

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

**New York City Board of
Education**

**Division of Portfolio
Planning**

Castle Bridge @M128

11/7/11

1 [START 259_094_1]

2 MS. ELSE NUNEZ: This Is the joint public
3 hearing of the Department of Education, The
4 Community Education Council on School Leadership
5 for the proposed two year collocation of a new
6 district elementary school, Castle Bridge School
7 with the existing school P.S. 128 in the M-128
8 Building.

9 I am the District Superintendent Else Nunez.
10 We have asked the District 6 Community Education
11 Council and the School Leadership Team for P.S.
12 158 to participate in this joint public hearing.

13 I am going to pass around the mike and
14 everyone can introduce themselves and state what
15 organization the represent.

16 MS. IRIS ANTONETTY: I am Iris Antonetty, I
17 represent the second and third grades.

18 MS. SUSETTE ARENA: Hi, my name is Susette
19 Arena.

20 MS. TORY FRYE: Hi, my name is Tory Frye, I
21 am a District 6 CEC member. I hope my fellow
22 CEC members will join us shortly.

23 MS. NUNEZ: This hearing is being recorded.
24 There are Spanish interpreters in the other room
25 for those who require interpretation services.

1 You may pick equipment on the table by the
2 entrance. Interpreters will interpret the
3 proceedings of this hearing as well as any
4 commentary made by Spanish language speakers
5 during the course of public comments.

6 It is important for Spanish language
7 commentators to allow the interpreters an
8 opportunity to repeat commentary in English for
9 the benefit of the transcriptionists in
10 transcribing this hearing as well as for English
11 language speakers in the audience.

12 The purpose of this hearing is for you to
13 provide comments about the proposal. Before I
14 describe the proposal I want to make sure you
15 all aware of the opportunity to provide your
16 input. All those who wish to speak must sign on
17 the speakers log located outside the auditorium.
18 This sign up list will close in fifteen minutes.

19 Speakers will be given the floor in the
20 order that they signed up. All comments are
21 limited to two minutes. There may be elected
22 officials who arrive at different times
23 throughout the evening. If they wish to speak
24 we will do our best to accommodate them at the
25 first opportune moment. Those who are here at

1 the start of the public comment segment will be
2 asked to speak first.

3 I believe today we have Sara Mulbridge from
4 Robert Jackson's office in the audience. All
5 comments will be mentioned in the announcement
6 of public comments to be published and provided
7 to the panel for Education Equality even before
8 the panel votes. The votes are scheduled for
9 November 17, 2011.

10 In addition, we welcome any comments and
11 feedback you may have at any time before the
12 panel votes on both proposals.

13 The email address and phone number where
14 comments may be made at
15 DO6Proposal@Schools.NYC.gov and 212-374-3466.

16 Proposal Summary: The New York City
17 Department of Education is proposing to open a
18 temporary site at Castle Bridge School a new DOE
19 Choice Admissions elementary school that will
20 serve students in kindergarten through fifth
21 grade in Building M-128 located at 560 West 159th
22 Street in Manhattan in Community School District
23 6.

24 Castle Bridge will be collocated in M-128
25 with P.S. 128, an existing DOE zoned elementary

1 school as well as students in grades
2 kindergarten through 5 and also offers three
3 kindergarten programs.

4 A collation means that two or more school
5 organizations are located in the same building
6 and may share common spaces like auditoriums,
7 gymnasiums and cafeterias.

8 This proposal is for a two year temporary
9 collocation beginning in school year 2012-2013.
10 At the end of this period the DOE will evaluate
11 the space available at M-128 and other buildings
12 in District 6 to identify a permanent location
13 for Castle Bridge. At that time the DOE issue a
14 new DIS to propose a permanent location for
15 Castle Bridge.

16 Castle Bridge is a new choice elementary
17 school that will admit students through a school
18 based allocation process with references to
19 District 6 residents and following Chancellor's
20 Regulation A-101 for admission.

21 Castle Bridge will open with kindergarten
22 and first grade classes on a thirteen, twelve,
23 thirteen and add one grade each year to serve
24 approximately 108 to 210 students in
25 kindergarten to sixth grade at full scale.

1 M-128 has the capacity to serve 920
2 students. In 2010-2011 the building only served
3 731 students, a utilization rate of just 78%.

4 If the proposal to temporarily site Castle
5 Bridge at M-128 were approved, Castle Bridge
6 will be collated at P.S. 128 for two years. In
7 the first year 2012-2013, Castle Bridge will be
8 enroll approximately 60 to 70 students, thirty
9 to thirty-five students in kindergarten and
10 thirty to thirty-five students in first grade.

11 P.S. 128 will remain about the same as it is
12 at present. The total enrollment will 696 to
13 796 students and the building utilization rate
14 will be 76 to 87%.

15 In 2013-2014, Castle Bridge will serve
16 approximately 90 to 105 students in kindergarten
17 through second grade and enrollment at P.S. 128
18 will continue at about the same level as at
19 present. During that year the total enrollment
20 will be 715 and 825 students. The building
21 utilization rate will be 78 to 90%.

22 This concludes the summary of the proposal.
23 At this time we will ask the CEC and FOT if they
24 would to speak. Does anyone like to speak?

25 We are joined by Judith Amaro our CEC

1 president. Okay. We will now take anyone who
2 would like to make a public comment. 1 through
3 5, if you have numbers 1 through 5. Oh, Ms.
4 Moritz would like to speak.

5 MS. SARAH MORBRIDGE: My name is Sarah
6 Morbridge, I represent the Councilmember Robert
7 Jackson. This school is not in Councilmember
8 Jackson's district and with the way the zoning
9 is drawn it does not particularly represent his
10 constituents, nor Councilmember Alex Rodriguez'
11 family to attend this school.

12 However the councilmember that I work for is
13 a chair of the Education Committee and we did
14 write a support letter that I would like to read
15 to you. I will read it slowly. It is dated
16 July 27, 2010 to the Office of Portfolio
17 Planning. To Whom It May Concern: Over the
18 years I have had the pleasure of meeting with
19 many educators who hope to start new schools. I
20 recently spent time with Julie Zuckerman and
21 Chrystal Williams from the Planning Team for the
22 proposed Capital Bridge. Their proposal is
23 exciting for a number of reasons, the first of
24 which is that the team had targeted a
25 neighborhood within my council district that is

1 decidedly underserved in terms of school
2 facilities that needs stability and school
3 choice.

4 It is a rare to find a team with such a
5 distinct vision with such deep experience and
6 such a good grasp of the community's needs. The
7 broad connections and breadth of expertise are
8 truly impressive. And I need to take time out
9 from reading the letter to mention that that the
10 Castle Bridge School has the community partnered
11 in the Fortune Society. The Fortune Society has
12 a distinct purpose. They are a citywide group,
13 but they are in a local facility, local
14 headquarters is at 141st and Riverside Drive and
15 they work with families who may have had one or
16 more parents who are incarcerated and are
17 returning to the community. So they have a lot
18 of expertise in working with people who have
19 served time and are reentering and need
20 additional support with that transition.

