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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF  
PORTFOLIO PLANNING  
New Day Academy (X245)  
1/13/11**

1 [START 181\_945.MP3]

2 MS. JENNY SOBELMAN: Good evening. I would  
3 like to begin by introducing myself. My name is  
4 Jenny Sobelman, I'm functioning as the moderator  
5 for this evening's joint public hearing. I also  
6 want to do a couple like [phonetic] housekeeping  
7 notes. Translation and interpretation services  
8 are available. Please silence your cell phone.  
9 And also want to let you know that tonight's  
10 proceedings will be recorded and transcribed.

11 And now I will briefly describe the agenda  
12 for this evening. This is a joint public  
13 hearing of the Department of Education, the  
14 Community Education Council and the School  
15 Leadership Team to discuss the proposed phaseout  
16 of New Day Academy.

17 Before we begin, a note about public  
18 comment. Anyone who wishes to speak during the  
19 public comment portion of this evening, we would  
20 like you to please sign up at the table in the  
21 back of the room. The public comment signup  
22 will end 15 minutes after the hearing starts, so  
23 15 minutes from now. And I will make an  
24 announcement to let you know.

25 Additionally, if you would like to make a

1 question available during the Q&A portion,  
2 which is also in the agenda, please make note of  
3 that on an index card, also available in the  
4 back of the room.

5 And I would also point out that—are there  
6 problems with the microphone? I don't think I  
7 can adjust the mic; I will try and speak louder.  
8 Is that—? Okay. I don't spend a lot of time  
9 with microphones. Thank you.

10 Uh, I think I was discussing the Q&A  
11 portion. Yes, okay. So if the evening is  
12 running long and we are not able to answer all  
13 of your questions I want to make sure that you  
14 are aware that all of the public comment and the  
15 questions will be included in the analysis of  
16 public comment, which is a document that is  
17 circulated online and to the panel 24 hours  
18 prior to the vote. And the vote will take place  
19 on February 1st.

20 Additionally if you have other questions  
21 that come up after the hearing you can submit  
22 that to the email and phone number which are  
23 listed on the back of the fact sheet and the  
24 impact statement.

25 I don't believe we have any elected

1 officials joining us yet. If they do we will  
2 make an effort to accommodate them if they would  
3 like to make a statement. And I believe we have  
4 everyone on the panel, so I think we're ready to  
5 go.

6 And I would like to draw your attention to  
7 the agenda that's posted right here behind the  
8 speakers so that you're aware. I'm doing the  
9 introduction now; there will then be a  
10 presentation by the department, then a  
11 presentation by the participants. Then we'll  
12 move to public comment and then to the Q&A  
13 portion.

14 And we have a timekeeper for the Q&A which  
15 is going to be right here, and there was a  
16 request by the members of the panel to have  
17 three minutes for the speakers because the  
18 students had prepared. And we had a discussion  
19 and agreed to accommodate that request.

20 So although the sign says—oh no, it doesn't  
21 say - - . So—so he'll hold up a sign to let you  
22 know when you have 30 seconds remaining and when  
23 your time has expired. And he would ask that  
24 everyone please be respectful of the time limit  
25 so that we can allow everyone who is signed up

1 an opportunity to speak.

2       Once we have exhausted the speaker list  
3 we'll move into the question and answer portion.  
4 So again if you have questions make them on the  
5 note cards; we will then have members of the  
6 Department of Education present who will be able  
7 to respond.

8       Okay, so now I would like to recognize the  
9 principals who are in the room with us but not  
10 on the panel. We have Mara Gonzalez [phonetic]  
11 from the New Day Academy; she's in the back  
12 here. And then also from New Day we have  
13 Suzanne Koenig [phonetic], who will be doing the  
14 presentation in a bit joining us. [Off mic  
15 conversation]. King [phonetic]. I apologize.

16       And now I would like to introduce the panel.  
17 Starting here we have Wilfred [phonetic] Coulton  
18 from Community Education Council 12; Carmen  
19 Taveras, the president of CEC 12; Debbie  
20 Chancellor [phonetic]; Kathleen Grimm; our high  
21 school Bronx and Manhattan High School  
22 Superintendent Geraldine Taylor-Brown; William  
23 Tyron; oh, I apologize, Myrna Rodriguez,  
24 District 12 superintendent; William Tyron from  
25 New Day Academy, the UFT Chapter leader; Robin

1 Walton is here from the SLT for New Day—did you  
2 want to join us upfront? Okay. Omari Gay from  
3 Bronx Career, and John Xavier, the principal of  
4 Dr. Esciardo [phonetic] Health and Science  
5 Career School. And at this time I will turn the  
6 program to Deputy Chancellor Grimm for a  
7 presentation of the proposal.

8 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR KATHLEEN GRIMM: Thank  
9 you, thank you very much, Jen. Good evening,  
10 ladies and gentlemen. I have to ask for your  
11 patience listening to me tonight. It doesn't  
12 hurt but I'm not contagious. And if I could  
13 figure out a way to do it right I would sound  
14 like Lauren Bacall. And I'm—I'd like you all to  
15 know that she is a graduate of Julia Richmond  
16 [phonetic] High School in Manhattan.

17 Before I present the substance of the  
18 proposal regarding New Day Academy I want to  
19 underscore that the decision to phase out a  
20 school is not an easy one, and one which we do  
21 not take lightly. Many factors and data are  
22 examined and stakeholders are engaged before a  
23 final decision is reached. We count on each of  
24 our schools to provide a high-quality education  
25 to its students and we much hold all of that to

1 the same high standard. If a school isn't  
2 getting the job done we have to take action, and  
3 in some cases drastic action, to ensure that its  
4 students don't fall even further behind and that  
5 new students will have other options.

6 Our goal is to create a system of great  
7 schools. To accomplish this goal we have to be  
8 vigilant in our efforts to constantly improve  
9 the options we provide our families. That  
10 having been said I also want you all to  
11 understand that in spite of this proposal we do  
12 recognize all the hard work that the principal,  
13 the staff and the school community has put in to  
14 try to make this school work [phonetic].

