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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**

**Expansion of P.S. 72
Lexington Academy from Current
K-5 to K-8 at M072**

**10/1/13
5:30 p.m.**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MALE VOICE 1: Hello.

3 [Background noise]

4 MR. ANTONIO HERNANDEZ: Parents, I just want
5 to remind you, teachers, parents, community
6 advocates, supporters of the Lexington Academy
7 proposal just want to remind you we're going to
8 start promptly at 6:00, so if you want to say
9 anything you must be signed up and received a
10 number. So, please if you want to speak on
11 behalf or whatever you want to say, please make
12 sure that you're signed up outside because we're
13 going to start promptly at 6:00. I hope you
14 enjoyed our cheerleaders. They're not done, I'm
15 sure. So, thank you so much.

16 MS. AMANDA CAHN: Good evening. Thank you.
17 Good evening, this is a joint public hearing of
18 the Department of Education community education
19 council four and the Lexington Academy school
20 leadership team for the proposed grade expansion
21 of the Lexington Academy from K-5 to K-8
22 beginning in the 2014-15 school year. I am
23 Amanda Cahn, deputy chief portfolio officer and
24 tonight I will be the chancellor's designee for
25 this hearing. I am joined tonight by

1 Superintendent Ostralea, Principal Hernandez,
2 CEC Representative Ms. Foxe and SLT member and
3 PTA president, Ms. Cantor.

4 [Background noise]

5 MS. CAHN: This hearing is being recorded.
6 The purpose of the hearing is for you to provide
7 comments about the proposal. Before I describe
8 the proposal I want to make sure you are all
9 aware of the opportunity to provide your input.
10 All those who wish to speak must sign up in the
11 speaker sign up area located just outside the
12 auditorium. The sign up list will close in 15
13 minutes. Speakers will be given the floor in
14 the order that they signed up. All comments are
15 limited to two minutes. There may be elected
16 officials who arrive at different times
17 throughout the evening. If they wish to speak
18 we will do our best to accommodate them at the
19 first opportune moment. Those who are here at
20 the start of the public comment segment will be
21 asked to speak first. All comments will be
22 mentioned in the analysis of public comment to
23 be published and provided to the Panel for
24 Educational Policy the evening before the panel
25 votes. The vote is scheduled for October 15th,

1 2013. In addition, we welcome any comments and
2 feedback you may have at any time before the
3 panel votes on this proposal. The email address
4 and phone number where comments may be made are:
5 d04proposals@schools.nyc.gov and (212) 374-3466.
6 I'll now read the proposal summary. The DOE
7 strives to increase high quality options for
8 students. The proposal to expand the Lexington
9 Academy from a K-5 school to K-8 school
10 initially came from the school community. In
11 May, 2013 a grade expansion team composed of
12 Lexington Academy teachers, staff and
13 administrators submitted a formal application to
14 expand. That application was supported by
15 parents and the broader school community. This
16 suggests a high level of satisfaction within the
17 school and its parent body and strongly implies
18 that an expanded school will suit the needs of
19 children in district 4. This grade expansion
20 will allow the Lexington Academy to serve
21 students in elementary and middle school. This
22 proposed expansion is not expected to impact the
23 Lexington Academy's existing prekindergarten
24 program. The Lexington Academy currently offers
25 a Spanish elementary dual language program.

1 This proposed expansion will allow the
2 Lexington Academy to continue providing its
3 students with dual language services in middle
4 school. This building has the space to serve
5 both elementary and middle school students.
6 This expansion proposal will result in more
7 students being served in this building and more
8 efficient use of building space within district
9 4. This proposal also will provide parents and
10 students with an additional middle school
11 choice. If this proposal is approved, 5th grade
12 students will be able to apply to middle school
13 at the Lexington Academy through the district 4
14 middle school choice process for the 2014-2015
15 school year. Students enrolled at the Lexington
16 Academy as 5th graders will have admissions
17 priority if they wish to remain for 6th grade.
18 Other eligible 5th grade students in district 4
19 will also have the opportunity to apply to
20 attend middle school at the Lexington Academy.
21 Thank you. The next presenter will be Principal
22 Hernandez.

