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**New York City Department of  
Education - Division of  
Portfolio Planning  
Closure of Academy Of Business  
and Community Development - 1/31/12**

1 [START 265\_777.MP3]

2 MALE VOICE: - - .

3 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

4 MR. GREG BETHEL: My name is Greg Bethel  
5 from Department of Education and I'll be acting  
6 as the moderator for this - - . This is a joint  
7 public hearing with the Department of Education  
8 between the - - to discuss the post closure of  
9 the Academy Of Business And Community  
10 Development - - .

11 [Background noise]

12 AUDIENCE MEMEBERS: Save our school. Save  
13 our school. Save our school. Save our school.  
14 Save our school. Save our school. Save our  
15 school. Bloomberg save us, Bloomberg save us.  
16 Bloomberg save us, Bloomberg save us.

17 [Background noise]

18 MS. DORITA GIBSON: - - all schools with the  
19 same standard because - - .

20 [Background noise]

21 AUDIENCE MEMEBERS: Save our DoE. Save our  
22 DoE. Save our DoE. Save our DoE.

23 MS. DORITA GIBSON: - - New York Charter  
24 school. - - .

25 [Background noise]

1 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: - - .

2 MS. DORITA GIBSON: - - 2006 2007 school  
3 year ABCD - - 45 districts - - our school  
4 represent 36% of - - the years. There used to  
5 be - - thanks to - - well. For example there is  
6 - - although this marks the first of ABCD - -  
7 high school - - students currently enrolled in  
8 the ninth grade and only 16 students enrolled in  
9 the local community. ABCD has an 80 percent  
10 attrition rate - - [background noise]. - -  
11 students do not fit most of the standards - -  
12 but we - - .

13 [Background noise]

14 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: - - ABCD, ABCD, ABCD.  
15 ABCD, ABCD, ABCD. ABCD, ABCD, ABCD. ABCD,  
16 ABCD, ABCD. ABCD, ABCD, ABCD. ABCD, ABCD,  
17 ABCD.

18 MS. DORITA GIBSON: - - .

19 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: - - ABCD, ABCD, ABCD.  
20 ABCD, ABCD, ABCD. ABCD, ABCD, ABCD. ABCD,  
21 ABCD, ABCD. ABCD, ABCD, ABCD. ABCD, ABCD,  
22 ABCD.

23 MS. DORITA GIBSON: - - .

24 [Background noise]

25 MR. DAVID GOLDSMITH: - - and the community

1 make the time [background noise]. We have - -  
2 in particular with regard about - - Department  
3 of Education in our school system. We do see a  
4 pattern here we see - - for a long period of  
5 time. The - - time - - leadership where - -  
6 sometimes there's absolutely no leadership. The  
7 school has - - focus only on the budget cuts  
8 without leadership the budget cuts - - would be  
9 longer and after we use - - the school  
10 assessment - - . This is the third joint public  
11 hearing - - to discuss the proposed closure of  
12 the school, and again the - - the school - - .  
13 And then - -, we have - -, we have even  
14 developed - - for our school. - - both the  
15 school with - - next time. We see the same  
16 issue over and over as time - - get the school -  
17 - . - - represents the school - - we all - - we  
18 have many - - public schools in New York City we  
19 know that - - let's give - - school community a  
20 chance - - all this - - .

21 [Background noise]

22 MR. BETHEL: Thank you - - the next speaker  
23 will be Ms. Nelson - - teacher [background  
24 noise].

25 MS. CHARISSE NELSON: Good evening my name

1 is Charisse Nelson I'm a teacher at the Academy  
2 Of Business And Community Development for the  
3 second year, and I strongly oppose the  
4 eradication of the school from the New York  
5 City's Department of Education's history.  
6 September 8<sup>th</sup> 2006 was the plan - - community  
7 development today, and the city of New York - -  
8 . I believe the discussion - - ABCD for the  
9 same reason that I also support the institute of  
10 New York City's young - - . The fact that more  
11 black and Latino young men end up in prison or  
12 impoverished whether in professions of their  
13 choosing is not a fact we are willing to accept  
14 here in New York City [background noise]. - -  
15 young initiative has been touted as the nation's  
16 boldest and most comprehensive effort to tackle  
17 the broad disparity - - of black and Latino  
18 young men. Therefore back in 2006 and  
19 unfortunately still today it is clear that  
20 something extraordinary must be done to help  
21 young black and Latino men beat the odds.

22 To help these struggling populations the - -  
23 has published - - for black Latino males will be  
24 higher than - -. When you look at the data for  
25 ABCD the same thing - - the numbers do not look

1 good, and I will not sit here and tell you that  
2 the numbers are okay. But what I will tell you  
3 is the history behind those numbers and how they  
4 are directly linked to the inconsistent and  
5 minimal resources offered to the school over a  
6 short time.

7 In 2005 - - started as a - - district 13  
8 school, by 2006 department networks had been set  
9 up to give schools more tongue and ABCD joined  
10 up - - . However by the end of 2007 it had been  
11 moved to another empowerment network which was  
12 largely made up of the elementary schools two  
13 other middle schools with most of the schools  
14 located in the Bronx. By 2008 it had been moved  
15 into yet another network - - between something -  
16 - eight and oral seven due to a switch that  
17 cannot be - - . However upon - - it will mean  
18 that in a little over six years we have had five  
19 different support systems. While this - -  
20 musical network chairs has taken place two major  
21 things happened, our high schools - - budgetary  
22 increase of \$300,000 and our member school - - .  
23 The DoE education impact statement gives a bunch  
24 of numeric resources it says ABCD received and  
25 approved. I would love to not only see the

1 dates of the - - and the dates of the resources  
2 - -, but also the invoices as I cannot speak to  
3 a lot of the - - support listed in the - - even  
4 though I have been in the school since 2006. -  
5 - one of the - - . What I can speak to is that  
6 not since 2007 has there been anyone on the  
7 budget or any school to specialize in - - and  
8 there has never been anyone to specialize in - -  
9 , nor has there been consistent use of  
10 innovative programs in our school. The schools  
11 that do not specialize in educating high risk  
12 population get much - - literacy programs or  
13 programs such as - - Wilson - - 3000. - - the  
14 students of ABCD - - . In addition when 258  
15 closed its doors ABCD - - and resources that  
16 would help our teachers grow their outside  
17 professional development centers. However due  
18 to budget constraints the center was never  
19 opened because the school can't afford to hire  
20 someone to run, nor will - - supplies nor make  
21 their way around the building used effectively.

22 In addition to that our special education  
23 population is - - percent of our school's  
24 population last year which is much higher than  
25 the DoE's average. However such education

1 resources were limited largely due to budget  
2 constraints in the school. For example the EIS  
3 - - ABCD offered self contained classes.  
4 However we have not had a high school self  
5 contained class since 2010 our middle school  
6 seven to ten class since this year. While I  
7 certainly believe that students should always  
8 feel the - - environment possible, I think that  
9 individual wise unless we meet the need of the  
10 student not the school. In addition [Background  
11 noise] it must be noted that - - . For example  
12 all of last year and this year there has been a  
13 - - as - - school this is a detrimental mistake  
14 that should not have taken place. In addition  
15 we currently and in the past have students - -  
16 report students from their prior school. We  
17 currently have students who are no show who are  
18 sent us - - how - - to use that against us.

