NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - DIVISION OF PORTFOLIO PLANNING

Phase out and replacement for Washington Irving High School - 1/31/12

[START 265_592]

MS. JENNY SOBELMAN: Good evening - - get started. My name is Jenny Sobelman and I will be acting as the facilitator for this evening's joint public hearing. This is a joint public hearing for the Department of Education, Community Education - - to discuss the proposed phase out and replacement of Washington Irving High School. I want to make note that this evening's proceedings will be recorded and transcribed.

I also want to acknowledge we're joined by representatives from the State Senator, Tom Duane's office, Jerry Chancer [phonetic] over here, and also from the - - over here as well. And other elected officials joining us over the course of the evening and are interested in speaking, we'll give them an opportunity as well. And as you see, we've got a panel assembled for the joint public hearing this evening. I'm going to run through our agenda and then each of them will introduce themselves.

So the folks that are interested in speaking during the public comment, I would also urge you to make your way out the back through the - -

and you can sign up and then each person who signs up will be given two minutes to speak. There'll be folks down here in front, we'll hold up a sign so that they know they're close the end and when your time has elapsed, and I'll just ask that we maintain a respectful posture while we're listening to each other and neighbors [phonetic].

And we - - for everyone who signed up to speak, to speak for two minutes, if you have to take - - we already have extra people [phonetic] so do make your way back to the back. The signup will stay open until 6:45 this evening.

And the other thing I wanted to make note of, it's going to be after the public comment, there's also a Q&A portion of Q&A. So if you have questions that you would like to raise, and there are still - - in the back where you signed up for public comment and you can submit those to the folks at the table and the staff - - auditorium, you can feel free to turn those in and we'll - - them and you can make - - towards the end of the agenda.

Okay. So on - - additional comments for questions that'll - - we have email and phone

lines that are there to take your comments and we would ask that you contact us. The email is d02proposals@schools.nyc.gov, and phone number is 212-374-3466. And all the comments this evening and any - - made through the phone or email is all included in the analysis of public comment, which is published on the Website and made available to the - - prior to their vote, and that meeting will take place on February 9th at Brooklyn Tech High School.

So I'm now going to start towards the far end to the panel and ask each member of the dais [phonetic] to introduce themselves. Mr. Pagan.

MR. JUAN PAGAN: My name is Juan Pagan, I'm a member of the Citywide Council on High Schools. What that means is I am the voice of students and parents of public high schools in Manhattan.

MALE VOICE: We can't hear you.

FEMALE VOICE: Thank you.

MR. PAGAN: Hello, my name is Juan Pagan and I'm a member of the Citywide Council on High Schools. What that means is I am the voice of the students and the parents of the public high schools in Manhattan. I'm the Manhattan

representative for the - - .

MS. DENISE DICARLO: I'm Denise DiCarlo, Principal of Gramercy Arts High School.

MS. DENISE GOLDMAN: My name is Denise Goldman, I am the - - parent of Gramercy Arts High School.

MS. GAYLEA PRICHARD-SILVERS: I'm Gaylea Prichard-Silvers, I'm the Principal of International High School at Union Square, we're a small school that - - last year. We have like the 10th grade English language learning students.

MR. WINTER MARK: Good evening - - my name is Winter Mark, a representative of the School - - for land and policy, and in addition to that, I'm the Senior President - - .

MS. SHARON TAYLOR: Good evening, I'm Sharon Taylor, I'm - - and I am on the SLT Washington program.

MR. GREGGORY LUNDAHL: I'm Greggory Lundahl, - - United Federation of Teachers, Chapter Leader in Washington.

MS. MARIAN BURNBAUM: I'm Marian Burnbaum, I'm the Chair of the School Leadership Team at Washington Irving High School.

MS. LIZBETH LOLIN: Good evening everyone, I'm Lizbeth Lolin and I'm a member of the Washington Irving High School.

MS. SARAH CHU: Hi, my name is Sara Chu, a member of the Community Education Council for District 2, and the CEC represents parents and families in District 2 which also includes Washington Irving [phonetic].

MS. TAMARA ROWE: Hello [phonetic], I'm Tamara Rowe and I'm a member of the CEC District 2. And I would like to let you know that our student team presence [phonetic] at the Community Education Council and in the 10 CEC [phonetic] - - our presentation is on - - tonight. So Sarah and I are representing the Community Education Council for the student - - .

I'm also the mother of - - in high school in Manhattan and one who graduated. So I've been through the process - - .

MS. ELLEN MCHUGH: My name is Ellen McHugh from the Citywide Council on Special Education - - .

MS. TAMIKA MATHERSON: Good evening, my name is Tamika Matherson and I'm the Manhattan High

School Superintendent.

MR. SHAEL SURANSKY: Shael Suransky, Deputy Chancellor.

MS. SOBELMAN: Great, so now we're going to start like this and we're going to go that way. Each member will have an opportunity to make a statement and beginning with Deputy Chancellor for the official proposal.

MR. SURANSKY: So as part of this process, I'm going to lay out the reasons for the proposal that we're here to discuss tonight. And I think that the most important thing for all of us on this panel is to have an honest, frank discussion. We are likely to have lots of viewpoints here - - are thoughtful, respectful and clear that every viewpoint in this room should - - this evening.

Part of this process is that there is a lot disagreements. One of the hardest things that I'm involved in and the department were involved in because none of us like to get to the point where we're talking about a school phasing out. It's a very difficult decision to make and a lot of the time for them to make these decisions, and so I want to explain a little bit of the

thinking that I'm sure many of you are here to speak about this evening.

First of all, let me state very clearly that the proposal here at Washington Irving is not a signal that we believe that the teachers in the school have failed or that the students in this school have failed, what we have come to believe is that, the school as an organization, as an institution, is not serving anyone's needs effectively. And the opportunity to create a new structure within this building that will more practically do that made up of, hopefully, many of the same strong educators that are currently here and other new educators that aren't here, and create a culture that will be more successful with our students in the future as we - - .

And I also want to make clear that, for the students, and I saw several of you here this evening, this is not going to impact whether or not you continue in your school. Current students who are in Washington Irving High School will have an opportunity to complete their high school career in Washington Irving High School. And essentially what the proposal—

I want you - - does is it stops accepting new students into the building.

So Washington Irving - - was located here in District - - in a place, is kind of an - - a CTE or Career and Technical Education programs. These programs are designed to provide both an academic education and critical skills to prepare them for a career and lead them into the workforce or post-secondary education.

As part of thinking about this proposal, one of the things that we looked closely at, is what has been the performance over the last several years? And we published a couple of education impact statements around this. The first on December 22nd, the second one in January 20th, and both of these were explaining in detail - - they were propositioning - - . The performance data that we focused on in these statements really looked first at how the school do overall, the annual progress report.

If you may know, the school - - past card report. And we also looked at the State's review of the school. The State has put Washington Irving on its list of persistently low-achieving schools as of January 2010. And

we also looked at graduations, so the graduation rate is Citywide 65% right now. For the past several years, we've been looking closely at this in Washington Irving. If you look back as far as 10 years there's no year where the graduation rate has exceeded 55%, the current graduation rate is 48%, that puts it in the bottom 7% of high school - - .

And there's a lot of reasons why that happens. And I want to emphasize again, it doesn't mean that people aren't working hard, it doesn't mean that kids aren't having successful learning experiences, but it does mean that more than half of the children in the school have not been able to meet the standards of graduation in four years. And that is a serious concern, and it brings with it a great sense of urgency to figure out what can we do differently in this building to support students in the future.

Because of these evaluations, we have made a proposal after consulting and having conversations with various sectors of the school community that it's best to phase out Washington Irving, stop the second and ninth [phonetic] grade students and create an opportunity for a

new team of teachers and educators drawn both from the urban community and elsewhere in the city to build additional new schools in this building.

And so as you may have seen from the folks up here on the panel tonight, there are already a number of schools sharing this campus and we are proposing that additional schools join this campus as part of the strategy to increase the performance of students in this community.

So right now in the building we have Washington Irving, we have Gramercy Arts High School, we have the International High School at Union Square, The High School for Language and Diplomacy, and each of these schools serve grades 9 to 12.

The additional schools that we're proposing are proposed CTE schools. As I mentioned before that means Career and Technical Education. One of the CTE schools is called Academy of Software Engineering. This is a school that will focus on preparing kids to be effective in the computer industry and in engineering and as part of a broader effort to partner with organizations and businesses that prepare

students for careers in the future.

We also imagine that the second school focused on health sciences that will be part of the proposal moving forward [phonetic]. These new schools would be limited unscreened [phonetic] and what that means is that they do not have [background noise] academic ability. All you have to do to get in is to select a preference and—

MALE VOICE: We are over two minutes, right?

MR. SURANSKY: And—I'm close to be done.

MS. SOBELMAN: - - excuse me, you do—you kind of need civil - - and I want to be sure everyone has a chance to speak. So we let them get a chance to finish, then—

MALE VOICE: Two minutes?

MS. SOBELMAN: --and then it will be your turn—

MALE VOICE: Is it two minutes.

FEMALE VOICE: Two minutes.

MS. SOBELMAN: Two minutes - - try to represent viewpoints if you like.

MR. SURANSKY: I agree. So the current students, I want to emphasize again, will complete high school at Washington Irving. And

as this school becomes smaller, we will work very hard to ensure that each child continues to get individualized attention through graduation and we have really made a very strong commitment to make sure that as students go through this process, we're responsive to choices that they want to make. So there are some options that I want to mention for parents and students.

Current ninth grade students who are on track to graduate, will also have an opportunity if they choose to apply to a different high school, we're going to run [phonetic] two other high school admissions process this year in March. Current students who are not on track to graduate, meaning that they've been held back or are missing a significant amount of credits, also have an option to join Chancellor High School or - - which are—both have strong track records for helping students who have overage and under credit to get back on track towards graduation.

And ultimately, if this proposal is accepted by the Panel for Educational Policy, Irving will be closed on June 2015 and any students who have not graduated at that point will have the

opportunity to graduate from another school. So I look forward to the discussion, the debate this evening and let me pass it on to the CEC.

MS. SOBELMAN: Sorry. So we had an announcement earlier about interpretation services. I just want to ask the interpreter to make a number of announcements in case folks who've joined us a little bit late. Right.

FEMALE VOICE: [Foreign Language].

FEMALE VOICE: [Foreign Language].

MALE VOICE: [Foreign Language].

FEMALE VOICE: [Foreign Language].

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you so much. So I just want to also remind folks that the speakers - - present for about five more minutes. So if you're thinking you might want to speak - - to sign up. If you change your mind, that is fine as well. And our next presentation from the panel, excuse, will be Ellen McHugh from the Citywide Council on Special Education.

MS. MCHUGH: Make the microphone. I've come from Citywide Council on Special Education - - are dependent. - - including the one that's before us now is not an educational impact statement. It is a - - building uses proposal.

There is nothing in there that mentions new curriculum that would be developed for the individuals who are coming, we already - - programs to increase reading or math efficiency [phonetic], nor is there anything in their - - the individual. Soon as the child is - - .

[applause]

MS. MCHUGH: The focus on each year will actually have access to new and improved academic or educational programs that will address what is odd to me because they have a chance to maybe refer to the organization network and the organization is made up of people, not of - - .

So I would want to - - the individuals coming in as part of the new organization and - - will actually have the skills to improve what will eventually—what probably will be the same type of child who applies here. The other - - that I do have in those—that there are - - sent to the students in some of the schools with IEPs that’s - - .

So we’ll take - - and sit at the dinner table because they don’t get back the mic. But the issue be that when you - - you want to type—

you really do put a tremendous amount of teaching staff to develop skills and techniques to address the various needs and - - .

MS. ROWE: So I'm Tamara Rowe and just so you know, I actually do have a child in IEP. She received her second grade final to certify when she was 15 and for the first time actually - - . So her life's totally changed, right, so - - high school been through high school process and was quite dismaying as a parent to see how segregated the schools become as kids move up in the system.

Looking at the same [phonetic], I've read most of EIS [phonetic], done a lot of research, trying to get up to speed here. And one of the questions that I have for the Deputy Chancellor is, what changed at the school between 2009 and 2011? Was it incoming students - - ? Did the regional scores or the metrics change? Is there a change in attendance? As I did some research, what I discovered was that over the past five years, Washington Irving has accepted transfers from - - schools like Martin Luther King and - - .

[applause]

MS. ROWE: During the same period, Gramercy Arts, which was at the time, the highest performing edition of Washington Irving was - - school. The other new schools in the building served far fewer students with special needs and they had substantial difference in demographics. Washington Irving takes many over-the-counter students each year and it—

[applause]

MS. ROWE: According to the - - 26% of these students have special needs and 22% are - - . That’s on top of the students particularly in - - to improve the regular high school process. And they’re also coming in as students under special needs and - - special needs and 22% - - EDIS [phonetic].

In any case, Washington Irving now has over a thousand kids, 16% of them are receiving Special Education, of those, 7% are in self-contained classrooms. They are—the demographics are 93% - - those that are - - are really different from the other similar schools and in general from the other similar schools - - .

[applause]

MS. ROWE: As - - students show similar

progress—

MALE VOICE: - - .