23 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ms. Cahn. So,
24 Ms. Cahn said two minutes. I don't know, I can
25 talk for 20, you all know. Oh, I have more than

1 two minutes, thank you. So, as all of you know
2 at the last PTA meeting that we had we had over
3 100 parents come out and support and to be
4 informed as well about the proposed middle
5 school. And the energy was high and the love
6 was there for this proposal as can be evidenced
7 by the sea of orange that we have in the
8 auditorium right now. So, thank you all here
9 that are wearing orange and even if you're not
10 thank you for supporting us today. Thank you.
11 As Ms. Cahn was speaking I was taking some notes
12 and she used some very important words. She
13 talked about high quality options. We are a
14 high quality option now and we will continue to
15 be a high quality option in middle school. And
16 as Ms. Cahn was speaking I saw Natasha's mom,
17 right, we just say Natasha's mom, Michael's mom,
18 Natasha's dad, right, Jesus' mom, Jesus', right,
19 that's just how we do it. Although I do know
20 your names Ms. Rodriguez, Ms. Rosado, don't kid
21 yourself. As Ms. Cahn was talking about giving
22 choice to parents because that's what this is
23 about, giving high quality choice to our
24 parents, to put their children in a safe school,
25 in a school that pushes them, all I saw from Ms.

1 Rodriguez is that she nods right now is
2 absolutely we're rated incredibly high on their
3 survey, the parent's survey, not Tony Hernandez'
4 survey, the parent's survey is rated by you, the
5 parents, the teachers and you've rated our
6 school incredibly safe. Also, when it came to
7 rigor you rated us at the 90th percentile. It's
8 not 100 yet, but we're working on that. And we
9 will get there. Of course, when we get there,
10 there moves. So, I want to thank all of you for
11 the support today, for the support yesterday and
12 for the support tomorrow. This is a proposal,
13 it's not a done deal, there are still things we
14 need to do such as receiving a C or better on
15 our school progress report. And after that, of
16 course, we also have the hard task and the hard
17 job of ensuring high quality common core aligned
18 curriculum across all subject areas, not ELA and
19 math, art, music, phys ed. For those of you who
20 remember, our phys ed teacher also incorporated
21 writing into his curriculum and we will continue
22 to do so. To provide character education to our
23 students, that is absolutely critical. In a
24 world where we are rapidly seeing violence and
25 disrespect in our communities, Lexington Academy

1 prides itself on its safety and its character
2 building. And that, of course, is not something
3 we do alone. Parents, we do it together. We
4 need you, you need us and our children need us.
5 After school programming, we will continue to
6 provide and increase our after school
7 programming. Already I'm working with one of
8 our teachers, Ms. - - , who is looking into
9 bringing chess in the schools for our students.
10 We will continue to provide our students with
11 special needs, we do not close the door on our
12 special needs students. We don't do that. We
13 love them and we know them by name, not by a
14 funding amount and that is something we pride
15 ourselves in at Lexington Academy. The door's
16 always open. Parents, you know this. We never,
17 ever, ever say not now to you. The door is
18 open, you see me every morning, some of you are
19 nodding. I am downstairs, Ms. Garin, stand up.
20 Ms. Garin, our assistant principal, is always
21 down there. Ms. Rado, please stand up. Ms.
22 Rado, our dean, is always there. You know who
23 to go to. We know who you are. And that is
24 what puts the word "community" in a community
25 school district. And we're proud to be that.

