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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING
High School of Graphic Communication
Arts - 2/26/13**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MS. JENNY SOBELMAN: Good evening, ladies
3 and gentlemen. My name is Jenny Sobelman, and I
4 will be acting as the facilitator for this
5 evening's joint public hearing. This is a joint
6 public hearing of the Department of Education,
7 Community Education Council, and the School
8 Leadership Team, to discuss the proposed phase
9 out of the High School of Graphic Communication
10 Arts, O2M625, beginning in 2013-2014. I want to
11 make note that this evening's proceedings will
12 be recorded and transcribed. So before we get
13 into the presentations, I want to give you a
14 quick rundown of how the hearing will go. So
15 there'll be formal presentations from panel
16 representatives, and then there's an opportunity
17 for public comment. So outside, as you were
18 coming in, you saw the table, where there was
19 literature available, and there was an
20 opportunity to sign up for public comment and
21 also to submit questions. So if you would like
22 to participate in public comment, I would ask
23 that you make your way out there. We'll keep
24 that list open for about 15 more minutes. So if
25 you change your mind and you're inspired,

1 please, make your way back there. And I'll try
2 and give you a couple of reminders that we're
3 going to close it soon, as we get to that point.
4 And then once we've gone through the
5 presentations from the panel, I will invite the
6 speakers to join us here, and each speaker will
7 be given two minutes. I've got a timekeeper
8 upfront. He'll hold up a sign that says, 30
9 seconds, and another sign that says, time's up.
10 And my role as the facilitator is to make sure
11 that each person who signed up is given their
12 two minutes, and to try and keep us moving
13 along. So I will encourage folks to try and
14 keep to that two minutes. Once we've reached
15 the end of our speaker list, we'll transition
16 into question and answer. So also, at the table
17 in the back, there was an opportunity--there
18 were cards available, and you can write down
19 questions that come up. So again, I would
20 encourage you to make your way out to the back
21 of the room and take a moment to jot down
22 questions that you have about the proposal. And
23 I would also say that it may be that we don't
24 have an opportunity to respond to all of the
25 questions tonight. And we also may batch some

1 together, if it's a similar question, and
2 respond to it once, if they are sort of
3 repetitive. But I will say that all of your
4 comments this evening and the comments that you
5 make, and I'll provide email and phone, if you
6 have additional comments and questions later,
7 are included in a document called, The Analysis
8 of Public Comment, which is published on our
9 website and made available to the panel members
10 prior to their vote. So we have all of our
11 panel participants here, and we also have a
12 couple of representatives from elected
13 officials. Some will speak. Some, I will
14 recognize. If other folks are joining us
15 through the course of the evening, we'll try and
16 make an opportunity for them. I would like to
17 recognize that we're joined by Julia Fredenburg
18 [phonetic] from Speaker Quinn's office, and we
19 are joined by Paul Sawyer from Assembly Member
20 Rosenthal's office. Okay. So I've gone through
21 the agenda, and now I'd like to introduce our
22 panel members. I'm going to start down on the
23 far end. We have Natasha Howard, representing
24 SUNY. We have Jimmie Kelleher from the School
25 Leadership Team. We have Shino Tanikawa from

1 CEC 2. We have Eric Goldenberg [phonetic],
2 also from CEC 2. Marisol Bradbury, our
3 superintendent, and Deputy Chancellor, Kathleen
4 Grimm. And we will also be joined at some point
5 this evening by other representatives, who will
6 join us, and I'll introduce them and give them
7 an opportunity to speak as well. And now I will
8 invite the Deputy Chancellor to read the
9 proposal.

10 MS. KATHLEEN GRIMM: Thank you very much,
11 Jenny, and good evening, ladies and gentlemen.
12 I want to thank each and every one of you for
13 being here tonight. As Jenny told us earlier,
14 this joint public hearing was convened to
15 discuss the following related proposals. The
16 proposal to phase out and the replacement of the
17 High School of Graphic Communication Arts and
18 the proposal to open and co-locate a new charter
19 middle school, Success Academy Charter School,
20 Manhattan Middle School, in September 2005
21 [sic]. Now, for the purposes of this hearing, I
22 will refer to the High School of Graphic
23 Communication Arts as Graphics, from this point
24 forward. The decision to phase out Graphics is
25 a difficult one, and we don't take this decision

1 lightly. We examine many factors and review a
2 lot of data before we propose a core selection.
3 We engage families and community members in a
4 discussion about what is and what is not working
5 at the school, before determining whether a
6 phase out is appropriate. All of us count on
7 our schools to provide a high quality education
8 to students. We must hold all of our schools to
9 the same standards of excellence. Every child
10 in this city deserves the best possible
11 education. When a school is not serving its
12 students well, we have to take action to ensure
13 that current students don't fall even further
14 behind, and that future students will have a
15 school that prepares them for success in college
16 and in the workplace. I want to acknowledge the
17 students who are here tonight, and the families
18 who feel that their children are being well-
19 served by Graphics. Tonight, I expect we will
20 hear about some successes happening here at
21 Graphics, and we honor those. But we also need
22 to consider the other students, whom the school
23 is not serving well and who have not experienced
24 the same success. These students deserve
25 better. As I mentioned earlier, tonight, we

1 will be discussing three related proposals. In
2 addition to the proposal to phase out Graphics,
3 we are proposing to replace Graphics with a new
4 district high school. We are also proposing to
5 open and co-locate a new charter middle school
6 in this building, beginning in September 2015.
7 Graphics is located in School Building M625,
8 right here at 439 West 49th Street in Manhattan.
9 Graphics is a district high school that
10 currently serves students in grades 9 through
11 12, and admits students through our citywide
12 high school admissions process. In the current
13 school year, Graphics is co-located with two
14 district high schools, Business of Sports School
15 and the Urban Assembly Gateway School for
16 Technology, a high school that is currently
17 phasing in. Additionally, this past December,
18 the Panel for Educational Policy approved the
19 co-location of a new charter elementary school
20 called, Success Academy Charter School,
21 Manhattan 2, in the building, for September
22 2013. On January 18th in 2013, the New York City
23 Department of Education published proposals to
24 phase out and replace Graphics, based on its
25 longstanding performance struggles. The

1 Department posted amended proposals on February
2 5th, 2013 and February 14, 2013, to provide
3 updated information regarding the availability
4 of a school improvement grant funding and to
5 correct the capacity figure for the M625
6 auditorium, the auditorium in this building.
7 These proposals discussed the track record of
8 Graphics, and why the Department believes the
9 phase out and replacement is the best option for
10 the Graphics community. Graphics' performance
11 data indicate the school has struggled, and
12 confirmed the Department's assessment that the
13 school lacks the capacity to improve quickly
14 enough to meet the needs of all of its students.
15 For example, graduation rates have remained
16 below 56 percent for the last ten years. Last
17 year, the school's four-year graduation rate was
18 54 percent, well below the most recent citywide
19 average of 65.5 percent. Furthermore, Graphics
20 earned an F grade on its most recent progress
21 report, including F grades in all four
22 subcategories, student progress, student
23 performance, student environment, and college
24 and career readiness. Graphics has a history of
25 poor performance, including an overall F grade

1 on its 2010-2011 progress report and an overall
2 D grade on its 2009-2010 progress report.
3 Graphics was also identified by the State of New
4 York Education Department as a priority school,
5 one of the bottom 5 percent of the schools in
6 the entire state. Given the school's continued
7 decline in performance, the Department believes
8 that the most serious intervention, the gradual
9 phase out and the eventual closure and
10 replacement of Graphics, will address its
11 longstanding struggles, and allow for a new
12 school option that will better serve future
13 students and the community. In two related
14 educational impact statements, the Department
15 has proposed to open and co-locate a new
16 district high school in September 2013, and a
17 new charter middle school, starting in September
18 2015. The new district high school would offer
19 a rigorous academic program that will prepare
20 students for postsecondary education and for
21 work. The new high school will offer career and
22 technical programming, and will prepare students
23 for careers in emergency management. The new
24 district high school will have a limited,
25 unscreened admissions method, and will give

1 priority to students from Manhattan. The new
2 charter middle school, the Success Academy
3 Charter School, Manhattan Middle School, will
4 serve students in 5th through the 8th grades.
5 Depending on seat availability, Success Academy,
6 Manhattan Middle School will enroll students
7 from continuing Success Academy Elementary
8 Schools. Before we move to the public comments
9 section of this meeting, I would like to briefly
10 discuss the impact of this phase out proposal on
11 current Graphics students. If the phase out
12 proposal is approved, Graphics would no longer
13 admit new 9th grade students after the conclusion
14 of this school year. Graphics would continue to
15 phase out one grade at a time, until June 2016,
16 when it would close. Most current students will
17 be able to complete high school at Graphics,
18 assuming, of course, that they continue to earn
19 credits on schedule and pass the required
20 Regents exams. As the school becomes smaller,
21 students will receive more individualized
22 attention, to ensure that they are receiving the
23 support they need to succeed and to graduate.
24 However, students may also apply to finish
25 school elsewhere. New 9th grade students will

1 have the opportunity to apply to a different
2 high school during round two of our high school
3 admission process in March. That's 9th grade
4 students who have already applied to be 9th grade
5 students here next year. Other students at
6 Graphics will get an opportunity to apply to
7 transfer to another high school as part of our
8 public school choice process. Applications for
9 these transfers, transfer opportunities will be
10 available to students this spring for enrollment
11 starting in September. I thank you in advance,
12 to all of those who will tonight share with us,
13 their feedback on these proposals. We look
14 forward to hearing your comments and your
15 questions. Thank you very much.

16 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you, Deputy Chancellor.
17 And we have been joined by Paola De Kock. I've
18 got a name card for you. And then quickly,
19 before we have the other panelists speak, I'm
20 going to invite Paul Sawyer from Assembly Member
21 Rosenthal's office to speak, so he can go to
22 another event. I think it's on.

