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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**

**The Re-siting of Beacon High School
from M837 to M912 in the 2015-2016
School Year**

November 17, 2014

5:30 p.m.

1 [START 422999_master.mp3]

2 MR. FRED WALSH: Alright, folks. We're
3 going to get started. Good evening and welcome.
4 My name is Fred Walsh. I'm the Manhattan High
5 School superintendent presiding over tonight's
6 hearing--this is--I have a cafeteria voice by
7 nature, but I will use this. This is a joint
8 public hearing of the Department of Education
9 Community Education Counsel and School
10 Leadership Team for the re-siting of Beacon High
11 School 03M479 to new building M912 and co-
12 location with PS35, 75M35, beginning in the
13 2015-2016 school year. We've asked the district
14 two and district three community education
15 counsels, and the school leadership teams in
16 Beacon High School and PS35 to participate in
17 this joint public hearing. I'm joined here
18 tonight by Principals Ruth Lacey and Marta Rojo,
19 Beth Cirone, and Joe Fiordaliso. I don't know,
20 I tried hard, and Noah Gotbaum. This hearing is
21 also being recorded by video and audio. The
22 purpose of this hearing is of you to be provided
23 with comments about the proposal. Before I
24 describe the proposal, I want to make sure that
25 you're all aware of the opportunity to provide

1 your input. All those who wish to speak, must
2 sign up at the speaker sign-up area located just
3 outside the auditorium, or the cafeteria in this
4 case. The sign-up--

5 MS. RUTH LACEY: The café.

6 MR. WALSH: The café, right, here we are in
7 the café. The signup list will close in 15
8 minutes. Speakers will be given the floor in
9 the order that they're signed up. All comments
10 are limited to two minutes. There may be
11 elected officials who arrive at different times
12 throughout the evening. If they wish to speak,
13 we will do our best to accommodate them at the
14 first opportune moment. Those who are here at
15 the start of the public comments segment will be
16 asked to speak first. All comments will be
17 mentioned in the analysis of public comment to
18 be published and provided to the panel of
19 educational policy, the evening before the panel
20 votes. That vote is scheduled for November 25,
21 2014. In addition, we welcome any comments and
22 feedback you may have at any time before the
23 panel votes on this proposal. The email address
24 and phone number where comments may be made are
25 D03Proposals@Schools.NYC.GOV. Again, that's

1 D03Proposals@Schools.NYC.GOV. Or 212-374-3466.
2 Again, 212-374-3466. I'm now going to read the
3 proposal summary bullet points.

4 - Under this proposal, Beacon High School
5 will move from its current building, M837, to a
6 newer, larger building under construction,
7 building M912, where Beacon will be co-located
8 with a new site of an existing District 75
9 school, to be known as P35M at M912.

10 - The re-siting and co-location with
11 District 75 will provide these two schools with
12 greater capacity, and access to spaces
13 specifically designed to support high school and
14 District 75 instruction; such as, classrooms
15 designed for District 75 students, a full
16 gymnasium, an auditorium with a stage, and a
17 cafeteria that can accommodate both schools'
18 current and future enrollments.

19 - The co-location will provide ample
20 opportunities for the two schools to collaborate
21 on how to best serve the students in M912.

22 - If this proposal is approved, Beacon will
23 be re-sited to new building M912 beginning in
24 the 2015-2016 school year and will be co-located
25 with District 75.

1 - Beacon will no longer serve students in
2 the M837, after the construction of the 2014-
3 2015 school year, and will serve all its
4 students in the new building beginning in the
5 2015-2016 school year and beyond.

6 - The Beacon community had notice of plans
7 to re-site the school since the DOE began
8 construction on M912 in July 2012.

9 - Building 912 is currently under
10 construction by the School Construction
11 Authority. Construction is anticipated to be
12 completed by September 2015.

13 - Beacon's re-siting and its co-location
14 with D75 are contingent upon the completion of
15 this new building.

