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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF  
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**  
**Expansion of Success Academy -  
Williamsburg at K050**

**June 2, 2015**

**5:30 p.m.**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MS. ALICJA WINNICKI: So we can start this  
3 joint public hearing, this is a joint public  
4 hearing of the Department of Education, the  
5 Community Education Council 14, and the School  
6 Leadership Team of Junior High School 50, John  
7 D. Wells and Success Academy Williamsburg. I am  
8 District 14 Community School Superintendent  
9 Alicja Winnicki. We have asked the District 14  
10 Community Education Council and the school  
11 leadership teams of both schools, John D. Wells  
12 Junior High School 50 and Success Academy  
13 Williamsburg to participate in this joint public  
14 hearing. So I know it's raining outside, and we  
15 want this joint public hearing to be as  
16 productive as possible. I am asking everyone to  
17 please respectfully listen to all the speakers,  
18 and we will move the agenda so everyone can  
19 speak and everyone can be heard. I will read  
20 the proposal. I will read through. We are  
21 joined by, and we will follow the protocol, and  
22 I thank you all in advance for your cooperation.  
23 Today I am joined by Principal Denise Jamison  
24 from MS 50, John D. Wells, and by Mario Aguila,  
25 the Vice President of the District 14 Community

1 Educational Council, Mario Aguila. We are also  
2 joined by Michael LaFrancis from the Success  
3 Academy. And we are also joined by the  
4 president of the Community Educational Council,  
5 Maria Farley. And by Antonio Reynoso, from the  
6 city council, and by Katarina Matic from  
7 Assemblywoman Davila's office, Katarina. Please  
8 note that this hearing is being audio and video  
9 recorded. We also have interpretation services  
10 here for our speakers and the audience. Please  
11 listen patiently to the proposal. The purpose  
12 of this hearing is for you to provide comments  
13 about the proposal. Before I describe the  
14 proposal, I wanted to make sure you're all aware  
15 of the opportunity to provide your input. All  
16 those who wish to speak must sign up in the  
17 speaker signup area located just outside of this  
18 auditorium. The signup list will be closed in  
19 15 minutes. Speakers will be given priority in  
20 the order that they signed up to speak. All  
21 times are limited to two minutes, and we will be  
22 monitoring this time. As you present your  
23 comments, please focus on presenting your  
24 opinion in a respectful tone as these hearings  
25 are open to all members of the community, and we

1 want to create an environment that is  
2 respectful of the entire community. The purpose  
3 of this hearing is to present your feedback and  
4 to also have opportunity to hear others'  
5 comments. These goals can only be accomplished  
6 if the tone remains calm and respectful. We  
7 will have other elected officials who may arrive  
8 at different times throughout the evening, and  
9 if they wish to speak we will do our best to  
10 accommodate them at the first opportunity.  
11 Those who are here at the start of the public  
12 comments segment will be asked to speak first.  
13 All comments, this is important, all comments  
14 submitted prior to 24 hours before the Panel for  
15 Educational Policy votes on this proposal,  
16 including the comments presented at this  
17 meeting, will be mentioned in the analysis of  
18 public comment to be published and provided to  
19 the panel the evening before the panel votes.  
20 The vote is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>.  
21 In addition, we welcome any comments and  
22 feedback you may have outside of this hearing.  
23 The email address and phone number where  
24 additional comments may be made after tonight's  
25 meeting are [d14proposals@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:d14proposals@schools.nyc.gov) or at

1 the phone number (212) 374-0208. All comments  
2 received before 6:00 p.m. on the day before the  
3 Panel for Educational Policy meeting - - or  
4 email will be addressed by the DOE in the  
5 analysis of public comment which is made  
6 available to the public after 6:00 p.m. on the  
7 date before the panel meeting. Let me read the  
8 proposal summary. The purpose of this proposal  
9 is to, and please let me go through the  
10 proposal, so then we can go straight to our  
11 speakers. Proposal summary: the purpose of this  
12 proposal is to expand the grades served by  
13 Success Academy Williamsburg from kindergarten  
14 through grade four, to kindergarten through  
15 grade five, beginning in the 2016-17 school  
16 year. Success Academy Williamsburg is an  
17 existing charter school located in Building  
18 K050, currently serving students in kindergarten  
19 through grade three. Success Academy  
20 Williamsburg is co-located in K050 with Junior  
21 High School 50 John D. Wells, a district middle  
22 school serving students in grades six through  
23 eight. K050 also houses two community-based  
24 organizations, El Puente and RAPP. - - proposal  
25 approved by the Panel for Educational Policy in

1 March 2012, Success Academy Williamsburg has  
2 already been approved to serve students in  
3 kindergarten through grade four beginning in the  
4 2015-16 school year. Success Academy  
5 Williamsburg will also serve one section of  
6 full-day pre-K beginning in the 2015-2016 school  
7 year. Junior High School 50 will continue to  
8 serve students in grades six through eight in  
9 K050. Additionally, Junior High School 50 is  
10 part of the School Renewal Program. If this  
11 proposal is approved by the Panel for  
12 Educational Policy, it will not impact the  
13 school's participation in the School Renewal  
14 Program or its ability to offer additional  
15 programming and supports for students. As part  
16 of the School Renewal Program, JHS 50 will adopt  
17 a Community School model beginning in the 2015-  
18 16 school year. While the DOE does not expect  
19 this potential expansion to impact any tailored  
20 services, extended instructional time or other  
21 additional resources, Junior High School 50 may  
22 receive as a result of the School Renewal  
23 Program and the school's designation as a  
24 Community School, the DOE will reevaluate the  
25 space allocations outlined in the attached plans

1 after the JHS 50 particular Community School  
2 model is developed. The DOE will continue to  
3 work closely with the Junior High School 50  
4 community to ensure all students receive the  
5 individualized support they need. This proposal  
6 is intended to ensure educational continuity for  
7 students currently enrolled at Success Academy  
8 Williamsburg. If this proposal is approved,  
9 future fourth graders at Success Academy  
10 Williamsburg who fulfill promotional  
11 requirements will matriculate to fifth grade may  
12 do so at Success Academy Williamsburg in K050.  
13 Pursuant to recent amendments to the New York  
14 State education law which provides certain new  
15 and expanded charter school with access to  
16 facilities, Success Academy made a colocation  
17 request to the DOE for space in District 14 for  
18 the fifth through eighth grades at Success  
19 Academy Williamsburg. Although Success Academy  
20 requested space for the fifth through eighth  
21 grades of Success Academy Williamsburg, at this  
22 time the Department of Education is proposing to  
23 site Success Academy Williamsburg's fifth grade  
24 only at K050. Details of the proposal,  
25 including current building utilization rates at

1 K050 and projected utilization rates - - this  
2 proposal, if approved, can be found in the  
3 educational impact statement and building  
4 utilization plan, copies of which are available  
5 here tonight. So thank you for listening very  
6 patiently. I really appreciate it, and now I  
7 would like to invite Principal Jamison to please  
8 make her statement.