15 New Day Academy is an existing school  
16 serving grade six through twelve, located here  
17 at 800 Holmes [phonetic] Street in the Bronx  
18 within District 12. On December 13th 2010 the  
19 Department issued a proposal to phase out and  
20 eventually close New Day based on its poor  
21 performance and the department's assessment that  
22 the school lacks the ability to turn around  
23 quickly enough to better support our student  
24 needs.

25 An amended educational impact statement, the

1 EIS, was published on December 22nd, which  
2 corrected the typographical and formatting  
3 errors, and included in an appendix listing  
4 other Bronx high schools that offer programs in  
5 the same interest areas as New Day.

6 At the middle school level. New Day  
7 received overall "C" grades on its last three  
8 progress reports, including last year's. Last  
9 year the school earned an "F" grade for the  
10 student performance subcategory, and indeed for  
11 the school environment.

12 At the high school level New Day earned an  
13 overall "F" grade on its progress report, with  
14 an "F" grade on student performance, an "F"  
15 grade on student progress, and a "D" grade on  
16 school environment. The school received the  
17 lowest score city-wide in the 2009-2010 progress  
18 reports.

19 Based on those conditions the department  
20 initiated a comprehensive review of New Day  
21 Academy with the goal of determining what  
22 intensive supports and interventions would best  
23 benefit its students and the New Day community.  
24 During that review the department looked at  
25 recent and historical performance and demand

1 data from the school, consulted with the  
2 superintendent and other experienced educators  
3 who have worked closely with the school and we  
4 gather community feedback.

5 After completing that review the department  
6 believes that only the most serious  
7 intervention, the gradual phaseout and eventual  
8 closure of New Day Academy will address the  
9 school's longstanding performance struggles and  
10 allow for school options to continue developing  
11 in this building options that will better serve  
12 future students in the broader school community.

13 New Day is currently co-located in this  
14 building with Bronx Latin [phonetic], Bronx  
15 Career and College Preparatory High School, and  
16 the doctor [phonetic] is Kiera Lowe [phonetic]  
17 Health and Science Charm [phonetic] School. A  
18 co-location, as most of you know, means that two  
19 or more school organizations are located in the  
20 same building, and they share common space like  
21 the auditorium, the gymnasium, a library or the  
22 cafeteria.

23 In the building Bronx Latin serves students  
24 in grades six to twelve. Bronx Career is a new  
25 school and it is still phasing in to the

1 building with a current cohort of ninth and  
2 tenth graders, and it will grow to its full nine  
3 to twelve grade span in the 2012-2013 school  
4 year. It's [phonetic] the Although [phonetic]  
5 Charter School opened in the [phonetic] 2010-11  
6 school year this year with grade six, and is  
7 currently in the process of phasing in. It is  
8 expected to reach its six to twelve grade span  
9 in the 2016-17 school year.

10 If this proposal is approved New Day would  
11 be phased out gradually over the next several  
12 years and would no longer admit new [phonetic]  
13 sixth grade or ninth grade students after the  
14 end of this school year. Current students would  
15 be supported as they progress toward graduation  
16 while remaining at New Day.

17 In cases where students do not complete  
18 [phonetic] graduation requirements in time for  
19 the June 2014 closure the department will help  
20 students and families find alternative programs  
21 or schools that meet students needs so they can  
22 continue their education.

23 The other schools located in this building  
24 will continue serving their current students and  
25 add additional grades as they continue to

1 expand.

2 In 2009-10 this building had a target  
3 capacity of 1,796 students. The building  
4 enrolled 870. That is a utilization rate of  
5 49 %. This means that the building was very  
6 much underutilized and had extra space to  
7 accommodate additional students.

8 In 2010-2011 the building is projected to  
9 enroll 1,027 students, which would increase the  
10 utilization rate to 57 %. Bronx Latin just  
11 finished phasing in its final grades this year.  
12 Bronx Career is currently in the process of  
13 phasing in, so it's not yet at full capacity.  
14 The department anticipates that - - will  
15 continue growing to full scale as New Day phases  
16 out and will complete its expansion during the  
17 2016-17 school year.

18 I want to thank you all very much for your  
19 patience listening to this proposal. We very  
20 much look forward to your comments and  
21 suggestions.

22 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you very much. And the  
23 next proposal will be presented by Robin Walton  
24 from New Day Academy. [Applause, whooping].

25 MS. ROBIN WALTON: Hi, good evening. Uh, I

1 am Robin Walton. I would just like to tell  
2 you brief information about myself. I'm a  
3 product of the South Bronx. Most of my  
4 schooling was in District 7, PS 37, uh, Junior  
5 High School 149. I went on to graduate from  
6 Advantage [phonetic] Child's [phonetic] High  
7 School, then went on to Marymount College, um,  
8 receiving a BA degree in theater arts and dance.  
9 Also went on to Columbia University Teachers  
10 College and also received my, uh, MA in dancing.  
11 [Applause, whoops].

12 - - also, um, I'm the vice president  
13 [phonetic] music [phonetic] - - .

14 Michael Vacias [phonetic] is my name, um, I  
15 am also from the Bronx [applause, whooping]  
16 [crosstalk] schools in District 8. I then went  
17 to Art Design High School in Manhattan. Then I  
18 went to Bronx Community College and then I went  
19 to New Paltz University and, um, my MA from the  
20 University of New York and City College - - .  
21 [Applause, whooping].

22 MS. WALTON: So with that we're just here to  
23 say that we are very proud to be back here in  
24 our neighborhood, supporting, you know, our  
25 family. [Applause, whooping].

1           Good evening. On behalf of our school,  
2 New Day Academy, our students, our parents,  
3 teachers and our principal, Ms. Ganales  
4 [phonetic] we, the arts department team, Ms.  
5 Walton, Ms. Hanna [phonetic] and Mr. Basswurst  
6 [phonetic] wish to express our desire and  
7 support in keeping New Day Academy open as a  
8 viable education institution.