16 - If approved, this proposed re-siting could
17 require 9th through 11th grade students
18 currently enrolled at Beacon to travel a greater
19 distance from home, to attend school in a
20 different school building in the 2015-2016
21 school year, and beyond, as Beacon's current
22 building and new building are located
23 approximately one mile apart. However, the DOE
24 believes that the re-siting will not create
25 significant travel hardships since both

1 buildings are located close to central public
2 transportation hubs, and Beacon is open to
3 students citywide.

4 - In 2014-2015, Beacon is projected to serve
5 1,280 students in grades 9-12. But its current
6 building has a capacity of 816 students. This
7 means that its current building has a
8 utilization rate of 156%. Thus, Beacon's re-
9 siting to the new building will increase the
10 amount of space available for the school, and
11 more adequately meet the needs of Beacon than
12 its current building.

13 - As a result of increasing demand from
14 students for Beacon, and greater capacity in new
15 building M912, Beacon plans to increase its
16 enrollment beginning in the 2015-2016 school
17 year, and is expected to reach scale in the
18 2019-2020 school year, in new building 912.

19 - District 75's enrollment is anticipated to
20 increase every year through the 2018-2019 school
21 year. In 2019-2020, once Beacon and District 75
22 reach stable enrollment, the DOE projects new
23 building 912 to serve approximately 1,444 to
24 1,516 students, yielding a projected building
25 utilization rate of 97% to 102%. While the

1 projected building utilization exceeds 100% in
2 the new building, if this proposal is approved,
3 Beacon and District 75 will receive their
4 baseline footprint allocations, and possibly
5 some excess space in M912, pursuant to the
6 citywide instructional footprint during and
7 after Beacon's re-siting and co-location with
8 District 75.

9 - The DOE believes there is sufficient space
10 to accommodate both Beacon and District 75 in
11 new building M912 throughout the phase-in of
12 both schools.

13 Thank you, I now have a list, yes. The next
14 presenter will be--who's going to present? I
15 don't think we have a presenter. Oh okay, the
16 next presenter will be Principal Ruth Lacey of
17 Beacon High School.

18 MS. LACEY: Oh, that's really why I don't
19 need it. Welcome, and I want to say as the
20 person who started Beacon, I couldn't be more
21 proud of where we are now. And I kept saying it
22 was going to be the best, and I think we're
23 close to it. I just want to say that I am
24 hopeful that everything will be done on time. I
25 am not sure that it will. And I want, under

1 these conditions right now, with a review in
2 April and May, to see if everything is on time,
3 and waiting of the C of O, which is not
4 scheduled to happen until--the first date was
5 July 15th. So we can't move out of this
6 building, and won't move out of this building as
7 it says here in this document, that when the
8 building is complete. The building is not
9 complete until they get the C of O. So we will
10 stay here until that happens. And you
11 understand that this has to be because there are
12 1,300 students, and if there are any more
13 delays, then we all have problems. So I just
14 want to make that clear. And I also want to
15 make clear that the two principals have been
16 planning together, and we don't consider it a
17 co-location, but one school accommodating
18 students with very many different needs, and I
19 want that very, very clear. So, it may say so
20 on paper, but our plans are quite different.
21 And I hope it'll be a great success. Won't it
22 be?

23 FEMALE VOICE 1: It will be.

24 MR. WALSH: Thank you, Principal Lacey. So
25 we've now concluded the formal presentations;

1 we've now opened the floor to public comments.
2 Speakers will be given the floor in the order
3 that they signed up. All comments are limited
4 to two minutes, and our first speaker is Eduardo
5 Sinclair, so I'm going to pass the microphone
6 over to Mr. Sinclair. Do you mind coming
7 forward? Do you mind speaking into the mic,
8 just for the record. Thank you, sir.