21 Let me return to the letter. The timing
22 could not be better for West Harlem, Washington
23 Heights and Harlem neighborhoods have the
24 unfortunate distinction of having a high
25 percentage of families with an adult who is

1 incarcerated often for a drug related offense.
2 Many of these prisoners will be released under
3 the recent reforms of the Rockefeller Drug Laws
4 and returned to an economy that is not
5 welcoming.

6 Some will not be eligible and will remain in
7 prison. All of these scenarios create special
8 stress on families and consequently on student
9 achievement and behaviors.

10 I am excited about the decision to embrace
11 this reality rather than ignoring it. I believe
12 that the Castle Bridge School will meet a real
13 educational need. I also believe that this team
14 of educators has a very good chance of making
15 this a real success story. They deserve our
16 support, our encouragement and here is the key,
17 and a home of their own to make it happen.

18 I urge your favorable review of this
19 proposal. In Unity, Robert Jackson.

20 So as I said to the principal here tonight,
21 this is for Councilmember Jackson a bit of a
22 straddle. We do not approve of collocation.
23 This is a terrible way to incubate a school and
24 get it started. We approve of its concept. We
25 think it bears its own home.

1 So tonight I stand before you supporting
2 the application of Castle Bridge School and with
3 real empathy with what that's going to mean to
4 the families and the teachers at P.S. 128.

5 We have had very unsuccessful collocations
6 in the district. The Hamilton Heights P.S. 153
7 community can talk to you about their
8 experience. They had no choice but to rely on
9 the DOE members and now the students in that
10 elementary school get, both schools get recess
11 once a week. Imagine once a week. They only
12 get gym once a week.

13 So if DOE could wave its magic wand and
14 implement these collocations successfully, we
15 would be totally supportive, but in your
16 experience the numbers always come out to the
17 disadvantage of both schools in the building

18 And you have heard Ms. Nunez read the
19 estimates. There is a spread of about a hundred
20 in their projection, a hundred students more or
21 less. So when you are talking about 600 or 700
22 students total that's a very big spread. Now
23 projections are estimates. We know that they
24 can be wrong, but we don't trust the numbers.

25 So I stand without a definite conclusion up

1 or down but I say to the people from DOE you
2 need to rethink this policy of collocation. You
3 need to acknowledge that this district needs
4 more capacity, that the instructional footprint
5 that you base your decisions for collocation is
6 not adequate, it is not even minimal. If you
7 design tools to your instructional footprint,
8 you'd be designing, you would be working for the
9 Dormitory Authority in designing prisons,
10 because the way you design schools as jurors,
11 the way you say they should be used is mean and
12 tight and not generous.

13 So that's the councilmember's position. He
14 is opposed to collocations in general. He would
15 very much like to see Castle Bridge get started
16 and thrive and we don't want this to come as a
17 cost to existing programs.

18 Thank you, very much.

19 MS. NUNEZ: I now would like to call Julie
20 Zuckerman, proposed leader of Castle Bridge.

21 MS. JULIE ZUCKERMAN: I am Julie Zuckerman,
22 the current principal of Central Park East 1 and
23 proposed school leader in Castle Bridge School.
24 I taught elementary school for twenty-one years
25 in kindergarten through fourth grade and I have

1 been a principal for seven years in East
2 Harlem.

3 Over two years the Central Park East 1 began
4 getting 200 applicants for twelve kindergarten
5 seats and started thinking about opening a new
6 school to accommodate that need.

7 Progressive education means a lot of
8 different things to different people. Castle
9 Bridge will be the pervasive alone model of
10 Central Park East 1. That means that the
11 classes will be mixed grade, kindergarten and
12 first graders will be in the same class
13 together. There will be a big emphasis o the
14 arts, starting with a full music program. The
15 children will have one period a day where they
16 choose a project to work on. In addition to
17 daily instruction in reading, writing and math,
18 all the classes will be inclusive, meaning that
19 there will be special education children missed
20 in with the general education students.

21 All children will have lots of time to talk
22 thus practicing their language skills through
23 speaking as their writing and reading skills are
24 developing.

25 This approach to learning is consistent with

1 the habits and standards that have been built
2 into the common core standards that are now
3 being adopted nationally. Independence,
4 inquiry, creativity, initiative, tenacity,
5 patience, cooperation and problem solving are
6 the aspects that have been identified as
7 important for people moving on to college and
8 into the work world.

9 We want children to develop strong reading,
10 writing, math and research skills in order to
11 pursue the questions that matter to them and
12 that our country needs help with.

13 There are two big differences in what exists
14 now at Central Park East 1 and what's being
15 planned for Castle Bridge. One is that many
16 more children at Castle Bridge will be Spanish
17 speaking. CPE-1 has a small number of Spanish
18 speaking and ELL students. These children are
19 serviced by an ESL program.

20 Recently at CPE nearly 50% of the staff is
21 bilingual, which has made a big difference in
22 our capacity to work with children's acquisition
23 of English. Castle Bridge will prioritize
24 hiring staff who are both fluent in Spanish and
25 English.

1 The other big difference is that Castle
2 Bridge has a partnership with the Fortune
3 Society, which has two residential sites on 148th
4 and Riverside. Sarah talked about that.

5 As a principal and teacher I found that the
6 children who struggle the most to connect
7 socially and academically to school have been
8 children with an incarcerated parent. So when I
9 began thinking about a new progressive school
10 for northern Manhattan I wanted collaborate with
11 the Fortune Society on how to include and
12 support children whose families have been
13 impacted by incarceration.

14 Castle Bridge will set aside 10% of its
15 seats for these children, children who are so
16 marginalized in the system that they aren't even
17 counted as at risk.

18 Collation is a tricky process, which is why
19 we are all here today. Often it means that the
20 existing school has to cut back on programs
21 because there simply will not be enough room and
22 that's what happened at 153.

23 In other cases we have seen that schools
24 that have been put into buildings are attempted
25 to grow to such a large size that the original

1 school gets further squeezed out. In other
2 cases we have seen that the new school puts the
3 facilities like playgrounds or air conditioning
4 that they will not share with the other school.

5 Castle Bridge is set to be a two year
6 collocation. We will begin with a maximum of
7 seventy-five students. The second year we will
8 have no more than one hundred. That represents
9 three classes and then four classes the
10 following year. Castle Bridge will not be more
11 than 200 students. And as I said it is on the
12 Central Park East model which has held for 200
13 students and it is now in its 37th year.

14 I have had a lot of experience in sharing
15 school buildings both as a teacher and a
16 principal. The Jasby Brothers complex where
17 Central Park East One is located is a building
18 that houses a DOE elementary school, a charter
19 elementary, a middle school and a high school.
20 During the time that I have been there the
21 schools have collaborated to track the funding
22 for a \$1.5 million playground that benefits not
23 only the schools but the neighborhood on the
24 campus and through the summer.

