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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING
John F. Kennedy High School (X475)
1/28/11**

1 [START TAPE 1]

2 MS. MELISSA HARRIS: Good evening everyone.
3 We are about to start. This is a reminder - - .
4 So just as a reminder, if you wish to sign up
5 for public comment, you can do so in the back of
6 the auditorium. If you have a question this
7 evening, there are index cards in the back of
8 the auditorium. Fill out the index card and if
9 you just stick it up one of the volunteers will
10 come and get it from you or you can turn it in
11 to the people in the back. Thanks.

12 [Spanish Interpretation]

13 [Background noise]

14 MS. HARRIS: Good evening. My name is
15 Melissa Harris and I will be acting as the
16 narrator for this evening's public hearing.
17 This is a joint public hearing of the Department
18 of Education, Community Education Council and
19 Student Leadership Committee to discuss the
20 proposed phase out of John F. Kennedy High
21 School. Tonight's proceedings will be recorded
22 and transcribed. Before the community hearing,
23 we ask anyone who wishes to speak during the
24 public comment portion of the evening, sign up
25 at the table in the back. Sign up will end at

1 6:30. If you have a question you want to be
2 addressed during the Q and A portion of the
3 agenda, please write that question on an index
4 card provided in the back and submit them to
5 "comments here" by the table. Only people who
6 are signed up to speak will be able to
7 participate in the public comment portion of
8 this evening's hearing. All parent participants
9 were asked to be here no later than 5:30 p.m.
10 Now I'm going to get started. If a parent
11 participant arrives late, he or she will be
12 given the time to speak at the first opportune
13 moment. We want to be - - . There may be
14 elected officials who show up at different times
15 throughout the evening. If they wish to speak,
16 we will do our best to accommodate them at the
17 first opportune moment. Those who are here at
18 the start of the public comment segment will be
19 asked to speak first. - - . The format will
20 include a presentation of the proposal and
21 presentation of - - participants, followed by
22 public comment. Speakers should have already
23 signed up at the sign in table in the lobby.
24 Public comment can be no longer than two minutes
25 each. The time will be strictly followed and

1 speakers will be informed when their designated
2 time has ended. There will be - - . Members of
3 the audience, if you have a question each of you
4 should write your question on the note card that
5 was supplied when you arrived this evening.
6 While the public comments are taking place,
7 staff members will organize the questions into
8 categories and get them ready for the Q and A
9 period. Some questions will be answered
10 directly and others will be - - in order to
11 avoid repetitiveness. Even though all
12 individual questions will not be addressed in
13 this forum tonight, the answers will be on the
14 website - - . If at the end of the hearing you
15 still have questions, we encourage you to direct
16 them to us by following - - or by sending them
17 to us via email to the email address provided on
18 the facts sheet and the fact sheets are at that
19 table in the back. You can pick up - - . I
20 would like to now introduce the panel which we
21 have assembled for this evening's joint public
22 hearing. Renee [phonetic], Lisa Lutz, Martha
23 Shelton, - - , Deputy Chancellor Mark Sternberg.
24 We are pleased to have Sara Estrada [phonetic]
25 with us this evening. Council member - - is

1 also with us this evening.

2 MALE VOICE 1: - -

3 MS. HARRIS: And Senator - - is here. Thank
4 you everyone for joining us this evening. I
5 will ask for - - from the Deputy Chancellor.

6 MR. MARK STERNBERG: Thank you Melissa and
7 thank you everybody for being here this evening.
8 My name is Mark Sternberg. I'm the Deputy
9 Chancellor for Portfolio Planning and we're here
10 tonight for the joint public hearing in advance
11 of the - - policies consideration for the
12 Department of Education's proposal that John F.
13 Kennedy High School phase out and eventually
14 close. We thank you for coming out on this
15 snowy evening and we thank our superintendents
16 for being here and for our - - officials being
17 there - - in the proposal we're here to discuss.
18 When you first - - we are not a - - joint and
19 convene public hearing between the school
20 leadership team of John F. Kennedy High School
21 and the other school leadership teams on campus,
22 the Community Education Council, which is also
23 represented here and the Department of
24 Education. This is a hearing. We are here to
25 present the proposal which has been offered this

1 evening. In short order we are here to open
2 the microphone and lend our ears to feedback to
3 the proposal. We will also take questions and
4 answers, we will take questions and provide
5 answers and I think once we have a few more
6 minutes - - questions that need to be heard
7 we'll do that with the note card. There are
8 volunteers coming around with note cards now.
9 So I look forward to - - the proposal this
10 evening. Let me share first that, the decision
11 to phase out a school is not one that we easily
12 arrive at, at the Department of Education. We
13 do not take these decisions lightly. In
14 arriving at this decision, you examine the data
15 from the school and compare that data to other
16 schools across the city - - . We examine the
17 facts, all of the factors we can find and after
18 we've done that - - . We've also reached out to
19 this community, both here at the school and
20 around the school to speak with members of the
21 school community, teachers, parents, staff and
22 elected officials and community members. All of
23 us depend on our schools to provide a secure
24 education to the students of New York City and
25 when a school has shown a number of times it's

1 not doing that, we have no choice but to
2 propose a phase out and eventual close. - - my
3 experience and my past as an educator. I served
4 as a teacher in the Bronx, Community School 66.
5 Several years later I had the opportunity to
6 start a school on the - - campus and so I know
7 both the pain and the process and this is a
8 difficult decision and a difficult moment for
9 the committee members of this community. I want
10 to make clear that this is not about the people
11 here; this is not about the adults here; this is
12 not about the children here. This is about what
13 the Department of Education has done as schools
14 with similar - - across the city over the last
15 decade and it's about what we've learned from
16 these campuses. And what we've learned is that
17 to change the structure of organizations that do
18 not produce the results for our kids, we have a
19 chance to vastly improve student achievement.
20 And what we've seen over the last eight years is
21 improvement in - - graduation rate from 49% to
22 62%. I was a part of the transformation of - -
23 campus where - - in 2004 241 students out of a
24 class of 1400 students graduated - - roughly
25 25%. And that - - for many years. Today at

1 the - - over 80%. And so what we know is that
2 we can do better. What we know is that a
3 graduation rate in the mid-forties, which is
4 what this school has - - year after year, is not
5 - - and we know we can do better - - . So now
6 the intended proposal this evening, as - - John
7 F. Kennedy High School is located at 99 Terrace
8 View Avenue, in Community School District 10
9 near the Bronx. It currently serves students in
10 grades 9 through 12. On December 20, 2010 - -
11 the Department of Education published a proposal
12 to phase out Kennedy High School based on its
13 poor performance and it was assessed that the
14 school lacks the ability to turn - - to better
15 support the needs of its students. I will note
16 that on January 26th, the CIS recommended to - -
17 errors in addition to an error in utilization -
18 - . These amendments do not represent a - - or
19 revision to the proposal itself. And I will now
20 share some of the data that has brought us to
21 this decision and - - to the decision - -
22 including community feedback about how the
23 school's performance. Let me share a few
24 things. Last year, Kennedy High School's four
25 year graduation rate, including August

1 graduates, was 46%. Well below the city wide
2 average of 62%. According to the state, the
3 graduation rates have - - about 40% of - - for
4 the past five years. The graduation rate in
5 2009 was 44%. If we can suppose alone, - -
6 toward graduation which will be the case next
7 school year, - - 25% below the citywide average
8 of 44%. So that is a description of the
9 graduation rates here at the school. Let me
10 also mention the progress report - - from the
11 school. - - with an average of student
12 performance D grade from student progress and C
13 grade on school environment. With these scores,
14 the school rates at the bottom of the 80% of
15 high schools citywide receiving a progress
16 report. I will also add that last school year,
17 only 52% - - students earned ten credits which
18 puts the school at the bottom of all high
19 schools city wide. The school has - - which
20 them at the bottom of - - citywide. And lastly,
21 safety has been a concern at this school as
22 represented by students, parents and faculty of
23 the school. Last year 24% of students reported
24 that they felt unsafe in classrooms, hallways
25 and locker rooms. Similarly, 26% of staff

1 reported that they did not feel safe coming to
2 work. So, with baseline evaluations of these
3 data that the Department conducted a thorough
4 review of the school along with 54 other schools
5 across the city to evaluate what interventions
6 would best fit the schools. As - - consulted -
7 - during this investigation - - . The party
8 consulted with the school superintendent,
9 consulted with officials at the school, around
10 the school and its network; - - teams. The
11 Department also - - with community groups, here
12 in the school and around the school to discuss
13 the data that was most troubling to us. Based
14 on our comprehensive review of this data, and
15 that - - provided to school - - that only the
16 most serious intervention be gradual phase out
17 of - - school will address the long standing
18 performance struggles and allow - - to provide
19 better options to future students who may have
20 attended the school. Let me also just quickly
21 share a few important data points about this
22 building and the proposal. Kennedy is located
23 in buildings S475 and - - with five other
24 district high schools and some of them are
25 represented this evening. - - . The schools

1 are - - Engineering and Technology; School for
2 Law and Finance, Ellis Preparatory Academy, - -
3 of International Studies and - - Theatre High
4 School. This building also houses a part-time
5 EED bus learning to work program - - young
6 adult. Let me be clear that if the proposal is
7 approved and - - of Thursday, February 3rd, at
8 Brooklyn Technical High School this next
9 Thursday starting at 6 p.m. The existing school
10 programs housed in this building will continue
11 to serve the current students and Ellis Prep
12 which opened in 2008 and is located, will
13 continue its growth as planned. - - the
14 Department recently proposed to co-locate two
15 new high schools in this building. Both are
16 charter high schools affiliated with - - . Any
17 - - for this proposal was issued on January 15th,
18 2011 and was - - for public hearing here on
19 February - - and voted on, on March 1st at - -
20 meeting. Those who oppose the new school will
21 provide District 10 families with new higher
22 quality education options as Kennedy gradually
23 phases out. - - with - - they do have the
24 discreet District 10 preference. So if you - -
25 public - - . Again, we're not here to approve

1 this proposal this evening, - - no longer
2 admit ninth grade students after the conclusion
3 of the 2010-2011 school year. Current students
4 will be supported as they continue their journey
5 through the school toward graduation while being
6 enrolled at Kennedy High School and we are happy
7 to provide families and students more
8 information about enrollment options after the
9 proceedings this evening and at a future date.
10 In cases where a student does not graduate, - -
11 Kennedy completes its phase out after June 2014,
12 Department of Health, students - - identify
13 alternate options and programs to serve their
14 needs as they continue to work toward
15 graduation. So, that is our proposal we are
16 going to discuss this evening. I'll turn back
17 over to you.

18 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. We have now
19 completed the formal presentations and we will
20 now go to the public comment section of this
21 meeting. You're reminded that public comment
22 must be no longer than two minutes. - - and we
23 will signal when you have thirty seconds
24 remaining and when your time's up. Senator
25 Espallat.

1 STATE SENATOR ADRIANO ESPAILLAT: Good
2 evening. Buenas noches. My name is Adriano
3 Espaillat and I - - New York State in addition
4 to being a State Senator and a former - - in
5 Northern Manhattan. I have also been a longtime
6 activist in this community and I have another
7 very important title and that is I'm also a
8 parent. As a parent - - and concerns of those
9 who are applicants that are nervous about this
10 particular process. The decision we made a year
11 ago most certainly impacted lives of thousands
12 of young people and their families. That's why
13 I'm so grateful to all of the parents, teachers,
14 past teachers, administrators and the community
15 for their involvement in this process and for
16 their advocacy on behalf of our children. It's
17 no secret that JFK has consistently
18 underperformed in recent years. The pattern of
19 failure has been low scores and low expectations
20 for our students. A trend that is simply
21 unacceptable. As a former education activist in
22 helping bring a dozen new schools to Northern
23 Manhattan, I have advocated for increased
24 attention and resources for JFK and I worked
25 with the Department of Education to seek

1 solution that would fundamentally improve this
2 school. As the Department of Education
3 significantly leans towards closing JFK, there
4 are multiple approaches that are favored by
5 various leaders. - - called for the immediate
6 closure of JFK and the establishment of new,
7 smaller schools. Others oppose the closure and
8 believe that the answer lies in - - additional
9 support. Many people also fall in between.
10 Regardless of one place - - , we all share one
11 priority, the quality of education offered to
12 our children must be approved, period. To this
13 day I have laid out several principles that must
14 be followed if JFK is to be closed. JFK must
15 only close if the alternative solutions offer a
16 quality education that is truly excellent and
17 significantly better than what is currently
18 offered at the school. The transition process
19 must be smooth and carefully planned so as to
20 limit disruptions to the students. Parents and
21 local community members must be given access to
22 all information in a timely manner and are
23 allowed to go to the decision making process.
24 There must be viable - - for the District's
25 over-the-counter admissions of special needs

1 students, English language learners, - - ,
2 individualized education plans, EIP's and
3 students with interrupted formal education or
4 otherwise will go to JFK. While I believe in
5 running the school council through this process
6 of sincere intentions and I appreciate the work
7 - - accomplished, I believe they can do more.
8 For instance, the - - requests for my office to
9 send out a representative to a PTA association
10 meeting on January 20th, 2011. A singly obvious
11 action - - should have attended on its own.
12 Following the meeting, my office repeatedly
13 requested the Department of Education send out
14 notification to local residents - - as well as
15 the Panel for Educational Policy, meeting on
16 February 3rd. These memos were never sent out.
17 Whether they were trying to save on printing or
18 postage costs, I can assure you that the
19 Department of Education, that this was a missed
20 opportunity and a failure to communicate with
21 the most important - - , the parents. The
22 families of this community who I'm willing to
23 represent - - who fight tirelessly to give their
24 children an opportunity to succeed. They
25 deserve to - - the best education possible.

