 schools, and all they're doing is reshuffling
23 the chairs on the Titanic. Thank you.

24 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Thank you, Mr. Farkas.
25 Next speaker? Caldwell Simmons [phonetic]?

1 Caldwell Simmons? Caldwell Simmons? I
2 apologize if I am mispronouncing the name.
3 Caldwell Simmons? No? Speaker number four,
4 Lady Kathryn?

5 LADY KATHRYN: Good afternoon, everyone. My
6 name is Lady Kathryn. I am a parent of a
7 student here. I do my internship here for
8 Metropolitan College. And I'm also an SLT
9 member. So you know what? Elmont [phonetic]
10 has my full support. It's not a question. It's
11 more like a comment. When you make these
12 changes in these schools, do you realize these
13 schools and communities are like a family?
14 You're coming in with your rules and your
15 policies and disassembling the family. You're
16 taking away the structure which is the core and
17 fiber of our children's future. I do not think
18 it's fair that you use numbers to determine how
19 much a child's education is worth. If you want
20 quality education, come in here and see what we
21 do. And then take that into consideration.
22 Thank you.

23 [Applause]

24 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Thank you, Ms. Kathryn.
25 Next Speaker, Brianna Walker. Ms. Walker?

1 Brianna Walker? And as Ms. Walker gets to the
2 mic, if speakers six thru ten could make their
3 way to the microphone? Thank you, ladies and
4 gentlemen. Ms. Walker?

5 MS. BRIANNA WALKER: Hi. I'm a teacher at
6 JHS 22. And I wasn't really sure what I was
7 going to say when I got up here. But you told
8 us to talk about some things that we can
9 celebrate. And there's so many great things
10 going on here. And you already mentioned them.
11 But honestly, we do need that help. That " - -
12 " has created such a great environment. And I'm
13 a special ed. teacher. So I teach in the ICT
14 class. We have two residents there now. And it
15 has broken our group from a one to fifteen ratio
16 into four small groups, where I can actually
17 help my students and target their needs
18 specifically. In the proposal, it definitely
19 mentions those types of things, that pending the
20 " - - ", because even in the proposal you're
21 still saying pending the " - - ". So I think
22 everyone is very adamant about, why not just
23 help JHS 22? Why not just invest in us?
24 Because we are on the right track, and we are
25 doing the right things. And I have seen my

1 students grow from writing at just one sentence
2 to explain their thoughts--and this is in my
3 self-contained class as well--to whole paragraphs
4 and getting excited and taking ownership of
5 their work and saying, can you put this on your
6 bulletin board? So I just want to say that
7 that's not just in my classroom. It's happening
8 in a lot. So we need to celebrate JHS 22 and
9 invest in this school and our students.

10 [Applause]

11 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Thank you, Ms. Walker.
12 Mr. Stephen Bennett? Mr. Bennett? You want the
13 mic turned up? Is that better? I'm sorry,
14 ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Stephen Bennett?

15 MR. STEPHEN BENNETT: Good evening, ladies
16 and gentlemen. I am Stephen Bennett. I am the
17 Grounds Field Director for the Council of School
18 Supervisors and Administrators, the union that
19 represents the principals and assistant
20 principals in all schools in the city. And I do
21 represent the principals and assistant
22 principals in the Bronx. The New York City
23 Department of Ed.'s latest attempt to close 33
24 schools--now, I guess, it's 26--which were already
25 in the process of a three-year reform program,

1 is a political maneuver that is not rooted in
2 sound educational practice. Rather it began to
3 deploy, designed to avoid negotiations with CSA
4 and the UFT, on the new principal and teacher
5 evaluation systems. The motivation behind that
6 ploy is the following turnaround model, a model
7 that does not require principal and teacher
8 evaluations and allows the city to close and
9 immediately reopen schools under new names.
10 What else would be new about them? 50% of the
11 teachers would be new, while 50% of the former
12 teachers would be put into excess willy-nilly.