23 MR. PAUL SAWYER: Oh, thank you. Hi,
24 everybody. Good evening. My name is Paul
25 Sawyer. I am here to deliver testimony on

1 behalf of Assembly Member Linda B. Rosenthal,
2 who is up in Albany, unfortunately, so good
3 evening. My name is Assembly Member Linda B.
4 Rosenthal. I represent the Upper Westside and
5 parts of Clinton and Hell's Kitchen in
6 Manhattan. I am here today to speak against the
7 proposal to co-locate the middle school grades
8 of three Success Academy Charter Schools,
9 Manhattan 1, Manhattan 2, and Upper West, with
10 the High School of Graphic Communication Arts,
11 Business Sports School and Urban Assembly
12 Gateway School For Technology in Community
13 School District 2. The three middle schools
14 would be collectively known as Success Academy,
15 Manhattan Middle School. This proposal is just
16 another example of poor planning by the New York
17 City Department of Education, as it aggressively
18 pushes disruptive co-locations of charter
19 schools into public school space, with little
20 regard for the needs of and objections raised by
21 the community. The Community Education Council
22 District 2 passed a resolution opposing the
23 DOE's proposed co-locations of Success Academy
24 Charter Schools within its district, challenging
25 the DOE's assertion that the proposed schools

1 fill a need for so-called high quality seats
2 in District 2. While the DOE frequently
3 attempts to justify the proliferation of co-
4 locations by suggesting that existing public
5 schools do not provide sufficient quality seats,
6 CEC 2 has demonstrated that 88 percent of
7 District 2 students are in classes that exceed
8 contract for excellence targets, and 78 percent
9 are in classes that exceed the Department of
10 Education's class size targets. Despite the
11 closure of several Catholic schools throughout
12 Manhattan, including the Holy Cross School on
13 West 43rd Street, less than a ½ mile from the
14 proposed co-location at issue here, the DOE
15 seems unwilling to require Success Academy to
16 find private space readily available, that would
17 not disrupt existing public schools and
18 students. Overcrowding is an ongoing problem
19 throughout District 2's elementary and middle
20 schools, and the district and its students would
21 benefit from the creation of additional public
22 school seats. Instead of helping to alleviate
23 that overcrowding, a factor in poor student
24 performance, leading to the DOE's solution of
25 eventual school closure, it seems bent on

1 aggravating that problem. If the current co-
2 location is approved, the building utilization
3 would increase dramatically to, up to 104
4 percent of capacity in 2021, from the current 87
5 percent of capacity, as estimated by the DOE's
6 bluebook, which is notorious among parents and
7 advocates for vastly underestimating the future
8 needs of districts, leading to high levels of
9 school overcrowding. Given the availability of
10 private space in the area, I am hard pressed to
11 understand the reasons behind this proposed co-
12 location, particularly, in light of the strong
13 opposition of area elected officials, such as
14 myself, the local CEC, the United Federation of
15 Teachers, and parents, advocates, and other
16 concerned community members. Perhaps, if the
17 DOE spent more time providing critical and
18 desperately needed support to existing teachers,
19 students, and their principals, instead of
20 zealously pursuing the privatization of public
21 education in this city, fewer public schools
22 would be forced to close because of poor
23 performance. Compounding overcrowding in this
24 building will only lead to poor educational
25 outcomes for the remaining public school

1 students in the building. It is high time
2 that the DOE and SUNY recognize that the current
3 system of charter school creation administration
4 in this city is creating an environment that is
5 combative and disastrous for learning. The city
6 needs to work on creating a better system and a
7 more open process in which community feedback is
8 consistently considered, and to seize its
9 strategy of pushing the disruptive co-locations,
10 to which our communities have been subjected in
11 recent years. I strongly urge the DOE to find a
12 better alternative for the Success Academy
13 Middle School seats than what is contained in
14 this current proposal, and SUNY not to approve
15 the proposed charter amendment until an
16 acceptable solution has been found. Thank you.

17 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. So we're...

18 [Applause]

19 MS. SOBELMAN: I'm now going to start at the
20 far end of the panel, and we'll have
21 presentations from the other members of the - -
22 . So first, we'll hear from Natasha Howard
23 from SUNY. And there's a microphone here in the
24 middle, which can hopefully reach all the way to
25 the end. Just turn it on.

1 MS. NATASHA HOWARD: Hi, everyone. My
2 name is Natasha Howard, and I am the Director of
3 School Evaluation at the SUNY Charter Schools
4 Institute. I am here this evening on behalf of
5 the Board of Trustees of the State University of
6 New York. Education law requires SUNY to hold a
7 public hearing anytime that one of the schools
8 it authorizes might open in an existing public
9 school building. I am here tonight to listen to
10 your comments about the proposal to locate
11 grades 5 to 8, of three Success Academy Charter
12 Schools, Upper West, Manhattan 1, and Manhattan
13 2, in part of Building M625, located here at 439
14 West 49th Street in Community School District 2.
15 Success Academy Charter School Upper West is an
16 existing public school, and Manhattan 1 and
17 Manhattan 2 will open in the Fall of 2013. The
18 proposed co-location, if approved, would start
19 in the Fall of 2015. SUNY is holding its
20 hearing now, at the same time that the DOE is
21 holding its hearing, so that we don't have to
22 ask you to come back twice, to ask parents and
23 community members to attend two different
24 hearings on the same topic. We want to be sure
25 that we have the opportunity to hear from as

1 many parents, teachers, school leaders, and
2 members of the community as we can. I do want
3 to note that SUNY has to make its own decision
4 regarding the school using the proposed space
5 here. I will be taking notes on comments made
6 tonight. In addition, you can give me any
7 written comments that you may have with you.
8 You can also email comments to
9 charters@SUNY.edu. You can mail comments to 41
10 State Street, Suite 700, Albany, New York 12207,
11 or fax comments to (518) 427-6510. I have extra
12 copies of our notices with me, that include all
13 of our contact information, and notices are also
14 posted in several places in the building. SUNY
15 will accept comments through March 18th, 2013,
16 which is five business days after the meeting of
17 the Panel For Educational Policy, where this co-
18 location will be discussed. Thank you and I
19 look forward to your comments.

20 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. So the next
21 presentation is from Jimmie Kelleher,
22 representing the SLT.

23 MR. JIMMIE KELLEHER: Good evening,
24 everybody. My name is Jimmie Kelleher, and I am
25 currently president of the Parents Association,

1 and I also sit on the School Leadership Team
2 here at Business - - School. Let me begin by
3 stating that I am against the proposed plan
4 being put before us here this evening. I
5 strongly disagree with the projections used to
6 build the foundation of this plan. I make this
7 statement after spending hour after hour,
8 researching, reviewing, and reading, and have
9 many serious concerns, most of which fall under
10 one major heading, the building usage plan.
11 I'll begin with my most serious concerns, the
12 library usage availability. Our students have
13 been waiting patiently for over a year, for the
14 library renovation to be completed. As promised
15 by the DOE, our library will be a college ready
16 facility. According to this new plan, our
17 school, BOSS, where students are already being
18 accepted into prestigious colleges, have use of
19 the library from 10:00 a.m. until 11:50 a.m.,
20 while Success Academy Grammar School will have
21 access to it every day from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.,
22 at this time when, in fact, our students would
23 need to utilize the library the most, after
24 dismissal at 2:45 and 3:30 p.m., to work on
25 projects, do extra credit, research, and study

1 for college entrance exams. This part of the
2 plan and the planning of scheduling time
3 allowance is unacceptable. Number two, the
4 Graphic Arts lunch period. In the 2013-14
5 school year, Graphic Arts enrollment is
6 projected for 830 students. Their lunch period
7 is scheduled from 10:20 to 10:55 a.m., a total
8 of 35 minutes. In accordance with New York City
9 Fire Department Building Code Regulations, our
10 cafeteria is certified for a maximum occupancy
11 of 387 people, which means, the Graphic Arts
12 lunch period will have to be divided into three,
13 11-minute lunch periods each, accommodating 276
14 students per session, allowing each student
15 about two or three minutes to eat. And this is
16 an outright show of disrespect and negligence on
17 the DOE's part, when you see how these children
18 are being treated. Although, BOSS, Gateway, and
19 M135 have longer lunch periods, according to the
20 plan, the enrollment in each of these schools is
21 still larger than the cafeteria maximum
22 occupancy by Fire Department of New York City
23 regulations, which means that all three schools
24 will have to split up their lunch periods, to be
25 in compliance with building codes, and more

1 importantly, to avoid putting our children
2 into dangerous overcrowded situations. Third,
3 shared space. The proposal projections into the
4 school year, 2021, which is really not that far
5 off, will have a student population of 2,426,
6 and that's 179 over building capacity, of which
7 1,046 of those students will be Success Academy
8 students, 48 percent of the population.