1 We provide wellness education and wellness
2 counsel information to all of our students,
3 three years in a row we're proud to be selected
4 as gold standard for health and fitness and
5 receiving the gold award three years in a row.
6 But, we don't just educate the child, we also
7 educate our parents. We have full two levels of
8 education for our parents where they come in
9 here from 8:30 in the morning until 4:00 in the
10 afternoon to learn English and to become
11 proficient so they, in turn, can support their
12 children. That, parents, teachers, visitors,
13 that is who we are. That is why we feel we need
14 to continue this. Today I had the awesome
15 opportunity, Lucius Young, our network leader,
16 sat with me, thank you for being here, Lucius,
17 thank you. One of my former 5th grade students
18 came back to visit me today and he's on his way
19 to medical school. And we want that not for one
20 child, but we want it for 500. We want it for
21 800, we want it for the 1,100,000 that are part
22 of New York City public schools and it starts
23 right here, today, at the Lexington Academy for
24 our kids. As Ms. Cahn said, this wasn't a Tony
25 effort, I didn't wake up one morning and decide

1 "Oh, jeez, let's open up a middle school."
2 No, this was sitting in SLT meetings with our
3 parents, please stand up Ms. Flores, stand up.
4 She never, ever lets me forget anything, thank
5 you. It's sitting at the SLT meeting with our
6 PTA president, Ms. Cantor, and being told why
7 does my child have to leave? I don't want my
8 child to leave. And I kept saying "Well, it's
9 not really up to me, I didn't make the rules of
10 this whole crazy putting kids out of elementary
11 school so early in their lives. I didn't make
12 that choice. That was a New York City choice."
13 And then the parents kept saying "Yeah, but why
14 and how do we change it?" And when the parents
15 asked me how do we change it and I didn't have
16 an answer it was time for me to look for an
17 answer. And so, a year later here we sit with
18 the answer to our parents your children do not
19 have to leave, you do have a choice and by
20 virtue of being here today you're proving that
21 you have choice, that your voice is powerful.
22 So, thank you so much for being here, thank you
23 for supporting us especially the school
24 leadership team. If you could please stand up
25 as well as Margie, you're part of the elementary

1 school process, Ms. Garin, these are the
2 people, Ms. Cantor, please stand up, these are
3 the people, Ms. Flores, you need to stand up
4 because you nudged me. These are the people who
5 have made today possible. Thank you so much.
6 Thank you, thank you, thank you. And now I have
7 the pleasure of introducing somebody I've been
8 working with at the district level leadership
9 meetings along with Ms. Estrella. Our CEC
10 representative from district 4, Ms. Foxe, who
11 has the best smile in the world. I just love
12 her. Doesn't she?

13 MS. FOXE: Thank you very much. And good
14 evening. It was my pleasure and honor to be
15 able to represent the community education
16 council tonight for this school. This is a
17 wonderful school that has been in our community
18 for many years and as your principal has pointed
19 out, great things happen here in the building.
20 And we know many of your students have started
21 their foundation here for elementary and what's
22 important is once you have put together a strong
23 foundation you have to continue building on
24 that. And so, as a community education council
25 we support you. All of the families here, all

1 the families that attend this school we want
2 to support you in your effort to continue
3 building so that your little ones can become
4 very successful and productive and successful
5 men and women in the future. So, we support you
6 in your effort to expand, you have our full
7 support. Okay?

8 [Background noise]

9 MS. FOXE: So, have the honor of introducing
10 or passing over the mike now to your PTA
11 president, Ms. Cantor.

12 MS. CANTOR: Thank you. That's from the
13 bottom of my heart. Gracias [speaking Spanish]
14 for coming tonight because I know it's really,
15 really hard. As a working parent I know how
16 difficult it is just to make time and it is
17 impressive. I mean, look at all of you here
18 which shows that you want this. You want this
19 for your children. [Speaking Spanish] I was a
20 former student here. That's why I put my son in
21 this school. I was here when there was a middle
22 school [speaking Spanish]. When I was here, it
23 was easy. You knew everybody [speaking Spanish]
24 everybody knew you. So, you could focus on your
25 work, you can focus on your study. I don't