1 They deserve to have a say in this particular
2 process and they deserve to know that this
3 community is moving forward and not backwards.
4 We can only do this with the full cooperation of
5 the Department of Education and the continued
6 advocacy of community leaders to stand up for
7 working families. I strongly urge the
8 Department of Education to improve the level of
9 elaboration and communication in this community
10 and I look forward to getting an update on the
11 progress being made on this critical issue.
12 Thank you and have a good evening.

13 [Applause]

14 MS. HARRIS: State Senator Gustavo Rivera.

15 [Applause]

16 STATE SENATOR GUSTAVO RIVERA- - : Good
17 evening. Buenas noches. I am State Senator
18 Gustavo Rivera. I am here to speak today about
19 - - officials and community leaders and
20 community members. I would like officials like
21 Senator Espaillet, council members to tell
22 Jackson and Bolinas about the potential closing
23 of JFK High School and - - the parents whose
24 children - - attend JFK. - - hundreds of
25 students and families that live in the - -

1 District that will be impacted by the
2 potential closing of this high school and I am
3 particularly concerned about the way the
4 Department of Education has proceeded with this
5 process because I know that they can do better.
6 The poor communication between the Department of
7 Education and parents and families is a huge
8 problem because the parents need to have a voice
9 as we proceed to make decisions that are going
10 to impact them and their children. If there
11 aren't more people here tonight, it may be
12 because of a lack of ample notice about
13 tonight's hearing and other - - developments.
14 Parents should not be learning about their
15 children's school being closed through newspaper
16 clippings or word of mouth. - - process that
17 provides them with the information that they
18 need and give parents a seat at the table when
19 important decisions are being made. While
20 reasonable people can disagree about the missing
21 votes of this specific provision in any
22 transition that takes place, Senator Espallat
23 and myself - - principles that must be met in
24 order to uphold this commitment and this - -
25 one, parents and local community members must be

1 included in the process. Number two, if there
2 - - the schools that are coming in have to be
3 better than what is currently here. Number
4 three, that any transition that takes place must
5 be smooth and carefully planned and when it
6 comes to English language learners and special
7 education programs, special education students,
8 those students needs must be attended to. - - .
9 So - - that we must find the alternatives and
10 meet the standards of programs that are
11 participated in can be - - . That also means
12 that - - the Department of Education gets these
13 alternative schools the resources that they need
14 to support and educate the students attending at
15 these programs. So, if there is a closing we
16 must ensure that the Department of Education
17 uphold their commitment to provide our kids with
18 a quality education and to ensure that parents
19 and community members are part of the process.
20 Thank you so much.

21 MS. HARRIS: Councilmember - - .

22 COUNCILMEMBER - - : Good evening members of
23 the panel, ladies and gentlemen. Let me say
24 that I am concerned about the process here.
25 First of all, I have never heard, and I've been

1 in government for almost forty years, of a
2 public meeting held on a Friday night at 6
3 o'clock. - - a lot of people go away for
4 weekends, a lot of people have responsibilities
5 on a Friday night, especially, it's just an
6 inappropriate time, 6 o'clock is an
7 inappropriate time because it's a little too
8 early for people to come. - - . Secondly,
9 there's a lot of misconception in the - - . As
10 was pointed out in the beginning, there are five
11 schools here that work and those are not being
12 closed down. But I think the fact that there
13 are five schools here that work suggests that
14 schools can work at this location. I don't feel
15 that strongly whether or not Kennedy High School
16 has a different name and certainly improvements
17 in this school are needed. And it is very
18 important, as my colleagues said, that the kids
19 who are here be given full attention as this
20 school is being phased out. But I am concerned
21 about what is going to happen after the phase
22 out . I know there's going to be - - but the
23 problem is the agency has already decided - - .
24 If Kennedy is suddenly replaced by - - , one of
25 them is a school of advanced math and science

1 and the other is a school of - - . That
2 sounds very good. But that's not the student
3 body of Kennedy High School. A lot of these are
4 people who are recent immigrants. They are
5 English language learners. You have a lot of
6 Special Ed students. Those students are
7 probably not going to be going to those other
8 schools. - - . We have the Ellis school right
9 in this building and it is overflowing because
10 at the other school, as specifically is designed
11 for kids who are English language learners, who
12 have - - , who come from other countries. - - .
13 You may not be aware of this Deputy Chancellor.
14 Kennedy High School is being overwhelmed with
15 English language learners and people who have
16 great interest in the school staying open. If
17 you close Kennedy and you replace it with one of
18 these charter schools, more kids are going to
19 flunk and then you're going to say "Oh we don't
20 understand it, close the - - school."

21 [Applause]. I suggest that - - that if
22 Kennedy's phased out we should get schools in
23 here that are like Ellis - - . Schools that
24 will pay attention to the large - - of kids,
25 mostly kids who come - - from the Dominican

1 Republic. Most have kids who need attention,
2 they need special attention, to catch up because
3 they're not fluent in English and many of them
4 have not been provided an adequate education
5 where they come from in the Dominican Republic.
6 So, I don't feel that strongly about a phase out
7 because the school isn't working well, but I
8 feel very strongly that those couple of thousand
9 seats either have to be addressed to the needs
10 of the students, very much like the students who
11 are here now who haven't gotten their needs
12 addressed to an adequate degree. And I just
13 feel so strongly, and I also think that rather
14 than putting charter schools on the agenda,
15 let's first have a meeting and ask people in the
16 community what kind of school they'd rather have
17 here. Don't - - decide. Maybe charter schools
18 are a good - - . We shouldn't put charter
19 schools on the agenda; we should put "What
20 should be replaced if Kennedy is phased out?"
21 and then let the people come up with all kinds
22 of suggestions. First, it's highly suggested at
23 least some of those seats should be devoted to
24 the Ellis students because they need more seats
25 and they could use more seats. So, again, I

1 don't think this process is done the way it
2 should go. I think it's very important to
3 ensure the kids, if Kennedy's phased out, our
4 kids will be able to get adequate attention
5 during the phase out period and I think it's
6 even more important to be sure that the seats
7 that replace Kennedy are seats that are
8 appropriate for the students here, at Kennedy
9 now, and it's very likely that if you look
10 around those are the kind of kids and the needs
11 of the kids that should be addressed by whoever
12 replaces Kennedy. Thank you.

13 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. - - Citywide
14 council - - . We'll now hear from Councilman
15 Jackson and Councilman Rodriguez.

16 COUNCILMAN RODRIGUEZ: - - don't burn
17 bridges. I think that elected officials - - in
18 the Bronx gave a good recession to a new
19 Chancellor - - . When we heard of the plan of -
20 - - we made the - - but the assembly said - - .
21 Back in December we say a student is first
22 priority. Education is a - - that we have to
23 move forward as a community and we say - - in
24 the school that plan to phase out - - is not
25 working, then we should explore change. If we

1 told the DOE, Mayor Bloomberg - - . or Huma
2 or the private corporation - - that they would
3 bring something in specific that we would be
4 allowed to move forward. And they say why don't
5 we look at that model - - so we - - or the
6 school that we are replacing the one that we
7 close JFK. And I think that we were - - and we
8 offered all support and we need all elected
9 officials that represent this area and that - -
10 this school. And we made a plan. And the plan
11 was we would all - - the DOE would make all the
12 other plans, they will invite all parties and we
13 as elected official would be involved also. So
14 be sure that all the parents and students would
15 be - - . - - information to the New York Times.
16 So what? - - . What information - - . And
17 they were saying that they were looking for
18 bringing a charter school to replace the school
19 that would close at this school. Private
20 classification is not the school's. - - by
21 saying that, it doesn't mean that we are not
22 open to share - - , to look at the school as a -
23 - by - - . And I think that that's - - . I
24 think that the new Chancellor has a great
25 opportunity. We can do a lot of - - . We are

1 not - - . - - and to the students. And I
2 think if we fail of the dream of a new
3 chancellor - - we are going to send the wrong
4 message. Then we will be doing business as
5 usual. The new chancellor - - all elected
6 officials. - - we bring to the school. One's
7 going to be a new school - - and let's show the
8 other one - - . You know the decision has been
9 made. It's made already. The decision has been
10 made that two charter schools run by the - - and
11 this is wrong because - - to the parents, to the
12 students, to the teachers and to the elected
13 officials. I hope that - - when the panel make
14 its decision, please don't do what - - last year
15 or what was - - calling this meeting. Let's
16 listen to the students. Let's listen to the
17 parents. - - what they want to see in this
18 building. Thank you.

19 MS. HARRIS: Councilman Jackson.

20 COUNCILMAN ROBERT JACKSON: Thank you. Good
21 evening everyone. Well, first let me thank all
22 of you for coming out on Friday evening after a
23 big snow storm. As you know, if you don't have
24 a car it's pretty far to walk to get to this
25 school. But, my name is Robert Jackson and I'm

1 a chair on the Education Committee on the
2 State Council and I want to say a couple of
3 things and then I'm going to comment on the
4 proposal because I truly believe that it's not a
5 final decision yet; at least I want to hope that
6 a decision has not been made as of yet.
7 Because, if in fact a decision has been made,
8 then all of this is just a charade and I think
9 if that is truly the decision then those
10 individuals in the decision making authority are
11 acting in bad faith. But as the chair on the
12 education committee, if you don't know, we held
13 a hearing on Tuesday that lasted for
14 approximately six hours. The Deputy Chancellor
15 and other staff were there along with advocates
16 and students and many other people testified.
17 We opened up about 1:20 we gathered and the
18 hearing closed at about 7:20 that night. And we
19 were there in order to discuss the issue in - -
20 of the monitoring of students at closing schools
21 because I do know there are approximately 25 or
22 26 schools that are scheduled to be closed and
23 of those 25 or 26, I think 15 were of the 19
24 that the Department of Education had proposed to
25 close last year and you know what happened with

1 that. They were suppose - - the United
2 Federation of Teachers, NAACP, State Senators
3 and City Council Members in which the courts
4 upheld our position that the Department of
5 Education did not do the right thing in
6 following the new law in deciding and
7 documenting what had to be done in order to
8 propose closing schools. But, I'm not here to
9 talk about that, I'm here to talk about the fact
10 that I know, based on being an education
11 advocate, that JFK has been an overcrowded
12 school for years. It used to be the school
13 students from North Manhattan tried to get into.
14 Then, you know, George Washington High School
15 was totally broken down into small schools but
16 JFK was not completely restructured. And based
17 on statistics that were supplied to me by my
18 staff, DOE statistics, my understanding is that
19 JFK was so overcrowded that in 2003-2004 school
20 year the capacity supposedly was 3785 and that
21 the enrollment was 4739 and that leaves
22 approximately 950 students way over the
23 capacity. And if you think about this for a
24 second, if you are a parent looking for schools
25 for your children, would you register your child

1 in a school that had 950 students over the
2 capacity? I think a majority of people would
3 say no to that. But then also, as you know,
4 overcrowding has many, many negative effects on
5 student achievement, and in fact, when schools
6 are so overcrowded like that, a lot of fights
7 and disturbances break out because everyone
8 needs their own space. And I say that as
9 growing up with a family of nine; growing up in
10 a two bedroom and three bedroom apartment we
11 literally fought for space. But I also know
12 that the establishment in the CFE can't pay - -
13 , which summarized briefly that overcrowding
14 drives down demands. And basically, if you want
15 to look at it, in my opinion of it, that's what
16 happened here. But, I hope that parents speak
17 out tonight as to the situation in this school.
18 I hope that staff and administrators speak out
19 in support of what you believe is right. One of
20 the things that I expect to convey to you is
21 that I will never tell you what type of school
22 to send your child to. If you want to send your
23 child to the local elementary school or to the
24 school - - District 6, or a school that you have
25 to test to get into, then go ahead and send your

1 child there. If you want to send your child
2 to parochial school or home school your child,
3 or private school or to a charter school, that's
4 your choice. But the most important thing and
5 as my colleagues said earlier, parents need to
6 be engaged and the administration needs to
7 listen to what parents have to say. Now, the
8 statistics are there and what we look at. And
9 obviously all of you are here because you want
10 your child, your children and your relatives to
11 get an excellent education. That's what it's
12 about. But, I don't know whether or not, I
13 don't sit in your shoes. I'm not a teacher in
14 this school. I'm not an administrator in this
15 school, so I am really not the elected official
16 like Arnold - - , like Adranas Rodriguez
17 [phonetic], like Adriano Espailat back there
18 who actually represent the area. But I do know
19 that I take my lead from them, and I take my
20 lead from parents overall. And so I hope that
21 the administration, Deputy Chancellor is
22 listening to what people have to say. I hope
23 that the decision has not been made. I do know,
24 as you know, and I mentioned this at the
25 hearing, that our Mayor, Mayor Bloomberg,

1 mentioned about a year or two years ago in
2 Washington D.C. that he planned on closing 10%
3 of the schools in New York City. Approximately
4 that's 150 or 160 schools over the next four
5 years. And so, one of the questions that I
6 asked the Deputy Chancellor at the hearing was
7 there a target of number of schools each year
8 that were expected to be closed and his response
9 to me was no there is not. As to whether or not
10 he was told that they, meaning the Department of
11 Education, had to close approximately 10% of the
12 public schools in New York City over the next
13 four years, and he told me at the hearing that
14 he had never been told that. Not to say that
15 that's not the case, but he has not been told
16 that. But I'm here today to speak up as the
17 chair of the education committee, as a parent,
18 as to say that we need to evaluate this
19 situation in order to determine what's best for
20 the children at this school. My colleague,
21 Adranas Rodrigues, had said to me along with my
22 staff that there was a meeting in December at I
23 believe at - - , where the - - representative,
24 staff members, members of my staff in which they
25 had asked at that time what was going to happen

1 to JFK and I believe that there was no answer
2 there as to what was going to happen. And
3 subsequently I was told that they heard in the
4 news or through someone else that two charter
5 schools were going to come in and that the
6 Department of Education did not communicate
7 directly with the elected officials or with the
8 parents as to the process that you're looking at
9 in deciding whether or not the charter schools
10 are coming here. And when, if in fact, the
11 decisions had been made. And that type of
12 communication has to stop. There must be
13 transparency over all of the processes of
14 communicating what the situation is, what it
15 looks like and what we possibly will consider
16 doing so that everyone knows exactly the
17 direction. This is about the children's
18 education. It's not about the DOE; it's not
19 about UFT; it's not about CFA; it's not about
20 that we're going win and we're going to lose;
21 it's about education of the children in this
22 school and the parents. They are the ones, if
23 it wasn't for the parents in the school, then
24 there would be no administrators, no teachers,
25 no one here. So I ask you to consider what the

1 parents have to say and I'm going to stay and
2 listen also. Thank you for giving me the
3 opportunity to say my two cents. Thank you.