13 There is nothing educationally sound about
14 this intervention plan. It is being introduced
15 for cynical reasons, not to help children. It
16 will not contribute to the development of sound
17 principal and teacher evaluation systems.

18 Furthermore, in removing half the staffs from
19 these schools and recruiting replacements from
20 other schools, the New York City Department of
21 Education will destabilize schools throughout
22 the system one after another like dominoes.

23 While these human costs are the most
24 important ones, there are fiscal costs too.
25 Removing 1,800 teachers and tossing them into

1 the ATR where they will work as substitutes at
2 full salary, will cost the city approximately
3 \$180 million annually. Thank you.

4 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Thank you, Mr. Bennett.

5 [Applause]

6 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Ms. Sasha Warner-Berry?
7 Ms. Berry?

8 MS. SASHA WARNER-BERRY: Was there another
9 person before, because I thought-

10 MR. JESSE MOJICA: [interposing] Yes, we
11 did-

12 MS. SASHA WARNER-BERRY: --number six.

13 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Caldwell Simmons? Ms.
14 Enriquez, we have you as number nine.

15 MS. SASHA WARNER-BERRY: Okay. Good
16 evening, everyone. My name is Sasha Warner-
17 Berry, and I'm an organizer with a group called
18 the Parent Action Committee. Some of you in the
19 room know us. Some of our members are parents
20 who are here tonight who have children in JHS
21 22. And partly I'm here to support them, and
22 partly I'm here to give a message out to
23 everyone who's here, really, about the process.
24 Many times I know that people feel frustrated
25 and come to these types of public hearings but

1 feel that the decisions have already been
2 made, or that regardless of what their comments
3 are tonight, they're not going to be taken into
4 consideration when the time comes to make the
5 final decisions.

6 So partly I just want to let parents here
7 know that our group is out there. We're called
8 the Parent Action Committee, and we're always
9 looking for more people to participate. What we
10 do is work to make the schools better for all
11 kids. But for especially at district nine and
12 especially in the South Bronx, we believe all
13 kids have the same right to a great education.
14 And if they're not getting it, then a big part
15 of the solution is parents and the community
16 getting involved and really having a voice in
17 the decisions that are happening in our schools.

18 So I just wanted to invite everyone to an
19 event that's happening on Thursday. Our group
20 is part of a larger coalition that's city-wide.
21 And what's happening here tonight is just one of
22 the many schools that is going through the same
23 process right now of either being closed or put
24 into a turnaround model. And many of those
25 parents, students, teachers, and others, allies,

1 elected officials, are all coming together to
2 try to oppose that process and to really send
3 Mayor Bloomberg a message that this is not what
4 our schools need.

5 So if anybody's interested, I'm going to be
6 passing out a pink flier, if you didn't get it
7 already. We will be meeting outside this school
8 at 2:30 on Thursday to go together to the press
9 event in Manhattan where you can come together
10 with other parents, community members, teachers,
11 and students from all the schools who are being
12 affected by these changes. Thank you so much.

13 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Thank you, Ms. Berry.

14 [Applause]

15 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Mr. Jose Villanueva? Mr.
16 Villanueva?

17 MR. JOSE VILLANUEVA: Good afternoon,
18 parents, teachers, boards. I was invited to
19 talk about this document, this proposal that
20 brought us here which has been a long trip. At
21 the beginning very disappointed and very sad
22 and, we could say, pessimist. Because it began
23 saying that we have no chance to have any " - -
24 " with that part " - - " in this situation. And
25 at the same time, if you just give me a teacher

1 of what we know " - - ". The numbers and
2 indicators that-

3 [Background Noise]

4 MR. JOSE VILLANUEVA: --seconds to determine
5 if the school is performing. We know all the
6 facts about this. Now this document does not
7 say any of what to do to solve the problems that
8 we're facing with the students. We want
9 students to improve, and does this document say
10 anything about that? Sorry. My " - - " about
11 this, but I didn't see anything about it. I
12 thought this school, they were going to give me
13 some light to see what we're going to do with
14 the improvement with a new school. What do you
15 call it? The turnaround. So I have to say
16 today, my vote for this proposal is that, I'm
17 sorry, it doesn't represent. Thank you.

