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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING
High School of Graphic Communication
Arts - 4/3/12**

1 [START 290222]

2 MR. GREG BETHEIL: My name is Greg Bethel
3 from the Department of Education and I'll be
4 serving as the moderator and facilitator for
5 this evening's joint public hearing. It's just
6 a few minutes after 6:00 and we wanted to make
7 sure that we respected everybody's time and got
8 the hearing started. This is a joint public
9 hearing of the Department of Education Community
10 Education Council and the school leadership team
11 to discuss the proposed closure of the high
12 school for graphic communication arts, 02M625.
13 And opening and co-location of a new high
14 school, 02M536, with the Business of Sports
15 School, 02M393, and Urban Assembly Gateway
16 School for Technology, 02M507, in building M625
17 beginning in the 2012-2013 school year.
18 Tonight's proceedings will be recorded and
19 transcribed. Is there anyone that requires
20 translation services? And I'd just ask one of
21 our translators to come up quickly, so we can
22 make a quick announcement. Are they still in
23 here? Before we begin the hearing, we ask that
24 anyone who wishes to speak during the public
25 comment portion of this evening's hearing,

1 please sign up at the table out in the hallway.
2 We'll keep sign up open for 15 minutes, which
3 will be about 6:25. If you have a question that
4 you want addressed during the question and
5 answer portion of the agenda, please write that
6 question on the index cards that are provided in
7 the back and submit them to a volunteer by
8 table. Only people who have signed in to speak
9 will be able to participate in the public
10 comment and we'll work to address the questions
11 that are submitted in the Q & A, either here at
12 the hearing tonight or online subsequent to the
13 hearing depending on the information requested.
14 All panel participants who were asked to be here
15 no longer than 5:30. Now that we've started if
16 any of the panel members arrive late, he or she
17 will be given time to speak at the first
18 opportune moment. We want to be respectful of
19 everybody's time. There may be elected
20 officials who arrive at different times
21 throughout the evening. If they wish to speak,
22 we'll do our best to accommodate them at the
23 first opportune moment during the public
24 comment. Those who were here at the start of
25 the public comment segment, will be asked to

1 speak first. In terms of the agenda, the
2 format will include a presentation of the
3 proposal and presentations by the hearing
4 participants here at the table, followed by the
5 public comment. Speakers should have already
6 signed up at the table in the lobby. And,
7 again, if you do wish to speak please make sure
8 you've added your name to the list. Public
9 comments can be no longer than about two minutes
10 each. And the time will be followed to make
11 sure that everybody has their chance. Speakers
12 will be informed when their designated time has
13 ended. There will be a question and answer
14 period. Members of the audience, if you had a
15 question please make sure you've written that
16 question on the postcards that were supplied
17 back at the table when you arrived. Or take
18 your chance to go back out there now. And while
19 the public comments are taking place, members of
20 our staff will organize the questions into
21 categories and get them ready for the Q & A
22 period. Some questions will be asked directly
23 and other will be batched under headings in
24 order to avoid repetitiveness. Even those all
25 individual questions will not be addressed at

1 the forum tonight, the answers will be on the
2 website prior to the panel meeting, which is on
3 April 26. If at the end of the hearing, you
4 still have questions, we encourage you to direct
5 them to us by calling 212-374-3466. Or sending
6 them to us via email to
7 D02proposals@schools.nyc.gov and I'll be
8 repeating that number and that email throughout
9 the evening. With that I'd like to introduce
10 the panel, which has been assembled for this
11 evening's joint public hearing. Folks moved
12 around a little bit. But at the far end of the
13 table is the Manhattan High School
14 Superintendent Tamika Matheson. We're also
15 joined by Shina Tonikawa from CEC2. Thanks for
16 joining us. Deputy Chancellor Kathleen Grimm.
17 And then we're also joined in the audience this
18 evening from Graphic Communication High School,
19 principal Brendan Lyons. As well as Richard
20 Rocco from the school leadership team. Josh
21 Solomon, the principal of the Business of Sports
22 School is with us this evening as is--it looks
23 like--Helen Haggerty from the SLT at Gateway.
24 As well as Josh Stone, the principal of Gateway.
25 We thank them all for joining us. I'm sorry.

1 That's my mistake. Thank you for correcting
2 me. Ellen, I'm sorry. I'm just having a hard
3 time reading my own handwriting. It's becoming
4 an interactive hearing already, so so far so
5 good. Thank you. We're pleased--I would say
6 we're pleased to have the following elected
7 officials here, but I don't think that any have
8 arrived yet. I just want to make sure. Do we
9 have any elected officials that are here? Okay.
10 And with that I will turn the program over to
11 Deputy Chancellor Kathleen Grimm who will
12 present the proposal.

13 MS. KATHLEEN GRIMM: Thank you very much,
14 Greg. Can everyone hear me? Thank you. I want
15 to thank all of you for being here tonight and
16 participating in this joint hearing. It was
17 convened as Greg mentioned to discuss the
18 proposed closure and replacement of the High
19 School of Graphic Communication Arts. Graphics,
20 we call it. Graphics is located here at 439
21 West 49th Street within the geographical
22 confines of community school district two in
23 Manhattan. It currently serves students in
24 grades 9 through 12. On February 27th, 2012,
25 the New York City Department of Education

1 published a proposal to close Graphics and to
2 open a new school, 2M536. By closing Graphics
3 and replacing it with a new school, we are
4 seeking to rapidly create a school environment
5 that will prepare our students for success in
6 college, in work, and in life. The new school
7 will building upon the strongest elements of
8 Graphics. And it will also incorporate new
9 elements in order to create a rigorous culture
10 for teaching and learning. Students will have
11 access to a higher quality educational option
12 while they continue to attend school in this
13 very building. We believe this process will
14 ensure that all students are set on a path for
15 accomplishment. We stand behind Principal
16 Brendon Lyons and we believe he is the right
17 person to be the proposed new leader of the
18 proposed new school. In his time here at
19 Graphics, he has shown commitment and a strong
20 will to improve student achievement and
21 learning. We hope you will use tonight to share
22 with us the thoughts you might have about the
23 qualities you want to see in the proposed new
24 school including the characteristics that matter
25 to you in a principal. Additionally, in

