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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING
Grade Truncation of 02M111
from K-8 to K-5, 5/8/13**

**May 8, 2013
5:30pm**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MR. MARIANO GUZMAN: Okay, so we're going to
3 begin. I'm going to go through what is
4 essentially a script, and then what we'll have
5 is an opportunity--at 6:15 we'll begin with a
6 series of--we'll start an opportunity for anyone
7 who has comments to join us. We expect two
8 members from the Community Education Council and
9 we hope they arrive, but in the interest of time
10 and given the fact that you arrived on time I
11 don't want to keep you. So officially, good
12 evening. This is a joint public hearing of the
13 Department of Education Community Education
14 Council and the school leadership team for the
15 proposal to truncate the middle school grades of
16 P.S. 111, Adolph S. Ochs, beginning one school
17 year from now in September of 2014. My name is
18 Mariano Guzman. I'm the community
19 superintendent for Community School District 2.
20 We've asked the District 2 Community Education
21 Counsel and the school leadership team of P.S.
22 111 to participate in this joint public hearing.
23 I'm joined tonight by Irma Medina. Irma is the
24 principal of O2M111 and she's also a member of
25 the SLT. And we're expecting two members from

1 our CEC; respectfully, they are Elizabeth Weiss
2 and Dimitri Ganiaris [phonetic]. And I'm giving
3 you their names now so that I don't have to take
4 time to reintroduce them when they arrive. The
5 hearing is being recorded, and the purpose of
6 this hearing is for you to provide comments
7 about the proposal. Before I describe the
8 proposal I want to make sure that you're all
9 aware of the opportunity to provide your input.
10 As I mentioned before, all those who wished to
11 speak must sign up in the speakers sign-up area
12 which is located just outside the auditorium.
13 The sign-up list will close in 15 minutes or so,
14 and speakers will be given the floor in the
15 order that they signed in. All comments are
16 limited to two minutes. There may be elected
17 officials who arrive at different times
18 throughout the evening. If they wish to speak,
19 we will do our best to accommodate them at the
20 first opportune moment. Those who are here at
21 the start of the public comment segment will be
22 asked to speak first. All comments will be
23 mentioned in the analysis of public comment to
24 be published and made available to the Panel for
25 Educational Policy prior to its vote, which is

1 scheduled to take place on May 22nd, 2013. In
2 addition, we welcome any comments and feedback
3 you may have at any time before the Panel votes
4 on this proposal. The email address and phone
5 number where comments may be made--and I ask
6 that you take a pencil and paper out so that you
7 can capture this information--are d02proposals--
8 and that's plural, P-R-O-P-O-S-A-L-S--@schools--
9 again, it's plural--.nyc.gov. The phone number
10 is (212)374-3466. The phone number is (212)374-
11 3466. And the email, again, is [d02proposals--P-](mailto:d02proposals--P-R-O-P-O-S-A-L-S--@schools.nyc.gov)
12 [R-O-P-O-S-A-L-S--@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:d02proposals--P-R-O-P-O-S-A-L-S--@schools.nyc.gov). In
13 collaboration with the school's leadership, the
14 New York City Department of Education is
15 proposing a gradual truncation of P.S. 111's
16 middle school grades to begin not this upcoming
17 school year but in the 2014-2015 school year.
18 P.S. 111's school leadership team initiated this
19 proposal to truncate the school's middle school
20 grades through the submission of a letter of
21 intent to the Division of Portfolio Planning in
22 January of 2012. Truncating P.S. 111's middle
23 school grades will allow the school to more
24 fully focus on serving its elementary school
25 students. If this proposal is approved, P.S.