4 MS. HARRIS: - - .

5 MS. DENISE SULLIVAN: Hello, I'm Denise
6 Sullivan, - - high school representing all of
7 the high schools. A phase out is not what the
8 members of the community desire. When high
9 schools fail to meet standards, it tells us that
10 the learning process is not excelling.
11 Minorities - - education community begins in an
12 education institution and phasing out - -
13 especially when it comes to resources. If
14 students achieve F's and B's and D grades, in
15 any institution in this country, they cannot
16 excel - - . What it's telling us is that with
17 our - - behind us, what we expect from them is
18 more. More resources, further - - , for our
19 students to have books, computers, not just read
20 from Xerox copies; for professional development
21 for our teachers. - - as completed in - - .
22 What I want to see happen in this school system,
23 especially in - - , is that the educational
24 resources are achieved from the 2.2 million
25 dollars that's offered by the federal government

1 for the - - students. And that - - get a
2 portion of those funds. If they fail, it's
3 because they're entitled to. Thank you.

4 MS. HARRIS: Okay, we're going to continue
5 with the public comment portion of this
6 evening's agenda. I ask that Marlene Davis,
7 Belinda Gordon, Geronimo - - and - - line up
8 right over here by Juan. You are reminded that
9 public comment must be limited to two minutes.
10 Time will be kept by Juan and he will signal you
11 when you have thirty seconds remaining and then
12 when your time is up. Please note that the - -
13 team of all schools in the building of the JFK
14 campus were invited to present this evening and
15 they have - - comment. Thank you.

16 MS. MARLENE DAVIS: Good evening, Deputy
17 Chancellor, DOE, staff, parents, students,
18 community. My name is Marlene Davis [phonetic]
19 and I've been an advocate for over 30 years.
20 The dropout rate at JFK is - - funds not being
21 correctly used. It has gone on for years - - .
22 As an elected Title One chairperson in June of
23 2010, we were told last year that they would
24 address these issues and then the issues would
25 be brought to the table, yet that's been undone.

1 Title One, - - parents, helps students and
2 helps staff to help students that have IEP's and
3 students that are at risk in schools. To date,
4 the tutoring services for our children have
5 suffered and at the beginning of this school
6 year, I tried to address these issues and many
7 others. When doing so, my son had exposed other
8 staff and - - board members have suffered. This
9 forced me to resign when I saw that they were
10 trying to hurt my child's education. The choice
11 to leave was at - - but my son's education was
12 more important. As a Title One chairperson, I
13 tried to get the school's budget. It wasn't
14 until before Christmas that my co-chair, now the
15 current title chairperson, working with us, the
16 DOE District and High School Region Center, we
17 were able to get that budget. JFK has been a
18 historical fix in this community where as me and
19 my twelve children have lived here. Nothing has
20 been done about preparing the children for the
21 future - - or even preparing for SAT's in
22 college. My son is in the twelfth grade. He
23 needs ten credits to be given to him from
24 another school, getting honors now, yet when
25 senior pictures was taken to dot him out of the

1 picture with a green dot over his face. As
2 far as refusing to let him take pictures with
3 the student body, where he is - - , there needs
4 to be a special DOE unit assigned to the school
5 immediately. The current PTA president is out
6 of control, allowing administration and staff to
7 run the PTA meetings. We have dared to have
8 type one separate meetings. These kind of
9 things is the reason for JFK High School being
10 forced to close. It's the DOE's fault, not our
11 children or parents fault. - - should continue
12 JFK High School and not shut them down. It is
13 not the children's fault or parent's fault for
14 the former Principal who stole \$91,000. It is
15 the DOE's fault and Mr. Bloomberg for shutting
16 down the Monitoring Department. It is my prayer
17 that JFK High School stays open. Thank God for
18 you listening to my question.

19 MS. BELINDA GORDON: Good evening, I am Ms.
20 Gordon. I am an alumni of John F. Kennedy, I
21 graduated in 85 [applause]. - - the city - -
22 quality of education. I am currently a resident
23 of the Bronx of 43 years. Our daughter
24 currently goes to Christopher Columbus which is
25 also phasing and closing out. I am an active

1 parent and I am concerned. I am also active
2 in leadership at Christopher Columbus.
3 Currently - - with Facebook I have contacted a
4 lot of classmates from 85, 84, and 83. Most of
5 them are lawyers, stock brokers, bus drivers,
6 electricians, doctors, teachers, social workers,
7 hygienists and entrepreneurs. What I have
8 conceived from parents in my years to today's
9 years are parents, mothers and fathers, are not
10 as involved as they should be. I see that
11 parents are not going out to parent teacher
12 conferences. As many students that are in the
13 schools I think that we have a growing, excuse
14 me, what we need to consider is our growing
15 dysfunction in society. We have more single
16 mothers, we have more violence, we have
17 alcoholism, we have group homes, we have teenage
18 pregnancies which started pretty much in 85 and
19 the class of 85 we had - - . We have poverty
20 and unfortunately, ACS, they have been in
21 control of our children given the head of
22 household title to our children. I don't think
23 closing Kennedy High School is the answer.
24 We're just pushing the problems off. We have
25 problems at home which, if we don't solve them

1 at home, they will not be solved in school.
2 So this will always happen no matter how well
3 you teach them, you will a low graduation rate
4 and you will always have less progress. I also
5 - - parent yesterday to today, the immigration
6 rate has quadrupled. When I was in Kennedy in
7 85, I did not know Jamaicans; I did not know
8 West Indians; I did not know of Russian. There
9 was not a high immigration population which
10 brings to the break down at the end of the day.
11 This is also forgiving for Bloomberg to make New
12 York City for illegal aliens. Thank you.

13 [Pause]

14 FEMALE VOICE: Thank you.

15 [background noise]

16 [pause]

17 MALE VOICE 2: Hello everyone. My name is -

18 - .

19 [background noise]

20 [pause]

21 MALE VOICE: I guess I just want to share a
22 personal story. You know, my personal story.
23 My personal Kennedy story, in an effort to sort
24 of, to sort of criticize this overemphasis on
25 statistics. Because they don't tell a whole

1 story. And just, this gentleman, Mr.
2 Sternberg, he recited statistics and they don't
3 tell the whole picture. My family has - -
4 issues - - high school - - we were hooked, you
5 know? - - recent immigrants - - recent
6 immigrants to this country. And, she - -
7 parent-teacher conferences. - - you know? - -
8 and you know, the - - truant officer, and he'd
9 say, "Well, why aren't you in school. I need to
10 speak to your parent." You know? and I said,
11 "I don't have a father." You know? And they
12 couldn't speak to my mom. You know, - - skip
13 school. It was so like, other internal factors
14 that contributed to the fact that I had - - . -
15 - . You know, I guess the - - I guess, - - .
16 [background noise]
17 [pause]
18 MALE VOICE 2: Okay, so, - - truant officer
19 could not call home, I didn't have a phone
20 number. They were all these socioeconomic
21 issues that were - - against - - you know, and I
22 feel like that representative of the student
23 body - - . You know, and I think that that's
24 another reason why more resources should be
25 allocated - - happened in recent years is that

1 resources have been taken away. You know?

2 So, I just, personally I think that's the
3 problem, you know? I think that is - - . Thank
4 you.

5 [background noise]

6 MALE VOICE 2: It is - - teachers - - . You
7 know, I wouldn't have gone near as far as I did
8 - - the reason I got to college was because a
9 teacher told me, you know, - - for me it was - -
10 a possibility before to go to college, I didn't
11 even think about that. You know? A teacher
12 came up to me and was like, - - to get in and -
13 - afterwards, and that's exactly what I did.
14 And I got in and I just, I shudder to think what
15 how my life would be like now if I didn't have
16 this teacher encouraging me you know? I had all
17 sorts of teachers, some of them - - . And I
18 was, you know, I'll tell you , when I graduated
19 in 2003, before, the year before, the small
20 schools took over the building, and, you know,
21 when the small schools came, a lot of these
22 great teachers - - left and - - you know - -
23 teachers in my life - - it's like, you know,
24 incredible educators. They were - - went to
25 work in small school. In fact, - - teachers

1 from - - you know? - - . I feel like the
2 small schools actually sort of hurt Kennedy in
3 so many ways. And, - - you know, - - .

4 [background noise]

5 MALE VOICE 2: - - it's ignoring the - - .
6 - - the - - Kennedy - - wasn't given a fair shot
7 in so many ways, you know? And - - policies, -
8 - I think - - parents take into account the
9 underlying issues that won't be addressed - - .
10 What will happen in public schools, you'll have
11 public funds go to private - - and you know,
12 those schools become - - less privatized. That
13 isn't--that isn't what it's--

14 FEMALE VOICE: [Interposing] I'm sorry--

15 MALE VOICE 2: - - .

16 FEMALE VOICE: I've allowed you to go, but
17 I'm sorry, thank you very much. - - .

18 MALE VOICE 2: I hope they - - as well you
19 know?

20 [background noise]

21 [pause]

22 MALE VOICE 2: - - .

23 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

24 [background noise]

25 FEMALE VOICE: So I do want to respect

1 everyone's time - - and - - . Thank you.

2 MALE VOICE 2: I just want to say it's - -
3 you know, the way things are - - I think you
4 know, more effort should be made to listen to
5 the voices of the people - - you know. And - -
6 thank you.

7 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

8 [background noise]

9 [pause]

10 MS. DIANE SNOW: Good evening, my name is
11 Diane Snow - - .

12 [background noise]

13 [pause]

14 MS. SNOW: And - - .

15 [background noise]

16 [pause]

17 MS. SNOW: - - public school system in
18 Brooklyn and I have one question. What is going
19 on with the education in New York?

20 [background noise]

21 [pause]

22 MS. SNOW: No one is speaking clearly about
23 the place of education in a large city. No one
24 is fighting for City education. And, I'll give
25 you two examples. Years ago when the State

1 Commissioner Knowles announced that all
2 children are the same, and everyone will - - to
3 graduate, why didn't the Department of Education
4 and every administrator in this city go up to
5 Albany and tell him you're wrong?

6 [background noise]

7 [pause]

8 MS. SNOW: No one fought for the educational
9 system that we had, that was fine. We had
10 problems, Kennedy's never been - - . But - -
11 their school, now we're forced to prepare
12 children for regents who should be in an
13 alternative track, have a vocational track.
14 There's no shame, where I come from in being a
15 blue-collar worker.

16 [background noise]

17 [pause]

18 MS. SNOW: Second example, - - stands the
19 place of a large high school - - . You go to an
20 elementary school when you - - when you're 5.
21 Then you go to a junior high, a middle school
22 that's larger. And you're always in awe of the
23 large nature of that school. Even when you're
24 there. And that - - . This system does not
25 organize students to - - . When I went school,

1 we had - - . We had music, chorus, - - .

2 [background noise]

3 [pause]

4 MS. SNOW: Tell me what the small schools
5 have. And - - large city. A large city high
6 school prepares you for the future, for real
7 life. It opens you to things that maybe you
8 would never have - - to before. They have
9 reduced Kennedy. They diluted it and to me
10 there's no hope, I'm sorry to say that, but we
11 will take care of your children for those
12 parents - - until they graduate, and God save
13 us, that's all I can say. I will be - - a lot
14 soon.

15 [background noise]

16 [pause]

17 FEMALE VOICE: Just - - . David Kozinsky
18 [phonetic], Paul English - - and Kimberly
19 Devalos [phonetic].

20 [background noise]

21 [pause]

22 MALE VOICE 3: My name is - - . I - - from
23 2003.

24 [background noise]

25 [pause]

1 MALE VOICE 3: - - we went to college
2 together for four years, and we've known each
3 other since then. - - he's my best friend. - -
4 legacy of - - . To, I guess I'll just share - -
5 I went to Kennedy and I went to a four-year
6 college, I graduated in '83, - - . I guess - -
7 and I think I - - myself - - follow your own
8 passion - - . And to be here today - - to sort
9 of see how this process - - that would be very
10 different. We prepared some words to say. I
11 think it's - - that JFK school - - Mr. Sanchez -
12 - . I would imagine as a school they focus on a
13 curriculum sustaining if not - - creating,
14 sustaining the effect - - students in respect to
15 - - plus they consistently - - . Results - -
16 students have to be - - parents have to
17 involved. A problem as complicated as the New
18 York City Public Schools - - to affect public
19 policy is - - as well. And I don't think - -
20 the folks in front of us have done their part to
21 - - successful school environment at JFK. It's
22 sort of sad to think 57 years after - - we still
23 have problems - - thank you.

24 FEMALE VOICE: Thank you.

25 [background noise]

1 [pause]

2 MR. ROBERT CRESS: Let me just introduce
3 myself. I'm Robert Cress a parent - - . This
4 school will suffer the same fate that other
5 overcrowded New York City schools, including the
6 one that I graduated many years ago - - .
7 Because those - - were doing nothing about
8 education and only - - Mayor Bloomberg--

9 [background noise]

10 [crosstalk]

11 MR. CRESS: --as I said, I - - parent
12 advisory council where - - came in as
13 chancellor. I was district 10 representative.
14 - - respect to parent - - and - - . Now the
15 public school system has a new chancellor to
16 finish what he started - - of this - - public
17 education system. Let me just tell you that - -
18 had a chairman - - education reform now. - -
19 board of directors, straight from the Wall
20 Street elite who just happen to be educated from
21 - - private schools, just like - - to this
22 school.