1 conjunction with this proposal as a way to
2 support additional school improvement, the
3 department submitted a school improvement grant
4 application, and S-I-G, a SIG application to the
5 New York State Department of Education to
6 implement what is called the turnaround model at
7 the new school. If approved, this would make
8 the new school eligible for up to two million
9 dollars in supplemental federal funding. I want
10 to acknowledge the students and the families
11 that feel that a son or a daughter is being well
12 served by Graphics High School. Tonight we will
13 hear about the success stories happening at
14 Graphics. There are success stories and we
15 honor them. But we also need to consider the
16 many students who started with your child in the
17 ninth grade and who has not experienced the same
18 success. They deserve better. Despite a number
19 of challenges the school has faced, some data
20 indicate that elements of Graphics are well
21 worth preserving in the new school. The
22 department believes that with new programs and a
23 push to improve teacher quality, the new school
24 could expand the recent improvement in student
25 outcomes. For example, the graduation rate at

1 Graphics has shown some improvement in the past
2 few years, rising from 35 percent in 2008 to 56
3 percent in 2011. Additionally, the school has
4 been able to graduate an increasing number of
5 students in six years. This is positive, but
6 much more work needs to be done. While the
7 school's overall quality review school was an
8 underdeveloped, the review did indicate areas of
9 strength, such as the principal and the staff
10 working as a unified team to create a calm and
11 respectful environment where learning can take
12 place and students feel supported. With new
13 students and restructuring, the DOE expects that
14 the new school will be able to effectively
15 leverage these areas of strength while improving
16 student outcomes. However, Graphics'
17 performance data overall and feedback from
18 members of the New York State Board of Regents
19 that the pace of change in New York City's
20 persistently lowest achieving schools is not
21 quick enough to meet student needs, suggests
22 that Graphics should be closed and replaced with
23 a new school with new programs and supports.
24 Graduation rates at Graphics have been
25 consistently low for years. In 2010-11,

1 Graphics four-year graduation rate including
2 the August graduates was 56 percent, well below
3 the citywide graduation rate of 65 percent. And
4 that puts Graphics is the bottom 16 percent
5 citywide. Moreover, Graphics is not adequately
6 preparing students for the rigors of college and
7 career. Only four percent of students in the
8 class of 2010-11 were prepared for college after
9 four years of high school, well below the
10 citywide rate of 25 percent. If regent's
11 diplomas alone counted toward graduation as will
12 be the case for most students in the 2012-13
13 school year, the four-year graduation rate at
14 Graphics would drop to just 46 percent, putting
15 the school in the bottom 28 percent of high
16 schools citywide. The progress report measures
17 the progress and performance of students in the
18 school as well as the school environment
19 compared to other schools serving similar
20 student populations. Graphics earned an overall
21 F grade on its 2010-11 annual progress report.
22 With an F grade in student performance, a D
23 grade in student progress, and an F grade on
24 school environment. Additionally, Graphics
25 earned an overall D in the prior year 2009-10

1 and a C in 2008-9 indicating a history of poor
2 performance. The school's attendance rate
3 remains below that of most high schools. The
4 2010-11 attendance rate was 77 percent, putting
5 Graphics is the bottom six percent of high
6 schools citywide in terms of attendance. Safety
7 issues have been a concern at the school in
8 recent years. On the 2010-11 New York City
9 School survey only 69 percent of students
10 reported feeling safe in the hallways,
11 bathrooms, and locker rooms. In addition, only
12 69 percent of teachers reported that discipline
13 and order were maintained in the school.
14 Graphics was rated underdeveloped on its most
15 recent quality review in 2010-11. Quality
16 reviews evaluate how well schools are organized
17 to support student learning. Graphics 2010-11
18 quality review cited a number of serious
19 concerns including the need to develop a
20 rigorous and engaging curriculum, inadequate
21 differentiation of instruction to support
22 individual student needs and uneven levels among
23 staff of analysis of student work and data to
24 allow teachers to modify teaching practices to
25 support students individualized needs. Before

1 we hear from other members of this panel and
2 move to public comment, I would like to briefly
3 discuss the impact of this proposal on current
4 Graphics students and families if the proposal
5 is approved. All current Graphics students have
6 a guaranteed seat in the new school. This
7 includes all current 9th graders, 10th graders,
8 and 11th graders, as well as any 12th grade
9 students who do not graduate by the beginning of
10 the 2012-13 school year next September. All
11 incoming 9th graders who have applied to
12 Graphics and are matched to it in the high
13 school admissions process will automatically be
14 enrolled in the new school. Additionally, the
15 DOE does not anticipate that the proposed
16 closure and replacement of Graphics will impact
17 the co-location of the schools currently on the
18 campus, Business of Sports Schools, 2M393, and
19 Urban Assembly Gateway for Technology, 2M507.
20 And finally I want to clarify the new--the
21 process that the new school will go through to
22 hire the best possible staff if this proposal is
23 accepted. First of all, there is no quota of
24 staff that must be removed as a result of this
25 process. This proposal does not require the

1 turnover of any set percentage of staff.
2 Pursuant to the city's teacher's contract, if
3 this proposal is approved pedagogical staff who
4 apply to work at the new school will be reviewed
5 by a five-person, school-based, personnel
6 committee. And that committee is made up of the
7 principal, two designees of the chancellor, and
8 two designees of the UFD president. The
9 proposed new leader will develop qualifications
10 for positions in the new school. And the
11 personnel committee will consider each candidate
12 who applies all teachers from the current school
13 are eligible to apply to work in the new school.
14 If sufficient numbers of staff from the closing
15 school apply, at least 50 percent of the new
16 school's pedagogical positions must be selected
17 from among the appropriately licensed, most
18 senior qualified applicants. Again, I want to
19 repeat there is no set percentage or limit on
20 the number of staff from the closing school who
21 can be hired to work at the new school. And the
22 decisions will all be made by the personnel
23 committee at the new school. Thank you all very
24 much for your patience and your attention. And
25 we look forward to hearing your comments and

1 your questions. Thank you.