18 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Thank you, Mr.
19 Villanueva. Thank you.

20 [Applause]

21 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Ms. Enriquez?

22 MS. CARMEN ENRIQUEZ: Good afternoon. My
23 name is Carmen Enriquez.

24 MR. JESSE MOJICA: If you could get closer
25 to the mic, sir?

1 MS. CARMEN ENRIQUEZ: As a mother and a
2 part of this school, as a parent who has a child
3 in this school, I believe this school does work
4 because I did bring my child who did not know
5 English. And he learned English in this school
6 in less than six months, less than six months.

7 [Applause]

8 MS. CARMEN ENRIQUEZ: Me, as a mother, I'd
9 like to know what would benefit this school. If
10 it changes the name and it's changing the
11 administration, what's the benefits—

12 [Background Noise]

13 MS. CARMEN ENRIQUEZ: I understand without
14 children, there won't be any school. As a
15 parent, I'd like to know what exactly is going
16 to happen. Thank you.

17 [Applause]

18 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Thank you, Ms. Enriquez.
19 Our next speaker is Pinea Pena. Pinea Pena?

20 MR. PINEA PENA: Good evening, everyone. I
21 have been teaching here in Lincoln High School
22 for 23 years. And I have a question for the
23 panel. The question is, what " - - " been doing
24 to avoid the closure of our school? Because I
25 believe we demand an explanation from the Board

1 of Education. Thank you.

2 [Applause]

3 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Thank you, Mr. Pena.

4 Next speaker, Alberta Martin. Alberta Martin?

5 [Applause]

6 MS. ALBERTA MARTIN: Good evening, everyone.

7 My name is Alberta Martin. I'm New York Chief
8 Chapter Leader at the Bronx Writing Academy. My
9 question actually was eloquently addressed by
10 State Representative Gibson, but I would like to
11 elaborate further.

12 It appears that in recent years a trend the
13 DOE has been doing is when they close down a
14 school, they replace it with several other
15 schools. So even though at the beginning of
16 this hearing you said that the Bronx Writing
17 Academy is not being affected by this process,
18 we are concerned that this is just the beginning
19 of what will eventually have a major effect on
20 us. So I'm hoping that by the end of this
21 evening, you'll be able to answer this question.

22 I would like to know, how is putting
23 multiple schools in a building where all schools
24 are competing for the same space, use of gyms,
25 the need for technology space, the need to have

1 programs, how is this making education better?
2 Alright? And so how does this improve the
3 quality of education? How can you say this
4 building is underutilized, but we constantly
5 struggle for space? You don't have science
6 labs. We can't do music. Bronx Writing Academy
7 is delegated to one floor as it is. If you put
8 the next school that comes in, you'll probably
9 put them on one floor which means you'll, I
10 heard Representative Gibson say we'll be at 75%.
11 In the minds of the DOE, that means that there's
12 space to stick another school. And how is
13 packing that many schools in one building going
14 to improve education? Okay?

15 It's already been proven that physical
16 exercise is important to student learning. So
17 what happens when a school can't use the gym?
18 There's enough hours in the day. There's not
19 enough space if you've got three or four schools
20 in one building. Okay? That's my question.
21 That's what we would like to know, because we
22 already struggle to get the resources that we
23 need as it is. And if you pack this school with
24 more than two schools, how is that going to help
25 our kids and this community in particular? They

1 need all the resources they can get. They
2 don't need stuff taken away from them. Okay?
3 Thank you.

4 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Thank you, Ms. Martin.
5 Next speaker is Ms. Nancy Graciana [phonetic].
6 Nancy Graciana? Ms. Graciana? Ms. Graciana?
7 Okay, we've been joined by the council member
8 Stevenson. Sir, would you like to " - - "? I'm
9 sorry, " - - " Assemblyman " - - ".