1 agree with sending the kids out into the world
2 after 5th grade. I don't agree this process of
3 having to choose schools and walk and just do
4 all of this stuff only to do it again in three
5 years [speaking Spanish]. And then to do it
6 again for high school and then to do it again
7 for college. It's too much. I think the middle
8 school here, bringing it back again is the
9 greatest thing that we can do. I mean, and I
10 speak selfishly for my child because I don't
11 want him to go anywhere else [speaking Spanish].
12 I think that here, at Lexington Academy, they
13 know your children. They know you. You know
14 what you're getting into, you know what you can
15 expect [speaking Spanish]. The children stay
16 focused. I mean, some of my best memories were
17 here. I knew everyone, everyone knew me. We
18 all got along and even when we didn't we all
19 worked it out. And we're not striving to try to
20 get along with 500 other kids in the school or
21 300, 1,000, I mean, I've seen these places that
22 are so huge that you're just you're child is
23 going to get lost [speaking Spanish]. Ms.
24 Cantor, Ms. Rodriguez or Justin's mom [speaking
25 Spanish]. That's how he knows you. He knows

1 your children, we know your children [speaking
2 Spanish]. We should all work together and just
3 push this because we need this. We all need
4 this. And I mean, I don't know what else to say
5 except this would be the greatest thing and the
6 best thing we could do for our children because
7 we keep them with us for a little bit longer,
8 just make them stronger before we have to send
9 them out to some huge school [speaking Spanish].
10 Thank you.

11 MS. CAHN: We have now concluded the formal
12 presentations and we will now open the floor for
13 public comments. Speakers will be given the
14 floor in the order in which they signed up. All
15 comments will be limited to two minutes and I
16 think we'll have timer down here in the front.
17 Excellent, she's waving her hand. And I will
18 call five speakers at a time so you know you're
19 coming up and I'll do my best with my names.
20 So, first we'll have Valentina Velez Rocha, Paul
21 Jeffries, Claudia Torres, Naomi Rosario and
22 Lissette Flores.

23 MS. VALENTINA VELEZ ROCHA: Okay.

24 MS. CAHN: Yes.

25 MS. ROCHA: Good evening everybody. I'm

1 very thankful here to be here this evening in
2 support of PS 72 Lexington Academy and your
3 proposed grade expansion. I'm here representing
4 [speaking Spanish] which as many of you know is
5 a museum that promotes Latino arts and culture
6 just on 5th Ave and 104th Street so we're
7 neighbors. And we're glad to be here today. Of
8 course, we have a really beautiful partnership
9 with Lexington Academy for reasons of physical
10 proximity, but beyond that also because of our
11 shared values. And whether it be the district
12 art nights that we've had the pleasure of
13 hosting here and seeing some of the amazing
14 artwork from the students with Ms. Ramos, some
15 of the amazing theatrical productions from Ms.
16 Perez, some of the amazing percussion from our
17 half type Mr. H as well. We can see that the
18 health of this school is strong based on the
19 arts that are present here. The second thing
20 that we know is a really big litmus of the
21 health of a school is parent engagement. And in
22 particular we've had some parent workshops at
23 the museo to engage parents with the common core
24 curriculum through the arts and the turnout from
25 Lexington Academy was spectacular. And that,

1 for us, signaled that there is an authentic
2 parent voice here and that the bridging to the
3 arts is something that is happening on their own
4 time outside of the school walls and so we want
5 to continue to support Lexington Academy in its
6 growth. We look forward to continue being a
7 resource for Lexington Academy and for the
8 middle school students. And we're just, again,
9 very grateful to be here in support of the
10 expansion and look forward to working together
11 in the future. Thank you.

12 MR. PAUL JEFFRIES: It's okay. Hi, good
13 evening everyone. My name is Paul Jeffries and
14 I am the director of City Soccer in the
15 Community. We provide in school and after
16 school support for this school and we couldn't
17 be more proud and honored to be a part of this
18 community. What really attracted us to this
19 school, from the very moment you walk through
20 the door you encounter a security guard by the
21 name of Ms. Yvette. And you get a sense of
22 family. It's a very safe as the principal has
23 noted, it's a very warm and it's a very enriched
24 environment. What I've seen first hand is four
25 years ago when we began the soccer program which