19 Also students from - - were missing from the  
20 DoE system - - students who were bright - -  
21 graduates to be erroneously labeled as off  
22 track. The reason this is important is because  
23 of November 7<sup>th</sup> DoE officials came to say that  
24 ABCD middle school can - - based on their  
25 analysis of our school's data. So they shut the

1 school because it cannot be turned around  
2 quickly or have replacements that - - support.  
3 At no point was the high school mentioned by the  
4 officials. At no point were the teachers or  
5 parents and most importantly the students  
6 informed the entire school may be closed.  
7 However on November 28<sup>th</sup> when a representative  
8 from the office of special planning came to our  
9 school and nearly three weeks later I got a  
10 feeling that things do not look good for ABCD.  
11 On December 9<sup>th</sup> the DoE officially came back to  
12 give us the news that the entire school would be  
13 closed shockingly the ABCD community. What was  
14 even more shocking was now the only data that  
15 officials wanted to talk about was the number of  
16 high school students that - -, the number of  
17 high school students who have passed the - - .  
18 Not only were those numbers incorrect at that  
19 time, but it was the first time that that had  
20 been presented as a reason for completely  
21 closing ABCD. Due to these issues and - - 6 to  
22 12 schools when the high school opened - - high  
23 school experience our middle school suffered all  
24 these things ultimately led to our middle school  
25 which had previously received 2 Bs to - - .

1 Please note that despite the setbacks - - and  
2 inconsistent resources ABCD has received over  
3 the years our students have been - - . We have  
4 - - community through the New York Mayor's  
5 program they have read - - school they have  
6 volunteered and spent time with our senior  
7 citizens, they have helped clean organize and  
8 paint murals for schools in the community. They  
9 have also - - as part of - - program, and they  
10 have used that money to provide - - organization  
11 in the community as well as the world. They  
12 have donated to their - - and World Vision  
13 donated money to the victims of the Haiti  
14 earthquake.

15 Not only have they done this but they have  
16 supported - - breast cancer and American  
17 Diabetes Association - - money. In addition to  
18 community service - - the students in the middle  
19 school have participated in track and field as  
20 well as fitness club via the champs program and  
21 basketball. While our high school has been  
22 limited to only basketball, they are currently -  
23 - [background noise]. - - they may not have a  
24 home - - to. The DoE should choose not  
25 eradicate ABCD's public history. What would it

1 take for ABCD should be listed among the  
2 schools that closed the - - gap between black  
3 and Latino young community something  
4 extraordinary. A school cannot be just big  
5 ideas but no research and support staff for  
6 Latino. From what I have heard about the black  
7 Latino young men initiative, there are 40  
8 schools that have shown improvement - - . If  
9 that resource coupled with what our staff has  
10 learned as well as leaders that not only know  
11 the nuances of middle school or high school or  
12 the unique needs needed to - - 6 to 12 school  
13 can seek along those line networks specifically  
14 for 6 to 12 schools should be set up so schools  
15 might - - and lose their school - - 6 to 12.  
16 Educating black and Latino men is no easy task,  
17 and when innovative solutions are discovered  
18 that work in public schools they cannot be kept  
19 secret and must be shared. I believe it is in  
20 the best interest of New York City and the  
21 Department of Education and most importantly  
22 young men ABCD that ABCD - - and given them  
23 resources and expertise needed to educate - - .  
24 Across the years I have seen boys grow up to be  
25 - - who are smart kind hearted considerate witty

1 and determined. ABCD was set up to educate  
2 young black and Latino men so that they can beat  
3 the odds. And I know the young men of ABCD do  
4 just that.

5 Our - - that is done to the urban school and  
6 technical history - - for young people - - in  
7 the Bronx. Given the knowledge that has been  
8 learnt from the 40 schools that have - -  
9 initiative and use that to turn ABCD around  
10 instead of trying to eradicate it from the DoE's  
11 history. What the young men at ABCD have got

12 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: - - ABCD, ABCD, ABCD.  
13 ABCD, ABCD, ABCD. ABCD, ABCD, ABCD. ABCD,  
14 ABCD, ABCD. ABCD, ABCD, ABCD. ABCD, ABCD,  
15 ABCD.

16 [Background noise]

17 MS. NELSON: - - as per the school's  
18 original motto are strong - - what is right no  
19 matter how hard it may be. They have - - and  
20 they can do anything they set out to achieve.  
21 They - - and they will always think of the needs  
22 of others so - - and keep their - - [background  
23 noise].

24 MR. BETHEL: - - the microphone for the  
25 public comment period. We'll ask - - to define

1 the - - speakers assigned here to speak, each  
2 speaker will be given two minutes - - after  
3 making your comment - - the microphone - - the  
4 time - - . The - - two minutes - - seconds - -  
5 some additional speakers who are joining us and  
6 - - .

7 COUNCILMAN AL VAN: Good evening family, the  
8 speakers, educators I'm Councilman Al Van as you  
9 know. I'll be fairly brief I just left the  
10 dentist's chair and I feel like my lips are  
11 bigger than my head, but my brain is working I  
12 hope I can convey [background noise]. I just  
13 came in and I sat and I heard very articulate  
14 very profound comments being made and I felt the  
15 enthusiasm of the students from ABCD and those  
16 who are here to support them. And such a tragic  
17 thought came in my mind that the very agency  
18 that has a responsibility for providing the  
19 education for our children find themselves in  
20 direct contradiction to the children and to the  
21 school and to the parents and to the community  
22 for which they are supposed to serve, that is  
23 really very tragic.

24 We should be one, they should be supportive  
25 of that which we say we need within our

1 community. I have thought about this, the  
2 mayor who is a smart man he made a business he's  
3 a brilliant man he's not a dumb person right?  
4 But there is a lack of understanding about  
5 what's involved with the school and education  
6 because you can build a business with widgets  
7 does not mean that you understand what you have  
8 in a school system.

9 I disagree on one major philosophy that  
10 appears to be what the mayor has followed. See  
11 this is not just a building here, this is a  
12 school with history culture legacy. I have  
13 taught with a number of my friends used to teach  
14 here when I taught in junior high school 35 a  
15 few blocks down. Generations have gone to this  
16 school and gotten a good education. So your  
17 grandparents may have gone here your parents may  
18 have gone here, uncles aunts. So it's not just  
19 a building that you do anything with, it's a  
20 community institution, a community institution.

21 And if you view it from that perspective  
22 then the program, you may have a vision of what  
23 you want to happen but how you go about getting  
24 there is wrong because he doesn't understand who  
25 we are and what we need and how we function.

1           There is no school system that will be  
2 successful if it does not involve the community  
3 the parents and the community involvement in  
4 that process. Studies after studies have  
5 demonstrated that no one can deny that. And so  
6 when you have a community and the parents say  
7 this is what we want, I am opposed to closing  
8 down buildings, you don't close down something  
9 you improve it. You provide the resources that  
10 are necessary, you provide the expertise you  
11 provide the technical support you bring the  
12 community into play, that's what you do. There  
13 may be a few exceptions maybe because of the  
14 federal mandate where you can get additional  
15 money and the race to the top and it may be  
16 circumstantial where you can find the school to  
17 fit that description to get the money. But as a  
18 mandate as your prime position to close schools  
19 to act as if they have no history to act as if  
20 there is nothing good going on there and in most  
21 cases the problem and issues that exist in many  
22 of our schools were actually created by the DoE.

23           The lack of leadership, the lack of support  
24 so I'm here as I described the letter earlier to  
25 the chancellor whom I know who is a friend, but

1 my letter is the same I am opposed to what  
2 they are proposing I asked that he withdraw that  
3 request and allow ABCD to remain open and give  
4 them what they need so they can - - . Thank  
5 you, chair at the meeting we had prior to the  
6 holiday breaks and tried to get some direction  
7 as to what we needed to do because and I believe  
8 the old position took place, the parents came  
9 together and did what they had to do. I was - -  
10 got this academy for same process, brought the  
11 same people, same thing happening - - school  
12 which the school is opposed to, the parents are  
13 opposed to it, the - - is opposed to it, the  
14 community is opposed to it, but the DoE wants to  
15 do it also.

