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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION – OFFICE OF  
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**

**Grade Expansion of Queens Gateway  
to Health Sciences Secondary School  
– 5/11/10**

1 [START 163\_014.mp3]

2 MS. FRANCESCA PENA: Well good evening,  
3 everyone. Thank you for coming tonight to the  
4 joint public hearing for the grade expansion of  
5 Queens Gateway to Health Sciences Secondary  
6 School. I am Queens High School Superintendent  
7 Francesca Pena. We have asked the District 28  
8 CEC, Ms. Denise Nelom, Citywide Council on High  
9 Schools representative Monica Ayuso, and the  
10 school leadership team from Queens Gateway and  
11 District 75 program to join us to this joint  
12 public hearing. This hearing is being recorded.  
13 The purpose of this hearing is for you to  
14 provide comments about the proposal. Before I  
15 describe the proposal I want to make sure you  
16 are all aware of the opportunity to provide your  
17 input. All those who wish to speak must sign up  
18 in the speaker's sign-up area located just  
19 outside the auditorium, or the room. Yes, in  
20 the back of the room. In addition, we welcome  
21 any comments and feedback you may have at any  
22 time during the Panel for Education Policy,  
23 before the Panel for Education Policy votes on  
24 this proposal at its May 18, 2010 meeting that  
25 will be held in Queens. The sign-up list will

1 close at 6:15 p.m. The e-mail and phone number  
2 where comments may be made is  
3 d28proposals@schools.nyc.gov, and the telephone  
4 number is (718) 935-4198. This e-mail address  
5 and phone number can be found on the  
6 Department's website under the section for the  
7 Panel for Education Policy. Before I begin to  
8 read the proposal, I wanted to make sure you are  
9 all aware that the Regional Educational Impact  
10 Statement posted on March 5, 2010 was amended on  
11 April 12, 2010, as a result of the questions  
12 raised by the community, to include more  
13 information. The additional information  
14 included is as follows: more information about  
15 the District 75 program that will be co-located  
16 with Queens Gateway in the new building, more  
17 information about how the space in the building  
18 will be allocated, and more information on the  
19 zone K-6 elementary schools and choice options  
20 in Districts 28 and 29. On April 26, 2010 the  
21 Department issued a revised Educational Impact  
22 Statement in response to feedback received from  
23 the community. The revised proposal is to  
24 implement the grade expansion of Queens Gateway  
25 in the 2011-2012 school year, and not in 2010-

1 2011 as originally proposed. In the 2011-2012  
2 school year, Queens Gateway to Health Sciences  
3 Secondary School, an existing school that serves  
4 grades 7-12, will implement a reconfiguration  
5 plan to expand its current grade configuration  
6 to 6-12. In the original Education Impact  
7 Statement posted on March 5, 2010 and the  
8 amended Educational Impact Statement posted on  
9 April 12, 2010, the proposal to expand Queens  
10 Gateway's grade reconfiguration from 7-12 to 6-  
11 12 was stated to begin in the 2010-2011 school  
12 year. However, based on feedback from the  
13 Queens Gateway school leadership team and  
14 community, the proposal has been revised to  
15 postpone the expansion of Queens Gateway grade  
16 expansion until 2011-2012 school year. This  
17 will allow Queens Gateway to have more time to  
18 prepare for the addition of grade 6 that is now  
19 proposed to take place in 2011-2012. Queens  
20 Gateway is currently located in school building  
21 Q680, located at 150-91 87th Road in Queens, in  
22 Community School District 8. However, prior to  
23 the start of the 2010-2011 school year,  
24 construction of Queens Gateway's new facility  
25 will be completed and the school will move to