10 ASSEMBLYMAN STEVENSON: Good evening,
11 everyone. It's a pleasure to be here. I know
12 more than a quarter of my colleagues " - - "
13 Vanessa Gibson, who I work closely with. And me
14 too, I'm probably just as disturbed as most of
15 the parents and teachers are about the mayor's
16 behavior in addressing the way he's dealing with
17 these school closings. Some of the students
18 from my district attend this school as well as
19 others like 339 that's going through the same
20 situation. He's just not speaking on or
21 negotiating at all and saying nothing about but
22 to close it.

23 Another transitional school, we feel this is
24 wrong. Many students have relationships with
25 the teachers in helping them with their growth

1 and education. And just to cut it like this,
2 bring in a new school, bring in new teachers, it
3 breaks relationships. And it causes these
4 students to now have to make and have new
5 relationships that may take several years to " -
6 - " back of these teachers.

7 So I oppose the closing of the school. And
8 I'm hoping we could revisit this with the mayor
9 and see how we could get this worked out with
10 the better " - - " fashion that we put the
11 children's learning and education first. And
12 not just to come over to " - - " and say close
13 the school and transition. That's not the right
14 way. That's not fair for the teachers, not fair
15 for the parents. It's not fair for who we all
16 should be here for, the children. Thank you.

17 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Thank you, Assemblyman.

18 [Applause]

19 MR. JESSE MOJICA: So ladies and gentlemen,
20 that concludes the speaking portion, the public
21 speaking portion, of our joint public hearing.
22 And now we're going to do the question and
23 answer period. There will be, as we said
24 before, there were cards that were collected
25 with questions. And now I will turn it over to

1 our Deputy Chancellor, Shael Svransky, who
2 will address the questions that were raised.

3 MR. SHAEL POLAKOW-SVRANSKY: Let me first
4 say I think I want to recognize and thank
5 everyone who came here this evening. I heard
6 that there's tremendous support in this
7 community for this school. I heard from
8 teachers at the school that they are working
9 hard and trying to improve education for the
10 students. We heard about some of the positive
11 things that have happened in the past year with
12 smaller class sizes in the Special Education
13 Department. And we also have heard concerns
14 from local political leaders and other broader
15 members of the community about, why is this
16 happening and what does it actually mean?

17 So I want to try and answer some of those
18 questions that were raised. And I also want to
19 recognize that it may be that we ultimately do
20 disagree on some of what would really help the
21 school to improve. And we can disagree. And
22 the point of having this conversation is to make
23 sure all different viewpoints are heard on this
24 issue before a final decision is made.

25 So let me first address, there were two

1 questions that came in on the comment cards.
2 The first one is, how can you guarantee this
3 change will be productive for this community?
4 And I want to speak about that in two ways. A
5 number of people also asked similar questions in
6 their comments about, well what exactly is the
7 proposed change in the educational impact
8 statement? And so if you read that statement,
9 what you will find is that there is a very
10 detailed proposal about what would be done as
11 part of this reform in this building. And it
12 includes some really positive things that I
13 think both kids and parents, and teachers, would
14 really benefit from.

15 A stronger focus on literacy and writing,
16 getting kids to do much more writing than they
17 currently do, putting more adults in each
18 classroom, working to use partnerships with
19 local universities, working to leverage the
20 resources of teachers who serve kids with
21 disabilities and English language learners, to
22 ensure that on average you would see two adults
23 in every classroom which would allow more
24 attention for each of the students, a health and
25 wellness program that would focus on making sure

1 kids have nutritious breakfasts, making sure
2 that there's supports in place around both
3 physical activity as well as health. And some
4 of the programs that have existed in some of the
5 small academies in the school could be expanded
6 under this new proposal so that every kid in the
7 school would have access to sports programs like
8 soccer, to visual arts, to the band program. I
9 think that there's some misunderstanding that
10 the band program would be eliminated. That is
11 untrue. The proposal for the new school is to
12 continue that as part of the program.