16 And so strange that they want to close  
17 Fredrick Douglas [phonetic] and it's Fredrick  
18 Douglas who made me aware and associated with  
19 his comment that if parents don't struggle there  
20 is no - - . And so you must take that as your  
21 mantra I know that the history is very clear,  
22 it's rare it is rare that the DoE will change  
23 their position no matter what we present. Very  
24 few on very few occasions has that occurred but  
25 that should not dissuade us. We must do what we

1 know is right, we must put everything in it  
2 that we can because we must struggle because we  
3 believe in our children, we believe in our  
4 schools, we believe in our community and we must  
5 struggle to do everything we can because we  
6 believe that.

7       Finally let me say this, I think there's  
8 nothing wrong I think there's something  
9 honorable about being able to admit that you  
10 made a mistake. It's not always easy and we  
11 know it in our personal lives. Sometimes we  
12 don't know how to say I'm sorry, sometimes we  
13 don't know how when to apologize. But I want  
14 the chancellor to know that we would hold him in  
15 high regard if he would listen through the  
16 arguments that have been advanced, listen to the  
17 mission and the vision and the plan that this  
18 school community have for ABCD, listen to the  
19 heart listen to the cries of the young men who  
20 are here, who say they want to be here. And Mr.  
21 Chancellor we will respect you highly if you  
22 would listen to those voices that say I made a  
23 mistake and you would let ABCD do what they need  
24 to do, we will support them to make sure they  
25 become a school of - - which they have a

1 potential to become. Thank you.

2 MR. BETHEL: Thank you councilman - - very  
3 important information should the proposal go  
4 through - - if you don't like those options and  
5 decisions made tonight, I want to make sure the  
6 before the hearing is over you have the  
7 opportunity to read the charter submission so  
8 the parents and students of here get clear  
9 information, no what their options will be,  
10 however - - [background Noise]. With that I'm  
11 going to ask the first five speakers we have - -  
12 speaker Mercedes Qualls speaker number one, - -  
13 will be speaker number two, Eleanor Pettway,  
14 Anita Pettway, Tamika Still [phonetic] if you  
15 can line up - - thank you. We'll begin with  
16 speaker number one Ms.

17 MS. MERCEDES QUALLS: Good evening community  
18 of ABCD, I'm principal Merc Qualls - - on behalf  
19 of the Council of Supervisors and Administrators  
20 that supports the education of all children in  
21 public schools as well as the administrator in  
22 this building, I have the following from Earnest  
23 Logan [phonetic] the Department of Ed has  
24 scheduled 25 more schools for phase out and  
25 closures and that said the new schools opened

1 under Mayor Bloomberg, are better than those  
2 that in place. Yet in the latest round of  
3 closings 11 schools were opened during the  
4 mayor's administration. Ironically some of the  
5 mayor's new schools are usually among those that  
6 are closed and become part of the vicious cycle  
7 of failure.

8 The New York City public school system is  
9 not a place for experimentation, where we can  
10 open and close schools for students who have  
11 already been traumatized by previous school  
12 closing. Then there's the tragedy of all the  
13 young people who have not been saved even  
14 briefly by the city's new school safety net.  
15 But have been turned away from new schools for  
16 reasons of poor academic achievement or for  
17 other reasons and sent to the warehouses and  
18 other low performing schools that would probably  
19 be closed as well.

20 This is a losing strategy for turning around  
21 low performing schools which are invariably  
22 attended by children of color from economically  
23 disadvantaged communities. The endgame of the  
24 strategy is to eliminate schools that the  
25 administration has had at least a decade to fix

1 and to improve its data by creating new  
2 schools that won't have a wrong data for as long  
3 as 4 years. The fact is that closure is an  
4 admission of failure by City Hall.

5 The Bloomberg administration should take  
6 more responsibility not less for schools that  
7 are not doing well, rather than turning them  
8 over to private entities like EPOs or closing  
9 them and washing their hands off a deep rooted  
10 problem that has been unsuccessful to remedy. I  
11 too I'm a child of public education at Crown  
12 Heights in 271 had to close the school or close  
13 the schools that I attended, I would not be able  
14 to serve the children that I have served for  
15 over 32 years. Thank you. [Background Noise]

16 MALE VOICE: Good evening, first and  
17 foremost I'm here to represent ABCD in making  
18 sure that it's very clear and - -. First and  
19 foremost to reiterate what Ms. Nelson has said  
20 what we were initially told about this closure,  
21 it was only about middle school, but high school  
22 was never ever told. You could have seen the  
23 faces of these young men when you gave us the  
24 task of explaining to them that their home was  
25 gone. When you gave us the task of explaining

1 to them that their home is gone. When you  
2 gave us the task of telling us where they've  
3 spent the last 4 or 5 or 6 years that they're  
4 all of a sudden, no longer part of the  
5 [background noise] that was not even your task.  
6 You put that on us to do after giving us  
7 misguided information about our mission which  
8 was to tell our middle school families middle  
9 school students of their plight. So the shock  
10 and awe that went to these young men is  
11 something that actually they deserve apology at  
12 some point from you.

13 Also what has been said is that we only have  
14 limited time, one student on track to graduate -  
15 - that in fact defined is not true - - resources  
16 and support that you speak of that it's our  
17 system and the average system that we need to be  
18 governed with you would have seen the correct  
19 data that we have upwards of over a dozen of  
20 these young men that are slated to graduate.

21 Several of which have already been accepted  
22 to college - - . So also I understand Ms. - -  
23 was handpicked for this job, she was not told  
24 that you have no more than a year to turn  
25 everything around - - you already knew took

1 place so when getting someone who was an  
2 aspiring doctor who is someone who has been on  
3 the - - team who was educated in this city a  
4 chance to be acquainted with these young men and  
5 find out how we can turn this around, that is  
6 simply not fair. She assembled a staff created  
7 a staff that was unique to the unique population  
8 - - the veterans like - - Mr. Nelson who are  
9 guiding given the history of this school so we  
10 can be collaborative and bring these young men  
11 to the standards that they know we know now that  
12 they can achieve now that we've come into  
13 contact with again they deserve your apology  
14 because she did not get the correct and  
15 efficient time to carry out the task that you  
16 gave her.

17 Lastly please - - should not be cast aside  
18 as spoken about in ill will kind of like a  
19 Hurricane Katrina people that are - - . They're  
20 black young men they're students. So with that  
21 said let's see - - out into these other schools  
22 [background noise] specifically sent them to a  
23 gender only school, specifically sent them to an  
24 all boys school because they know their children  
25 and now we know their children, now they need an

1 easier time to transition into these other  
2 schools, than just cutting their legs up under  
3 them - - . Nothing else my last comment to you  
4 is that if for some reason you don't find it in  
5 your hearts to save this school, they at least  
6 need to be phased out or transitioned properly.  
7 Thank you I know that's my time - - .

8 MS. ELEANOR PETTWAY: I'm Eleanor Pettway my  
9 situation in this school is a little different,  
10 my son was in a safety transferred. He was  
11 bullied, he was abused and the last time - - at  
12 his last middle school. When he arrived here I  
13 had my transgressions because in fact it was an  
14 all boys school. What I appreciated at the time  
15 I came to this school was that the parent  
16 coordinator spoke to me and eased my fear. They  
17 said that this would never happen to my son  
18 again as long as he was at ABCD - - problem, if  
19 there was an issue, I came to the parent teacher  
20 conference, they sat with me they spoke to me  
21 they gave me solutions to ensure my son's safety  
22 and that they would make sure that he was - - in  
23 the population. Since my son has been here,  
24 Michael please stand up, my son has never been  
25 attacked in the 3 months that he has transferred

1 here my son is happy. My son is safe, my son  
2 is safe among his brothers because that's who  
3 they've become because unfortunately for Michael  
4 his girl ratio at home is 5:1. So he has now  
5 the male support because he has - - but that's  
6 okay because they take him in and they treat him  
7 like their brother - - .