1 is using soccer to promote healthy lifestyles,
2 character education and align ourselves with
3 important values that Lexington Academy
4 espoused. And most importantly, all of this is
5 adopted and implemented by very caring,
6 dedicated teachers. There was a group of kids
7 who really took to soccer. And for four years
8 with these programs we saw a foundation being
9 built into their lives. It was a great shame
10 for us to see how they may get lost in a middle
11 school. They returned to this school, they
12 graduated last year and returned to school every
13 day because they wanted to stay connected to
14 their mentors, their friends and people that
15 trusted them and felt trusted by. And so, we
16 saw that, but also recognize what a great value
17 and asset they could be for the younger grades
18 at Lexington Academy. And so, we invited them
19 to help participate as junior coaches to help
20 serve in the after school program for their
21 younger brothers and sisters and 1st and 2nd
22 grade children. So, as I was just walking in I
23 saw, probably using my two minutes up here, but
24 I saw a very appropriate sign. Please allow our
25 family to grow. It's so suited. Thank you,

1 than you for listening. Okay.

2 MS. CAHN: Thank you.

3 MS. CLAUDIA TORRES: Thank you. Hi, good
4 evening. My name is Claudia Torres. Both of my
5 children come here. My oldest one, now, is in
6 5th grade and I really, really would like for her
7 to remain here. The trust that has been built
8 not only with the teachers, but with the
9 counselors and the staff is just tremendous. It
10 helps her focus, her teachers are very attentive
11 and I believe that they have the manpower and
12 they're willing to do the expansion. I believe
13 they have the room necessary for it. I believe
14 they did their best last year when the city
15 changed the testing, the kids were very anxious.
16 Especially my daughter, she was antsy about
17 taking the test. And I believe they did their
18 best that they could with the time allotted to
19 them to teach them and prepare them to take the
20 examination. I really do hope that the Board of
21 Ed really decides to expand the school. I mean,
22 it will be amazing especially for the parents
23 who live in the area, they don't really have to
24 think about sending their kids downtown or
25 further uptown, it takes them out of their way

1 and the kids are already used to everyone here
2 and they know all the children here and they
3 have that trust that it's really hard to come by
4 nowadays and that's pretty much all I have to
5 say. Thank you.

6 [Background noise]

7 MS. NAOMI ROSARIO: Not the mike, my voice
8 is too loud.

9 MS. CAHN: Okay, go for it.

10 MS. ROSARIO: I'm just going to do it
11 without the mike because my voice is really loud
12 and if I do the mike--

13 MALE VOICE 1: [Interposing] Excuse me - - .

14 MS. ROSARIO: --you sure. Oh God.

15 [Crosstalk]

16 MS. ROSARIO: Hi, my name's Naomi Rosario.
17 I'm a parent to students that come here. I was
18 a former student myself. I actually graduated
19 out of here from the 8th grade and when we had
20 middle school it was a success. It felt like
21 family growing. And I think our kids would be
22 much more comfortable with having the support,
23 the love of people that they have grown with and
24 have gotten to know than to run out at the 5th
25 grade and start all over, start with new

1 principals and teachers and friends. So, I
2 believe that Lexington Academy can do this.
3 That sign up there, the strength of the future,
4 we did that when I was in the 6th grade. And I
5 believe that that's what this is. So, for
6 Lexington Academy to get back a middle school
7 would definitely be a great thing. At first,
8 when I heard of it, believe me, I was against
9 it. No, the students are not the same anymore.
10 Parents have changed, but you know what, no.
11 With Mr. Hernandez being a principal and was
12 once a former teacher and we know him as a
13 teacher. My children had him, my sister, I have
14 faith and belief that Lexington Academy will
15 succeed as a middle school and Ms. Cantor, I do
16 remember her being in school when I was in
17 school. So, therefore as a PTA parent I feel
18 so, so comfortable with us getting this. So, I
19 would appreciate and love and speak for those
20 who do not speak and are scared to speak, please
21 do give Lexington Academy that chance. And you
22 will see we will be the strength of the future.
23 And for my last and closing I do want to thank
24 Mr. Hernandez because my oldest who is only 16
25 years old has made it to Penn State University.