9 According to the building usage plan, Success
10 Academy will not be allowed usage of the
11 cafeteria, gymnasium, exercise room, or weight
12 room, all grammar schools and elementary
13 schools, whether it's a charter school or a
14 public school. Having this many students, have
15 that many parents, and they like to hold events.
16 Their schools need to accommodate them and
17 provide space to hold them. A multipurpose
18 room, which Success Academy will have at its
19 disposal, courtesy of the DOE, will not be
20 feasible based on the plan's own projected
21 population growth of that school. Success
22 Academy will need more space. They will use
23 more space, our cafeteria, our gym, and our
24 other areas. But this is not a two-way street.
25 BOSS, Gateway, and M135 will not get usage of

1 Success Academy's multipurpose room. This is
2 something not factored into the building usage
3 plan. Is this fair? Is this what is considered
4 shared space? My next concerns regard security
5 and safety. First is the metal detectors. Me,
6 personally, I'm in favor of them, but I'm also a
7 children's advocate and I strongly believe that
8 everybody needs to be treated equally. Since
9 Success Academy Manhattan 2 has already been
10 approved to start serving students in the 2013-
11 14 school year, and another elementary proposal
12 before us here tonight, there is no other
13 option, but to remove the existing metal
14 detectors in the Graphics lobby. It would be
15 discrimination; the unjust or prejudicial
16 treatment of different categories of people on
17 the grounds of race, age, or sex, and to subject
18 one group of students to metal detection and not
19 others. Rules regarding building safety need to
20 be uniform for the whole building. Protocols
21 need to be followed by all the schools on the
22 campus, no exceptions. The argument will be,
23 grammar schools are exempt from metal detectors.
24 However, this is not a handful of children.
25 Based on the projected Success Academy capacity,

1 this will be 1,046 students or 48 percent,
2 compared to 1,380, 52 percent, high school
3 students. This should have all been looked at
4 closely, not taken lightly, and discussed by DOE
5 officials when this proposal first came across
6 their desks. This should have also been
7 discussed by the DOE officials and the high
8 school superintendent, the School Leadership
9 Teams, and the Parents Associations of this
10 campus. Second, the traffic safety. Success
11 Academy doesn't provide bus service for their
12 students. With a full enrollment of over 1,000
13 children, has anyone contacted a local community
14 Board Number 4, the transportation department,
15 or the police department, for that matter? Each
16 police precinct, ours being the 18th, has an
17 officer designated to the school as a community
18 officer. The 50th side street of this building,
19 where Success Academy is said to be entering
20 and dismissed, is a no-standing zone. It's also
21 a crosstown street with heavy theater district
22 and truck traffic. This will cause major
23 traffic delays during morning drop-offs and
24 afternoon pick-ups. It's going to cause
25 dangerous hazards for children, and also,

1 residents of this neighborhood. This is
2 something that should have been seriously
3 considered. And I pray that the Panel of
4 Educational Policy takes this into serious
5 consideration. These are accidents waiting to
6 happen. With over 2,400 students enrolled in
7 our school in six short years, and 600 of them
8 being middle school children, if approved,
9 safety will become the number one priority. It
10 is also a public fact that most trouble happens
11 after school is dismissed, outside school
12 buildings where there is less supervision. This
13 campus and surrounding area will not be the
14 advantage these middle school children need.
15 With numerous other schools housing many other
16 high schools in walking distance from this
17 campus, this is clearly not the ideal situation
18 for these middle school children. I beg you to
19 reconsider for the sake of the children's
20 safety. Do not grant this proposal. And last,
21 what about Graphic Arts and the children there?
22 What about all the dedicated work that the
23 teachers, administrators, and staff have put in
24 over the years? This institution has achieved
25 so much since first opening its doors in 1958.

1 Nobody considers that. Everybody goes through
2 some rough patches in life. Does that mean that
3 we give up on them? No. We battle back and
4 fight through it. I thought that's what New
5 York City was based on, and not giving up.
6 Isn't that what we did through 9/11, and most
7 recently, Sandy? We stick together and we get
8 through tough times. We work hard and repair.
9 We just don't give up. And that's what I see
10 here. I see the DOE giving up on these
11 children. They're going to close down a school
12 and bring in two schools that haven't done
13 nothing yet. Not a classroom has been--not a
14 class has been taught in either one. Why don't
15 they just fix what's in place? And how can they
16 justify and fix what's already in place? I beg
17 the Panel of Educational Policy reconsiders this
18 and votes against this proposal.

19 [Applause]

20 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. And the next
21 presentation will be from Shino Tanikawa from
22 the CEC.

23 MS. SHINO TANIKAWA: Good evening. My name
24 is Shino. I'm the president of the Community
25 Education Council, District 2. That was a tough

1 act to follow, but I will share some of my
2 personal thoughts, as well as, the Community
3 Education Council, District 2's official
4 positions as well. There are so many components
5 to this particular hearing. I'm going to
6 organize them by phase out, co-location, and the
7 Success Charter issues. For the phase out, this
8 administration has proudly closed and proposing
9 to close so many schools. And I fail to
10 understand why they are so proud of this so-
11 called achievement because that's admission of
12 their own failure. If the DOE was doing its job
13 right, we shouldn't have to be closing any
14 schools at all. So by the fact that the DOE is
15 proposing to close so many schools, they're
16 admitting that they're failing our children.
17 And it's our children who are going to pay the
18 price of their failure. And I am vehemently
19 opposed to closing any schools because as this
20 gentleman said, we don't give up on our kids,
21 and closing high schools or any schools is
22 really giving up on those children who need our
23 help the most. So I don't understand, if there
24 is going to be space available, maybe--I guess
25 there is space available because Success Charter

1 Manhattan 1 has been approved to be co-located
2 here. It's a done deal. But I wish we had
3 thought about using that extra capacity to
4 create a community school, which seems to be
5 something that a lot of people are supporting
6 right now. Rather than cram more schools in
7 here, why not bring in an outside entity that
8 could really work with Graphics to help their
9 children? Offer tutoring, offer remediation
10 work, but work with some other entity that's not
11 going to take up precious school space, but
12 really try to help the students who need it.
13 And it's really unfortunate because it's
14 probably too late to do that now. But if the
15 DOE was serious about helping our students, that
16 should have been what we decided to do with this
17 building, not bring in another school, but bring
18 in a community organization and partner
19 organizations to help the students. In terms of
20 co-location, I am, personally, wary of any co-
21 location of any kind, whether it's a charter
22 school or district school. The reasons being,
23 oftentimes, it's like having a roommate forced
24 on you, without having an interview process or
25 an agreement. You're throwing in a roommate, a

1 stranger, into your apartment. And let's say,
2 you have maybe, three bedrooms or four bedrooms
3 even, but a teeny-tiny kitchen and one bathroom,
4 and you have four or eight people living in your
5 apartment. Well, that's not really going to
6 work. It's difficult, trying to figure out
7 who's going to use the bathroom at what time,
8 and if you don't work that out ahead of time,
9 you're going to run into problems. And that's
10 what I see in a lot of co-locations in this
11 city, regardless of what kind of schools it is.
12 When you put four schools, five schools into a
13 building with a cafeteria capacity of 300, are
14 you kidding me? That is just insane. How can
15 the SCA and the DOE put this building's capacity
16 at 2,247 students, when the cafeteria can only
17 serve 300 students at a time? That means that
18 we have to seven lunch periods in a day. So
19 obviously, the bluebook that we use to evaluate
20 the capacity of school buildings is deeply
21 flawed. And we've known this for a long time
22 and we've been pushing to change that. But we
23 cannot take this capacity number from the
24 bluebook and divide that up among all these
25 different schools. We have to think about the

1 common shared spaces and how those schools are
2 going to use them. Co-locations actually is a
3 terribly inefficient way of using buildings
4 because you have to have administrative spaces
5 for every single school, that could be used for
6 other purposes. And cafeteria, library,
7 gymnasium, auditorium, all those things are
8 shared facilities. The time it takes for these
9 multiple schools to figure out the schedule and
10 make sure that everybody sticks to it is a waste
11 of time on the school administration. So again,
12 I wish we could make this a community school,
13 where we can really form a partnership with
14 everybody who's interested in the welfare of the
15 students, and not give up on them. Finally,
16 I'll talk about the Success Charter. This
17 middle school does not even exist yet. The
18 application to expand the grade for Success
19 Charter 1, 2 and Upper West has not even been
20 submitted yet, because Success Charter Academy,
21 Manhattan 1 and 2 just got the applications to
22 open the elementary school, approved this past
23 year, and it has to wait five years to apply for
24 the grade expansion. So here we are, talking
25 about co-locating a charter school that doesn't

1 even exist. And the DOE calls this, long-
2 range planning, but to me, planning for a school
3 whose application may or may not be approved by
4 the state is not a good way to plan long range.
5 CEC D2 does have two charter school--resolutions
6 against charter co-locations. We have
7 trepidations about co-locations of any kind,
8 like I previously said, but particularly,
9 charter school co-locations have the added layer
10 of resource iniquity that is obvious to
11 children. So we do have resolutions against co-
12 locating charter schools with district schools.
13 We also passed a resolution last year, calling
14 for a moratorium on charter school applications
15 in District 2. Moratorium on charter schools
16 because from where we are, we don't see the
17 charter schools working the way they were
18 intended to. Charter schools were supposed to
19 be innovators in pedagogy. They can do a lot of
20 things that a district school cannot do because
21 they are not constrained by the same
22 bureaucracy. So they innovate, which is great,
23 but they're supposed to come back to the
24 district schools and share with us, the success
25 stories, the best practices, what worked, what

1 doesn't work, so that the district schools can
2 also improve based on what the charter schools
3 are doing. That is not happening. What is
4 happening right now is division amongst parents,
5 which is not what the charter school movement
6 was started to do. It was not intended to
7 divide us into pro-charter, anti-charter. Until
8 we can bring everybody together, sitting at the
9 table, really talking about, how can we move--
10 how can we use the charter movement to improve
11 all schools? How can we use the charter school
12 movement to educate every single student,
13 whether that student goes to charter schools or
14 a district school? Until we can have that
15 conversation, I do not want to see any more
16 charter schools. It's time that we come
17 together and figure out how we can serve all the
18 students in New York City, working with the
19 charter schools and the district schools,
20 together. And I don't see that happening.
21 Let's see. Did I leave out anything else? Oh,
22 yes, one last thing, and I'm sorry to go on and
23 on. District 2 CSE right now is working with
24 parents and community members, like Community
25 Board 8, Community Board 2, to create two new

1 middle schools in District 2. One, we are
2 hoping to locate inside M158 Building, where
3 P.S. 158 is located, and the other one is a
4 building to be purchased soon by the city,
5 thanks to Speaker Quinn, 75 Morton Street. We
6 are trying to create district middle schools, so
7 that we can serve the increasing population of
8 elementary students in District 2. I hope that
9 we can put more energy into these two projects
10 that are already happening, and not really
11 expend our energy and attention on trying to co-
12 locate a success charter middle school that does
13 not even exist. So thank you for indulging me
14 with these comments. And I apologize, I'm going
15 to have leave at 7 o'clock. But I'm going to
16 hand the mic over to my colleague, Eric
17 Goldberg.