MS. ROWE: --Washington Irving continued to serve those with the greatest needs and its attendance rates and graduation rates are now suffering as a result.

[applause]

MS. ROWE: Why is the DOE systematic with students with the greatest needs who are already started in schools?

[applause]

MS. ROWE: And now - - 98 students with their educational and social aspirations. If the adult program at Washington Irving closes, where will students that need such specialized instruction go?

[applause]

MR. SURANSKY: So thank you for raising those questions, I think they're important questions and I want to try and - - .

The first issue that you raised is around is in fact that the school that is behind the students a reason by the performance of the students in the school or both? I think that's at the heart of what you're asking, and I think

that’s a fair question. So when look at the percentage it’s probably around 16% students from IEP, the Citywide average is about 15% inclusive [phonetic] of IEPs.

And I think that you definitely do have a group of 98 [phonetic] students in the school but it’s not different to a Citywide average. And we have high schools in Manhattan, in the Bronx, in Brooklyn—

[background noise]

MR. SURANSKY: Please do not interrupt. Please do not interrupt. Everyone will have a chance to speak.

[background noise]

MR. SURANSKY: Everyone will have a chance to speak. I’m answering a question.

[background noise]

MR. SURANSKY: Do you want - - .

[background noise]

MS. SOBELMAN: Excuse me, I understand you’re very angry. But I would like to be able to hear the answer and I know that you people also are interested in hearing what the answer is.

[background noise]

MR. SURANSKY: So the agenda, just to be clear, is that when members of—the folks up here ask a question, my—they ask before this meeting for me to respond. And so I don’t have this one [phonetic] but if you want me to respond, I will respond.

So I think that there are definitely hanging [phonetic] students in the school but I think if you look around the city, many, many schools in the city serve very a similar population of high number of [phonetic] students and get very different end results, and that doesn’t mean that these students in the school cannot achieve at a high - - . It is definitely a challenge, the challenge is to organize the school effectively—

[background noise]

MR. SURANSKY: --to engage [phonetic] the students. That is the goal.

[background noise]

MR. SURANSKY: So look at - - panelist.

[background noise]

MR. SURANSKY: You mentioned schools that - - campus, that is an example of a campus that previously had similar very decent graduation

rate and—

[background noise]

MR. SURANSKY: That school is serving them a very similar proposition to the one that was previously there.

[background noise]

MR. SURANSKY: Okay. I don't want to begin public hearing this way. Every single—

[background noise]

MR. SURANSKY: --but we won't be able to - - .

[background noise]

MS. ROWE: I fully understand, as a mother I'll understand how we all feel about this, but we need to be calm and civilized. We're going to do this the right way, not their way, our way, the right way, please. I'm begging you - - let's just listen to what—what he is going to say and let's just be calm. Thank you.

MS. SOBELMAN: If we're going to have a debate and a discussion, I am asking you to please if you want to take notes on what they say and then get up and respond to it when we have—the moment when the public can get up and respond, if you haven't signed up to speak

please do so. We welcome you to give your input, but let's continue.

MR. SURANSKY: So what I was trying to say was that I think that there are opportunities to organize - - to actually do serve - - and get a very good - - . And it's not an easy thing to do but I've seen it done in many schools across the city and I think we can do it here.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you, so the next presentation from the panel will be from Sarah Chu from the District 2 CEC. There are - - at the back for those who have questions that you want to pose to the Deputy Chancellor for him to respond to and so if you have those questions or if you—as issues come up please use those - - .

MS. SARAH CHU: So my—when I read the - - for the closure of the schools here, my first response was—my first reaction was that closing these schools is not going to help the students who have - - .

[applause]

MS. CHU: And they keep it open - - teacher but the students in this school have two choices. You either get transferred to another school that's going to have a high concentration

of - - students or you stay in the school that’s dying and schools that are dying lose resources.

[applause]

MS. CHU: So that means that it come down to - - senior year. And that’s my concern for the students here and that’s one of my—

[applause]

MS. CHU: And the second concern that I have is the issue of data and the use of - - . Now teachers you always tell your students you have to support your answers, you have to use information and you have to show the diversity of data to underscore your point. Well, this is what the data shows.

An internal study commissioned by the DOE called the - - report has said when you concentrate high need students at a school that you will be at—that that school is not going to be set for success. Concentrate high need students leads to a disadvantage in the school.

[applause]

MS. CHU: Other data [phonetic] have shown that if you increase diversity in school, if you increase socioeconomic integration in the

school, those are the types of things, those are what lead to success. So it's kind of confusing and it doesn't model the behavior for students when you see strategy applied that don't conform with presenting [phonetic] the data—

[applause]

MS. CHU: And as we close this door [phonetic] each year there are more and more schools being closed. As school - - education system where we have students that might be super easy to educate. Guess what, great scores, we can't take credit for that because what happens is you then start creating schools where you're pooling [phonetic] people with a lot of resources who need extra help, and one school can't take care of a large population of students like that.

And so when you're not addressing the hard part of education and when you're not actually taking care of the students who need your help the most, that is not education reform, that does not transform a school, it does not—

[applause]

MS. LOLIN: Good evening everyone, as I said

before my name is Lizbeth Lolin. And first of all above everything [phonetic], I just wanted to say something to Mr. Suransky about - - at the beginning of your speech you - - I felt very insulted as a parent - - I waited for a very long time for you to - - .

[applause]

MS. LOLIN: Now someone mentioned based on members of the school - - dignity. Why is it that the DOE can - - particularly on high need students? 28% of the students in Washington Irving are high need kids. I was a high need student when I came - - . I applied to a high school that did not have English assistance [phonetic] language.

Unfortunately that was a big mistake. I was young when – - so she was my - - . She didn’t have the resources - - for me. Due to this I felt - - and I dropped out. Luckily, I got into - - coming to school now—

[applause]

MS. LOLIN: And I’m from the city, because I live in - - I didn’t - - . I’m out of school because I want to teach my girl - - think. I’m sorry, I was—

MALE VOICE: You're doing fine.

FEMALE VOICE: You're doing fine.

MALE VOICE: You're doing fine.

FEMALE VOICE: - - .

MS. LOLIN: - - said but unfortunately I lost many years due to the lack of parents [phonetic].

Luckily, my daughter now has learned Portuguese and I am deeply grateful with all the teachers and all the faculty at Washington Irving.

[applause]

MS. LOLIN: --and supporting me because as parents we want something good for our kids and their behavior, we want good teachers. We all do.

My biggest concern as a mother is my girl's education. I'm not rich and I think that a lot of parents can relate to me when I say the only we left—we need then is what we can get now [phonetic], good education, good school, and push them to the top. That's all we can do.

I believe that everyone at the table as a parent will understand my decision. I carefully chose Washington Irving, I wanted a school I

would want my children - - academically and providing good - - since we all know how - - sometime. An icon [phonetic] of great education and somehow they consider someone like my daughter because they don't talk about that. They always keep her on track, they're always on top of our case, trying to do the best and trying to push our kids to do the best, and I think that's priceless.

When I came here at Washington Irving I was - - the other school programs and the clubs they have, and at some point my daughter told me, mommy, they're too strict. I don't think I want to come here. That was the answer, that's all I needed to hear to know this was the perfect place.

Probably at the end of September or October - - I find out that Washington Irving was in the process of being - - closed down. I tried to be - - I don't know anything about this, I'm trying to - - . It has been a big support from Mr. Brett [phonetic] and - - a lot of other people who told me and explained to me that essentially what I need to learn so I can - - my kids and the school and our children that supported me,

because parents they need our support. In situations like this right now they need our support.

I think that the transformation started [phonetic] around September and three months later - - .

[applause]

MS. LOLIN: --with all the money and with all the power will transform a big company in three months.

[applause]

MS. LOLIN: - - it’s a school - - for the little bit I know, they only needed three months, not even one year. Three months.

And then the money will go to a new school when we—

[background noise]

MS. LOLIN: --the schools or the new schools and having opened our - - . Thank you.

[applause]

MS. LOLIN: For what they’re going to do, they want to close this school, graduation rate is 30% all year. For the new schools that are not ready for that 30% that’s college credit [phonetic] for those new schools that are taking

money out of our kids' schools to open new schools. They want to talk about money, it's more expensive to open a new school.

[applause]

MS. LOLIN: Our school has a very - - kids with a lot need, a lot of attention and they don't see that. They want to have an additional [phonetic] paper - - just to manipulate the numbers—

[applause]

MS. LOLIN: It's disgusting to see how they come and try to close the school only because the buildings don't look pretty and because - - and because—stop playing politics with our kids.

[applause]

MS. LOLIN: What has the DOE do to Washington Irving in transformation?

[background noise]

MS. LOLIN: How - - closing with dignity? What? Why are they wasting money on a new school when it's just cheaper to invest in the one we already have?

[applause]

MS. LOLIN: And then they change the graduation rate and the faculty, and yes, they

did mention the faculty, how they're doing a great job. But how can you prove that then? How can you prove that they're not - - the faculty when—how can I put it. I'm sorry everyone. The school runs because the faculty is working on it. If you're not blaming the faculty then who are you blaming?

[applause]

MS. LOLIN: My daughter - - she's in 9th grade. What's going to happen to kids in 9th grade - - what's going to happen for the next four years? How—the little money that they have left how will that support their education and program and all this - - ?

MALE VOICE: Is the Deputy Chancellor listening to the speaker or is he?

[laughter]

[crosstalk]

MS. LOLIN: - - where is she going to go in the next three, four years when she has to go high school? I mean they - - what's going to happen to that child? What's going to happen to that - - and that means that the teachers, they - - the city and they - - .

[applause]

MS. LOLIN: --in the building. They can't even fix the library because they have to—

[applause]

MS. LOLIN: For the record, thank you for this meeting. My biggest concern is - - and our kids' education, the way it's handled from the demolitions and then they blame our Spanish kids for being who they are, they blame our - - kids for their education. This is all they're giving us. This is all they're leaving. How—

[applause]

MS. SOBELMAN: I just want to recognize we've joined by City Council Member Rosie Mendez.

[applause]

MR. SURANSKY: Okay, so there were a number of questions that I had when you were speaking I found - - . One of the things you asked is part of [phonetic] the new school that is going to open - - . So for the 500 [phonetic] schools open something I've never heard from - - but the vast majority of that has been very successful, very sort of high proportion of - - and high proportion of Blacks and Latino and equal proportion - - at the schools across the city,

and there has been a study nationally where over - - the average study, they improved the learning outcome for students in those schools. So you have schools that are graduating 35, 40% of kids four years later they're graduating 70 to 80% of their kids with the same student population.

So what you're saying about this is not true. What is actually—

[background noise]

MR. SURANSKY: --is the improvement of opportunities of Black and Latino students in many communities across the city and there are hundreds and hundreds of examples that I can take you through.

So I would urge you to look closely at what this is about. The debate here tonight is about whether or not the existing structure—the existing organization of the school continue, there will be - - schools in this building, so any new student coming up will access - - just like - - has.

In fact there will be less - - in this building than there currently are under the proposal that I read out, which means that your

future student - - has an opportunity to come here and there are currents students who had been in this school community now, my commitment to you is that we will maintain an excellent educational environment, what you see as a school that phase out and have smaller, it could have been an opportunity for more students to graduate. So where we see 30, 40% graduation rates as schools as phasing out, it goes to 50 or 60.

And when you—

[background noise]

MR. SURANSKY: --myself as a teacher and principal, we were at - - campus, they were taking in 750 and graduated 70 four years later, as that school phased out the number of kids graduated in the last year was 210 because the school got smaller, and collaborated with the other schools in the building, shared support - - and clubs and sports teams and they still can get access to those and they were able to get more kids to graduate than previously. So the goal here, we can disagree on strategy, and it’s fair to disagree, the goal here is to improve the learning experience for the kids who are

currently in school and future generation of kids. And we have seen it happen over and over again successfully across the city.

[background noise]

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. So the next presentation will be from Marian Burnbaum, also from the SLT.

[applause]

MS. BURNBAUM: Thank you. Why are children in the New York City public school system able to miss 40 to 100 and more days at school without the participation of all—

[applause]

MS. BURNBAUM: --with low pay and bringing these students back to school or just try to—

[applause]

MS. BURNBAUM: Washington Irving's graduation rate for students who regularly attend school would meet or exceed the Citywide average.

[applause]

MS. BURNBAUM: The students who are assigned to Washington Irving have very great needs and receive many more services.

When we have a large population, Irving has

a larger budget and more personnel to attend to those students' needs.

At that time we had a 55% graduation rate and climbing, then additional schools were opened in the building and our enrolment declined. - - it was our budget decreased. Then we then had more a difficult time serving our students. Our class sizes increased while the number of average students increased as well.

This year alone Irving was assigned 77 over-the-counter students. Our high need students are 19% English language learners and 16% Special Education students that now leads to about 35% of our population.

Irving is being judged under the same criteria as schools with fewer high risk and high need students.

While Irving's job is becoming more difficult, the Department of Education has continually shifted its progress report criteria each year.

[applause]

MS. BURNBAUM: It seems like the Department of Education does not want schools to fully

understand the rubric by which they are measured.

The staff of Washington Irving are among the hardest working people in the department.