9 MR. EDUARDO SINCLAIR: Hi, good evening. I
10 just feel that your presentation was very
11 thorough. I'm wondering if--the only thing that
12 I could ask at this moment would be if you have
13 a date of when the school will be open, and when
14 the C of O will be received. No one knows,
15 yeah. Okay, but do you expect the start the
16 next school year in the new building? When it's
17 complete, okay. Fair enough, thank you.

18 MR. WALSH: Okay, yeah, I'm going to break
19 protocol momentarily. I do want to hear from
20 members of the CEC, so I will pause on our
21 speaker signup and I will return to our
22 presentation from the CEC. So take it away.

23 MS. BETH CIRONE: Hi, I'm Beth Cirone. I'm
24 from the Community Education Counsel in District
25 2, and I just very briefly wanted to say that we

1 really look forward to the move of the school.
2 We feel that it's great that there's a new
3 school coming into District 2 that will be open
4 citywide. I think that that's very much needed,
5 that we have a larger school that will serve all
6 children. It's something we all want to see.
7 And even though the CEC has not officially
8 really voted on this, I know that I myself,
9 speaking personally, and the President of our
10 CEC, both think that this will be a win for
11 everybody. It's also going to open up a space
12 in District 3 for another school, and I think
13 that that is an entire win for the community.
14 So we are very much in support of this proposal.

15 MS. LACEY: I just want to say that we will
16 be grandfathered into District 3, that means we
17 will be considered part of District 3.

18 MR. JOE FIORDALISO: Thank you,
19 Superintendent Walsh. I'm Joe Fiordaliso. I'm
20 President of Community Education Counsel 3, in
21 which this building sits. I'm joined here by my
22 colleague, Noah Gotbaum, and I appreciate the
23 opportunity to speak briefly. In short, this
24 proposal is a win-win for District 3. Beacon
25 High School moved to District 2, and as a

1 citywide high school, will still be open to
2 District 3 applicants. And since December, the
3 Community Education Counsel 3, Community Board
4 7, elected officials and community leaders have
5 been working together to establish a new school
6 to be incubated in this building. This building
7 will serve District 3 students in grades six
8 through twelve, and already has a dynamic new
9 leader who has been making the rounds and really
10 selling and marketing the school, which is so
11 important. This school will be opened to all
12 District 3 students. We'll have a student body
13 that's representative of District 3's diversity,
14 and will have an academically rigorous
15 curriculum. The new west-end, I'm sorry West
16 End Secondary School will provide more middle
17 school options for District 3 families, and will
18 create District 3 priority high school seats.
19 West End Secondary is firmly on track to open
20 its doors next fall. DOE and school
21 construction authority are working with
22 community leaders, CEC, CB7 and elected
23 officials to ensure that everyone will be where
24 they need to be in time for Beacon High School
25 and West End Secondary to open their respective

1 doors on time, and that's critically important
2 to drive home. CEC continues to work
3 collaboratively with everyone involved with this
4 process, and on behalf of my counsel, which
5 unanimously supported, unanimously passed a
6 resolution last December to establish the new
7 West End Secondary School, I can say that we
8 pledge whatever support and effort is needed to
9 effectuate a smooth relocation and transition,
10 and for both schools to open in a successful and
11 seamless fashion. Thank you.

12 MR. NOAH GOTBAUM: I just want to say that
13 this is most of our hearings on co-locations are
14 fraught, they usually involve charter co-
15 locations into space that doesn't--not
16 sufficient. This is what I would call a happy
17 hearing, and as Joe said, we at District 3CC are
18 very strongly behind this, and we want to just
19 do whatever we can to make sure that there's a
20 smooth transition for both schools, or all three
21 schools, and be supportive. But the DOE
22 listening to parents and educators in terms of
23 building a new building, and then also taking
24 this building and turning it into a six through
25 twelve is very, very heartening, and we're way

1 behind it, very much supportive.

2 MR. WALSH: Thank you very much. We will
3 return to our public comments. Next I would
4 like to bring to the microphone Mr. Eric
5 Scheffler, if you're here.