18 [Applause]

19 MS. SOBELMAN: And quickly, before you
20 begin, I forgot to remind folks about the
21 speaker sign-up list closing. So if you didn't
22 have an opportunity to sign up, and you feel
23 inspired, let me give you a couple of other ways
24 that you can communicate with us after this
25 hearing. So the email will be open up until

1 6:00 p.m., the night before the panel meeting,
2 which takes place on March 11th, so up until 6:00
3 p.m. on March 10th. And you can email us at D2D,
4 the number, 0, the number, 2,
5 proposals@schools.nyc.gov. And you can also
6 reach us by phone at (212) 374-3466. So if you
7 have additional thoughts that come up, please do
8 take advantage of those two opportunities. And
9 at the panel meeting on March 11th, there's also
10 an opportunity for public comment there as well.
11 So we're going to go back to our presentations
12 from the panel. And the next presentation will
13 be Eric Goldberg from CEC 2.

14 MR. ERIC GOLDBERG: Thank you. Tonight,
15 we're here, once again, as part of a slow,
16 methodical process of sacrificing a school and
17 its students on the altar of a political agenda,
18 the charter school agenda. And I know that
19 tonight is about policy and not about students,
20 because if tonight was about students, we
21 wouldn't label schools as underdeveloped, or
22 persistently low achieving, or turnaround, and
23 then ask those schools and students to achieve,
24 because we know it's not possible when we label
25 students that way. If tonight was about

1 students and not about policy, then we
2 wouldn't ask students in these phased out
3 schools, to go without electives, without
4 supports, without afterschool activities, and
5 ask them to graduate on time. And if tonight
6 was about students and not about policies, we
7 wouldn't be here, talking about a school that
8 doesn't even exist. There is no Success Charter
9 Middle School. It hasn't opened. It has no
10 track record. It has no students. It has not
11 faculty. But we're reserving space for this
12 school, which is going to crowd out other
13 schools and impact the educational attainment of
14 students in this building. This is not the way
15 that this should be done. There is a clear
16 process for opening schools through the SUNY
17 process. And why we're going to sit here
18 tonight and reserve space for a school that
19 doesn't exist, again, confounds me. So I know
20 that my colleagues tonight have listed a very
21 well-reasoned argument around why these
22 proposals don't make sense, but I also will ask
23 you tonight, on the other hand, to understand
24 the bigger political agenda that is underway and
25 that we're all a party to. This is not about

1 students. This is about policy. If it was
2 about students, we wouldn't be labeling
3 students, we wouldn't be putting students in a
4 position where they have little chance of
5 success, and we wouldn't be reserving space for
6 schools that don't even exist. Thank you.

7 [Applause]

8 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. And we've been
9 joined by District Leader, Mark Landiss
10 [phonetic]. Excuse me. And I'm going to invite
11 him to come down to the mic and give brief
12 remarks, before we return to the panel
13 presentation.

14 MR. MARK LANDISS: Thank you. I appreciate
15 the scheduling accommodation. Good evening,
16 everyone. My name is Mark Landiss. I'm a
17 district leader, parent activist, and also, a
18 city council candidate in District 6, which
19 covers the Upper Westside of - - [off mic]
20 Clinton. And I'm here tonight to speak against
21 the proposal to co-locate the middle school
22 grades of the three Success Academy Charter
23 Schools into the High School of Graphic
24 Communication Arts and the other high school's
25 building here. Once again, and I do mean, once

1 again, the community is faced with more and
2 more pressure for the Department of Education to
3 accept unnecessary, disruptive, co-locations of
4 charter schools. Each co-location takes badly
5 needed seats away from existing public schools
6 and needed public schools, including the needed
7 middle schools, without regard for the
8 community's concerns. This is a familiar battle
9 for me. I reside on the Upper Westside, and not
10 long ago, we organized students and parents on
11 the Upper Westside to fight another Success
12 Academy co-location, after the DOE disregarded
13 the public's desires. I agree with Assembly
14 Member Linda Rosenthal, CEC Council, District 2,
15 the parents' advocates, and the UFT, in their
16 opposition to this co-location, as both
17 unnecessary and unjustified. The students at
18 the high schools already in place don't deserve
19 this disruption. The DOE must make the relief
20 of overcrowding, its number one priority. And
21 co-locating charter schools into public schools
22 spaces doesn't help. Frankly, Success Academy
23 is flush with cash, and they should seek to rent
24 private space, including one of the many
25 Catholic schools that is closing in Manhattan

1 would be available. And finally, study after
2 study shows that on the average, charter schools
3 do not lead to better educational outcomes than
4 traditional private or public schools. And I
5 call upon both DOE and SUNY, to declare a
6 moratorium on any further expansion of co-
7 located charter schools in New York City, until
8 all the consequences of co-location on
9 traditional public schools and their students
10 are considered and addressed, and until New York
11 City parents can be assured that their voices
12 will be heard. Thank you.

13 [Applause]

14 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you, sir. So now we'll
15 hear from Paola De Kock, representing CCHS.

16 MS. PAOLA DE KOCK: Good evening. My name
17 is Paola De Kock. I am the public advocate
18 appointed to the Citywide Council On High
19 Schools, and I'm also its president. I want to
20 be brief because I don't believe in long
21 speeches, and it's really difficult to find
22 something that hasn't been said, either by my
23 colleagues - - or in previous public--joint
24 public hearings. In fact, this is my third
25 time--my second time here, and my third time,

1 submitting a statement for the school. And in
2 these public hearings, it does become clear that
3 the DOE's various proposals to either turnaround
4 or strangle, sometimes by the very same
5 document, this venerable school, which has
6 served many generations of students well, as a
7 trade school for the printing arts, it's become
8 clear that the DOE is set on its path and will
9 not be turned away. We are here tonight to
10 participate in a sort of funeral for Graphics,
11 and simultaneously, assist in the birth of
12 something that we hope, for the sake of the
13 students, will enjoy a better life. We know.
14 We've been around a while. We've been to many
15 of these hearings. And we know it's pointless
16 to ask that Graphics be saved. We know that
17 once the DOE has set its sights on closing a
18 school, it will be closed. And it's become
19 clear that the DOE is not interested in saving
20 this school. What we have seen over the years
21 is a series of haphazard and uncoordinated
22 attempts to refashion this school into small
23 learning communities, first, into small learning
24 communities, and then tinker with its program,
25 with its staff, and finally, this past fall, the

1 DOE, to all appearances, simply stood by as
2 the school became notorious for a particularly
3 chaotic start of the school year, and the
4 institution of brightly colored plungers as hall
5 passes. But what I want to talk about is the
6 proposal to start a new school, because the buzz
7 du jour nowadays is CTE, Career and Technical
8 Education. And so today, we are considering
9 this proposal to open O2 M135. In keeping with
10 the favored school model, it will be limited,
11 unscreened, and small. It will, quote, "offer a
12 rigorous academic program with a career and
13 technical education component that will prepare
14 students for postsecondary education and work."
15 Closed quote. If you have read as many
16 educational impact statements as I have, you'll
17 know that that's what they all say. If you have
18 read this particular one, you will know that
19 pretty much all it says about this new school,
20 besides the fact that it will offer, quote, "CTE
21 pathways related to planning for and responding
22 to emergencies. FEMA, Region 2, American Red
23 Cross, Department of Homeland Security are the
24 proposed partners for O2 M135." Imagine that.
25 In 38 pages of tightly packed text, the document

1 that purports to be a quote, "educational
2 impact statement" says nothing more than that
3 about the education that these kids will be
4 receiving. What classes will be offered? Will
5 there be special equipment available for the
6 students to practice these trades, that they're
7 supposedly getting trained for? I don't think.
8 As I've told the school, I haven't seen many
9 emergency--much emergency equipment here. Will
10 there be--is there a plan to obtain state
11 certification for the CTE endorsed diploma?
12 Maybe there is. We just haven't been told. DIS
13 has nothing to say about this; although it has
14 plenty to say about rooms and how you can carve
15 up school space inside the building, so that you
16 can accommodate as many schools as the DOE
17 fancies with, quote, "no impact." Also, it has
18 a lot to say about you can give away public
19 space to private school--to essentially, a
20 private enterprise that is notorious for
21 squeezing the district schools and have, quote,
22 "no impact" on the students--on the district
23 students. I don't think that I really need to
24 say more. It's been said many times. There is
25 no grand plan to ensure that all New York City

1 high school students are college and career
2 ready. Only time will tell whether the
3 wholesale destruction of large, old schools,
4 such as Graphics, in favor of small, themed
5 schools will work, although the signs are not
6 particularly good right now. Just a couple of
7 weeks ago, not even a couple of weeks ago, some
8 of us went to a closure hearing for Jonathan
9 Levin High School. It's one of the small
10 schools that succeeded the old Taft High School.
11 Just think about that. Sadly, for the students
12 and their parents, what we're doing here is
13 basically just moving around pieces--moving
14 pieces around the chessboard, with the
15 administration hoping that it will be out of
16 office before the game is over. Thank you.

17 [Applause]

18 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you, Paola. And we
19 actually have two SLT members, who are going to
20 speak during this portion. They're just wasn't
21 space upfront for them. I am not sure of the
22 order. So Jeannie Laconte [phonetic] and Alice
23 O'Neill, representing the School Leadership
24 Team.