23 [background noise]

24 [pause]

25 MR. CRESS: - - Mayor Bloomberg just

1 admitted that when it come to public education
2 he's a failure. And let's not forget - -
3 administration. The key word is privatization.
4 The blame for the failure of the public school
5 system also belongs with the state legislature.
6 And I'm sorry two senators - - . Because it is
7 the state legislature that gave Mayor Bloomberg
8 mayoral control. I'll close with, finally - -
9 Sternberg for the failure of - - school
10 restructuring and its due success all I have to
11 say is that when the DOE changed the high school
12 admission process, several years ago, students
13 were sent to certain schools for certain
14 reasons, I guess we know now why.

15 [background noise]

16 [pause]

17 MR. DAVID KOZINKSY: My name is David
18 Kozinsky and - - in the Bronx.

19 [background noise]

20 [pause]

21 MR. KOZINSKY: I liken the closing of JFK to
22 the sinking of a great steamship. A ship that
23 sailed proudly and majestically across the ocean
24 for decades. A ship that was - - of many others
25 that took to the water. But this ship was the

1 victim of sabotage. - - sabotage of the very
2 people who should have protected it from harm.
3 Over - - years and years, the Department of
4 Education drilled holes in the hull of this - -
5 vessel and the more they drilled the slowed it
6 moved until now, it's sinking. - - now they're
7 going to repair the holes - - they sit on the
8 shore and watch. Rather than provide rescuers,
9 the Department of Education ignores the cries
10 from the passengers and crew until - - . And
11 the ship still sinks deeper and deeper into the
12 ocean. And now, when only the top of the smoke
13 stacks can be seen above the water does the
14 Department - - life preserver? No. Instead, it
15 - - insults. And blames you, your teachers,
16 your parents, your community for your failure to
17 - - afloat.

18 [background noise]

19 MR. KOZINSKY: I can only hope as time
20 passes the Department of Education has the guts
21 to admit to all of you if not themselves, that
22 they - - .

23 [background noise]

24 [pause]

25 MS. PAULA DANDRIDGE: Good evening. I'm

1 Paula Dandridge, I've been teaching chemistry
2 for 25 years.

3 [background noise]

4 [pause]

5 MS. DANDRIDGE: For many years we had spring
6 classes for those - - for those without. Now,
7 everyone gets the same, it's not working. We
8 were told if you do your homework, pass exams
9 you pass the class. We were not - - for the
10 fact if the student did not do that, they
11 expected to fail. And they learned from that
12 when they took it again, what to do, to pass the
13 class and later became - - full members of
14 today's society because they learned through
15 their mistakes. Unfortunately - - charter
16 schools who are threatened if they fail a
17 student, the teacher is threatened it's a very
18 sad situation. Now, as a science teacher, I'm
19 teacher like all other charter schools, - -
20 science room. They don't have - - tables, they
21 don't have - - they don't have - - so, that kind
22 of gets rid of the fun part of science at times.
23 It's hard to keep up with - - by the school.
24 Small charter schools do not have enough
25 classrooms for teachers to teach in license.

1 Large schools do. So now you're going to have
2 science teachers teaching out of license. It's
3 sad. They're not going to do a great job.
4 That's not their problem. We have enough
5 licenses for - - . Now, I have an issue as a
6 taxpayer. Over a million dollars will go to
7 many of these schools and assist these schools
8 who are not teaching. I have a problem with
9 that. I'd rather take that money, hire - - to
10 work on student's bad behavior, to work on
11 tutoring students to get the textbooks we need,
12 and perhaps ask me what I'd like, I'd like - - .

13 [background noise]

14 [pause]

15 MS. DANDRIDGE: - - . But small schools do
16 have bigger sports and that is sad. Many large
17 schools that had teams are gone. That is what
18 kept the kids - - . You've got to pass the
19 class work - - .

20 [background noise]

21 [pause]

22 [background noise]

23 FEMALE VOICE 2: - - .

24 [background noise]

25 [pause]

1 FEMALE VOICE 2: - - .

2 [background noise]

3 [pause]

4 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

5 [background noise]

6 [pause]

7 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

8 [background noise]

9 [pause]

10 MR. DALE CASEY: Good evening. My name is
11 Dale Casey. And I'm the vice president for - -
12 high schools - - teachers. We are told that
13 we're here tonight because there has to be
14 accountability. That's the word that the mayor,
15 the former chancellor, the current chancellor
16 are very fond of. Accountability. For year
17 after year, UFT told the chancellor, the
18 superintendent, the - - that the principal in
19 charge of JFK was incompetent--

20 [background noise]

21 [pause]

22 MR. CASEY: --he was driving this school
23 into the ground. And for year after year, he
24 was protected by - - .

25 [background noise]

1 MR. CASEY: - - was about to be closed
2 that you finally fired that principal.

3 [background noise]

4 [crosstalk]

5 MR. CASEY: - - . You look at Monroe - - .
6 You look at - - High School 114, closing school
7 after closing school. Run into the ground by
8 incompetent leadership--

9 [background noise]

10 [pause]

11 MR. CASEY: The truth of the matter is that
12 this is a system designed for failure. And you
13 - - in charge of the school because you want
14 failure. The mayor said it straight out, he
15 wants to close one in every ten schools. And by
16 - - he's going to do it. You take a school like
17 JFK, you overload it with at risk students. You
18 put in English as a second language, special
19 needs students, and you do not provide the
20 resources and supports that are necessary to
21 educate them and then you say the schools are
22 failing.

23 [background noise]

24 [pause]

25 MR. CASEY: Accountability, yes. Let it

1 start at the top with the mayor, the
2 chancellor, - - - -

3 [background noise]

4 [pause]

5 [crosstalk]

6 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

7 FEMALE VOICE 3: The New York City Public
8 Education System is failing us students. And
9 the one thing that public education never seems
10 to realize is the problem - - . There are over
11 1.1 million students in this city alone. - -
12 six schools for one - - . One - - per school
13 and 35 students to a classroom that only fits
14 22. Can you say it's my fault that I have to
15 sit in a class with no desk - - ? Is it my
16 fault that I - - because my - - other school?
17 Is it my fault?

18 [background noise]

19 FEMALE VOICE 3: Is it my fault that I have
20 - - because I haven't even met my guidance
21 counselor. If you - - public education - -
22 that's ruined this school for the next
23 generation - - . In the next - - problem. And
24 if you close down Kennedy, that gives us one
25 less chance to be who we want to be and to do

1 what we want to do. And you want know what I
2 like to do?

3 [background noise]

4 [pause]

5 FEMALE VOICE 4: - - .

6 [background noise]

7 FEMALE VOICE 4: I'm 15 years old and, - - .
8 - - hallways and passing through seniors,
9 teachers, books, computers and other necessities
10 - - from a public high school. - - . Students
11 have to meet in overcrowded classrooms and - -
12 students - - .

13 [background noise]

14 [pause]

15 FEMALE VOICE 4: - - other resources
16 unappreciated and ignored for years. Now you
17 want to - - Kennedy and other schools like it to
18 be closed and phased out without even giving it
19 a fair chance? - - . - - classes like music,
20 art, - - to keep - - in school instead of out on
21 the street. - - . We need textbooks. - - take
22 them home to study. It's simple. - - . And
23 students - - quality education because we--
24 because - - charter school. Many schools like
25 Kennedy are deemed unfixable without even giving

1 them the courtesy of a fair chance.

2 [background noise]

3 FEMALE VOICE 4: - - proud and respectful.

4 I'd be proud that - - of the Bronx - - your

5 school and education. - - . - - shortcomings -

6 - proper education. - - because - - investment.

7 - - failing? No. It's you that failed our

8 schools.

9 [background noise]

10 [pause]

11 FEMALE VOICE: Sheila Rainy, - - , Samantha

12 Velez and - - .

13 [background noise]

14 [pause]

15 MALE VOICE 4: Hi. My name is - - . I'm 16

16 and - - Bronx High School. I'm also part of

17 Sisters and Brothers - - .

18 [background noise]

19 MALE VOICE 4: Many schools in the city are

20 struggling to maintain - - . - - putting

21 emphasis on - - . We all put a little effort on

22 this. I would expect them to at least help us

23 out. But no, you want to completely close

24 schools down. - - all students and staff. Let

25 me ask you a question. What makes you think

1 that this is for the - - ?

2 [pause]

3 MALE VOICE 4: Because - - create more
4 violence. Now you want to overcrowd schools
5 that are already overcrowded, making learning
6 even more difficult for some of us students.
7 Are you going to close those schools down?
8 'Cause you think they're not doing so well. My
9 school is on the - - list. And there's a good
10 chance that by next year it might be in the same
11 situation. But we're not going to let that
12 happen.

13 [Pause]

14 Cheryl Brady, Sapharo [phonetic] Suron,
15 Samantha Velez and Jay Ardu.

16 MR. ROFAS: Hi. My name is Logan Rofas
17 [phonetic]. I'm 16 and I go to Samuel - - High
18 School. I'm also part of - - tonight. Many
19 schools in the city are struggling to maintain
20 its doors open; working hard; putting emphasis
21 on the word community. We are open our eyes. I
22 would expect you to at least help us out. But,
23 no. You want to completely close schools down,
24 getting rid of all students and staff.

25 Let me ask you a question. What makes you

1 think that this is for the better? Because
2 it's only going to create more problems. And
3 now you want to overcrowd schools that are
4 already overcrowded, making learning even more
5 difficult for those students. Are you going to
6 close those schools down, because you think that
7 they're going to do so well?

8 My school is from the PLA District, and
9 there is a good chance that by next year it
10 might be in the same situation. Well, we're not
11 going to let that happen. [applause] We're
12 working harder and harder to make it the place
13 we want to learn in. Instead of closing schools
14 down, you should look at the other, some, other
15 available, um, yeah, options. But, now, we
16 demand that you look at the other options.
17 You've got a chance to show me what they could
18 do. Show us that you care about education,
19 because right now, I feel like none of you are
20 listening to what I have to say. [applause] At
21 least help us out. We're your future. Whether
22 you like it or not, whether we do something good
23 or bad, we're staying. It's your job to give
24 use what we need for a successful future. You
25 should put more thought and funding into the

1 schools. How do you expect them to change for
2 the better when you don't give them the funding
3 they need? [applause]

4 You need to work with us? For all you know,
5 there are a lot of students and teachers willing
6 to do whatever they can to change the school and
7 the education. We are here to prove to you that
8 we care about our education, and that if you
9 thought that closing our school would be so
10 easy, you thought wrong. [applause]

11 We are here to say that whatever you say
12 will not bring us down. [applause] We are here
13 tonight, and we are here to show the DOE what
14 we're made of. [applause] Thank you.

15 MALE VOICE 1: My name is - - , I am a
16 student at SEU. - - on campus, and we recently
17 - - .

18 Last night I went to see - - to defend the
19 other high schools. This morning, I woke up and
20 I had a major headache. I felt as if my illness
21 was chaining me to my bed. However, I got up
22 and forced myself to get ready so that I'd be
23 here. It is my belief that schools such as JFK
24 High School - - by the DOE, and that gave me the
25 strength I needed to get here. And it is this

1 belief which leads me here today. In every
2 single school, - - DOE standards are under-
3 funded and under-resourced ones that are
4 struggling to be a good school.

5 There are exceptionally bright students here
6 who will grow up to be the movers and shakers of
7 the world. For all we know, the kids - - class
8 could have the potential to become a world-
9 renowned writer. Or the girl who pays attention
10 in biology may grow up to discover a cure for
11 cancer. Or maybe the boy who loves history may
12 grow up to be - - law school class. I know
13 anybody who has the capacity to flourish
14 intellectually is seriously inhibited by a lack
15 of proper resources. We deal with it. If what
16 we want to learn cannot be taught in the old and
17 outdated text books they give us, and trust me
18 when I say they're outdated. I once took a look
19 at a history text book issued in our school, and
20 it only documented 42 presidents. People learn
21 what we want in other places. We already have
22 reduced experience in school. - - . They want
23 to tear down our school. How could you live
24 with yourself knowing that you got in the way of
25 a student who could become the next president

1 that runs, or might become a Nobel prize-
2 winning scientist.

3 There's another point I want to make. The
4 DOE also - - high school to - - system, but now
5 we would like to - - . Consider that all
6 students and parents are all learning that
7 Katherine Black was appointed Deputy Chancellor
8 of the DOE. She has absolutely no experience
9 when it comes to public schools. She didn't
10 attend public school. [applause] - -
11 Chancellor, she only has three years of teaching
12 experience and a Master's of Special Education
13 Management. She has - - . So, why is the
14 future of the student body rests in her hands.
15 I felt shocked when she made a joke about - - .
16 If a student or teacher had made that joke, they
17 would have been reprimanded. But, she's has the
18 backing of this person, Michael Bloomberg, who I
19 like to think of as the Fuhrer of New York City.
20 Fuhrer is a German word, which happens to mean
21 leader. It was a title granted to Adolph
22 Hitler. All of us brought together - - . Our
23 collective intelligence is unstoppable for us.
24 You can see how many people have come out today
25 to support John F. Kennedy High School.

1 And to the - - of the DOE, we would like
2 to send a message to them. Do us a favor and
3 stop getting in our way.

4 SAMANTHA: Wah, wah wah, wah, wah wah, wah
5 wah. I'm sorry - - . My name is Samantha Maria
6 Velez, and I am - - . I just wanted to know how
7 it feels to - - going on, or, better yet, what
8 is being said. Don't lie to these students when
9 you say you don't have money to fix this school,
10 because they know you do. Especially when you
11 have money to give to the private schools.