2 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. We are joined at
3 the table by a member of our Citywide Council on
4 High Schools, Paola De Kock. Thanks for joining
5 us this evening. Our next presenter will Shina
6 Tonikawa from CEC.

7 MS. SHINA TONIKAWA: Good evening. My name
8 is Shina Tonikawa. I am the president of the
9 Community Education Council district two. I
10 have a fourth grade daughter in an elementary
11 school in district two, but I also have a junior
12 in high school, which is actually located in
13 district three. So I have a little knowledge of
14 what it's like to parent a high school student
15 and I have actually guest-lectured in high
16 schools. So I have a little bit of a sense of
17 what it's like to guest lecture in a high
18 school. So I have a little bit of a context
19 even though I represent K through 8 schools in
20 district two. I would like to share with you
21 the resolution that the CEC district two passed
22 last week on Wednesday. So just bear with me.
23 Resolution number 55. Against the DOE's school
24 turnaround plan for persistently low-achieving
25 schools. Whereas on January 12th, 2012, Mayor

1 Bloomberg announced that New York City would
2 take immediate action to implement a school
3 turnaround program and chancellor Wolcott
4 submitted a New York State education department-
5 -to the New York State education department--a
6 letter of intent to amend New York City
7 Department of Education's school improvement
8 grant application. Whereas the initial school
9 improvement grant application submitted in July
10 2011 was for 65 million dollars in funding over
11 the next two years to be distributed among 44
12 persistently low achieving schools, 11 of which
13 were scheduled to phase out and 33 were slated
14 for or were already undergoing re-start or
15 transformation under the federal school
16 improvement guidelines. Whereas the turnaround
17 strategy of school improvement relies primarily
18 on replacing 50 percent of the teachers,
19 replacing principals who have been in place more
20 than three years and changing the school's name
21 and district borough number. Whereas New York
22 City Department of Education has issued
23 proposals for significant changes in school
24 utilization and Educational Impact Statements
25 for all schools that will--upon approval by the

1 pep--at its April 26, 2012, meeting
2 essentially erase these schools including some
3 schools with a proud history of achievement and
4 neighborhood connections. Whereas participation
5 of the Community Education Council district two
6 in public hearings for proposals for significant
7 changes in school utilization and EIS's
8 (phonetic) is required for all schools including
9 high schools, which are located within the
10 geographical boundary of the community school
11 district two. Whereas in hearings and meetings
12 held subsequently, it has become clear that New
13 York City DOE sudden shift in school improvement
14 strategy will destabilize thousands of students
15 in primarily large comprehensive high schools
16 and by mandating the replacement of teachers and
17 principals according to rigid and fundamentally
18 arbitrary criteria will have the perverse effect
19 of penalizing the very people who have made
20 significant improvements in several of the
21 schools now subject to turnaround. Whereas New
22 York City Department of Education has put forth
23 no evidence that the turnaround strategy has
24 actually improved educational outcomes for any
25 school, let alone a number of schools sufficient

1 to justify the massive disruption and
2 dislocation involved. Whereas the New York City
3 Department of Education has claimed that it was
4 forced to adopt the turnaround model because
5 restart and transformation are no longer
6 available to New York City, but has pointed to
7 no federal or state law or regulation that, in
8 fact, prevents the New York City Department of
9 Education from continuing with the restart and
10 transformation models if it so chooses. Whereas
11 New York City Department of Education has
12 further claimed that millions--variously 65 or
13 58 million spread over two years--in federal
14 dollars are at stake but has failed to
15 acknowledge that it is not certain the new
16 schools that will open as replacements will, in
17 fact, receive the suspended school improvement
18 grant funding and to the extent teachers who are
19 replaced are placed in the absent teacher
20 reserve, the costs to the city will ultimately
21 dwarf any federal or state grants for all 1,800
22 replacement positions at the 33 schools. The
23 cost is estimated to be almost 180 million
24 dollars per year. Now, therefore, be it
25 resolved that the Community Education Council

1 district two condemns the Whereas New York
2 City Department of Education's turnaround plan
3 as hastily conceived, irrationally formulated,
4 arbitrarily implemented, and not reasonably
5 calculated to improve educational outcomes for
6 the thousands of students affected. Be it
7 further resolved that the Community Education
8 Council district two calls on the Whereas New
9 York City Department of Education to withdraw
10 all proposals for significant changes in school
11 utilization and Educational Impact Statements
12 that involve a shift from transformation or
13 restart models already under way. To conduct
14 school-by-school reviews of its current school
15 improvement strategies, transformation, and
16 restart, to assess which measures and programs
17 have been effective or are showing promise in
18 raising student achievement and improving the
19 school environment. These reviews shall be
20 conducted in a transparent manner and include
21 all stakeholders--administrators, teachers,
22 staff, students, and parents--to determine for
23 each school whether it is appropriate to
24 continue or adjust the interventions put in
25 place under restart or transformation bearing in

1 mind that both improvement strategies
2 contemplate multi-year plans and to ensure that
3 all struggling schools, whether or not they are
4 undergoing federally specified reform plans are
5 given adequate support so that the students can
6 only graduate that receive the kind of education
7 that will enrich their lives and prepare them
8 for the future. Thank you for your patience.
9 This resolution has been voted upon, approved,
10 and adopted and will be available on our CEC
11 district two website shortly if it's not
12 available already. I would like to just take a
13 few minutes to share my personal opinion on
14 these proposals. I have read a couple of the
15 proposals from other schools such as Legacy
16 Washington Irving and what I don't understand is
17 whether we are expecting too much from the high
18 schools. If the students entering the ninth
19 grade are not performing at grade level, then I
20 don't think there is a way for high schools to
21 be able to educate them to the grade level and
22 then make them ready to graduate. Oftentimes, I
23 feel like we're expecting too much for the wrong
24 reasons. I am all for teacher quality. I am
25 all for training teachers, making sure that