25 [Background Noise]

1 MS. SOBELMAN: Are you making your way up?
2 Wonderful.

3 MS. JEAN LACONTE: Good evening, everyone.
4 My name is Jean Laconte, and I am the UFT
5 chapter leader at Graphic Communication Arts
6 High School. I oppose both the co-location of
7 the Success Academy Middle School and the phase
8 out of the High School of Graphic Communication
9 Arts. The co-location of the Success Academy
10 Middle School will further disrupt and
11 negatively impact our students at Graphics, The
12 Urban Assembly, and BOSS School. It will
13 negatively affect the space issues that we
14 already have with our office space and our
15 classrooms, and will ultimately affect our
16 students. Isn't it enough that the Success
17 Academy is coming to this building as an
18 elementary school? My understanding was that
19 there was a need for elementary schools, not
20 middle schools. Now, the DOE wants to phase out
21 the High School of Graphic Communication Arts.
22 We are a CTE high school with programs that help
23 students learn about career choices in
24 photography and graphic art. We were originally
25 the New York City High School of Printing, where

1 students learned the art of printing and
2 secured jobs right out of high school,
3 sometimes, earning more than some teachers. The
4 High School of Graphic Communication Arts has
5 existed here in one form or another since 1925.
6 Maybe, that will mean something to those of you
7 who think history and tradition matter, and that
8 we are not always destined to repeat our
9 mistakes. Did you know that up until last year,
10 our work-based learning program was one of the
11 biggest in the city? Graphic Communication Arts
12 has had a long tradition of serving some of our
13 least served students in this city, but under
14 these new plans, that won't happen anymore.
15 Before you make the decision to close this
16 school, I want you to think about the children
17 who are currently attending it. Stop for a
18 minute and think about the children, not the
19 numbers and not the data, but the young lives it
20 will impact. You have branded them with an F,
21 and now you want to phase them out. They take
22 what you say about their school to heart. They
23 internalize it. Make no mistake about it. What
24 you do to this school, you do to them. And you
25 must own that. Know that you are wrong about

1 them and you are wrong to close this school.
2 It has been a challenge for the last seven or so
3 years, to try to meet the expectations of the
4 Department of Education's ever-changing rubrics
5 and standards. Although the DOE will point to a
6 laundry list of things it has provided, I am not
7 sure that in the end, this closure was not
8 always the endgame. I hope there will be some
9 of you who are brave enough to say, you will not
10 take this building away from the families and
11 students it already serves, and give it to
12 another constituency. I hope there will be some
13 of you who will say, no, to closing this school
14 and dismissing the students who attend it, and
15 instead, support and embrace them. Thank you.

16 [Applause]

17 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. And our final
18 presentation from the panel, Alice O'Neill.

19 MS. ALICE O'NEILL: Do you mind if I face it
20 this way, facing the audience? Do you mind? Do
21 you mind? Okay. Great. Okay. Are we ready?
22 Okay. Good evening, everyone. First of all, my
23 chapter leader will not be bullied. Good
24 evening, everyone. My name is Alice O'Neill. I
25 am the UFT Manhattan High School district

1 representative. What you have in this
2 audience, you have team members here, who have
3 put their heart and soul into this school. This
4 is the fourth meeting here in two years. Two
5 years ago, there was such a phenomenal turnout,
6 that the DOE said, yes, let's give Graphics
7 another chance. And then the mayor said, you
8 know what, I need to make room for my buddy, Eva
9 Moskowitz, so let me have turnaround and then we
10 can try to crush the system. But they lost,
11 didn't they? So before the mayor leaves, he
12 wants to make certain that his friend, Eva
13 Moskowitz, has as much public space as she
14 possibly can. If you want to see a disaster,
15 please make a joint visit with me to the
16 Brandeis campus. It is repulsive to see two
17 separate and unequal cafeterias. Never blame
18 the children. And someone from the DOE asked me
19 an excellent question. Do the parents at the
20 Success Charter School in Brandeis know how
21 offended the students and the staff are within
22 that building? I don't think so, because when I
23 hear them speak at these meetings, they don't
24 have any contact with the people in that
25 building. That is why there should never be an

1 elementary charter school here, or the middle
2 school that doesn't even exist yet. There is no
3 possible way that you can have a high school
4 setting, where you could have all the high
5 school students meet the needs, that they need
6 met every single day. They need to be able to
7 use a cafeteria and not be overcrowded. They
8 need to be able to use the library, a gymnasium.
9 Elementary school students need the same. What
10 we are against is having the school, where the
11 teachers--because they are non-union, they will
12 have absolutely no voice. They will take the
13 marching orders of Eva Moskowitz or she will
14 march them out of those schools. The way that
15 she is trying to push people out in public
16 space, her teachers have no voice. So last
17 year, the DOE was reasonable and they gave
18 Graphics another chance. It is never too late.
19 So, please, what I ask you again this evening is
20 to please give Graphics another chance, and
21 recognize that there are bullies everywhere, and
22 just rave on with orange. Do not put up with
23 the bullies. Eva Moskowitz is a bully. She
24 does not deserve any space within any school
25 building, particularly, this one. Thank you.

1 [Applause]

2 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. So we have now
3 concluded the formal presentations. [Coughing].
4 Excuse me. We have concluded the formal
5 presentations, and I am now going to start
6 public comment. So as I said, each person who
7 has signed up for public comment will have two
8 minutes. The gentleman upfront here will be
9 timekeeping, so he'll have a little sign that
10 says, 30 seconds, and then another sign that
11 says, time's up. And I'll try and move us
12 along. And what I'm going to do is call up
13 folks in groups of five, and they've got a row
14 reserved for you here. And I apologize in
15 advance, if I get your names wrong, so please do
16 sort of correct it when you approach. Speaker
17 Number One, Rosalee David [phonetic]. Number
18 Two, Slissen Nalim [phonetic]. Speaker Number
19 Three, Kaleb Windover. Number four, Jaycee
20 Renners. And Number Five, Gretchen Knudsen, I
21 believe. So Speaker Number One, Rosalee David.

22 MS. ROSALEE DAVID: Thank you. Good evening
23 to all the people here. You've worked hard all
24 day and you're now working a little bit harder.
25 I am Rosalee David from the CSA, Council of

1 Supervisors and Administrators. I am one of
2 the assistant field directors. Once again, the
3 DOE has scheduled more than two dozen schools
4 for closure. The latest 20 schools destined for
5 this scrapheap don't fit into any particular
6 pattern. Several have new principals who were
7 told they would have time to turn the school
8 around. Several have effective ratings from the
9 state. Several have proficient quality reviews.
10 One actually has a principal who exceeds
11 expectations and a quality review rating of
12 well-developed. The DOE seemed to take aim at
13 schools as if it's playing a game of Russian
14 roulette. The DOE's worst practice often
15 devastates children and families. It usually
16 takes aim at students who have already suffered
17 setbacks and humiliations from previous school
18 closings. Many of them have been turned away
19 from the city's new schools for reasons of poor
20 academic performance or for coming from families
21 without clout. Then the youngsters are
22 warehoused in other low performance schools that
23 are likely to be closed, too. This is a failing
24 strategy for turning schools around. The High
25 School of Graphic Communication Arts is a school

1 that has gone through many years of
2 uncertainty and turmoil. The students, the
3 principal, the APs, the teachers, and the entire
4 school personnel have suffered; yet, all of
5 these people come to work every day to educate
6 our students. It is a shame that the DOE
7 doesn't care about these youngsters. Thank you.

8 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. And Speaker
9 Number Two, Slissen Nalim.

10 MS. SLISSEN NALIM: Good evening, ladies and
11 gentlemen. I strongly disagree with the
12 proposal to close this school. It's sad, and
13 the bigger losers are our children. They have
14 to face the situation, and unfortunately, they
15 feel that they can save their own school. It's
16 not only the school to blame about this problem.
17 We are all responsible for the final result.
18 When we're altogether, everyone succeed. Close
19 it or phase out the school and open a new school
20 will mean to give up on high school students and
21 their dreams and their future. Let's look at
22 the positive facts of keeping this school open,
23 and don't leave our children, our youth, boys
24 and girls, in the middle of nowhere, feeling
25 hopeless and depressed, with our - - future and

1 with - - place. Don't close the doors. Open
2 the doors for the opportunity of the high school
3 students. Let's embrace and fight altogether
4 for the great High School of Graphic
5 Communication Arts. Thank you very much.

6 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you.

7 [Applause]

8 MS. SOBELMAN: Speaker Number Four, Jaycee
9 Renners.

10 MALE VOICE: Number Three? Did you skip
11 three?

12 MS. SOBELMAN: Oh, I'm sorry. Number Three,
13 Kaleb Windover.

14 MR. KALEB WINDOVER: Thank you very much.
15 Thanks for letting me be heard. I am a parent
16 of a student in the Upper West Success Academy
17 School. And the reason that I wanted to speak
18 tonight is because before making the choice to
19 send my son to the school, I thought about it
20 very carefully, and I thought it was the best
21 choice for him. But more than that, I did go to
22 forums like this, and I did speak and
23 communicate with a lot of folks who had a lot of
24 strong opinions about the school and about what
25 the co-location on West 84th, you know, many

1 people had the opinion that, essentially, from
2 what I perceived it, it would be the apocalypse.
3 The traffic would be messed up. There would be
4 diminished feelings from other students in the
5 school. The lunchrooms, the gyms, and there was
6 about dozens and dozens of potential problems.
7 And I thought about it carefully, and when they
8 began to go to school there, I found, quite
9 frankly, just the complete opposite. And I
10 found that, not only from the perspective of the
11 Success Academy students, but knowing, by
12 coincidence, a fair amount of parents with the
13 other schools that are part of the co-location,
14 the exact same sentiment, that everyone--it was
15 a combined community. Everyone got along very
16 well. There were no issues. There continues to
17 be a lot of seemingly empty space. So all of
18 the numerous, numerous concerns, and frankly,
19 speaking with administrators, folks that, you
20 know, security personnel, et cetera, within the
21 school, all these disastrous issues, I don't
22 personally see. So maybe they're there, but I
23 can't tell if they are. And I feel like, it's
24 very much overstated. And I, personally, feel
25 co-location could work in this school as well.

1 And I do believe that choice is something
2 that's important. And I think, personally, that
3 when the schools are together, it ultimately
4 strengthens the community and provides a better
5 output for our children's futures. So thanks
6 for hearing me.

7 [Applause]

8 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you, sir. Speaker
9 Number Four is Jaycee Renners.

10 MR. JAYCEE RENNERS: Good evening, everyone.
11 Thank you for having me and thank you for
12 letting my voice be heard. I want to just echo
13 Mr. Windover's sentiments. I'm in the school
14 every day, and I, in fact, talk to a lot of the
15 Brandeis teachers and students. And never, have
16 I once heard a negative comment from any of the
17 students. In fact, they enjoy having the
18 youthful, positive energy that the school has
19 brought in there. And I think it's actually
20 increased attendance and some of the results
21 that they've gotten. And the teachers would
22 agree that Success has helped raise all boats.
23 And that's one of the things that I think we're
24 lacking in New York City is--what I'm hearing
25 from some of the board members and the panel

1 members here is, if everyone can't have a
2 fantastic education, then no one should have a
3 fantastic education, and I completely disagree
4 with that.