12 Don't say schools are failing because of
13 students and teachers. When you talk about a
14 failing school, say it to them, because it's
15 your fault, because you keep underfunding it.
16 These students want to go to their school, but
17 they're invested in it, because they want to
18 learn and receive an education that is worth
19 something. But you are not giving them that
20 chance. You are stripping them of an
21 opportunity to grow and become something big.
22 The - - of something you want to do.

23 Someone will look back on this day and say,
24 You know what? I'm not going to make the
25 mistakes those people made. I'm going to fix

1 these schools that are screaming for help.
2 I'm going to invest in these young people.
3 That's only one. Invest in us.

4 Don't say the only way to help us is by
5 abandoning us, because that is not the answer.
6 Closing our schools is not the answer. Fix
7 them. Stop making the wrong decisions. When
8 you find yourself thinking, keep us in mind,
9 because whether you like it or not, the people
10 sitting in this school—these young people—they
11 are your future.

12 And my last comment is a suggestion. The
13 people that are sitting there right now, pay
14 attention. Especially Ms. Lisa. These are your
15 students and your school; at least pretend that
16 you care. My last comment, if you did not hear:
17 Ms. Lisa, these are your students and your
18 school; please pretend that you care.

19 MODERATOR: The first name is Tyrene Green,
20 Rhianna [phonetic] Graham, Oralis Trancoso
21 [phonetic], and Amanda.

22 MALE VOICE: Hello. - - senior at
23 O'Malley's Preparatory Academy in the Bronx. -
24 - the sisters and brothers tonight.

25 I'm a student in protest at a school in

1 danger. Urban communities are denied the
2 right to a fair education, because it's - - that
3 denies urban leaders from future success and
4 better livelihoods.

5 Kennedy has its problem. This has been
6 acknowledged by both students and teachers.
7 Kennedy, with the proper funding and attention
8 by the DOE, could become a success. The
9 potential is here, and has been here. The
10 problem isn't the students who are taught. The
11 problem isn't the teachers who teach. The
12 problem is, indeed, the DOE and its policy of
13 abandoning its urban students ever - - . There
14 are five other schools in this - - , and they
15 both have more resources than Kennedy High
16 School. And when two charter schools are facing
17 this building, they will have more resources
18 than both - - combined.

19 This DOE has left the students on this
20 campus forgotten about and left behind. Oh, but
21 didn't we forget to stop leaving children
22 behind? Didn't we? - - . But I can speak on
23 behalf of Kennedy School to tell you that we all
24 stand in unity to tell the DOE to halt these
25 plans and this is the desire of the Kennedy

1 community.

2 Two new district charter schools will soon
3 replace John F. Kennedy High School if the
4 Department of Education gets their way. But the
5 students have hope, and my question to the DOE
6 is: Have you listened? Have you heard the
7 ideas of Kennedy's community of teachers,
8 administration and students, and what they have
9 to say? Or have you tuned it out when you guys
10 are in the back room doing dirty deals, talking
11 about putting two charter schools in our
12 community's - - . This will affect the local
13 community, because charter schools mean - - .
14 Why - - take a chance - - . We should be
15 educating them to become the leaders in the
16 field of their choice. Going to school isn't
17 setting them up for future jobs and future
18 success, but critical and monumental failure.
19 When I say to be strong as a whole, we must walk
20 down together in solidarity and fight for the
21 DOE to reconsider closing Kennedy, because the
22 special - - in science, and for those who truly
23 understand the magnitude of this decision
24 understand that this is a disgrace; this is an
25 abomination to close this place. Thank you very

1 much.

2 TYRENE GREEN: How you guys doing? My name
3 is Tyrene Green. I'm 18 years old and I go to
4 University Heights High school. I just want to
5 say that you guys, members of the panel, are
6 definitely the biggest hustlers I've ever met.

7 Before I relocated last year to University
8 Heights, I actually had a conversation with you
9 as to all our needs, and you're probably like,
10 why is this guy up there? How can you guys
11 think about closing schools and relocating
12 schools, when you guys are hardly students right
13 now? You have like - - over here lecturing
14 you, and you're not taking notes. You're
15 talking in class, you're texting—that's got your
16 phone taken away. [applause]

17 Another - - , Deputy Chancellor, I don't
18 know why you're here. You have this
19 superiority, you know, somebody else over you,
20 and they're not here. So, - - DOE is kind of
21 like, I would like people to see me by myself
22 without my mom. It's so weird. Yeah, it's
23 really weird. I don't understand how schools in
24 the Bronx have no funding; but, rumor on the
25 school - - media is investing most of its money

1 into charter schools. Why won't the DOE send
2 some of that money to our schools?

3 Well, where is Kathy Black? Why she's not
4 here? Why was our meeting for our decisions
5 held only Staten Island, and the meeting for
6 schools in the Bronx decisions is held in
7 Brooklyn? You guys have to think like us. I
8 mean, I'll tell you this--and you guys are, you
9 know, middle-aged, give or take a few years.
10 You should at least know, you know, have common
11 sense, and the sense to be smart. But, no. You
12 are not using neither parts of your brain.

13 Tell me and I'll leave, because you guys are
14 idiots. [applause]

15 [crosstalk].

16 Hello. Hello. Hello. I'd like to thank
17 all the students that came here, the parents who
18 were able to make it here. I'm a parent of one
19 of the students that is attending this school.
20 I'm also on the PTA Parent - - representative.
21 I'm also on the Superintendant Subcommittee.
22 Okay, I also go to all the PTA meetings that are
23 happening in the year in school, as well as in
24 the quarter. I - - Tweet. Okay, I am an active
25 parent.

1 And I'm also going to tell you a little
2 bit about me. I'm also a product of a high
3 school in the city - - . I could pay to learn.
4 And I have a child that, while before he came to
5 this school, I home schooled him for three
6 years; so, he doesn't know anything about how
7 the system works. But, what am I supposed to
8 tell me son? We're not teaching him the values
9 of life in the school setting. What am I
10 supposed to tell my son when he is, now,
11 transforming into an adult, and I'm not able to
12 - - and encourage him to be the best he can be,
13 because the school itself is crumbling all
14 around him.

15 What am I supposed to tell my child? Okay,
16 they tell him that it's part of - - . While my
17 son couldn't read at the time that I was home-
18 schooling him, I taught him how to read. He
19 loves to draw; that's why he came to this
20 school. It just so happens that I live five
21 minutes away and it makes it easier to come
22 here. But, we don't have an active library.
23 There is no-the library is not active. There is
24 no librarian.

25 What happened to the teachers? They have to

1 go to prep, and they're not able to help the
2 students, because their time is being used to go
3 to these prep classes where they are taught to
4 do this new program called Castor Learning, and
5 most of them don't know how to use it. How am I
6 supposed to show my son that he has a place in
7 this world, when the school that is supposed to
8 be helping him is failing him? And - - . Just
9 - - .

10 FEMALE VOICE 1: Good evening. My name is -
11 - , and I was - - High School. And I'm also
12 here for Kennedy, and also all the other schools
13 that the DOE wants to close. Whether it's this
14 year, next year, the year after that, I'm - - of
15 all those schools. Why? Okay, let's talk about
16 it.

17 So, you have Kennedy listed at the bottom 15
18 percentile as - - , Deputy Chancellor. Now,
19 what is the DOE going to do about that? "Oh,
20 let's close Kennedy, because we don't care about
21 the students who are there." I mean, the
22 majority of them are minority students, right?
23 Basically, their parents are most likely
24 unemployed or they barely have even money just
25 to pay the rent. And what's going to happen to

1 the students who end up having nowhere to go
2 to get their education? Oh, charter schools.
3 Oh, yeah, right. I forgot. - - , except that
4 there is actually a lot of - - to those schools,
5 right? Because that's just what it is. So, for
6 us to actually have our grades and can't even
7 afford a private education—oh, wait, hold on. I
8 think that, actually, public schools are going
9 to become private.

10 Okay, so that means that my mom has to pay
11 for me to go to school, and it's supposed to be
12 a public school that is supposed to support
13 people who are minorities. Okay, so, what am I
14 going to do? Drop out? That's basically what
15 it is. - - my stereotype is I'm going to become
16 pregnant by the time I'm 18, right, and drop out
17 of school. That's the image of me. That's what
18 you're expecting. That's what - - . And I can
19 tell you, everyone is mistaken right here and
20 who has been - - all along, we're going to
21 continue fighting for Kennedy and for all those
22 schools, because, regardless of what if the DOE
23 thinks - - .

24 You guys are taking notes, right? Right,
25 yeah. I wonder what you guys actually do with

1 those notes, though. I mean, are they going
2 to go somewhere? Are they going to go to - - ?
3 I don't know. So, why are you even going to
4 take notes? - - library - - . It doesn't
5 matter, right? Okay. That's what I thought.

6 [Applause]

7 FEMALE VOICE 2: You - - about the notes,
8 so, as I said earlier, this meeting is being
9 recorded and it will be transcribed, and
10 everything I said today will be - - for the
11 Panel on Education Policy, which will go on this
12 Proposal - - .

13 EMANUEL: Good evening, everybody. - - .
14 I'm 17 years old. - - . Tonight I got the
15 vacation. I got - - . Students in this school
16 do not - - progress. [inaudible] - - We demand
17 the DOE to fix our schools and not destroy them.

18 [inaudible]

19 Education is a right.

20 MODERATOR: Michael Adiel [phonetic], Miguel
21 Rodriguez, Jay Liese. [inaudible] Go ahead.

22 ADOLPHO GRAY: Yeah, I'm so, I'm so tired,
23 right, because I'm tired of seeing those two
24 women talk completely in circles. [applause]
25 So, my name is Adolpho Gray. I'm 17 years old.

1 I'm a youth leader - - .

2 I would like to start off by saying that
3 it's very disgusting, preposterous—choose an
4 adjective you want to replace that with—because
5 this hearing was - - . And, what I know is our
6 students are here - - , so you guys are doing
7 this on purpose, because you don't want to
8 students to come out here and - - . And - -
9 over at City Hall, then. All of them. And one
10 thing is clear: charter schools are not the
11 answer. What charter schools do is they steer
12 the attention of what's really going on in
13 schools or how we should really solve the
14 problems. Right? People are now invested in
15 this whole charter idea, which really would
16 replace all public schools, where a lot of black
17 and Latino students go, alright, and then they
18 place this glamorous building, which is by
19 lottery. So, if you don't get in, you're
20 screwed. That's what you're telling us, right?

21 You're telling us that if you don't get in,
22 well, - - . And, little by little, what you're
23 doing is—oh, I got the word—little by little,
24 what you're doing is closing down public schools
25 at the same - - . You know public schools,

1 you're raising little - - , right? And I want
2 to, like, I want someone to - - , I want to make
3 one thing clear to you. If I'm the - - , I'll -
4 - . They're clapping [applause] [inaudible]. I
5 thank everybody here [applause]. And some of
6 you, you know, some of you are just puppets.
7 You have no idea what you're doing here - - .
8 What you need to realize, you need to realize
9 you need to get out of our schools, get out of
10 our communities, and get out of our lives,
11 because we know how we want to - - , whether or
12 not to close our schools, [applause]
13 [inaudible]. Thanks you.

14 MIGUEL RODRIGUEZ: So, my name is Miguel
15 Rodriguez, and I go to Hostos Community College.
16 I didn't go the Kennedy. I'm here representing
17 my College. We did a bit of research on what's
18 happening with these school buildings. So, I
19 first want to say, how do you view a school
20 failing if you don't support it? And you see
21 that by the amount students that are here, (1)
22 they're here on a Friday night at 6:00, and (2)
23 during Regent's Week. How do you get, how do
24 you take things from a community if you don't
25 allow them to come? Like, the person said

1 earlier, letters weren't sent out. You didn't
2 notify anybody. What if - - you were fired
3 tomorrow and they didn't send you a letter, and
4 you just saw somebody sitting in your seat? How
5 would you feel, how would you feel if you walked
6 into the office and saw me sitting down, but you
7 weren't notified? You guys continuously say
8 that the school is failing, that 25% of students
9 don't - - , but the school environment has been
10 pretty good. Maybe because it feels like an
11 airport when you're talking to the school.

12 So, I need to advise - - you of your roles
13 for any of you who work for the Department of
14 Education, both superintendents and Deputy
15 Chancellor. Let me give you the report card:
16 you guys receive an F for student support; you
17 guys receive an F for student leadership; you
18 guys receive an F for telling us that we're - -
19 supporting us. So, just like - - three years in
20 a row. You guys need to be phased out. Bye.

21 MALE VOICE: Hi. My name is - - and I'm
22 17 years old. I attend Southern Yonkers High
23 School. I'm also here as a - - . The reason
24 for my being here is to say that I'm aware of
25 what's going on with the public education system

1 and know that it's failing, and that the
2 leader - - . And that being the case, I just
3 don't know why have you given up on us. Why are
4 - - . Is it an excuse, is it to excuse
5 yourselves for your lack of usefulness.
6 Whatever the reason may be, I just need to say
7 that you're doing it, what you're doing is
8 wrong, and that closing our schools - - .
9 Instead of closing the doors on us, why don't
10 you instead accomplish your goals and dreams?
11 But, most important, help us become - - people.
12 Why don't you, instead, incorporate the quality
13 of charter school education into public school -
14 - , and see what pans out. And then, no matter
15 what your - - is, even if you thought it - - me,
16 just know that this isn't the end, but, indeed,
17 this is just the beginning of us youth fighting
18 for education in our schools. And we, and this
19 school, are going to stay. [applause]

20 MODERATOR: Tyler Ahman, - - , Felix,
21 Predderman [phonetic], Ahani - - [phonetic].

22 ELLIOT VASQUEZ: Hello. My name is Elliot
23 Vasquez. I am student of - - High School and a
24 leader at - - . I'd like for John F. Kennedy to
25 stay open. I'm aware of the Department of

1 Education's reasons for closing Kennedy, but
2 your - - responsible to no one. They fail to
3 realize that closing schools are mere catalysts
4 for the same reasons they are trying to close
5 Kennedy. The Department of Education justifies
6 their actions by using students under their
7 regime as scapegoats, reasons and excuses to
8 close schools rather than young people who want
9 and deserve an education. And the Department of
10 Education must not be able to justify their
11 actions by generalizing students from public
12 schools into the archetype of a failing student.
13 Their actions, if allowed to be continued, would
14 overcrowd schools. And if they keep downsizing
15 the budgets of our school, every school under
16 the Department of Education's reign will suffer
17 the same fate as that those who have been forced
18 to close. Closing Kennedy will not solve the
19 problem and closing schools will not solve the
20 problem.