1 the facility, school building Q695, which is  
2 located at 160-20 Goethals Avenue in Queens, in  
3 District 28. The move of Queens Gateway to its  
4 new facility, Q695, was approved by the  
5 community board in July, 2007. Interpretation  
6 services are available if any parent needs  
7 translation services. A District 75 program,  
8 P752Q will be co-located with Queens Gateway in  
9 Q695. P752Q is an existing District 75 school  
10 serving a total of 398 students in grades 9-12  
11 in five sites in District 24 and 28 in Queens.  
12 P752 @ Q695 will be sited in Q695 beginning in  
13 2010-2011 and will serve new and existing  
14 students in grades 9-12 classified as  
15 emotionally disturbed or developmentally delayed  
16 on their Individualized Education Program. New  
17 construction sites, like Q695, designate  
18 specific space in their construction plans for  
19 District 75 programs. The Q695 building has a  
20 capacity of 805 students, but no target  
21 utilization rate is available because the  
22 building has not been completed and is not  
23 currently occupied by a school. Q695 has  
24 sufficient space for Queens Gateway and P752Q @  
25 Q695 to operate at full organizational capacity

1 with the grade expansion of Queens Gateway.  
2 The projected at scale enrollment of Queens  
3 Gateway and P752Q @ Q695 is approximately 775-  
4 800 students. The Department of Education  
5 reaffirms the commitment made by Deputy Mayor  
6 Dennis Walcott to the community, including  
7 Queens Community Board 8, in 2007, to cap  
8 enrollment in the Q695 building at 800. With  
9 the addition of the 6th grade at Queens Gateway,  
10 the combined enrollment of Queens Gateway and  
11 P752Q @ Q695 will not exceed 800 students. For  
12 the 2010-2011 school year, Queens Gateway will  
13 continue to serve grades 7-12 in Q695.  
14 Beginning in 2011-2012, Queens Gateway will add  
15 grade 6, and will serve grades 6-12. The grade  
16 expansion of Queens Gateway will create  
17 approximately 80 new grade 6 seats in District  
18 28. This proposal addresses the need to create  
19 grade alignment and to increase access to high  
20 quality middle school options in District 28.  
21 For the 2011-2012 school year, students enrolled  
22 in grades 5 and 6, for the 2010-2011 school  
23 year, current grade 4 and 5 students, from other  
24 schools in Districts 28 and 29 may apply to  
25 Queens Gateway through the middle school choice

1 process and may be enrolled at Queens Gateway  
2 beginning September of 2011, subject to seat  
3 availability. Since the release of the original  
4 Educational Impact Statement posted on March  
5 5th, 2010, all current 5th grade students in  
6 Districts 28 and 29 received a new middle school  
7 application for the proposed 6th grade and the  
8 7th grade process was executed according to the  
9 main round timeline at Queens Gateway. The  
10 applications were due on March 23, 2010. If the  
11 proposal had been approved by the Panel for  
12 Education Policy as originally presented, 6th  
13 grade seat offers to Queens Gateway would have  
14 been made in May, 2010. Since the revised  
15 proposal is now for the 2011-2012 school year,  
16 beginning in 2012 however, only 5th grade  
17 students will be able to apply for entry into  
18 Queens Gateway for the middle school grades.  
19 Should the proposal be approved, students in 5th  
20 grade will be made aware of the 6th grade option  
21 at Queens Gateway early on in the 2010-2011  
22 school year. Notifications about Queens Gateway  
23 grade expansion will be included in the middle  
24 school choice packet for Districts 28 and 29,  
25 which will be distributed to all 5th grade

1 students in Districts 28 and 29. Additionally,  
2 there will likely be a District 28 middle school  
3 fair in the fall of 2010. Once the grade  
4 expansion is implemented, all current 5th grade  
5 students in District 28 or 29 interested in  
6 attending Gateway will have the opportunity to  
7 apply to the school, even if they are enrolled  
8 in a school where 5th is not the terminal grade.  
9 If 7th and 8th grade seats become available as a  
10 result of attrition, the students who are  
11 interested in attending Queens Gateway and meet  
12 the selection criteria may request a transfer  
13 through the Borough Enrollment Office. When  
14 there are available seats, students who are new  
15 or are requesting a transfer may request a  
16 referral to Queens Gateway from the Office of  
17 Student Enrollment. If the school approves the  
18 referral, the student is then enrolled. Please  
19 note that Queens Gateway currently admits middle  
20 school students from District 28 and District 29  
21 via its school-based application process.  
22 Admission of students from both District 28 and  
23 District 29 has been a standard practice for the  
24 last several years. Any changes to restrict the  
25 Queens Gateway admission process to only