5 [Applause]

6 MR. RENNERS: As a former teacher in both
7 public and private schools, Ms. Shino wanted to
8 know if we could share our best practices. All
9 she needs to do is read the book, *Mission*
10 *Possible*. The best practices are right there.
11 And if you want to know what best practices are,
12 fire bad teachers, get rid of bad teachers, and
13 hire exceptional teachers, and hold teachers,
14 students, and parents accountable. Set the bar
15 high and give the teachers a chance to succeed.
16 Give them an opportunity to have continuing
17 education every week, which is something that
18 Success does. And I think there are a lot of
19 exceptional teachers here. I'm not saying there
20 aren't. There are exceptional teachers at
21 public schools, charter schools, which are also
22 public schools, and private schools all over the
23 city. But we need to have more of them and we
24 need to have ways to get rid of bad teachers
25 when they're not performing or when they're

1 having inappropriate relationships with their
2 students, which has happened 100 times last
3 year. And 90 of those teachers are still on the
4 payroll. I find that to be mindboggling. And
5 I've heard the word, bully. Someone just
6 mentioned the word, bully. I feel like, every
7 hearing that I've been to, everyone has bullied
8 Success Charter Network, and tried to keep
9 parents, who really want a great education for
10 their students and for their children, they
11 tried to keep them from going to these schools
12 by misinformation, lies, and just the most
13 absurd, ridiculous reasons that you could
14 imagine. And it really does a disservice to the
15 parents of New York City. And I think that's
16 why a lot of the parents of New York City are
17 actually moving out to the suburbs, because
18 there aren't enough quality public school
19 education choices. And I really--

20 MS. SOBELMAN: [Interposing] Thank you, sir.

21 MR. RENNERS: Thank you very much. I
22 appreciate it.

23 [Applause]

24 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you, sir. So before
25 Speaker Number Five starts, I'm going to call up

1 our next group. Speaker Number Six, William
2 Gibson--Gibbons. Number Seven, Andrea Espin
3 [phonetic], Esper [phonetic]. Number Eight,
4 Barry Annabunette [phonetic]. Number Nine, Mara
5 Seltzer. And Number Ten is Jay Parasurik
6 [phonetic], I believe. Ms. Knudsen, Number
7 Five?

8 MS. GRETCHEN KNUDSEN: Thank you. In the
9 November Daily News, DOE data show less than
10 1/3rd of NYC high school students are college
11 ready. The pathway to college starts as early
12 as kindergarten and in the primary grades.
13 Before high school, the middle grades are the
14 crucial years to not only progress academically,
15 but to develop habits, behaviors, and skills
16 that will foster success in high school,
17 college, and life. NYC high school dropout
18 rates are the highest in the first two years,
19 making middle school pivotal. This is the last
20 chance at effective intervention. What do
21 concerned parents have to do to ensure our
22 children's future? In NYC, the best elementary
23 schools are overcrowded. A real estate study
24 projects 1,600 new kids in 2015, in the Upper
25 Westside, alone. More students qualify for G&T

1 programs than there are available seats.
2 There's a crisis in this city's education
3 system. NYC needs more high quality schools. A
4 new Success Academy Middle School right here is
5 a part of the solution, and we need it now. HSA
6 was named a National Blue Ribbon School, one of
7 five NY schools to be recognized nationally.

8 [Applause]

9 MS. KNUDSEN: Forty-seven percent of city
10 kids are at or below--excuse me. Forty-seven
11 percent of city kids are at or above grade level
12 in English. At Success, it's 80 percent. A new
13 middle school will offer parents another high
14 quality school. Members of the panel, I urge
15 you to vote in favor of a co-location of a new
16 Success Academy Middle School.

17 [Applause]

18 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. And Speaker
19 Number Six, William Gibbons.

20 MR. WILLIAM GIBBONS: Thank you for having
21 me. I've heard tonight that it is about policy
22 and not about students. And I am here about one
23 student, my student, my daughter. My daughter
24 had a choice of going to an expensive private
25 school that we could not afford or an

1 underperforming public school, and into that
2 breach came Success Academy. And it has kept my
3 family in New York City. The difference of
4 having the opportunity to educate my child at a
5 level that I promise her every single day, that
6 I will do my best for her, if I can't educate
7 her to the level that she deserves, I am not
8 doing my best for her. And the Upper Westside
9 Success Academy gives me that opportunity every
10 single day. So I feel like, in New York City,
11 the best idea should rise to the top. We live
12 in America, in the United States, where the best
13 idea, a free market economy, should allow the
14 best idea to rise to the top. Success Academy
15 is the best idea that I've heard of to date, and
16 it has allowed my daughter to rise to the top.
17 Thank you.

18 [Applause]

19 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you, sir. Speaker
20 Number Seven, Andrea Esper or Espen?

21 MS. ANDREA ESPER: Good evening. Thank you
22 for allowing me to speak. I am an Upper West
23 Success Academy parent, and I am too here on
24 behalf of my children, but as--the other
25 children who attend Success Academy as well. I

1 am one of those families who was seriously
2 considering leaving New York City because I was
3 facing a school that was overcrowded or--and I
4 did not want to pay for private school. And we
5 are so thankful that Success Academy came into
6 our lives. They're doing amazing things with
7 those kids. And I worry that sort of some of
8 the fear mongering comments that have gone on
9 earlier about issues with co-location and
10 bullying, you know, from my perspective, it has
11 been a successful co-location. The Success
12 Charter Network does not look to go into schools
13 where there is not space. It does not serve
14 anyone's interest to do that, ours or the
15 schools that are already there. We are
16 successfully co-located with a high school.
17 There are elementary schools that are co-located
18 with other elementary schools, successfully. So
19 I really stand here, asking you to approve space
20 for our middle school. Thank you.

21 [Applause]

22 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. And Speaker
23 Number Eight, Barry Annabnette? Speaker Number
24 Eight, Barry Annabnette.

25 MR. BARRY ANNABNETTE: Hello. I have a

1 son. He went to P.S. 84, a public school.
2 And now he goes to the Upper Westside. I had a
3 great experience at P.S. 84. I've had a great
4 experience at the Upper Westside. I really have
5 nothing, no speech. This is the first time that
6 I've come. I wanted to get much more involved
7 in these processes. And I was very moved and
8 empathetic by the first woman's sort of plea for
9 her high school. I thought that was very
10 passionate, and I think most teachers are
11 passionate. I was equally taken back by the
12 next one, which seems to always point the finger
13 at charter schools as the demonization for why
14 their public schools aren't successful. I wish
15 them the best of luck. And I also want my
16 school to have an intermediate school as well.
17 I think charter schools are very successful, and
18 it was a choice that I had. I'd look at a
19 public school again. And I just want the choice
20 to do--of where I want to send my son, and it's
21 that simple. I think most teachers try as best
22 as they can, and I think that most students do.
23 I think parents as well. I think we have to do
24 a better job as a city, and I think we have to
25 do a better job as administrators. I think you

1 have to do a better job as a union. But what
2 I do know is that I like the opportunity and the
3 choice to send someone to the Success Academy,
4 because it's been very successful. I hope you
5 approve this. And I hope there will be more
6 choices in New York, whether they're charter
7 schools or better schools to go to.

8 [Applause]

9 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. And Speaker
10 Number Nine is Mara Seltzer.

11 MS. MARA SELTZER: Thank you for giving me
12 the opportunity to speak. My daughter goes to
13 the Upper West Success Academy. She's in
14 kindergarten. And I had an option of private
15 school, as well as, an overcrowded public
16 school, and we chose, rightly, to go to the
17 Success Academy. I have another daughter who's
18 older, who's in a public school, Gifted and
19 Talented program. And I have seen a huge
20 difference, frankly, in the quality of the
21 education that is offered by the Success
22 Academy. It is astounding to me, how much my
23 daughter has learned in such a short period of
24 time. She's already almost at the end of first
25 grade reading, and she is in kindergarten. And

1 this was not somebody who I expected to do as
2 well as she's done. She didn't do as well on
3 the tests that she had to take for the other
4 admission processes. And I truly believe that
5 it is due to this school's ability to teach
6 these children, as to why she's succeeding. I
7 also wanted to make a few comments, to comment
8 on some of the points made earlier. We are in
9 America. Whether it's a charter school or a
10 public school, they're all public schools and
11 they're all publicly funded by the government.
12 They should all have an opportunity to have
13 space to be taught in. And there is no reason
14 at all, that one school that has the space
15 available should not be allowed to have another
16 school enter it, if there is not enough space in
17 other locations that will not be funded by the
18 government. So that is my opinion, and I think
19 that it is shared by my fellow colleagues here.
20 I also wanted to say that before this school
21 existed for the graphic arts, and the other
22 schools that are here, there was a need to place
23 these schools somewhere, and they were placed
24 and given that opportunity before they existed.
25 So the same goes here for this middle school.

1 And there is a drastic need for middle schools
2 in District 2 and in District 3. So that should
3 be considered in terms of why we needed a middle
4 school. The last thing I wanted to say is our
5 children are real. They will need to continue
6 their education. They will need a middle
7 school. And we would be grateful to be able to
8 enter this building, along with the other
9 schools.

10 [Applause]

11 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. So quickly,
12 before Speaker Number Ten, I just want to call
13 up my next batch of speakers. Speaker Number 11
14 is E. Nelson. Number 12, I'm not sure if it's
15 Paul or Davy. Number 13, Norm Scott. Number
16 14, Antonia Cosalous [phonetic]. I apologize.
17 And Michael Brocon [phonetic] will be Number 15.
18 So now we'll hear from Speaker Number Ten, Jay?