25 We have collaborated to build a dance space

1 in the elementary school and a library for the
2 middle and high school staff. The collaboration
3 among our schools has allowed each school to
4 offer more to our children than we would have
5 been able to if we stood alone.

6 I am not saying that sharing a building is
7 easy or necessarily preferable. I am saying
8 that it is possible to do it well in ways that
9 benefit all the schools involved and minimize
10 the organizational struggles.

11 One of the ways that Castle Bridge will
12 limit its impact on the current spaces is that
13 classes will be in your classrooms, so will not
14 have to use the cafeteria.

15 I am sure that there will be other ways in
16 which we can impact on the program at P.S. 128
17 as we haven't had a chance to meet with Rasani
18 Ganda in order to talk about the space issues.

19 There is much more to describe and details
20 to be discussed. I welcome the opportunity to
21 address questions and concerns as we move
22 forward.

23 Thank you.

24 MS. NUNEZ: Numbers 1 through 5 stand up.
25 Please come forward.

1 MS. AMANDA: - - My younger children in
2 the school because it is a school that had
3 academic achievement for all the students
4 regardless of their economic background - -

5 MR. KEVIN GUZMAN: Hi, my name is Kevin
6 Guzman, I run a daycare in this area. Actually
7 the daycare goes from the Harlem side of
8 District 6 all the way to the Washington Heights
9 side of District 6, we take care of about sixty
10 in the neighborhood.

11 And the reason that I am support Castle
12 Bridge is, I guess the most fundamental reason
13 is I believe in progressive education, I believe
14 in the CPE-1 model, I believe in the - - years
15 ago and I believe in small schools. I don't
16 believe in really large schools. My child goes
17 to a small school. I like to walk into a school
18 and have a principal know my name. I like
19 everybody in the school to know each other's
20 name. It is the kind of school that I want to
21 send my kids to and it is the kind of school
22 that Castle Bridge is going to be.

23 P.S. 128 is like that a lot too, my wife
24 actually used to teach in P.S. 128, she taught
25 there for five years and it is a wonderful

1 school. And I can't think of a better school
2 to collocate with, if we are going to collocate
3 than Castle Bridge. There are lots of reasons
4 for that.

5 The first is when I look at the district I
6 am scared for the district. I see charter
7 schools coming and they are not small, they are
8 very large and they take the space away from
9 public schools. It is something that has
10 happened over and over and over again. Look at
11 District 5 and you see what I'm talking about.

12 We don't District 6 or at least I don't want
13 District 6 to end up that way. I think that the
14 Department of Education has an agenda in favor
15 of charter schools. I support Castle Bridge
16 because it is not a charter school, because it
17 is not a large school.

18 Of all the teachers that I had privilege to
19 meet, UFT teachers, who are union to get decent
20 wages, this is not a charter school that is
21 coming in to P.S. 128 to take its space This is
22 a school that is coming into P.S. 128 to work
23 with P.S. 128.

24 If you take a look at CPE-1, you will see
25 what I am talking about. It has been in that

1 space for many, many years, it was the lead
2 opponent in the biggest lawsuit last year
3 against the charter school collocation.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. JEANNIE LEE: My name is Jeannie Lee and
6 I am the mother of a three year old and when I
7 look at the educational options that my daughter
8 will have as a pre-K student next year I am
9 inspired by the pre-school education she has
10 had, which has been a progressive education,
11 which has nurtured her spirit and her
12 independence and her smarts and her attitude and
13 her greatness.

14 And I am inspired by what the Castle Bridge
15 school can do for our community, which has been
16 under surge, which has been devastated by the
17 impact of the criminal justice system and
18 incarceration. The Castle Bridge School will
19 provide services for children in our community
20 to lead them, will teach our students a
21 progressive education.

22 And I am inspired by the commitment of P.S.
23 128 families who are here tonight. I feel
24 strongly that the Castle Bridge school will be a
25 good neighbor and will enhance services to our

1 children and to our community that our
2 community severely needs.

3 MS. CRYSTAL WILLIAMS: Good evening,
4 everyone. My name is Crystal Williams and I am
5 a parent and also live in Harlem. I have lived
6 in Harlem for the last thirteen years and those
7 last thirteen years my children have never been
8 able to attend school in our neighborhood
9 because progressive education is every important
10 to me, that a child - - neighborhood - -

11 Among the things about Castle Bridge is just
12 being a choice. That's all we want is a choice,
13 nothing is better, nothing is worse, it is
14 different you know Brussels sprouts, asparagus,
15 one is not better than the other, it is just
16 different.

17 I've worked for the Department of Education.
18 I have known Julie for a very long time, which
19 she approached me about this. I was excited. I
20 said finally I will be able to take my kids to a
21 school in the neighborhood. My kids are older
22 now, but I am in the process of adopting two
23 little boys and I am excited to know that there
24 is going to be a local school for them to
25 attend.

1 I wanted to talk a little about the
2 incarceration. A lot of the students that I have
3 come across that live in a very high needs
4 district and everyone is impacted by
5 incarceration you know. I am. The little boys
6 that I am adopting their mother has been
7 incarcerated. I have students who come into
8 office if it is not a parent it could be a
9 brother. We just thought that how close we are
10 to that and I think it is wonderful that we are
11 going to have these resources in place for our
12 students.

13 That's all I wanted to say. I am really
14 excited about this. I am glad to be a part of
15 the team and just again it is just a choice, it
16 is not better, it is just different and we all
17 like--some people like chocolate ice cream and
18 some people like strawberry. I like chocolate.

19 MS. NUNEZ: Speakers 6 through 10 please come
20 right up

21 MS. CAROLYN ESOFFERY: My name is Carolyn
22 Esoffery. I am a native New Yorker. I am from
23 the Bronx and Randall's Island and I am a proud
24 to be a resident of District 6. I have lived
25 for almost ten years. My educational background

1 is varied. I went to private schools, not in
2 my neighborhood, I went to public schools in my
3 neighborhood and I am a firm believer of keeping
4 as many public school options as we possibly can
5 in the district. And this district is lacking.

6 My son is three, he has been very fortunate
7 to have a progressive education, I see his
8 linguistic skills are amazing and he is an
9 amazing little boy. I believe it is largely due
10 to the education he received up until this
11 point.

12 I want my son in his community. I want my
13 choices for the community. I personally do not
14 want any charter school or any more charter
15 schools in this community. We need more public
16 schools. Everyone benefits from more choices
17 and I know there have been negative experiences
18 with collocation, but there have been also very
19 positive experiences with collocation and we
20 need to give all of our children as many options
21 as possible to stay in our neighborhood and have
22 a fabulous education, one that the need.

23 Different children learn differently regardless
24 of religion, culture, race has nothing to do
25 with that. Different kids learn differently and

1 need different things and we need more options
2 for our children, to keep this community strong
3 and get stronger and work together as parents.

4 And obviously I am a supporter of Castle
5 Hill School, I am a supporter of P.S. 128 and I
6 really, really look forward and hope that we
7 will all get to work together to make this
8 school a house for two schools, until it doesn't
9 work anymore and can do it somewhere else and
10 until then I think we all get to need each and
11 work together.