13 And also the school has started to build the
14 technology program. That is really interesting.
15 It was named for the school that would
16 participate in the innovation zone, which means
17 putting work online and allowing kids to present
18 digital portfolios of their work, which is a
19 skill that kids need as they move forward. So
20 this is just some of the ideas that is outlined
21 in this new school proposal.

22 And we also talked at the beginning about
23 opportunity to make sure that we have the
24 strongest possible staff working to support
25 these goals. And I think that there may be an

1 honest disagreement about whether this will
2 work better than what we have working right now.
3 But we actually believe the way to support the
4 school, the way to strengthen it, is to go
5 forward with this proposal and try to create
6 this new school along the lines of the vision
7 that was just outlined with the leadership of
8 Principal Rosenberry [phonetic]. And my hope is
9 that many of the great teachers that we heard
10 from tonight and are here, will apply and become
11 a part of this new school community.

12 And I want to emphasize, again, that if this
13 is successful, we hope to get additional money
14 from the federal turnaround " - - ". And we
15 also expect that the kids and the families who
16 are here will continue to attend the school. So
17 there will not be a disruption for those kids
18 and families. That is what is being discussed
19 tonight.

20 There was another specific question about
21 how the supports for English language learners
22 and special education students will be impacted
23 by this proposal. Those are mandates that kids
24 are entitled no matter what school they're in.
25 One of the things, if you read the educational

1 impact statement you'll see, is there's some
2 really innovative ideas about how the new school
3 would work to serve our special education
4 students more effectively by making sure that
5 the schedule for the special ed. program is
6 aligned very closely with the schedule for the
7 general ed. program so that we can maximize the
8 flexibility of having students with their
9 general education peers as much as possible
10 where it's appropriate but then pulled out where
11 necessary to provide supports and tracking their
12 mastery of what they're learning using some of
13 those new online tools. So I would expect that
14 we would see in this new school better
15 performance for those students who are some of
16 the ones that are most vulnerable.

17 I also heard questions about the stability.
18 And I think that's a real question. I think
19 that whenever there's a change, it has a risk
20 associated with it that some relationships that
21 are working could be broken. That is why the
22 decisions about who will be staffing the classes
23 in the school, will be made by a school-based
24 committee so that they are able to select the
25 most qualified teachers here in the school. And

1 that committee is led by the principal and has
2 representatives from the Teacher's Union and
3 designees appointed by the chancellor so that we
4 can make the decisions that will best support
5 the kids' needs.

6 I also heard a question about, is this going
7 to mean that all the teachers are going to be
8 fired? That's not what's going to happen. I
9 want to be very clear about that. That
10 committee that I just talked about will have an
11 opportunity, just like in any new school, to
12 review all the applications. And teachers are
13 entitled to apply, and if there are enough
14 qualified applicants, they are guaranteed at
15 least 50% of the slots in the new school. And
16 it could be more.

17 The other question that I heard was about
18 the negotiations that have happened between the
19 chancellor and the UFT president. I want to let
20 people know that those negotiations are
21 continuing. They met just last week, and they
22 are continuing to meet. We are hopeful that we
23 will reach an agreement with the UFT. We both
24 agree that the current rules around how we
25 evaluate teachers are not working. We have not

1 yet reached an agreement though. And we will
2 continue to do that, but that, at this point, is
3 unrelated to this proposal. It is separate from
4 this proposal. If that agreement is reached,
5 that does not impact the proposal for this new
6 school.

7 I also want to speak to the question that
8 was asked about transformation. And why would
9 we dismantle all of the hard work that's been
10 done this year on transformation? And I want to
11 be very clear that that hard work, where the
12 work is succeeding, has the potential to become
13 part of the new school proposal. Because the
14 goal of this new school proposal is to take the
15 things that are really working well in the
16 current school and make that part of the new
17 school. That's the goal of the proposal. So
18 that work should not be wasted. That work
19 should become part of this new school where it's
20 actually succeeding.