[applause]

MS. BURNBAUM: The teachers are highly qualified, some of whom have doctoral degrees. Our teachers could have chosen to teach anywhere in the system, but they chose to work high needs and at risk students because they want to make a difference.

[applause]

MS. BURNBAUM: Yet, our school and our staff is being punished for staying to work with our students. We are asking the Department of Education to look at the whole picture. Our students need support from their teachers, but also from teachers, social workers, - - , guidance counselors and other professionals.

[background noise]

MS. BURNBAUM: - - are extremely difficult and can be confusing. Our school is sound [phonetic] for that purpose and can improve the performance with the right kind of support.

The transformation model funding was going

to do that for us. Our attendance rating was showing improvement during the first few months of the school year. Then the DOE announced it was proposing to phase Washington Irving out.

Our strongest small learning community, the art—performing arts house, was carved out of our school to form another school. Gramercy Arts High School. Why?

Some external students that applied to get to Irving in grade 9, and we select them. But the Office of Enrollment chooses not to send them to us, why?

MALE VOICE: It’s a scam.

MS. BURNBAUM: Why?

[applause]

MS. BURNBAUM: Why did the DOE not populate these schools with an equal number of students at each program level?

[applause]

MS. BURNBAUM: All schools should be proposed of 25% of the students at level 1, level 2, level 3 and level 4.

[applause]

MS. BURNBAUM: --the performance of all old schools. You would soon improve the performance

of the schools if you had that ratio.

MALE VOICE: They don't want to.

MS. BURNBAUM: Students have shown that—studies, I'm sorry, studies have shown that level 1 and level 2 students benefit from attending schools with level 3 and level 4 students.

[applause]

MS. BURNBAUM: It should not be a choice, the system should embrace diversity, not concentrate behind these [phonetic] average students in one school. It is not the school that needs reform, it's the system.

[applause]

MS. BURNBAUM: Can the Department of Education make hard decisions? The public historically has never chosen to integrate or diversify schools.

Finally, then to courts. And in Brown versus Board of Education, the Supreme Court held that schools shouldn't [phonetic] be integrated and that diversity is important for our students to grow as human beings.

Learning to love the differences in people. What really is the difference between economic

and racial segregation? They are both harmful. If people are wealthy, should they really be entitled to segregate their children from the mainstream of the population?

[Applause]

MS. BURNBAUM: Segregation harms our entire society. Washington Irving High School still has a strong work ethic and spirit to fight for survival. We believe that our students will be successful. Our job is to support them in their difficult journey to adulthood. Because we have worked very hard with our principal to move our students forward, run innovative programs and partnerships, Washington Irving High School and the staff deserve to be recognized and celebrated, not phased out.

[applause]

MS. BURNBAUM: No matter what happens this month, we—the love we have for our students will never die.

[applause]

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. - - .

MR. LUNDAHL: Okay, - - . I want to introduce that question first then make some remarks. - - and there is a feeling here that a

lot of people from school, to school to school are going through a great deal of pain when they get thrown out of buildings that they have made life commitments to. They've fought for their kids, they've advocated for these buildings, they've worked to get the high [phonetic] grades that you want us to get, we try to do everything that you told us to do. We even really just follow orders because this has been an administration that has given orders but really hasn't collaborated with professionals we have, in many cases people that have - - .

You're speaking in a classroom telling those people what to do. The question I have for you is when the school closes, this will bring [phonetic] pain and suffering and stigma that goes [phonetic] to the students. And just kind of wondering, we paid a heavy price, our teachers paid a heavy price, we had - - teachers coming through here and we're paying a heavy price, it's stressful coming into a new building, not being able to go to [phonetic] the bathroom, or not being able to get an elevator key, a bathroom key, it's torture.

Some people say it's [phonetic] on purpose

to try to get us to quit, but the only question I have is in all the schools that have failed, where is the accountability?

We've paid a tremendous price—

[applause]

MR. LUNDAHL: --what kind of pain [phonetic] is the mayor or the person who is in charge - - ? What kind of - - does he have? I'll just leave it at that [phonetic]. And—well, it may be probably [phonetic] that he's suffering super pain or something like that, I don't know.

[applause]

MR. LUNDAHL: I don't if you'd like to make some remarks.

MR. SURANSKY: Yes, I think what you're saying is important, but whenever we go through a process like this - - and I think the balance that we need to struggle with and ask the question is for those children that we haven't succeeded with, for all the children that we have—we've chosen but we haven't succeeded with, when they don't get the opportunity to finish high school, and thus don't have life chances, there is also a tremendous gain [phonetic] there.

And I've heard a lot of comments this evening already that because students are high need they tend to learn well in this environment, and—

[background noise]

MR. SURANSKY: The correlation between saying that this school has too many high need kids, and therefore, not enough are graduating, or saying that the kids are not coming to school and high attendance rates for are not graduating—

[background noise]

MR. SURANSKY: The truth is that we know it's possible for a school to organize differently and get very different outcomes for kids, and that the theme that comes right [phonetic] out as they make changes in their lives is nowhere connected to this same number experienced by kids.

I mean let give you—someone earlier had asked me for an example. There are three examples that I will share from three different campuses that have phased out and are doing well with almost exactly the same population of what Washington Irving currently has.

So Urban Assembly School for Media Studies which had about 20% Special Ed students, 76% graduated from there. The High School of Hospitality Management at Park West was a school that was graduating kids in the low 40s now has a 79% graduation rate with 18.5% Special Ed.

[background noise]

MR. SURANSKY: Lower Manhattan Arts Academy school [phonetic] which for decades had a graduation rate in the 30 to 40s, now with 21% Special Ed has 72% graduation rate.

So it's just not true that with high need kids you cannot succeed, and I think that the challenge here is to think about how to invest the talent that exists in this building in building a new school that are connected at different levels [phonetic].

Because it's not—someone asked isn't it—if it's not teachers then what is it? And I think what happens in a school that is struggling, the culture of development [phonetic] that exists in the school amongst both teachers, students and administrators, where the expectation is that kids aren't able to succeed. And I don't accept that we—

[background noise]

MR. LUNDAHL: All right, I just want to make a few remarks that just I might have forgotten that Manhattan's Ivy League schools had 6% staff [phonetic] that take Special Education, that Bloomberg - - Manhattan schools, 32 schools, of those 32 schools, they're 1% Special Ed students.

[applause]

MR. LUNDAHL: --there are 12 - - for the - - that all these schools are doing basically all - - it's just not true.

[applause]

MR. LUNDAHL: --their dreams, parents did the best - - and the DOE decimates and destroys. When people follow rules, they do everything that they're trained to do, they open their minds, they work themselves to the bone - - to be successful.

So the teachers and parents have learned that it is not true here at Washington Irving High School. Students, teachers and parents have learned in this manner there's [phonetic] winning schools and the losing schools.

[applause]

MR. LUNDAHL: There’s winning schools and for losing schools. And it doesn’t matter if you play by the rules because just like - - the rules keep changing.

[applause]

MR. LUNDAHL: Rules that keep changing - - and our minorities, rules that are increasingly signing the death of the schools that are slated for closing - - and students with a lifelong history of not going to school. In some cases students who are not even in this country we are to blame.

Rules that increasingly abolish are those that are - - those will be the most helpful, those where the largest rules will be placed in one school so that other schools have better - - .

Your rules Mr. Mayor means failure by design. Your playbook, Mr. Mayor, means that some of our students will be warehoused in schools slated for closing. Your ethics means that even high need schools who have achieved certain levels [phonetic] will be closed and new boutique schools will receive the money instead.

You have no problem—

[applause]

MR. LUNDAHL: You have no problem serving - - who know how to use your - - and turning their back on the rest. Your rules, Mr. Mayor, mean that the school will be separate and unequal.

[applause]

MR. LUNDAHL: The schools - - that you don’t play fair, that your goals don’t serve the public, they serve you. Your rules lead to segregation through - - in your new schools and no - - students, your new schools - - technology and/or safe [phonetic]. They also these - - one of the rules in your show game the few. The few students who don’t - - the overcrowded and less-endowed schools that you will then have closed.

Hope that you can get to the end of your administration before anyone else notices. Fire management and then rehire them as consultants so that you don’t have to - - .

[applause]

MR. LUNDAHL: Keep showing your preference that - - success through mindless static inputs. 8 years ago you were - - for mayor a public joy for what they did to walk the - - through their own show game, many of the audience remember. -

- what they did to this school. They - - from public schools and then they cut down on the discipline and - - and you know what else happened.

Where is your decency now, Mr. Mayor, for closing us down for something that you started? Swept under the carpet like everything else, your rules are about influence, about favoritism, about deception, and now about accepting the - - .

And the more expensive, experienced teachers who have given the best years of their lives - - that has not - - . Why don’t you just say, Mr. Mayor, you’re closing down the school for your schools, but at what expense? Your rules for the school and survive for 100 years and destroy the - - . You have cut our funding for the past three years and then when we’ve gotten Federal grant we don’t last for three months. In your justice system Mr. Mayor you have destroyed more schools than you have improved. You were making a turn in the same while playing your hardworking - - to address in our communities. - - and crimes, I am sure that you would like to play it all on one - - . The answer has no - -

you have lost our confidence, you are hurting our students, you are a Mayor in need of improvement and you should ensure that.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. Thank you and the next in session is Sharon Taylor also from the SLT.

MS. TAYLOR: In the - - activists have really played essential roles. No one in a sense - - the generosity and intellect within the schools - - of every true education should be to unlock that principal and that’s what we - - .

For every child we’ve got - - IQ, test scores to see what is associated with standards. Now I shall take a moment behind these - - and a member of the school - - along with - - . A lot of the - - on the public schools and then he embraces an ultimately large and fragile population appear to my comments and any things he has to go.

So let kids - - who may not have their cut fits - - . Kids from other school minorities, kids from the evening involve with - - . These students return the high - - are supported by teachers and administrators and the experienced

teachers who have chosen to stay here and work with them.

My son is just four grade middle and - - there will always been and always probably will be regretfully. Washington Irving - - comes down and gets it all done with fast. With this school - - .

In my opinion previous studies show particularly that within schools which replace older and larger high schools with special programs, except their program in schools, left over - - now have no school and are placed in other schools with larger high schools and special programs.

Time not to comment and suddenly one day these other older, larger high schools are open probably, get better grades and are much - - . This is Einstein’s definition of insanity, doing the same thing over and over. Mr. Suransky reasonable - - like us.

My parents, all teachers passed examination and generally were more - - . My home was education centered, I did a - - . I had the opportunity - - on many thing on which we would have lived, you said probably in 2009 we would

have - - .

My job is not to intervene and introduce - - , for us to provide a great database and a qualitative - - using the qualitative views so that those supporting students are going to help the school go through it’s next step, saying - - .

We need more teachers to accommodate the present teachers, excellent teachers along with this. - - give this background funding, change the - - changes also - - somebody was, those don’t say the school was the last to stand - - . We also said in the - - .

It’s all this sort where educational and vocational programs, they take - - my son as well as his friends and all of my students, they know I’m his mommy.

Let’s not judge Washington Irving as if they are equal and they can add through and it’s sad - - human beings. In 1935 school teacher - - learning disabled and that with retarded children in Chicago who went on to graduate from - - centers because she believed that if a brilliant child lack - - like every student. And that’s what we did. We’re sensitive to - -

.

We never said 80% of successful children thanks to all of you for doing - - my question, you said that you're trying to help us in - - , what exactly and specifically did you do to help us?

MR. SURANSKY: So over the past—I want to just take this question for you now because over the past three years and a half, as many of you know - - and that has included a lot work from us in the building as well as folks from outside the building, we have spent over 1.5 million dollars during that period of time working on curriculum development, after school programs, building community partnerships and trying to create a successful community within the school.

And I think that as some folks mentioned earlier, there were worse - - three years ago than there are today that the tone in the building has actually improved during that period of time and I think that there were worse graduation rates, two years ago than there are today, there has been some improvement. The question that we're struggling tonight I think that it's a very fair thing to say that you

believe that continue to do more of these efforts but the question we're struggling with is, is there time that we do not - - and we end up in the same place as we have these last few years because the kids did well through that process.

We are losing hundreds and hundreds of kids in this process and Federal grant that we reference, just so everyone is clear now, to say that certain programs where every single school in the city because of the disagreement that exists between the union and the city. So at this point no school is able to get that grant for transformation like Washington Irving is doing.

And so until that is resolved, the only way for schools to get grants is through either a - - or turnaround. But turnaround means the place is not to have the staff and the school and closing and we all have - - . So those are the two options to get that kind of money at this point that are available to us. And we actually believe based on the experiences of - - Park West - - and hundreds of different schools around the city that we can work with this

community and hopefully some of the talented teachers will choose to be part of that process, to build something - - that those schools are successfully doing.

And I think we disagree about the way to do that. I think it’s a fair disagreement but I think we deeply disagree based on what ever seen happen over and over again elsewhere in the city.

MS. SOBELMAN: - - if you would just pass the microphone down - - .

MS. TAYLOR: I was going to ask you, what actual supports did you give us?

MR. SURANSKY: - - resources were included. There’s has also been - - to provide instructional support so they’re including work to improve the quality of what’s happening in the classroom.