1 Thank you, Mr. Hernandez.

2 MS. LISSETTE FLORES: [speaking Spanish].

3 MALE VOICE 1: Are you saying the school?

4 MS. FLORES: [speaking Spanish].

5 MALE VOICE 1: I think the school is not

6 only like a building, - - education - -

7 [speaking Spanish] thank you.

8 MS. LYNN CHAMBERLAIN: Good evening

9 distinguished panelists, parents, community

10 members, fellow teachers. My name is Lynn

11 Chamberlain and I'm here both as a bilingual

12 speech pathologist at the school and as a parent

13 of two children, one with autism and one general

14 education student. And I can attest that the

15 work that we do with our students here in the

16 speech language community integrating with

17 teachers, with the community, is extremely

18 important. It takes years to build

19 relationships with parents. Once these

20 relationships are built the transition the

21 following year in providing services is

22 seamless. As a parent, when my two children

23 were in elementary school I was at school every

24 day. I had my thumb on the pulse, I knew what

25 was happening. When my children left for middle

1 school I can tell you I was at school maybe
2 three, four times a year. I had no clue what
3 was happening, it was not the same feeling.
4 There is such a comfort in knowing that we could
5 continue to service the students who hopefully
6 our goal is to get them out of therapy, but for
7 those who need to remain, for us to be able to
8 service them, continue working with the parents
9 and the teacher, is a real gift. I urge you to
10 strongly consider this. It is the best option
11 for our students, our community and our school.
12 Thank you.

13 MS. CAHN: Thank you. Our next speakers
14 will be Lissette Flores, oh, I called her
15 already. Irina Rosario, Anne Nichols, Crystal
16 Martinez and Jennifer Cosmie.

17 MS. IRINA ROSARIO: This is my son Jesus
18 Rosario. My name is Johnny Rosario - - Rosario,
19 I was the PTA president last year. And I'm an
20 active parent at the school. I was an SLT
21 member for quite a while. I've moved very far
22 away so I can't be as active here as I can be,
23 but I really wish that I could be because this
24 school really welcomes the parents and we're
25 very involved, this is the place where it's a

1 competitive curriculum, they're really
2 teaching these kids not because they have to
3 teach them these things, but because they really
4 want them to learn. I brought my kids to school
5 here from the Bronx initially because I needed
6 to find an environment for them that truly was
7 going to be safe for them that I could feel that
8 it could leave them there and they would be
9 cared for the way that they were in my home. I
10 was a stay at home mom for a very long time.
11 Because of my experiences with the world in my
12 youth I made sure that I was always front and
13 center in my children's lives. And here I was
14 welcome to do that. He graduated and was put in
15 a school because we weren't a zone school, he
16 was put in a school that was kind of a left
17 over. I wanted him to be put in the Patrick
18 Henry school and there were 32 children there
19 per class. So, he couldn't do there. The
20 school that he's at, the environment is
21 completely different. It feels institutional
22 and today coming home I let him walk the three
23 or four blocks from there to here and I wait for
24 him on the corner of 103rd and Lexington and he
25 walks with another parent and child. But,

1 somehow he still managed to get punched in the
2 face today on the way here. And that would not
3 happen if he was here. When I came to pick up
4 my two small ones they're in 1st grade and this
5 is home to them. And everyone loves them here.
6 And I want to give them the opportunity to have
7 that safe in New York City it's a cold city.
8 But, here it still manages to be warm and loving
9 and that makes them learn harder and grow harder
10 and they want to impress their teachers and they
11 want to do better for longer because if there's
12 a middle school here they'll have that desire
13 for a longer amount of time. So, it's very
14 urgent that we do continue that safe time for
15 them just a bit longer, thank you.

16 MS. CAHN: Here you go.

17 MS. ANNE NICHOLS: Hello, my name is Anne
18 Nichols and I am a teacher here. I've been a
19 teacher for 12 years, so all my teachers.

