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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING
Math, Engineering, Science Academy
(MESA)**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MALE VOICE 1: [Foreign Language 00:00 -
3 00:23]

4 MS. TAMIKA MATHESON: Okay, so good evening.
5 We're going to begin in probably one or two
6 minutes. Okay, thank you. Good evening, can
7 everyone hear me? Can you hear me in the back?
8 Okay, great. This is a joint public hearing by
9 the Department of Education, Community Education
10 Council and School - - location of a new public
11 charter school, Math, Engineering, and Science
12 Academy, with existing school, Junior High
13 School 291, Rolland Hayes [phonetic], and
14 Bushwick Community High School, in Building K291
15 beginning in 2013-2014 academic school year. I
16 am the Brooklyn High School superintendent,
17 Tamika Matheson. We have asked the District 32
18 Community Education Council and the school
19 leadership teams in the building to participate
20 in this joint public hearing. I am joined
21 tonight by members of the school committee on
22 the dais, and I'm going to take this opportunity
23 to introduce them. First we have-- , okay, I
24 think I felt better without the mic, but we're
25 going to do this. So, first will begin with

1 District 32, Community District Superintendent,
2 Lillian Druck; Principal Jacqueline Rosado, of
3 Junior High School 291; Principal Llermi
4 [phonetic] Gonzalez, Bushwick [phonetic]
5 Community High School; CEC 32 President
6 Victorina Lugo; Junior High School 291 SLT
7 member Fazia Rahaman [phonetic]; and from the
8 State Ed, Erin Shovlin [phonetic]; and CEC 32
9 member Louis Tillman. The purpose of this
10 hearing is for you to provide comments about the
11 proposal. Before I describe the proposal, I
12 want to make sure you are all aware of the
13 opportunity to provide your input. Please be
14 advised that this hearing is being recorded.
15 All those who wish to speak must sign up in the
16 speaker signup area, located just outside the
17 auditorium. The signup list will close in 15
18 minutes. Speakers will be given the floor in
19 the order that they signup. All comments are
20 limited to two minutes. There may be elected
21 officials who arrive at different times
22 throughout the evening. If they wish to speak,
23 we will do our best to accommodate them at the
24 first opportune moment. Those who are here at
25 the start of the public comment segment will be

1 asked to speak first. All comments will be
2 mentioned in the Analysis of Public Comment, to
3 be published and provided to the Panel for
4 Educational Policy the evening before the panel
5 votes. The vote is scheduled for March 11,
6 2013. In addition, we welcome any comments and
7 feedback you may have at any time before the
8 panel votes on both proposals. The email
9 address and phone number where the comments may
10 be made are: d32proposals@schools.nyc.gov, and
11 212-374-0208. Lastly, when making your
12 comments, please be respectful, especially of
13 the children and/or students, and the audience
14 this evening. The proposal: the New York City
15 Department of Education is proposing to open and
16 co-locate Math, Engineering, and Science Academy
17 Charter High School, which will be referred to
18 as MESA, a new public charter high school that
19 will serve students in ninth through twelfth
20 grade in this building, K291, beginning in 2013-
21 2014. A co-location means that two or more
22 school organizations are located in the same
23 building, and may share common spaces like
24 auditoriums, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. If
25 this proposal is approved, MESA will be located

1 in building K291, with Junior High School 291,
2 Rolland Hayes, an existing zoned and academic-
3 screened middle school that serves students
4 sixth through eighth grade, and Bushwick
5 Community High School, an existing transfer high
6 school serving students in grades nine through
7 twelve. In addition, K291 houses a United
8 Federation of Teachers Training Center, a school
9 safety office, and the District 32 Office of
10 School and Food Nutrition. Three community-
11 based organizations are also located in building
12 K291: a Beacon program, Brooklyn College
13 Community Partnership, and the Saint Nicks
14 [phonetic] Alliance. The DOE does not expect
15 this proposal to impact the space available to
16 or services offered by these programs. In
17 December 2012, MESA's charter was authorized by
18 the New York State Education Department to serve
19 students in ninth through twelfth grade. If
20 this proposal is approved, MESA will open with
21 ninth grade beginning in 2013, September 2013,
22 and will add one grade each year until it serves
23 students in ninth through twelfth grade in 2016-
24 2017, in K291. The school will admit students
25 via the charter lottery application process,

