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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
DIVISION OF PORTFOLIO
PLANNING
TER of 07X154 + SBxC II
P.S. 154 Jonathan D. Hyatt
333 East 135 Street
Bronx, NY 10454
3/14/13**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MS. YOLANDA TORRES: Good evening. I'm
3 going to--can we get translation?

4 [Translator]

5 MS. TORRES: Okay, good evening again. I'm
6 Yolanda Torres. I'm the Community
7 Superintendent and we have also invited members
8 of the SLT, the School Leadership Team from 156
9 to join us and Mr. Mateo will be our
10 representative. 154, that's what I said--oh,
11 154, sorry. But we're going to talk about 156,
12 right?

13 [Laughter]

14 MS. TORRES: 154.

15 [Laughter]

16 MS. TORRES: I've had a long day. Okay.
17 154 and also we have divided the members of the
18 community into - - Council, from District 7 to
19 be here and I know that Mrs. Magna had
20 mentioned that she was - - and she will be here
21 very soon. So good evening.

22 This is a joint public hearing of the
23 Department of Education Community Education
24 Council. That's the Leadership Team for P.S.
25 154, the Jonathan D. Hyatt School. And I'm your

1 Community Superintendent, Yolanda Torres, as I
2 said before. As I mentioned we have asked the
3 Community Education Council, members from
4 District 7 and the School Leadership Team of 154
5 to participate in this joint public hearing. As
6 I said before Mr. Mateo is here with me and then
7 as they arrive I will then present them.

8 This hearing is being recorded. The purpose
9 of this hearing is for you to provide comments
10 about this proposal. And before I describe the
11 proposal I want to make sure that you are all
12 aware of the opportunity that you have to
13 provide your input. All those who wish to speak
14 must sign up in the speaker sign-up area located
15 just outside the auditorium. The sign-up list
16 will close in 15 minutes and speakers will be
17 given the floor in the order that they signed
18 in. All comments are limited to two minutes.

19 There may be elected officials who arrive at
20 different times throughout the evening. And if
21 you wish to speak we will do our best to
22 accommodate them as they arrive at the most
23 diverse [phonetic] opportune moment. And those
24 who are here at the start of the public comment
25 section will be asked to speak first.

1 All comments will be mentioned in the
2 analysis of public comment to be published and
3 provided to the Panel for Educational Policy the
4 evening before the Panel votes. The vote is
5 scheduled for March 20th, 2013.

6 In addition we welcome any comments and
7 feedback that you have; you may have at any
8 time, before the panel votes on the proposals.
9 The email address and phone number where
10 comments may be made are
11 D07Proposals@Schools.NYC.Gov and the number is
12 (212) 374-5159.

13 I also want to mention that the other
14 members of the SLT that are sitting in the
15 audience, Ms. Megdalia Maldonado, Norma Reyes,
16 and Denise Ring [phonetic].

17 So let's start with the proposal summary.
18 The New York City Department of Education or DOE
19 is proposing to collocate a new public charter
20 school to be named South Bronx Classical Charter
21 School II or SBCCS in School Building X154
22 beginning in the school year 2013-14. Building
23 X154 is located at 333 East 135th Street, Bronx,
24 New York 10454 in Community School District 7.

25 If the proposal is approved, the proposed

1 new charter school will open in 2013-14 with
2 Kindergarten and first grade and add one grade
3 each year to serve students in Kindergarten
4 through fifth grades. The school will admit
5 students via its charter lottery system wide
6 application process with preference given to
7 District 7 students.

8 Concurrently the Department of Education is
9 planning an enrollment reduction at P.S. 154
10 beginning in September 2013, P.S. 154 will admit
11 a smaller incoming Kindergarten class of 45 to
12 55 students as opposed to the 70 to 80 students
13 it has served in recent years. The school will
14 continue to take in 45 to 55 Kindergarten
15 students and - - until all grades, Kindergarten
16 through five serve fewer sections for 2018-19.

17 P.S. 154 will continue to offer a - -
18 Kindergarten program at its current sites while
19 still - - and - - .

20 On November 26th, 2012, the District 7
21 Community Education Council, CEC, independently
22 voted to un-zone the elementary schools in
23 District 7. P.S. 154 is currently a zoned
24 school but next year will participate in the new
25 District 7 elementary school choice admissions

1 process by which families will have the
2 opportunity to rank their preferences among all
3 elementary schools in the district similar to
4 the middle school choice process.