1 teachers are teaching. But when I look at the
2 statistics on the number of students living at
3 or below poverty for the Graphics school, it is
4 85 percent. That is a high percentage. Maybe
5 it's the fact that students are not coming in
6 performing at grade level. If that's the case,
7 replacing teachers may not be the answer or
8 starting a new program may not be the answer.
9 Oftentimes, I read these proposals and I think
10 about a doctor taking your symptoms--you have a
11 fever, you have coughs, you have sore throats--
12 but the doctor not being able to identify the
13 cause of your illness but the doctor going ahead
14 and prescribing a treatment. I'm not sure
15 that's the kind of doctor I want. We have to
16 move towards really diagnosing the true cause of
17 the problems. Why is it that these students are
18 not performing at the level they are supposed to
19 be? Is it because the teachers are not teaching
20 or is it because these kids don't have any
21 support at home from their families. That could
22 be a huge factor. So to subscribe--prescribe
23 these blanket treatments seems like the wrong
24 approach. And this is my personal opinion and I
25 would like to actually see more statistics on

1 the demographics of the students. And really
2 start looking at what it is that we need to be
3 fixing. And I think that is sorely lacking
4 right now. Thank you very much for listening.

5 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. Our next speaker
6 will be from the Citywide Council on High
7 Schools, Paola De Kock. I don't know if the
8 microphone will reach all the way down there.
9 You might want to...

10 MS. PAOLA DE KOCK: Good evening. My name
11 is Paola De Kock and I'm the public advocate's
12 appointee to the Citywide Council on High
13 Schools. My son went through public school in
14 New York City. He's now--he's graduated. He's
15 now at university. And I feel very privileged
16 to have been appointed because I feel very, very
17 strongly about the problems that high schools
18 have in this city. Our power unfortunately is
19 limited. If it was up to us, we would fix a lot
20 more things, but it isn't. In any event, I want
21 to be brief because--first of all--because I
22 don't believe in long speeches. And secondly
23 because I would hardly feel it right for me to
24 make a big fuss about this school when I don't
25 see--I don't see the SLT here. I don't see the

1 principal. I don't see anybody from the
2 schools - - . So it's--maybe they're going to
3 be speaking later, but I don't want--okay. So
4 my objection to what we're doing tonight is
5 really two-fold. One is I object to the DOE's
6 turnaround plan. In fact, it is the antithesis
7 of a plan since it represents a sudden
8 abandonment of previous strategies,
9 transformation, restart, or in the case of this
10 school, other interventions without any actual
11 evaluation of any of the strategies or their
12 components. As best we can determine, the
13 turnaround strategy was adopted mostly because
14 it struck Mayor Bloomberg as a good idea on a
15 fine January morning. Since then of course DOE
16 has worked overtime, even appointed the very
17 able Ms. Gorman as chief of turnaround to
18 justify after the fact a decision that seems to
19 have been made with little thought going in.
20 Just exactly how little thought we found out
21 yesterday when DOE pulled--suddenly pulled seven
22 schools from the turnaround plan just as
23 suddenly as it had put them in. Claiming that
24 close evaluation including visits by leadership
25 teams had convinced them that the schools could

1 improve since they got As and Bs on the
2 progress reports. I would like to point out
3 something. The plan was announced in January.
4 The progress reports came out in mid-November.
5 Secondly, if I were DOE I would really not want
6 to admit that I did the close evaluation almost
7 three months after the turnaround plan was
8 announced. So I'm a bit skeptical let us say.
9 But anyway--but Graphics is still on the closure
10 list. Actually, it's not on the closure list.
11 It will be closed and reopened with a different
12 name and number. Some percentage of its faculty
13 changed. I will get to that later. And the
14 same students. One of my colleagues calls this
15 the trans-substantiation because it's really
16 difficult to get your head around it whether
17 it's a new school or an old school. But I
18 cannot really address whether the changes
19 promised in the Educational Impact Statement
20 will actually be beneficial. Maybe the new
21 school will work out great. I really wish the
22 new school luck. But what I can say is that we
23 can take some lessons from history of what DOE
24 has done to this particular school--what has
25 happened at this particular school and in other

1 similar schools, which is basically throw
2 things at it hoping that they will work. In
3 2003--apparently the current configuration came
4 out in 2003 or thereabouts when they received a
5 grant to make small learning communities. And
6 maybe small learning communities work somewhere
7 else, but here it didn't seem--you know, it's
8 not enough to say we're now going to have four
9 small learning communities and the school will
10 now perform. What I notice about the four CTE
11 programs here is that they don't seem to have
12 any--two of them have, have some kind of
13 connection. The other two seem kind of tacked
14 on. The media--the media journalism, which
15 apparently has a very high proportion of ELLs
16 according to the Educational Impact Statement.
17 I don't know. It doesn't look to me like there
18 were any particular supports given to students
19 who are ELL students who are doing media
20 journalism. I find that difficult--I was in ELL
21 at one point. I'm not sure how I would have
22 done. And then the law enforcement program.
23 Those two programs apparently will be closed so
24 they will be phased out. So that tells you that
25 maybe not a great deal--not enough thought was

1 put into them. The other facts that I found
2 interesting from the Educational Impact
3 Statement and speaking with people is that no
4 one could tell me--this is an educational option
5 school--no one could tell me how many of the top
6 two percenters actually apply. What I was told,
7 however, is that about 50 percent of the
8 students do not apply to the school. They are
9 here because--and they don't necessarily want to
10 be here. That is a sobering fact especially in
11 a city school. Also, other things that I've--in
12 addition to the 85 percent poverty rate--I
13 thought another thing that was interesting was
14 that I actually looked--I make a practice of
15 looking at the supports that are claimed in the
16 EIS for the school and all the extra-curricular
17 activities, the programs--and I make a practice
18 of looking at them and often what you'll see is
19 they appear different on one page than on
20 another. And if you look at page seven of the
21 Educational Impact Statement, there are
22 different organizations listed from the ones on
23 page 17. And after some inquiry, I was told
24 here and also in other schools that, well, you
25 know, sometimes we have it. Sometimes we don't.