9 MS. DENISE JAMISON: I'd like to start by  
10 saying that I am not here to oppose the  
11 expansion of Success Academy. I am here to make  
12 an appeal for our students. We are, at MS 50,  
13 are excited. We are enthused. We have been  
14 infused with new energy as a result of having  
15 become a Community School recipient and as a  
16 result of becoming a part of the Community  
17 School program. We are thrilled to be a part of  
18 it. We are thrilled to have another opportunity  
19 to continue to be of service to this community.  
20 Through Community Schools we will be able to  
21 provide additional services to the community at  
22 large, medical service, mental health services.  
23 We are also looking to bring in immigration  
24 services and expand the programs that we already  
25 have existing in this school as a result of our

1 partnership with El Puente. The Community  
2 Schools grant has only helped to solidify an  
3 existing partnership that predates my tenure  
4 here at MS 50 - - for the past 12 years. The  
5 renewal school program will support us with our  
6 academic program. We work very hard to make  
7 sure that our students do progress. And with  
8 the help of the renewal school program we know  
9 that we will be able to take our students even  
10 further than what we already have done. My  
11 concern is - - of this great opportunity to be  
12 able to transform our school, rejuvenate our  
13 school, renew our school, and to turn our  
14 situation around for - - that we will not have  
15 the opportunity and the space that is necessary  
16 for the anticipated growth that we are seeking  
17 to have take place in this facility. So my  
18 issue is not with Success Academy. You guys are  
19 successful, and we're glad about it. We have a  
20 wonderful relationship with Success Academy.  
21 For the time they've been here, or whatever, the  
22 problems we had encountered, they were minor and  
23 have been resolved very quickly. So my issue is  
24 not about colocation or expansion. But again, I  
25 want to make sure that we have the room that we

1 will need to grow, because trust me, we will  
2 grow.

3 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. I would like to  
4 invite Mr. Michael LaFrancis from Success  
5 Academy - -.

6 MR. MICHAEL LAFRANCIS: Hello. Thank you,  
7 Miss Denise. Hello, my name is Michael  
8 LaFrancis. I am the assistant principal of  
9 Success Academy. Ms. Johnson, our principal, is  
10 devastated that she's not here today. She's out  
11 of the country on a school trip that's been  
12 scheduled for months and would like me to say a  
13 few words on her behalf. So I'm going to do my  
14 very best to - -. Success Academy Williamsburg  
15 is honored to be a part of the phenomenal  
16 Williamsburg neighborhood and District 14. As a  
17 resident of Williamsburg and the principal of a  
18 school that serves predominantly District 14  
19 children and families, I am so pleased to be a  
20 part of a neighborhood that believes so strongly  
21 in education, diversity, and excellence. We are  
22 fortunate to be in a neighborhood and a building  
23 where parents stand up for the education rights  
24 of their children, and I commend you all for  
25 being here tonight. We are also very fortunate

1 to be in this building. From our perspective,  
2 we have a terrific relationship with MS 50, from  
3 - - tutoring programs to meet-and-greets, and  
4 making signs and cards - - state testing, we  
5 thank MS 50 for their tremendous support as we  
6 open our doors. We look forward to continuing  
7 to work together in supporting MS 50 and the El  
8 Puente - - Leadership Center to make this the  
9 best school community it can be. Because at  
10 Success Academy we want all kids to receive an  
11 incredible education. Thank you. When we  
12 opened these doors three years ago, I promised  
13 Success Academy Williamsburg families that we  
14 would be a school where we would work together  
15 to make possibility a reality for their  
16 scholars. I spoke to families about this  
17 because I truly believe that this is the mission  
18 of schooling. A life worth living is one that  
19 is full of dreams and opportunities. And this  
20 is something that I believe and want for all  
21 children of this neighborhood, of this city, and  
22 of this country. We are on the way to make this  
23 dream a reality for our scholars. 95% of our  
24 children in K through three are reading on or  
25 above grade level. Our kindergartners are

1 solving math problems. Our kindergartners are  
2 solving math problems that include fractions,  
3 multiplication, and division. Our third graders  
4 have performed over 300 science experiments.  
5 Our chess team is third in the nation. We  
6 recently hosted an art show containing over 400  
7 beautiful works of art from every scholar in the  
8 school. Our scholars sing - - yoga, they play  
9 soccer, basketball, track at a competitive  
10 level. We are here today to make sure that this  
11 phenomenal education can continue here in the  
12 neighborhood where our scholars live. Without  
13 this space, we would not be able to fulfill our  
14 promise to our parents. And more important, our  
15 promise to our kids, the promise that they will  
16 have an education that supports whatever hopes  
17 and dreams - -. In addition, every day we - - a  
18 focus on a shared vision. We become more and  
19 more like a family. This building is our home.  
20 It is where I shake hands every morning with  
21 children. It is where we have the - - family  
22 events. It is where I have to kick teachers out  
23 in the evening because they are working too  
24 hard. This building is where we are comfortable  
25 and - -. This is where we get closer and closer

1 to fulfilling our goal every single day. This  
2 is also a school that the community continues to  
3 support - -. This past year SA Williamsburg  
4 received more than 2,400 applications for fewer  
5 than 75 open seats. There were 395 applications  
6 for fourth grade seats alone. Please, let us  
7 stay in our home, and please let us make the  
8 hopes and dreams of our scholars a reality.  
9 Thank you.

10 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you, - - our next  
11 speaker is Maria Farley, the CEC president - -  
12 the District 14 Community Education Council.

13 MS. MARIA FARLEY: - -. The CEC is here to  
14 lend its support to - - in partnership with - -.  
15 We want to be sure that the programs that are  
16 being - - are given the full support that they  
17 need in order to succeed, and that means making  
18 sure that they have the adequate space available  
19 to provide students and families of this  
20 community with academic enrichment, family  
21 support programs, as well as, most importantly,  
22 - - enrollment. We will for sure let the DOE  
23 know - - regarding space allocation as these  
24 issues of space are taken into account. The CEC  
25 is very excited about these initiatives, and we

1 look forward to the growth - - school. Thank  
2 you again.

3 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you, - - Farley. And  
4 now the vice president of the CEC, Mario Aguila.

5 MR. MARIO AGUILA: - - of the CEC - - from  
6 the very beginning - - and the fight - -  
7 everyone should have equal rights - -. My  
8 argument here is that this - - city council,  
9 senator, in the House, in Albany - - because we  
10 need equal rights for every kid. If I - - it  
11 serves its community. It serves its students.  
12 It serves its country. It serves - -. We  
13 should all be given equal rights. Thank you.

14 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you, Mr. Aguila. I  
15 would like to ask Councilman Antonio Reynoso to  
16 speak now.

