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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**
**Resiting and co-location of
Independence High School - 1/3/13**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MS. MARISOL BRADBURY: Good evening,
3 everybody. This is a joint public hearing of
4 the Department of Education, Community Education
5 Council and School Leadership Teams of
6 Independence High School and the High School for
7 Environmental Studies for the proposed
8 consolidation of Independence High School's
9 enrollment at its primary site with existing
10 school, the High School for Environment Studies
11 in building M834 beginning in the 2013-2014
12 school year. I'm Marisol Bradbury, high school
13 superintendent for District 2. Good evening.
14 We have asked the District 2 Community Education
15 Council, the Citywide Council on High Schools
16 and the School Leadership Team of Independence
17 High School to participate in this joint public
18 hearing. I am joined tonight by Esteban Colón
19 from the SLT and Shino Takanawa from our CEC.
20 This hearing is being recorded. The purpose of
21 this hearing is for you to provide comments
22 about the proposal. Before I describe the
23 proposal, I want to make sure you're all aware
24 of the opportunity to provide your input. All
25 those who wish to speak must sign up in the

1 speaker signup area located just outside the
2 auditorium. The signup will close in 15
3 minutes. Speakers will be given the floor in
4 the order that they signed up. All comments are
5 limited to two minutes but we may make an
6 exception. There may be elected officials who
7 arrive at different times throughout the
8 evening. If they wish to speak, we will do our
9 best to accommodate them at the first opportune
10 moment. Those who are here at the start of the
11 public comment segment will be asked to speak
12 first. All comments will be mentioned in the
13 analysis of public comment to be published and
14 provided to the Panel for Educational Policy the
15 evening before the panel votes. The vote is
16 scheduled for January 16th, 2013. In addition,
17 we welcome any comments and feedback you may
18 have at any time before the panel votes on the
19 proposal. The email address and phone number
20 where comments may be made are
21 D02proposals@schools.nyc.gov, G-O-V, and the
22 number is (212) 374-3466. I will now read the
23 proposal summary. The New York City Department
24 of Education is proposing to consolidate the
25 enrollment of Independence High School, or

1 Independence, into the school's current main
2 site and building M834. Independence is an
3 existing transfer school that serves students 17
4 years of age and older and organizes students by
5 credit need, not grade level. The school is
6 currently split sited between two buildings--a
7 primary site located in building M834 at 850
8 10th Avenue, New York, New York, 10019, and a
9 secondary site located in building M641 at 250
10 West Houston Street in New York, New York,
11 10014. A split site means that a single
12 organization serves some students in one
13 building and other students in another building.
14 Both sites of Independence High School are in
15 Community School District Board District 2. If
16 this proposal is approved, all students enrolled
17 at Independence High School would attend school
18 in building M834 as Independence consolidates
19 its enrollment in a single site. This proposal
20 is not expected to have any impact on the space
21 allocated to the High School for Environmental
22 Studies, the school co-located with Independence
23 High School. At its primary site in M834,
24 Independence is currently co-located with High
25 School for Environmental Studies, an existing

1 high school that serves students in grades 9
2 through 12. A colocation means that two or more
3 school organizations are located in the same
4 building, although in this particular case,
5 Independence and High School for Environmental
6 Studies use different entrances and exits to
7 access their specific portions of the building.
8 M834 also houses a living for the young family
9 through education life program in the
10 administrative offices of Restart Academy. In
11 sum, this proposal is not expected to impact
12 High School for Environmental Studies, and is
13 also not expected to impact either the life
14 program or Restart Academy. Transfer high
15 schools are designed to create a personalized
16 learning environment and to provide students
17 with connections to college. Each transfer
18 school determines criteria for admissions
19 individually. Students graduate with a high
20 school diploma from the transfer high school
21 they attend. Transfer schools do not
22 participate in the high school admissions
23 process. Transfer schools accept students who
24 have been enrolled in high school in New York
25 City for at least one year, and who are behind

1 in high school or at risk of dropping out.
2 Each transfer school determines admissions
3 criteria individually. Independence serves
4 students who are over age and under-credited.
5 These students have attended at least one year
6 of high school, earned a minimum of 10 credits
7 and passed at least one Regents exam, but are
8 behind in credit accumulation. Independence
9 currently enrolls students who are classified as
10 10th, 11th and 12th graders based on their
11 credit accumulation. Independence serves
12 students who are 17 years of age and older. It
13 has a rolling admissions policy, accepted
14 students throughout the year. If this proposal
15 is approved, Independence will reduce its
16 enrollment to reflect the decrease in
17 instructional space. This proposed move will
18 reduce organizational overhead and increase
19 focus on student achievement at Independence in
20 M834. This proposal is not expected to impact
21 High School for Environmental Studies. Thank
22 you.