12 Thank you.

13 SPEAKER: My name is - - I am a student from
14 P.S. 128. This year we - - signed petitions.
15 No one has listened to those petitions.

16 MS. VALADA: My name is Mercedes Valada, I
17 am a member of the PA, association of parents.
18 The petition of 80 parents of 650 students and
19 four years ago in the school. We want our
20 space. Four years consecutively - - we
21 solicited pre-K and they haven't paid any
22 attention to us and we've asked that they
23 haven't paid any attention to us. The provision
24 of quality that has been made and they had a
25 good situation and it had good growth. We would

1 like to know if the state responsibility of
2 what happened in the school is in the directory
3 of P.S. 128. The provision of quality of work
4 is very good. We want to know if the same
5 responsibility will be exercised with the new
6 director.

7 Our school? Could it be because it is
8 located in a very important place, a very
9 strategic place where you have the trains, the 1
10 and the A, could it be because they have
11 constructed a hospital for children on 165th
12 Street for other races and not for our own.

13 It is not personal, but they feel strongly
14 that they do not want the other school in this
15 building because this building belongs to this
16 community.

17 MS. NUNEZ: Councilmember Rodriguez has
18 joined us. Would you like to say a couple of
19 words?

20 COUNCILMEMBER RODRIGUEZ: [Spanish] So what
21 I am saying is, I will support part of the
22 decision, but I will not - - people awarding
23 their own agenda and that's what we should not
24 accept. I believe that the parent decide on the
25 best education for my daughter who is five years

1 old and I what is best for her - - I would
2 like to see more quality education. So go over
3 it and look over the facts and make the best
4 decision, but don't make - - saying that
5 progressive education it doesn't work, it works
6 because these are people not the students with
7 critical thinking and the students - -

8 So I say as a project organizer, as a
9 community leader, as a father I would like to
10 see more choice in our community and I will
11 support your decision, but I know that there are
12 certain people with their own agenda trying to
13 block this school to come into this place.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. VERNON BALLARD: My name is Vernon
16 Ballard and I am here--it is very strange that I
17 am here tonight for this meeting because when
18 this school was originally proposed, Lilly
19 Zuckerman who is the principal for the - -
20 School came to Community Board 9 when I was the
21 chair at the time and they submitted a proposal
22 and they wanted community support and she had
23 been a friend of mine since 2001, going back to
24 September 11, actually.

25 Actually, I am following Councilmember

1 Rodriguez and actually I have known him since
2 the early 1990's because we went to City College
3 together. I actually had two children here. I
4 used to live in District 6 up until last year.
5 I have two girls and I have a four year here
6 with me now. When I was two years old my father
7 was incarcerated for like six months and so for
8 me it is very personal this school.

9 I really hate the collations the way they
10 implement them. When I was the chair of
11 Community Board 9, we did the Hamilton Heights
12 School and P.S. 153 collocation and because
13 there wasn't much choice we had to make it work
14 and they are collocated and it is a struggle,
15 but it is working. You know it is working for
16 the kids.

17 Like I said my daughter is four years old
18 now and we actually moved from 142nd and
19 Riverside to 119th and Lennox, which is right
20 around the corner from Julie's school now and
21 actually the Central Park East 1 School is one
22 of the top six schools that we are looking at in
23 District, which has got amazing schools.

24 So if she is going to be the principal here,
25 she is going to do an amazing job. And it is a

1 setting that I would to have either of my two
2 daughters in and I am a very picky parent.

3 MS. LEE: Hi, my name is Judy Lee and I am
4 here because I live in this community. We
5 bought an apartment ten years ago to commit
6 ourselves as a blended family

7 I am Asian American and I don't see any
8 yellow faces and it distresses me because I am
9 here at community and saying it belongs to me.
10 Well, I am a part of your community and I live
11 here, I pay taxes here, I watch children here
12 and I raise my boys here

13 It distresses me that I am going across town
14 to 103rd and Madison at Central Park East 2, who
15 is a sister school of Central Park East 1 to get
16 an education that works for my children.

17 And people are afraid of new. When they
18 hear progress they think oh, no, there is going
19 to be something that's not going to work, it is
20 different. It is different. It needs to be
21 different because variety is a spice of life. I
22 like to eat blue cheese, some of you like to eat
23 coleslaw, others like to eat green salads, we
24 need different salads to make our taste buds
25 happy. The same thing with education styles we

1 need different styles to make it work for us
2 and our children.

3 If you want to know if this model works,
4 well, my son who just graduated fifth grade from
5 Central Park East 2 has now been accepted in
6 Columbia Secondary School and I know that is one
7 of the choice schools that many of you want your
8 children to go to. It works. It can work,
9 trust it.

10 If your school, P.S. 128, we are not saying
11 that it doesn't work, but you need to have
12 additional choices. These kids learn
13 differently. My youngest, he is now in fourth
14 grade. He was mainstreamed at Central Park East
15 2, and he is coming out of early intervention,
16 out of CPSE, also by the special needs kids who
17 had a full docket. He was getting speech,
18 occupational, physical and special education.
19 In fourth grade now he is now down to just
20 speech therapy twice a week. That's CPE-2 and
21 the progressive school model did to him. It
22 embraced him. It let him be who he is and
23 offered the strengths, supported his weaknesses,
24 so he could be a full participant in the
25 community as he can.

1 Thank you.

2 MS. ERIN RATNER: Hi. My name is Erin
3 Ratner and I - - such a great idea. I have a
4 two year old and I am really excited for him to
5 be able to go to a school that has progressive
6 education. I really - - to the community. I
7 think it is really important, if you live in the
8 community, you are employed in the community,
9 you make friends in the community, you know and
10 that way you support your community.

11 So I think it is just great that this school
12 exists and - - they will be looking for another
13 building at some point, but it would just be
14 great to have - -

15 MR. DONNIE RATKIN: Hi, my name is Donnie
16 Ratkin and I have been part of Central Park East
17 1 elementary schools for three years. I am
18 obviously an advocate and wholehearted believer
19 in this type of education. And this type of
20 education is also where I bring my two children
21 in Brooklyn to the Brooklyn New School. So I am
22 believer for myself, for my family, for my
23 community. And it is an option, not something
24 that would mandate it, but as a choice, where
25 the whole child, the intellectual, the academic,

1 the social the artistic, the emotional growth
2 of children is expected and is looked at.

3 When we look at what proves this education
4 in the last two years have talked about how do
5 you know. One of the ways I know as a teacher
6 is the middle school teachers come to me and
7 say, your kids are terrific. I don't mean the
8 best student. I don't mean the one that scores
9 the highest. I mean your students are the ones
10 who love to read. Your students are the ones
11 who pick up the books when they are not supposed
12 to pick up the books. Your students are the
13 ones who get excited about math and are
14 interested and intrigued and excited. That's
15 learning. That's what we hope this school,
16 Castle Bridge, has to offer.