17 MR. ANTONIO REYNOSO: How is everyone doing  
18 tonight? - - this meeting, so I'm very happy to  
19 hear that and to see that. So good evening to  
20 everyone. My name is Antonio Reynoso, - -  
21 council in the 34<sup>th</sup> district, which encompasses  
22 Williamsburg and Bushwick in Brooklyn and  
23 Ridgewood in Queens. I want to thank - - and  
24 Ms. Denise Jamison, Success Academy - - for  
25 having me here today - -. I'm here to speak - -

1 Success Academy - - to the fifth grade. If  
2 approved, the expansion would take effect in the  
3 fall of 2016. I'm here to - - in the School  
4 Renewal Program, the Community School program  
5 scheduled to commence this fall. In previous  
6 meetings that we've had - - there was a common  
7 understanding this investment of the Department  
8 of Education - - Junior High School 50. That  
9 has since changed - - seen more money and more  
10 resources coming into the school - - Junior High  
11 School 50. So want to I thank the Department of  
12 Education - -. I'm happy that the community-  
13 based organization was awarded this opportunity  
14 - - El Puente, an organization - - executive  
15 director - -. To give you guys some history, in  
16 the eighties and nineties this community was  
17 plagued by drugs and gang violence. And El  
18 Puente on the corner opened up a place that kids  
19 could come and breakdance, - - into this school,  
20 and we're so grateful that - - for Junior High  
21 School 50. I believe that this is - - Community  
22 School - - if approved for 2015 and '16 Junior  
23 High School 50 will serve 180 to 210 sixth to  
24 eighth graders, and Success Academy Williamsburg  
25 will serve - - students. If approved for 2016

1 and '17, a year later Junior High School 50 is  
2 projected to serve 165 to 195 sixth to eighth  
3 graders, and Success Academy at - - funded by  
4 the DOE, and - - expansion of enrollment here at  
5 Junior High School 50. I would like first to  
6 offer my support for the proposed expansion into  
7 the fifth grade for Success Academy. I strongly  
8 urge the Department of Education to give a  
9 second assessment of the building utilization  
10 plan after the - - to consider the expansion  
11 allocation. At this moment what I'm asking is  
12 to allow the Community School - - and the  
13 renewal program to - - Success Academy to the  
14 fifth grade so that students don't need to leave  
15 for one year - - continue their education here  
16 in this building. So as long as the Department  
17 of Education doesn't mess this up, this will be  
18 a great opportunity - - together and make that  
19 happen. Thank you.

20 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you Councilmember  
21 Reynoso. I would like to invite Katarina Matic  
22 from Assemblywoman Davila's office, Katarina.

23 MS. KATARINA MATIC: Good evening. My name  
24 is Katarina Matic. I work presently with  
25 Maritza Davila, who represents - - 53, Bushwick

1 and Williamsburg. Unfortunately the  
2 Assemblywoman could not join us today. She is  
3 in Albany in a session night, but I am here to  
4 convey her words - -. As a State Assembly  
5 member of the 53<sup>rd</sup> district and a former school  
6 board president, I am - - experience - -  
7 proposal - -. I am glad to see the two schools,  
8 JHS 50 and Success Academy Charter School, co-  
9 located in building K050, are willing to work  
10 together to be making changes - - which should  
11 be - - to increase student enrollment in public  
12 schools. On March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, the Panel for  
13 Educational Policy approved the siting and co-  
14 location of SA Williamsburg's kindergarten  
15 through fourth grade education. SA Williamsburg  
16 has been - - Department of Education - -. I  
17 believe that the DOE has proposed the site as  
18 fifth grade only. This way SA Williamsburg can  
19 accomplish its vision to - - that all children  
20 from all backgrounds can succeed without - -  
21 Community School - - JHS 50 will have a unique  
22 opportunity to use its new resources as well as  
23 the advantage of - - fifth grade to attract  
24 students and increase its enrollment in grades  
25 six through eight. JHS 50 - - have begun

1 implementation of integrated academic arts and  
2 leadership development - - for students and  
3 families - - community by creating relationships  
4 with students, families - - educational  
5 workshops, family support services, and - -  
6 leadership center and offer summer and  
7 afterschool programs - - professional arts  
8 training and leadership development, innovative  
9 arts projects, - - parents, teachers, and  
10 community - - as well as other - - professional  
11 development and enrichment activities. I give  
12 my full support to their program because it  
13 encourages parents, families, and communities to  
14 be actively engaged in their public school.  
15 Despite all the effort and resources being  
16 poured into - - at JHS 50, DOE projects that its  
17 enrollment will dramatically increase by 2016-  
18 2017 - -. If this - - implemented by the DOE -  
19 - schools, how is it possible that DOE does not  
20 believe that its own initiative will succeed?  
21 According to the building utilization plan, DOE  
22 projects 165 to 195 enrollment in JHS 50 for  
23 academic year 2015-2016, down from its current  
24 enrollment of 286 students. Using these  
25 projections, DOE will take away nine full-sized

1 classrooms and two half-size rooms from JHS 50  
2 and allocate them to Success Academy  
3 Williamsburg in academic year 2015-16 and  
4 additional two full-size classrooms in 2016-2017  
5 academic year. In addition, due to projected  
6 increase in enrollment, the community - -  
7 allocated significant - - in rooms that are  
8 considered shared space, such as library, gym,  
9 theater room, - -. The space allocation in the  
10 current building utilization plan should be  
11 revisited - -. This proposal is a unique  
12 opportunity for the two schools to maximize  
13 their resources and work together to provide a  
14 quality education. However, projections by the  
15 DOE when it comes to colocation proposals of any  
16 kind undermine the potential of public schools.  
17 Many colocations - -. Given these points, I - -  
18 the DOE to - - the Panel for Educational Policy  
19 votes on - -.

20 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. I would like to  
21 invite Jacob Vidal [phonetic], representing  
22 Senator Dilan.

23 MR. JACOB VIDAL: Good evening. Senator is  
24 in session right now, so he couldn't be with us,  
25 so I'm going to speak on his behalf, just to let

1 you know that I'm here - - to listen to both  
2 sides, to both the charter and the district, to  
3 make sure we hear both sides of the story to  
4 make sure that we know what's best for both  
5 schools. Thank you.

6 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. I would like to  
7 invite Ms. Ginger Brown from the MS 50 School  
8 Leadership Team to please come up.

9 MS. GINGER BROWN: Good evening. My name is  
10 Ginger Brown, and I am a teacher and a member of  
11 - - leadership team. As a member of - -  
12 community, I feel fortunate that our school was  
13 chosen to be a community and renewal school. It  
14 is my understanding that our students will have  
15 more opportunities than ever before to be part  
16 of new academic programs and extracurricular  
17 programs. At 50, we are excited for our  
18 children - -. We at 50 - - for students. 50  
19 deserves to be rewarded the same opportunity to  
20 grow as one community. There's plenty of space  
21 in this building to - -. This is not an  
22 argument over taking over, one school taking  
23 over the other school. This is about how to  
24 share space as one community, so that all  
25 children have the same opportunities, all

1 children are equal. All children are entitled  
2 the education, and to be part of the school  
3 community. And this - -. Thank you.