21 These right here, these are the students'
22 points of view of the opposition. This is what
23 the DOE should do in order to fix our broken
24 education system.

25 Hey, everyone - - . My name is Tyler Ahman.

1 I am a youth - - , and I - - united. And
2 we're here tonight - - John F. Kennedy High
3 School. And, it's kind of like dodging for me,
4 because we've all been here - - . It's our job
5 to reform schools. - - , we were here - - . We
6 were here right from - - with the panel of
7 judges who were doing to the same thing you are
8 doing now. The same story. We're always
9 getting attached, we're always fighting back.

10 Do you see the weather outside? It's so
11 stormy. - - . The alumnae, the parents. Do you
12 see us? We didn't have a problem coming here,
13 even though we knew the DOE already made its
14 decision. So, we come here anyway just to show
15 our support. Just to show our support for John
16 F. Kennedy High School, so we know they didn't
17 get the justice they deserve.

18 John F. Kennedy once said, "Do not ask what
19 your country can do for you, but what you can do
20 for your country." Likewise, don't ask what - -
21 for the schools. The schools are doing what
22 they want for us? What about the timing? The
23 timing that regents week at 6:00 in this
24 weather. Be careful, because I picked up the
25 Daily News yesterday, and they got close on the

1 weather. So, I should take - - all the way
2 back to - - . So, I'm wondering, what about the
3 kids who are graduating? It's their job to
4 serve - - . You have to take regents to
5 graduate. So, what happens if you don't
6 graduate and don't take the - - on time?

7 Mayor Bloomberg already calls the principals
8 of schools CEOs. Their money is dependent on
9 tax breaks. Do we look like - - numbers here?
10 We're students. We're not, we're not numbers.
11 [applause] - - the future, but the future ain't
12 looking too good. And I want all you guys, when
13 you leave tonight, to remember all our faces.
14 Remember, we are depending on you guys. Hey,
15 how about you look at me? We want to make sure
16 when you guys leave, you remember our faces.
17 We're depending on you guys. We want you guys
18 to take a vote, and to not be Bloomberg's
19 puppets, but to vote your conscience.

20 [applause]

21 AWANI PROON: Good evening everyone. My
22 name is Awani Proon, and it's a shame that it
23 has come down to this, but I would like
24 everybody's full attention.

25 My name is Awani Proon and I am a - - of

1 the Student Council here at John F. Kennedy
2 High School. I will take full advantage of this
3 opportunity to express how I feel and how this
4 matter is affecting our lives as students. The
5 - - has stated that JFK will be replaced with
6 two tall high schools at the beginning of next
7 school year. Unfortunately, these schools will
8 be charter schools, which means that future
9 students will have, future students will have -
10 - at this school may not have a chance to, due
11 to the lottery process. This will also mean
12 that our school building will be overcrowded and
13 continue to be under-resourced. These incoming
14 schools will take up even more space, which we
15 don't even have the capacity for. They may get
16 computers and text books that we won't have
17 access to. There are--these are the resources we
18 have needed for years. If the DOE exhibits its
19 support for these new schools, why can't you
20 support Kennedy? Are we not good enough for
21 you? Why do you want approval to phase us out
22 when you have already been doing it and,
23 apparently, you have - - . You have phased out
24 our resources, quality teachers, a library and
25 even text books. You have planned for this to

1 happen. It is the DOE's fault that we are
2 here today. The DOE has been using our school
3 as a place to shove students in who have stopped
4 and - - . This has been a key factor in making
5 Kennedy a low performing high school year after
6 year. Where do the future - - and special needs
7 students go with John F. Kennedy no longer
8 exists? This can potentially increase drop out
9 and student - - .

10 Another factor - - to replace with our
11 principal, Lisa Lubbocks. She who has been
12 placed here by the DOE, has had a reputation of
13 overseeing the closing of schools. Why would
14 you bring in a closer instead of a principal
15 motivated to fixing our schools. We have been
16 given an administrator who has focused on
17 closing and not on our potential - - .

18 [applause]

19 With that being said, our current situation
20 appears - - . This Department of Education is
21 trying to close our school, and we can't let
22 that happen.

23 In conclusion, the students and
24 administration has been - - academic - - , while
25 the Department's goals were adversary. This is

1 unacceptable, and we've had enough.

2 [applause]

3 Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.
4 We're supporting you. Well, I'm not going to
5 start until I have your attention, so I'm going
6 to wait. Thank you. So, my name is Robert - -
7 and I am very—I feel great I'm actually in this
8 auditorium again, because of the fact that I
9 graduated from this school in 2007. [applause]

10 When I heard about this school, when I first
11 came in here, it wasn't what I expected. But,
12 then again, I never believed - - about this high
13 school. But, I graduated here. I was - - , but
14 at the end of the day, I graduated. But, even
15 during my time as a student here—and, again, you
16 guys - -, all the shady things that happen in
17 this school, - - . And the school -- did they
18 tell me this? They did.

19 You know, again, I'm not going to continue
20 until I have your attention. You all ready?
21 Thank you. So, like I was saying, I went here
22 for the four years I was here, and I wasn't told
23 about all the shady things that happen in this
24 school. It was not right at all. Mr. - - ,
25 increase the - - . Michelle Davis, - - . So,

1 if you're not speaking today, it's crazy,
2 because you work at this school. - - [applause]

3 And so, just to continue on, Lisa Lowe, you
4 remember me. I - - . But I'm actually up here
5 and I can speak my mind. - - you actually
6 support every school here, except Kennedy.
7 Don't support the closer. Don't support the
8 charter school. Yo, these are the-look, you
9 have the statistics right here. These are
10 students who, when it comes to - - , for
11 Kennedy, it is 28% compared to the City's
12 average, which is 19%. [applause] So,
13 basically, they are saying that Kennedy is - -
14 students for the City. We're doing. We're
15 doing. Right? But, then again, we don't have
16 the support. And this has been going on for a
17 long time. And I know that you're saying - -,
18 but I want to see you all up here - - good.
19 [applause] - - up here a lot.

20 This is ridiculous. You've got to have a
21 look at this. This is - - sources, New York
22 City School Reports, part of the 2009 reports
23 ended. This is a bunch of documents from the
24 Department of Education. Oh, this is, if you're
25 not reading this, then I don't know what to do,

1 because, then again, if you're not reading and
2 you guys are the ones who make the decision, - -
3 . I remember when Lisa was the principal at -
4 - Walton School. I'm pretty sure - -
5 organization, this is the - - 90. Frankly, you
6 have a reputation of trying to - - your
7 students, and you can see this organization has
8 done so much for every student across the city.
9 For the Bronx. That's crazy.

10 [Pause]

11 MALE VOICE: So we come here anyway just to
12 show our support, just to show our support for
13 John Kennedy High School. So we know - - gets
14 the justice we deserve. John F. Kennedy once
15 said, don't ask what your country can do or what
16 you can do for your country. Likewise, don't
17 ask us-- please don't, what we can do for the
18 school. - - the school is doing what they want
19 for us.

20 What about the timing? The timing that
21 regents week, 6:00, in this weather. Speaking
22 of regents, I had to take the geometry exam
23 yesterday and they got postponed for weather, so
24 I - - all the way back to June. So I'm
25 wondering, what about the seniors here that

1 graduate? It's their job. It's their regents
2 diploma. You have to take the regents to
3 graduate.

4 So what happens if you don't graduate if you
5 don't take your regents on time? Mayor
6 Bloomberg already - - the principals of schools,
7 CEO's. Their money is dependent on tax breaks.
8 Are we really - - reading numbers here? We're
9 students. We're not--

10 [Applause]

11 MALE VOICE: - - future, but the future
12 ain't looking too good. And I want all of you
13 guys, when you sleep tonight, to remember all
14 our faces. We're depending on you guys. Hey,
15 how about you look at me. We want to make sure
16 when you guys sleep, just remember our faces.
17 We're depending on you guys. We want you guys
18 to - - , not be Bloomberg's puppets, to vote
19 with your conscience.

20 [Applause and cheers]

21 MS. ARMANI PRUME: Good evening everyone.
22 My name is Armani Prume [phonetic] and it's a
23 shame that it's come down to this but I would
24 like very much your attention. Um, okay. My
25 name is Armani Prume and I'm a proud member of

1 the Student Council here at John F. Kennedy
2 High School.

3 I would take full advantage of this
4 opportunity to express how I feel and how this
5 matter is affecting our lives as students. The
6 Riverdale test stated that JFK will be replaced
7 with two small high schools beginning next
8 school year.

9 Unfortunately, these schools will be charter
10 schools, which means future students will have--
11 future students will have - - to come to this
12 school, may not have a chance to, due to the
13 lottery process. This will also mean that our
14 school building will be overcrowded and - - on
15 the resources.

16 These incoming schools will take up even
17 more space, which we don't even have classrooms
18 for. They may get computers and textbooks that
19 we will have access to. They are the type--
20 these are the type of resources we have needed
21 for years.

22 If the DOE is willing to support these new
23 schools, why won't you support Kennedy? Are we
24 not good enough for you? Why do you want
25 approval to phase out if you have already been

1 doing it and apparently are unsuccessful at
2 it?

3 You have phased out our resources, - -
4 teachers, our library, and even textbooks.

5 You have planned to-- for this to happen.
6 It is the DOE's fault that we are here today.
7 The DOE has been using our school as a place to
8 shove students in who have - - and been pushed
9 out of their schools. This has been a key
10 method in to keeping a low performing high
11 school year after year.

12 Where will future English language - - and
13 special needs students go if John F. Kennedy no
14 longer exists? This can potentially increase
15 drop out and students won't - - .

16 Another method that the DOE has
17 strategically put-- placed-- placed would be our
18 principal Lisa - - . She, who was appointed by
19 the DOE, has had a reputation of overseeing the
20 closings of schools. Why would you bring in a
21 closer instead of a principal motivated to
22 fixing our school?

23 We have been given an administrator who has
24 focused on closing and not on our potential - -
25 .

1 [Applause]

2 MS. PRUME: The fact that you say our
3 present situation appears inevitable, the
4 Department of Education is trying to close our
5 school and we can't let that happen.

6 In conclusion, the students and
7 administration has been blamed for academic
8 failure while it's the Department's fault we're
9 at this point. This is unacceptable and we've
10 had enough.

11 [Applause and cheers]

12 MALE VOICE: - - .

13 [Inaudible background conversation]

14 MALE VOICE: Well, I'm not going to start my
15 talk - - detention. So I'm going to wait.
16 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. So my name
17 is - - . Uh, I am very-- I feel great that I'm
18 actually in this auditorium again for the fact
19 that I graduated from this school in 2007.

20 [Applause and cheers]

21 MALE VOICE: - - I can say a lot of things
22 about this school. When I first came in here,
23 it wasn't what I expected, but then again, I
24 never really knew much about this high school.
25 But I graduated here. I was low performing but

1 at the end of the day, I graduated.

2 But even through my time as a student here,
3 and again, if you guys want - - all the shitty
4 things that happened in this school, I went
5 through. I - - told me that the school-- did
6 they tell me this? They did. Yo, I'm not going
7 to continue until I have everyone's attention.
8 Ya'll ready? Thank you.

9 So like I was saying, I went-- for four
10 years, I was here and I wasn't told about all
11 the shady things that were happening at the
12 school that wasn't all right at all. Mr. - - ,
13 you know, - - . I didn't see - - . When I was
14 here - - , I think it was the AP - - or
15 something like that.

16 So, if you're not speaking today, it's crazy
17 because you work here. So - - I'm going to be
18 really upset. All the Kennedy alumni who would
19 actually be really upset if you're not up here
20 defending your school.

21 [Applause and cheers]

22 MALE VOICE: And so, just to continue on,
23 um, Lisa - - , you run me, uh, - - . You shut
24 me down because I wasn't a member. Well, I'm
25 actually up here and I can speak my mind.

1 [Applause]

2 MALE VOICE: - - as an alumni, that's
3 everybody over here, I want to actually really
4 thank you - - support every school year. It's
5 like Kennedy, don't support the closing. Don't
6 support the charter schools. Yo, these are-- I
7 have the statistics right here. These are
8 students-- let me see, when it comes to LEP - -
9 for Kennedy is 28% compared to the city's
10 average which is 19%.

11 [Applause]

12 MALE VOICE: - - are saying that Kennedy is
13 housing LEP students for the city. We're doing
14 it. We're doing it, right? But then again, we
15 don't have the support. We don't and this has
16 been going on for a long time. And I know
17 you're saying, I don't have the time, but I
18 don't see you up here defending the school when
19 - - .

20 [Applause and cheers]

21 MALE VOICE: - - . If ya'll have a look at
22 this. This is our - - sources, um, New York
23 State school reports - - . This is, um,
24 actually documents from the Department of
25 Education. Oh, this is-- you're not reading

1 this and I don't know what you're doing
2 because then again, if you're not reading this
3 then you guys must be making decisions behind
4 the community's back.