8 The only other thing I would like to mention  
9 is the first trip my son had here was to City  
10 Park. They took him and showed him to feed the  
11 hungry which I appreciate because he needed to  
12 know that yes there are people even in your  
13 community that still need help. He has begun to  
14 have a drive for education that he ignored when  
15 he was being abused before. He didn't want to  
16 come back to middle school, he wanted to return  
17 to elementary school because he thought that was  
18 safe because he spent 5 years there safe. Since  
19 he's been here he wants to go on this trip he  
20 wants to learn how he can build his community,  
21 how he can become the businessman that he wants  
22 to be.

23 He wants to cook he wants to be a chef, he  
24 wants to show people that he can cook and feed  
25 his neighbors. He wants to get out and show his

1 community that he can be the best man he's  
2 going to be. How can you guarantee my son's  
3 safety when he's not here anymore, he's already  
4 made a home here. He's been accepted here, he's  
5 no longer this closed eye little boy who was  
6 scared to return to middle school because the  
7 boys were beating him every day, every day he  
8 was being attacked. Since he's been here he's  
9 been the happiest I've ever seen him. - -  
10 growing man and I feel that it's inappropriate  
11 to just take them away from the home now he's  
12 established here, because now you're saying to  
13 him that I have to risk his safety at a new  
14 school where he has to get to know people and  
15 try to trust that this going to happen again. -  
16 - and here I don't worry, when I drop him off in  
17 the morning, he goes and he tags with his  
18 brothers. He gets his education he's back on  
19 track, he does what he needs to do and a mother  
20 shouldn't have to work and worry that her son is  
21 being abused. [Background noise]

22 MS. ANITA PETWAY: My name is Anita Pettway  
23 and my nephew goes to this school and as you  
24 know Eleanor Pettway is my sister so I was  
25 always for Michael because he's like the first

1 boy to actually get to junior high school  
2 right now for us. As she said the ratio is  
3 mostly girls okay and I believe in education  
4 okay. My feeling is how can people make a  
5 number go to school, it's supposed to be based  
6 on students and what they can do and what they  
7 will do okay, I mean I came here and I did the  
8 orientation, everything was set, it was great  
9 okay. I said put him in here our son needs to  
10 go from junior high school to high school in an  
11 all male school and that's great because what  
12 she said we're in an all female population at  
13 home there's only one other male in our house  
14 and that's - - I mean come on now instead of  
15 trying to get to school - - their library was  
16 taken over by a charter school, does anybody  
17 know that? Does anybody know that there's  
18 computers here that don't work. - - he has to  
19 go to a library to find a research for a  
20 project, they can't do, they can't do - - that  
21 makes me very angry, very angry and that's all I  
22 have to say.

23 MS. TAMAL SMITH: Good evening. My son's  
24 been going here since September. I moved to the  
25 neighborhood community and I'm trying to

1 understand why Bloomberg and his puppet wants  
2 to close the school. - - Bloomberg but Bloomberg  
3 telling him what to do to close our school, now  
4 I'm sitting here looking for almost an hour and  
5 noticed Bloomberg and his puppet didn't come to  
6 see our protest. So why should I close my  
7 school our school when we got to find somewhere  
8 else for our kids to go - -. My son loves  
9 reading, he has made male mentors that I can't  
10 even find in a street to help my son. - - see I  
11 don't understand that but where is him and his  
12 puppet? They're not here to see this but - - he  
13 wants to close our school my school because he's  
14 too cheap to command his puppets - -  
15 billionaire, millionaire/trillionaire can't come  
16 and put money in our school instead of trying to  
17 get it - - . Put some money in our school so  
18 our kids can get the - - that they need - - been  
19 here for 2 years - - but what they did they put  
20 money in a project but then - - . My advice to  
21 Bloomberg and his puppet is to please put some  
22 money in our school so our school my school our  
23 school can stay out of trouble. Okay?

24 MR. BETHEL: - - .

25 DISTRICT LEADER: Good evening.

1           AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good evening.

2           DISTRICT LEADER: Like he mentioned, I'm the  
3 District Leader of the 56 Assembly District  
4 which is District right here. But I'm not here  
5 as the District Leader, I'm here as a concerned  
6 parent.

7           I live on - - and I have six children, five  
8 of which are still in the New York City public  
9 school system. Four of which will be looking  
10 for a junior high school home very shortly. And  
11 I just wanted to make some notes that--I wanted  
12 to give you some notes that I was able to take.

13           In New York State, grade by grade testing in  
14 06--conducted for the first time in 06 showed  
15 that rich and poor districts alike, rich was  
16 plunged from the fifth to the sixth grade, where  
17 most students move to the middle school, and  
18 continued to decline through eighth grade. The  
19 pattern is increasingly seen as a critical  
20 impediment to tackling early high school drop-  
21 out rates, as well as the achievement gap  
22 separating black and white students.

23           When you couple that with the uncertainty of  
24 when and where these young men will be educated,  
25 that's the recipe for disaster that we as

1 parents can ill afford.

2 According to the - - report in 07, the lack  
3 of educational sound living and learning  
4 environments, and the lack of consistency has  
5 contributed to New York State being the last in  
6 graduation rates, having a 25 percent graduation  
7 rate.

8 So we know that between the age of 10 and  
9 the age of 14 that's a critical age. So this  
10 uncertain period is contributing and is going to  
11 continue contribute through our low high school  
12 graduation rates.

13 So we're asking, and I'm asking as a parent,  
14 that we have some consistency available for our  
15 young men especially.

16 I have a particular interest in ABCD school  
17 because, where my fraternity brother was first  
18 principal here at - - . What you don't know is  
19 that when - - principal he brought the  
20 fraternity, that's going to - - and go back to  
21 the - - . So he brought a community of men, as  
22 mentors to work with these young men so he  
23 didn't come by himself. He came with a group of  
24 young men and it's that kind of consistency  
25 within our community that's going to help our

1 young people.

2 So that by itself is not factored in the  
3 report. But I wanted to report that not only  
4 did he as a black man at the school, when it  
5 came, a whole bunch of black men we were willing  
6 to participate in the growth and development of  
7 our young people. So that has to be considered.  
8 And that might not show up on any report. So  
9 I'm here to report myself personally that we  
10 were invested in the school, and we need that  
11 kind of participation to continue in our school.  
12 Thank you.

13 MR. BETHEL: - - .

14 MS. ELIZABETH CAPRICI: My name is Elizabeth  
15 Caprici, and I'm the mother of Marvin Gibson,  
16 been in this school since sixth grade. Okay?

17 I would like to see my son graduate out of  
18 ABCD. Okay? I would really like that. Okay?  
19 Because not only--this school has saved my son,  
20 but they helped me raise my son. You know, from  
21 the 6 grade to now 11th grade, I mean, come on.  
22 I know this one is - - . He wants to graduate  
23 with his school mates. There's a few here that  
24 - - . Guide these young men - - .

25 MR. MARVIN GIBSON: - - .

1 MS. CAPRICI: Speak from the heart - - .

2 MR. GIBSON: I've been in this school, ABCD,  
3 since the sixth grade, the second year it was  
4 opened. The date December 9<sup>th</sup> when Ms. McIntosh  
5 called the whole school in this auditorium, that  
6 they've decided to close the school down, so  
7 they've made a proposal. I'd say, alongside Ms.  
8 McIntosh because after that is a brotherhood,  
9 this is my second home. And this school has  
10 taught to me how to - - in what I do. Right now  
11 I deejay for - - right now. I've been deejaying  
12 since the eighth grade in this school. I've  
13 been here since middle school, and I've been  
14 taking it serious since the fifth grade. Thanks  
15 to my biological family my mother, my second  
16 home, ABCD. They held me down. They want to  
17 see me be successful. And I don't appreciate  
18 the fact that--this school, it is like--no, I'm  
19 not going to say that. I don't know what - - .  
20 I want to be successful. I'm a black male, - -  
21 first black male - - school, and I feel that is  
22 going--I'm in 11th grade, if this school does  
23 close, I'm going to have one more year to - -  
24 for a year. It's like starting pre - - all over  
25 again. And I'm not going to be safe at that

1 school because this is my home. This is my  
2 second home. I feel comfortable coming here  
3 every day of the week, I feel safe, and then to  
4 let you all know when did I hear the school  
5 being violent? This school has a low violence  
6 rate. We barely have fights. We barely fights  
7 - - . But this could be because it has not - -  
8 all over the school that's being violent, - -  
9 the school, never heard nothing like that. This  
10 school is a medical cover school, we're safe, I  
11 feel like he's my brother and I would love to  
12 graduate here. I stared here, why not graduate  
13 here? Thank you.