1 111 will begin its grade truncation in the
2 2014-2015 school year. In that 2014-2015 school
3 year, P.S. 111 will no longer enroll new sixth-
4 grade students. Students already in sixth and
5 seventh grade at P.S. 111 in the 2013-2014
6 school year will continue at the school for
7 seventh and eighth grade in 2014-2015, provided
8 they meet promotional requirements. All eighth-
9 grade students at P.S. 111 in the 2013-2014
10 school year who meet promotional standards will
11 apply to high school through the citywide high
12 school admissions process and enter ninth grade
13 as planned in September of 2014. The Department
14 of Education does not anticipate that the
15 proposed truncation of P.S. 111 will impact the
16 existing pre-kindergarten program. However,
17 like all pre-kindergarten programs, its
18 availability will depend on continued demand and
19 funding. If this proposal is approved by the
20 Panel for Educational Policy on May 22nd, 2013,
21 P.S. 111 will be removed from the District 2
22 middle school choice application and matching
23 process after the 2013-2014 school year. So for
24 next year, it would still be in the book. No
25 fifth-grade students will be matched to P.S. 111

1 for sixth-grade enrollment in the 2014-2015
2 school year. New middle schools--we're being
3 joined by our CC member, Elizabeth Weiss--new
4 middle schools planned to open throughout the
5 city for the 2014-2015 school year will be
6 available for future fifth-grade students to
7 consider. Through the District 2 middle school
8 choice process, students are offered the
9 opportunity to apply to a range of middle
10 schools within their district and/or schools
11 with borough-wide or citywide eligibility.

12 Thank you. The next presenter, if she would
13 like, is Elizabeth Weiss. Okay. They told me
14 you've elected to make a statement. Okay. And
15 I believe we're expecting Mr. Ganiaris in 15
16 minutes. When Mr. Ganiaris arrives, I will ask
17 him if he would like to provide a statement;
18 then I may break with the protocol to allow him
19 to do that. Would you like to present, Irma?
20 Okay. You don't have a statement either. Okay.
21 So with that, we will take a five-minute break.
22 As I mentioned, at 6:15 we'll start the public
23 comments and we want to make sure that everyone
24 can sign in. So I now have the sign-in sheet.
25 It has three names listed. Would anyone else

1 like to add their name to this sheet?

2 [Speaking non-English]

3 [Break]

4 MR. GUZMAN: We being the public comments.

5 I think there are several school leadership team
6 members that might be in the audience. I want
7 to mention those that I think are here. And if
8 you would like to make any comments or speak,
9 please let me know by signing in. And so,
10 Michelle Arquette [phonetic]. Michelle, would
11 you like--no? Okay. Thank you for coming,
12 Michelle. Samantha Cabalo [phonetic]. Hi,
13 Samantha. Hi. Would you like to make any
14 comments? No? Well, thank you for being here.
15 Rebecca Greene. Frances Picone [phonetic]. Hi,
16 Frances. Comments? No? Okay. And parents.
17 We have Evelyn Savios [phonetic]. Hi, Evelyn.
18 Mr. Ockomenta [phonetic]. Yes? No? Okay.
19 Mitalia Colon. Mitalia, you're going to--yes.
20 Vivian Cruz [phonetic]. Okay. Yvette Gonzales
21 Rolon [phonetic]. Okay. Sandra Hayik. Hi,
22 Sandra? Are you commenting? Okay. Thank you
23 very much. Just wanted to make sure that I
24 covered everyone. So we formally completed or--
25 or we concluded our formal presentation and I'd

1 like to open the floor for comments. We're
2 going to--as I mentioned earlier, speakers will
3 be given the floor in the order that they signed
4 up. All comments are going to be limited to two
5 minutes.

6 [Speaking non-English]

7 MR. GUZMAN: And I will begin by calling up
8 the first speaker. I believe that these lists
9 are in order. The first speaker is Rosalina
10 Chase.

11 MS. ROSALINA CHASE: - -

12 [Speaking non-English]

13 INTERPRETER: She would like - -

14 MR. GUZMAN: So just--so that we can address
15 concerns that you might have, we are proposing
16 another middle school and you will hear about
17 that later, if not this week, next week. We're
18 having another public meeting.