5 - - and then the - - . I remember you used-
6 - it was a principal for one of the - - schools.
7 I'm pretty sure - - .

8 [Applause]

9 MALE VOICE: - - that we try to offer your
10 students. As you can see, this organization has
11 done so much for every school in the - - of the
12 city, for the Bronx - - .

13 [Applause]

14 MALE VOICE: You turned your backs on us.
15 That's crazy. So if you don't care about your
16 students when you was a principal, then how are
17 we sure that you're going to care as the
18 superintendent?

19 [Applause]

20 MALE VOICE: - - . To all those people up
21 here, great. We're not in position. I'm pretty
22 sure you guys must be - - or doing this for - -
23 . Then I'm going to stop doing it for the
24 paycheck. You can do something about it, stop
25 your job, just quit, walk off. - - .

1 [Applause]

2 MALE VOICE: - - us fighting against us.
3 Stop this. Stop this attack from this
4 capitalist system. Stop it. - - as the
5 education system. - - what are you going to do
6 after this? Are you going to be proud that
7 you're going to say, oh, I was the principal of
8 a school that ended up closing? What did I do?
9 Nothing. I didn't do - - .

10 [Applause and cheers]

11 MALE VOICE: - - every parent. Did you
12 actually inform? Did you-- did you - - and
13 inform every parent, every student, about today?
14 I would say no. You know why? Because I spoke
15 to many parents. They didn't know about today.
16 Students didn't know about today. So this is a
17 shame. This is really, really shady. And I - -
18 . As a matter of fact, both are next week. We
19 the students, we teach - - .

20 [Applause and cheers]

21 MALE VOICE: - - .

22 [Applause and cheers]

23 MR. KIRKLAND: My name is - - Kirkland and
24 normally I'm a - - but that's - - not for the
25 students, guys in gangs, guys that have

1 felonies, guys who basically, to me, that the
2 system has turned its back on. But I'm here
3 today because I'm unfortunate enough to have a
4 son that goes to - - .

5 And one thing I'm going to say to you, the
6 member up here, and next I'm going to say
7 something to the youth. One of the things I
8 want to say to you guys is that you need to
9 understand that there's other ways to choose
10 schools.

11 For instance, my son goes to - - . Before -
12 - he went to a private school. When he was 14 -
13 - different class, for eight years. And then
14 when he came to - - there was 28-30 kids in
15 class. Is average improved 10 points - - . So
16 that tells me right there that it doesn't have
17 to be about a charter school.

18 What it is about is-- it's about principle
19 and someone just mentioned mistakes. You can't
20 find a good principal nowhere in the country.
21 It's about a principal that's concerned with the
22 students. It's about a principal that demands--

23 [Applause and cheers]

24 MR. KIRKLAND: It's about a principal that
25 demands that the teachers teach the students.

1 It's about a principal that understands what
2 the Board of Education wants, which is for
3 students to pass the regents.

4 You can take that model and deal with it and
5 - - . You can - - . You'd have got the same
6 results. So that's what I want to say to the
7 panel. To the students, I want to say this to
8 you. In 1998, - - you'll see one thing is for
9 sure. And that is, nobody in the world can make
10 you a failure but you. The Board of Education -
11 - .

12 [Applause]

13 MR. KIRKLAND: Nobody can make you a failure
14 in life but you. You have to accept reality.
15 Everybody - - . You know the expression.
16 Either play the game or get played by the game.
17 Let's be honest. Let's be real. The decision
18 is made. It dives past. It can't be - - . The
19 question is, where do we go from here? What do
20 we do?

21 First thing I want to say, when I went to
22 school, you get a master's degree. I studied
23 real hard, system analysis. One thing I learned
24 about systems was, the Board of Education-- the
25 Board of Education is one of the biggest systems

1 in the world but it's a closed system.

2 Instead of being an open system, it's a closed
3 system.

4 The Board of Education is the biggest closed
5 system in America, one of the biggest. That
6 means that the city - - at the top. The chances
7 of making decisions, the only person that might
8 be privy to any decision outside of that, or
9 have an involvement, is the Deputy Chancellor.

10 So I think you have to understand, it ain't
11 real fair for us to talk about your teachers.
12 It ain't real fair for us to talk about this
13 lady who is Deputy Chancellor. Do you - - the
14 expression? - - and tell - - . You can't see
15 how hurt they are because of what happened here?

16 It's nothing they can do. Understand,
17 there's nothing they can do. They don't vote.
18 They have nothing to say. It's the - - .
19 That's the problem. What is the solution? - -
20 what is the solution? You know what the
21 solution is? No, not revolution. The solution
22 is you.

23 Let me ask you this here. Can any of you--
24 could you-- the statistics he just gave us,
25 could you affect those statistics if every kid

1 got a 70, 80, or 90 in his class? No. The
2 reality is it's up to you. You have the power.
3 You are the youth. It's not the Board of
4 Education. They don't have the problem. They
5 have the power to make the decision from the
6 statistics.

7 He read the statistics. What I'm saying to
8 you is, every school year is recognized in this
9 state. Where are you going from here? What is
10 your mindset for education from here? What did
11 you learn from this experience? The - - . The
12 Board of Education is concerned with the Board
13 of Education. You are a statistic. It's not
14 about New York. It's about the world. We are
15 talking about just statistics in America.

16 They'll rate you with our country. So the
17 only thing you can win is everybody here to take
18 it upon himself personally to do the very best
19 you can do. - - we can laugh. We can talk
20 about it. But that - - . Is that going to make
21 you get a higher grade? Is that going to make
22 you go to college? Is that going to mean you be
23 a better - - in your life? No, it's not.

24 My question here today that we should be
25 asking because right now the education - - .

1 We're talking about one thing when we should
2 be talking about something totally different
3 which is your future.

4 Is anybody here concerned about once Kennedy
5 is closed, what is going to happen to the
6 students here? Where are the students going?

7 [Yells from the audience]

8 MR. KIRKLAND: That's right. Then why don't
9 we ask that question?

10 [Crosstalk from the audience]

11 MR. KIRKLAND: - - . It's about respect. If
12 you ask them for some respect, - - respond.
13 Somebody has responded. That's my question. I
14 need to know from you, the Deputy Chancellor.
15 You need to explain to these young people here
16 exactly what's going to happen to every one of
17 them that do not fit in a charter school. Am I
18 right or wrong?

19 [Applause]

20 MR. KIRKLAND: You don't want to leave here
21 today saying that - - . You want to leave here
22 today with an idea about what's going to happen
23 to the future. They need you to explain to them
24 exactly what's going to happen to every student
25 that do not fit in a charter school.

1 FEMALE VOICE: There is a question here -
2 - .

3 [Crosstalk]

4 MR. KIRKLAND: Hold on. Hold on. Hold on.
5 Excuse me. Young lady, what did you say?

6 FEMALE VOICE: How can we change education
7 if we can't even change - - ?

8 [Applause and cheers]

9 [Crosstalk]

10 MR. KIRKLAND: - - I think everybody here is
11 waiting to see what he says about your future
12 now that we've come to-- now that we have come
13 to reality that Kennedy is closing, already
14 closed, - - .

15 [Crosstalk]

16 FEMALE VOICE: I am - - to be here tonight.
17 My husband advised me to stay home. - -
18 probably to - - keep my mouth shut. Um, I did
19 not. It was many years shut and - - . I - -
20 from - - after revolution and - - . After 30
21 years in Romania coming from a second or third
22 most excellent school systems in New York with
23 the best - - and - - and students that are still
24 - - in Washington - - in the newspapers.

25 I love - - 30 years of teaching, excellent

1 teaching. I was very impressed when I - - .
2 And two years of supervision as a teacher of
3 English in a - - .

4 Now, - - I came. So I tried to adjust
5 myself, my - - , my professional practices to
6 the system that - - . I was not that happy - -
7 so, I did not think they were the right way as -
8 - , as a couch, but that's a - - . 30 years
9 after, was naturally the - - schools - - . I
10 kept going to Kennedy and to my students because
11 it was my duty as an immigrant to set - - .

12 [Applause]

13 FEMALE VOICE: And I know what it means to -
14 - when you have the education yourself and many
15 of these families, unfortunately, do not. When
16 I had a husband that was sick for many years and
17 I was the only - - in the family, - - not to be
18 able to keep together - - for three hours a day.

19 One of my - - in my - - is dead. I had to
20 work as a teacher here and I could not postpone
21 my child for the - - because - -

22 [Applause]

23 FEMALE VOICE: - - from PS81, the best
24 school, public school in the Bronx and - - ,
25 into 141 when this - - was taking - - and all

1 the eyes were there and the school went - - .
2 For the tree years - - , for my son, from honors
3 class to - - High school of Science.

4 I want to tell you that I was impressed with
5 teachers, many teachers that had heart and
6 besides - - each because here in America, I
7 would make it coming after a brother that was a
8 very rich, - - . The distinction between his
9 salary and mine and - - was this. - - not
10 important.

11 So, I feel - - in my - - , in my expectation
12 - - because the school is facing - - . At the
13 same time, I want to, uh, tell Mr. Jackson,
14 unfortunately, the decision, I feel, is not now.
15 The decision has been taken about five years ago
16 because, uh, you know people in Romania have - -
17 . It has a lot to do with leadership.

18 Leadership, uh, if you have specialists in
19 school that tell you this is not a feasible
20 approach to this. Listen to the specialists.
21 Don't look in other places. You'll find the
22 resources there. To do the other thing that's -
23 - the school year was unconscionable and - -
24 that is sending its education, the public
25 school, the fiber of this society, - - . That's

1 one - - future. And we'll know that whenever
2 there's a change in policy, a new school
3 approach, you need to a span of ten years to be
4 able to put together data and analyze it.

5 My feeling is that we can survive as - - .
6 There are a lot of things that - - . These are
7 the things that we need to analyze. We need to
8 make the healthy - - of - - because there were -
9 - from inside his body that failed - - . - - I
10 want to commend your state, but I cannot - - .
11 - - I cannot command you. You are the direct
12 person of attack that was uncalled for - - . We
13 understand it. You need to make your point in
14 an - - manner and unfortunately, the - - address
15 will - - . You need a mister or miss or misses
16 in front of a person's names and that goes with
17 any of you because I hear enough here - - .

18 So, try to do the best we can. Not the
19 resources are going to make it better. The
20 change in the family and - - your education, not
21 communication, education and instruction, we can
22 do-- we can see how the - - and education needs
23 to be taken care of--

24 FEMALE VOICE: We need to go to the next
25 comment. Thank you.

1 [Applause]

2 MALE VOICE: The first thing I want to say
3 is, I was here at Kennedy on day one, 1972.

4 [Applause]

5 MALE VOICE: - - I graduated in 1976. So I
6 love Kennedy. And Kennedy is the foundation of
7 my success and many others. The other thing I
8 wanted to add is that Dr. King said that social
9 action, without education, is a weak display of
10 pure - - . We don't want you to do that. An
11 education without social action has no potential
12 for power. We want you to be empowered and you
13 need to combine those two together.

14 As Dr. King said, when you go against your
15 adversary, make sure that you have a plan and
16 it's well thought out because they will use the
17 negative behavior against you. And the other
18 thing I was very proud to hear, I was surprised.
19 I've been to a lot of these hearings and I have
20 yet to hear young people articulate themselves
21 as well as you young people do.

22 [Applause]

23 MALE VOICE: You spoke extraordinarily well.
24 And, you know, I applied for a position here and
25 I didn't get it. And I interviewed with that

1 principal who so well - - and my assistant
2 principal, Irwin Goldberg, started that kind--
3 that hotdog and that pretzel where you make all
4 that money that you stole.

5 And you know, I was second runner up. There
6 were only two finalists who are a charter
7 school, all boys and only New York called - - ,
8 a national search. If I can be number two in a
9 national search, how come I can't get a position
10 in New York City public school system? I don't
11 know if they want talented people to save our
12 schools. So I understand my - - and you know,
13 I'm - - for that.

14 Okay, now, I'd like to say that I'm an
15 advocate for children. I graduated in 1976 as I
16 stated. Schools don't fail. Children don't
17 fail. Adults do. Rather than the politics of
18 shut down, phase out, we need to build our
19 public schools like John F. Kennedy.

20 Now, the former Governor, Mario Cuomo, once
21 said that any dummy-- he really said jack a**.
22 I'm not going to say that, can kick down a barn.
23 But it takes a good man or woman to build one.
24 And that's what we need to do. We need to
25 rebuild Kennedy.

1 [Applause]

2 MALE VOICE: Now, as a parent and educator,
3 I'd like to say to you young people, don't
4 allow-- because you're the blueprint. Don't
5 allow nobody to count you out.

6 [Applause]

7 MALE VOICE: - - determined nights. Work
8 hard. Stay in school. Long live John F.
9 Kennedy. Now, Dr. King also said that if it
10 fails, you go on to be a street sweeper, sweep
11 streets like Maya Angelo painted pictures.
12 Sweep streets so well that - - will pause and
13 say, "Here is a great street sweeper who swept
14 his job well." - - Kennedy that you win or
15 fail. Be the best of whatever you are. Kennedy
16 will - - to remain in our hearts.

17 And you know they say it's a pre-drawn
18 conclusion. But they may be able to shut it
19 down, but they can't take what's in your heart
20 away from you. You guys are the future
21 generation. And just like a - - I'm trying to
22 get on this seat and help them see that they
23 need to build things, not tear them down.

24 But you are the future. You're the future
25 chancellors. You're the future superintendents.

1 And just like they shut it down, you can
2 reopen it.

3 [Applause]

4 MALE VOICE: Thank you.

5 MELISSA: - - public comment portion now - -
6 agenda. We will now hear the Q&A period.
7 Remember, there will be some - - questions - - .
8 Then we have - - questions after. Any question
9 that is not answered here tonight, will be
10 answered on the website. If you have additional
11 questions at the conclusion of tonight's
12 proceedings, we ask that you direct them to our
13 - - telephone number or email address on the
14 fact sheet. Deputy Chancellor?