9           Although we have been here for a short  
10 period of four months we can honestly say that  
11 we have witnessed a positive transformation in  
12 the behaviors and attitudes amongst our student  
13 since the implementation of the arts here at New  
14 Day. [Applause].

15           Students have become very receptive and  
16 eager in each of our arts disciplines: dance,  
17 theater and music. In our classes we are  
18 witnessing improvements in attendance, attitudes  
19 towards learning, verbal communication and  
20 socialization within our classrooms as well as  
21 in other subject areas.

22           Students are taking a more active role in  
23 being responsible for their education. Students  
24 have expressed, on numerous occasions, their  
25 gratitudes and happiness for being able to

1 participate in this new arts program that was  
2 envisioned by our principal, Ms. Ganales.

3 [Applause].

4 We, the arts department team, are proud to  
5 be at New Day Academy to support our students,  
6 our parents, staff members and Ms. Ganales in  
7 collectively achieving the goals and needs of  
8 New Day Academy's educational plan.

9 We, the arts department, implore you to take  
10 notice of the positive changes that have already  
11 taken place and allow New Day to remain open and  
12 build upon these recent accomplishments. Thank  
13 you. [Applause, whooping].

14 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you very much. Mr.  
15 Tyron did--were you making a statment as well?

16 FEMALE VOICE 1: - - .

17 MS. SOBELMAN: Okay, so now there's a  
18 presentation on behalf of the school leadership  
19 team. [Applause]. Oh, and also, I neglected to  
20 remind you that the time for signer speakup has  
21 expired. So I hope you had a chance to signup  
22 if you wanted to make public comment. If you  
23 did not and questions arise, as I said earlier,  
24 you could submit them through the phone number  
25 or the email. Thank you. [Applause].

1 [Applause, whooping].

2 MS. SOBELMAN: And while you're setting up I  
3 did also want to acknowledge we've been joined  
4 by a member of the CCHS, Constance [phonetic]  
5 Asuedo [phonetic], did I get that last name  
6 right? Thank you.

7 [Applause].

8 FEMALE VOICE 2: Hello? Testing. Testing.  
9 Testing one—okay. Okay, all right, um, good  
10 evening everyone. My name is Susie King and I  
11 am, um, a science teacher here at New Day  
12 Academy who's been here since the founding of  
13 New Day Academy. And we have just heard  
14 highlights from this year's education impact  
15 statement, stating reasons for the proposal, the  
16 phaseout of New Day Academy.

17 However, we would like you to read between  
18 the lines a little bit, if I can get my mouse to  
19 work. Okay. Okay. Sorry. All right, for  
20 example, the educational impact statement states  
21 that New Day Academy has struggled since it  
22 opened in 2005. However, several accountability  
23 measures have proved—prove otherwise.

24 For example, on the federal level we have  
25 been in good standing with the No Child Left

1 Behind Act every year that we have been in  
2 existence. On the state level we have met our  
3 AIP, our annual year list [phonetic] progress,  
4 EOD [phonetic] progress, every year other than  
5 [phonetic] 2010. We have never been placed on  
6 the state's PLA, Persistently Low-Achieving  
7 schools list, or on the SURR list, for the  
8 Schools Under Registration Review.

9 On the city level we have received a  
10 proficient on every SQR that we have had. That  
11 is the equivalent of a three out of four on a  
12 point scale. [Applause]. In addition, we have  
13 never, um, received an "underdeveloped" in any  
14 category in the SQR.

15 So despite these federal, state and city  
16 affirmations our progress reports still  
17 indicated that we needed to make changes in  
18 order to avoid phase-out. So we responded by  
19 making some dramatic changes to our school. For  
20 example, we hired a new principal, Mara  
21 [phonetic] Ganales, who had over 18 years of  
22 experience. [Applause].

23 We've had a major restructuring in our  
24 staff, in fact 95 % of our staff is new,  
25 compared to two years ago. We have implemented

1 individualized programs to increase academic  
2 engagement, which was one of the areas of  
3 concern in our school progress report. We have  
4 also introduced an arts program and electives  
5 taught by licensed arts teachers.

6 We are now in compliance with special  
7 education and English language learner programs,  
8 and to address another area of concern, safety,  
9 on our school progress report we have made  
10 changes in our youth development team.

11 Now all these changes that we have made have  
12 contributed to some major improvements that have  
13 gone unacknowledged in our educational impact  
14 statement. For example, please look at our  
15 learning environment survey and compare 2008 to  
16 2009, to 2009 to 2010. The second year was the-  
17 the 2009 to 2010 year that you see was the first  
18 year that, um, Ms. Ganales was here. You can  
19 see that our learning environment survey has  
20 increased in every category: academic  
21 expectations, communication, engagement and  
22 safety and respect over the past year. And in  
23 fact we are above our peer group more than 50 %  
24 in our bureau [phonetic]. [Applause, whooping].

25 What about our student progress? What about

1 our Regent's pass rates? It has increased to  
2 66 % for the first time—[crosstalk, applause].  
3 In fact we are at 94 % compared to our peer  
4 group.

5 Now attendance. We know that attendance is  
6 something that New Day Academy has been struggle  
7 with—struggling with. However, in the majority  
8 of our grades we have seen an increase in  
9 attendance since Ms. Ganellis has been here.  
10 [Applause]. The tenth, eleventh and twelfth  
11 graders have increased significantly. Overall  
12 they have 84 % to 85 %, as you can see, an  
13 increase in the last year. [Applause,  
14 shouting].

15 The sixth and seventh graders continue to  
16 come consistently; the areas we are struggling  
17 with are the eighth and ninth graders. However,  
18 we recognize that over half of the eighth and  
19 ninth graders in our school are overage,  
20 repeating students. [Whooping, applause]. We  
21 have continued to do outreach for these  
22 students.