1 with preference given to returning students,
2 the siblings of enrolled students, English
3 language learners residing in District 32, ELL
4 or English language learners outside of District
5 32, and students and residents of District 32.
6 The DOE has identified building K291 as an
7 underutilized building, and therefore believes
8 there is sufficient space to accommodate MESA.
9 Building K291 has the capacity to serve 1,892
10 students, but in 2012-2013 Junior High School
11 291 is currently enrolling 591 students in sixth
12 through eighth grade, and Bushwick Community
13 High School is enrolling 346 students in ninth
14 through twelfth grade. This yields a building
15 utilization rate of approximately 50 percent,
16 which demonstrates that the building is
17 underutilized, and has space to accommodate
18 additional students. If this proposal is
19 approved, in 2016-2017 building K291 would serve
20 1,295 through perhaps 1,440 students from MESA,
21 Junior High School 291, and Bushwick Community
22 High School collectively, which yields a
23 projected utilization rate of 68-to-70 percent,
24 thus building K291 has sufficient space to
25 accommodate the proposed co-location. The

1 Department of Education does not anticipate
2 that this proposal will impact the admission
3 methods or academic extra-curricular and
4 athletic offerings at Junior High School 291 or
5 Bushwick Community High School. MESA has been
6 approved by its charter authorizer, the New York
7 State Department of Education, or SED, to open a
8 new public charter school in community school
9 District 32. Although this proposal has not yet
10 been approved by the panel of educational
11 policy, SED is required to hold a facilities
12 hearing to receive feedback on the proposed co-
13 location of MESA, with Junior High School 291
14 and Bushwick Community High School. As such,
15 this joint public hearing will also serve as the
16 facilities hearing. There is a representative
17 from the New York State Ed Department of
18 Education in attendance. If you have any
19 questions or comments on the charter itself,
20 Erin Shovlin, at the end of our table here, our
21 dais, of SED, will now tell you how to submit
22 those questions and comments. Erin?

23 MS. SHOVLIN: Good evening, everyone. My
24 name is Erin Shovlin. I work within the Charter
25 School Office of the New York State Education

1 Department, or SED. We are the administrative
2 arm of the Board of Regents. The Board of
3 Regents is responsible for the general
4 supervision of all educational activities within
5 the state. The Board comprises 17 members
6 elected by the state legislature for five-year
7 terms, one from each state's 13 judicial
8 districts, and four members who serve at-large.
9 Regents are unsalaried, and are reimbursed only
10 for travel and related expenses in connection
11 with their official duties. The authority for
12 the Regents to issue charters to boards of
13 trustees to establish charter schools comes from
14 Article 56 of the New York State Education Law.
15 The law was originally passed in 1996, and most
16 recently updated in 2010. The law requires the
17 Board of Regents to conduct public hearings to
18 discuss co-located charter schools in existing
19 public school buildings. The law reads as
20 follows: "A charter school may be located in
21 part of an existing public school building, in
22 space provided on a private work site, in a
23 public building, or in any other suitable
24 location, provided however, before a charter
25 school may be located in part of an existing

1 public school building, the charter entity
2 shall provide notice to the parents or guardians
3 of the students then enrolled in the existing
4 school building, and shall hold a public hearing
5 for purposes of discussing the location of the
6 charter school. A charter school may own,
7 lease, or rent its space." The purpose of
8 tonight's hearing is to discuss the proposed co-
9 location of the Math, Engineering, and Science
10 Charter School within building K291. While the
11 Board of Regents sets educational policy, and
12 SED serves as its administrative arm, neither
13 the Board of Regents, nor SED have any authority
14 over the placement of charter schools within
15 facilities owned by the Department of Education.
16 Nonetheless, we remain concerned about public
17 sentiment pertaining to the co-location of
18 Regent's authorized charter schools. This
19 evening, I am here to gather comments from the
20 school community pertaining to this co-location.
21 These comments will be summarized, and shared
22 with the Board of Regents. SED will continue to
23 receive comments for five calendar days until
24 after the Panel for Educational Policy meeting.
25 The PEP hearing will be held on March 11th. SED

1 will continue to receive public comments until
2 March 18th. Written statements may be submitted
3 at the conclusion of this hearing, or mailed to
4 the attention of Susan Megna [phonetic], New
5 York State Education Department at the charter
6 school office. And the address for that is 89
7 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York, 12234. And
8 again, that address is 89 Washington Avenue,
9 Albany, New York, 12234. Or you may email your
10 concerns or questions to the following email
11 address: charterschools@mail.nysed.gov. Again,
12 the address is charterschools@mail.nysed.gov.
13 And if you have any questions or if you missed
14 that contact information, I'm happy to talk with
15 you at the end of the hearing. Thank you.