6 MR. ERIC SCHEFFLER: So I really need to use
7 this? Hi, Eric Scheffler, I'm the Community
8 Board 7 Education Co-chairperson, and I'm also a
9 5th grade parent; I brought my son along, kind
10 of a civics lesson, and a potential West End
11 student. So I figure we'll knock off a lot of
12 things at once here. I just want to kind of
13 speak to the issue of the construction. I know
14 there's 1,300 students here, and I hear what Dr.
15 Lacey has said--I'm sorry, not doctor, Principal
16 Lacey. Your reputation precedes you so I'm just
17 willing to upgrade you to doctor. But there's
18 also 120 you know, future sixth graders who need
19 to be considered here also. So while I'm not
20 even sure what a C of O is, or what a
21 construction schedule is, you know, it is a
22 little concerning as a parent and community
23 leader to worry about a potential conflict with
24 whether a C of O is issued, or whether
25 construction is done enough for a school to

1 leave in order for other work to begin here.
2 I understand an issue of you can't move to a
3 school until it's ready for you, but I would
4 hope that among all of us, the common good and
5 our interests of 120 sixth graders, as well as
6 the parents and faculty of Beacon, that there is
7 a way to work together so that work can begin
8 here in a timely fashion so this can be a win
9 for the community that's worked a lot of years
10 on this. And Joe and Noah, we all go way back
11 in the parent advocacy battles, and spent a lot
12 of time on this. So I just hope that we can
13 work together to find a way to make this work
14 for all the kids.

15 MR. WALSH: Thank you very much. Our next
16 public comment will be from Maggie Reid.
17 Maggie?

18 MS. MAGGIE REID: Hello, I'm Maggie Reid.
19 I've had two children come to Beacon; one is
20 still here. And again, I'm also going to talk
21 of my concern about what was mentioned in one
22 paragraph, being the time kids will start versus
23 the kind of fuzzy deadline for the building to
24 be finished. And I certainly know as a parent,
25 what it's like to have children in a new school,

1 and what that means to go through that
2 process, as well as what it means to go through
3 the processing of having children have
4 construction in a school, and also what it is to
5 have children in a transitioning school. And my
6 comment is really based on that those three
7 options are not light options in terms of the
8 impact that it has on a kids' education.
9 There's a lot of adjustments; there's a lot of
10 interruption. And it concerns me that at this
11 point, I mean, this construction has been going
12 on for a while, and it does concern me at this
13 point that in your presentation, you have two
14 conflicting deadlines basically. So, what I
15 would like to know, or what I would like to say,
16 is if there can be a better way to communicate
17 this to parents, for one thing, because you do
18 have parents that are applying into a school.
19 And to also communicate to parents because they
20 need to know what is going on with the school in
21 a realistic fashion. And I'm not really
22 speaking to the school on this, because I know
23 that Ms. Lacey wants this. You know, you want
24 your school, but they're not constructing the
25 school. This really goes to the people behind

1 the construction. So my comment is, I'd like
2 to see you know, I don't feel like there's real
3 open or communication for accountability in
4 terms of the deadline. And I know as a parent,
5 that's starting to make me nervous. And I know
6 that I speak for many parents. So that's my
7 comment.

8 MR. WALSH: Thank you, and your comment is
9 noted and recorded. Our next commentary will be
10 from Anna, forgive me, Brackett, thank you.

11 MS. ANNA BRACKETT: Hi, I'm Anna Brackett.
12 I'm the Beacon Parent Association co-president,
13 and at the risk of sounding like a broken
14 record, our concern is the schedule, pure and
15 simple. We don't really understand how if the
16 deadline is September 2015, we can--I think in
17 your words--not interrupt educational
18 programming if we're moving at that time, and
19 especially for the middle school also, if
20 they're moving at that time. So we really also
21 would like answers about you know, what is the
22 timeframe in the school's move? How much time
23 do you allow for that? And how will that be
24 scheduled, hopefully, in the summer, not in June
25 or in September. I also, just in your comments

1 earlier when you said that this building is at
2 150% roughly, curious about how that happens,
3 and is that something that could potentially
4 happen at the new building, obviously over a
5 much longer period of time. But that would be
6 an enormous school, and I hope that's something
7 that the DOE would put a cap on in some way. So
8 thank you. I saw, I know. But then I'm sure
9 this school had projections of capacity, and
10 that went way over. So, are there more
11 restrictions for that kind of thing not
12 happening now, in a school this size? Anyway,
13 that was a little alarming. So thank you.