4 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you, Ms. Brown. I  
5 would like to invite Michele Listokin from the  
6 Success Academy school leadership team.

7 MS. MICHELE LISTOKIN: Good evening,  
8 everyone. My name is Michele Listokin, and I  
9 support Success Academy Williamsburg from out  
10 network office. It's very nice to meet you all.  
11 Success Academy Williamsburg is part of the  
12 Success Academy's Charter School network. Last  
13 year, our schools ranked in the top 1% in math  
14 and top 3% in English language arts in the  
15 state. Our scholars learn chess and debate,  
16 take dance and musical theater, have science  
17 five days a week, participate in HTML coding and  
18 art and soccer and take field studies all over  
19 the city. We are so proud of what our scholars  
20 have been able to do across the network and here  
21 at Williamsburg. As you may all know, there is  
22 strong parent demand for high quality schools in  
23 Brooklyn. As Principal LaFrancis mentioned  
24 before, we received more than 2,400 applications  
25 for fewer than 75 open seats, and there were 395

1 applications for fourth grade seats alone.  
2 Our experiences with colocations have been very  
3 positive and productive. Wherever we are  
4 located, we believe in creating a learning  
5 environment that is safe and conducive to  
6 learning for all students. K050 has been no  
7 exception. Over the years, we have enjoyed a  
8 positive relationship with our co-located  
9 school, and we look forward to continuing to  
10 work with them. Thank you.

11 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. I would like to  
12 invite Ms. Frances Lucerna from El Puente.

13 MS. FRANCES LUCERNA: Good evening,  
14 everyone. Buenos noches. My name is Frances  
15 Lucerna, and I know many of you do know me and -  
16 - organization that I represent. For those of  
17 you who do not, I am the cofounder and executive  
18 director of La Puente, a community-based  
19 organization here in Williamsburg that has been  
20 here for 33 years and whose leadership  
21 represents, like myself, people who have been  
22 born, raised, and nurtured in this community and  
23 who have made this community what it is today,  
24 who have been committed to sustainable change,  
25 change that will not only be for today, but for

1 generations to come. And I just want to say  
2 that because as I stand here and I look at all  
3 of you, I realize that this is one community.  
4 We are all parents. We are all members of this  
5 community, and we are all raising our children  
6 in this community and have the highest hopes for  
7 their future, for them to be loved and to be  
8 nurtured to truly aspire to their greatest  
9 potential. And that's what tonight is about and  
10 should always be about. It should not be about  
11 which school is going to get the most out of it.  
12 It's really about how we all come together and  
13 to understand that a success for one school is a  
14 success for all of our children. And so this is  
15 what this night is about. MS 50, who we have  
16 partnered with for the last 15 years, have  
17 gotten a tremendous opportunity that is going to  
18 serve all of our children, particularly the  
19 students of Success Academy who will be  
20 graduating into the fifth grade. Hundreds of  
21 thousands of dollars for the next three years  
22 are being invested in MS 50, and we are being  
23 able to partner with them to create a model,  
24 successful, and we hope the kind of innovative  
25 school that will be a model for other schools in

1 the rest of the city. - - in 1993, - - and I  
2 had the great opportunity to be the founding  
3 principals of the El Puente Academy of Peace and  
4 Justice. - - it was first high school in the  
5 United States focused on leadership and human  
6 rights. It has been consistently for the last  
7 22 years an A-plus school, and it was the first  
8 Community School in New York City. - - that we  
9 have for MS 50. And so as we - -, we really  
10 support the expansion of Success Academy to the  
11 fifth grade - - we are really committed to, is  
12 to implore the DOE to exercise their leadership,  
13 to honor the commitment - - in MS 50 for the  
14 next three years so that it can grow into its  
15 full capacity and to be the kind of school that  
16 you all, we all, and everybody in this community  
17 who want our children to be in. So tonight I  
18 hope all - - understanding that as we support  
19 and we ask the DOE to exercise its leadership in  
20 terms revisiting the building utilization plan  
21 so that it really does ensure MS 50 the  
22 opportunity to grow and for Success Academy to  
23 grow, that we are growing, and we are supporting  
24 the kind of - - kind of quality education and  
25 the great schools that we want for all our

1 children. Thank you so much.

2 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. We have now  
3 concluded the formal presentations, and we will  
4 now open the floor for public comments.  
5 Speakers will be given the floor in the order  
6 that they signed up. All comments are limited  
7 to two minutes. A second microphone will be set  
8 up to my left. We will begin by inviting  
9 student speakers first. So I will call students  
10 to please line up over - - the side right here -  
11 -. Let me call your names, and you will speak  
12 in the order that I call your names, okay.  
13 Christopher Tapia [phonetic] from MS 50, Tabitha  
14 Vazquez [phonetic], MS 50, Jenisa Martin  
15 [phonetic] of MS 50, and - - MS 50. Then we  
16 will invite Angela Somer [phonetic], Success  
17 Academy, - - Success Academy, - - from Success  
18 Academy. So this will be the order. Now let's  
19 listen to our students when they speak.  
20 Christopher.

21 MR. CHRISTOPHER TAPIA: I just want to say  
22 that I would like to thank Success Academy for  
23 being here - - Miss Jamison, great principal.  
24 One thing I want to say is that MS 50 and  
25 Success Academy are - - for the children and

1 that we both have been growing a lot - - money  
2 from the DOE for our new science lab and for the  
3 library, so that will benefit both Success  
4 Academy and 50. The library, so we can get new  
5 books to read, to research for projects, to do  
6 homework and just - - our education. The  
7 science lab will also help us to learn - - for  
8 experiments and also - - in class. - - Success  
9 Academy - - that they are very - - children and  
10 that these young children are very intelligent,  
11 and they learn very quickly.

12 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you, Christopher. - -.

13 MS. TABITHA VASQUEZ: Good evening - -. My  
14 name is Tabitha Vasquez - - Middle School 50 - -  
15 . I also - - Middle School 50 - -. Thank you.

16 MS. WINNICKI: Alicia?

17 MS. ALICIA SOMER: Hello, my name is Alicia  
18 Somer, and I am a current student here at - -  
19 great to see other kids, our teachers and our  
20 parents excited about - - programs that - -  
21 Community School - -. I care about my school,  
22 and I want it to be able to - - prepare you for  
23 a better future. - - so we can have a library,  
24 and - -. As Success Academy - -.

25 MALE VOICE 1: Sorry, ladies and gentleman,

1 just common courtesy, just quiet on the side  
2 conversations. It takes a lot for students to  
3 get up and talk in front of the community, so we  
4 want to - - their voice is heard by everyone in  
5 the auditorium. So while we're telling them to  
6 speak up, it's difficult for them speak up if  
7 you're having side conversations. So - - to  
8 show that respect, that would be appreciated.  
9 Thank you.