23 Also, the progress report that the DOE puts  
24 out also gives additional points for exemplary  
25 outcomes that demonstrate closing the

1 achievement gap. As I mentioned before, some  
2 of the changes we made involve special education  
3 team and the English language learning team.  
4 And as a demonstration of that, in last year's  
5 high school progress report we received extra  
6 points for demonstrating improvement with our  
7 English language learners, and in the middle  
8 school we demonstrated significant improvement  
9 with our special education students, as you can  
10 see in our progress report. [Applause,  
11 whooping].

12 Now these are the improvements that we have  
13 already demonstrated. In addition, we project,  
14 um, improvements in our graduation rates and our  
15 credit accumulation [phonetic] rates. We  
16 project that we'll have a 50 % graduation rate  
17 for the class of 2012 [Applause, shouting],  
18 which is a significant improvement from last  
19 year's rate of 32 [phonetic] %. Also, we are  
20 going to see an increase in credit accumulation  
21 as based on our preliminary scholarship awards.

22 Now research shows that it takes three to  
23 five years to turn a school around; we have not  
24 been given ample time to make that progress.  
25 [Applause, shouting].

1 MALE VOICE 1: Yeah, tell 'em teacher,  
2 tell 'em. Tell 'em.

3 MS. WALTON: As the DOE states in their  
4 progress reports and in the educational impact  
5 statements, if no significant process [phonetic]  
6 is made over time a leadership change  
7 restructuring or closure is possible, however,  
8 closure should not be the first option.  
9 [Applause, shouting].

10 MALE VOICE 1: Yeah, tell 'em, tell 'em.

11 MS. WALTON: The fact is, six months after  
12 our first graduating class graduated the DOE  
13 proposed a phaseout. And three weeks after our  
14 new principale arrived the DOE announced that  
15 the school lacks the capacity to significantly  
16 improvement student performance. Isn't that a  
17 little premature?

18 MALE VOICE 1: Word. Word. Word.

19 MS. WALTON: Also, Principal Ganales has  
20 never been given the chance to recruit incoming  
21 students. Our educational impact statement says  
22 that there is low demand for New Day Academy.  
23 In September of 2008 we received 4.9  
24 applications per seat; in 2009 that number was  
25 5.2 applications per seat. Then for September

1 of 2010 we received even few applications with  
2 only 3.6 per seat. However, last year was when  
3 we were placed on the phaseout list, removing us  
4 from the pool of possible high schools  
5 [phonetic] that the eighth graders could apply  
6 for; no wonder our demand was down. We cannot  
7 be held accountable for that.

8 We are serving an increasingly higher need  
9 [phonetic] population as well: 85 % of our  
10 incoming ninth graders in 2009 had attendance  
11 issues in middle school. Our poverty rate is  
12 increasing. Our students in temporary housing  
13 are increasing as well. With this population we  
14 need more time to demonstrate improvements in  
15 academic achievement data, not a year.

16 [Applause, shouting].

17 So I ask you this: when will our school be  
18 given time? When will we ever receive a fair  
19 chance?

20 FEMALE VOICE 1: Exactly. [Applause,  
21 shouting].

22 MS. WALTON: Our students, our school, our  
23 community deserve the best. We need the support  
24 and commitment of the DOE that they will not  
25 give up on our school, but that they will work

1 with us to improve it. Thank you. [Applause,  
2 shouting].

3 MS. SOBELMAN: This concludes - - . Okay,  
4 this concludes the official—I'm sorry, now I  
5 have a microphone—this concludes the formal  
6 presentations and we will now move to the public  
7 comment. As I stated earlier, we have a, uh,  
8 short list. We have 15 speakers, and there was  
9 a decision made by the panel to extend the  
10 speaking for each person to three minutes, with  
11 the agreement that, folks, we're going to be  
12 very mindful of that time.

13 So as I said, when you're down to 30 seconds  
14 you'll see a sign that says 30 second remain,  
15 and then when it says time up, hopefully you'll  
16 be able to finish. So I'm going to call up the  
17 first five people and if you would form a line  
18 right here. And I apologize in advance if I  
19 don't get the names correct. Andrew Mickens  
20 [applause], Steven Avtar [phonetic], Adrien  
21 Stanley, and Daouda Diep [applause, shouting].

22 MR. ANDREW BICKENS: Good evening everybody,  
23 DOE, students, parents, the academy students.  
24 My name is Andrew Bickens and I'm a twelfth  
25 grade student [applause, shouting]. - - has

1        been very great. I've made honor roll five or  
2        six times, and I thank the teachers and the  
3        staff and Ms. G [phonetic] for pushing me to  
4        that [phonetic] level. By you [phonetic]  
5        closing down the school - - Ms. G. enough time  
6        to really show improvement. She has - - the  
7        past couple of months. I have to say I've seen  
8        her do it. [Applause, whooping].

9                A lot of the students - - the school - -  
10        improvement, and I think by your closing down -  
11        - now, early, is that simply a better deal  
12        [phonetic]? If you gave us more time then you  
13        would see New Day improve. So- [applause,  
14        shouting]. I - - right now - - you guys, but I  
15        hope you guys make the right decision on this  
16        issue because New Day is here to stand forever  
17        [Applause, shouting].

18                MR. STEPHEN AVTAR: Good evening everyone,  
19        my name is Stephen Avtar, and I'm current senior  
20        at New Day Academy - - . [Applause, shouting].  
21        I am among that 66 % of first-time Regent  
22        seekers who achieved a 93 % achievement in  
23        comparison to peer groups [Applause, shouting].  
24        If that does not spell [phonetic] success I  
25        don't know what is.

1 I didn't start my high school education at  
2 New Day, but I have spent the majority of my  
3 high school years here, getting my education.  
4 And it is with that education I took the ACT and  
5 scored within the 94th percentile-[shouting,  
6 applause]. It is with that education I applied  
7 to college and admitted early. It is with that  
8 education I was offered an \$80,000 merit-based  
9 scholarship. [Applause, shouting].