14 MR. WALSH: Thank you very much, and
15 according to this list, our last commentary,
16 we've passed the 15-minute mark? Yes, so this
17 will be our last comment, from Mr. Andy Court.

18 MR. ANDY COURT: Thank you, my name is Andy
19 Court. I am a parent, a very happy parent, at
20 Beacon High School that my daughter attends.
21 And we are thrilled with the energy of the
22 place, and we love what you're doing, and we're
23 thrilled that the principals are working
24 together on a common plan as well. I'm going to
25 put on the record the same concern that you

1 heard from the two other parents, and I want
2 to note that this is very different from what we
3 heard when we were briefed by the school
4 construction authority, at least the impression
5 I got when we heard from the school construction
6 authority, that everything was going smoothly;
7 that everything was going to happen on time;
8 that there was going to be enough time. I
9 certainly left the meeting, the briefing that
10 the parents got at a PA meeting from the school
11 construction authority, thinking there was going
12 to be plenty of time for a transition, that
13 everything was going very smoothly, and that no
14 obstacles were foreseen. That was the
15 impression that I got, and I guess I would like
16 to know, as a parent, what happened, why are we
17 in the situation now where things suddenly seem
18 very tight, and why haven't we gotten a
19 subsequent briefing if there's been a change or
20 a problem or a snag. Is there anything that we
21 can do, as parents, to change that. The other
22 thing, and this is a question for the
23 principals. I think we're all on your side here
24 and we all support what you're doing. I think
25 it will be helpful to all of us if we could have

1 a little more details about how this kind of
2 things works, because Beacon has always been a
3 self-contained school. The students, for
4 example, are accustomed to an open campus
5 arrangement. Is it open campus still? Is it
6 open campus for all students? How does it work?
7 In other words, can everyone pretty much come
8 and go for lunch and things? How do you
9 envision--are there different floors, but that
10 is the only--seven floors, and are classrooms--
11 I'm just curious how it works when you have two
12 schools at the same place. Are two floors for
13 one school and three for another, or are all the
14 classrooms intermingled? That kind of thing.

15 MS. LACEY: We haven't seen the space. You
16 have to give us time. But our goal is to work
17 together and have the students be together.

18 MR. ANDY COURT: And going out for lunch is
19 not a problem, open campus, all that? Okay.

20 MS. LACEY: The cafeteria is - - it's so
21 big.

22 MR. ANDY COURT: So they might want to eat
23 in - - okay. Okay. And is--what kind of
24 orientations are anticipated for the kids so
25 that they understand what to expect, and that

1 kind of thing. That was the other--I realize
2 these are comments, not questions. That's what
3 you're probably saying. But in general, I think
4 it would be helpful to all of us to know at some
5 point, now or in the future, how kids are going
6 to be prepared for the transition in terms of--

7 MS. LACEY: That's why both schools need the
8 summer. You know, they need transition and we
9 have oriented not only our new class, but the
10 whole school, and - -

11 MR. ANDY COURT: So again--

12 MS. LACEY: We're all on the same page. We
13 should have their school on time, and we should
14 have ours.

15 MR. ANDY COURT: Thank you.

16 MR. WALSH: Thank you, and our final, final
17 comment will be from Molly McDermott. For the
18 record please, thank you.