10 MS. SIENNA KIRKLAND: Good evening, ladies  
11 and gentleman. My name is Sienna Kirkland  
12 [phonetic]. I am a parent - - here to support -  
13 - the changes occurring in our school. We are  
14 very happy that the DOE finally decided to - -.  
15 For example, - - library. As the students MS  
16 50, we want to be able to look back and say yes,  
17 - - that our school needed to grow.  
18 Furthermore, - -. Yes, I believe Success  
19 Academy is successful. Yes, I believe Success  
20 Academy - - education - -. Thank for you  
21 listening, and have a nice day.

22 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. Angela Gomez  
23 [phonetic]. - -.

24 FEMALE VOICE 1: Hi, hello. My name is - -  
25 I want to be a person in life that succeeded.

1 And - - anything that I needed. I - - to  
2 learn. I - - I need to know how to - -  
3 division, and this school got me, they got me  
4 everything I needed to know. They got me - -  
5 for something - -.

6 MALE VOICE 2: Hi, my name is - -. We need  
7 fifth grade because we want to get to our dreams  
8 and get to our goals.

9 MS. WINNICKI: Let's give these students a  
10 round of applause. Thank you. I will - -  
11 speakers now, and there will be a person that  
12 will time the speakers for two minutes. I will  
13 call four speakers at a time. Please line up by  
14 the microphone, and we'll listen to your  
15 comments. Anthony Tapia [phonetic]. Please let  
16 me read their names. - - Pilar Ruiz [phonetic].  
17 Please come to the microphone, and - - Tapia.

18 MR. ANTHONY TAPIA: Good evening, everyone.  
19 My name is Anthony Tapia. I'm a community  
20 member for all my life. I was raised here, and  
21 I went to this school. I went to Junior High  
22 School 50. And I'm a product of Junior High  
23 School 50. And who I am today, as I'm trying to  
24 become a pillar of my community. And that's why  
25 I stand here today in front of you. And I want

1 you to understand that I'm not here to put  
2 down Success Academy. I'm - - the community - -  
3 but what I want you to understand - - my school  
4 - - where I came from, the opportunity to grow  
5 and become what it was. The old motto of my  
6 school was - -. Let us get back to the  
7 excellence - - Junior High School 50. And I  
8 know, and I know - - and I'm not trying to hold  
9 back any child from education, any child. We  
10 all - - but we're asking to let Junior High  
11 School 50 grow - -. I grew up in the  
12 neighborhood. I've seen this neighborhood  
13 change from what it was to what it is now. I've  
14 seen it go from bad to good, so keep us - -  
15 Junior High School 50 is a pillar of this  
16 community, and it doesn't need to go away. And  
17 it does need to get smarter. It needs to get  
18 the opportunity to grow, and to grow with you  
19 guys, be a part of you guys. - - for lasting  
20 change. You understand? And that's all I want.  
21 I want opportunities to happen so thank you and  
22 please, we're not trying to take anything away  
23 from you. We're trying to add on. Thank you.

24 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. Next - -.

25 [Background noise]

1           MALE VOICE 3: I am also an alumni here  
2 at, I used to go here four or five years ago.  
3 And I wish I had the opportunity that these kids  
4 have now - - with the staff that was - -, and I  
5 think that both schools deserve an equal  
6 opportunity to grow, and together, not separate,  
7 not against each other, but together as one  
8 community.

9           MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. Tara?

10          MS. TARA BURKE: Hello, my name is Tara  
11 Burke [phonetic]. I have been a resident in  
12 Williamsburg for 11 years now, and also I'm the  
13 mother of a third grade scholar. And I really,  
14 - - in 2012. I can really see everybody in here  
15 wants to work together for the same thing, but I  
16 think we can all say we love Success Academy.  
17 As a parent, I believe our kids are getting this  
18 top-notch education, and we want to not only see  
19 it through to fifth grade. We would love to see  
20 it all the way through high school. But we want  
21 to work with everyone, and we just want the  
22 correct allocation of space, I think based on  
23 classroom size and based on everyone's needs,  
24 and we'd would love to see everyone flourish and  
25 grow. But we really think that - - hopeful

1 they'll put a preschool here as well, so - -  
2 and I do hope that this gets voted - -.

3 FEMALE VOICE 2: [Foreign audio 00:59:35 -  
4 01:01:35].

5 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. - - Mario Rafael  
6 [phonetic], and Claudia Lopez, [phonetic],  
7 please come up. - -.

8 FEMALE VOICE 3: Hi, everyone. I am a proud  
9 Success Academy parent, and I'm here - - and we  
10 have - - school. He has grown so much - -.  
11 He's finishing second grade, and he's reading -  
12 - fourth grade. - - fifth grade. I would love  
13 to see - - through high school as - - said  
14 earlier. They do an amazing job with their  
15 children - -.

16 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you.

17 FEMALE VOICE 5: I love all my teachers. -  
18 - I love this school.

19 MS. WINNICKI: - -.

20 FEMALE VOICE 6: [Spanish audio 01:04:30 -  
21 01:06:20].

22 INTERPRETER: - -. Thank you.

23 FEMALE VOICE 7: [Spanish audio 01:06:40 -  
24 01:08:59].

25 INTERPRETER: - - since the morning hour,

1 it's a smile on his face. - - from the  
2 Success Academy. More importantly, we need this  
3 space, this school. Our children are prepared.  
4 Every time I call the office, - -. And our  
5 teachers take care of our children. Thank you.

6 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. - - so please  
7 listen to the speakers while they speak. Karen  
8 Camp [phonetic], Rashid Fermiz [phonetic],  
9 Maritza Alvarez [phonetic], and - -. Karen?

10 MS. KAREN CAMP: My name is Karen Camp, and  
11 I have been living in this community for 11  
12 years. And as anyone who lives here knows,  
13 we're constantly seeing changes. As a matter of  
14 fact, I was walking here from the subway with my  
15 daughter. - - bar, and almost every week, when  
16 I walk my daughter to school, I see a new bar.  
17 There's tobacco shops in 2015. Who would've  
18 thought tobacco shops - - up in our  
19 neighborhood? There's hairdressers, there's  
20 restaurants, and these all are - -. These are  
21 all non-essential things. They're nice things,  
22 but they're not essential. And I thought to  
23 myself if we as a community can open up all  
24 these different establishments that bring in  
25 money, can't we just let needy kids into the

1 school? And I really do not believe, unless  
2 I'm totally missing something, that the success  
3 of MS 50 and the success of Success Academy are  
4 mutually exclusive. As a member of the  
5 community, I want both to succeed. And I mean  
6 that. I really do mean that. And I also want  
7 to say one thing, that having a second grader in  
8 this school is an opportunity to see - - but I  
9 think because they like the school - - provide a  
10 terrific education. But you know, I just hope  
11 that all - - have the same goals in mind, and  
12 that is that all of our kids can have a good  
13 education. I applaud all the middle school  
14 teachers here, and my time is up. So thank you  
15 very much.