1 District 28 will be reviewed in consultation  
2 with the Office of Student Enrollment prior to  
3 the 2011-2012 school year. Queens Gateway is a  
4 screened school. Admission criteria will not  
5 change as the result of the addition of the 6th  
6 grade at Queens Gateway. Students in grades 9-  
7 12 apply for a seat at Queens Gateway through  
8 the citywide high school admissions process.  
9 Priority is given to continuing Queens Gateway  
10 8th grade students. The creation of additional  
11 grade 6 students to be served by Queens Gateway  
12 will help align middle school entry grades and  
13 ensure that all students in Districts 28 and 29  
14 have access to high quality middle school  
15 options. Given the new middle school options  
16 that have opened in District 28 and the  
17 alignment of middle school entry grades at grade  
18 6, the Department of Education began  
19 conversations with the District 28 Community  
20 Education Council in the fall of 2009 to move  
21 towards middle school choice in District 28  
22 beginning in the 2011-2012 school year. Given  
23 this move towards middle school choice, the  
24 Department of Ed. has also begun discussions on  
25 truncating K-6 schools to K-5 to align exit

1 grades of elementary schools and to further  
2 increase choice for all students in District 28.  
3 Any proposal to truncate District 28 elementary  
4 schools from K-6 to K-5 for implementation in  
5 the 2011-2012 school year will be addressed in  
6 future Educational Impact Statements. I will  
7 now turn the floor to the Principal, Ms.  
8 Edwards, from Gateway.

9 MS. CYNTHIA EDWARDS: Thank you very much.  
10 Good evening. Superintendent Pena, members from  
11 Community School District 28, members of the  
12 CEC, members of the CCHS, representatives from  
13 the Office of Portfolio Planning, and from our  
14 support organization, CEIPEA, members of Queens  
15 Gateway SLT, staff of Queens Gateway, students,  
16 friends, ladies and gentleman, again, it is  
17 indeed an honor to be with you this evening at  
18 this public hearing to address the new proposal  
19 for the 6th grade reconfiguration at Queens  
20 Gateway in the hope of putting to rest the  
21 discourse that's been reverberating over the  
22 past six months. I am also delighted that we  
23 have the opportunity of revisiting the concerns  
24 in this forum, because we have come with another  
25 perspective after listening to the issues and

1 the concerns of the different constituencies.  
2 To address the concern as it impacts Queens  
3 Gateway, it is our understanding that the  
4 proposal, the new proposal, is for a 6th grade  
5 reconfiguration for the school year 2011-2012.  
6 The rationale is that one year later we will  
7 better prepared to plan for and receive the 6th  
8 grade in our school. While I stand firm on the  
9 belief that students deserve the best learning  
10 environment to enrich their academic experiences  
11 and foster their learning goals, it would be  
12 unjust to underscore the fine work of our  
13 colleagues in the elementary school. We believe  
14 that our school provides a nurturing and  
15 challenging environment for all students,  
16 whether they would come from the 6th grade or  
17 7th up to 12, just to learn and to be  
18 successful. But amid the rumors of the capping  
19 the 6th grades from the elementary schools, we  
20 were faced with making the decision to accept  
21 the 6th grade students. And over the years, and  
22 since the inception of this school, our target  
23 entry population has been 6th grade students for  
24 entry into our 7th grade. We would like to  
25 posit this afternoon that if there is not a plan

1 to place or to de-cap the 6th grade, then the  
2 past practices should remain unchanged.  
3 However, if there is de-capping of the 6th grade  
4 as we were led to believe at the elementary  
5 grade level, then we will most heartedly welcome  
6 the 6th grade entry to Queens Gateway to Health  
7 Sciences Secondary School. So in the absence of  
8 that prospect, I will have to stand in support  
9 of my School Leadership Team that as internal  
10 representative stakeholders we will make a  
11 proposal at the appropriate time for a grade  
12 expansion that we deem necessary for Queens  
13 Gateway. With that I thank you so much ladies  
14 and gentlemen.

15 MS. PENA: Thank you. Thank you very much.  
16 I will now turn the floor to the School  
17 Leadership Team of Queens Gateway if they would  
18 like to make a presentation.