1 They make a good list. So again it's good to-
2 -when claims that all sorts of supports were
3 thrown at the school, but how consistent was the
4 effort, how appropriate, how targeted at the
5 specific problems was it. The other thing that
6 I wanted to address was the business of
7 teachers. You know, I--DOE has done a good job
8 dancing around the 50 percent number and maybe
9 we'll be--I really cannot address what
10 eventually they will--I cannot fathom what
11 eventually--who eventually will hire, what
12 percentage they will hire. I can tell you
13 though that the federal turnaround model does
14 say that they need to rehire no more than 50
15 percent of the teachers. That's what it says.
16 If they want to do something else, that's fine.
17 But that's what the turnaround model says. The
18 other, the other issue that I wanted to address
19 as far as rehiring, as far as teachers is, um,
20 what's interesting is that the teachers will
21 either be put in the ATR pool or they will be
22 hired out of that ATR pool. And some of those
23 teachers--a lot of those teachers in the ATR
24 pools will be teachers who are allegedly causing
25 some schools to fail. So you are going to get--

1 either you're going to get a fiscal disaster
2 or you're going to get re-circulated allegedly
3 failing teachers. You wonder whether this model
4 is really for real. That's, um, that's sort of--
5 --that's my thinking on that. Also, what I found
6 when I looked at the EIS, the main--oh, and the
7 other thing. To the extent that there are new
8 teachers hired, where are they coming from?
9 Teach for America, uh, where else? Math for
10 America or Pratt or various colleges. Well,
11 they might be excellent teachers in a few years.
12 You can't say that you are hiring excellent
13 teachers if they're new teachers. That just
14 doesn't make any sense, um, and that's in the -
15 - . But you cannot say that you have a model
16 that will assure the hiring of excellent
17 teachers. Um, the other thing that is going to
18 loom large here is the I-zone. They're going to
19 do a pilot program, you know, the--in, um, from
20 the I-zone on differentiated instruction. And
21 we actually had a presentation at our council
22 last month from the I-zone. The problem with
23 differentiated instruction is it sounds really
24 good, but when you have class sizes of up to 34
25 and one teacher. It doesn't matter how much

1 differentiation you have, what is the teacher
2 going--how is the teacher going to really
3 develop plans for all of those students--
4 differentiated plans. So in some--I really wish
5 the school luck. I think it's, you know,
6 there's nothing that pains me more than seeing
7 students in schools that do not succeed. But I
8 am not sure that this Educational Impact
9 Statement really details plans for success. And
10 of course the turnaround model in itself is just
11 basically throwing things against the wall and
12 hoping they will stick. Thank you.

13 MR. BETHEIL: :Thank you. The next speaker
14 from the school leadership team at Graphics High
15 School is Richard Rocco.

16 MR. RICHARD ROCCO: Good evening. In the
17 eight years I've been at Graphics, I've seen an
18 awful lot of improvements. The first year I
19 came in here, um, you can imagine what this was
20 like. We overcame a lot of obstacles. We're on
21 the most dangerous school list. We came off
22 that and actually received an award from Mayor
23 Bloomberg and the police commissioner for being
24 the safest school in the city. We were on the
25 Sur (phonetic) list. The staff and

1 administrators always worked as a team. I
2 mean, we came off that list. So there's always
3 been constant improvements in this school. And
4 yes we can improve more and I think we are and
5 have been improving more. The thing I'm
6 concerned with is that we have a lot of students
7 who have a lot of discourse in their life. And
8 I think that a major change in staff will only
9 sever relationships on these people--these young
10 students who really have built some
11 relationships and come here because we're the
12 stability in their lives. They don't really
13 have it at home. And I think we've helped a lot
14 of these students. Just to come to school is a
15 big achievement for them. And our graduation
16 rates have gone up. Our academics have gone up.
17 And as was said in the opening statement, we
18 have a new principal this year, Principal Lyons.
19 We have a lot of new initiatives. We have no
20 curriculum. And a lot of rigor and a lot of
21 excitement. And I think that the students see
22 it and the staff sees it and we always have
23 worked as a team and I think we will continue to
24 work as a team. So I hope the deal--we will
25 reconsider and keep the staff together, keep our

1 administrators together so we can continue to
2 improve and work for our students because that's
3 the main goal that everyone has had here. And
4 in the last eight years I've seen and I know it
5 will continue that way. Thank you.

6 MR. BETHEIL: :Thank you, Richard. Are
7 there any other members of the panel that wish
8 to make a statement? Hold on one second.

9 MS. DE KOCK: I just wanted to add--I forgot
10 to add--that when I visited the school people
11 talk, you know, I didn't recognize the school as
12 a dangerous place. There were a couple of kids
13 sitting on the steps. They moved very nicely
14 when somebody asked them to move. It seemed to
15 have--I actually peeked into the cafeteria.
16 There was no chaos. I really did not see a
17 school--a dangerous place or anything like that.
18 I just really wanted to add that.