10 So anyone to say that I or my school is not  
11 successful or not conducive to success is both  
12 insulting and belittling. [Applause, whooping].  
13 I stand and ask you guys: what has the Board of  
14 Education done to significantly help better aid  
15 New Day? And until a satisfactory answer can be  
16 given with which everyone in this room can agree  
17 there is not reason the proceedings for this  
18 phase-out can continue. [Chanting, applause].

19 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you.

20 MR. ADRIEN STANLEY: Hello, my name is  
21 Adrien Stanley, uh, I am a twelfth grade-  
22 twelfth-

23 FEMALE VOICE 2: Adrien, we can't hear you,  
24 baby.

25 MR. STANLEY: My name's Adrien Stanley, I'm

1 a senior here at New Day Academy [applause].  
2 I'm going to read a speech on behalf of my  
3 colleagues Ms. Talladegas [phonetic] [whooping,  
4 applause]. Before I do that I would like to say  
5 words of my own.

6 Um, by closing the school, uh, you're not-  
7 you're not really seeing [phonetic] the point of  
8 education; you're denying these kids their  
9 education. - - instead of teaching them lessons  
10 that they need to learn in life you're teaching  
11 them a lesson in futility, that-that no matter  
12 how hard you endeavor and try to reach your-your  
13 full potential, it doesn't matter; that's the  
14 lesson they're teaching you by closing down this  
15 school.

16 And now Ms. Talladega's speech [whooping,  
17 applause]: Good evening to my New Day family.  
18 I stand here as potential valedictorian of the  
19 graduating class of 2011 [applause, whooping].  
20 I been in this building for 13 years; this has  
21 come to be my second home. I've seen many  
22 changes in this school and have all been for the  
23 better.

24 Having Mrs. G as our principal has given me  
25 and others the chance to explore our talent.

1 She is one of a kind and we are thankful for  
2 her. Ms. G has brought life to our school and  
3 given us the ability [phonetic] to meet  
4 [phonetic] new teachers and even given us better  
5 electives. We know she has only been here for a  
6 year but she has done her best to make  
7 everything possible for each and every one of  
8 us.

9 We'll continue to strive for the best, with  
10 or without your help. Just know that we never  
11 needed acceptance from you outsiders.  
12 [Applause, whooping].

13 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you.

14 MR. DAOUDA DIEP: My name is Daouda and  
15 before I start I'd like to give a shout out to  
16 Ms. Susie [phonetic] [applause, shouting] and  
17 I'd like to give a shout out to Ms. Charlene  
18 [phonetic] [applause, shouting]. - - .

19 I want to - - a poem:

20 My school is closing because - - things are  
21 not good. What do they think? What are they  
22 doing? Is it because we live in a 'hood? Just  
23 because of what you're seeing outside doesn't  
24 mean we have to sweep [phonetic] the inside.  
25 Even though we've been through a lot of stress,

1 - - put arrest [phonetic]. We'll rise higher  
2 and know it will take us somewhere better. We  
3 need your support to allow us to become winners,  
4 instead of making us the losers. - - say we  
5 can't because I know we can. [Applause,  
6 shouting].

7 MS. SOBELMAN: Sorry, they other microphone  
8 has a lot of feedback, so I'm going to call up  
9 the next five speakers. And if you would join  
10 us up front: David Marquis, Steven Goldberg,  
11 Ellen Scheinbach, Laura Thornberg and Meg Hart.

12 FEMALE VOICE 2: Yeah, Meg.

13 MS. SOBELMAN: David Marquis, Steven  
14 Goldberg, Ellen Scheinbach, Laura Thornberg and  
15 Meg Hart. [Applause, shouting].

16 MR. DAVID MARQUIS: Good evening. I'm David  
17 Marquis, um, I'm the director and founder of  
18 Marquis Studios, which is a 33-year-old not-for-  
19 profit arts organization. We serve 25,000  
20 schoolchildren every year in the five boroughs  
21 and approximately 70 school locations.

22 We were invited to work in this school with  
23 our arts program, so we currently have a program  
24 in stage, design and theater, and movement - - .  
25 We were invited by Mara Ganales when she first

1       came to this school to interview with her. I  
2       found her to be thoughtful, I found her to be  
3       dedicated to a school that she inherited under  
4       difficult conditions.

5               And I've experienced something this year  
6       that's very interesting for me. One of my  
7       teaching artists who taught here last year, when  
8       she found out that, due to basically scheduling  
9       changes she would not be reassigned to New Day  
10      but to another school, demanded to come back to  
11      this campus. [Applause].

12             What she saw was—you just heard from these  
13      students—she saw hope. And in reading the  
14      proposal for closure papers, uh, I know a  
15      certain extent by necessity, but everything is  
16      in the past tense. What the DOE has done is  
17      announce they were going to close this school,  
18      and then made a very, very serious mistake:  
19      they hired Mara Ganales. [Applause, whooping].  
20      If they wanted to close this school then they  
21      should have sent in a caretaker; instead they  
22      sent in somebody who knows how to turn this  
23      school around. And this school is being turned  
24      around.

25             So I'd just like to add my voice to say in

1 my 33 years working with New York City schools  
2 I find this school to have a lot of hope; I find  
3 this school to have a lot of heart, and I  
4 believe that things are being done in this  
5 school to provide the kind of education that  
6 will inspire these students to achieve. That's  
7 going to be some alternatives to blackboards and  
8 books, and that's going to be some reinforcement  
9 and new approaches to science and math. And I  
10 see those things happening in this school. So I  
11 thank you all for your service sitting on this  
12 panel, I thank these students for their loyalty  
13 to their school, and I really think that a  
14 serious injustice will be done to this community  
15 if the schools is closed. As somebody said  
16 before: the wrong message is being sent. Thank  
17 you. [Applause].

18 MR. STEVEN GOLDBERG: Good evening, my name  
19 is Steven Goldberg, I'm the District 12  
20 representative from the United Federation of  
21 Teachers. [Applause, whooping]. Here we are  
22 again. Last year when we were here there was a  
23 significant amount of teachers, students and  
24 parents up in arms over the proposed closing of  
25 New Day Academy.