And let me be very clear because a lot of folks outside of schools have this belief that somehow that staff that are - - coming to a school from outside and - - what’s happening—

[crosstalk].

MR. SURANSKY: The way it works is that when teachers and the leadership of the school work

effectively together to try and support what's happening and - - with guidance and support and advice from outside, but it's not - - from outside–

[crosstalk]

MR. SURANSKY: --and it's happening. It's not - - .

MALE VOICE: You should resign.

MALE VOICE: You are the leadership.

MS. SOBELMAN: - - pass the microphone down to - - representative - - .

MR. PAGAN: I just want to say thank you - - support. I'm going to make my statement then I'm going to ask Chancellor Suransky a question and then - - an answer.

As I said my name is Juan Pagan, I'm a member of the Citywide Council on High Schools and I represent Manhattan. So that you have my understanding of my perspective on the matter that brings us all here tonight, I need to tell you just a little bit about who I am.

I was born and raise and still live on the lower east side, just a few blocks away from the school; this is my community. I lived in a New York City housing development for 43 years,

still there.

Educated in the public education system from kindergarten to - - Department of Justice. I am a former director of two community centers in the lower east side. The - - Community Center, then I moved on to the - - community center in which I supervised teens after school programs and teen evening programs that deals mostly with low income and impoverished families of color, mostly Black and Latinos.

Prior to that I worked I worked with the New York State Department of Correction Services for many years - - prison system of New York City, before that the New York State of - - .

I’ve been in the trenches, I’ve worked here, I’ve witnessed the aftermath or the consequences of young people, our children and what they suffer because they are marginalized, they continue to be pushed to the side without any resources.

I’m also the parent of a child who attends a public high school, my daughter Connie [phonetic], a Special Ed kid, attends the Legacy School for Integrated Studies, that has also been a - - and - - by the Department of

Education as the - - school - - poor graded and now being punished with the threat of phase out with - - education policy - - to chop us down. Worst of all, out children are falsely characterized, labeled as failures.

What has happened to Washington Irving, it’s a legacy high school and many other schools throughout the city are - - by a misguided and misgoverned department of education are merely effects of a larger problem.

The underlying cause of is a corrupted and defected education reform strategy imposed by Mayor Bloomberg who - - ignores the democratic process, it is a strategy or system that deliberately excludes parents, teachers, educators - - this school alone to take - - into the - - that will lead towards its success, they have excluded the very people who it affects the most, the very people who can make the difference and this is what has to change, we need to be included, period.

Now quick message to the parents, we the parents have the power to effect that change, we the parents need to unite city wide to effect that change. Parents united in a powerful voice

that has not yet been heard. Let's find a way to unite to effect the change we need so that our children will no longer continue to pay the price.

My final statement is that the Mayor Bloomberg, I'm going to refer to as Mayor - - because - - high success rate when only 13% of our black and Latino children citywide prepare for college. The other 87% of our black and Latinos - - and I want to remind Mr. DOE, I'm a POP, I'm a pissed off parent.

But it's—

[background noise]

MR. PAGAN: --since the Department of Education has been using our children as expandable pawns in their game to set up schools to fail and then closing them. Now that the department of education - - the most important part of their lives, their high school years, that time - - my question is this.

Do you have the statistics on what happens to hat 87%? For example, how many end up in remedial courses to go to college? How many give up and drop out? How many become unemployed? How many end up on welfare or in

jail or end up going to prison? What happens to them? Do you have those statistics? If you do I'd like to see them because I have all kinds statistics here, all kinds of stats but I don't see that. That's very important you should know.

MR. SURANSKY: - - as a former teacher and principal - - I respect that you come this with a depth of experience and passion and commitment and even though we might disagree I think that it's important that you are here and speaking and I'm listening—

[crosstalk]

MR. SURANSKY: --whether or not the students—

[crosstalk].

[Background noise]

MS. SOBELMAN: Folks - -

[background noise]

MS. SOBELMAN: --I want to say that I appreciate how respectful everyone has been to this point and I hope that it continues so I'm going to ask - - respond to the question - - .

MR. SURANSKY: So at the beginning of 2002 about 16,000 kids each year were going to into

college, now we have over 25,000 going into - - . Many of those students still take remedial courses. The number in 2002 was about 56%, the number today is about 50% that are taking remedial courses on - - and that number is unacceptably high.

We also - - this year we published for the first time information about college readiness which is based on how many kids score at 75 or 80 - - exam. The Citywide average 25%, that’s the same as the national average because ACT did the same study nationally and at this school it’s 6%.

And the challenge of getting kids to be college ready is about creating a rigorous, challenging, interesting learning environment where demand kids to do a lot of - - , where we ask kids to think critically to solve problems and that is the work that we are doing across the city to try and change those outcomes. So I share the passion to change that and I also am convinced that as a result of the work we’re doing now we have moved the graduation rate for black and Hispanic kids from 40% to 60% and a lot of that change has come a result of a

strategy similar to this one to create more options for those kids.

And so those chances—those kids now have, even if they go to remedial courses in college are better than living on the street and I think that is the first step and then the next step is how do we make it even stronger and create an environment where kids are challenged and push so that we are getting them college ready. And that is the work we're aiming to do and this is part of that process.

MS. SOBELMAN: Okay, so Courtney - - .

FEMALE VOICE: Thank you very much the members of the panel, Deputy Chancellor, members of the public. Thanks for the opportunity to testify - - similar testimony - - the public. So my written testimony actually has much more so I ask you to read it at some point.

You know I'm here today because I object the DOE's plan to close and phase out Washington Irving High School. I believe that school has not been provided sufficient time to implement an original, proposed transformation model and the school has shown much improvement in the last few years. It went from 38% to 55% in

graduation level and for one year that it dipped, one year; this past year it dipped to 48%, you're proposing closing it.

For the last seven months this school has been in a transformation model, for the last four months it's been - - the plan to phase out - - the school. I ask that you give the principal Bernardo Ascona, that you give teachers and the students the opportunity to move forward and to continue to make the school a success.

So the DOE publicized that it was going to—planned to close the school in October, then in November it had some meetings with the community and with parents and - - and then in December it announced two new schools that are going to be placed. In fact two weeks in January the mayor announced at the State of the City that it's going to—one of the schools is going to be Software Engineering Academy. All of this prior to tonight's hearing and prior to the pep hearing.

So such a quick and clear turnaround plan; one, shoes a lack of respect for the democratic process and just let's everyone think that this

is a building.

Well deputy chancellor the pep in you and everyone demonstrated that these proceedings are really about information gathering and getting - - and - - this is a predetermined decision to allow this school to close. I ask you, considering all the prior years besides this last one, is years of improvement. Principal Bernard Ascona should be commended for the improvements he’s made and teachers should be commended and they should not be punished and my community should not be punished by closing he school.

MS. SOBELMAN: Okay so now we’re going to start public comment. So we have folks set up on two lists so there’s a green microphone on this side and a white microphone on that side. So what I’m going to do is call five folks who have a green number one to five and five folks who have the one—I’m sorry the white number one to five and then we’ll all take back and forth. And also - - we’re going to be timing as we said - - so we’ll probably let you know when you’re getting close to the end and when you wrap it up. And we do have a pretty long list, so I’m

going to try and encourage folks to keep it to two minutes.

But again if there’s more time—I’m sorry, if you have more comments that you need to make, like I said earlier - - email and there will be additional opportunity in the future and - - if I get your names wrong - - .

So number one by the white microphone, we’ve got Karen Munez [phonetic], Trevor Johnson [phonetic], Rosanna David [phonetic], Nisan Emrez [phonetic] and Stanley M [phonetic]. And on the green side we have Nicholas Bagensky [phonetic], Gail Wright [phonetic], Leo Casey [phonetic], Alice O’Neil [phonetic] and Zachariah Richardson [phonetic].

So we’re going to start with the white microphone with Karen Williams.

MS. KAREN WILLIAMS: Good evening. I have a good report card for the mayor, it’s an F, - - F; effective leadership, zero; communication with employees, LTA-long term absence.

The first lesson that a teacher learns is that it’s a partnership between student, parent and teacher; this mayor has never learned that lesson. The failure of the schools is a failure

of leadership. He said he would take responsibility for failed schools, he needs to do that.

Our school 10—1,038 students 5.98 of those students are level one and two. That means they come into the school reading at fifth grade or below. We worked with those students, I came to the school to work with those students and this year I'm a Special Education teacher. 50% of our Special Ed students are graduating with regions and local diplomas. The students who came in - - school cannot read, if they get to a sixth grade reading level by the time of graduation, to me that's a success, that is a success.

Not every student wants to go to college. This mayor has cut all vocational programs and suddenly last week he wants to open vocational schools again. This mayor has reorganized the citywide system four times; imagine the thoughts and the disruption to do that.

I worked for - - and I was sent to schools to deal with Special Education problems. One of the schools that got an A in the - - asked me to come in and get rid of one of their Special Ed

students. They were not providing services and I know the people that work down there and they're still not providing services.

So we are being graded in schools that are not following the rules and they need to be monitored and evaluated and they need to be held accountable. Thank you.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you so much.

MR. TREVOR JOHNSON: Thank you - - I taught in the Bronx, I've taught in Manhattan and now I teach - - in Queens. I came here about the time - - . I walked up to the Washington Irving and I couldn't help but to notice that they added something outside of the building and it read, renewing the spirit of our students and I'm sure that happens on a daily basis. - - and I have to witness the fact that it's that student in a community that is intrinsically interwoven with it that is being destroyed by this decision, by this process.

The mayor would rather sabotage, rather than support the community of Washington Irving High School and this has been repeated across the city, so goes Washington Irving High School, so goes education as we know it in New York City.

President Obama in the State of the Union said that we can have the one bus, deputy chancellor, each and every one of us thinks of a great teacher that’s made us who we are. These policies will destroy that memory for untold children that attend Washington Irving High School and the schools that this is - - .

You may remember you personally walked into a classroom I was teaching and afterwards I spoke to you, you said it was excellent and I’m here to tell you that the administration that you are supporting is ineffective.

FEMALE VOICE: - - .

MALE VOICE: Good evening everyone. You’re - - this evening to close yet another school - - . I know nothing said here tonight will change the agenda that Mayor Bloomberg has embarked upon in the last years. You have eviscerated Special Education EML programs and have played a shell game with the education and lives of our most vulnerable students as in the Three-card Monte game. You shuffle these students into different warehouse schools and hope that these young people will drop out or disappear.

For 25 years I've taught Special Education

at all levels. Once a student graduates high school, the most capable students are enrolled in CTT classes - - general education. This was never supposed to be an alternative placement in lieu of self-contained classes. It was supposed to be a way to help Special Education students eventually leave Special Education.

As with most of the policies made by the DOE under the education mayor, this policy is sneaky, non-transparent and ignorant of the real needs of our students. Most of our students are failing and falling through the cracks.

Since Mayor Bloomberg has taken the school system the focus has been on—to brow beating - - educators, close schools without community or parent involvement and to open up the schools to the accountability game that is being embraced by politicians and business leaders who really have never been particularly accountable to anyone. We are putting the future of our nation and youth into the sticky hands of the very people who have destroyed our economy, our political system and now we're handing them our school system. How foolish and short sighted we are, you should be ashamed of the way you have

conducted educational policy under Bloomberg. Remember we are the professionals, you are the armatures.

As Mark 21 said, in the first place God made idiots, that was the prophecy then he made school boards. Thank you very much.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you.

[Background noise]

MS. GAIL WRIGHT: I—first of all my name is Gail Wright, I’m an extremely [phonetic] parent of a senior in Washington Irving. Do you have any idea what you’re doing - - out this learning institution?

Personally I don't think so. This is not just a school, this is also the only safe haven and stability in the lives of hundreds children, okay? I’m sorry to say it but it’s true. This is the one place that doesn’t judge every single thing they do and say, they treat them like people. So many of them have adopted children, are people too. - - out of the door when they’re getting better.

This is a place that when a teacher goes on maternity leave, she’s back before the due time to report back to school because she learned

that her students are not being treated properly or taken care of properly or taught properly by a the subs, okay? This is a place where teachers meet students before school, after school and during their lunch hour; they give up a lot of their free time. They don't have to; they don’t get paid for that. - - I’m getting ready to change - - Ms. Davis you don’t – because they’re not the big to do’s of the DOE. But to me, to the parents, to the children they are. This is the place where students are told, yes you matter, you are somebody and yes you can be what you want to be with hard work and determination.

You’re telling these children, you don’t have to be the one on the corner looking for a handout, you don’t have to be the kids snatching somebody’s purse, you don’t have to be the kid who’s trying - - and even more important you don’t have to be the kid selling drugs to be able to put food on the table because he has to be the man of the house because his father is in jail, okay? This is a place that lets a child know that they can be a part of a family without being in a gang. This is a place that not only

teachers - - , they social graces.

Do you have any idea how many children here savor everything they get from their parents whether - - so that once a month they can get together and go to a fancy restaurant. Those things don’t matter, okay.

FEMALE VOICE: Hurry.

MS. WRIGHT: All right, I understand what you’re saying but right now I mean—I’m 60 years old, I do look good for my age—

[background noise].

FEMALE VOICE: I’ll ask - - .