17 This is something that we have worked at for
18 years and years and it is something that we
19 think that Julie Zuckerman can continue in a new
20 place.

21 The applications of our school supposed to
22 be level one. We want this kind of education
23 available to people in every community, this
24 community in particular at the moment, other
25 communities at other points. Collocation is

1 hard but we can make it work.

2 The last thing I want to say is that the
3 English language learners benefit from this kind
4 of education in particular by the rich language
5 and spirits of talking about what they are
6 learning about. It is a model that gives work
7 off and study begins.

8 Thank you.

9 MS VALERIE VALENTINE: Good evening. My
10 name is Valerie Valentine. I live in Inwood. I
11 am a lifelong resident of Washington Heights and
12 Inwood. I am a student of District 6, I came
13 out of P.S. 132, 187. I was also a teacher in
14 District 6. I was myself a teacher a
15 progressive educator. I firmly believe in this
16 type of education.

17 I am not against any other type of
18 education. I think kids have different learning
19 styles and I think this is a choice. I think
20 this is a choice that District 6 should have.
21 It is the way I educated my students, it's
22 worked with them. A lot of my students are in
23 college right now. They are very thankful for
24 the type of education they received.

25 I taught at Middle School at I.S. 218. I

1 have to children. I have a seven and a nine
2 year old. My children don't go to school in
3 District 6. They don't go to school in District
4 6 because this option is not available for them.
5 They go to school on the upper Westside. I
6 would have loved for them to come to school in
7 District 6 but it is just not available.

8 It is an option. It is an option that I
9 want as a parent, as a parent, as a resident of
10 this neighborhood, of this community and a
11 Latina. I don't want to be told what kind of
12 education my students should have, especially by
13 charter schools, that don't know how to educate
14 my kids. My kids have a certain way of learning
15 and I want that learning style on it and I want
16 the parents of this community to have a choice,
17 to have a choice, not be dictated to about how
18 their kids should receive their education.

19 That's all I am saying. I think Julie
20 Zukerman is a wonderful collaborator. I know
21 her working for the DOE. She has collaborated
22 wonderfully with the principals in the schools.
23 They obtained a lot of resources for the kids
24 and it has been all about the kids.

25 Please, don't vote it against it because we

1 are against the collocation. It is not an
2 ideal situation. All people should have the
3 knowledge, okay, to speak about it. It is a
4 separate option for our students.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. SUZANNA GONZALEZ: Good evening. I am
7 Suzanna Gonzalez. I am a parent of 128. I came
8 to this school several years ago. I don't agree
9 with the collocation because it is not a choice
10 that I would like for my kids. It is like
11 somebody invading their school. And as parents
12 we have not gotten enough information of what
13 the school is about. And they gave us the wrong
14 information as a charter school, but we don't
15 want a charter school in our community. We want
16 P.S. 128 to remain P.S. 128 as it is.

17 There is a lot of things, okay, I know,
18 there is a lot of places in school, but you have
19 pre-K, we have the 7th and 8th graders who make
20 up the school, P.S. 128, but past the grades,
21 there isn't a lot of space for another school to
22 come to this school, because our kids are not
23 going be-- they are not going to understand,
24 they are not going to follow like the rules
25 because they have had a bad experience with the

1 school being collocated, with my little sister
2 and they got into a lot of problems, a lot of
3 trouble. So if we have space available, make
4 more kids from the community come into the
5 school. Make a pre-K space available or have
6 other programs for our school for our community.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. ADAM RIVERA: Good evening name is Adam
9 Rivera. I just think we should we look into our
10 ability to compromise and find some common
11 ground here. Everybody is here on a Monday
12 night and it shows well for some parents that we
13 want a choice in getting a good education. This
14 isn't a simple you know black and white - -

15 I think everybody is in agreement that
16 collocation is not the ideal situation for the
17 school, but it is ideal that our children have
18 as many education option as possible to achieve
19 their long term goals to go on to college, to
20 reach that next step and our schools are to
21 serve this community, we don't have enough
22 options.

23 My son is in kindergarten right now. I get
24 up an hour earlier to travel across town to take
25 him forty blocks to school. We shouldn't have

1 to do that. We should be able to have our
2 options here so that our children can get a
3 progressive education.

4 And in terms of the progressive education,
5 you know progress, let's try something else.
6 Let's have other options. Let's quickly say
7 maybe there is another way of doing things.

8 I've worked with Councilman Rodriguez on a
9 number of issues when he was a community
10 organizer and we need people to get involved.
11 This didn't just happen overnight, this happened
12 because a bunch of people had conversations and
13 said we would like to have additional options.
14 And so I say let's have more conversations.
15 Anybody who is opposed to the plan let's talk
16 and see where we can find common ground to make
17 the collocation as easy as possible on
18 everybody.

19 I don't want to step on anybody's toes, I
20 want everybody to get along and share this
21 space, but I think we should consider all of our
22 options instead of just looking at a black and
23 white issue and being opposed to something just
24 because we feel threatened. There is no
25 threatening.

1 Goodnight.

2 MS. IRIS DETOUR: Good evening and my name
3 is Iris Detour and I am the parent of a child
4 that went to CPE-1 - - principal right now. And
5 my choices this evening are several but more
6 important than anything is that collocation may
7 not be ideal, but what it is is that this kind
8 of education, the progressive education model, I
9 hope that Julia is trying to bring here is the
10 best possible maybe we can have. And what I am
11 saying is that clearly it is not trying to
12 invade your school and that it is a two year
13 process that they are proposing and that they
14 will be together and that they should remotely
15 be utilizing the common spaces all the time.
16 And that preventive education is really the best
17 kind of education.

18 So now, sorry, I am here for Borough - -
19 I am a mother, I am a teacher and I live in this
20 community and I believe in progressive
21 education. I think the problems that we are
22 facing in collocation are problems that in
23 general the schools are having in every single
24 school. It is not because of collocation, it is
25 not because of - - but it is a concept of many

1 other things, not collocation.

2 I believe that we too make a decision, an
3 informed decision about if they are sharing this
4 building or not, but the consequences that your
5 decision is going to have in the education and
6 the choices that we as parents and our children
7 are going to have for the future.

8 MS. CELIA PORTER: Good evening, my name is
9 Celia Porter and I am a sponsor of my
10 organization The Exclusive Classroom Project, is
11 a sponsor of the Castle Bridge School. The
12 words progressive education that has been used a
13 lot and I think it is important to talk about
14 what is progressive education, it is not new.
15 It is a hundred years old and also to say that
16 P.S. 128 has a superb reputation for doing very
17 high quality education. This is not about P.S.
18 128 not doing a good job.

19 Unfortunately, the New York City Department
20 of Education's space issues are moving towards
21 collocation, but I think it is important for the
22 P.S. 128 to community to understand Castle
23 Bridge would be the very best possible neighbors
24 that you could imagine.

25 I just want to explain ten points quickly

1 about the progressive education. One is
2 progressive education is to help a wide variety
3 of learners, fast learners and students who need
4 different rates of learning to all learn
5 together in one room.