20 [Background noise]

21 MS. NICHOLS: I was thinking about what I
22 was going to say here and I can come up here and
23 speak a lot of jargon about the rigor and common
24 core, but there was one pivotal event that
25 happened last year at the end of school last

1 year that I knew solidified my belief that we
2 need to expand our school to become a middle
3 school. One of my students, so the last day of
4 school and this was the toughest student I would
5 say in the whole school, very exterior, very
6 tough, very hard to get into him. And he just
7 last day of school burst in tears. He ran, he
8 hugged me, he turned around and looked for Mr.
9 Hernandez and brought tears to both our eyes and
10 I knew then that we were sending him into arms
11 that we didn't know. So, I've heard a lot of
12 trending statements about we know our kids and
13 that's one thing as teachers we work together
14 collaboratively, we plan together
15 collaboratively to work for our kids because we
16 know our kids and we know what they need. So, I
17 am in full support of Lexington Academy growing
18 stronger.

19 MS. MARTINEZ: Okay. Hi, good evening
20 everyone. I'm Ms. Martinez, I have two
21 daughters here in Lexington Academy, one in pre
22 K and one in 1st grade. And I just want to say
23 to please, pretty please, allow our family to
24 grow because being here has been awesome. I
25 remember when my daughter was going to start

1 kindergarten with Ms. Heidi and Ms. Yuri and I
2 cried because she had to go to her zone school
3 which wasn't this one. And I literally cried
4 because I was so accustomed to everyone here and
5 we're family. We're not just teachers, mothers,
6 fathers, guardians, principals, PTA, we're a
7 family. And like my sign says "Please allow our
8 family to grow." - - say - - .

9 STUDENT: Hello, I love Lexington Academy
10 and Lexington Academy is my family.

11 MS. JENNIFER COSMIE: Hi, none of you know
12 me. My children will be starting here tomorrow,
13 my name is Jennifer Cosmie. I came here
14 tonight, I found out that you guys are willing
15 to do a middle school and as my children to be
16 starting here tomorrow I would really look
17 forward to that because my babies are my babies.
18 And I don't them separated, I just don't want
19 them in a different school. I would like for
20 them to be able to keep on growing and growing
21 and like I said, you guys don't know me, but I
22 look forward to working with the PTA, look
23 forward to working with anybody in the school in
24 whichever way I can. And I like I said, I
25 believe we'll look forward for you guys having a

1 middle school growing along with the school.

2 You want to say anything? No, okay.

3 MS. CAHN: Our next speakers will be Jose
4 Rodriguez, Tracy Joyner, Mike Thompson, Adora -
5 - and Nicole Vasquez.

6 MR. JOSE RODRIGUEZ: Good evening everyone.
7 I am here to support the proposal. I am Jose
8 Rodriguez, parent of two children and the reason
9 that I am here supporting the proposal is
10 because I going to tell you a little story about
11 my children. They came to this school and the
12 support that we got from the principal and the
13 teachers was great and they have a big change of
14 their attitude, grades and behaviors. But, we
15 made a mistake and we made a mistake to change
16 their school from this school to another school.
17 I said my wife and I and we have really
18 difficult experience where the children was
19 bullied, the teacher we don't have the
20 communication that we have in here with teachers
21 and the principal. It wasn't there that
22 communication like is in here. And also, so we
23 came back and thank you for Mr. Hernandez we
24 have the children back in here, they make a big
25 change and they going stronger and stronger.

1 They're distracting me. Yes, and another
2 thing is children, people, they are difficult
3 sometimes to make a transition and age of the
4 transition for 5th grade to middle school is
5 difficult for children especially at that age
6 they can be lost easier. Thank you so much.