19 MS. MOLLY MCDERMOTT: Hi, I'm Molly, I
20 promised not to embarrass my son, so I'll do
21 this short and sweet. So I'm a PS87 mom and I'm
22 sure most of you could care less about the
23 middle school because you're probably all the
24 high school parents, but I just wanted to share
25 some anecdotal information. So I've been to the

1 school town meeting, what was it with the
2 Chancellor? Thank you. And everyone is so
3 excited about this move for everyone involved.
4 It's quite the buzz at PS87, which is about 800
5 plus parents. They're taking this leap of
6 faith, they're ranking it first, which if you
7 guys know, is kind of like a total nightmare
8 because whatever you rank first, you kind of
9 hope to get it, and then you might not actually
10 get anything except for the 10th spot. Does
11 that make any sense? Did you guys do all this
12 whole ranking? Whatever it is, they're all
13 passionate, they're dedicated. I'm meeting with
14 about 10 parents, families, Friday. If they
15 hear that there's a chance their kids will not
16 have a school in September, and this is exactly
17 when they're picking, like exactly, it's just
18 not going to be a success. People are going to
19 pull back fast, and they'll list it second, and
20 they'll go to Booker. We have a 90% success
21 rate there, but these are the parents who you
22 know, they're going to roll up their sleeves,
23 they're going to paint a mural here, they're
24 going to raise money, you know, they care. So
25 if you lose them, I worry about the future of

1 the school. So just anecdotally, be aware.
2 This is when everyone's talking. Like, we're
3 having drinks, we're having coffee, what are you
4 ranking first. And many people are going from
5 second to first for West End, but I think
6 that'll slip to second if they feel there will
7 be no school. So that's what's happening in the
8 halls of 87.

9 MR. WALSH: Thank you very much. Okay, just
10 one second.

11 MR. GOTBAUM: Just on behalf of the CEC, Joe
12 and I just discussed we want to try to call SCA
13 in to one of our meetings and invite the parents
14 in so that the questions can be asked directly,
15 because it is disconcerting that the key players
16 who need to be here are not here. So one of the
17 things we're discussing is very, very soon, at
18 one of our CEC meetings, our public meetings, to
19 have the SCA come in and really address this
20 question. So all the parents, perspective
21 parents, for West End Secondary, parents at
22 Beacon, educators, can really put this on the
23 line and we can get some real answers. Because
24 I think we need that.

25 MS. CIRONE: Can I just add one thing? I

1 mean, I know I'm in District 2 and not
2 District 3, but we have opened a ton of schools
3 throughout District 2. I've been involved in a
4 lot of the rezonings, and what has happened.
5 And the SCA, and I know this sounds kind of like
6 it sounds kind of unbelievable. But they really
7 have pulled off miracles in getting schools
8 together at the very end, when people think it's
9 impossible. They have managed to do it every
10 time, at least in our district. So I think it
11 is really good to have a meeting with them, but
12 before parents start getting all alarmed and
13 saying oh my God, I can't do this and I'm
14 pulling out, I have to say just based on--I've
15 been on the CEC for six years. Before people
16 start getting alarmed, it's much better to have
17 a meeting, really hear what the SCA has to say,
18 and get--because they will be able to give you a
19 better sense of what's going on. And I just
20 think panicking is a mistake; you should really
21 hear from the people who are dealing with the
22 construction issues.

23 MR. WALSH: Thank you. Indeed a lot is at
24 stake for a lot of people. So I've taken your
25 comments. They have been recorded. And I know

1 that they will be taken quite seriously, so
2 thank you. Again, we welcome any comments and
3 feedback you may have. Before the PEP votes on
4 this on November 25th, the email again is
5 D03Proposals@Schools.NYC.GOV, so if you want to
6 send an email about these concerns, or call 212-
7 374-3466. Thank you again for your
8 participation and coming out on this cold and
9 wet, nasty night. It says a lot about you all
10 and how much you care for the future of this
11 school, and the schools going forward. The
12 joint public hearing is now closed. Thank you.

13 [END 422999_master.mp3]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature



Date November 20, 2014

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