19 MR. BETHEIL: :Okay. With the end of those
20 statements and the conclusion of the formal
21 presentations. I will now begin the public
22 comment. Right now we have six speakers that
23 are signed up. I'll ask them to line up at this
24 microphone. And we'll begin in just a second.
25 The first speaker is Rosalie David. The second

1 speaker is Steve Landress. The third speaker
2 will be Alex O'Neil. The fourth speaker will be
3 Janella Hines. The fifth speaker is Midge
4 Maroni. And the sixth speaker--I'm sorry if I'm
5 pronouncing this wrong--Siken Nallau. Um, your
6 reminded that your comments should be limited to
7 two minutes. Our timekeeper will let you know
8 when there are about 30 seconds left and when
9 your time is up. Since we have so few speakers,
10 I will allow you to finish your thought, but
11 hope that folks will try and stay right around
12 the time. With that, I'll turn the microphone
13 over to Ms. David. Ms. David.

14 MS. ROSALIE DAVID: - - . The New York City
15 Department of Education's latest attempt to
16 close 33 schools, but now 26, which were already
17 in the process of a three-year reform program is
18 a political - - that is not rooted in sound
19 educational practice. Rather - - designed to
20 avoid negotiations with CSA and UFT, uh, the
21 blueprints of - - teacher evaluation systems.
22 The motivation behind the move is to follow the
23 turnaround model. A model that does not require
24 principal and teacher evaluations and allows the
25 city to close and - - schools and do new things.

1 What else - - knew about. Fifty percent of
2 the teachers would - - . Well, 50 percent of
3 the former teachers would be put into excess - -
4 . There is nothing educationally sound about
5 this intervention - - . It's being introduced
6 for cynical reasons, not to help children. It
7 will not contribute to the development of a
8 sound principal-teacher value systems.
9 Furthermore, - - have the stats for these
10 schools and recruiting replacements from other
11 schools. The Department of Ed will destabilize
12 schools throughout the system one after another
13 like dominoes. While these - - are the most
14 important ones, there are fiscal - - . Removing
15 - - teachers and tossing them into the ATR
16 program where they will work as substitutes at
17 full salary will cost the city approximately 100
18 million - - annually. If you take out the - -
19 seven school and I'll just use the figure of 20
20 percent - - approximately. You'd still - - 44
21 million dollars. I represent the council of
22 supervisors - - . Thank you.

23 MR. BETHEIL: :Thank you, Ms. David. Our
24 next speaker - - Steve Landress.

25 MR. STEVE LANDRESS: It's not exactly my

1 forte here. Thank you sir. Good evening. I
2 am Steve Landress and I am the UFT - - here at
3 Graphics High School. Thirteen years ago I came
4 to Graphics High School as a novice teacher.
5 Prior to that day, I had worked for over 20
6 years in the printing and publishing industry.
7 I came here like so many who try teaching with
8 pre-conceived ideas on how I was going to change
9 the world. I was certain that - - young people
10 for a technical career. Quickly I discovered
11 just what a daunting task was - - . During my
12 career in industry, I had worked in many and
13 different interesting jobs. Never however had I
14 ever found a job more challenging than teaching
15 here nor for that matter had a I ever found a
16 job more exciting. Every day I realize how
17 fortunate I have been to spend the last stage of
18 my - - career in this profession in this
19 building. I am not alone. Many of the faculty
20 at Graphics High School here bring the
21 experience of former careers to share with their
22 students. Here there are former lawyers,
23 printers, bond traders, editors, artists,
24 computer programmers, military veterans, career
25 educators, and experienced parents teaching a

1 Graphics. These teachers belong with the new
2 young energetic teachers. Many graduates of the
3 most prestigious universities provide a dynamic
4 mix of talent. I am appointed at Graphics High
5 School as a special education teacher. In
6 addition to a special education license, I hold
7 a math content - - license. This has enabled me
8 to work primarily in the integrated co-teaching
9 inclusion classes. It provides me a rare
10 opportunity every day to see my colleagues in
11 action. Over the past seven years, I've worked
12 with 13 different math teachers. I submit that
13 I have observed many of my colleagues countless
14 long hours than any administrator has the
15 opportunity to do. I've witnessed daily, their
16 abilities, passion, dedication and compassion
17 for our students. Without reservation, I would
18 exception--I would be exceptionally pleased to
19 have my young son sit in a class - - . The
20 turnaround model before us proposes to replace
21 50 percent of the staff. We all realize that a
22 factor in a teacher's effectiveness is the
23 element of time. That is the length of time
24 that a student and a teacher has to develop a
25 relationship. The time - - for a teacher to

1 become familiar with the unique abilities and
2 needs of each student. The time required for
3 students to develop trust in their teachers.
4 The turnaround model does not change the
5 students in this building. How do we better--
6 how do we better serve these children by placing
7 before them 45 or 50 new teachers in September?
8 Just this last September, the Department of
9 Education assigned a new principal to lead
10 Graphics High School. Mr. Brendon Lyons, our
11 new principal, is young, energetic and creative.
12 He came here with a wealth of new ideas and
13 ambitions. Mr. Lyons and the faculty have
14 worked feverishly to implement these initiatives
15 the last seven months. Much of what Mr. Lyons
16 has proposed is just beginning to take hold.
17 Replacing half the faculty in September will
18 only set back the implementation of these new
19 structural methods. Another term will pass as
20 new faculty members learn to use the Brendon
21 Lyons methods of instruction. The turnaround
22 model only slows down the process of positive
23 change at Graphics High School. I sincerely
24 believe this turnaround proposal is an example
25 of one step forward and two steps back.

1 Graphics High School is already in the process
2 of reducing the student population over the next
3 three years. That is now a science to a level
4 so that the number of available seats is equal
5 to the number of applicants. A formal - - has
6 led to success in schools with similar
7 populations in this city. The turnaround
8 process before us is not - - the day when we
9 reach that magic number. Last - - last fall you
10 attended a meeting when many distinguished
11 alumni, parents, and students spoke on behalf of
12 maintaining Graphics High School. As the
13 meeting closed, you and I - - . You said to me
14 and I quote, if only were able to transfer the
15 positive energy in this building to other
16 schools. Soon after you decided to allow
17 Graphics High School to proceed with the plan
18 for change under the new leadership. The
19 faculty and their dedication has not changed in
20 those few short - - few short months since last
21 October. Graphics is not - - nor it is now. I
22 respectfully ask you to reconsider this
23 turnaround option before us as it was not in the
24 system's best interest to close Graphics last
25 October. It will not be in their best interest

1 now. Thank you.