16 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. Rashid?

17 MR. RASHID FERMIZ: Good evening, everyone.  
18 So glad - -, all right. Thank you for coming  
19 out today. My name is Rashid Fermiz. I'm a  
20 second grade teacher here at Success Academy in  
21 Williamsburg. - - all our kids here at Success  
22 Academy Williamsburg. And may I say I'm very  
23 appreciative of the diverse culture and  
24 experiences that Williamsburg has here. I'm  
25 very excited to be working here. Working - -

1 Success Academy - - education. I had to work  
2 diligently to be the first in my family to  
3 graduate from college. A lot of these scholars  
4 here, they're working toward the same goals.  
5 They're working toward the same, they're laying  
6 that foundation right now. In first, second,  
7 and third, in kindergarten, in third - - fourth  
8 grade. What I noticed that this is a community  
9 where teachers work. They - - in order to see  
10 them become great individuals, become aware  
11 individuals, and to be great individuals who can  
12 achieve anything. One I thing I noticed, - - as  
13 well, and these kids learn from each other.  
14 They - - each other. Everything that I bring to  
15 them, they bring to themselves whatever they're  
16 learning - -. One thing I know is if we have  
17 the space, when we get the space, I tell you  
18 this community is going - - great. They're  
19 going to foster better relationships. They're  
20 going to foster a better community here in  
21 Williamsburg with MS 50 and the great community  
22 - -. Thank you so much.

23 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. Maritza Alvarez?

24 MS. MARITZA ALVAREZ: [Spanish audio  
25 01:14:20 - 01:14:25]. Welcome, everyone. My

1 name is Maritza Alvarez, and I am the second  
2 grade teacher here at the college. It is such a  
3 pleasure to be with you all today, especially in  
4 my very own community. I am a Brooklyn native,  
5 born right here and raised right here in  
6 Williamsburg. I remember when I was younger. I  
7 was so fascinated with my neighborhood's  
8 culture, - -, the music, the shopping, the - -  
9 out loud. I mean - -. I just knew that  
10 Williamsburg was the best place to be, and  
11 nobody here could tell me any different. My  
12 family did all they could, just like you all to  
13 make sure I got the best education you can  
14 imagine. I knew that - - graduate school and  
15 become something greater for me, but for my  
16 community as well. I went to school right here  
17 in this neighborhood, and - - and I did all that  
18 I could to get to college. But when I got to  
19 college, I felt like I wasn't ready. I felt  
20 like everything that I had done throughout my  
21 years was for nothing. I felt like I was robbed  
22 out of an education. When I got in competition,  
23 I had to work twice as hard. - - I noticed that  
24 those As and Bs in high school that I had gotten  
25 meant nothing, because when I got to college,

1 those Cs and Bs were really - -. So in  
2 conclusion, - - college, I notice that having  
3 great education is essential to be successful.  
4 And here - - not only - - but for the parents as  
5 well. So here I stand, a proud advocate - - to  
6 success.

7 [Background noise]

8 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. - -.

9 FEMALE VOICE 8: [Spanish audio 01:16:52 -  
10 01:20:34].

11 INTERPRETER: - - second grade here at  
12 Success Academy. I was born and raised in this  
13 community. I went to public and private schools  
14 in this community - -. I had love, and I had  
15 parents that were interested in my academic  
16 progress - -. So when it became my turn to pick  
17 the best education for my boys, I was - - very  
18 lucky that - - here at Success Academy - - all  
19 parents want their children to be happy and to  
20 make progress as much as possible. That's - -  
21 Success Academy. Now my daughter is reading  
22 above her level. She's surpassed in  
23 mathematics, music, art and science. She has  
24 gained - -. Success Academy has been the best  
25 option for our family.

1 MS. WINNICKI: - - Juanita Alvarez  
2 [phonetic], Maria Gurano [phonetic], and - -.  
3 Please come up to the microphone - -.

4 FEMALE VOICE 9: Hi, - - second grade  
5 teacher here at Success Academy. Every day I am  
6 so impressed by the learning that goes on here  
7 and the dedication and joy that - -. On my  
8 first day - -, my first class - - Success  
9 Academy to teach was math, and I have to tell  
10 you this was the first time I did a math class  
11 that I smiled. I was so annoyed - -. Usually  
12 when it comes to math, I have this twisted,  
13 frustrated look on my face. 'Cause growing up,  
14 my teachers and my parents told me that well  
15 maybe math just isn't for you. And maybe it's  
16 not meant to be, and you should focus elsewhere.  
17 Maybe you're just not good at math. And in this  
18 class, I knew I am not bad at math. I just  
19 never had the right tools. If I had been had  
20 taught math the way they teach math here at  
21 Success Academy, I would've known that I'm  
22 actually pretty good at math. At Success, there  
23 is no right or wrong way to solve a problem.  
24 Yes, there's a correct answer, but our style - -  
25 options and given the opportunity to experiment

1 with numbers. Seeing the smiles on my  
2 scholars' faces when they complete a math  
3 problem is probably one of the most rewarding  
4 parts of my day. Watching them try to solve one  
5 number story in three or four different ways is  
6 amazing. And my scholars are six, seven, or  
7 eight years old. I started for working for  
8 Success about a year ago, and joining Success  
9 Academy was one of the best decisions I've ever  
10 made. The scholars here are developing their  
11 own - - to solve math problems, analyzing and  
12 discussing essays, poetry, and fiction with  
13 their classmates. They're learning about  
14 ecosystems and the - - and frequency of sound.  
15 Every day I come to work excited to see what - -  
16 my scholars will have. And I am so excited to  
17 see where they will grow. Thank you so much.

18 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. Juanita Alvarez.  
19 Juanita? Maria Gurano?

20 MS. MARIA GURANO: My name is Maria Gurano -  
21 - I'm also a parent with two daughters here at  
22 Success Academy, kindergarten and second grade.  
23 I was born and raised in Brooklyn too. Went to  
24 New York City public school, - - family - -  
25 whatever you want. And I'm so thankful for

1 that. And I came back to - - in 2004 to make  
2 my home here and for my children. And when I  
3 take my children - - 'cause this is not what I  
4 wanted for my kids. And then Success Academy  
5 came along. And - - and the teachers, and I get  
6 emotional - - so much - - what they do. And  
7 unless I'm mistaken, this proposal, which was  
8 read earlier, specifically said that it did not  
9 impact MS 50's current or future programming,  
10 which I'm - - about, because I went to New York  
11 City public schools, junior high schools, - -  
12 it's amazing for you guys. I hope they make it  
13 work. But again, I don't think it's mutually  
14 exclusive either, and I don't see why Success  
15 Academy can't get their fifth grade - - they  
16 flourish as well, unless the DOE is - -. But  
17 anyway, thank you so much for all that you guys  
18 do, and I - -.

19 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. - -.