21 So I think that there was just one other
22 question that came in as I was just reading.
23 And let me address that. Why does the closure
24 affect the students and teachers but not the
25 administration? Doesn't leadership come from

1 administration? In each school, we have to
2 make a decision about where do we stand on the
3 strength of a leader? And there are some
4 schools where we have serious concerns about
5 leadership. This school is not one of them. I
6 have spent time walking these halls and visiting
7 classrooms with this principal and talking with
8 her about her work. And I've been incredibly
9 impressed with what she has done so far. And I
10 see a lot of potential. I know that there are
11 other members of my team who have been here over
12 the course of the year. We never ever make a
13 decision based solely on quantitative data. We
14 always look at the school specifically and
15 what's working and what's not working in the
16 school.

17 And I think that it's fair to have concerns
18 and suspicions about things being, someone said,
19 it's all about numbers or dollar bills. I don't
20 think that that is reflected in what's actually
21 happening here. If you look at the last year
22 where the State Assembly and Senate, last year,
23 passed a budget that cut hundreds of millions of
24 dollars because the state was in a budget
25 crises. And they had no choice. And the

1 federal government cut. And New York City
2 lost \$1.7 billion as a result of the state and
3 federal budget crises. New York City inserted
4 \$2 billion of its own money to match that.
5 That's \$2 billion more that was put in to
6 support New York City Public Schools. There is
7 no one getting rich at the expense of New York
8 City Public Schools. The budget for New York
9 City Public Schools has gone, in the last 10
10 years, from \$13 billion to over \$20 billion.
11 And do you know where that money has gone?
12 There's a 43% raise over that period for
13 teachers in our system so that we can be
14 competitive with the districts outside. And
15 there are more teachers that have been hired
16 during that period, over these last 10 years, in
17 our system.

18 There have been real, real improvements. If
19 you looked at the Bronx graduation rate 10 years
20 ago versus today, you see thousands more kids
21 graduating high school than we had before. We
22 used to have 20 high schools in the Bronx. Now
23 we have over 100. There are really good options
24 for kids that in many cases are working well.
25 So I'm proud of these reforms. They are

1 working. And I want to ask each of you who
2 are here tonight, as you consider this, to be
3 part of this effort. We need the energy and the
4 passion and the support of this school community
5 to be part of this effort. Thank you.

6 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Thank you, Deputy
7 Chancellor. I just want to also say that we
8 thank you, ladies and gentlemen. We appreciate
9 your feedback on today's joint public hearing.
10 I want to let you know that the information was
11 shared with us today will be shared with the
12 Panel for Educational Policy which will have its
13 hearing on April 26th at 6 p.m. at the Prospect
14 Heights campus, which is located at 883 Classon
15 Ave., Brooklyn, New York, to vote on this
16 proposal. Oh, I'm sorry, ladies and gentlemen.
17 We have one more question.

18 MS. VANESSA GIBSON: Thank you. So as many
19 of you, as we are preparing to leave, let me
20 just make one comment in a question. Within my
21 testimony, I talked about the transformation
22 model, which was supposed to be a three-year
23 model, to determine if Junior High School 22
24 would improve. Through that transformation
25 model, this school has made significant

1 improvements. My question to the department
2 is, now that we are implementing this restart
3 model, how long will we implement this model
4 before we see that it doesn't work and then will
5 have a third model? And the reason I say that
6 is because I recognize that in government, and
7 this comes from the federal government to the
8 state government down to the local, we tend to
9 put these unrealistic demands on many of our
10 schools and our teachers and our principals.
11 And while we are always looking at data, data
12 drives a lot of what we do. But we must
13 remember that these are kids, and these are
14 students that need help. So within that
15 timeframe—

16 [Applause]

17 MS. VANESSA GIBSON: Within the timeframe of
18 this transformation model and the fact that 22
19 has done well, my question is, why are we not
20 allowing the time to happen for them to continue
21 to move in the right direction? Because under
22 the principal, under Linda's leadership, 22 is
23 doing very well. And we do not want that to
24 stop.