6 Two, subjects are connected and integrated
7 not separated, so science and social studies are
8 connected, reading and writing and math are
9 connected.

10 Three, all content connects to the community
11 and to the world and I am not saying that P.S.
12 128 doesn't do all of those things already.

13 Number four, the focus is on helping
14 children develop interests and skills and
15 everybody doesn't have to be learning the same
16 thing at the same time.

17 And I have gotten the time signal, so it is
18 very important to progressive education to know
19 that high expectations and high standards are
20 for all students and they are not grouped and
21 they are not leveled. Some students are
22 understood to be high, medium or low.

23 My time is up. Thank you.

24 MS. CECELIA VASQUEZ: Good evening, my name
25 is Cecelia Vasquez, I am the mother of two

1 children at P.S. 128. Our school has a great
2 need and that is that we need more classes for
3 pre-K. We currently only have two-pre-K
4 classes. The classes are she said [Spanish]
5 which would leave me to believe over-registered.
6 And this pre-K program is unique because they
7 are in the neighborhood, the only pre-K program
8 that offers full day pre-K.

9 The space that we are proposing is space
10 that we would like for pre-K. We expect our
11 space since it is for our children and no one
12 else and that is why I am asking the parents of
13 our school 128 that we should unite and be like
14 the politicians, that when they need that vote,
15 they come out looking for us. We need to
16 continue on until we are heard and not
17 collocated.

18 Thank you

19 MS. LESLIE CAIN: My name is Leslie Cain. I
20 have a three year old. I am trying to find a
21 choice for my child. I am trying to find the
22 same quality of choice of parents who have kids
23 in District 4, 3, 2, 1 automatically get. It is
24 disheartening to see parents have to fight each
25 other with what all our children automatically

1 deserve and parents on the Westside don't have
2 to share, is automatic - - this I am in
3 conflict.

4 We are fighting over funds when we should be
5 fighting to make sure we get new books. We
6 should not be - - pre-K in the school or a
7 progressive school. Our children all deeply
8 deserve all the same options everybody else
9 gets. Don't let them play you. This is a fight
10 between parents who love their children, this is
11 a fight that should not have ever had happened.
12 Why are co-schooling, why are we collocating?
13 They are still going to fight to make sure that
14 their progressive schools are available to every
15 parent here in our building. Is that not the
16 same sell? If there is a parent like me who
17 wants a progressive education because they think
18 that is the best option for their child. I
19 should think again. This progressive school is
20 your children. This is not a charter school.

21 It is interesting the parents showed up here
22 tonight with the wrong information. Charter
23 schools would take away from you. You get
24 attention at this school that other schools
25 don't get because of the model that is being

1 used. This is an advantage that will be a
2 missed opportunity of you let them divide you
3 and make you feel like you have to choose
4 between one's there already, what you think
5 should not be and us. That's not the choice.
6 Let there be only what you deserve, which
7 includes choice, how you want to raise your
8 child is your business, your tax dollars is
9 supposed to make it possible, my tax dollars
10 will make it possible here and not anywhere
11 else.

12 And I am not mad at you, don't be mad at me.

13 MS. BATIA SEMETTE: Hi. My name is Batia
14 Semette. I am the mother of two, Amalia and
15 Elia, fifth grade. Elia right now is actually
16 in Troy School, which is a progressive school
17 that she had been enrolled in for the last two
18 years.

19 I am a member of this community. I live in
20 this community and I do believe that my children
21 do have a choice in what type of education that
22 they should be enrolled in.

23 I do sympathize and understand the parents
24 reluctance and anger to think that collocation
25 is the best option and - -

1 I don't think collocation is an option,
2 but unfortunately the Department of Education
3 has made it the only option right now. And
4 because of that I think despite of fighting
5 among parents who actually want the best choices
6 for their children, the same the way parents
7 have choices at P.S. 128, which is a great
8 school, among all of the public schools that in
9 the neighborhood for their child, I want to be
10 able to choose a public school, not a charter
11 school, not a private school, but a public
12 school that provides that same option for my
13 child.

14 I live in my community. I do pay my taxes.
15 I don't want to go anywhere. Unfortunately,
16 collocating seems to be the only option right
17 now. I think there is a way to work it out.
18 There might be a little of difficulties to pass
19 away, but I think as parents we have the right
20 to provide the best education for all our
21 children, your children, my children, they are
22 all ours, they are citizens of this community,
23 they are citizens of this country and hopefully
24 they are going to be the next leaders of the
25 world and we want to provide them the same

1 choice. Give us that choice. Don't close us
2 because you think we are coming here to debate.
3 We are here. We're not coming from anywhere
4 else. We are members of this community. Don't
5 make us feel like we are aliens.

6 Thank you.

7 MR. MITRA SCHENEIGHTER: We have 665
8 students. And the waiting list of parents are
9 waiting for pre-K. We have overpopulated
10 classes of 31 and 32 students in the classroom.
11 Just to - - We are not misinforming the parents
12 and we are not orientating the parents on the
13 issue. We are not misinforming the parents or
14 manipulating the parents to the way someone
15 would like to say.

16 [END 259_094_1]

17 [START 259_094_2]

18 I would like to tell the parents of 128 that
19 we are going to take this fight to the end. It
20 is not just that they want to invade our
21 building for just two years. If it is just two
22 years why don't they find their own location?

23 The Department of Education is not
24 interested in the quality of education of our
25 students, it is just a business. He said that

1 they are welcome tonight, but he is saying
2 that there is not enough bedding for so much
3 people.

4 MS. SUZETTE WALSH: It seems a little
5 hard to follow that, but I am going to try my
6 best. My name is Suzette Walsh and I subbed for
7 many, well, about two years at CPE-1. I
8 actually subbed at the school, also. I have
9 been in District 6 for a very long time and I
10 subbed all over the district.

11 When I went to District 3 Julie Zuckerman
12 set up this great image that she wanted for the
13 school and she chose the higher path.

14 I am getting a little emotional. It is very
15 hard to stand here and to see parents fighting
16 to train our children how to fight. And there
17 is no need for us standing here. I see some of
18 my students and former students here in this
19 community, they are here tonight, they are part
20 of P.S. 128 and I am sure these children are
21 amended the rooms, but they were taught by me.

22 I know, but anyway, let us start tonight by
23 teaching our children how to love and
24 communicate in a positive way.

25 Castle Bridge, Castle Bridge is - - an

1 effort to teach, guide and strengthen our
2 children to be independent learners. These
3 children will learn how to communicate,
4 participate and work well in groups when they
5 learn how to help each other, not to fight with
6 each other, okay. So I pray, I pray that the
7 Board and DOE and Ms. Romano take the site
8 apart, which you know I learned the fact when
9 other people came up here from 128 he did not
10 hold it up.

11 Amen, but anyway I am not angry, I am just
12 saying let us do this and well. Let us teach
13 our children how to love and prayer. And back
14 to a question, one question, how many of us know
15 that there is a mental program across the street
16 awaiting for our children. How many of us know?
17 How many of us here know? One, two, three.
18 Raise your hand if you are aware that the mental
19 program is across the street?