20 FEMALE VOICE 10: Hi, name is - - second  
21 grader - - University of Michigan. I've been  
22 living in Williamsburg for 33 years. I'm 22  
23 years old, and I've been living on the - -. I  
24 went to many different public schools in  
25 Williamsburg, and I struggled with an identity

1 crisis when I was younger, and - - success  
2 here and - - school being diverse, that was  
3 something that I needed for my daughter. And  
4 she is also a part of the El Puente Saturday  
5 school - - program. And I enrolled her in that  
6 because my daughter is half-Hispanic, and I need  
7 her to have that culture, you know, part of her  
8 life, and that's something that I know that I  
9 cannot do, or her dad can't, and - - community  
10 and things like that. I just want to say one  
11 thing. I feel that El Puente is a really good  
12 program that our kids are in, and I feel that if  
13 Success and El Puente join together, it will be  
14 like unstoppable. Those school programs will  
15 really make a big change in our community, and I  
16 think that that is something that we do need  
17 here in Williamsburg. Thank you.

18 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. - - Beverly  
19 Charles [phonetic] and - -, please come up.

20 FEMALE VOICE 10: Hello, - -. My daughter  
21 has been a scholar at Success Academy for three  
22 years, since - -. And - - the last few years -  
23 -. I just wanted to talk about how Success  
24 Academy is like a home away from home and - - my  
25 daughter. Her teachers, the administration,

1 other staff members - - me, myself, my child,  
2 and - - parents and other scholars with dignity  
3 and respect, and I admire their dedication. I  
4 admire the hard work - - public school teachers  
5 - - as well. So I can recognize talent when I  
6 see it, and - - to flourish. I can see it in -  
7 - from any other schools or any other programs.  
8 I can say from my heart that Success Academy - -  
9 scholars - -. Thank you.

10 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. - - Beverly  
11 Charles?

12 MS. BEVERLY CHARLES: - - Success Academy  
13 parent. I'd like to take a moment to just  
14 acknowledge Success Academy teachers. There  
15 aren't that many schools where you encounter  
16 teachers as dedicated as Success teachers,  
17 teachers that are - - telling scholars, they're  
18 telling them they're doing a good job and keep  
19 up the good work. Teachers - - tests, who wish  
20 them good luck. But the amazing thing is that  
21 not only are the teachers dedicated - -. Your  
22 child is not just a face or a - -. Your child  
23 is someone, someone who - - excellence because  
24 they've had a Success Academy education. So  
25 respectfully, we ask that we are granted the

1 space - -.

2 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. - - .

3 MALE VOICE 4: Hi, - - PS 221 on Empire  
4 Boulevard. I remember precisely my fifth grade  
5 teacher, the class, the floor, the principal,  
6 Mr. Schindler [phonetic]. And it's vivid in my  
7 mind. I remember exactly what she looked like.  
8 I remember the good days when - -. I can  
9 remember the bad days when she'd yell at the top  
10 of her lungs. And now being a grown adult with  
11 my own daughter, I can understand how important  
12 fifth grade is. At that age, I - - confidence  
13 in myself. In fact, I remember that being one  
14 of the points in my life where I decided to be a  
15 teacher myself. I taught for six years under  
16 the DOE in Ridgewood - -, District 24, IS 77.  
17 And I can tell you that I didn't have a fraction  
18 of the enthusiasm and zeal that my daughter has  
19 as a third grader at Success Academy in  
20 Williamsburg. - - and from the bottom of my  
21 heart, I am so thrilled and honored to be a part  
22 of Success Academy and the staff, and Ms.  
23 Johnson. And once again, I'm so grateful for  
24 the investment in time that the teachers put in  
25 my daughter. Thank you.

1 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. - -.

2 FEMALE VOICE 11: Hi, my name is - -, and I  
3 have two children here at Success Academy, - -  
4 and Zoe [phonetic], kindergarten and third  
5 grade. We looked for the right school for my  
6 daughter, and this is the type of school - - and  
7 she was really struggling with reading. And I  
8 worked with her, and she only got frustrated.  
9 So when we came to Success Academy, we were  
10 really desperate. And they took her step-by-  
11 step, and they tutored her, and they really  
12 taught her how to read. And that was, we were  
13 looking at whether she was dyslexic or not, and  
14 we were really worried. And they - - her. And  
15 I don't see - - access to her education. And  
16 she's doing amazing - - with her peer group, and  
17 she has a foundation in both math and science,  
18 and we're very grateful to Success Academy.

19 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. - -.

20 MALE VOICE 8: - - I have a kindergartner  
21 here and a third grader. They've been here  
22 since day one. My son Alex, he started  
23 kindergarten here. And we have a public school  
24 - -, but we wanted something better, something  
25 more. So we looked into the charter school

1 system and applied to the lottery, and we got  
2 in. So it was probably the best thing that's -  
3 -. And honestly, it's been amazing. That said,  
4 we have to fight for every single square inch -  
5 - support. And Success Academy has a very  
6 amazing system. They found like a perfect  
7 formula that was academic as well as fun. My  
8 kids never complain about coming to school.  
9 They love it. And I'm very happy that MS 50 - -  
10 I think it's amazing - -. I just hope that - -  
11 the school, the students, the teachers, and the  
12 community, and rally - - show how much you  
13 really want - -. I just want to take this time  
14 to thank all the teachers and the community for  
15 letting us be here with you. Thank you very  
16 much.

17 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. - - and after -  
18 -.

19 MALE VOICE 9: [Foreign audio 01:36:44 -  
20 01:38:02]. So there is no - -. What there is,  
21 is - - community because tonight we are not  
22 parents of students at MS 50. We are not  
23 parents of students at Success Academy.  
24 Understand that we are parents of students of  
25 this community, - - so we support very strongly

1 a fifth grade at Success Academy. But even  
2 more strongly we support Success Academy's  
3 growth to be equal of MS 50, both schools  
4 working together with - - to make this the - -  
5 that we have equal use of the building, equal.  
6 - - sixth, seventh, and eighth grades - -  
7 Success Academy - - to teach young people - -  
8 from the sixth grade up to - -, so thank you  
9 very much.

10 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. - -. Christine  
11 Blackburn [phonetic].

12 MS. CHRISTINE BLACKBURN: Good evening. My  
13 name is Christine Blackburn, and I have a  
14 kindergartener and a third grader at Success  
15 Academy. - - I'm hearing so many parents who  
16 are so proud of both schools. And when I think  
17 about how - - school, it all comes down to - -  
18 teachers - - I'm so grateful for the community  
19 that has supported them - - has worked so hard  
20 over the past few years to come together to  
21 support each other and to support these kids,  
22 and to see unbelievable - - my kids - -. So I  
23 hope that we can have a fifth grade space so  
24 that my son - - to have at least one more year  
25 together school because they love seeing each

1 other in the hallway, - - happy. And because  
2 our community is growing - -. We are strong, we  
3 are proud, and - - to have at least one more  
4 year together to support - -.