5 If this proposal is approved in 2018-19 once
6 SBCCS II's Kindergarten through fifth grade have
7 fully phased in and P.S. 154's enrollment
8 reduction is complete, SBCCS II is projected to
9 serve 330 to 390 students and P.S. 154 is
10 projected to serve 306 to 366 students for a
11 total of between 636 to 756 students yielding a
12 building utilization rate of approximately 100%
13 to 119%.

14 The Department of Education believes the
15 building has sufficient space to accommodate
16 both schools despite the possibility of a
17 utilization rate over 100% although a
18 utilization rate in excess of 100% may suggest
19 that a building will be over-utilized or
20 overcrowded in a given year, this rate does not
21 account for the fact that rooms may be
22 programmed for more efficient or different uses
23 than the standard assumptions in the utilization
24 calculations.

25 In addition, charter school enrollment plans

1 are frequently based on large class sizes and
2 target capacity contributing to building
3 utilizations of above 100% while not impacting
4 the utilization of the space of a traditional
5 public school. Therefore the Department of
6 Education believes that the X154 building has
7 the capacity to accommodate P.S. 154 and SBCCS
8 II at full scale.

9 So I thank you for listening to the summary
10 and now we will have Mr. Mateo, are you ready to
11 make a statement?

12 MR. ALBERTO MATEO: I don't need a
13 microphone. Hi, guys.

14 MS. TORRES: No, because they're recording
15 this.

16 MR. MATEO: Recording. Good evening. I
17 want to start of by saying thanks for coming for
18 those of you who came. Unfortunately it saddens
19 me that we don't have enough - - parents to be
20 here and now we're going through this little
21 phase which is not going to affect our school.
22 I can guarantee that. You know we have good
23 administrations.

24 We've got a good team and we're doing a lot
25 of good positive things and we're going in the

1 right direction. So please do not feel like--I
2 want to say that I do not feel that this school
3 is going to be here. It is going to be here for
4 the following many years to come. All right?

5 The charter school is just a different
6 [phonetic] school. It's just going be just
7 using our space, that's all it is. So I
8 personally encourage you to keep your child with
9 us. They're in good hands. And basically
10 another thing is that for the parents that are
11 not here, it didn't have to be--so we have some
12 that when things happen and we make changes they
13 didn't want to come - - . It's me. I think
14 that's where they are 'cause we sent our memos
15 and our letters, you know, emails and phone
16 calls and verbally talking to people. We are -
17 - this is what it is. So that's basically what
18 I've got to say. That's--if you have any
19 questions I'll answer to the best of my ability.

20 MS. TORRES: Later on.

21 MR. MATEO: Oh, okay.

22 MS. TORRES: Thank you. Thank you. We also
23 have a representative from the New York State
24 Education Department Charter Office.

25 MS. SUSAN MAGNA: Thank you. Good evening.

1 My name is Susan Magna. And I work in the New
2 York State Education Department Charter School
3 Office. And we serve as the administrative arm
4 for the New York State Board of Regents. And as
5 you probably know the Board of Regents is
6 responsible for the general supervision of all
7 educational activities within the state.

8 The authority for the Regents to issue
9 charters to the Boards of Trustees to establish
10 charter schools comes from Article 56 of the New
11 York State Education Law. The law was passed in
12 1996 and most recently updated in 2010. And it
13 requires the Board of Regents to conduct public
14 hearings to discuss collocated charter schools
15 in existing public school buildings.

16 So the piece of the law that talks about it
17 is Section 2853(3)(a) and it says "a charter
18 school may be located in part of an existing
19 public school building in space provided on a
20 private work site, a public building, or in any
21 other suitable location. Provided, however,
22 before a charter school may be located in part
23 of an existing public school building, the
24 charter entity shall provide notice to the
25 parents or guardians of the students then

1 enrolled in the existing school building and
2 shall hold a public hearing for purposes of
3 discussing the location of the charter school".

4 Tonight's public hearing is to discuss the
5 proposed collocation of South Bronx Classical
6 Charter School II which was authorized by the
7 Board of Regents in June of 2012 to open in
8 2013. It's important to understand that while
9 the Board of Regents sets educational policy and
10 the State Education Department serves as the
11 administrative arm, neither the Board of Regents
12 nor the State Education Department have any
13 authority over the placement of charter schools
14 within facilities owned by the Department of
15 Education. Nonetheless we do remain - - of
16 public sentiment pertaining to the collocation
17 of Regent's authorized schools.