19 MR. GHANDI MOUSSA: Good evening everyone  
20 and welcome. My name is Ghandi Moussa. I'm the  
21 Assistant Principal here at Queens Gateway to  
22 Health Sciences Secondary School, and I'm also  
23 the SLT Chair. Before I make my prepared  
24 statement, on behalf of the SLT I would like to  
25 acknowledge the presence of some SLT members. I

1 would like to acknowledge the presence of Ms.  
2 Gaduso [phonetic], Ms. Williams, and Ms.  
3 Gardenbachs [phonetic], from the parent  
4 constituency, Ms. Huntley and Ms. Mujas  
5 [phonetic], from the teacher constituency, and  
6 Ms. Carr [phonetic] from the student government  
7 at Queens Gateway. Welcome, and welcome to all.  
8 During the regular monthly meeting of the Queens  
9 Gateway to Health Sciences Secondary School  
10 School Leadership Team, was held on Tuesday, May  
11 4, 2010, the following consensus was reached  
12 regarding the proposal for adding a 6th grade to  
13 Queens Gateway in 2011-2012. The SLT of Queens  
14 Gateway is not in favor of adding a 6th grade  
15 for 2011-2012, and would rather remain a 7-12  
16 secondary school. However, if District 28  
17 decides to truncate and leave us no choice but  
18 to reconfigure to a 6-12, then we will apply for  
19 the 6th grade expansion. Thank you.

20 MS. PENA: Thank you. I will now turn the  
21 floor over to the Community Education Council  
22 representative from District 28, Ms. Denise  
23 Nelom.

24 MS. DENISE NELOM: Good evening. My name is  
25 Denise Nelom. As a representative to this

1 evening for District 28 CEC, we are supporting  
2 the delay in the expansion of the 6th grade for  
3 Gateway until they are better prepared, until a  
4 decision is made on middle school choice.

5 MS. PENA: Thank you. I now turn the mike  
6 over to the representative from the Citywide  
7 Council of High Schools, Monica.

8 MS. MONICA AYUSO: Good evening. The  
9 Citywide Council on High Schools stands firmly  
10 with the School Leadership Team, and we would  
11 like to take the time to thank the Department of  
12 Education for revising their Impact Statement to  
13 include the concerns that we have raised over  
14 the time, which was the District 75 giving us a  
15 description and telling us what the impact of  
16 the District 75 program would be on the school,  
17 and explaining how the space will be allocated  
18 in the new school building, and mentioning the  
19 choice options in Districts 28 and 29, which we  
20 know are moot, because they haven't taken place  
21 as of yet. So we thank them for that  
22 information and we continue to stand behind the  
23 parents and the Leadership Team of Gateway.

24 MS. PENA: Thank you, Monica. Any elected  
25 officials is present and would like to address

1 the audience? Okay, I will now move to the  
2 public sign-up, and we'll begin with Vanessa  
3 Sparks.

4 MS. VANESSA SPARKS: Good evening panel, and  
5 good evening attendees for this, tonight, second  
6 hearing on the proposed reconfiguration of  
7 Queens Gateway. My name is Vanessa Sparks, and  
8 I wear several hats here tonight. First, let me  
9 say I am a past parent, past PTA President,  
10 original Gateway PTA President from 1994-2000,  
11 I'm also a District 28 parent, past PTA  
12 President for a school in District 28, former  
13 school board member, and former CEC member. So-  
14 -and I am a lifelong resident of District 28.  
15 So I have a long, long history with District 28.  
16 Regarding the proposed truncation or  
17 reconfiguration for Queens Gateway, I'm glad to  
18 have heard Ms. Edwards' statement where she  
19 indicated that if the school is forced to  
20 truncate or reconfigure to grade 6, they would  
21 of course accordingly support the incoming  
22 students. However, there are a couple of things  
23 that I need clarification on. About a month  
24 ago, District 28 held a middle school choice  
25 hearing, and at that time parents and attendees