MS. WRIGHT: Tell me what happens to the children who are not - - at school - - Brooklyn Tech - - they are forgotten and you need to remember that, okay? It’s more than likely that’s it’s this school didn’t—the destruction didn't start with Bernardo Ascona, he brought this place back up to—at least it was a level C - - because there was a principal here - - it’s wrong. Give somebody 1 or $2 million to do a transformation and you don’t even let the man give a testimony and all of a sudden - - down. - - they mayor wants to bring in not just other public but charter schools, a - - that will be

run by corporations that he owns, okay?

You're not doing anything new and I—the reason why the DOE doesn't have, because we have over 1,000 charter schools in New York City - - and do you know how much they pay them? $1 a year, where in New York City can pay for an—

[background noise]

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you so much. - - two minutes because we do have a lot - - . So number three on the white microphone goes to David.

MS. ROSANNA DAVID: Under the leadership of Principal Bernardo Ascona the AP's, the teachers and the stuff; the school has improved. The New York City Public System is not a place for experimentation where we open and close schools for students - - school closing. This a tragedy - - students of this school, safety net Dan we then turn away from new schools for reason of poor academic achievement - - school that will probably be close too.

This is a losing strategy for turning round - - schools which are - - attended by children of color, economic and disadvantaged communities. The - - strategy is to eliminate

schools that the administrator has had at least a decade to fix and to improve - - by creating the schools - - . The fact is that closure is an admission of failure by city rule.

The Bloomberg administration needs to take more responsibility, not just for schools that are not doing well, that in return - - to BPO's of closing them and washing their hands of the deeper problem that is an unsuccessful - - . By the council of supervisors and they didn't - - . Thank you.

MS. SOBELMAN: Leo Pasy [phonetic].

MR. LEO PASY: Good evening, my and I'm a Vice President of a university and I—

[background noise]

MR. PASY: --to say that this is case of failure b design. When regions [phonetic] Counselor Marilyn Tish [phonetic] said to the department of education is where housing - - meets kids in schools without providing them with the resources and supports the need to educate those kids. She could well have been talking about Washington Irving High School.

What we have here tonight is the birth of a participle Three-card Monte to try to cover up

that reality. You have to watch the hand as it moves. When - - said the new schools are going to these buildings have the same population that’s the old schools.

When it’s said the new schools; watch carefully, meet the city average but of course the old school didn't have the city average, the old school was concentrated with students with special needs, with English language learners, with - - kids, they are two completely different populations.

When it is said that schools that have the same population are starting them and then it talks about Special Education without letting you know that one school has huge numbers of self-contained Special Education students with the highest level of disability and the other school has nothing but the most minimally disabled Special Ed - - .

This is lying - - . This is dishonorable behavior for an educator who should be about educating all students. Tell the truth Mr. Chancellor, tell the truth and stop warehousing kids with high needs in the Washington Irving’s across the city, give these kids the chance they

deserve, and give these schools the ability to serve. This is a failed policy you are defending.

MS. SOBELMAN: Nitza Hernandez [phonetic].

MS. NITZA HERNANDEZ: My name is Nitza Hernandez—

[background noise]

MS. HERNANDEZ: --and I want to speak on two things. I am a VLA [phonetic] Special Education teacher and I want to tell you about my students. Too many of my students when we write a business letter, they're either addressed to a homeless shelter, an immigration office or a homeless shelter.

Many of us when we go for vacation we for a round trip. When I ask my students to write about their summer experience, they talk about the one way trip and then have to wrestle with a coyote in the desert to get back to school. We never talk about that.

Another thing I am not allowed to talk to is about attendance, well today I am going to speak about attendance. I run a small learning community, I am the coordinator; I have a team daily to make home visits, daily to make phone

calls, daily to send letters, daily we hold the student and parent conferences and yet in the end attendance continues at the last hour - - sense of initiative and under the backdrop attendance continues to drop.

So my question to you mayor, which is not here, chancellor who is not here but you deputy chancellor, what are you doing to find my students? The thousands of students across the city - - back to school, where are the students?

MS. SOBELMAN: - - number four Alice O'Neil.

MS. ALICE O'NEIL: Good evening everyone, my name is Alice O'Neil, I'm here to - - . There is no need to put Washington Irving on the phase out list, you have other options and the decision should be democratic. Tonight you'll hear from many teachers, you will hear from parents; you've heard from various teachers already who know that this school, Washington Irving High School accepts self-contained students.

The most confusing book in New York City is the book that eight grade families open up and they don't know where they're going to send their students and they don't think that they

can send them to the small high schools because the small high schools have the—as they were referred to, they have students who have minimal disability, so that idea is - - self-contained to an appropriate - - school and send them to become CCT so they could switch to a small high school.

Washington Irving is not just about serving students, it’s about serving all students. There were recommendations on an inappropriate night for - - meeting, Thursday before a pre dated veterans holiday weekend, that’s not right. You can still make the decision to ask - - you can ask the attendance teachers, you can downsize. If we actually - - who’ve never reported here? There you go.

If the you - - on top of this beautiful building, have a gorgeous auditorium, a wonderful library that - - with no librarian—

[background noise]

MS. ONEIL: --why do you have - - librarian who’s in another location, there’s not librarian for - - . That is—that can be changed, you can - - you can have a librarian, you can add the attendance feature and then both of - - they can

go into a different company [phonetic]. But they won't be accepting the same self-contained students - - students and even perhaps students who are homeless, who have no one to choose a school for them, it's not too late to correct this wrong.

As you know the mayors announcement last week, he wants - - but we don't - - project.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. We're now inviting speakers who have number six through ten on both sides. So for the white microphone Alden James [phonetic], Patricia McKenzie [phonetic], Carlos Ruiz [phonetic], Hala Bent [phonetic] and Juniata Torres [phonetic] - - . And then on the green microphone numbers six through ten, we have Cree Betsin [phonetic], Alejandro Garcia [phonetic], Shaniqua Johnson [phonetic] for number eight, Michael Shuman [phonetic] and Irene Brown [phonetic]. - - .

MALE VOICE: My name is - - I'm the - - high school, I'm also - - representative. I have a couple of questions regarding the statistics - - talking about Special Education.

Now under Special Education, there's two categories; most restricted and less restricted,

I - - high schools - - . So when you look at student in - - high school which is - - school - - it has upwards of 500 kids is 12% least restrictive or under the most restrictive they have zero.

Washington Irving has - - kids. Under the least restrictive they have 9.47% bit under the most restrictive, they have 9.47% more than 98 kids, it’s a big difference in these numbers, okay? So when you go and say Washington Irving is 62%, that’s not the case, you have to take it down by most restrictive and least restrictive. - - there are 242 kids. The least restrictive is 16% which is fine but the most restrictive they have one kid, it’s a big difference.

International School at Union Square, it’s a - - program which means they get to pick and choose who they want. Least restrictive they have one kid, most restrictive, none. So the thing is I’m just - - your attention - - and how the Special Ed kid has to learn. Your current high school in this campus does not even accommodate the special kids.

MS. SOBELMAN: Okay, thank you.

MALE VOICE: Now when you close this school

and you go into the two new schools - - on screen, you can't guarantee that these numbers are going to increase or be the same with the Special Ed kids. Where are they going to go? Thank you very much.

MS. SOBELMAN: - - Zachariah Richardson. Is Mr. Richardson here?

MS. ZACHARIAH RICHARDSON: My name is Zachariah Richardson. - - he's asking me questions because the school is going to close. I'm looking at - - and all I see is the decision is already made. I see that you already have notice on the pamphlets that you handed out, the phase out period.

I see nothing handed out where we're trying - - so maybe one of you to save the school, I see none of that. All I see is making - - . One thing I must say, there is no minorities, we are all majorities here; all of us. We're not going to be 150,000; we're not going to be 100,000 - - 50,000 some of us.

So in saying that, what are we telling our students when you're phasing out - - I don't understand it, I really don't understand it, the school is phasing out, everyone is sitting up

here trying to. I can see the deputy chancellor - - or you writing things down but you're not answering our questions directly, you're going a roundabout way and telling us about the statistics.

Tell us the truth, is the decision made to close the school already or are we just going through the torment or just what are we doing here. I would like that question answered so I can tell my son, so that when he asks me a question why is the school closing? Because I don't believe, teachers - - decision was made to close the school and this is why it's closed. Because it's a big school, we have - - and this is what you all do. If that's not true, please tell my child and me - - why - - . Thank you so much.

MS. SOBELMAN: Just I wanted to let you know - - go through public comment, the Deputy Chancellor will respond to the questions that are raised during the public comments. So we have speaker number 6, Alden James.

MR. ALDEN JAMES: Yes I'm a resident of - - park for 35 years and I've headed banks and - - 25 years and it's always an exciting opportunity

for me to walk into this school and meet - - graduation plan - - where I live at 15 Graveson [phonetic] Park. I think we should now out heads because this is this is a school that's over 100 years old, it has a - - faculty, I've attended the graduations, I've - - , I've seen the individuals - - and it's really part of our national resource, it's a wetlands if you will where future leaders—we could have a future president or future mayor. Great leaders and we all serve a role regardless of our positions.

But when I heard—and I was here for the school evaluation - - presentation to the DOE but tonight of course - - previous papers, the verdict is in. So I want to say how sad it is for me and before we leave, we should remember the - - right here above the manual, it was - - spirit of dreams and fancies, what - - thinking for education, thank you.

MS. SOBELMAN: - - Shaniqua Johnson.

FEMALE VOICE: I would like to start by saying - - the Deputy Chancellor because like everyone knows he does not care, the mayor does not care, the chancellor does not care, the DOE does not care. No one cares except these people

and a few people who are up there. And - - no I'm not a student; I'm a volunteer at the school. Before moving to New York City a few months ago I worked in DCDS, Washington DC and I worked in a variety of - - schools there that - - similar population to Washington Irving and I can tell you through my experience Washington Irving is the best school, certainly in - - students that I've ever seen.

I've worked with some of the most dedicated teachers who I could have ever imagined. Who sometimes at 6:00 in the morning, walk into the building before the sun comes up and walk out of the building after the sun goes down. And - - I have so much respect for them and I have learned so much from them and I cannot see how anyone could possibly be more dedicated their students as many of the teachers at - - are.

I would also like to say that from all this information it does not make sense to me why the school is closing, yes - - graduations but that is because we work with - - who always have - - and we are doing the best that we can to help them and to make those things better and it does not make sense to close the school because like

everyone has said where will those children go.

FEMALE VOICE: - - speaker number 8, Carlos Ruiz.

MR. CARLOS RUIZ: Let’s be honest here, deputy chancellor - - . We all know that the decision for Washington Irving was already made months ago. It started off with Martha Stewart, this transaction; the turnaround. For a few months the school was given a grant for the turnaround then it went for - - count. So one question that I want to ask is, where the turnaround money went if it was not given to Washington Irving and now the school is chosen to be phased out.

Two, is another fact that the decision was made because the mayor - - already made the announcement that he’s trying - - already - - Washington Irving before the PDP [phonetic] vote was even made. So let’s be honest here, excuse me am I - - you deputy chancellor? I like people to look at me when I’m speaking to them. So answer this question, am I right or wrong for me to say that the decision was made even before the PDP vote February 9th? Because for - - that

the decisions already made for a technology school to come in here already.

And another thing is where are - - people keep asking and I'm wondering too. Where are - - voted when this school—not just this school, many other schools in the city are supposed to close and phase out. Where are these children going to go? Where are they now? Are there any positions [phonetic], reports indicating where these children are? Where they're ending up, I would like to see those reports, I'm sure that everyone would like to see those reports.

And for all the parents and everyone out here I remind you and encouraging you that February 9th is the PDP meeting and for all of us to go out there and support not only Washington Irving but all the other schools throughout New York City that are being closed. Thank you.

MS. SOBELMAN: People numbers seven through ten on the green microphone Alejandro Garcia.

FEMALE VOICE: He had to leave.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you.

FEMALE VOICE: He had to go.

MS. SOBELMAN: Shaniqua Johnson, Michael Shuman and Irene Brown Shaniqua Johnson - -

still?

FEMALE VOICE: Shaniqua.

FEMALE VOICE: Shaniqua, thank you.

MS. SHANIQUA JOHNSON: Good evening everyone my name is Shaniqua Johnson. I am a - - here at Washington Irving High School. Also a former Washington Irving High School student, I graduated in 1998. Central - - probation for the teacher and also - - high school graduate.

What I just wanted to say is I think that what we need to think about and we need to pay attention to is the students that we still have existing in Washington Irving High School because when you phase out the school you phase out the school, you phase out the desire, the encouragement, the thought, everything that students who are already here have is going to - - .

And you cannot go through this process we are starting to see a - - and I have to say that I am the only - - but there are some of these like the - - and we wanted you to know that we are here - - about teachers - - did not come here because this is the only place that they can work, we came here because this is a place

that we chose to work. So please - - .