16 MS. MATHESON: Okay, thank you. Our next
17 presenter will be Principal Jacqueline Rosado,
18 Junior High School 291.

19 MS. JACQUELINE ROSADO: Good afternoon, and
20 welcome to our school. We are definitely not
21 opposed to welcoming additional students to our
22 campus, especially since the Department of
23 Education is saying that we are so
24 underutilized, but on behalf of our school
25 community there are major concerns regarding the

1 amount of proposed space allocated to the
2 middle school. Although we realize that there
3 is a formula that is used to determine
4 footprint, it is unrealistic for the Department
5 of Education to expect middle school teachers to
6 share classrooms, to travel from class to class,
7 to require middle students to eat lunch too
8 early, and although the Office of Portfolio
9 Management has assured me and our school
10 leadership team that there will be no impact on
11 programming, anyone that has led a middle school
12 knows that this is not true. High school and
13 middle school programming is completely
14 different, and scheduling the use of shared
15 space such as a gym, and a cafeteria, becomes a
16 burden for the middle school, not to mention the
17 rooms the middle school has invested thousands
18 of dollars in this past year to increase the
19 efficiency of the technology necessary for the
20 instruction of our students that may be lost.
21 It is manageable right now with one small high
22 school, but it will be a huge challenge with
23 another. As the leader of the middle school, I
24 need to make it perfectly clear for the record
25 that I will not allow the learning environment

1 of my students to be compromised, and if this
2 proposal is approved I respectfully request
3 support from the Department of Education to
4 ensure that our students had all relocated
5 learning facilities restored and ready for the
6 new school year. Thank you.

7 MS. MATHESON: Thank you. Our next
8 presenter will be Principal Llermi Gonzalez,
9 Bushwick Community High School.

10 MR. LLERMI GONZALEZ: Thank you. Good
11 evening, everybody. I want to make sure that
12 everyone understands who our school services, so
13 everyone understands the concerns of our
14 community. We are a transfer school, and we
15 service the neediest of students in the
16 Department of Education. We are the school, the
17 last chance, for many students, and many of our
18 students come to us with deficiencies in their
19 credits, and the credit accumulation that they
20 have. They are over-aged, and they come with a
21 lot of social and emotional issues that are
22 school addresses. Our school has been going
23 through a transition, beginning last October.
24 The entire community has been involved, both
25 parent, students, teachers, and staff, to make

1 sure that Bushwick Community High School
2 offers the best opportunity for progress for
3 achievement to students in our community that
4 come to us as a last resort. We are in the
5 process of developing many programs that meet
6 students' academic needs, and in addition, and
7 most importantly, their social and emotional
8 needs. It is of great concern to our community,
9 to students, to parents, and staff, that this
10 proposal doesn't necessarily take into
11 consideration the needs of our kids in terms of
12 their social and emotional needs. If you look
13 at the formula that is used to calculate the
14 amount of space needed, it is based on academic
15 classroom use, and not necessarily on the use
16 for social services that we provide to our kids.
17 Just as an example, you know, we have a lot of
18 kids who have kids themselves. And you know,
19 one of our goals is to provide those kids with
20 services in-house, with a life center for
21 example. There is no space at this moment for a
22 life center in our school. We're working to
23 move things around. Bringing in another school
24 and taking space away from our school, which is
25 small already, will make it very difficult for

1 us to provide the services we need for our
2 students. In addition, we're also trying to
3 create new programs to address our students'
4 academic needs, which will include the hiring of
5 new teachers and the opening of new classes,
6 which will, again, require a need for space.
7 So, it's very difficult for our community to
8 make sure that Bushwick Community High School
9 stays in this community, and offers the services
10 that all of our students need, from this
11 community and other communities. It's very
12 difficult for us to maintain that if we have the
13 funding, have the programs, but don't have the
14 space. It's also difficult for us to share
15 limited space with the current school here. For
16 example, it is difficult for the middle school
17 to program kids for lunch because of the limited
18 amount of space. Our students take lunch
19 upstairs in our school, and for the most part
20 they eat in the classrooms because we want to
21 accommodate our kids. In the future, that will
22 not work. We will require a lunch period in the
23 cafeteria. It is difficult to schedule that,
24 and with a third school in the building, you
25 could imagine how more difficult that would be.