20 Now my daughter has a public - - C-274 and
21 she was cleared by the guidance counselor there
22 not to apply for those programs, because why?
23 No one from the school has ever gotten in. But
24 you know what, guess what? She applied and she
25 was the first one from C-274 to get into this

1 program. And you had to have gotten it - -
2 you have to have people that is going to love
3 you. You are going to have to have teachers
4 that are going be on the side of the clear side
5 with your children and there will be no
6 fighting, there will be no fussing, there will
7 be nothing but love, okay. - -

8 SPEAKER: We are going to have to have those
9 children on the playground, but from what I am
10 hearing that may be cut if the Castle Bridge
11 program is allowed to come to the school, right?
12 I have eight children and I don't want to
13 introduce myself because I am so hyped about
14 what everything is saying and everything you
15 know that went on so far that I just to beach
16 that one there.

17 I fought for what I wanted. I think that
18 progressive education is fine - - however, we
19 are from a country, when I came here I had to
20 fight and struggle to fit into a situation. I
21 can't understand why they just want to come in
22 here when they are not wanted here.

23 Here is another thing, I have a child that
24 went to a school that had another school move in
25 and it was just supposed to be for two years.

1 Amoya's here to tell you what happened to her
2 school.

3 MS. AMOYA: So our school got shut down
4 after two years.

5 SPEAKER: Why, what happened?

6 MS. AMOYA: We got pushed out.

7 SPEAKER: By who? Another school. I don't
8 know why she is not speaking, but let me tell
9 you and that's what these schools is afraid that
10 might happen, that they will get pushed out
11 because the other school has moved in. I think
12 Castle Bridge has promises, promises. I think
13 it is a great concept and it is outstanding, but
14 I don't think that it should be here. I think
15 the space here needs to be utilized by the
16 people here, for the kindergarten program.

17 I don't think that the Castle Bridge is a
18 bad program. I think that it is just that this
19 school has been fighting for other things before
20 it and I don't think Castle Bridge can just come
21 in when we want other things for our students
22 that's here, we want to utilize that space, but
23 we are not having the opportunity to do so and
24 another school is going to come in and do so.
25 We want to utilize that space for our students

1 in this community. Please just give us that
2 time.

3 Thank you, very much.

4 MS. NUNEZ: Do we have any remaining
5 speakers? Please come to the podium. It should
6 be in numbers 26 and up.

7 MR. WAYNE COLLIER: I am Wayne Collier and I
8 have worked as a co-chair CPE-1 Parent
9 Association in School District 2. It doesn't do
10 a whole lot of good for us to talk about what we
11 love about CP-1, because the parents here are
12 already supporting and working hard in the
13 school.

14 Just to give you an idea of what it would be
15 like to be next to the school, the CP-1 model.
16 The CP-1 meters and Julie will be coming here,
17 is very respectful people, they are very good
18 collaborators and they are very patient. That's
19 just the way they work.

20 It is very important to understand that a
21 CP-1 the children are taught to behave well and
22 collaborate well, even more important than
23 learning to read, just because when these
24 children respect each other and behave well the
25 teacher could then give individual attention to

1 the needs of each individual student. And
2 that's a real thing, that really does work.

3 I was the first kid from my county to go to
4 - - My kids are very different than the other
5 kids from the school and they are very well
6 respected by the other kids in the school, okay.
7 So that's the way that school works.

8 MS. NICOLE VALDEZ: Hi, my name is Nicole
9 Valdez and I teach in the school. I am a fourth
10 grade teacher and I am working here for around
11 eleven years. I have seen the condition over
12 the years, I have seen how the school has had to
13 fight for a lot of things and how we
14 accomplished on the whole. We don't like to
15 fight. We are just trying to stand for our
16 rights.

17 We have noticed that for some reason they
18 think we have space available in different
19 classrooms, but it is not necessarily true. I
20 don't know the way it count it because we have
21 teachers sharing rooms because according to the
22 Board of Ed the space that we have here is not
23 enough students to capture - - divided by the
24 class. We have enough teachers to be divided
25 and work in very small rooms and function.

1 And another thing that I don't understand
2 is how come they allowed the new school, the
3 Castle Hill School, to come here to have eight
4 to twenty students and to us they don't see that
5 popular. Even I, myself, had thirty-two
6 students in my classroom. So it is not that we
7 like to fight, that's not a goal. So don't take
8 that idea. We just want to have our particular
9 space and we just want--another thing I want to
10 mention is we also, even though we had labor or
11 we didn't have a title, we provide different
12 services for our students, we provide music and
13 we also provide art, in room 6. We have
14 different programs besides science, math and
15 reading. We had information classes - - we also
16 draw in groups. We divide those rooms by their
17 need. - - So it is not that we don't have the
18 students.

19 And also, by the way, we have students also
20 that - - high school. - - So you know what I
21 am saying, for a parent to say oh we don't have
22 the children here, we forget all those things
23 involved. So guess what - - we are to stand for
24 our rights, that's all.

25 MS. MICOS: I am Silva Micos, and I'm the

1 mother of a three year old daughter - - and I
2 believe New York City is a diverse city and this
3 district is a diverse district and I think that
4 it is a great and very important thing. And I
5 don't like my daughter to out of the district
6 and I want to have options. And I believe in
7 progressive education and I feel like this
8 district needs more progressive schools, as well
9 as all of New York City.

10 As long as none of us see that--sharing this
11 building will be very beneficial to anybody, but
12 as long as we don't have our facility we will
13 need to work on pulling this in. And I believe
14 it can be a great exercise for respect and
15 working together in a diverse community that can
16 be a great thing.

17 So all of the statements that has been
18 stated I think it is very bad, and I understand
19 how all the parents of the school feel so
20 strongly about space being taken away from them
21 and I feel like we don't want to take space
22 away, we just need to use it for a very short
23 time and I think we can all work together and
24 get in what we need, but we do not have to fight
25 against each other.

1 MS. SALLY CLEAVER: Hi, my name is Sally
2 Cleaver and I live here, I am a mother in this
3 neighborhood. And I agree, we need more pre-Ks,
4 but we are fighting the wrong fight. Pre-K is
5 barely funded, there is no power in the city to
6 grant pre-K sites. We need to take to it to the
7 federal to get the - - there isn't enough. I've
8 got nowhere to take my kids. So I agree with
9 you, we certainly need pre-K. - - details here
10 with Castle Bridge next year and it is a huge
11 area that we collaborated in CP-1, we worked it
12 out to two groups - - we did it, we shared
13 building one - -

14 MS. JULIA YAT: Good evening. My name is
15 Julia Yat and my son goes to P.S. 128 and I will
16 say I have no parent that's like all of you and
17 for me no collocation with Castle Bridge. None.

18 This collocation is only the answer for the
19 Board of Education. That's for the benefit
20 only, the benefit for the Department of
21 Education and not for P.S. 128.