1 for that meeting were told that the decision  
2 to truncate or reconfigure their respective  
3 schools was made by the SLT solely. And if that  
4 is the case, then Queens Gateway School  
5 Leadership Team should be the only responsible  
6 body for making the determination whether the  
7 school is truncated to grade 6. Currently  
8 District 28 has 14 middle school, no I'm sorry,  
9 15, 14 middle schools that go to the 6th grade.  
10 As per that meeting, I'm sorry, elementary  
11 schools, I'm sorry, that go K-6. Parents from  
12 several of those schools have indicated they  
13 wish to remain K-6. So it appears there can be  
14 no resolution on that, possibly even after  
15 school year 2011-2012. As I look at page 7 of  
16 11 in the EIS, I see here the K-6 elementary  
17 schools in District 28, and as you can see, we  
18 have a number of schools in District 28 that go  
19 to 6th grade, and until there is unilateral  
20 reconfiguration or truncation, I don't think  
21 that Queens Gateway should be forced to make  
22 that decision including the year 2011-2012.  
23 There's no definitive timeframe in which that  
24 will be done, and again, as I said, as per that  
25 meeting, as per the education law, which I would

1 ask the DOE to go back and kind of review, the  
2 decision to reconfigure an existing school,  
3 which is different from a new school, Queens  
4 Gateway is an existing school, and the decision  
5 to truncate it or reconfigure it is the decision  
6 of the SLT. So with that, I support Queens  
7 Gateway remaining a 7-12 school. You have my  
8 support.

9 MS. PENA: We'll continue with Jackie  
10 Forrestal from Hillcrest Estates Civic  
11 Association.

12 MS. JACKIE FORRESTAL: Good evening. My  
13 name is Jackie Forrestal, and I am the  
14 Corresponding Secretary for the Hillcrest  
15 Estates Civic Association. We are pleased and  
16 excited to have the Gateway School for Health  
17 Sciences coming to our neighborhood. The  
18 architect who designed the building had a  
19 wonderful vision, and the vision has made a  
20 dramatic change in the appearance of Goethals  
21 Avenue. I am, however, chagrined that you at  
22 the Department of Education do not seem to have  
23 heard my testimony given last month at April's  
24 public hearing about placing a 6th grade at  
25 Gateway. Nowhere in the summary of testimony

1 from that hearing does it state that we are  
2 opposed to having a 6th grade class placed in  
3 this building because of the extreme need in  
4 Queens for high school seats. Nowhere in your  
5 Educational Impact Statement do you show how  
6 giving up potential high school seats will  
7 affect my community. I want you to hear me now.  
8 Queens has a severe shortage of high school  
9 seats. We ask that the Department of Education  
10 review and provide us with the number of seats  
11 needed in Queens. Francis Lewis High School is  
12 at 250% capacity with over 4,500 students.  
13 Bayside has about 3,000 students, also over  
14 capacity, and Cardoza has over 4,000 students.  
15 Why then are we giving up much needed high  
16 school seats for a 6th grade, when proposals for  
17 grade reconfiguration to create K-5 schools,  
18 according to your EIS and Notice, will have to  
19 be reviewed later, have Educational Impact  
20 Statements written, public hearings, and votes  
21 by the Panel for Education Policy? Why are we  
22 deciding this 6th grade issue now? Surely the  
23 Department of Education is putting the cart  
24 before the horse. You are disenfranchising all  
25 new students, faculty, and staff who will be at

1 the new Gateway school in September. We need  
2 high school seats. And this plan for a 6th  
3 grade is wrong. We ask that the Department of  
4 Education increase the seating capacity at  
5 Gateway High School for Health Sciences, and  
6 that they drop this ill-conceived plan to add a  
7 6th grade. Thank you. And I would like to add  
8 a short message from the President of Hillcrest  
9 Estates Civic Association, who regrets that he  
10 cannot be here this evening, because he works in  
11 a hospital and cannot be here. He asked that  
12 his testimony from last month's hearing be  
13 considered again, and he will submit written  
14 testimony to the person indicated on the Notice  
15 posted at this hearing. Thank you very much.