19 [Speaking non-English]

20 MR. GUZMAN: So are planning on opening up
21 another middle school. We felt that the
22 truncation here in having--we don't have may K
23 through 8 schools left in this District, and so
24 we felt that the truncation, at the principal's
25 request and after meeting with the SLT, that the

1 truncation of the school would be more
2 appropriate to meet the needs of the community
3 in a way that served best those youngsters from
4 K through 5. But we do recognize the need for
5 another middle school in the community, and our
6 CEC has been working with us and we're going to
7 announce the opening of another school. So you
8 will have another school to send your daughter
9 to that is going to be walking distance.

10 MS. IRMA MEDINA: Currently, the children
11 that are in fifth grade will be eligible to stay
12 on in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade and
13 graduate. So this is the case in Angie. She
14 will be able to attend the middle school.

15 [Speaking non-English]

16 MS. MEDINA: All right?

17 MS. ELIZABETH WEISS: You said that there
18 will be more information available soon for
19 parents. Would that information come from the
20 principal about what would replace the current
21 middle school age students and how that--what is
22 in place now would be different, what will be
23 coming in, and why and how it would be
24 different, the leadership, and how that
25 information will be given to parents?

1 MR. GUZMAN: So we'll have two pieces,
2 we'll have multiple pieces of information
3 available. But specific to your question, we
4 will--we will do an educational impact statement
5 that will talk about the opening of a new middle
6 school in 2014. That middle school will have a
7 new leader. That leader has not been selected
8 yet, so we won't be able to address that
9 particular issue. And the leader will have some
10 discretion over specifically what that school
11 might look like. But one of the hopes I have is
12 that that school does address the specific needs
13 of this community and that it indeed addresses
14 many of the issues, especially issues around
15 language of this particular community. With
16 respect to students that are currently in
17 school, they'll be at--the school will phase out
18 of this particular building so it will be
19 students--what will happen in 2014 is that we
20 won't be admitting students into sixth grade,
21 but students that are currently in fifth grade
22 will be able to stay here. And students that
23 are in eighth grade will obviously graduate.
24 And so as students move through they'll be able
25 to graduate from the school if they so wish or

1 they can transfer into the new middle school
2 once that's opened, depending on the grade.
3 Mitalia Colon?

4 MS. MITALIA COLON: Good evening. - -

5 MR. GUZMAN: Thank you, Mitalia. Sandra
6 Hayik? Ms. Hayik, before you speak, let me just
7 clarify one thing. The educational impact
8 statement, or a similar meeting to this, is
9 occurring tomorrow night and that meeting is to
10 discuss the proposal that is posted regarding
11 the opening of the new middle school. So that
12 meeting will be tomorrow night. And the
13 location, Jennifer? Okay. We'll have that
14 information written up outside for you. Ms.
15 Hayik?

16 MS. SANDRA HAYIK: Good evening. - -

17 MR. GUZMAN: Thank you, Ms. Hayik. If I can
18 speak for our CC, we've had ongoing discussions
19 about the need for middle school seats
20 throughout the District, but particularly
21 there's been a concern about middle school seats
22 on the west side corridor that can serve this
23 community. And so to that end, we are proposing
24 a school that will be incubated for a couple of
25 years in another building and you'll hear more

1 about it tomorrow and then will move to its
2 own location. So let me go to the second list.
3 So the second list is really reflective of the
4 SLT and other community members. So what I'm
5 going to do, I don't know if you all necessarily
6 want to speak, I'm going to take the
7 opportunity, this opportunity, to go through the
8 names again, and if you'd like to speak please
9 by all means let me know. So we've heard from
10 Ms. Colon. Ms. Savios, would you like an
11 opportunity to speak? Oh, okay. Ms. Arquette?
12 No? Ms. Cabalo? No? Ms. Picone? Yes?

13 MS. FRANCES PICONE: Hi, everyone. - -

14 MR. GUZMAN: Jen, do you want to speak to
15 that?

16 MS. JENNIFER PAINE: So I do want to be
17 clear that there are contracts with the union
18 that cover this particular situation. And that
19 while, unfortunately, tonight I will not have
20 those specific details for you, in our public
21 comment analysis to be posted before the panel
22 votes on this it will all be listed out in that
23 analysis.