FEMALE VOICE: - - and I graduated in - - that graduated from Washington Irving School and I also went to - - college. So when we talk about our success at Washington Irving High School and we talk about what we have - - and we talk about - - career goals, I was - - and they can count on me every day of the week - - because I appeal to them, I don't care what the - - is about getting the best education they can get and right now they are doing - - because we do have staff that's dedicated from the bottom all the way to the top. So when you think about - - and ten years it is going to be - - other community schools - - and it is the same thing that - - . So we need to - - . So we are simply saying that the - - we are here for you and we will - - .

FEMALE VOICE: Good evening everyone, I am a - - of Irving senior and want to say I am proud of her because she has been doing very well here. I have seen her progress from beginning to this point but I'm not proud of what you're doing sir at this - - .

It's a shame because I have seen - - with

other students coming here, not knowing much and with the help of the teachers here, they have progressed so very well. And furthermore what I need to make you know, you might not know what type of principal we have. But he is not a principal who sits on his butt doing nothing. He is a very hardworking principal.

So I have quite a few nieces, nephews, grand-nieces, grand-nephews who have passed through other schools and I have never seen such hardworking principal like Mr. Ascona. He is really on top. And I'm sure I'm not the only parent who can say that.

Mr. Ascona is not a principal who is prejudiced, he is for everyone, every ranks. His interest is to see everyone reach the top. And also our - - . I have seen parents' coordinators also just sit in the office, they do nothing - - answer from them.

Mr. Ariza [phonetic] is a very hard working parents' coordinator too. I think you really need to know someone who we have here or I think with - - our students. This rate seems to be a type of thing that okay, you remember - - close the school out, but it's not worth, you will

need to look into this some more.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. Next on the line Michael Schuman. Topic on the - - and then we will come over to the - - . So after the - - Veronica Benet, Michael Veracruz, Olivia Phenpan and Jenifer Deer and - - we have Chris Yetra, George Atomari, Diane - - , Maria Souris and Dama - - .

MS. ROSEMARY GRAHAM: Well my name is Rosemary Graham a teacher at Washington Irving High School. - - but I will read you a letter, I'm reading a letter from Alia - - to go to - - . Our names are - - and we are 2011 graduates from Washington Irving High School.

We can say that our time here has been so well worth it. we stand here today with high school diplomas thanks to the faculty members who encouraged us every day - - . Although we did have difficulties at times during the four years, our principal Mr. Ascona and those wonderful teachers strived for nothing but the best for us. The managed to bring the degree of the school up to.

Washington Irving has been around for 10 decades or even more. We are only two of

thousands upon thousands of students that had the pleasure of graduating from here. There are many students that want to be standing here now but we are appealing their case and that Washington Irving High School should not close.

We are proud to say that throughout the journey here, we have chosen our career through the programs that were offered by this wonderful high school, and we feel that Washington Irving should remain open so that more generations will have the same experience as the success that we had.

I’m number 19, label number 10 on the white desk - - I just want to say anything is possible—I mean a few years ago we took two programs at our school and we - - and that’s going very well. We have - - just entering the building, three years ago and two years ago and hopefully they’re doing very well.

Why don’t we look at the one school that was originally here - - years and said what can we do to make this place do well too. And I think what - - and what other people have mentioned is basically - - it was.

Why can't we look at the - - of people who

will never walk through the door, where are these kids? They were at least here. After the native program, that’s 8 years, 9 years ago, I don’t know, doctor - - they don’t - - people here.

We were in - - by the police department - - I’m sorry and you know what, they walked on - - and let the police stay here and you know what - - college graduate - - . Why can't we - - why can't they - - everybody is carrying around - - .

You may not convince me - - and you’re forcing the students to - - and it’s like an anchor on - - they’re drowning us - - .

FEMALE VOICE: My name is - - and I have been a teacher at Washington Irving for 22 years. This is - - and I am proud to say that our school has made progress in the last two years and - - . I believe we should - - to nurture and care for the environment with the - - . But we can't be responsible for students - - because it seems that everything we’re doing - - and not the students that are here.

This year—the first years - - . We were also doing transformation of our - - . And I

believe that transformation or a definition of transformation is a process of converting all the time. And when it comes to my students we talk about - - transform over time due to the circumstances and we were not given the chance to transform. And the - - just to make sure the - - a turnaround the future it seems as - - .

A procedure search and acting from time - - result in this process to keep the doors of Washington Irving open to best serve the needs of our deserving students.

The message that the DOE sent to students of Washington Irving by calling this a transformation school is that they truly have confidence instilled in our school and they're building school reps for over three years of the transformation round.

By - - to close the school soon - - is showing a lot of faith on the part of the DOE in the - - of all Washington Irving Students, they do it best. I hope you will support us in this endeavor and I also wanted to say that in Washington Irving - - and I have to say that if you and the DOE - - school, why wasn't Washington Irving given a chance to go through -

- before the schools that were opening here.

If you do the - - that we should have been the first people asked to make a proposal to the schools and why are these schools also with - - with the services that they did, they've been pushed out and it's not good.

MS. SOBELMAN: Notice that we are - - make for all this, thank you so much.

MALE VOICE: I have been a teacher here for 10 years, I won't take a long - - , can you hear me. When I go to New York from Chicago and San Francisco, I kept thinking I was going to find New York all over the city looking forward to the weekend and go to - - , Wall Street, forget about it.

I looked at the neighborhoods of Brooklyn, I love those - - San Francisco and Chicago, I thought maybe - - Chicago and San Francisco may be - - . But I know I found New York finally right in front of me in my classroom. Kids from all over the city come here. They come from - - , they come from the lower side, they come from the heights, they come from Parkchester, the only place they don't come from is - - . You live on numbers, that's how you can talk, I

don’t think you can go on for 30 seconds with that - - .

Well but my students are - - and three months ago when my mother died, I came back here and my children made me 1,000 - - . When I asked them to imagine a world, they imagine that - - . You talk about the atmosphere and you talk about all these numbers.

If you talk about the atmosphere - - that’s not the atmosphere - - that’s the atmosphere love, and it is in this building. Those students are the future I dream of, don’t tell me it’s a future, some environment failure because it’s not. The problems they struggle with are huge, the problems are bigger than any school and my time - - .

The students can bring their problems here and I will help them, you don’t. We will help them, every teacher in this building is more inclined to this job and I’m not going to take this - - . Every year I chose to - - and I was here for ten years, I’m going to take that - - . This is failure, what is failure - - against color, against class, race division.

The one group I don’t see here in my class

or from the class is going to four points to call or what the sleepers [phonetic] has on their jacket when they come to school on Monday morning. They don't come here, they go to French school.

So what do the kids here - - and he has made that clear since day one. They close this school, our kids get pushed around in the system, they will despair, you know it and I know it. They will be sent from school to school so that each school can play the numbers game that politics forces them to play. The school composes of one thing, please do that thing well.

The choice for these places—do we focus on the school's future or it's student's future. A message should be sent on the schools, it is being sent, pretend yourself, give us the numbers we want the newspaper to talk about those created numbers like they mean something, besides protecting some. Meanwhile pushed around the system, focus on itself, our students will ignore these responsibilities so that will be everybody's problem.

Most importantly, their dreams are the are

the ones we won't talk about. Ours is to continue the fight, so that we found their dreams. I'll fight for this school because this school doesn't turn away students. Doesn't try to have the problems these students struggle with, we are proud of our struggle.

We are - - even when they're sad. We might not have the numbers but we are trying to make numbers here. We're trying against all these odds and the - - to create students who get to count their dreams, and I dream, my dreams - - has to do it.

They will leave the community to do it. So ask - - , I ask New York, I ask you, put those number aside for a minute, look at my students, I tell them that they're in an atmosphere of failure when they admit something for their teacher who is drowning - - .

Tell them that that's not a - - because it's not them. Don't close schools, open your minds and let the school work. If there was a parade the day that schools open, right there on urban place. The city was one that celebrated education and it's past failures.

You probably know there was a pretty

committed up the school, but I will deal with the - - school and I will - - . It wasn't about matters we have, it was about the beautiful question our student's futures were. Move your numbers around, make a stretchy - - but all your data doesn't have a place for their dreams in it.

I saw to you though, the biggest necessity our educational system faces is this, where are we going to put these dreams our students have? And you never got them.

FEMALE VOICE: - - .

MALE VOICE: My name is Mr. - - at Washington Irving School, this is my fifth anniversary at - - and like I said - - most of the kids I have worked - - unfortunately which - - in the school for two years, three years and kind of - - and they come here and the - - for two years.

I don't think another - - . They just - - over and over again for 20 years with the kids from high - - we take them, don't - - schools - - we take them and we deal with them, it will be nice, because even if you gathered those it will be work - - .

MS. SOBELMAN: - - Veronica Benet.

MS. VERONICA BENET: Good evening. I just need address this - - personally because at least everything you said today and how you look at this point it will be - - . You mentioned - - and it just made meant absolutely no offense. Mr. Ascona has worked really hard in trying to improve school and he was given no time to change the school. He met school from - - that was, it was - - he did on top of work to do that.

And it was like there is no real valid reason to close the school down, it just makes no sense, it just makes no sense. And then you guys are going to continue the close decision if you close the school down and continue to go back - - . I need to be an - - admit it you were thinking and you will feel really damn - - you just make no sense whatsoever.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. - - .

MALE VOICE: Thank you. Someone mentioned that this doesn’t mean anything because the decision is already made. And - - but you’re going to educate us, as matter of fact you may not be changing this - - model or the chance to

live by it.

If they can just persistent to the deputy or the full time is - - to be able to hear will come. Besides that we're not going to try to educate you, I hope you are open to it. But we try to educate each of the people because even if we don't win this time you're other powers. So it's common with the multi-billionaires, grabs a hold of the mayoral control, that is more in power. That is the super-power, that's something we're occupying more on the sides - - .

We should not give back on the power because it's translating to what's happening here. What is it they're doing other than moving the shares from the depth as the titanic failed in the sea. We had to oversee what time of the year - - I can go with the social studies agency here for 34 years, and I talked to - - and that in the - - you don't make decisions first and then that meeting like just happened, it happened at the agency first and then it happened.

- - question and I talked to the deputy - - I don't know but - - what I tend to say is this, it's a question, what if I actually don't want

to do it, soon by soon - - the potential now it is full, what can you do?

On first instances a - - said not everything that be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted. And I think it’s a lesson to all of us but - - here. Let’s remember this day, let’s remember what happened and let it never happen again, thank you.

MS. SOBELMAN: Michael Veracruz.

MR. MICHAEL VERACRUZ: Good evening, my name is Michael Veracruz, I’m - - I had so much to say tonight but everything has been said already. Everything has been said already. What I see the decision has been made already because it sounds like politics, all about the money, the state is holding up the money now it’s - - .

As someone said earlier, he could yes or now, yes. So the thing has it—so the - - so we are playing cards in the same mandate in order to make the - - it’s not. So why are closing Washington Irving High School, I want to know that, it doesn’t make sense. I’m going to give you an interesting story. I won't tell you everything because I will be disrespecting my

time. Okay, I got three - - .

I was told by the vice principal of the school - - to take - - of our time - - so you understand. Anyway you should be able because there was a big - - very frank here, I'll tell you that. But I'll tell you something, when he came to Washington Irving - - because first of all I live - - and I ended up doing the school study I tend to stick to a lot of - - .

It has - - they have to take piece out of another or something like that - - . My son has - - through the great - - okay. Right in the middle so it was part of the - - with the - - . I asked - - question, the only problem is sometimes you get - - kids. As the - - had said and you know what that tells - - , he worked for the - - . Thank you.

MS. SOBELMAN: - - .

FEMALE VOICE: - - as my colleagues have said it doesn't make sense to close down the school. You got any idea - - and anyone else - - .

MS. SOBELMAN: Speak right into the microphone.

FEMALE VOICE: - - all the dedication and

all the effort of the teachers, the principal and the - - to make us more successful, being more - - students. Thank you.

FEMALE VOICE: - - .

FEMALE VOICE: Hello, my name is - - , I'm a teacher at Washington Irving High School. I can't believe that they're trying to close the school so that they can supposedly move it in the right direction. - - in the right direction.

Your - - and spirit - - our school by saying you should be closed is like saying you have diagnosed it with an incurable disease. There is nothing - - improvement and moving in the right direction. Let us continue to do this. The students have a right to think and to know that their efforts to improve and to better will be rewarded and not punished. Thank you.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. - - .

MARIA: Hi, my name is Maria, I have an older brother in the school. I - - to me this school and I have studied at Washington Irving High School - - . In Washington Irving - - a school take its pick. With most of you to make this school.

MS. SOBELMAN: - - Jennifer Diaz [phonetic].

JENNIFER DIAZ: Good evening. I'd like to start off by saying that you guys - - the school only activator [phonetic] and not for all things have accomplished. I'm a senior and I - - and I hope to graduate, I will be attending college. And I would like to say that, since freshman year, you have systematically been closing the school down. You got a - - reference, you got it in, you're taking away all of our floors.

To save our school, you're - - is like saying a failure - - is not - - graduates. We have had - - to graduate that at the baseline [phonetic] is always true. Our school is capable of so much more than it may be. We have a rigorous International - - program, our teachers are taking more work, each of them and - - sponsors. And I would like to debate what Deputy Chancellor said about the graduation rate decreasing when the school phases out. You have to take into consideration that teens are transferring out of that school that is phasing out and so graduation rate will become - - . Thank you.