19 MR. JAY PARAFECK: Parafeck [phonetic].

20 MS. SOBELMAN: There you go, Parafeck.

21 MR. PARAFECK: Just like it looks. Hi,
22 everyone. Thanks for your time. I'm the parent
23 of a first grade Success Academy student. I
24 have to say that our experience with the school
25 has been nothing short of phenomenal. My

1 daughter loves going to school every day, and
2 she's practically dragging us down the sidewalk
3 to get there. She entered kindergarten last
4 year, literally, no ability to read. She knew
5 her letters, but she could not read, and pretty
6 basic math skills. Before the holiday break, at
7 the end of last year, so just a few months into
8 first grade, she had completed the third grade
9 reading curriculum, and she's onto
10 multiplication and division on her math
11 problems. The success that she's had there has
12 been just incredible, and we are more than
13 thrilled. And hopefully, we have another
14 Success Academy student here in the not to
15 distant future. I think everyone, every parent
16 out there should have the option of being able
17 to send their kids to top performing schools.
18 And for middle school, which is just a few years
19 away from us, we need an option. And we've
20 spent a lot of time looking at the public
21 schools in our district, and some of the private
22 schools as well, and Success Academy and their
23 ability to open up a middle school is our only
24 option. Short of that, we will make the
25 decision to move out of New York because there

1 are not reasonable education alternatives
2 outside of Success, for us, right now in New
3 York City. And I hope you will all find it in
4 you, to support the kids and getting them the
5 best education possible. And certainly, a co-
6 location, by the way, has worked very well for
7 our school. And I think the argument against it
8 is nothing more than a façade for political
9 interests, and I think we understand what those
10 are. Thank you.

11 [Applause]

12 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you, sir. And Speaker
13 Number 11 is E. Nelson. Speaker Number 11.

14 MS. E. NELSON: I also don't have a huge
15 speech prepared, but I did want my voice to be
16 heard, as I am a parent on the Upper Westside.
17 I have two sons, who are both attending the
18 Upper West Success. My older son did attend
19 public school, and we did have a good
20 experience. But this school is amazing, and
21 it's doing amazing things, and it's successful.
22 And it deserves space, as any other public
23 school deserves. It deserves space. And that's
24 my voice that I want to be--my opinion and what
25 I think is important.

1 [Applause]

2 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. And Speaker
3 Number 12, Paul or Davy?

4 DAVY: Davy. So I am another parent of
5 Upper Westside. I was sensitive to the father
6 there, who talk about the history, and I feel
7 the same way, and you, as well. And we also
8 want opportunities. For us, the opportunity--I
9 have no comment to make about closing the school
10 here. I have a lot to say about giving
11 opportunity to Success Academy to have middle
12 school. It's a great opportunity for us. Like
13 many parents said, we are super happy with the
14 school. The teachers are amazing. The school
15 is amazing. And nobody better than all of us to
16 say than people who don't know. And then on top
17 of this, we are looking for the middle school.
18 We want an opportunity for middle school. And I
19 don't understand how people don't want to give
20 this opportunity - - . So I ask people to give
21 us this opportunity, to have a school where all
22 the parents are so happy. We are parents. For
23 some reason, there doesn't seem to be parent
24 representatives representing us. I don't, you
25 know, the way it works. But we need this. So I

1 would like you to give this opportunity.

2 Thank you.

3 [Applause]

4 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. And Speaker
5 Number 13, Norm Scott.

6 MR. NORM SCOTT: Hi. My name is Norm Scott.
7 I go to these hearings quite often, and I was at
8 Sheepshead Bay High School the other day with
9 Kathleen Grimm. The grim reaper of closing
10 schools was there again. Of course, Success
11 wasn't there, but I guess that you're not
12 interested in that real estate in Sheepshead
13 Bay. But you are interested in this real
14 estate, and you are interested in the real
15 estate on the Upper Westside, and you are
16 interested in the real estate of the Westside
17 and the Eastside in Washington Irving. And
18 you're parents, and that's fine. I just would
19 note the racial imbalance between the parents
20 who are speaking here from Success and the
21 children who go to this school. There is a
22 racial imbalance, and that is what this is all
23 about. It's about a dual school system. And we
24 know from history--and you asked for the best
25 practices. I know Shino asked for the best

1 practices, and I'm here to give you the
2 Success Academy best practices. First, make
3 sure that you don't bus children in, so the
4 people who might have to take public
5 transportation - - would have a difficult time
6 getting there. So you immediately set up the
7 lottery in the first place. Make sure that you
8 have a very high requirement option for parents,
9 so that those who are the poorest and most
10 struggling--and I taught 35 years in
11 Williamsburg on Bushwick Avenue, and I saw a lot
12 of struggling parents, who could not make it to
13 this school and probably wouldn't, and could not
14 give you the time that you asked for them. So
15 those people are out. Let's take them off the
16 list. That will raise your success. Let's
17 lower the special ed quotient, and make sure we
18 have a lower level. Oh, we'll count someone for
19 special ed, if they have maybe a little hearing
20 problem. I've seen that game. I know the game
21 of how you up your special ed quotient by taking
22 certain special kids who are classified--
23 misclassified as special ed. Make sure that you
24 have a low ELL quotient. I didn't see a lot of
25 ELL people, parents speaking here tonight, but

1 maybe next time. And then, of course, if
2 someone manages to slip on through the net,
3 counsel them out. Because I got an email today
4 from five--the other day from five Brooklyn
5 Success parents, who are leaving the school.
6 And I've got a friend at P.S. 241, who every
7 time when it comes time for reading scores, the
8 Success Academy kids start floating back into
9 the public schools, those who are not wanted.
10 And as Brian Jones in the movie we made--and I
11 represent movement of - - educators more. Brian
12 Jones says, they win the lottery and then they
13 lose the lottery. And for those of you who
14 think this is the UFT, because all of Success
15 likes to say, it's the UFT, did you notice that
16 the two UFT reps were hiding from my camera?
17 Because I represent the group inside the UFT--

18 MS. SOBELMAN: [Interposing] Sir, if you
19 could wrap up--

20 MR. SCOTT: --that really wants to fight you
21 guys, and not the people who are hiding from the
22 camera. There you go.

23 [Applause]

24 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you, sir. Speaker
25 Number 4 is Antonia Cosalous.

1 MS. ANTONIA COSALOUS: Cosalous.

2 MS. SOBELMAN: I was close.

3 MS. COSALOUS: Good evening. I want to
4 first say that I know Sheepshead Bay very well.
5 I'm a graduate of John Dewey High School. And I
6 attended public school. I'm an attorney here in
7 New York. My son attends Upper West Success
8 Academy. I had some wonderful, wonderful
9 teachers in high school, and I had some awful
10 teachers. I navigated that course and did well,
11 thanks to my parents and to my perseverance. I
12 have nothing against the public school system as
13 it is, provided that it is working and educating
14 students. And frankly, if I had an option of
15 sending my son to a public school that was a
16 decent public school, I probably would have, but
17 it wasn't a decent public school. And I owe my
18 son, who by the way, receives special education
19 services at Upper West Success, and is an
20 English language learner, having spoken Mandarin
21 for the first three and a half years of his
22 life. So I owe to him, the best education that
23 I could possibly get him. And Upper West
24 Success allowed me to do that for him. It seems
25 that what I've heard from the individuals here,

1 words such as, this is our gymnasium, our
2 cafeteria, our schools, our community. What
3 community? We're all taxpayers. These are our
4 children. These are all of our children. You
5 don't have any more right to the public funds
6 than taxpayers do. We have a right to determine
7 where our taxes go. And if there's schools that
8 are not working, we shouldn't be funding them,
9 to an end that's not serving anyone. So my
10 take, and you know, the sarcasm and the
11 comments, you know. I think we really do need
12 to come together. And when these public schools
13 work, great for them. Let's go for it. But
14 when they don't, I think we have to open
15 ourselves up to other opportunities. And Upper
16 West Success is a great opportunity. And I look
17 forward to having my son attend middle school
18 here.

19 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you.

20 [Applause]

21 MS. SOBELMAN: So quickly, before we have
22 Speaker Number 15, Michael Brocon, I'm going to
23 call up our next batch of speakers, 16 through
24 20. So Speaker Number 16 will be Gilbert
25 Sabateur [phonetic]. Number 17, Nina Rosen.

1 Number 18, Rob Kuhar [phonetic]. Number 19,
2 Emily Owens. And Number 20, James Law. So now
3 we'll have Speaker 15, Michael Brocon.

4 MR. MICHAEL BROCON: Hi. I don't have a
5 prepared speech. I'm a retired teacher. I
6 worked at what was a great school, at the onset
7 of Bloomberg's mayoralty, Bayard Rustin High
8 School For The Humanities, a great school. Kids
9 graduated there and they went onto ivy league
10 schools, some of them. Top scholarly students.
11 At the end of ten years of Bloomberg's reign of
12 improving schools, that school was closed. How
13 can that be? The same teachers. It became the
14 SLC movement. Then it became the super small
15 movement. They had seven schools in one
16 building. Seven. Each school is scheduled to
17 have, I am told, 500 students. That building
18 was designed, we were told, for 2,200 students.
19 So now a parent has a very hard time finding
20 out, if the school is overcrowded, because you
21 have seven schools. How do you find out the
22 total? It's hard for the average parent. Great
23 school closed under Mayor Bloomberg's rule. Ivy
24 league students. Okay. The biggest factor that
25 I see in the charter school movement is money,

1 follow the money. Eva Moskowitz makes
2 \$440,000.00, and that's on the 990 Form. Who
3 knows what else she gets? And her husband
4 probably makes another \$440,000.00 at his
5 school. Joe Biden, Vice-President, his brother,
6 Frank Biden, has a big charter chain in Florida.
7 It's money. This is about money. Mayor
8 Bloomberg, I believe this with all my heart,
9 couldn't care less about improving schools.
10 What he cares about is getting rid of the tax
11 burden as much as possible, bring in the private
12 operators. Why does Eva Moskowitz make
13 \$440,000.00? How many students does she have?
14 The chancellor made 250,000.00 for a million
15 students. What a scam. In five or ten years,
16 this will come crashing down. But right now,
17 because President Obama supports charter
18 schools, all the snake oil salespeople ran into
19 it, and they're raking it in. Thank you.

20 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you, sir.