1           The feeling has changed. People are  
2 spent. They were so hopeful that since the  
3 court decision last year that things would  
4 change and that help would be on the way. Did  
5 that happen? No. New Day should have been  
6 given intensive assistance based on the needs,  
7 as the DOE has pointed out, and yet no change,  
8 no help, and now we are faced with the same  
9 proposal as last year.

10           If the DOE hadn't already predetermined the  
11 fate of New Day Academy they would have sent the  
12 assistance that was needed. Instead, New Day  
13 Academy has taken in an increasing percentage of  
14 English language learners and special education  
15 students and its poverty rate has climbed  
16 steadily, with more than one-third of the middle  
17 grade students, 38 %, being English language  
18 learners, with more than half the middle school,  
19 56 % and more than a fifth, 21 % of the high  
20 school requiring special education services, and  
21 with a poverty rate of 93 % for both schools.

22           Most schools would require intensive  
23 assistance to stay afloat; the DOE should engage  
24 in the hard work of turning schools around;  
25 educating children successfully is challenging,

1 and demanding. There are no shortcuts, and  
2 closing schools is not the answer to me  
3 [phonetic]. The DOE sees real estate and rent  
4 money rolling around in their eyes, rather than  
5 the needs of our students and our community.  
6 [Applause].

7 MS. ELLEN SCHEINBACH: Okay, - - . Good  
8 evening, my name is Ellen Scheinbach, and I have  
9 worked in junio and senior high schools and New  
10 York City Board of Ed for the past 46 years,  
11 since 1965. [Applause]. - - worked here for a  
12 few years now as a coach. The school that I  
13 started to work in, New Day Academy, no longer  
14 exists. In that school the students were not  
15 serious about their work, the teachers were  
16 young and inexperienced and the administration  
17 was overwhelmed.

18 The school didn't get enough support from  
19 the DOE, the administration didn't know how to  
20 achieve its goals, the program was underfunded,  
21 and the district, through [phonetic] network  
22 management, changed every year, so that no one  
23 came here over time who could assess the help  
24 that was needed.

25 Finally last year the DOE took notice and

1 decided to appoint a new principal, Ms.  
2 Ganales. However, within three weeks of that  
3 appointment they decided that it was not enough  
4 and they moved to phase out the school.

5 Even though that decision was stayed a year  
6 by the court, Ms. Ganales phased out the old  
7 school anyway. The special ed program and the  
8 ESL program were brought into compliance, the  
9 school program was restructured. For the first  
10 time a standard six-week summer school was  
11 established.

12 This year New Day is a new school. Students  
13 are individually programmed, 63 % of the staff  
14 is new this year, and most of those new teachers  
15 are experienced pedagogues who can help reap  
16 [phonetic] inexperienced and new teachers  
17 prioritize [phonetic]. An arts focus for the  
18 school was established with the help of three  
19 new arts teachers. For the first time ever  
20 students from all grade levels participated in  
21 an arts exhibition and the entire student body  
22 sat respectfully and appreciatively in the  
23 auditorium for a performance by their peers.  
24 That was an event that never could have happened  
25 before.

1           I understand the need for transformation  
2 for poorly-performing schools. Under federal  
3 and state guidelines that calls for replacing at  
4 least 50 % of the staff as well as the school  
5 leadership. That's already been done.

6           I understand the graduation rate went down  
7 last year, however the quality of the work in  
8 the classroom's and the expectations for the  
9 students went up. Students proved that by an  
10 increase of 20 % in ELA Regents [phonetic]. We  
11 did not even have a quality review last year,  
12 and in previous years it reviewers [phonetic]  
13 were never the same, so they had no context for  
14 - - .

15           Your idea is to phase out the school and  
16 replace it with what, a new administration? A  
17 new staff? A new focus? We've already done  
18 that. We are the new school you would put into  
19 place. You give new schools at least four years  
20 to prove themselves; give us at least three more  
21 years. [Applause].

22           MS. LAURA THORNBURG: My name is Laura  
23 Thornburg. I'm a first-year special education  
24 teacher in the middle school here at New Day  
25 Academy. I'm a product of the New York State

1 Teaching Fellowship and I entered this program  
2 with the hopes of making a difference where it  
3 was needed most, in the lives and the educations  
4 of students in struggling communities. That is  
5 why I'm here this evening to speak to you and  
6 here teaching at New Day every day.

7 I'm speaking tonight on behalf of my amazing  
8 students to share with you a heartfelt letter  
9 written by Divina [phonetic] Morales [phonetic],  
10 one of my seventh graders who could not be here  
11 tonight. These are Divina's words.

12 "Dear Board of Education: please don't  
13 close down New Day. This is the first school  
14 that actually stood here and understood me. All  
15 of the teachers here understand me and what I'm  
16 going through. These people have helped me a  
17 lot. Even though the school is average it  
18 doesn't mean that you should shut it down; you  
19 should keep it open because you're hurting  
20 everybody in this school.

21 "Please understand that we want to keep New  
22 Day Academy open for the students and the staff  
23 that we love. We love this school; please don't  
24 phase it out." [Applause].

25 Please take Divina's words into

1 consideration. She and all of her fellow  
2 students deserve the very best - - this school.  
3 Thank you. [Applause].

4 MS. ROBELMAN: Sorry to interrupt. Just  
5 before you start I'm going to call up the next  
6 five speakers: Robin Walton, is that—you  
7 already spoke? Okay. Next four speakers: Ms.  
8 Catthouse? I apologize. Ms. Cattouse, Kavely  
9 [phonetic] Jones [screaming], Ms. Catthouse,  
10 Kavely Jones, Warren Bailey and Antoinette  
11 Rivera [phonetic]. [Shouting, applause].