2 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you Mr. Landress. The
3 next speaker is Alice O'Neil.

4 MS. ALICE O'NEIL: Hello again. I'm Alice
5 O'Neil. I'm - - school district rep for - - .
6 As we just heard from Steve Landress, chapter
7 leader--new chapter leader from Graphics who is
8 an honest man. And for him to have those
9 reports about the new principal. He is speaking
10 openly not just because these were his two
11 minutes of this semester. Because he believes
12 in the changes that this staff is able make.
13 That is so important. No one wants to dispute
14 that it is important for all of our students to
15 graduate. That is not the debate this evening.
16 What matters most is that every student learns.
17 He's not going to make the excuse and either am
18 I. And I do actually respectfully disagree with
19 some of the comments that were made by the panel
20 this evening. I actually believe as does this
21 chapter leader that every student can learn.
22 And it's not just because a - - home
23 environment. There have been wonderful changes
24 that this year's team membership has been
25 willing to make under brand new leadership.

1 Even hearing the students actually discuss
2 that they liked the restrictions - - as seniors.
3 That you had to play - - to go to the prom.
4 Even a small change like that, putting a social
5 activity and linking it to something academic.
6 This membership is willing to work hard in the
7 best interest of the students and not using - -
8 . thank you.

9 MR. BETHEIL: :Thank you - - . The next
10 speaker is - - .

11 MS. JANELLA HINES: Good evening. My names
12 is Janella Hines. I'm the special
13 representative for the United Federation of
14 Teachers. And I come here this evening to speak
15 about the turnaround model and the challenges
16 that it places before us as an entire city
17 system that's looking to improve student
18 performance across the board. These schools--
19 the 26 schools now--now that I'm told that seven
20 have been taken off the list, are schools that
21 are full of energetic educators, full of great
22 challenges, full of substantial need. And this
23 model does not take into account the dedication
24 of the educators that have worked with these
25 students and their need for relationship in

1 effective education. Education does not
2 happen in a vacuum. You don't - - a superstar
3 teacher and turn this school around. Schools
4 improve because of the kind of cultural changes
5 that we see happening at Graphics right now.
6 That these educators are talking about, having -
7 - with their new principal, working together to
8 bring about the kind of cultural, systemic,
9 institutional changes that need to take place.
10 This is a political ploy. We're all hearing
11 about that. And what happened yesterday only
12 reinforces the fact. The removal of those seven
13 schools just reinforces for all of us that this
14 is about - - it's about politics and it really
15 isn't about what's in the best interest of the
16 thousands of students that are being affected by
17 this proposal. It is essential that as
18 educators, as community, as parents, as
19 students, we stand up and call out what this
20 really is and demand the kind of real school
21 reform we know is possible in New York City
22 under effective leadership, with real
23 partnership, and strong systemic cultural change
24 and improvement. Thank you.

25 MR. BETHEIL: :Thank you, Ms. Hines. Next

1 is Midge Maroni.

2 MS. MIDGE MARONI: Good evening. Good
3 evening. My names is Midge Maroni. I'm an
4 English teacher here at Graphics and I've been
5 here since 2002. A couple things I want to call
6 you--to everybody's attention is that--at some
7 of the statistics I want to mention. In 2008-
8 2007, the school got a C. 2008-2009, a C.
9 After two years of Cs, many schools' principals
10 were removed. Following year 2009, a D. And
11 then finally the coup de grace, the last F. Now
12 how long are we supposed to believe in the good
13 faith and the confidence of your choices when
14 you let a school flounder for four or five years
15 with failed leadership, broken leadership. How
16 are we supposed to believe your good faith now?
17 You let the school flounder. We think that some
18 of your purposes just to remove staff here, we
19 don't really believe for a minute you have the
20 students at heart. We don't believe you have
21 their interest at heart. For example, some of
22 the problems we have in this school. We have a
23 lot of really energetic, very eager, younger,
24 newer teachers--newer teachers transferring in
25 from other jobs. What do they have here? In

1 seven years--I'm sorry--in eight years, they
2 have not had a valid licensed AP in English.
3 They need that. They need that support. They
4 need that appropriate and proper mentoring.
5 Recently, in the last two years, the math AP and
6 the science AP have been removed. Where is the
7 mentoring for the new math teachers? Where is
8 the mentoring for the design teachers? All
9 right. You can new lab equipment, but without
10 appropriate leadership. So who's been making
11 choices or spending the money. All right. The
12 students need the leadership. The teachers need
13 the leadership. Something else to hone your
14 attention, in the ten years I've been here, for
15 about eight years I collaborated with wonderful
16 special ed teachers. And we had classes in the
17 inclusion. A lot of us--this is the first year
18 in eight years I have not had a co-teacher. And
19 in all those years, the only training we had was
20 very limited. My training came from three years
21 upstate. And I didn't spend just ten minutes in
22 a weekend workshop. I've had weeks and weeks of
23 training. There are some really valuably
24 skilled teachers here, especially with our large
25 population of special ed. They need time to

1 collaborate and they need time to work
2 together. In all the years that I've been here,
3 our collaboration with special ed was so
4 limited. But I will tell you one thing that I
5 am so proud of, which is that in my classroom
6 and my co-teachers, the students didn't know who
7 was special ed and who was general ed. Because
8 both teachers had a chance to address the needs
9 of those students. I would also say that we
10 struggled with large numbers of special eds. If
11 you really want the money, give us smaller class
12 sizes. All right. We need that for our special
13 ed and we especially need them with the CTE in
14 the special ed. You're overloading the
15 classrooms. You're not giving us the
16 appropriate resources. And the only other thing
17 I would say is that, um, everybody here at
18 Graphics has been so overloaded, so overwhelmed,
19 and they haven't quit working because they
20 really care about these students. So don't dump
21 half of us. All right. Consider the strides
22 we've made and consider what we really need
23 here. Thank you.