14 MR. BETHEL: - - .

15 MS. TANYA KING: Good evening everybody. My  
16 name is Tanya King. - - . Can you hear me now?

17 I'm the grandmother to adopt a kid from the  
18 sixth grade. I just want to say that I've been  
19 here--this is the first year in junior school.

20 And this is a brotherhood - - . We both have  
21 to--have become a family within the school.

22 With Matt [phonetic], with Dan [phonetic], with

23 - - . This is family here. This school needs

24 to stay open, this - - the resources and the

25 service that they need. You want to close this

1 school down why - - these are black and Latino  
2 boys. Let the school stay open, let them show  
3 you that they can be successful men when they  
4 come out. Here's their one chance to show or  
5 prove that they can do it. Here's - - chance to  
6 show you that you can put in these program that  
7 would help these young men become young  
8 successful businessmen, that they are going to  
9 be when they get older, if you have - - .

10 MS. ALMALTHEA: We're going to give the  
11 other half - - time. My name is Almalthea  
12 Lynden Hall [phonetic], I'm the PTA Treasurer,  
13 and I'm here to give a message to Dennis Walcott  
14 and the puppet education parents. They need to  
15 take their hands out of their backs and they  
16 need to vote on facts not on the - -.

17 My son came here from Bushwick. Y'all  
18 brought him over here so that he could fill a -  
19 - in his State funding. He has a - -, he's  
20 building the - - . Now he has to do that and  
21 put some place else, and start all over again.

22 You all don't know the mental damage that  
23 y'all doing to this children okay? Y'all seeing  
24 is the outcome of bringing in other people in  
25 here. That's what - - .

1           That--what you're doing to these children,  
2 these children are the ones that have to take  
3 care of us when we get old. So when they see  
4 you coming down the street, and they set their  
5 feet out and trip you, because they remember  
6 what you did to them, you have nobody to blame,  
7 but yourself. And I don't want to - - because  
8 you know why? I don't want you to want to get  
9 hurt. I want them to see me and be like, you  
10 know, she helped me. She did what she could do  
11 for me. Okay? You're going to put a band aid on  
12 that, if they have a problem fix it, okay, the  
13 solution is not shipping them out so someplace  
14 else. Because that same problem they have,  
15 they're going to have it when they get to that  
16 new school. And that band aid they're going to  
17 put on you, is going to eventually come off, and  
18 that sore is going to fester and it's going to  
19 stink. Because nobody solved your problem.

20           Solve the problem. The money that you're  
21 going to put into whoever's coming here, invest  
22 it in them, because they need it. You - - give  
23 them what they need, give them a library, okay?  
24 I was sitting in Ms. Dunn's office the other  
25 day, why is it that a student had to come in, to

1 print this college information? Why is there  
2 no working computers in this school? Why is  
3 there no library in this school? But yet it's  
4 new. You all said--you all came - - to support,  
5 where? Because you didn't even give them a  
6 library.

7 I talked to a student the other day, he told  
8 me he wanted to learn music. Why don't we have  
9 a music program here? Those are the questions  
10 that need to be answered - - .

11 So like I said, vote on the facts. Don't  
12 vote - -, take your hands out the back.

13 MR. BETHEL: - - .

14 TEACHERS OF ABCD: We the teachers of the  
15 Academy of Business and Community Development  
16 stand united to voice our opposition against the  
17 closing of the ABCD door at the end of the  
18 school year.

19 When the mayor introduced his initiative, he  
20 stated, and I quote, "Even though skin color in  
21 America no longer determines a child's fate,  
22 sadly it tells us far more about a child's  
23 future than it should. That reality is not  
24 something we ever tell a child. Because how  
25 could we possibly explain to a young black and

1 Latino boys that they are twice as likely as  
2 white children to grow up in poverty? Twice as  
3 likely to drop out of school, and twice as  
4 likely to end up out of work?

5 How can we possibly tell them that when they  
6 get older they are far more likely than their  
7 peers to become violent criminals or the victims  
8 of violent crime? How could we possibly look  
9 them in the eyes and say, America is a great  
10 place where you can grow up to be anything you  
11 want, but the odds are against you?

12 The truth is, we can't possibly look our  
13 children in the eyes and say any of those  
14 things. the fact that more black and Latino  
15 young men end up in prison or impoverished,  
16 rather than in professions of their choosing, is  
17 not a fact we are willing to accept here in New  
18 York City, not today, not ever."

19 We the United Teachers of ABCD ask, how can  
20 the DoE look in the eyes of the young men of  
21 ABCD and take their home away? A home where they  
22 have learned how to become young men, and  
23 leaders in the community, despite the lack of  
24 support their school has received over their  
25 years.

1 Closing ABCD and telling our young men to  
2 find a new home is something we the united  
3 teachers of ABCD are not willing to accept. Not  
4 today, not ever.

5 ABCD's mission is to help young men,  
6 particularly those of color, young black and  
7 Latino men become leaders in the community,  
8 through academic achievement, brotherhood and  
9 dedication to their community.

10 Throughout this school's history, students  
11 have participated in New York Care's Day,  
12 helping to clean and beautify other New York  
13 City schools as well as their own home. They  
14 have participated at - - sponsored by Common  
15 Scent, and as a school community, collected  
16 pennies that was then used to write grants to  
17 such organizations as Bed Stuy Campaign Against  
18 Hunger, and World Vision.

19 They have participated in the Making Strides  
20 Breast Cancer Walk, as well as the American  
21 Diabetes Association Walk. In addition, they  
22 have donated food to - - Church and the  
23 Salvation Army. They have spent time with  
24 senior citizens, and with elementary students.  
25 They have participated in New York City's

1 History Day, receiving recognition and  
2 accolades for the organization. And, the high  
3 school basketball team is currently undefeated  
4 in their league. And this was all done despite  
5 the lack of support school received to ensure  
6 their academic success.

7 While the data is not good, we ask, how can  
8 anyone expect to be, when we do not receive some  
9 of the basic resources other schools receive?  
10 Schools that do not specialize in helping black  
11 and Latino males beat the overwhelming odds.

12 A parent of first co-location with another  
13 school, our students would never get access to  
14 the second floor library.

15 Upon our second co-location, the library was  
16 dismantled to make space for the co-location.

17 Therefore, we find it quite strange that in  
18 the proposal to co-locate, P140K, at - - after  
19 all eradication from the building is safe, the  
20 DoE proposes that time in the library be  
21 allocated to all schools based on the relevant  
22 project involvement for each school.

23 We ask, what library? Second, our school has  
24 lacked literacy, math--and math coaches as well  
25 as programs to help students struggling in these

1 areas. For a school with the current special  
2 education population of 20.35 percent, and the  
3 past population 25.2 percent, it is also seems  
4 strange to us. Not only have we lacked  
5 specialized staff members, but resources, which  
6 would help teachers differentiate what the wide  
7 range of abilities we have in our classes.