12 MS. MEG HART: Good evening. My name is Meg  
13 Hart and I was a special educator here at New  
14 Day Academy from 2007 to 2010 and I could not be  
15 more proud of the time that I spent here. Uh,  
16 this year I'm a teacher over at Metropolitan  
17 High School, just two blocks down the road. And  
18 I often get asked, especially after New Day's  
19 "F" grade came out this year, "Was it really  
20 that bad?" Being at an "A" school this year,  
21 was New Day really an "F" school?" And I have  
22 to say I don't think so at all, not even a  
23 little bit.

24 Three years here and I wish that  
25 Metropolitan had some of the things that New Day

1 continues [applause, shouting]. I wish that  
2 the teachers differentiated the lessons as much  
3 as they do here to accommodate all of the  
4 students' needs: all of the special education  
5 students, all of the English language learners,  
6 all of the students who have not been considered  
7 top level learners. All of those students are  
8 considered here at New Day and the lessons  
9 reflect that.

10 I wish that we had the kind of team meetings  
11 that New Day had. I can't tell you how many  
12 team meetings I was on, grade level and  
13 curriculum team meetings each week here at New  
14 Day, and Ms. G made a point of having those  
15 meetings every week so teachers could  
16 collaborate and communicate about the students,  
17 about the lessons, about the success that they  
18 want to have.

19 I wish that we had—that we have a  
20 Metropolitan the same kind of passion for  
21 meeting all of these students' needs. I know  
22 that New Day is not a perfect school, but I do  
23 know how hard all of the teachers work, all of  
24 the teachers—all of the students work, and how  
25 much the administration wants to be successful.

1 Ms. G is not just sitting there, sitting  
2 back waiting for the school to close. She is  
3 working extremely hard to make sure taht the  
4 programs are in, that the students' needs are  
5 being met, and that everyone at New Day is  
6 seeing the progress.

7 So give her a chance and give these students  
8 a chance to show that they can get better.

9 [Applause, whooping]. Thank you. [Applause].

10 MS. MARILYN CATTOUSE: Good evening,  
11 everyone. My name is Marilyn Catthouse, I'm the  
12 parent coordinator here at New Day Academy, and  
13 my colleague here [screaming]—I'm Ms. Jones, the  
14 best school, in the United States of America.  
15 [Applause, shouting].

16 This feels like deja vu. It was only a year  
17 ago when we stood in this auditorium, fighting  
18 for the same reason and our cries went unheard,  
19 or against deaf ears. Up until November 2009  
20 this school was out of control, with students  
21 that were heading nowhere fast.

22 On November 9th, 2009 Ms. Ganales, also  
23 known as Ms. Ganales, walked into New Day  
24 Academy as the new principal. On November 10th  
25 she pulled out [phonetic] her gavela and called

1 "Order in the court." From that day on Ms. G.  
2 took her mission that seemed impossible to many.  
3 Even Ms. Jones, standing next to me right now  
4 did not believe Ms. G and make change - -  
5 school, and Ms. Jones, what did you tell me?"

6 MS. KAREN JONES: Bull crap.

7 MS. CATTOUSE: I said, "This woman will make  
8 the change that this school needs." I describe  
9 Ms. G as a small axe that falls big trees.  
10 Believe me, I could see the trees that she has  
11 brought down. Students that used to come to  
12 school just to hang out, or curse out the  
13 teachers, knew that when their parents were  
14 called they would not answer our phone calls the  
15 moment they said--they saw New Day Academy on  
16 their caller ID.

17 These were overage students that were  
18 supposed to have graduated two years ago. Ms. G  
19 got here and saw the track record and we  
20 realized that Ms. G don't play. From that day  
21 on New Day Academy has come upon--excuse me--a new  
22 day has come upon New Day Academy to this date.

23 Why can't this woman continue the excellent  
24 job she has accomplished to this day as we go  
25 forward? Anyone that agrees--anyone agrees with

1 me please stand up and applaud Ms. G  
2 [applause, whooping]. Thank you very much.

3 MR. WARREN BAILEY: My name is Warren  
4 Bailey, I'm a special education teacher here at  
5 New Day Academy. I got my education from the  
6 city school systems - - all the way from - -  
7 college, City College. I come from a family of  
8 educators, all of - - teachers as well.

9 Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I've  
10 come here tonight to speak in support of the  
11 mission and the efforts of the New Day Academy  
12 students, parents, staff and principal. The  
13 Department of Education has decided that it  
14 wants to close New Day Academy. You must ask,  
15 "What are the compelling reasons that would  
16 warrant such a massive undertaking?" Is the  
17 school dysfunctional to the point that it is  
18 undereducating or inappropriately educating its  
19 students?

20 We are charged with the responsibility of  
21 closing the achievement gap, but just what is  
22 the achievement gap and what are its causes?  
23 One of the contributing factors is poverty;  
24 another is when educational professionals  
25 inadequately fund and support academic programs

1 in working class communities.

2 The Department of Education, upon examining  
3 the record of achievement at New Day Academy has  
4 decided that it's not meeting its mission of  
5 appropriately engaging, enabling and empowering  
6 the students to meaningful participate in the  
7 world once [phonetic] its - - is depleted. But  
8 [phonetic] is closing New Day Academy a step in  
9 the right direction?

10 In defense of New Day Academy I would  
11 preface my remarks with a quote from a learned  
12 educator which addresses one of the challenges  
13 New Day Academy has and continues to face:

14 "Human beings who are forced to live under  
15 ghetto conditions and whose daily experiences  
16 tell them that almost nowhere in society are  
17 they respected and granted the ordinary dignity,  
18 according to others, will, as a matter of  
19 course, begin to doubt their own worth.

20 "Since every human being depends upon his  
21 cumulative experiences with others for cluse as  
22 to how he should view and value himself,  
23 children who are consistently rejected under  
24 that we begin to question and doubt whether  
25 they, their family and their group really

1       deserve normal respect for the larger society  
2       that they receive.

3               "These doubts become the seeds of a  
4       pernicious self and group hatred, a complex and  
5       debilitating prejudice against himself." This  
6       is by Dr. Kenneth Clark, "Dark Ghetto  
7       [phonetic]".