[applause]

MS. SOBELMAN: --so the microphone, Noah Kausence [phonetic], Mary [phonetic] - - , Tensen Jensel [phonetic] and Roger Ferreira [phonetic] and the next group of speakers are on the free microphones. Stephie Britling [phonetic] maybe, number 16, Leila Otocito [phonetic], Devaughn Philip [phonetic], Ishmael [phonetic] - - and Robert Blanco [phonetic]. So, I want to ask speaker number 15, Delia Ferreira [phonetic].

DELIA FERREIRA: I will say in matching scenario, I have many mistakes - - . One of the many things is why I believe much concern should be at focus because - - show me good - - which - - Naples [phonetic]. I have personally experienced the - - council, I’ve watched the disturbance. Ever - - just like another school. I have - - come to school because it’s one week. If you don’t have - - school, you’re going to have pathetic - - and I think that’s feeding [phonetic] our school.

Washington Irving makes sure parents are very significantly - - to our bay [phonetic]. Not only because Washington’s spending care of

our institution and - - attendance, but it also helps students improve their grades. Another factor that helps - - students, is that teachers - - and get reports. It takes individual sentences [phonetic] in any subject and any - - . Guys sponsors make sure slits [phonetic] are up to date when to make - - and are - - . - - concerns are always there to help students with special circumstance.

Also Washington Irving has many after school programs that are excellent and I am currently involved in - - scores, which is a - - program that enable us to be in. I was in state care for three years and was an excellent performer [phonetic] providing - - . And I just believe that Washington Irving should remain open. As long as it’s going to be closed, we’ll keep it [phonetic].

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you very much. - - . Mr. Kausence.

MALE VOICE: - - .

MS. SOBELMAN: Speaker number 17, Nancy.

MS. NANCY ALUA: Alua [phonetic]. Good evening. This question—I mean, yeah. This questions leads directly to the - - I’m sorry.

MALE VOICE: - - .

MS. ALUA: If you're proposing to close Washington Irving High School because you think we're a failing school, why did you - - saying how many new students do they admit? You should now have the best interest of heart or yesterday - - . Or you just using all this over-the-counter children District close the school all over the city, is that what's going to happen to all these kids that look forward to continue for - - school just to be closed? Thank you.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you very much. Please have a—

[applause]

MS. SOBELMAN: Speaker number 18, Devaughn Philips, okay.

MR. DEVAUGHN PHILIPS: Good evening. My name is Devaughn Philips and I'm an - - , we're - - programming. I have heard what you call a national teaching, the one that told you where Brooklyn schools have - - and have for our - - to have - - technology. Are you telling me we realize that - - too? We, a bunch of - - are collaborating to kind of go see if we - - school. - - is just - - the ability to be a

part of this incentive that - - opportunity with you. I'm also a part of the law - - law firm right there in front of - - . You know - - said that education is an - - you need to change the world. But it seems to me like you're welcome to - - different colors of black, you know I'm watching the news, you realize how we're taking passes of each - - this world got nothing down on me to pursue that you want to have the form, want to have this entire - - be the case.

You know present kind of student - - the things - - students program for years, that is - - my principal. He had told me sure that I was - - be able to have that - - ready. He did that - - charging them and after that, picked my - - under you and you didn't want to - - for us. Secondly, decision for opportunities, tell me - - . People are having some great - - manage - - . And you people - -? Certainly, my - - pressure is ruined all over right now. They have opportunity of - - that I have never told my mind to constantly be my student review, my condominium, my academic integrity that I knew that was possible.

But yet - - the school we - - that and knowing that we—and people behind me prefer to come for my sister who probably will also want to go away. - - that opportunity, would you have not convince me - - work to do that. Washington Irving is a - - and continues to do wonderful things that I am proud to have been able, I am proud to be associated in the - - community.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you.

[applause]

MS. SOBELMAN: Tensel Jensel. Speaker number 18, Tensel Jensel.

MS. MARIA BEBE: I'm - - parents, - - , students of the school, I want to talk briefly about the - - . My name is Maria Bebe [phonetic]. My style came from Florida and - - and started school in September. And as I - - came here, he's doing very well international - - the region so now we work through this depression - - . We simply teach, we wanted doing regular things so how we became to pass all the tests and the regions - - contain as an expression, please.

MS. SOBELMAN: We'll respond to the

questions here in a minute. The Q&A after the comments have been confirmed.

MS. MARIA BEBE: - - for the school to be closed. There’s a parent in - - and also - - in high school. The - - also to - - was going on where the decision - - . Legally, you have to school, so where do you - - children’s in legal and - - . Where do you want all these kids?

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you - - .

MS. BEBE: - - is fair.

MS. SOBELMAN: So, the next speaker is speaking—

[applause]

FEMALE VOICE: Good evening, they - - and the - - only went to the - - high school to go in attendance rate and our graduation rate and how far our school is. This is like high school - - and teachers as leaders. I think I - - in order to English. Looks - - , I was senior - - in the city to do all - - . I am - - an advanced - -process, which is - - English - - French. Primary - - initial since 2010, 2003, I am taking the college - - and persons, send classes - - kids and all over New York City.

One of the reasons why - - this program is

we're teaching the first school that supported me much of my - - success for - - in our education - - . And what you're trying is really wrong and you have to apologize in our education - - rules - - opportunities that you give students. And make sure on the basis of Washington Irving - - .

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you - - .

[applause].

MR. ISHMAEL: Good evening, my name is Ishmael - - . I stand before you guys and - - suited and watch - - my school senior. When I'm - - school, going to both the shared experience of my time is - - in New York and most of the - - . Around this school is the first so ever - - in the city. In here, grown up and brought the whole in - - brothers in this city and - - . It's not 18, it's - - submit through a part-time - - school to succeed is a - - talking about, I'm trying to make you understand that.

For being - - New York City going to this school impression saying you ever met, made you - - . Teachers made me as well students. You know - - came here and be sheltered, ignore the process this is. You came here and - - who I've

known all - - now with a broken heart. Now I’m trying as hard as I can to make it through this night and definitely we’ll get through this. I plan to graduate and I plan to go to college and being in this school has given me experience, wisdom and strength to - - girl who had a big family here, you know.

And if you close this close down, it’s definitely going to - - sure memories. Because I can't say 10 years from now that I went to the school Washington Irving and I can only see - - . - - going to say, listen, there’s no such thing as Washington Irving because there’s - - in them. So please ensure you - - will be - - you know, will definitely impact every - - . How - - to school, attention gets - - program in Massachusetts. No things will break teaching who decides to - - great - - here as reference as soon as you hear the - - .

So a lot of reasons teachers here, deserve to be here and deserve take you deserve to stay here. I’m not sure where did it get to folk’s school got - - here but if you do it - - , please, people want to - - and let them stay there. Thank you very much.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you.

[applause]

MS. SOBELMAN: Roger Ferreira. I'm going to call up the next set of speakers for the white mic column [phonetic] and grey microphones before we have Mr. Colaco [phonetic], number 21 for insight. We have Sean DaSilva [phonetic], - - Flores [phonetic], Celia Castilo [phonetic], Ambrio Amiota [phonetic], Denise Middleton [phonetic] and Sherr-Lynne Richards [phonetic] on the white microphone. And to the grey microphone, Marco Menendez [phonetic], Marlene Flores [phonetic], Essence Berg [phonetic], Bobby Leash [phonetic] and Michael Brockman [phonetic]. We have Roger Ferreira at number 20. Roger Colombo [phonetic], are you going to come to the - -? Speaker number 21, Sean DaSilva.

MALE VOICE: This is point four over here.

FEMALE VOICE: Okay. Marco Menendez on the grey microphone, number 21.

FEMALE VOICE: - - having - - ago.

MS. SOBELMAN: Great. Essence Berg.

MS. ESSENCE BERG: Hi. My name is Essence Berg, I - - in 2005. And actually in 2004, as I

was attending Washington Irving, I had a baby. Not knowing where I was going to go, I had this lecturer who was the - - is - - . And Mrs. Webster, my English teacher who encouraged me to stay. And last week till now, the person who—now, when I took maternity from Washington Irving but came back to graduate. And it was not—

[applause]

MR. BERG: --progress that was - - . And as - - to—I really look forward to being a teacher but it's very discouraging that that I want—at a certain point of time, I'm not going to be able to continue - - student teaching. Because this is what you normally do.

You're going to take much harder school who have actually—is still part of your school, is still part of your due [phonetic]. Even as - - lottery is not going to - - , is not part of lottery, is not part of - - list. So this could be a - - like you soon have - - now I'm collecting - - child to school. So now I don't have the option of going to the - - or the other stuff. But I mean the - - is shaking, you know what I mean, so that - - listen to you. These

are children with - - needs, so they need to work extra hard to get to Bronx Science.

First they need to take the test to Bronx Science and they students so, oh, they need attendance, not just a surgeon [phonetic] in place. Not even have to bring her to Morris [phonetic] High School or other low performing, underperforming schools. They're just - - cools down. I mean, they shouldn't have - - anywhere to go. So you actually have been - - drug dealers and actually - - down hard because they've got a problem with making a decision. You have to look at - - out of respect there. Would you be ready do that if your school closed down, if they - - the school system, push you around and did everything like that? Apparently not.

So you got to think about that. This what - - commercial center introduces. I have - - high school teacher who had a baby in high school and is now a role model for other students who attended this school and who ask me what to do, and what do I tell them? I tell them it's all with me, not you. Thank you very much.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you.

[applause]

MS. SOBELMAN: Speaker number 25, - - .

MALE VOICE: Yes, that’s me. yes, I just wanted to really—first of all, I’m glad to be here and—

MS. SOBELMAN: Can you - - please?

MALE VOICE: You’re not hearing? Then you can hear now? Okay. But anyway, there’s two things I want to reiterate. First of all, education to me is a very vital thing and I always stress it to my children. I could go to that 10th school even and she could find a home school is of the highest priority to me and there are several reasons why. One is to - - and I will - - education is never taken away from you. You cannot take - - you put a very high price on education. I just relocated back to New York and I was very glad that she had the one - - program here.

There’s not a day that goes by that she does not come home, toss - - and she account to stay at the school. I don’t know the principal very well but I do know the reason that - - is the calling and one day about - - and I’m glad to have - - so I could come here and attend and be

a part of this. I’m sitting here looking at the school - - report and nowhere down here does it say to me that the school is unfair [phonetic] - - , okay.

I had—I didn’t know - - in my career, it was just - - . It was a - - , I come from unfortunate background as well. It was just like - - , and the reason I’m allowed to - - the school, chances are, like we said, therefore we end revealing what they had not - - doing in their new - - can't have - - about and gotten particularly for my daughter to read and I’d be - - if she wants anyway. But if - - give her a chance to excel in school like I was given when I was going to school and I’m proud of New York City schools as well. There are some very qualified teachers that I still in contact with today. And really - - nobody has asked a question about the stats, about what happened to these kids that are lost along the way?

A lot of the questions that people ask and nobody - - the answers to. You sit up there and you look like - - what's going on and then someone say, all you keep giving us is numbers. These kids are numbers, they’re very important

on the side of parents, to the teachers that are there but obviously no to the mayor. The school system here has changed, so, so much disappointed. Not as much for - - certain people but as long that we have parents right now stopping others that aiming put a - - do you want education, then these kids would still have a chance to succeed the—I wanted to - - .

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you so much.

[applause]

MALE VOICE: --to get an education, I left school for a - - here in 1980, I did finish my school because I no one to push me like this. I certainly pushed for - - because I went back to school so I tell my boy, don’t waste your - - , go to school, do this - - . I didn’t want another to strike to the side.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you so much, we’re going to have—

[applause].

MS. FLORES: I’m - - Flores and I just wanted to know, how can you just - -? And how can you - - yourself going back - - school to the - - are going to be denied a chance to be introduced to this wonderful school, has

wonderful teachers. I mean, I'm talking out of experience and I - - off quick just to be - - . It did really dig into my - - because it just - - . Ever since I was - - .

FEMALE VOICE: - - quiet, hello. We can't hear you up here.

MS. FLORES: Ever since I went to that high school and like changed - - I've decided to - - I want to be a teacher and be able to find my best teachers. I mean, this will - - experience a whole - - . One last thing as I close this - - , well, this includes - - to be—I want to explain what it feel to be here again. I want to - - .

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you very much. - - Sharon Richards.

MALE VOICE: Yes, one.

MS. SHARON RICHARDS: Strike four [phonetic] and telling who didn't fail to - - .

MALE VOICE: 22.

MS. SHARON RICHARDS: Okay. First I have everybody take on a bunch negative - - a male or a school like that I have to get it - - whatever. About a few months ago—about two months ago, I came here to - - and sat in the

library for the end one. And she said, this is another school, - - school are coming in both - - I don't care, they're coming in September. Two, she did say here for two, that's the - - I got. And my parents taught me, a half a lie is still a lie. There's no that lie - - , it's all a lie. Even - - a lie. Right now, all of the ghetto [phonetic] lie. Okay, please stand up - - four, five times I've been pissed off by the teacher.