8 There is no - - . We want a--achieve 3,000  
9 or other innovative programs that other schools  
10 who do not specialize in helping young black and  
11 Latino students have.

12 Third, even though last year 69 percent of  
13 our population received free or reduced lunch,  
14 we lost our title one population funds due to  
15 new cut-off rules. As such, we have not  
16 received free tutoring this year, and the  
17 presence of outside student education support  
18 services have been absent from the school's  
19 history.

20 As teachers over the years, we have  
21 willingly gone without preps, work at the  
22 school, helping students academically, a sell as  
23 providing clubs to meet their social, emotional  
24 needs, and when the budget cuts force the money  
25 to run out, teachers still volunteered their

1 time to help our students.

2 But small staff from any small school can  
3 only do so much.

4 So yes, the numbers are bad, but as we--we  
5 currently have students accepted into college,  
6 based on Region's diploma we can only imagine  
7 how well our young men can do, if only given at  
8 least adequate resources.

9 So, should the DoE--while they choose to  
10 remove ABCD from the closure list, and instead  
11 providing with the resources necessary, in  
12 reaching a population that must beat the odds,  
13 we, the United Teachers of ABCD would like to  
14 share some of the things we have learned over  
15 the years.

16 It is difficult to get high school students  
17 to choose on their own. To go from a co-ed  
18 Middle School, to an all boys high school, and  
19 that is why the 6 to 12 action is so important.  
20 It helps the students build a brotherhood. A  
21 family where they feel more comfortable, raising  
22 their hands to answer a question, or to receive  
23 help. Sharing their writing pieces and doing  
24 their best to succeed, than in some co-ed  
25 settings.

1           However, to get through this, to continue,  
2           from the middle school to the high school, there  
3           must be objects which appeal to that as a young  
4           man.

5           Due to the small nature of our school, our  
6           school has only been able to offer basketball to  
7           our high school students. They lack the option  
8           football, being a part of a marching band or a  
9           drum line. Nor have we been able to offer as  
10          many clubs and after-school activities as we  
11          would love for our students to participate in,  
12          due to lack of money.

13          How do you expect a young man to transition  
14          to a school where his social-emotional needs are  
15          not met along with his academic needs?

16          In addition, 6 to 12 schools are unique.  
17          And in this age of networks, one should be  
18          created to specialize in the unique needs of  
19          those schools, but just find teachers and  
20          leaders that are well-versed in the joint middle  
21          school and high school issues. As well as give  
22          those 6 to 12 schools a fair peer index room to  
23          be compared against. Not co-ed school, not  
24          middle school only school, or high school only  
25          school.

1           And finally, the resources for the school  
2 to provide the adequate amount of staff and  
3 interventions that help these young men.

4           Yes, this will take money. And possibly  
5 more than what other schools receive. But the  
6 mission of the ABCD is not an easy one. And  
7 we'll take it's - - on the part of all parties  
8 to help our young men beat the odds. Which  
9 brings us back to the initiative. Which is, and  
10 I quote, "currently set out the target, 40  
11 schools have already shown progress in closing  
12 the achievement gap in high school graduation."  
13 And then transfer that knowledge to other  
14 schools.

15           While our school has clearly struggled,  
16 instead of eradicating its existence, add to the  
17 initiative as a school that would gladly accept  
18 the methods that have become worthy in those 40  
19 schools.

20           We have told you about some of the problems  
21 that have led to the numbers you use to create  
22 the proposal to close our school, and have also  
23 given you an action to take to help resolve them  
24 should you widely choose not to close our  
25 school. And help ABCD and New York City become

1 a leading example in helping young black and  
2 Latino men beat the odds.

3 Closing the school after not providing it  
4 with everything it needed to succeed is the easy  
5 way out, and we, the United Teachers of ABCD  
6 never choose the easy way out.

7 [VIDEO PRESENTATION]

8 MALE VOICE: What do you like about ABCD?

9 MALE VOICE: I like the fact that ABCD is a  
10 good school and there is no one above anyone  
11 else.

12 MALE VOICE: How long have you been at ABCD?

13 MALE VOICE: For about two years.

14 MALE VOICE: And what do you like about  
15 ABCD?

16 MALE VOICE: I'd have to say the students -  
17 - . The teachers, a lot of them have  
18 contributed to the person that I am now so--

19 MALE VOICE: What do you like most about  
20 ABCD?

21 MALE VOICE: What I like most about ABCD is  
22 the fact that - - everyone in the school. It's  
23 like - - it's like a family here. That's  
24 something you can't get anywhere else.

25 MALE VOICE: I've been attending this school

1 since sixth grade and I feel like this school  
2 shouldn't close down, because ever since I've  
3 been connected like I've learned lot it's a real  
4 brotherhood in the school. So I feel like - -  
5 shouldn't close the school down because it gives  
6 me - - the same if the school closed down.

7 Ever since I came to this school in sixth  
8 grade, I met with good friends, and you know  
9 what, it's just not the same. Ever since Mr.  
10 Cole [phonetic] was - - as my class came in,  
11 there's been a big difference. I started  
12 learning more, I started doing better in  
13 classes, and I feel like - - .

14 MALE VOICE: How do you feel about this  
15 school closing?

16 MALE VOICE: Disrespected.

17 MALE VOICE: And how do you feel about them  
18 closing this school?

19 MALE VOICE: Well I say it shouldn't be  
20 closing because I--we had a case in like third  
21 grade, they tried to get to regional schools  
22 affected, and some other school putting me like  
23 that or other people. So they--you find ample  
24 space here for them to come in.

25 MALE VOICE: How do you feel about them

1 closing the school?

2 MALE VOICE: I feel--I feel bad because--  
3 like I'll get to--I'm going to like miss the  
4 people that I've been hanging out with for like  
5 two years, and like all the time we had, all the  
6 things--even in good or bad times.

7 MALE VOICE: What school will you go to when  
8 you leave here?

9 MALE VOICE: I haven't made a choice yet.

10 MALE VOICE: If you could say one thing to  
11 the Mayor about ABCD closing what's that?

12 MALE VOICE: I'll say, you know, don't close  
13 ABCD, just fix it.

14 MALE VOICE: - - honestly I was shocked, I  
15 never thought it would happen, the way it  
16 happened. Just one day we walked into the  
17 auditorium and it was broken to us. Complete  
18 shock. And after the renovations was done to  
19 the school, for these past two years I thought  
20 we were doing better than we were before. And  
21 the fact that we were doing better, - - the  
22 stewards, the faculty, everything here seems  
23 extremely - - than it was before, - - extremely  
24 shocked that something like this could happen so  
25 soon then just standing up.

1 MALE VOICE: Closing the school down or  
2 basically just shutting down - - students have  
3 to - - right now and shouldn't be broken apart.  
4 So they actually graduate out of high school and  
5 it's just going to--I guess - - .

6 MALE VOICE: You can say - - . Why would  
7 you say that?

8 FEMALE VOICE: Don't close down ABCD.

9 MALE VOICE: Why?

10 FEMALE VOICE: Because I think we should  
11 have a chance.

12 [END OF VIDEO PRSENTATION]

13 [Applause]

14 MR. BETHEL: - - do apologize to those - -  
15 teachers. So I would ask everybody to try and  
16 stay as close to your time of two minutes, so  
17 that we can make sure everybody can participate.

18 The next speaker is Daniel - - , Joseph  
19 [phonetic] - - , Malik Williams, Matthews  
20 [phonetic], Howard Pellar [phonetic] and Tyson  
21 Paul [phonetic]. Speakers please - -?