16 MS. PENA: Kathleen Forrestal from Hillcrest  
17 Estates Civic Association?

18 MS. KATHY FORRESTAL: My name is Kathy  
19 Forrestal, and I am the Recording Secretary from  
20 the Hillcrest Estates Civic Association, and I'm  
21 speaking for the community and the Civic  
22 Association tonight. The Hillcrest Estates and  
23 surrounding communities objected initially to  
24 the construction of the Gateway School on the  
25 Queens Hospital Center campus because, in part,

1 of the volume of schools and other large high-  
2 traffic entities which we already have within  
3 our neighborhood and our community. We  
4 ultimately ceased objection to the School's  
5 placement and construction, and even embraced it  
6 once Deputy Mayor Walcott made a number of  
7 written concessions, one of which is noted in  
8 the EIS, that the Gateway facility would have a  
9 firm and non-negotiable cap of 800 students  
10 placed within it. We have concerns, however,  
11 that the proposed change will have other impacts  
12 on the community which are not addressed by the  
13 EIS. There was much discussion when the school  
14 was sited within the Hillcrest Estates community  
15 about the effect of so many 7-12 graders  
16 arriving on our already stressed bus routes and  
17 roads. The proposed addition of 6th graders  
18 raises new concerns. Will the students be  
19 relying on existing MTA bus routes, or will they  
20 receive transportation from yellow school buses?  
21 It was noted in the traffic study when the  
22 school was sited that there would not be yellow  
23 bus transportation to the school. The answer to  
24 the question about busing is found in the EIS,  
25 but certainly will have an impact on our

1 community. Yellow school buses travelling to  
2 the school, as well as waiting for students to  
3 be dropped off or picked up, will affect those  
4 who live on the streets neighboring the campus.  
5 I would anticipate too that the parents of 11-  
6 and 12-year-old 6th graders might be more likely  
7 than parents of older students to drive their  
8 children to school, and again this would have a  
9 negative impact on the surrounding community,  
10 which already deals with substantial traffic  
11 from the Queens Hospital Center. I drive or  
12 bike past the site of the new Gateway School  
13 daily. The additional traffic that a 6th grade  
14 might bring would be a profound detriment to the  
15 community and those who live in the blocks  
16 adjacent to the new school. The School, with  
17 the addition of a 6th grade, will never be able  
18 to help alleviate overcrowding at local high  
19 schools without violating the Deputy Mayor's  
20 agreement, a violation which the community would  
21 wholeheartedly oppose regardless of the cause of  
22 the violation. In fact, in order to maintain  
23 the maximum 800 students in the building, the  
24 expansion of the middle school portion of the  
25 school to include a 6th grade could ultimately

1 reduce the number of high school seats within  
2 the building. Queens cannot afford to lose a  
3 single seat. Finally, asking the community to  
4 voice concerns now, when the school has not even  
5 moved into its new building, and when there is  
6 no consensus on whether schools should be K-6,  
7 K-5, K-8, or other, is profoundly premature.  
8 The same holds true for the stakeholders within  
9 the school, many of whom are students who'll be  
10 beginning next year, and others who might be  
11 voicing their concerns tonight may be graduating  
12 soon. Because of these concerns I oppose the  
13 addition of a 6th to the Gateway School at the  
14 present time.

15 MS. PENA: Monica Ayuso.

16 MS. AYUSO: Good evening. My name is Monica  
17 Ayuso, and I'm a lifelong resident of District  
18 28, and I definitely oppose this proposal  
19 because it didn't start out where it should have  
20 started out, the conversation in the school. We  
21 didn't get an opportunity as a community to have  
22 the conversations that we needed to engage in  
23 concerning our K-6 schools. I'm asking the DOE  
24 as always, to align their EIS with common sense.  
25 If the EIS states that there's a 800 cap and it

1 will not exceed an 800 cap, but then gives us  
2 a number of 805, and then tells us there's no  
3 target utilization rate available, it makes you  
4 say is this common sense? Align your EIS to  
5 make some sense. Throughout this process, we've  
6 looked at these EIS's and we've said where does  
7 the development of the EIS begin? And it should  
8 not begin somewhere in - -, it really should  
9 begin at home with the stakeholders that are  
10 involved with making and implementing these  
11 changes. If it was constructed in that fashion,  
12 then you would have information that's tailored  
13 to that school, and not a cookie cutter example  
14 of they have going across the City of New York.  
15 So I take this opportunity to say that the  
16 Educational Impact Statements are loose with  
17 the, they're just loose. They don't provide  
18 substantial information to make it unique to the  
19 desires or the needs of the community that's  
20 being impacted. And I do not believe that our  
21 legislators, when they intended for Impact  
22 Statements to be provided, wanted Impact  
23 Statements that were not tailored to the  
24 community. So I thank you for the time. Good  
25 evening, good night.