21 [Applause]

22 MS. SOBELMAN: Speaker Number 16, Gilbert
23 Sabateur.

24 MR. GILBERT SABATEUR: I'm a businessman.
25 Thank you. I am very puzzled and confused. The

1 Department of Education, it appears, runs all
2 the schools. The Department of Education
3 appoints the principals. Graphics is a public
4 school. The principals have been appointed by
5 the Department of Education. I cannot
6 understand how we solve problems by saying to
7 800 children that are left here, you're all a
8 failure. What we're going to do with you is,
9 we're going to replace you with something that
10 we may or may not know if it works. I cannot
11 understand how, when you appoint the CEO of a
12 school, you say, since you're failing, this is
13 my appointment, I will now close the school. We
14 don't do that in business. If we have a
15 division that doesn't work, we send a
16 troubleshooter to fix the division. We don't
17 close the division. Here, we're closing a
18 school. We're calling our children, failures.
19 And on top of that, we're saying that our
20 teachers are bad teachers. I heard that today.
21 We have bad teachers in this school. I'm not a
22 teacher, but I'll tell you this much, I know
23 every teacher that I've ever met, want to do a
24 good job. Not one of them wants their students
25 to fail. So I am puzzled. I just do not

1 understand how the Department of Education
2 solves problems by closing schools. Thank you.

3 [Applause]

4 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you, sir. Speaker
5 Number 17, Nina Rosen.

6 MS. NINA ROSEN: Hi. Thank you for having
7 us here tonight. My name is Nina Rosen. My
8 son, Kenny, is a first grader at Success Academy
9 Upper West. I didn't come prepared with a
10 speech, but I did want to address the issue of
11 co-location. My son started in kindergarten at
12 Success Academy, and we were worried about a
13 little child being with the high school
14 students. Well, my son looks up to the high
15 school students. My son was proud of the high
16 school students when he saw their - - . And you
17 know what, the high school students are proud to
18 be role models. The high school students come
19 in and read to our children. And it's been a
20 wonderful experience for my son. I had every
21 intention of sending him to a city public
22 school. Then we were rezoned for a failing
23 school. We needed another option for him, and
24 this worked out very well. And you know what,
25 I--oh, with regard to the topic of diversity, my

1 son's class is quite diverse. It's 75
2 percent, African-American and Hispanic, 25
3 percent, white, but 100 percent of the families
4 are devoted to their children's education.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. And now we'll
7 hear from Speaker Number 18, Rob Kuhar.

8 MR. ROB KUHAR: Thank you very much. The
9 Pinto and - - and a number of other things are
10 product lines that failed and they are no longer
11 with us because they got cut. I also noticed
12 that quite a few people are missing from the
13 late hour of this hearing, the UFT members, and
14 I believe assemblywomen are not here, and
15 councilman candidates are not here. So are they
16 not willing to listen to another point of view?
17 And is that one of the problems that we have as
18 a system, that we can't hear another person's
19 point of view? Basically, a couple of things, I
20 mean, obviously, the traffic situation, which
21 was brought up before, it's a non-topic. I've
22 never seen one bus or truck even stopped and
23 couldn't get around the cars that were parked on
24 84th Street. So I believe that that's a
25 ridiculous argument. And also, the DOE has

1 offered no less than 12 avenues of help for
2 this school to advance, and yet, it continues to
3 receive an F grade. So one of the other
4 proposals was to bring in another entity to
5 help. Therefore, by your own admission, this
6 school cannot help itself. So what do we do?
7 We close a failing school. I apologize. Also,
8 if you're going to be talking about Success
9 Academy, you have to talk about Success Academy
10 numbers, and not charter schools, in general.
11 Success Academy Harlem has achieved an A rating
12 for at least the last three years. So let's not
13 talk about Sheepshead Bay or poor neighborhoods,
14 okay, since we started in the poor
15 neighborhoods. Thank you.

16 [Applause]

17 MS. SOBELMAN: So we've got a couple more
18 speakers. And I just want to ask that the
19 audience is respectful and that we listen to
20 each other. Speaker Number 19, Emily Owens.

21 MS. EMILY OWENS: Hello. Yes, my name is
22 Emily Owens Eddington [phonetic], and I teach
23 physical education at both Graphics and BOSS. I
24 have worked in a private school, this public
25 school, and I was also a founding member of a

1 charter school. I am 30 credits away from my
2 doctoral degree at Columbia. And the bottom
3 line is, I am an educator. So with that said, I
4 left my charter school for a number of reasons.
5 One of which was that they were not closing the
6 achievement gap, which was one of their founding
7 principles. Instead, my charter school provided
8 a number of teachers, who were first year
9 teachers, who were trained for six weeks in the
10 summertime, and then thrown into their
11 classrooms. So that, on top of a business model
12 for the charter school, did not work for the
13 students. So I had to leave. It did not meet
14 with my alignment of what I feel education
15 should be. So I've landed here at Graphics and
16 BOSS. I primarily teach at Graphics, so I'm
17 going to speak on behalf of them. I do agree
18 that all students deserve an equal education for
19 sure. My students here at Graphics should be
20 given the opportunity to thrive in the areas
21 that they bring to the table, with their
22 strengths. That, for my students at Graphics,
23 is CTE classes. Now, my students thrive in
24 those classes, and over the past ten years,
25 those classes and opportunities for those

1 classes has dwindled. And I do not find that
2 correlation between the dwindling of the CTE
3 classes and that of the decreased rubric rated
4 success of Graphics, to be non-causal. We have
5 not done everything that we can to save Graphics
6 because we have not reinvested our time and
7 efforts, into increasing the CTE classes and
8 availability. So with that said, please do not
9 close Graphics. Please do not stop and tell my
10 students at Graphics, that they are less
11 important in any way than any student at a
12 middle school, an elementary school, or other
13 public schools in this city. Thank you.

14 [Applause]

15 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you. And
16 congratulations on your doctorate. And the
17 final speaker this evening is Speaker 20, James
18 Laws.

19 MR. JAMES LAWS: Hi, everyone. I wish that
20 the meeting was held at a little bit earlier
21 time because I would have been able to bring my
22 daughter here. You would have seen her--if you
23 had seen her, you would know how incredibly
24 important it's been that she's spent her time at
25 the Success Academy School. She has a speech

1 impediment, but even with that being said,
2 she's number two in her class, in math. She's
3 reading at nearly a third grade level. And I
4 have to thank the wonderful staff and teachers
5 at the Success Academy School. All we're asking
6 for is space for middle school. The high school
7 here is already going to close down. We're not
8 trying to push anyone out. We just want our
9 space as well. It's really important that our
10 kids get the chance to have this increased space
11 as they go through their grades. In addition, I
12 heard a lot of people talking ill of Eva
13 Moskowitz. And I just wanted to say that you
14 guys are concerned about co-locating, you're
15 concerned about what's going to happen in the
16 cafeterias or libraries, et cetera. I've seen
17 Eva Moskowitz work miracles in the school that
18 we're at right now. And if you give her a
19 chance, you're going to see a miracle in this
20 school as well. Thank you very much.

21 MS. SOBELMAN: Thank you, sir. So with
22 that, we have exhausted our speaker list, and
23 we're now going to transition into the question
24 and answer session. And we didn't have formal
25 questions submitted, but we did have questions

1 that were raised during the comments session,
2 that we wanted to take this opportunity to
3 respond to. And before we do that, I also want
4 to remind folks that if, as a result of this
5 evening or tomorrow, you have additional
6 comments or questions, there are still a couple
7 of more opportunities to comment on the
8 proposal. So you can contact us by email or
9 phone up until 6:00 p.m. on March 10th. And the
10 phone number is (212) 374-3466, or by email at
11 D02proposals@schools.nyc.gov. And again, all of
12 the information received this evening, anything
13 that comes in through either of those methods is
14 published on our website and provided to the
15 panel members prior to their vote. So we're
16 going to just take an opportunity to respond to
17 a couple of questions that came in or that were
18 raised during the public comments section.
19 There were a lot of folks who raised concerns
20 about co-locations, and also expressed some
21 concerns about shared space plans. So I'll
22 invite the Deputy Chancellor to respond.

23 MS. GRIMM: Well, specifically, as to the
24 two issues that were raised, our--we have over
25 700 of our schools that are co-located. We have

1 schools that are not at capacity, and we
2 really have an obligation to use that capacity
3 in a very constructive way. I know in that
4 context, there was a lot of concern expressed
5 about the shared space. And I think people have
6 to realize that the sharing of the space is a
7 very iterative process. We make proposals, but
8 the final decisions about using shared space are
9 actually made by the principals, once the
10 schools are co-located in the building. And we
11 have found that that process has been pretty
12 successful. I would like to make one comment,
13 and that is, I think this has been a very
14 interesting hearing. And I don't think anybody
15 is probably going to be really persuaded, one
16 way or the other. But I draw these conclusions
17 and would like to share them with you. All of
18 these schools are public schools. Charter
19 schools are public schools. All of the children
20 in these schools are our children. And I think
21 what we're talking about here, and what we have
22 heard tonight, is that we want to offer parents
23 and our children, choices. We want to offer
24 them charter schools. We want to offer them
25 good public schools. And then it's up to you,

1 the parents, to decide which option you want.
2 But we do want to be able to provide those
3 options. And that is what we're trying to do
4 with these proposals. So I thank you all very
5 much. I thank my colleagues on the panel, who
6 have been very articulate, as they usually are,
7 and all the parents who spoke on both sides and
8 all sides of the issue. Thank you all very much
9 for being here.

10 [Applause]

11 MS. SOBELMAN: And with that, I just want to
12 remind folks, I think I've said it enough, but
13 you can contact us by phone or email. All of
14 the information that you submit will be included
15 in the analysis of public comment, which is
16 provided to the panel members prior to their
17 vote. I don't think I mentioned where that
18 takes place. So the panel meeting is scheduled
19 for March 11th, excuse me, at Brooklyn Technical
20 High School, which is located at 29 Fort Greene
21 Place in Brooklyn, New York. So with that, I
22 will say thank you again, and this joint public
23 hearing is officially adjourned.

24 [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 February 28, 2013