1 So, I'm speaking on behalf of the concerns of
2 our parents, our students, and our staff, and
3 we're really concerned of the impact that, you
4 know, having a third school, taking space away
5 from future programs that we're implementing,
6 will have on our community. Thank you.

7 MS. MATHESON: Thank you. Our next speaker
8 will be Junior High School 291 SLT member, Fazia
9 Rahaman.

10 MS. FAZIA RAHAMAN: Good afternoon,
11 everyone. As members of the I.S. 291 School
12 Leadership Team, we are greatly concerned about
13 the proposals to house yet another high school
14 in our building. As you already know, we are
15 currently co-existing alongside Bushwick
16 Community High School, and this is not without
17 its challenges. We have had to alter our
18 schedules to accommodate the expansion demands
19 that Bushwick Community High School has imposed
20 upon us, such as seating [phonetic] classrooms
21 and offices, as well as sharing common spaces
22 like the auditorium, library, gym, and the dance
23 room. Those requests were doable, however,
24 adding another high school will further
25 complicate our situation. We will have to alter

1 our students' lunch periods, and the result is
2 not too appealing. Should our students be
3 forced to eat lunch during breakfast hours?
4 Should 11-year-olds commingle with 15-through18-
5 year-olds? Should teachers also be expected to
6 cohabitate in rooms with all of the extra
7 demands that are being placed on them by the
8 DOE? How can they complete all of the expected
9 paperwork, have a print [phonetic] rich
10 classroom environment, and meet with students?
11 Where are the teachers supposed to plan during
12 their prep if they are now expected to share
13 rooms? As the school expands we lose more space,
14 and that will bring additional problems. How do
15 we accommodate students with disabilities during
16 test times? Where will they go? Additionally,
17 the building structure will have to be further
18 altered to now accommodate three schools. Are
19 we expected to absorb the costs of rewiring
20 rooms, such as our computer labs, when those
21 funds can be put towards resources for kids?
22 Please tell us. Has the DOE met with the
23 school's construction authority to reduce or
24 eliminate intermingling? As we consider the
25 aforementioned issues, and the effects on our

1 children, we go on record to state that we
2 strongly oppose the addition of this new high
3 school, MESA, at I.S. 291. Good afternoon, and
4 thank you.

5 MS. MATHESON: Thank you. At this time, we
6 have now concluded formal presentations. We
7 will now open the floor for public comments.
8 Speakers will be given the floor in the order
9 that they signed up. All comments are limited
10 to two minutes. Our first speaker is Diana
11 Delgado.

12 MS. DIANA DELGADO: Thank you. Hi everyone,
13 good evening. My name is Diana Delgado, and I'm
14 the director of The Beacon. And I just want to
15 say a little bit about The Beacon, because this
16 would also affect one of the community programs
17 that is currently here at 291. One thing that I
18 want to say is that I am not in opposition of
19 the charter school, despite the fact that I do
20 realize that it is going to complicate things in
21 terms of space, in terms of organizing
22 schedules, and in terms of just making sure that
23 the community of educators here at 291 are all
24 together, you know, working toward a common
25 goal. One of the reasons why I believe that the

1 school would be beneficial, not only for
2 participants of The Beacon, I think that it will
3 also be beneficial for the entire Bushwick
4 community, because there is definitely
5 statistically a gap in terms of opportunities
6 for high schools, quality high schools, that are
7 actually attempting to address some of the
8 academic deficiencies that are occurring. And
9 they are actually leaving the community. So in
10 terms of that sense, one of the things that
11 we're doing at The Beacon is, we really want to
12 make sure that the students feel that they're
13 able to make choices about their education, and
14 in that sense, I think widening that scope, and
15 providing them with opportunities that they
16 maybe, beforehand, had never had, is a plus.
17 And again, I just want to say that in that sense
18 I do believe that it's something that would be
19 beneficial for the students. I do realize that
20 it is going to be, in a sense, affecting in
21 terms of the space, which is something that I
22 have thought about, because we have a very
23 thriving ESL program. We have a fitness
24 program. We have a homework-time program. And
25 we just do a lot of activities that are very

1 school based. But I'm confident that, if you
2 know, not to make this sound a little bit naïve,
3 but I'm confident that if we work together, and
4 if we pull on everyone's strength, that it can
5 actually be built into a very, and even
6 stronger, academic community. So, that's my
7 hope, and again, I believe that it's something
8 very positive. Thank you.