1 MS. PENA: Sandra Williams?

2 MS. SANDRA WILLIAMS: Good evening everyone.  
3 My name is Sandra Williams. I'm a member of the  
4 School Leadership Team. I want to thank the  
5 Department of Education for at least listening  
6 to us at the last public hearing and made  
7 adjustment based on our conversation regarding,  
8 you know, put it off one year. But I don't know  
9 how you feel, but today this whole thing feel  
10 like a drag. A drag is when something is pull  
11 along with effort. A drag is pulling somebody  
12 or something by force. A drag is persuading  
13 somebody to come along. Now it doesn't matter  
14 which description you want to use, but a  
15 reconfiguration of Queens Gateway is a drag.  
16 First of all, we, the decision making body, did  
17 not apply for this reconfiguration, and that is  
18 a reason why, after the last public hearing, we  
19 went back to the drawing board discussing why we  
20 are being dragged into this process, and how it  
21 will benefit us and the students. After careful  
22 consideration, we all agreed to stop the  
23 process. According to the Department of  
24 Education's blueprint document, decisions are  
25 best made closest to the school, and the

1 building council is the venue for this kind of  
2 issue, and those decisions are made by  
3 consensus. Though the process for  
4 reconfiguration states that the decision making  
5 body at the school level would apply for the  
6 change, we did not apply, and that caused  
7 disarray among our years of united effort on the  
8 School Leadership Team. I demonstrated at a  
9 previous public hearing, leaving our Principal  
10 alone, today we stand together and to say no, we  
11 currently don't want a 6th grade at Queens  
12 Gateway, and if we decide differently later on,  
13 we the School Leadership Team will follow the  
14 process that is outlined by the Department of  
15 Education. The parents and teachers of Queens  
16 Gateway are losing their role. We want is best  
17 for our school, and have made a decision that  
18 should be honored. Though we were dragged into  
19 believing that all District 28 elementary  
20 schools would be capped at grade 5, and later  
21 learned that there is no District-wide plan to  
22 do so, there is no need to continue. Though we  
23 were dragged into believing that having the  
24 students starting earlier in the middle school  
25 benefit the students, after analyzing the

1 State's current data from the 2008-2009 ELA  
2 and math results, it shows that in District 28  
3 the 6th graders in elementary schools score  
4 higher than the 6th graders in the middle  
5 schools on those same exams. The middle school  
6 is suffering from teething pain. Let the tooth  
7 break through the gum and get out of danger  
8 before we start brushing. The School Leadership  
9 Team met and came to consensus that we do not  
10 want to change the organization of our school.  
11 This is, and was, our decision to make. I hope  
12 that those who started the process listen to the  
13 decision makers of the school, and put an end to  
14 this painful journey. Thank you.

15 MS. PENA: Elanor Huntley from Queens  
16 Gateway?

17 MS. ELANOR HUNTLEY: Good evening. My name  
18 is Elanor Huntley. I am the UFT Chapter Leader  
19 for Queens Gateway. I just want to concur that  
20 the constituents here at UFT, I'm sorry, that my  
21 constituents here at Gateway concur that we  
22 still want Gateway to remain a 7-12 school. We  
23 feel that there will be social ramifications if  
24 it were different, and only if the vote changed  
25 will be more than 6th grade. So we support

1 Gateway remaining a 7-12 school. Thank you.

2 MS. PENA: Dolcea Dwyer [phonetic] from  
3 Queens Gateway? Okay, alright. The speaker  
4 list is now exhausted. Thank you again for your  
5 participation. This joint public hearing is now  
6 closed.

7 [END 163\_014.mp3]

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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: Mark E. Yoshioka

7           Date: May 13, 2010  
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