25 So with all respect, Mr. Deputy Chancellor,

1 I know you said that this is not about money.
2 But the agreement that the Department and the
3 UFT had with the evaluation plan, I voted for a
4 bill two weeks ago, and I voted yes on an
5 evaluation plan that there was an agreement. So
6 I was under the impression that the 33 schools
7 in the city would not be closed because right
8 now we are in the implementation phase. Because
9 there is an agreement on teacher evaluation. So
10 my question is, why does this school, along with
11 the other schools, still need to be closed if
12 this is not about money? If that grant
13 opportunity—

14 [Applause]

15 MS. VANESSA GIBSON: If that \$900,000 was
16 not hanging in the window, we would not be here
17 talking about the new model. So we cannot say
18 that this is not about money. We must be
19 realistic with parents, and we must tell them
20 the truth. Because far too often, we are hiding
21 behind—

22 [Applause]

23 MS. VANESSA GIBSON: --we are hiding behind
24 these endless cycles of closures and
25 restructuring, and we're not being truthful with

1 parents. We owe them that. I owe them that
2 as a legislator. I have to be accountable for
3 these parents.

4 [Applause]

5 MS. VANESSA GIBSON: Not only are they
6 voting for me, but they are expecting me to
7 speak up on behalf of their children. And I
8 always say, I've been at 22 a lot. I visit the
9 Bronx Writing Academy, and I'm always in my
10 schools. And all that I say to the Department
11 is help us. Help Superintendent Espizedo
12 [phonetic]. Help Principal Rosenberry. Give us
13 a chance before you set us up to fail. There
14 are too many challenges in our district—

15 [Applause]

16 MS. VANESSA GIBSON: --to allow our
17 students, our immigrant students, our ESL, our
18 ELL, students with major challenges that
19 continue to be left behind. How do I know
20 they're left behind? Because when I visit
21 colleges, they struggle because they need more
22 money. Because the students, through the grace
23 of God, that are able to get out of high school,
24 are struggling in a remedial class in college.
25 Because somewhere along the line, from pre-K to

1 grade 12, someone failed them.

2 And middle school is the most challenging
3 part of our education growth in young people.
4 So this is the opportunity right before us.
5 This is the crossroads where we are. We cannot
6 leave these kids behind because, sadly enough,
7 there are jails upstate waiting for our kids.

8 [Applause]

9 MS. VANESSA GIBSON: There are jails
10 upstate. It is true. It is true, and it's
11 heartbreaking that there are jails that will
12 welcome our kids, incarcerate them, criminalize
13 them before they have future. We cannot allow
14 that to happen to 22. This is a family, and we
15 cannot break apart this family. Help us. Give
16 us the resources we need here at 22. Help Linda
17 and her team. We need help. The numbers are
18 turning around. They're moving in the right
19 direction. But we cannot be assured that this
20 new model is going to work. Do we have the time
21 to invest in yet another plan at the expense of
22 our children? They don't have time. Every day
23 is a wasted opportunity that we are allowing our
24 young kids to fall behind. And I just had to
25 say that because it is heartbreaking.

1 Again, the budget that I support, I'm
2 expecting the money to come into my communities.
3 And I'm expecting my schools to do better. But
4 this transformation model has not even had a
5 full year of implementation. And now you're
6 saying that it's a possibility that it could be
7 implemented into the new model. Well, how am I
8 assured that the school is still going to be
9 able to be successful?

10 So I am asking this administration to please
11 consider the ramifications of what you are
12 deciding. You sit in a different seat than us.
13 You as educators, we as parents, we are in this
14 together.