9 MS. MATHESON: Thank you. Our next speaker
10 is Arthur Samuels, MESA.

11 MR. ARTHUR SAMUELS: Good evening, everyone.
12 I'm Arthur Samuels. I'm the founding executive
13 director of MESA Charter High School. I've met
14 many of you before. Thank you, to everyone, for
15 coming out on a very, very, very cold night. I
16 understand completely the concerns of the two
17 schools that are currently located in the
18 building, as well as The Beacon program, and the
19 other programs that are here. And I want to
20 promise you that we intend to work very, very
21 collaboratively if this proposal is approved.
22 All of the kids who go to school in this
23 building, who use the after-school programs in
24 this building, these are all our kids. We want
25 to see all of them succeed. Our hope is that

1 students who are currently eighth-graders at
2 291 will become ninth-graders at MESA. We think
3 that there are a lot of opportunities for
4 collaboration. We think that there are
5 opportunities for joint programs, for mentoring
6 Big Brother, Big Sister, joint community service
7 ventures, mutual grant applications. We can
8 bring more funding into the building if we apply
9 for grants together. So, we really, really are
10 looking forward to, hopefully, working together
11 as much as possible. I want to say also that I
12 know this isn't really the time to answer a lot
13 of questions, but I will stay for as long as
14 need be to answer any question from anyone in
15 the audience who has questions, or has concerns
16 that they would like to speak with me about.
17 Our proposal is out there. It's familiar to a
18 lot of folks. Our goal is to be an option,
19 another option, for parents in Bushwick who are
20 looking to send their kids to an academically
21 rigorous college preparatory high school without
22 their having to leave the district. We know
23 that every parent wants what is best for their
24 kids, and they want their kids to succeed. Too
25 often, parents have told us they need to send

1 their children to Manhattan, or to Queens, or
2 other parts of Brooklyn. We want to be an
3 option for students here in the district. We
4 are not part of any network. We are a purely
5 independent school, and our only goal is to be
6 the best school possible for the students here
7 in Bushwick. And that's my signal. Thank you
8 so much.

9 MS. MATHESON: Thank you. Our next speaker
10 is, I believe, Mr. or Ms. Shim, Saint Francis
11 Cabrini Catholic Academy. And if you wouldn't
12 mind, please say your name.

13 MR. PRZEMEK MURCZKIEWICZ: Yes, my name is
14 Przemek Murczkiewicz [phonetic], good evening.
15 I'm the principal of Saint Francis Cabrini
16 Catholic Academy, a couple of blocks north of
17 this place. I learned about MESA a couple of
18 months ago, and I think it's a wonderful idea
19 for Bushwick. Eighth-graders at Saint Francis
20 Cabrini are receiving right now acceptances from
21 Catholic high schools. They're very excited
22 today, because in a couple of days they're going
23 to receive the bill: \$11,000, \$8,000. They
24 cannot afford it. Even if they can afford my
25 school, and it's \$3,000 a year, it's not an

1 elite elementary school, but they are looking
2 for good education. They think the Catholic
3 high school is a good option, but they cannot
4 afford it. At this point, they are waiting,
5 also, for acceptances from public high schools.
6 They're all aiming to Manhattan and Queens.
7 They do not aim to Bushwick, because there is no
8 place to go in Bushwick. They want to stay in
9 Bushwick, because their families are here, but
10 they don't see a good place for them to be in
11 Bushwick. I think the idea of new charter, a
12 good high school, it doesn't have to be charter,
13 a good high school, a rigorous high school in
14 Bushwick is extremely, extremely important, and
15 I fully support it. I wish I could invite you
16 to my school, and find room for you guys at
17 Saint Francis Cabrini. Thank you.

18 MS. MATHESON: Thank you. Our next speaker
19 is Carmen Leyola. Again, the next speaker is
20 Carmen Leyola. So, at this time, the speaker
21 list is now exhausted. In closing, again, we
22 welcome any comment and feedback you may have at
23 any time before the Panel for Educational Policy
24 votes on this proposal at its March 11, 2013
25 meeting, which will take place at 6 p.m. at

1 Brooklyn Technical High School, located at 29
2 Fort Green Place, Brooklyn, New York, 11217.

3 The email address and phone number where
4 comments may be made are

5 d32proposals@schools.nyc.gov, and 212-374-0208.

6 Thank you for your participation. This joint
7 public hearing is now closed.

8 [END RECORDING]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

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6 *Charlene E. Poliquin*

7 Date: January 25, 2013
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