22 FEMALE VOICE: - - on that time.

23 MR. BETHEL: - - . The next speakers, - -  
24 Sewa Codington, Jeff Utz, Yolanda - - .

25 MR. JEFF UTZ: my name is Jeff Utz and I am-

1 -

2 MR. BETHEL: I'm sorry - - .

3 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

4 MR. BETHEL: Okay. Mr. Codington?

5 MS. SEWA CODINGTON: Good evening my name is  
6 Sewa Codington and I am--sorry. I'm just  
7 getting a little tired.

8 Okay, my name is Sewa Codington and I'm the  
9 President of the - - Black Association - -, and  
10 - - down to Conference [phonetic] Avenue, and  
11 from Conference and McDonald, to Tompkins. And  
12 like--from Tompkins and McDonald to Tompkins and  
13 - - street.

14 And I've lived in this community my entire  
15 life, and I've got vested interest in this  
16 community. And although we've been going  
17 through gentrification, we are still  
18 predominantly an African-American and Latino  
19 community.

20 And New York City is a mosaic of  
21 communities, with varied cultures. And the  
22 school system must be prepared to effectively  
23 facilitate learning for every individual. Every  
24 student. No matter how culturally different or  
25 similar they are, to those who control the

1 system.

2 And in our community, schools are more than  
3 an academic institution. They are the social--a  
4 very important social institution, and they are  
5 essential to the growth of our community to our  
6 development and our sustainability as a people.  
7 And like all other communities, our community  
8 must address the specific problems that are  
9 detrimental to us and our wealthy--

10 And unfortunately--

11 FEMALE VOICE: You just started.

12 MS. CODINGTON: the school system has a  
13 primary true, has been a primary - - of missing  
14 education for our population. Without business  
15 education there would be no economic - - .  
16 There would be no wholesale homicide and there  
17 would be no jails full of black men.

18 Our black males are the most marginalized  
19 groups of people in this country. And this is  
20 why is the first of ABCD. It is a necessity.  
21 It caters to educating our young males without  
22 our males, we would cease to exist.

23 What support has been given by the New York  
24 City Department of Education to determine how to  
25 correct the needs of the school? What efforts

1 have been made to turn its weaknesses into  
2 strengths? Its failures into successes?

3 Before closing the school due to the  
4 evaluations based on - - tests, which are  
5 questionable. It's the duty of the decision  
6 makers to take an active role in reexamining all  
7 educational practices, and how they affect the  
8 learning of our students.

9 Assessment methods. Teaching and learning  
10 strategies, school psychology and counseling  
11 practices, educational materials and textbooks.  
12 The method of determining the amount of money  
13 allotted to the schools, and so on.

14 It is the responsibility of the New York  
15 City Department of Education to develop and  
16 support this school, that directly serves the  
17 members of - - instead of looking out for the  
18 interests of those who are being bussed and  
19 driven in from other communities.

20 And as a lifelong member of this community,  
21 I am staunchly against the closing of ABCD  
22 without the board making every effort to address  
23 all the issues that are necessary to make this  
24 institution one which molds successful citizens  
25 of the 21st Century.

1 DR. JEFF UTZ: My name is Dr. Utz, and I  
2 am an excess teacher from the school, I'm - -  
3 into the school year I was supposed to - -  
4 didn't have money in the budget for me, which  
5 made that - - .

6 This time I've been going around from school  
7 to school. And I've noticed a pattern. Every  
8 single school I've been though, even the ones  
9 that are supposed to be the best, there is not  
10 nearly enough money to support the kids to the  
11 way they're really need to be supported.

12 And that a school like this, there is no way  
13 near enough support for the students. The  
14 students here need afterschool help. They need  
15 homework help. They need to have support. They  
16 need to have programs in the morning to help  
17 them get going through the day. There is  
18 nowhere here enough support for our kids. If  
19 teachers need more support as Ms. Nelson  
20 mentioned earlier, to help teachers use all the  
21 technology that they need they also need better  
22 technology in the school.

23 The computers that I have used last year  
24 were - - .

25 So this is a business school and I am going

1 to use business terms. The students in this  
2 school are upset with the United States.

3 The City needs to invest in the students  
4 here. And if they do it the right way, and use  
5 the brains that they actually do have, that the  
6 school and the students will pay wonderful  
7 dividends to the City and for the country. So  
8 it's time for the City to invest in the  
9 students, and not close down the school.

10 MR. ELIAS SILVER: Hi. I've been an ABCD  
11 student like the fifth grade now and I feel like  
12 shutting down the school is the wrong thing to  
13 do because it's like taking my home away from me  
14 and my brothers there too. And if you're taking  
15 our home, you take our education. I mean you  
16 take our education away from us, it's going to  
17 be harder for us to learn, and harder for us to  
18 phase new.

19 I think that by shutting down the school,  
20 we--you should give us a chance to improve. If  
21 we can improve, we can show you that we can do  
22 better.

23 MR. BETHEL: - - .

24 MR. MARK HEPBURN: All right. The first  
25 thing that Ms. McIntosh said to me when I

1 started my senior is that, we're going to  
2 graduate. I believe that to be true. And the  
3 fact that you're closing ABCD means that you're  
4 killing a lot of dreams for a lot people here.

5 This school has been my home since 2006.  
6 And the people I've met here, mean that I'm  
7 going to make it somewhere in life.

8 My brothers well, these people want to  
9 consider my brothers, they've taught me so many  
10 things, and I taught them so many things. I  
11 feel like if you break up the school, you'll be  
12 breaking up that brotherhood that makes the  
13 school alive.

14 MR. OMAR HERERA: My name is Omar Herera.

15 Here at ABCD we're more than just a school.  
16 We're a family. A brotherhood. I've attended  
17 ABCD since the ninth grade, and I'm now a  
18 senior.

19 I can say this school has helped me grow in  
20 many aspects in my life. My grades increased  
21 from middle school, and ever since attending  
22 ABCD I have yet the need to attend summers  
23 school.

24 Yes, every school has their problems, but  
25 ABCD is different. Because the staff care about

1 the students, and instill self confidence in  
2 everyone.

3 I can say this because I am one of the  
4 students who have been accepted into college.  
5 And I plan to make a successful future with  
6 myself.

7 In any other school, I would have probably  
8 made unwise and life-changing decisions.  
9 Overall, I would have been a different  
10 individual.

11 Later in the future, I would like to come  
12 back to ABCD and say this was my home.

13 College was not in my life agenda, ABCD has  
14 helped me to change that. Without ABCD, I would  
15 have probably been another statistic.

16 MR. BETHEL: Speaker 20, Lisa North, 21,  
17 speaker, 22, Joseph Modinghall, speaker 23,  
18 Khadija McCort.

19 MS. LISA NORTH: Hello, my name is Lisa  
20 North, I'm a teacher in a neighboring school,  
21 P.S. 3, and I'm just--would like to say how  
22 impressed I am with--to see the kind of  
23 community that you've been able to build here.  
24 And I'm very much against the closing of this  
25 school.

1           Unfortunately Bloomberg thinks that he can  
2 restore - - before schools by a business model.  
3 Which is--unfortunately the problem with the  
4 business model is that there is always winners  
5 and losers. And do we really want--in  
6 education, that means our children, do we really  
7 want winners and losers for our children?

8           AUDIENCE MEMBERS: No.

9           MS. NORTH: But unfortunately that's the  
10 kind of education Bloomberg is building. He's  
11 building an education system that's built on  
12 winners and losers. Open a school, don't give  
13 it what it needs, up, close it, open another  
14 school here, move kids here, move kids there,  
15 move teachers here, move parents here. And  
16 that's the kind of system that he has built.  
17 And unfortunately we see that it doesn't work.

18           So what can we do as we--everybody has  
19 spoken about it, what can we do to improve our  
20 school system? Is give us the resources that we  
21 need. Fix our schools.