24 MR. GUZMAN: I'm not steering away from the
25 question but I don't want to give you

1 misinformation. There's a process and it's
2 obviously--I believe it's P18D but I don't want
3 to--and what that process does is it provides an
4 opportunity for the staff from the school that's
5 being impacted to apply to the new school. And
6 then there are specific data sets within that
7 that would probably be much more helpful for you
8 to have, but I don't have it at my fingertips
9 and I don't want to mislead you. So we can do
10 two things. As Jennifer Paine [phonetic]
11 mentioned, there will be more information in the
12 forthcoming document, or I can also arrange for
13 your network's HR person, Ms. Lauren Lewis, to
14 come to the school and perhaps meet with the
15 staff and discuss what those options are. If
16 that's your presence, we can sure arrange. So,
17 Ms. Medina, would you arrange for that?

18 MS. MEDINA: I'll be glad to.

19 MR. GUZMAN: Okay. Terrific. Zyda Cosman
20 [phonetic]? Would you like to speak, Zyda? No?
21 Okay. I have Neal Arachan or Abachan
22 [phonetic]. Would you like to speak?

23 [Speaking non-English]

24 FEMALE SPEAKER: - - [through interpreter]

25 INTERPRETER: What she needs - - stay here,

1 they're going to let them finish.

2 FEMALE SPEAKER: - -

3 INTERPRETER: Is there going to be a change
4 to improve the sixth grade for the next school
5 year, to improve the next school year for the
6 sixth grade?

7 FEMALE SPEAKER: - -

8 INTERPRETER: - - sixth to the eighth grade
9 because my son had - - no control - - next year.

10 MR. GUZMAN: [speaking non-English]

11 So in terms of--the question specifically
12 was whether her son will have the opportunity to
13 complete through eighth grade at the school--
14 he's currently in sixth grade. So the answer to
15 that is yes, your child would have that
16 opportunity. The second part of the question
17 had to do with the fact her particular child is
18 having some issues at the school, and she's like
19 to know to know whether there's going to be--
20 what will the sixth grade look like next year in
21 terms of instruction, etc., discipline, to
22 ensure that her son doesn't necessarily face
23 some of the issues and concerns that he's faced
24 with now. And I can't address that. That's
25 certainly for you to bring up with the school.

1 And as Ms. Medina said, with respect to next
2 year's sixth-grade program and the subsequent
3 year's, the curricula and the particular
4 approach within those programs is something to
5 be discussed with the SLT. Okay. So the
6 speaker list is now exhausted. Do we have--

7 [Speaking non-English]

8 FEMALE: - -

9 [Speaking non-English]

10 INTERPRETER: - - and I have a - - girl.
11 She's in fourth grade. My question is, would
12 she have--my daughter have been to graduate from
13 fourth grade to sixth grade in this school?

14 MR. GUZMAN: - -

15 [Speaking non-English]

16 MR. GUZMAN: So what I said was that her--
17 she asked specifically about her fourth-grade
18 daughter and whether her fourth-grade daughter
19 would have the opportunity to go to sixth grade
20 and continue in this school to graduation. And
21 the answer to that is no. In 2014 we will not
22 have an enrolling sixth grade. However, if you
23 are currently in the school seventh or eighth
24 grade you have the ability to complete school if
25 you're in the school in 2014 in either of those

1 two grades. We will not, however, be
2 accepting a sixth grade into the school in 2014.
3 Her daughter will have the opportunity, however,
4 to apply to the new school that will be within
5 the community and that you can hear more about
6 tomorrow at a similar meeting, which is called
7 an educational impact statement meeting, and
8 that meeting will be at 425 West 33rd Street.