7 MS. TRACY JOYNER: Oh, can I use it? I
8 wrote notes on it, sorry. Hi, my name is Tracy
9 Joyner, I'm a 4th grade teacher here at Lexington
10 Academy. This is my first year as a member of
11 the staff. So, my experience has been short,
12 but it's definitely been impactful and I just
13 wanted to say that even though it's my first
14 year, it's really apparent to me that children
15 and students are the number one priority here.
16 So, I think that that's something that's really
17 important to keep in mind. A lot of times kids
18 are talked about in terms of test scores or
19 their achievement levels, but they're also
20 people. And this school really provides a
21 supportive environment for them and gives them
22 so many opportunities to become successful
23 members of the community. There are so many
24 programs offered to them, so many things that
25 I've never seen in other New York City schools,

1 so I think that having a middle school would
2 allow for those opportunities to continue and
3 also my kids have soccer tomorrow, they had
4 drama yesterday, they're getting to do all of
5 these things that not only do they love doing,
6 but it makes learning fun for them and they
7 should continue to have those opportunities for
8 as long as they can.

9 MR. MICHAEL THOMPSON: Hi, my name is
10 Michael Thompson. I've been a teacher here for
11 three years. I taught 5th grade, 4th grade and
12 now 5th grade again. And as an upper grade
13 teacher I've only had about a year or two to
14 instill the lessons in the students that I've
15 had both academic lessons and life lessons.
16 Having a middle school would prolong the time
17 that I have as well as my colleagues to continue
18 to work with the students that we have. I'm
19 sure that there are a lot of other great
20 teachers and a lot of other great schools in New
21 York City. But, one thing I do know for sure is
22 that the teachers here care, they love their
23 students and they work hard.

24 MS. ADORA: Hi, good evening. My name is
25 Adora. I'm the owner of La Casa bookstore which

1 is the only independent bookstore here in East
2 Harlem. It's just one block away on 103rd and
3 Lexington Avenue. And I'm here tonight to speak
4 to you on why the bookstore and why I support
5 the expansion of Lexington Academy to a middle
6 school. Mr. Hernandez and the entire
7 administration of Lexington Academy supported me
8 in opening a bookstore in 2010. We opened just
9 last year in 2012. But, when I first met with
10 Mr. Hernandez he immediately said yes to
11 partnering with me in planning and opening a
12 bookstore. And since then we've had many, many
13 programs. We actually together founded the East
14 Harlem Children's Book Festival which takes
15 place every June and it brings children's book
16 writers, illustrators, people from the community
17 to the playground at PS 72 in promoting literacy
18 and the arts. We also have brought to the stage
19 where you are sitting now people like Juno Diaz,
20 Madeline Santiago and Sandra Cisneros and the
21 opportunity that students have to meet writers
22 that they admire is a wonderful thing. And for
23 those reasons, the fact that there is so much
24 parent involvement as I've just been listening
25 to alumni to current PTA president being a

1 student here, that speaks a lot to the
2 integrity and to the value of an education here
3 at Lexington Academy, so that's it. Gracias.

4 MS. NICOLE VASQUEZ: Good evening everyone.
5 I'm Nicole Vasquez, I'm actually a parent of a
6 5th grader. This is a decision for the children
7 and I actually asked my son. I'm going to make
8 it short and sweet. But, I asked my son because
9 he's honest with me and I was "Hey, what do you
10 think about a middle school?" And he's "You
11 know what, I wouldn't mind doing that." And I
12 said "So, why?" And he says "You know what, I
13 build relationship with my friends and I don't
14 want to leave them." So, from that decision I
15 made my decision and I decided that with all the
16 programs that you guys are going to provide for
17 them it's just a blessing for the kids. And I
18 think all the kids here, are you ready for a
19 middle school?

20 [Background noise]

21 MS. VASQUEZ: And that's their decision.

22 MS. CAHN: Thank you all. The speaker list
23 is now exhausted. Again, we welcome any
24 comments and feedback you may have at any time
25 before the Panel for Educational Policy votes on

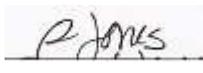
1 this proposal at its October 15th meeting.
2 I'll say the email address and the phone number
3 again where comments can be made. The email
4 address is d04proposals@schools.nyc.gov. And
5 the phone number is (212) 374-3466. Thank you
6 for your participation, this joint public
7 hearing is now closed.

8 [END RECORDING]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

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6 Signature 

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