22           The other thing that needs to be done, is  
23 that we need to end the mayoral control of our  
24 schools.

25           Communities just like this have a right to

1 decide what happens to their school. What  
2 happened to democracy? We have--what we have now  
3 is a mayoral dictatorship of our schools. So I  
4 want--what I want to say is, to keep up the  
5 fight. Don't let them demoralize us. To keep  
6 fighting, I hope to see everyone there's an  
7 event tomorrow in Union Square. I'd hope  
8 everybody can come. I hope to see everybody in  
9 PEP on February 9th. You really need to turn  
10 out, you really need to show the mayor that  
11 everybody is against this. All the other  
12 schools will be the, and we really need to show  
13 that the mayor and the City that this is not the  
14 way to fix our schools.

15 The last - - organizations out there try to  
16 get involved and are trying to bring communities  
17 together, the Coalition for Education and  
18 Justice, CEJ, there's - - Education Movement,  
19 there's the Occupy DoE, there's the handing on  
20 information. So please get involved and stay  
21 involved.

22 MR. BETHEL: Thank you. - - .

23 MR. JOSEPH MODINGHALL: Now the reason why I  
24 think the mayor--Mayor Bloomberg is facing the -  
25 - is because he's just some - - of the sixth

1 graders. And plus, it is a most - - to the  
2 high - - because they have been in this school  
3 since - - sixth grade. And those in - - Mayor  
4 Bloomberg to.

5 And they--and he--I think he - - them away.  
6 Now that is not the solution. Because if we go  
7 to another school, that would be - - . Then  
8 what? Now they are just stuck.

9 And then, - - just keep moving to the  
10 schools, but what Mayor Bloomberg will always -  
11 - charter schools are not the solution.

12 Now most--now my mama sent to me the other  
13 day, charter schools cost money. Now most  
14 people don't have money like that. And this is  
15 not - - just doing that. Now he is just - - our  
16 education and we have to learn. We have - -  
17 together and fight for our school. Thank you.

18 MR. BETHEL: - - .

19 MS. KHADEJA MCCORT: My name is Khadeja  
20 McCort. Good evening. I'm a parent of a  
21 seventh grade student.

22 Readily available are body bags and cells to  
23 catch our sons and hold them in captivity. Why  
24 is it they have had to pay the system and  
25 support setup to help them get to the second

1 stage of life? Most of these boys are coming  
2 from broken homes, single homes, drug addicted  
3 parents, foster care and parent homes where  
4 grandparents are doing most of the job. Instead  
5 of making them feel as if they are on  
6 punishment, we need to embrace them and hold  
7 them and help them and welcome them into society  
8 into the community and help them become positive  
9 partners of society.

10 I don't understand how Bloomberg could sit  
11 down with a - - and make a proposal to build a  
12 stadium downtown - - Brooklyn. But you respect  
13 him because he's on an opposite side now. Help  
14 our sons get to that point. It's better to have  
15 obtained a job working at the concession stand  
16 or at McDonald's - - as well.

17 MR. BETHEL: Thank you - - .

18 MS. PATRICIA ROMAINE: Good evening. My  
19 name is Patricia Romaine, I'm - - .

20 I - - my son in this school because it was a  
21 all boys school. When I came here I was very  
22 welcomed and very at peace, and I could tell  
23 here, this school has helped him be a better  
24 person in the community, as a leader in the  
25 church, and even - - .

1 I wondered why is it that - - big deal to  
2 close the school? Why not look at the problem,  
3 because there's always a problem. Why not find  
4 a solution and then - - ? What did we do when  
5 the elementary school was failing how did we  
6 help? Are we afraid that these young men here  
7 will be the future president? We have this - -  
8 future presidents, or future congressmen, what  
9 we need is to have so many young men just have  
10 proper education, and so - - . We want the - -  
11 .

12 MR. BETHEL: I want - - .

13 MS. ROMAINE: - - Thank you.

14 MR. BETHEL: And with that we'll come to the  
15 public comment we will have the question and  
16 answer period. And two questions - - to us and  
17 we will continue to - - from that. Any question  
18 - - public website and if at the end of this  
19 session if you have additional questions please  
20 take both the local email address and phone  
21 number at the bottom of the faq sheet and - -  
22 and we will respond to them prior - - . With  
23 that I'll give it back to - - to respond to the  
24 questions.

25 FEMALE VOICE: Thank you. I heard from the

1 faculty the voices, I heard voices of the  
2 students and the entire - - community. As I  
3 said earlier this is not a - - . We have two  
4 questions today, the first question is why does  
5 the DoE need to - - schools - - . The answer to  
6 that is - - considering the factors, and  
7 progress, performance - - . In 2010, 2011 92%  
8 of the middle school were - - . 26% of students  
9 were - - lower than that and 30% of the  
10 students. I have to say that we have more than  
11 40 students - - as well.

12 The 2007 not 2010 - - . The 25 - - students  
13 they were promoted - - city. In 2008, 2009 - -  
14 involving 19 students - - 50 percent of the  
15 students. 80 students - - and about 57 percent  
16 - - . ABCD as - - high school. Of the 44  
17 students enrolled in the eighth grade in 2010,  
18 2011 school year only nine students and that's  
19 roughly 20 percent - - ninth grade ABCD 2011,  
20 2012 - - . The second case - - grades 6 to 12.  
21 In 2010, 2011 - - 75 schools in this - - . A  
22 ratio of 1.5 students per seat whereas the city  
23 wide average is 8.5 students per seat. 80  
24 percent 18 students or 60 percent ranked ABCD as  
25 their first choice for high school. So you have

1 to understand - - process - - the first choice  
2 first. [Background noise]. But - - and - - it  
3 breaks my heart to see that you have a classroom  
4 with computers that don't work. And it breaks  
5 my heart for me to - - that have computers that  
6 don't work. - - all students.

7 AUDIENCE MEMEBERS: Do something.

8 FEMALE VOICE: - - I'm sure there's also  
9 students that - - and - - directly support for  
10 the students that are not directly incorporated  
11 [phonetic] because their parents need to know -  
12 - through grade 16 - - opportunity to graduate  
13 at the end of the school year for - - process.  
14 The department six and seven grade students will  
15 - - . The department 12<sup>th</sup> grade students will  
16 have an opportunity to graduate at the end of  
17 this school year and congratulations to those  
18 students and - - 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students are  
19 on track to - - in another district 13 high  
20 school for September the 12<sup>th</sup> - - . students who  
21 will allow the opportunity to move on to a  
22 different school in 10<sup>th</sup> grade - - .

23 First time that any of the students will  
24 have an opportunity to acquire an - - school  
25 from tenth grade - - high school - - process - -

1 .

2 MALE VOICE: - - .

3 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

4 [Background noise]

5 FEMALE VOICE: - - the first one - - middle  
6 school and - - . My son is turning - - my son -  
7 - make sure that he's passing his test. Guess  
8 what - - because he's - - . I'm a parent and I  
9 came here I volunteered I was working with these  
10 young men and they are not - - they are not - -  
11 as their parent for as long - - public school  
12 and this - - no other high school - - . As a  
13 parent - - for ABCD - - . And I understand why  
14 you - - and school counselor that - - ABCD - - .  
15 And your - - talking you didn't know but I know  
16 - - public school - - take ABCD into a charter  
17 school - - and - - but - - . You understand - -  
18 these are young men that need us, black young  
19 Latino men that need us, and they need us - -  
20 supposed to make it - - and y'all made my minds  
21 up and even though you made our minds up - -  
22 y'all want trouble with ABCD look at the - -  
23 look at everything that was announced - - about  
24 us. My son his got - - but my son came from a  
25 two and a three from a three to four with the

1 help of all these people here.

2 [Applause].

3 MR. BETHEL: - - comments - - . We  
4 appreciate the details - - .

5 AUDIENCE MEMEBERS: Save our school. Save  
6 our school. Save our school.

7 MR. BETHEL: Thank you all for coming and  
8 the joint public hearing is now concluded.

9 [END 265\_777.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 *McLennan Amos*

7           Date February 3, 2012  
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