9 [speaking non-English]

10 MR. GUZMAN: So Mr. Ganiaris has just joined
11 us and I would--he is one of the community
12 members of our Community Education Counsel and
13 I'd like to give him an opportunity if he'd like
14 to make a statement or address the community.
15 Dimitri, what we've--I'm sorry, couldn't wait.
16 I know you were being delayed. And so we've
17 gone through our educational impact statement.
18 We heard from several parents and the questions
19 that sort of most on the table had to do
20 specifically with whether their children would,
21 one, have an opportunity to graduate here, which
22 depends obviously on the grade that they're in
23 currently, and secondly, more information about
24 what might be provided in the community to
25 address middle school seats. I addressed the

1 fact that specifically with each child that
2 was discussed whether or not they would be able
3 to graduate, and the larger question about
4 middle school seats, I said that the CC had been
5 working over the last year to really look at
6 middle school seats throughout the District, and
7 specific to this community we are in support of
8 the proposal which will be discussed tomorrow at
9 the educational impact statement meeting for the
10 creation of a new middle school that will be
11 incubated in a school for a couple of year and
12 then our hope is, and our recommendation will be
13 for one year, and then that school will be
14 moving. So just so that everybody knows what
15 that last part is, I'll give you sort of a
16 surprise as to what we're going to discuss
17 tomorrow. The new school that we're proposing,
18 the new middle school, will be house at P.S. 51
19 for one year. And after that year, in 2015,
20 that school will move to where Clinton is
21 currently, which is 425 West 33rd Street, and
22 that will be the new home for that school.
23 Okay? Dimitri, would you like to make a
24 statement? Elizabeth?

25 MS. WEISS: One thing I hope will happen in

1 addition to parents receiving more information
2 and staff receiving more information about
3 what's going to happen next is we on the CEC
4 really encourage parents to become involved with
5 what they want. There is a new school opening
6 up, middle school opening up, on top of P.S. 158
7 on the east side and it's amazing how many
8 parents come out and say well, I want this and I
9 don't want this. And I urge you to really think
10 about what you want rather than this is it, this
11 is what you've got. Whatever your concerns are,
12 whatever your child would like to see that might
13 be different than what they've had before--I am
14 not familiar with your school so I'm not
15 critical. I don't know. But I urge you all to
16 use this time to be able to ask for what you
17 want. Dimitri also had an insight, too, is that
18 there's a lot of development going on in this
19 neighborhood, that new buildings are coming up,
20 and that people that are moving to this
21 neighborhood also probably will want to bring
22 their kids into the school. And the
23 demographics of the school, the ethnic mix of
24 the school, there's some things that could
25 really change this school, what makes the school

1 special. So, you know, when Dimitri said, you
2 know, this whole thing about the demographics of
3 the area will change, that's something that, you
4 know, affects everybody. So I urge whatever
5 meetings are set up is a chance for parents, and
6 also students, to ask for what they want and
7 what they don't want. There are a lot of
8 different things that can be brought to a
9 school. And I don't want to go off on that
10 tangent. But you don't have to just get what
11 the DOE says, you have to have this and that's
12 it. You can say wait, we want more of this, we
13 want less of this. And so use your voices to
14 ask for what you want. I know I'm speaking in
15 very general terms. And, again, I don't know
16 what's here already or what's to come. I just
17 encourage people to not be shy.

18 MR. GUZMAN: Any comments? Questions? So
19 we're going to close this session because we've
20 had--all of our speakers we've exhausted, and
21 then we can entertain questions after that. But
22 I'm going to officially close the session.
23 Okay. With that, let me adjourn this part of
24 the meeting and then any questions that--I see
25 two questions. I see Miriam and then I see

1 Dimitri. So would you like to ask your
2 question first?

3 MS. MIRIAM: - -

4 MR. GUZMAN: Yes. So tomorrow will not give
5 you the details that you're suggesting. It will
6 not have that information because we don't have
7 a school leader. And as you know, the vision of
8 a school is typically created by the school
9 leader. And so--the school leader working with
10 the community. So you will have a general
11 sense, will know that we're going to create a
12 middle school.

13 [END RECORDING]

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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.

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6 Signature: 

7 Date: May 11, 2013
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