18 This evening I will be taking notes on your
19 comments. I'll be gathering comments from the
20 school community pertaining to this collocation.
21 And we will then summarize comments and share
22 them with the Board of Regents. We will
23 continue to receive public comments up to 5 days
24 after the date of the PEP hearing and so the
25 hearing, as we've heard, is on March 20th and

1 continue to submit public comments to the
2 State Education Department, to me actually,
3 until March 27th.

4 You could submit written statements or
5 anyone could submit written statements at the
6 conclusion of this hearing either by mail to my
7 attention. I'm Susan Magna at NYSTD Charter
8 School Office. The address is EVA 465A9
9 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12234 or it
10 can be faxed at (518) 474-3209 or emailed to
11 CharterSchools@mail.NYSED.Gov. So thank you.

12 FEMALE VOICE: Can I have the fax number
13 again?

14 MS. MAGNA: The fax number is (518) 474-
15 3209. And if you fax to my attention, I'm Susan
16 Magna, M-A-G-N-A, it's good.

17 MS. TORRES: Thank you.

18 MS. MAGNA: Thank you.

19 MS. TORRES: Thank you so much. We have now
20 concluded the formal presentations and we are
21 now going to open the floor for public comments.
22 And once again, speakers will be given the floor
23 in the order in which they signed up and all
24 comments are limited to two minutes. So our
25 first speaker is Megdalia Maldonado.

1 MS. MEGDALIA MALDONADO: I'd like to know...
2 Hello my name is Megdalia Maldonado and I was a
3 parent here, a grandparent. I'd like to know
4 who makes the decisions to bring in the charter
5 schools and why don't they go to the schools
6 that are underutilized and the bigger school
7 buildings that they have in this district.

8 And from past experience and from being an
9 ATR when you say they continue to add classes
10 each year, from one grade to another, from one
11 grade to another, what to me and to a whole lot
12 of other educators that are--were in--that are
13 still in the same role that I was in, all it
14 means is a very nice way, this is my personal
15 opinion, that you're phasing out the school and
16 eventually P.S. 154 will cease to exist because
17 it will be going to one phase. It will be going
18 to something else and then it will go into
19 something else.

20 And also, too, charter schools do not have
21 the reputation of helping our children that have
22 special needs. They don't want them, they want
23 the--again this is my personal experience and my
24 personal opinion because I've lived it. I've
25 experienced it and I know it. And I know it to

1 this day, to this moment. And if your child
2 is not the cream of the crop, I'm--and this is
3 exactly what they're saying when they say it's a
4 lottery. Because they go through it, they go
5 through your child's scores and records, and
6 again from personal experience, they want the
7 cream of the crop.

8 And these are things that--you know--and
9 like I said my biggest thing is that I feel that
10 this is sort of like snuck in and again this is
11 the history that I've experienced over the last
12 15, I can't say 15, but the last--over the last
13 10 years starting with my own school of how
14 these charter schools come in to existence.

15 And like I said, you've got that school
16 that's closing. You've got 31 that's a
17 humongous school that has--they pay money for
18 guards and nobody does anything. And they
19 turned around and they could fix that building.
20 They could make it into a charter school. Why
21 do they have to come to our school? But again
22 like I said this is my personal opinion. And I
23 hope somebody can answer these questions because
24 I'm going to fight for - - . Thank you.

25 MS. TORRES: Thank you. Okay. We are

1 recording the comments and the questions. The
2 only thing that I am going to say, collocation
3 does not mean phase out. It means collocation
4 between two schools. The next speaker is Sarah
5 Benitez [phonetic]. Sarah Benitez?

6 [Translator]

7 MS. TORRES: Okay. She doesn't want to.

8 [Translator]

9 MS. TORRES: She - - attendance. So we only
10 have these two names. So with that said, we
11 have now closed any additional remarks or
12 comments from the people that are here. Again,
13 we want to welcome the feedback and comments you
14 may have at any time before the Panel for
15 Educational Policy votes on this proposal at the
16 March 20th meeting.

17 The email address and phone number where
18 comments may be made are, once again,
19 D07Prposals@Schools.NYC.GOV and the number is
20 (212) 374-5159. We thank you much for your
21 participation. The joint public hearing is now
22 closed. Be safe. Have a good evening everyone.
23 Thank you everyone. Thank you.

24 [END RECORDING]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature 

Laura L. Springate

Date March 17, 2013