15 [Applause]

16 MS. VANESSA GIBSON: We are in this
17 together. Do not believe that parents are not
18 engaged in this community. We are. Many of us
19 struggle, but we are engaged, and we are
20 committed. And if need be, we will continue to
21 stand together and fight for this school because
22 this is about the future of 22. And we have to
23 stand for something. Who is going to take care
24 of our kids? No one. We must stand for these
25 children. They are looking to us, and they are

1 crying out. Before a jail takes them, please
2 consider this proposal moving forward. Please
3 consider this and the future of Junior High
4 School 22.

5 So again, let me revert back to my question.
6 How long will we allow this proposed restart
7 model to work, before we determine that it is
8 not working?

9 MR. SHAEL POLAKOW-SVRANSKY: I want to thank
10 you. I think your leadership is inspiring. And
11 I am a teacher who spent my whole career working
12 in Northern Manhattan and the Bronx and working
13 with kids who have struggled in exactly the ways
14 that you described. I share that passion, and I
15 share that commitment. And I think that even
16 though we might have some disagreements about
17 the right strategy, I think we do share a real
18 belief that parents need to be empowered. Kids
19 need to be served effectively. And we need to
20 create a collaborative community in this
21 building that's going to do that.

22 And part of what I was trying to outline is
23 a set of opportunities that goes beyond what we
24 think we can do within the transformation model,
25 that will be more successful and will build on

1 what we've done so far. And I hear the
2 skepticism. And I recognize that in some cases
3 this hasn't worked. But we've opened 500 new
4 schools in this administration, and 95% of those
5 schools are doing really, really well. You have
6 some of them in this community. They are all
7 across the Bronx. And we can go to them
8 together and see examples of what we are
9 envisioning in many, many places.

10 I cannot guarantee in a specific place that
11 it will definitely work because it depends on
12 the leadership in that community, the faculty in
13 that community, the parents in that community.
14 But I can say that that is the commitment, is to
15 try to make it work. And when we see things
16 that aren't going fast enough—I mean, last year,
17 let's be honest, 92% of the middle schools in
18 the city, outperform the kids in this school.
19 So there is a real need to dramatically change
20 the results in this school, even though there's
21 been some progress. And we need to be honest
22 about that and work hard at that.

23 And so when you look at this process around
24 other new schools, we always allow those schools
25 to get to the point where they have been in

1 existence for at least two years before we
2 even start to evaluate them and say, is this
3 school meeting the standards compared to other
4 schools?

5 And it's a process that involves a lot of
6 conversations over time where we talk with
7 people inside the schools, we visit the school,
8 we look at how the kids are doing. And it's not
9 something that's done regularly. But when
10 something isn't working, it's important to try
11 to change it because even though it may be
12 destabilizing, it also, in hundreds of schools
13 across the city, has brought the schools to
14 life. And that's powerful. And that's
15 important. And that is the belief that we're
16 basing this proposal on.

17 And I hear that there's concerns about
18 whether or not it will work. But either way,
19 whichever way this goes, we do need this
20 community to be part of that process. And we
21 need your leadership. We need the parents. We
22 need the teachers to be part of that process.
23 So thank you.

24 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Thank you, ladies and
25 gentlemen. Once again, I just wanted to say

1 that we appreciate your feedback at this
2 hearing. We appreciate your comments, and those
3 will be shared with the Panel for Educational
4 Policy which will have its hearing on April 26th
5 at 6 p.m. at the Prospect Heights campus at 883
6 Classon Ave. in Brooklyn. You can also continue
7 to call the number if you have additional
8 comments and concerns. The number is " - - "
9 with respect to this proposal. The number is
10 212-374-5159. Or the email address to share
11 your concerns is d--as in David--
12 09proposals@schools.nyc.gov. I want to thank
13 you all for coming this evening. This joint
14 public hearing is officially adjourned. Thank
15 you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

16 [END 290_214]
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C E R T I F I C A T E

1
2 The prior proceedings were transcribed from
3 audio files and have been transcribed to the
4 best of my ability.

5
6 Signature Maggie S. Quason

7 Date April 5, 2012
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