8               The term "at-risk" refers to children who  
9       are likely to fail in school or in life because  
10      of their life's social circumstances. It does  
11      not appear that any one single factor places the  
12      child at risk, rather more than one factor is  
13      present, and that is what causes it. Poverty is  
14      considered a major at-risk factor.

15              At New Day Academy the students, parents,  
16      staff and principal have worked hard to improve  
17      their educational experience despite a paucity  
18      of meaningful support from the Department of  
19      Education. As my colleague in her Power Point  
20      has shown, we have improved, as measured by the  
21      School Quality Review and we're making  
22      improvements throughout our school.

23              On another level, what is the message your  
24      phase-out is sending? That the school is  
25      substandard despite the efforts of staff and

1 students? That the DOE will not allow any new  
2 students to be exposed to New Day Academy  
3 educational programs? Despite the fact that  
4 we've had improvement on the progress report in  
5 2009 and '10, and then the SQR every year we got  
6 a proficient.

7 My question to you is when are the efforts  
8 of an inspired group—oh by the way, the last  
9 thing: the message you're sending that the  
10 current students are expendable because school  
11 is not—the school is not good enough to stay  
12 open, but it's good enough to keep them.

13 I just have 10 seconds more—my colleagues  
14 didn't go that much further. My question to you  
15 is when are the efforts of an inspired group  
16 every enough? It would seem like despite the  
17 fact that there have been improvements in this  
18 short period of time to the academic program is  
19 not enough. I'm reminded, on this auspicious  
20 coming weekend, of Dr. Martin Luther King's  
21 comments he made on a hot Wednesday in August  
22 1963:

23 "On some positions, cowardice [phonetic]  
24 asks the question, 'Is it expedient?' And when  
25 expedience comes along and asks the question,

1 'Is it politic?' Vanity asks the question,  
2 'Is it popular?' Conscience asks the question,  
3 'Is it right?'

4 "There comes a time when one must take the  
5 position that it is neither safe nor politic nor  
6 popular, but he must do it because conscience  
7 tells him it's right."

8 A school dies, a community dies, a people  
9 die when they're bereft of hope. We know about  
10 hope, because hope, H-O-P-E, is How Our People  
11 Exist. I stand before you, asking you to be  
12 true to the dictates of conscience and to  
13 support the parents, staff, students and - -  
14 principal at this school and their efforts to  
15 improve this school; keep hope alive.

16 [Applause, screaming].

17 MS. SOBELMAN: Sir, I know there were  
18 questions in your testimony; if you'd like to  
19 submit that we'd be able to include them - -  
20 analysis and public comment.

21 The speakers' list has now been exhausted  
22 and we'll transition into the Q&A. And I have  
23 two questions that were submitted. And again, I  
24 just want to say we'll answer these questions  
25 and then as additional questions come up please

1 do continue to send them to the email and the  
2 phone number that are listed.

3 The first question is: How do students  
4 benefit from closing schools? And I'll have  
5 Tania Shinikawa [phonetic] fromt the Office of  
6 Portfolio Planning respond.

7 MS. TANIA SHINIKAWA: Good evening,  
8 everyone. I'd like to answer the question in  
9 two parts. The question was asking how students  
10 benefit. And so we think about the current  
11 students, who are already enrolled in New Day  
12 Academy as well as future students who wouldn't  
13 potentially have attended this school.

14 In terms of the current students we've seen  
15 in our experience schools that begin to phase  
16 out, as they are phasing out they're able to  
17 continue providing and strengthening the  
18 instructional, um, experience for students.  
19 There's more personalized attention. As already  
20 pointed out, there are many wonderful things  
21 that Ms. G has put in place here. We fully  
22 expect that the current students at New Day  
23 Academy would continue to be served well by New  
24 Day, and we would actually hope also to see, um,  
25 many of the things such as graduation rate pick

1 up and improve as the school phases out.

2 In terms of current students the decision to  
3 close [phonetic] and phase out at New Day  
4 Academy is made because we feel that the  
5 students of this community can be served better  
6 by additional school options. Again, looking at  
7 our experience in terms of schools that have  
8 been proposed for phase-out, an example in the  
9 Bronx that I can find [phonetic] is the Evander  
10 Childs [phonetic] High School—experienced a  
11 graduation rate just over 30 % back in 2002. It  
12 was phased out and there are many new schools on  
13 its campus. In 2009 the schools on that campus,  
14 as an average, were graduating 80 % of their  
15 students.

16 We believe that similar things can happen in  
17 our new schools and that's why we'll be  
18 proposing to offer educational opportunities for  
19 future students, um, in this community and  
20 throughout the Bronx.

21 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. And the final  
22 question this evening: Is there any prevention  
23 method for the remaining schools in this  
24 building—excuse me—from having the same fate as  
25 New Day? Is there any prevention method for the

1 remaining schools in this building from having  
2 the same fate as New Day? Tania?

3 MS. SHINIKAWA: I think in this case, um,  
4 the schools in the building, as well as  
5 throughout the borough and the city are not  
6 thinking about each day in terms of the  
7 prevention of phase-out or closure; they're  
8 thinking first and foremost about educating the  
9 students that attend their schools. And they  
10 will continue to focus on that. The department  
11 will offer support to every school, and as they  
12 go forward we hope that they will each be able  
13 to ensure student achievement and continued  
14 success.

15 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. That concludes  
16 the question and answer period. And I would  
17 like to say I want to thank everyone for coming  
18 this evening and for the contributions you've  
19 made, the Power Point and the statements you've  
20 shared. As I said, this will be included in the  
21 analysis of public comment that will be provided  
22 on the website and also given to the panel  
23 members prior to the hearing.

24 Their vote will take place on February 1st  
25 at Brooklyn Technical High School, and if, as

1 I've said repeatedly, if additional questions  
2 come up or comments please do continue to send  
3 them to the email and the phone number that have  
4 been provided. Thank you all again for coming  
5 and the joint public hearing is officially  
6 adjourned. - - .

7 [END 181\_945.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 

7           Date 01/17/11  
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