5 MS. WINNICKI: - -, and Kevin Perez  
6 [phonetic]. We will - -.

7 FEMALE VOICE 12: This has been a pretty  
8 long night, so I'm going to keep it short. I  
9 want thank all of you for being here to support  
10 - - so that everyone in this building can have  
11 space to grow. - - Williamsburg with my family.  
12 My children are being engaged by this school and  
13 this community. I want my children to be here  
14 in this building as long as possible, because  
15 we're family. There is space for - -, and I  
16 would really love for our fifth graders to have  
17 this space. Thank you very much.

18 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. Duane? Before  
19 the next - - that we have a representative from  
20 Congresswoman Velázquez's office - -.

21 MR. DUANE BROWN: Good evening, everybody.  
22 My name is Duane Brown [phonetic]. I'm a deputy  
23 director - - Education Department - - school,  
24 and so I'm here to talk on behalf of - -. We  
25 currently have two Community Schools that we're

1 looking - - the community, the Williamsburg  
2 community, and we're - - Success. So I would  
3 definitely urge your community to give MS 50 and  
4 El Puente a chance - - but I also know the  
5 trials and tribulations that our middle school -  
6 -. This is a really traumatic time for them in  
7 their lives. They're developing not only  
8 physically but emotionally. So we need to - -  
9 as much as possible during this - - in their  
10 life. So - - in the community. Thank you.

11 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. - - Rosa Gara  
12 [phonetic]. Yes?

13 MS. ROSA GARA: Hello, good evening. My  
14 name is Rosa Gara. I've lived in this community  
15 for a very long time. - - was one of my  
16 assistant principals, and I've been here for - -  
17 MS 50. Okay, so - - Success Academy, it's  
18 beautiful that you're up here. It's beautiful  
19 that - - parents. It's beautiful that - -  
20 commitment - - this school. - - the fifth grade  
21 - -. That's great. But what we are talking  
22 about - - future, and what's going to happen to  
23 our kids - -? And we want equality in this  
24 school. It's not all about separate and - -  
25 equal. This is about equality. One of the

1 things - - one of the things that - - is two  
2 principals, 'cause - - two principals, is that -  
3 - great community. - - Success Academy and MS  
4 50 - - communities. We - - in Williamsburg.  
5 This is all we have here. And unity and  
6 diversity, - -. Yes, you - - and it's  
7 beautiful. But let MS 50 stand tall with the  
8 support of - -. Thank you.

9 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. - -.

10 FEMALE VOICE 13: Good evening, everyone.  
11 My name is - - also the same concerns or  
12 feelings - - had tonight. We have a beautiful  
13 working relationship with Success Academy. They  
14 have supported us on many occasions. And we are  
15 very proud and wish to continue that  
16 relationship. My main concern right now is that  
17 will we have the opportunity to grow and expand  
18 in our school. We are a Community School and a  
19 middle school, and the Department of Ed has  
20 given us a lot of - - school so we can grow and  
21 - - the future. So what I'm - - the proposal if  
22 we - - those extra rooms and get the extra  
23 space, we will be allowed to grow. The only  
24 thing that we want right now is the opportunity  
25 to grow and to expand along with Success, so - -

1 that chance to grow. Thank you.

2 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. Kevin Perez  
3 [phonetic]?

4 MR. KEVIN PEREZ: Hello. My name is Kevin  
5 Perez, and I'm a former alumni of MS 50. And -  
6 - at MS 50 I learned how to express myself and  
7 also - -. Here I'd like to point out at MS 50  
8 that we have many ESL programs. We have  
9 children with disabilities that are here at MS  
10 50. And when these kids are here at MS 50, they  
11 don't a choice to come here, and it's not - -.  
12 So - - I hope one day that - - MS 50, and I hope  
13 - -.

14 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. - - from  
15 Congresswoman Velázquez's office.

16 FEMALE VOICE 14: Good evening, everyone.  
17 Good evening, everyone. You should always - -.  
18 This is a dialogue and a conversation. It's not  
19 a protest or a rally, so I think you should all  
20 get a round of applause. My name is - -  
21 Congresswoman Velázquez, and we are here because  
22 we support the efforts to close the achievement  
23 gap for all children. We need to ensure that  
24 every child is given access to education, and  
25 for them to develop their God-given potential.

1 That is why we are here tonight to - - from  
2 Washington as a representative. We want to  
3 extend our support for the expansion with a side  
4 condition - -. That condition is that MS 50 is  
5 able to meet the needs that - - so that El  
6 Puente - - efforts to succeed as one of New York  
7 City DOE's Community Schools and the renewal  
8 school initiative. This is important as the  
9 services that El Puente - - MS 50, that they are  
10 able to procure a space that is required so that  
11 they can help develop our young people,  
12 predominantly our English-language learners - -  
13 our community, our children with special needs,  
14 and also to engage the families, because at the  
15 end of the day, it takes more than brick and  
16 mortar to build education. It takes a holistic  
17 approach, a comprehensive approach, and that is  
18 - - Success Academy and El Puente program is - -  
19 . That is why we have one of the highest rated  
20 graduation rates in our district, - - and the  
21 only human rights high school in the country,  
22 and - - for over 30 years. So they understand  
23 the needs of our students in this community.  
24 And that is why Nydia Velázquez is supporting  
25 the expansion, but we also want to ensure that

1 both schools, MS 50 and Success Academy can  
2 grow equally. It's got to be, it's got to be  
3 fair, and it cannot be separate but equal. We  
4 don't fall for that - -. We want to ensure that  
5 every child is eligible. And I want to say in  
6 full disclosure that my nephew is a student at  
7 Success Academy - -, but he is a student at  
8 Success Academy, and I am proud of his  
9 achievements, so I - - firmly and say that we  
10 support MS 50, we support the community renewal  
11 initiative, and this school needs to expand and  
12 grow equally. It's got to be done right, so we  
13 urge - - we want to ensure - - so that El Puente  
14 - -. You cannot design a program to fail - -  
15 succeed. So that's it, thank you for your time.

16 MS. WINNICKI: Thank you. We've exhausted  
17 our speaker list - - comments and feedback - -  
18 the Panel on Educational Policy votes on this  
19 proposal on the evening of Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>.  
20 The email address and phone number where  
21 comments can be made are  
22 [d14proposals@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:d14proposals@schools.nyc.gov) or (212) 374-0208.  
23 Thank you for your participation, and this joint  
24 public hearing is now - -. Thank you.

25 [END RECORDING]

C E R T I F I C A T E

1  
2           The prior proceedings were transcribed from  
3 audio files and have been transcribed to the  
4 best of my ability. I further certify that I am  
5 not connected by blood, marriage or employment  
6 with any of the parties herein nor interested  
7 directly or indirectly in the matter  
8 transcribed.

9  
10           Signature *Anne Coleman*

11           Date June 5, 2015  
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