22 I have - - to mention tonight. First, P.S.
23 128 has applied for four weeks now to the
24 Department of Education for an extension for
25 pre-K and from sixth grade up to eighth grade.

1 But the Board of Education was so happy to
2 deny it, now because it would cost them millions
3 to put up a new school, it is so cheap to put
4 students in this innovation at P.S. 128, and
5 that is a big, big unacceptable thing for me and
6 for these parents.

7 And secondly the Department of Education is
8 not calculating correctly. Why? They are
9 thinking we have more extra rooms and more
10 existing spaces, but it is wrong, because we
11 have children or students with special needs.
12 Children with disabilities and one student with
13 disability is up to five, speech, speech therapy
14 OT, occupational therapy, child sitting and a
15 lot of other services that would help, but they
16 don't, they don't consider those children's
17 special needs. Their calculation is only bent
18 for kids in general education, kids with no
19 needs at all.

20 And where do they want these kids to go, in
21 the hallway, in the hallway for therapy? Like
22 back in the old days? No, no.

23 And one more thing, the Department of
24 Education is only thinking for the welfare of
25 those parents and children from Castle Ridge My

1 goodness we are here - - don't, we have extra
2 rooms because they denied us for so many years,
3 we are existing we are alive, we have a lot of
4 problems that need to be addressed too? What
5 are those? We have a lot of problems in the
6 cafeteria. I am a parent and a - - leader and I
7 volunteer in the classroom pre-K. Pre-K is not
8 only - - to stay there from 8:30 to 3 o'clock
9 and you ask me what is happening there? I know.
10 A lot of things in the cafeteria. There are a
11 lot of people in the--that are short staff in
12 the cafeteria because of the budget. Why?
13 Because the city wants to save more money. And
14 the Board of Education is the one that could
15 police, the Department of Education programs or
16 role for our students and that's not acceptable.

17 My proposal, because they are proposing to
18 us, but the way it looks and everything that we
19 want here is they are not proposing, they are
20 declaring or declarations, no. If you are
21 presenting something, we have a choice. We have
22 the right to say no.

23 And the parents have voices to be heard.
24 But the way you - - we are never heard anymore.
25 It is just like you are telling us this is it.

1 No, we have the right, we have the right to
2 stand up and if it is not that way, then they
3 are in, if we let them, they will be here and I
4 say no.

5 MS. JARICA HISTO: Good evening, my name is
6 Jarica Histo and I am the mother of three
7 children and I am speaking on behalf of the
8 parents. We do not want the collocation.

9 Supposedly this school has space to begin a
10 pre-k to K, but it is not okay. We do not have
11 the space. We have always been taught that we
12 should share, but we can't share something that
13 we need.

14 She is here to say that we need the space
15 for pre-K and I am a mother here to show you
16 that I need it for my children. We need the
17 space for pre-K. We are all interested in
18 having our children have a good education. I am
19 aware that that school Castle Bridge has
20 received an F for two years.

21 And she supposes that parents from this
22 school or that school would not want their
23 children to be in an atmosphere where there is
24 not going to be progress.

25 In conclusion, I would like to say that it

1 is not personal, but we cannot share the space
2 that we need.

3 MS. NUNEZ: Is there anybody else who we
4 have not heard who would like to speak?

5 MR. ROBERT LA ROSA: Robert LaRosa. - - and
6 they don't have a good communication with
7 parents. - - they want to bring something in
8 our community, another school, they don't have
9 good communication. - - they never sit down
10 with the CEC, they never sit down with Robert
11 Johnson - - at the City Council. - -
12 sacrifice our community to get progressive
13 education for our children. - - let them know,
14 the DOE, the Department of Education, that if
15 they want to do something in our community they
16 have to win our trust and do what we say - -
17 they don't have use, they don't try to treat
18 people like that because why, because they can
19 do that, but here in our community they just
20 want to do whatever they want.

21 So my concern is if you don't want, if you
22 think it should be for pre-K, if you think - -
23 you and I don't accept it. - - and don't let
24 them do whatever they want to do.

25 Thank you.

1 MS. CARMEN ROJAS: [Spanish] My name is
2 Carmen Rojas, I have been a community member
3 representing the rights of students and parents
4 for over twenty years. She is to serve, case
5 she says that at times they want to put out a
6 product but then it turns out that the product
7 is not what was shown to them. And she seems to
8 wonder how is it that just recently the
9 chancellor announced that forty-seven schools
10 will be shut. Among those forty-seven are some
11 charter schools.

12 She believes that this school, P.S. 128 is
13 the patrimony of this community that one time
14 had over a thousand students, but right now she
15 does not believe in the collocation because she
16 feels that if the school thinks they need the
17 pre-K program because of the growing population
18 they should have a pre-K program. And she hopes
19 that the BOE officials, the superintendent and
20 CEC members present here tonight listen to what
21 the parents are demanding.

22 MR. DENNIS RIVERA: My name is Dennis Rivera
23 and I am parent in the school. I have a three
24 year old girl and a ten year old boy who live in
25 this community also really what we are looking

1 for is to free the opportunity for a diverse
2 education. That is really what we are trying to
3 connect with these kids.

4 We wholeheartedly support the opportunity to
5 bring forward new choices in this community. So
6 this is - - in my house.

7 The argument that we have here is
8 interesting because I appreciate your passion,
9 I really do. The program, why the whole why
10 this is advised now, but this is a DOE decision
11 not ours. All right, I believe the argument is
12 with them. I know the argument is why here.
13 But I also know what it is that we think is
14 really well. I see what some of these things
15 can do some students and I see their argument
16 and I see what the end result is and I am just
17 asking this particular community board to really
18 weigh this thing carefully and understand the
19 long - - of cases around - -

20 But we think that it is an opportunity, we
21 do think that bringing Castle Bridge in - -
22 where everybody gets to see how this works,
23 could work better and ultimately we think it is
24 - -

25 MS. NUNEZ: The speaker list has been

1 exhausted. There is one additional gentleman
2 who has asked to speak. So if you will please
3 bear with us for one more speaker and this will
4 be the end of the public hearing. Before we do
5 close, I want to particularly thank our district
6 superintendent for doing such a phenomenal job.

7 MR. LUIS MEDRONA: Hi, my name is Luis
8 Medrona and I just want to say a very short
9 thing. I've seen people here being so focused
10 on being territorial about their school and I
11 think you don't know what you are going to miss
12 out on. This is not a space ship that is coming
13 to this building to build a new super thing with
14 aliens or Martians inside. This school is for
15 you, this school is for your children and your
16 community.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. NUNEZ: Again, we welcome any comment
19 and feedback you may have at any time before the
20 Panel of Education & Policy votes on this
21 proposal at its November 17th, 2011 meeting. The
22 email address is and phone number where comments
23 may be made are: DO-6Proposals@Schools.NYC.gov
24 and 212-374-3466.

25 Thank you for participation. The joint

1 public hearing is now closed.

2 [END 259_094_2]

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

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 11/9/11