23 [background noise]

24 MS. BRADBURY: I think you will be - - okay,
25 so Esteban, would you like to speak? Okay, so

1 the next presenter will be Shino from the CEC.

2 MS. SHINO TAKANAWA: Thank you very much. I
3 apologize for arriving late. I had every
4 intention of being here on time and I am sorry
5 to keep you waiting. As the Community Education
6 Council, we have not had a chance to discuss the
7 proposal and we are predominantly the council
8 overseeing K through 8 programs, so we don't
9 really have a collective opinion. My only
10 personal concern reading the proposal is the
11 utilization rate that is expected to be as much
12 as 120%. I do hope that there is capacity
13 inside the building to accommodate the two
14 schools comfortably and that this does not
15 result in any type of overcrowding for either
16 school. Having said that, I know that the
17 principal of the Independence school is in
18 support of this program. He just told me that
19 he has been asking for this for quite some time
20 and I also, as a mother of a teenager I have a
21 high school senior, I know it's extremely
22 difficult to educate a spirited young person and
23 I am in support of doing everything we can to
24 support those students who are not necessarily
25 educated through the conventional system, so I

1 would just like to add a personal note that I
2 would like to support this proposal. Thank you.

3 MS. BRADBURY: So we have now concluded the
4 formal presentations and we will now open the
5 floor for public comment. Okay, in the meantime
6 I will introduce our panel. And I will allow
7 them to do that individually.

8 MR. RON SMUCKIN: Hi, everybody. This feels
9 a little weird, speaking to a small group of
10 people with a microphone and I'm usually a
11 loudmouth, but I'm Ron Smuckin. I'm the
12 principal of Independence High School.

13 MS. TAKANAWA: I'm Shino Takanawa, the
14 president of Community Education Council,
15 District 2.

16 MR. ESTEBAN COLÓN: Esteban Colón, assistant
17 principal for Independence High School and also
18 a member of the School Leadership Team.

19 MS. BRADBURY: So I will open the floor
20 again for any public comment. No? Okay. So I
21 believe the speaker list is now exhausted.
22 Okay, so we will wait eight more minutes and
23 allow you to think if you want to speak. So our
24 first speaker is Joe Tiederman.

25 MS. JOE TIEDERMAN: I am Joe Tiederman. I'm

1 one of the co-presidents of our PTA and also
2 co-president of the SLT--or co-chairman,
3 chairperson of the SLT here at the High School
4 for Environmental Studies, and first I just want
5 to thank everyone for being here and really to
6 thank the school system for the very careful way
7 that this has all been handled. We had lots of
8 communication and Miss Matthews and her
9 organization have been really forthcoming in
10 letting us know exactly what it was and what it
11 involves, so first I just want to put it on the
12 record to say thank you so very much. Just two
13 things that I'd like--one would be to follow up
14 on Shino's question about space. I'm assuming
15 that the calculations that have been done that
16 everyone is comfortable that the space use--we
17 won't later on hear back that there's some sort
18 of issue about the total population of students
19 in the building. I don't know if that's a
20 follow up--that's fine, but that would be one
21 question. And the second one is, and I know
22 that this is somewhat not customized but I just
23 wanted to clarify--it does say that a colocation
24 means that two or more school organizations are
25 located in the same building and may share

1 common spaces like auditoriums, gymnasiums and
2 cafeterias. That has not been the case here in
3 this building and I was just, again, putting it
4 on the record to confirm that that would not be
5 the case moving forward. Those would be the two
6 points. Thank you.

7 [background noise]

8 MS. BRADBURY: Do we have any more speakers?
9 No? Okay. So again, we thank you for coming
10 out tonight and we welcome any comments and
11 feedback you may have any time before the Panel
12 for Educational Policy votes on this proposal at
13 its January 16th, 2013 meeting. The email
14 address and phone number where comments may be
15 made are again D02proposals@schools.nyc.gov, and
16 the telephone number again is (212) 374-3466. I
17 once again thank you for your participation.
18 This joint public hearing is now closed.

19 [END RECORDING]

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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 

Date January 7, 2013