24 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you, Ms. Maroni. The
25 last speaker we had signed up was Siken Nallau.

1 Am I pronouncing that correctly?

2 MS. SIKEN NALLAU: - - . I'm - - . My son
3 is - - . He's coming to this school and he's -
4 - . - - another school. He was - - education.
5 It's because - - do that. My son is doing - -
6 I'm very emotional. Um, - - at least know about
7 the school is about bringing some change but I -
8 - as American citizen, we need education and I
9 think it's a - - place. So thank you very much.

10 MR. BETHEIL: :Thank you. That was the last
11 of the speakers and we'll now begin the
12 question and answer period. So just... Okay. I
13 just wanted to make sure. We received one
14 question on the cards on the back. Was there
15 anybody else that believes they submitted one
16 just to make sure we aren't skipping over
17 anybody. Okay. It was one question that was
18 submitted and we'll do our best to answer it
19 right now. If there are additional question
20 that folks have or comment they wanted to
21 submit, there will be a mechanism to do that
22 after the hearing as well and that will be
23 incorporated into the public comment and
24 responses that we need to post online. The
25 first question or group of questions I'll direct

1 to Deputy Chancellor Grimm. When will the
2 2011-2012 progress report be announced and will
3 it have any impact on the potential closing?
4 Please explain.

5 MS. GRIMM: Well the DOE progress report
6 will be released in October or November. And
7 then of course we have the state PLA list, which
8 is typically distributed in December or January.
9 So these are dates after September. So neither
10 of these reports will have any impact on the
11 proposal we are talking about tonight. The
12 process is we have this hearing. We take public
13 comment at the hearing and also through several
14 means that Glenn will explain to you. And then
15 there will be a public hearing at the panel
16 later this month.

17 MR. BETHEIL: :There were no any other
18 questions that were submitted at this time.
19 Again, if you are interested in submitting any
20 additional questions that we need to answer, the
21 phone number to do that at is 212-374-3466. Or
22 you can send written comment via email to
23 d02proposals@schools.nyc.gov. And again that's
24 212-374-3466 or email at
25 d02proposals@schools.nyc.gov. Um, with that,

1 we've heard many significant comments at this
2 evening. And I'll depart from the script for a
3 second. I believe we actually heard a number of
4 very significant comments this evening. This is
5 a school that's--stepping outside my hat as a
6 facilitator. I'm the former director of career
7 and technical education. And oversee the small
8 learning community grants. And I've actually
9 spent a lot of time on this campus going back
10 the last four years. And I think one of the
11 things that's been said tonight is--I think I've
12 heard two sets of comments that I think both
13 weigh equally. There's a set of general
14 comments that have been made about the city's
15 process and politics and what does this mean in
16 general. And then there's been a set of
17 heartfelt comments about the progress that's
18 actually been made at this school and how people
19 are feeling and the care that everybody has for
20 the students that are here. I know from my own
21 first-hand experience that those feelings are
22 genuine. And that the beginnings of progress
23 here at Graphics are real. Whatever plays out
24 over the next couple of weeks and over the next
25 couple of months, I genuinely believe that what

1 will happen at Graphics by the end of this
2 year and going into the new structure at the
3 beginning of next year is that you get the fresh
4 start that many at this school have been looking
5 for for some time. I know it's often hard to
6 listen for all the things that are said in the
7 Educational Impact Statement and the proposal
8 that we read, but this was a different proposal
9 than what we hear at a lot of phase out hearings
10 where there is not a lot to acknowledge in terms
11 of the progress being made and the effort there.
12 I think the comment from our parent during the
13 public comment and the effort being made on
14 behalf of her son is just one good example here.
15 Whatever transpires, I know the folks here at
16 Graphics are tired. Mr. Rocco, going back to
17 your comments earlier. This was a serve
18 (phonetic) school. This was an impact school.
19 This school was consider on the closure list any
20 number of years. And each and every year there
21 was something going on here that indicated there
22 was progress that could be made. It is
23 understandable if people are exhausted and want
24 to get back to the work of serving kids. And
25 one way or another, it's my hope and I believe

1 the genuine intention of the Department of
2 Education to allow you to begin to do that with
3 a fresh start in the coming school year. And I
4 hope with all the politics one way or another
5 behind all of us, that you'll have a genuine
6 opportunity to begin to do that with the support
7 of the department, with the support of your
8 superintendent, your network, and ideally with
9 some financial support that comes with the
10 turnaround process as we move forward. Because
11 I know for sure, um, that despite the progress
12 that's been made here, we all have a long way to
13 go and you should have as much opportunity to
14 continue to make that progress on behalf of your
15 students as anybody else in this city. And we
16 look forward to working with you. However, if
17 this moves forward, Principal Lyons and the
18 others that are on this campus. This is not
19 easy work for any of us. And I know the
20 students will continue to need all the support
21 they can get as they move forward. With that, I
22 thank you for the feedback that we've received
23 this evening. We genuinely do appreciate the
24 comments and do take them to heart. The
25 information that we've received this evening

1 will be shared with the panel of educational
2 policy, which is having its hearing on April
3 26th at 6:00 p.m. on the Prospect Heights
4 campus, which is located at 883 Classon Avenue
5 in Brooklyn to vote on this proposal. There
6 will be additional opportunity for public
7 comment at that panel meeting and would
8 encourage folks to attend. Again, please use
9 the phone number 212-374-3466 or send email to
10 d02proposals@schools.nyc.gov if you have any
11 other questions or concerns. With that, thank
12 you all for coming this evening. This joint
13 public hearing is officially adjourned.

14 [END 290222]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature *M. Wilkin*

Date 4/4/12