Anyway, - - to be a teacher but it takes a real prisoner [phonetic] teach to sit down to listen to these students, and mingle with these students. You continue serving - - member, at least 100 of the students from the - - taught or press are devoted. There's a huge difference but it's called - - , being emotional, showing that you care. I'm talking because I went to school, my subject of high school dared me to go. This is the first choice of this school, went and left junior high. I was - - , I came to full orientation before I decided, okay, I like what I've heard and I let her come here. Is the case settling in here, I am going to school, I will come to call you.

I want to be a teacher, I switched. I decided to go into psychology because I did a few internships with both in a few junior high schools in high, I did not like what I see. I said I just have change, that was 10 years ago. Things haven’t changed, I started - - get worse. I’ve got the - - I have - - in my college years and - - concert. You could put 10 months here, you got three more, three high, two middle is one of the dropped schools. - - no face and don’t tell the middle.

Next they have it, okay. You got to celebrate by Chancellor Suransky. They say in this - - , we’ll lie in - - . That’s a politician. Don’t see up there and lie to me in front of my face, okay? I’d rather you sit on there and tell me the truth, and don’t give me no numbers, don’t run those numbers. I would like to sit down here in this school, spend a month. I come see what - - pretend to see this. Spend a month here, mingle with kids, mingle with teachers. I’m sure you’ll see a better opening, a more sense of what's going on in this school. You can't sit over there and look at numbers and you tell me, this, oh, this isn’t

like a school now.

I have been to - - , let me finish. I have been - - my attention. Can't stop - - , who know you're going to go all to finish. Yo, this time and they've come to this country and they go lost in the system, okay? And I sat with these kids and I will tutor them and I even taught them. Some of them drop out of school and then they go sit in at attendance school. And then when they come at them - - , for every kid because I'm going to listen to this - - . They're not even in school. The board of advocacy [phonetic], the good - - to find these kids no matter what's going on.

Because you know - - , my child's been out of school for weeks. Within months of surgery, that - - many because he has a lot of problems, okay? And the good thing about this school is I got a call every day from this school to find out what's wrong with my child, why my child is not coming to school. Would - - do that? I doubt it.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you very much. - - .

MALE VOICE: Hi, my name is - - and Deputy Chancellor Suransky, I think it was a very

clever move from you to use—to see and then send the time in the beginning so that nobody had left here, thank you very much.

I hope you all - - one of the spectator's eyes because they are many. If anything happens when you close the school and they have no place to go, and something happens then, that's on you. Because you're - - hear you say at one time that you taught us, when you - - that each student - - to graduate. I had just at a - - , I just want us to—I just want to say this. That I - - here for an edition for Fox News, because the way you're talking here, it sounds like you were auditioning for Fox News.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you, sir. The next speaker is - - .

MS. KELLY FLORES: Hi, my name is Kelly Flores [phonetic] and I'm assuming here at Berkley [phonetic] and first of all, okay, right now I'm pretty nervous because this is the first time I speak in public and I wouldn't be doing—it wouldn't be - - if I'm calm and my English teacher, Ms. Baker, yeah. This is the first teacher - - here to inspire us and I'm actually very emotional right now. This is the first

time I do this, the first time I speak.

And well that’s what they do, they inspire us. And well the teacher like - - record.

MS. SOBELMAN: Ms. Flores, - - .

MS. KELLY FLORES: Yeah, Mr. Decker [phonetic], he just had him strong. Felix is doing really fine and it’s something you wouldn’t understand. Obviously the speaker, not from what they - - after five minutes, I see the folks come in, they judge the school just like for five minutes sitting there. Five minutes is not enough for you to see how wonderful this place is and this is like my second home. It’s like - - coming here and if you close this down, you wouldn’t be closing down the school, you would be destroying a family. This is how I view my school, as a family.

Every teacher here, every teacher that was present, that’s the only way we wouldn’t have to - - understand but it would be cool to do. I mean with Ariza, yeah well, he holds the houses and he does a really a good job, he really does. And Mr. Ascona, yeah, he was the principal when I entered this school. And he greets my mom with a huge smile, like wow, it’s an amazing—no

teacher that I know has greeted my mom with such a warm smile like that. And so when the teachers serve us, they serve us with - - wake up. They - - my mom every time they see her, my single mom. They sit down and speak with her, and this is beyond teacher, student relationship, these are more like friends. And it's a beautiful community that you'll be destroying. You'll be separating a family, yeah, and that's the way it is.

And I hope you think about this and—give me a smile, I'm so sorry. This - - is my mom, hi mom. People with that - - will be doing and - - but yeah, I don't know. Please really think about it and, yeah, okay? And I was actually writing this but I guess - - from here because I would get lost with this, okay? But yeah, mostly - - read this until you have a - - the guys. He's talking like he has the flu. And I actually thought that this was never going to be able to, I'm sorry, yeah. I thought I wasn't going to be able to but I was able to just like I'm able to speak right now and - - now and I did - - later on, thank you.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you, Kelly. - -

Brooklyn. Speaker number 23, Celia Castilo and number 26, Sherry-Lynn Richards. Okay, so can we have Richard Shannon [phonetic] of the speaker - - , it's all now - - to the - - a chance to respond to the questions that were raised in the - - comment as well as the questions that were submitted. And just on the line folks, that he'll be responding to the questions. Some of them have been batched together so they're repetitive.

And as well, if there are questions that were submitted to the - - respond to tonight and that conversation will be included in the analysis of public comment which will be published on the Website and made available to the panel members prior to the vote and again, that takes place on February 9th as part of the technical - - , it's all now turn of the - - .

MR. SURANSKY: So, I want to acknowledge the panel but the question I had is a very national defense of what the school - - , the kids, the teachers have heard that the principal is someone who is - - going on for the - - in this accomplishment with parents. I've heard from the students, the powerful - - folks at - -

alternative support and alternative learning experiences, which will be - - prior. And I do want to say, there are a number of people who asked the question along the way. Is this decision really made? Is there a reason why we're here today?

And I want to tell you that everything that has been said has been recorded and as a partner, what we consider the Chancellor making a final recommendation to the council educational policy and then they may - - the constituents. So, in the past years, many of the proposals that have been submitted have been approved and there are also proposals that haven't changed and they're not going to.

And so it's not like we have made a decision, it is very important what people say. But I also want to speak to some of the specifics of what we said and I think there's some deep misunderstandings about what's happening. And a lot of people will ask the question, where will student from Washington Irving? They're going to be sent from school to school to school. And I just want it say again like I said at the beginning. There are

communities that every child has - - will have an opportunity to stay here until they finish.

And if they want to move, they can but no one is going to be forced to move. And so that is an important thing because the next - - that exist between the kids that we've heard speak tonight and their teachers, if those connections are powerful, those can continue. And the real question though as we think about this is, what's going to happen for the future students? And some of our students that spoke tonight asked this question and I imagine they're you're brothers and sisters. Now, I just want to share.

In four years before the last graduating class, we have here a school with less - - , there were a thousand ninth graders who went with the school and in 10th grade, there was 515 10th graders who made it to 10th grade. And in 11th grade there were 450 11th graders, and in 12th grade there were 226 12th graders. So along the way, what happened to those other students? Some of them were held back and continued in school, some of them dropped out, some of them

might have moved to other schools. We had from about 10 kids tonight who have had very powerful experiences but those hundreds of kids that haven't succeeded here, they weren't heard, and they have stories.

And that is not to put a—castigate them but I think that we know that we can do better, we can do better. And the question is how we do it. And we have - - this agreement about the best way to move forward and to do better for the kids in the future of the school. And I've heard loud and clear that the faculty, many of who spoke very passionately, believe that the work that they're doing is powerful and that they are - - . And it's here that that is happening for some kids. But for many, many hundreds of kids, it's also not happening, and that's not okay.

And as I think about the work ahead, our responsibility is to try and solve that. And I think that the proposal that we put forward to create new schools which could be made out of some of the great teachers that we've heard tonight. Every single teacher has a right to apply to teach in these new schools. It could

be made up of some of the leadership in the current schools. All of the people who made Washington Irving Washington Irving that are interested in participating in the future of this school, have an opportunity to choose to participate and - - to be part of that process.

And if they're strong and if they're doing great work, there will be opportunities. And if some of them are also - - proposal has passed choose to go and start other schools in other parts of the city. I told the story earlier of one - - high school, someone misunderstood that story and that school was phased out begin of 2001. Out of the Morris High School, there were seven new schools across the Bronx that were started by teachers from Morris High School. One of them was in the Morris High School campus, six of them were in other campuses. All of those schools are thriving and doing great work. There were many high school students there that were trapped in an organization that wasn't working for kids.

And it is possible to create a different organization. And of the questions that came up again and again in the past, is what's really

going to be different? Why can't we just do it here? and it’s a really difficult question to answer but having worked on this myself over the years, I’ve been watching many schools go through the process, it actually is very, very important to create a fresh start where a team of educators come together and build something from the ground up, built a new culture, bring some new students into the process and slowly grow that into something that is going to work very differently. And that might demand that the process look different in terms of what is taught.

It might be that the length of the - - is different, how many classes are at this peak might mean the number of kids that can succeed is different. It might mean something that the part of the curriculum is different. It might mean the way that enters work together - - all of these are - - .

And so what I’m asking you to consider as I present to you is also the possibility that maybe you’re wrong in your assumption that this can’t work. That the only way to succeed here is to continue doing what did do. Maybe that’s

not the best, and maybe it’s not about something seriously, maybe it’s not about the mayor not caring about kids, maybe it’s actually about people who do care, who believe it’s possible to do something different to what we have been doing and have proven that in many places across the city.

Now I want just to speak to the pressure of enrollment. Someone said while they’re great kids that enroll in the school or private school and they never did that. And there is something serious about it and that’s just not perhaps every time - - New York City when they go to high school has an opportunity to - - .

And most students for the last to get to one of the top 40. So a student might put a question to learn a bit as number 5 or as number one or as number 9. It is accepted to the school above - - than they will go to - - because that is their preference. And so yes but a kid could apply here as a matter of choice - - again it’s a - - and then go to Harvard.

And it’s not a - - it’s actually a chance for kids to make decisions - - and I respect that some parents who take their children to

school and not have very good experiences but that doesn’t mean that everyone who applies to the school actually put it as their first choice. That isn’t the - - .

Another - - and one of the parts that I have here, why is the school named persistently low achievements? How can a school succeed after being given that name? And I think it’s a fair question. This is not a name that the city gives to schools, this is something the New York State decides separate from the department of education, separate from the school, that’s a name that they have created when they say year after year after year - - .

And they created that and we have two levels. And another best to have score, what’s going to happen to this mandate if you say, is this some sort of political game to just deal with the - - .

And I want to be clear, what I said that the state has told us that we cannot send the money if are able to make plans and that we only have two options in how we spend money at this point in time because we have not changed the way teachers are evaluated in New York City because

we have not made a traditional agreement between the city and the union.

And that is one - - that’s about the - - . The other decision is what is the best thing for the school community and where will the kids to go and I heard that over and over again this evening. Where will the kids go. Where will the students that need a school like this go? And the answer is they’re going to go to - - . This is where the students will go. This is exactly where they will be in their future and I know that folks said that I was lying about the statistics.

But that’s also not - - from 7 to 4 has 6% self-potential, that is the city average. That is the city average for self-contained students, that’s what - - . It was also said that there are 16% Special Ed students. The city average is 58%. That doesn’t acknowledge that there - - kids that are gone.

You said that there are - - average learners, in other schools with less than the building we have 90% as the average - - or 30% - - . I came from a school that was dedicated to serving kids who were learning English for the

first time, I know how hard it is to work with those - - .

I think that the kids who spoke about that are powerful representatives. That doesn't change the fact that those kids can learn, they can learn about it and they can do that on average and that makes - - we can't accept that just because the kid is Special Ed of if the kid is an English language learner or if the children have choice if they aren't going to succeed.

Those types of kids deserve better and that is what this problem is about and it's fair to remember that - - to agree with the argument that to show it for another three or four years and possibly in another several other kids along the way, I think we can do better and I would hope that as we go forward in this, as we make the decision, as the - - goes, we will see one way or another what's going to happen and then we're going to need to continue to work together in the school community and figure out what is it that we're going to do to make sure that as an entity of the strong teacher - - , how can the students as the school is phased out, as

many of the strong teachers said, who have spent 30 years in the school and they've been inspirational to their students that they've come back to teach, that they've certainly become part of us.

And that is what we want. And those strengths need to continue to be part of that. and I urge you to - - , I urge you after we make this decision, if it doesn't make the way we want to continue to serve the students in this building and to continue to be part of the process and not make what we will seem three or four years down the road that the Washington Irving campus is a thriving place where many, many more kids have succeeded as a result of this transformation. That is all.

MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you Deputy Chancellor. So again I just want to reiterate that if additional questions or comments come to you after this evening, please do take advantage of the email and phone number to communicate with us.

The email is d02proposals@schools.nyc.gov and the phone number is 212-374-3466. And again comments this evening, the questions, all of

this will be mentioned including any analysis of public comment which is published on the website and provided to the Panel for Educational Policy prior to the hearing which will take place on February 9th at Brooklyn Technical High School.

So I want to thank everyone for coming and this public hearing is officially adjourned.

[END 265_592]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature

Date February 3, 2012