15 MR. STERNBERG: Thank you Melissa. So I
16 want to thank everybody for being here this
17 evening. I want to thank you for your clear
18 passion we all feel in this room. Thank you for
19 being here on a Friday night, - - . I want to--
20 there are a few questions and my colleague and I
21 - - from the Division of Portfolio Management
22 will address them.

23 I want to, before we get to that, address
24 some of the comments about, first of all, the
25 logistics of this evening and how the invitation

1 was made and how a decision is made. And I
2 certainly appreciate your attention, uh, - -
3 answer these questions fully.

4 So, I want to explain the process that the
5 State has laid out for significant changes and
6 how buildings-- school buildings are used and
7 how we propose, as the Department, to phase out
8 a school.

9 We are required to have a plan - - and that
10 - - will happen next Thursday. The - - is
11 appointed by - - by the mayor. They will make a
12 vote next week to decide if this proposal is a
13 good move or not. Not less than 45 days before
14 that vote, we're required to issue an education
15 index statement and there are copies of our
16 index statement in the back of the room.

17 When we-- when we post the index statement,
18 we are required by law to reach out to the
19 school leadership team at the impacted school
20 and the community education council. In this
21 case, there are two that. There is CHS and
22 there is CEC10. Both them are represented at
23 this table.

24 So this is a joint public hearing and 45
25 days ago, we issued this proposal and it was at

1 that time we announced that this meeting will
2 be held tonight. The meeting is next week. We
3 regret that this happened - - but we are in a
4 state of elation to both hold this meeting, not
5 less than 30 after the proposal had been posted
6 and at a time that's convenient and agreed upon
7 by the student leadership team of the CEC. And
8 that's how we arrived at the scheduled meeting
9 this evening.

10 So let me jump to your questions. The first
11 question is this. Why do you feel that phasing
12 out, relocating and/or creating campuses changes
13 the educational target of this school?

14 So there's been a lot of passionate response
15 and comment this evening and I certainly
16 appreciate that. I want to explain what has
17 become my life's passion as an educator. I
18 started as a teacher at a school not far from
19 here, a failing school, to be frank. - - and
20 when I talk there, um, as much as I love my
21 students and as much as I enjoyed my work, I
22 couldn't help but feel that my students were
23 predestined to fail.

24 And that was because of one thing. At the
25 time that I taught, this was in the 90's, there

1 was no - - . So students who went to my
2 school were zoned to IS 4 - - . And at the
3 time, most high school graduation rate of less
4 than 30%, which meant that everyone of my kids
5 was going to go to - - and only three of them--
6 three out of ten were going to graduate. Seven
7 out of every ten of my kids in - - was going
8 through school - - , much less getting a college
9 degree.

10 So fast forward to my experience at the - -
11 campus where I had the opportunity to start a
12 small school there. And as I mentioned earlier,
13 when I got to that campus for graduation, it was
14 around 30% and now the campus graduates nearly
15 80%. That's the answer to this question. Why
16 do we feel that phasing out, relocating, or
17 creating campuses changes the climate?

18 We feel that way because we've seen it
19 happen across the city. The campuses that were
20 closed down and then the new schools replaced
21 those campuses, we see graduating rates double,
22 almost triple on certain campuses and as a city,
23 go from roughly half to roughly two-thirds.

24 This is not nearly enough. We know we can
25 do better. We're going to push ourselves to do

1 that. But we have seen that when you make
2 structural changes to a school, that for a very
3 long time is - - that we can have dramatic - - .

4 FEMALE VOICE: So another question that
5 someone asked--

6 [Inaudible male voice]

7 [Inaudible female voice]

8 [Inaudible male voice]

9 MR. STERNBERG: Well, I appreciate your
10 clarification and we do have quite a few
11 questions this evening so we want to make sure
12 we go through these. But let me try.

13 MALE VOICE: Okay.

14 MR. STERNBERG: But let's be clear, okay.
15 You may just not like - -. So I'm going to give
16 you an answer. It's an answer that I've lived
17 as the former principal of a school. You may
18 not like it. It may be diametrically different
19 from what you would do and so we're going to
20 have to be - - and disagree on this. Okay?
21 We're not going to-- I'm not going to attempt to
22 change your mind - - . And I'm not going to ask
23 you to - - .

24 [Inaudible male voice]

25 MR. STERNBERG: Okay, well that's a

1 different question.

2 [Inaudible male voice]

3 [Applause]

4 MR. STERNBERG: Very simply, I want to--

5 [Inaudible male voice]

6 MR. STERNBERG: Okay, so you asked a
7 question and I'm going to try to answer it.

8 [Inaudible male voice]

9 MELISSA: Excuse me, I'm sorry but--

10 [Crosstalk]

11 MR. STERNBERG: So here's the answer to your
12 question. What we know is that when we changed
13 the structure of the school, it has-- it was
14 more likely to be successful. That's what we've
15 seen. We've seen it in high school campuses for
16 decades graduating three in ten kids. And that
17 by changing the structure of the school, we're
18 able to produce outside of - - .

19 [Inaudible male voice]

20 FEMALE VOICE: So the next question is what
21 is your plan to support current and new students
22 who are left behind in this phase out process?
23 And so I think the way I would answer that--
24 I'll say two things to that. One is that for
25 work - - the teachers here at Kennedy, of the

1 students here at Kennedy and of the principal
2 here at Kennedy, who will be the same next year
3 and the year after as it is this year.

4 For every student in this building, there
5 has to be a plan. And the plan is what do they
6 need to get them towards graduation. And if you
7 don't know that plan, you should meet with your
8 teacher, you should meet with your guidance
9 counselor to develop what that plan is and we
10 would never - - representatives who are here
11 today from the network, who will continue to
12 support Kennedy's principal and the staff over
13 the next couple of years if this proposal is
14 approved.

15 And if the proposal isn't approved, that
16 work remains the same because what's most
17 important is each individual student and what
18 their plan is towards graduation, making sure
19 they're not - - , they find programs that will
20 meet their needs and get them back on track.

21 [Crosstalk]

22 MR. STERNBERG: So the next question is--

23 [Crosstalk]

24 [Inaudible male voice]

25 FEMALE VOICE: So I think the question is a

1 little bit different. So what kinds of
2 programs - - . That's your question. What are
3 these kinds of programs? So I'll talk about one
4 type of program specifically and I think if
5 people want to know where these programs are,
6 let's talk afterwards and I'll let them know
7 where you can find them.

8 Transfer high schools are a good example of
9 a type of high school that students who are
10 over age and under accredited can go to in order
11 to get back on track to graduate. They're
12 small, they're vigorous, they're full of
13 students who are focused on getting the credits
14 they need to get through graduation.

15 That's a specific kind of program that
16 students who are perhaps not on track can be at
17 any one of our high schools, can look to attend.
18 Guidance counselors have information about those
19 schools. There's information online and anyone
20 who wants to learn more to find that, just come
21 by me after the meeting and I'll show it to you.

22 MR. STERNBERG: So the next question is what
23 plan does the department have to accommodate the
24 overcrowding in other schools upon closing JFK?
25 Will more services be offered at other schools?

1 This is a good question and it's been
2 contemplated in the - - . The short answer is
3 this. That over the last five years, there has
4 been a steady decrease in the number of schools
5 and programs across the city serving students
6 through - - and I think that's kind of what this
7 question is about.

8 It's about student enrollment at the school
9 and the fact that the school, as like the other
10 schools, taking the course of this year of peak
11 enrollment of students.

12 So, over the last five years, the number of
13 schools and programs across the city that
14 accepted - - enrolled students has increased by
15 almost 75. Currently there are 128 schools and
16 programs across the Bronx alone that accept - -
17 students. So we will continue to look for ways
18 to increase that number to ensure that all
19 schools in the city are taking peak enrollment
20 students serving - - .

21 [Inaudible female voice]

22 FEMALE VOICE: So I think something else I
23 want to add to what Deputy Chancellor Sternberg
24 just said is that we do close schools, but we
25 also open schools to replace those schools. So

1 I know that we have the question here later
2 on about what a charter school is and how that's
3 different from a public school. A charter
4 school is a public school and the charter
5 schools that will open in this building if the
6 panel - - a policy to close those, will serve
7 the number of student per grade that Kennedy
8 serves now.

9 And so what we know is the seats will a
10 little bit different. A charter is a little bit
11 different from a public school. Their
12 admissions process is different. They have a
13 lottery - - . The number of students in this
14 building that will be served in that charter
15 school will replace the seats that were served
16 historically at Kennedy.

17 So there will not be a need for students who
18 like - - in this building to have to go
19 somewhere else unless they choose to through the
20 high school admissions process or through other
21 charter - - because there are other charter
22 schools.

23 MR. STERNBERG: So the next question is the
24 heart of this question - - and some of the - - .
25 It asks what the difference between public

1 schools and charter schools are. So let me
2 try to share this as passionately as I can.

3 As - - , charter schools are free public
4 schools. They serve public school students.
5 They are tuition free. They are-- they accept
6 students by a lottery and any student can apply.

7 Often--

8 [Inaudible female voice interposing]

9 MR. STERNBERG: And that's a good point.
10 Not every student who applies to a charter
11 school gets in. And you're right. There's a
12 lottery-- there's a lottery, uh, that has a
13 certain preference. In this case, there's two
14 charter schools that are proposed to come into
15 this building, have a District 10 preference.

16 So that means that a student who lives in
17 District 10, and that's this area, can apply.
18 If a student applies from District 10 and a
19 student applies from District 9, the student
20 from District 10 will get in first. That one
21 will have preference in the lottery.

22 So it is true that not every child who
23 applies to this school will get in. That also
24 somehow answers your question. That also is
25 true for all high schools. There are no zoned

1 high schools in the Bronx. There are no
2 zoned high schools in Manhattan. And so every
3 child who goes to high school in New York City
4 applies and you guys know about that. You know
5 what it's like. We give you your - - options
6 and you get a choice.

7 But there's a lottery so if you apply to a
8 school and more students apply than that school
9 has seats, not every child is going to get in.
10 Charter schools operates the same exact way.

11 Let me also point out that charters will
12 also - - the same way every school here in the
13 city gets, right. So if the school has 100
14 kids, they will get 100 - - of the student
15 funding from the state. That is the same for
16 every school in New York City. We have what's
17 called the - - .

18 And so every school in the city gets the
19 funding according to the number of students that
20 attend. I also want to point out that, uh, at
21 present, there are more than 40,000 students
22 across New York City. 40,000 students and
23 families that have applied to charter schools
24 and that are not enrolled in charter schools.

25 So we want, because it's a lottery, just

1 because it's like any public high school in
2 New York City. So we certainly feel that - -
3 for charter schools but I also want to point out
4 that a lot has been said about our mayor.

5 This mayor has opened 450 schools, 350 of
6 those including the one that I started are not
7 charter schools. So not every school that
8 starts in this city is a charter school. The
9 schools listed on the banners of - - are not
10 charter schools. We feel this campus would be
11 well served by charter schools, but that's
12 certainly not-- it's part of the solution, not
13 the whole solution and I think you guys - - .

14 [Crosstalk]

15 MR. STERNBERG: Can I just answer this
16 question sir? I'd like to be able to get
17 through the questions. The next question is
18 what impact will having a charter school in this
19 same building as public schools have on the
20 remaining schools on the campus?

21 So there's sort of a false distinction in
22 this question in that it's suggested that
23 charter schools are not public school. So I
24 want to address that. Charter schools, again,
25 are free public schools open to all members of a

1 public high school.

2 So the impact will be, we are convinced,
3 that - - . This school is graduating less than
4 half of its students. This school is graduating
5 less than half of its students and we are
6 convinced, after a thorough review of the
7 charter application of the organization that's
8 behind this charter application, which happens
9 to be - - public schools, the same organization
10 that supports many of the schools on this
11 campus.

12 We're convinced that student outcomes here
13 will be better and better quickly. At present,
14 there is a building council that includes all of
15 the principals from the schools represented
16 here. So, uh, the introduction of these new
17 school organizations should not change how the
18 building operates. The building council will
19 continue to meet. The principals will continue
20 to meet to decide how the best use of shared
21 spaces, this room, the library, the gymnasiums,
22 the cafeteria, to make sure that the building
23 operates effectively.

24 FEMALE VOICE: The next question is what
25 happens to the records of alumni if the school

1 is closed. And that's a very easy question
2 to be answered. They will stay here. So any
3 alumni who needs their transcripts, we direct -
4 - still come to this building to get it.
5 Ultimately, once Kennedy is phased out and that
6 proposal is approved, there will be one school
7 in the building who maintains responsibility for
8 those records and is a point of contact for
9 alumni who need their records, but they'll still
10 be here in this room.

11 MR. STERNBERG: The next question asks what
12 is the point of this hearing if your decision is
13 made? So it's a fair question and it's kind of
14 asking how the procedure works. So I'll re-
15 explain this very quickly.

16 The Department of Education is governed by
17 the Panel for Education Policy. That panel is
18 appointed by borough presidents and by the mayor
19 who I appreciate your respect. So that panel
20 meets periodically, usually monthly.

21 They will meet next week on Thursday to take
22 up this proposal. And it is up to them. They
23 will decide. Our job is to look at the facts of
24 the proceedings, to examine the data, and to do
25 what we think is right and best for the children

1 in the city of New York.

2 And so we've made this proposal. And I want
3 to point this out that we-- this year, we
4 conducted a series of meetings and conversations
5 at schools before we made this proposal. We
6 spoke with the principal of the school. We
7 spoke with the school leadership team. We spoke
8 with the faculty, the students. And I mentioned
9 this before, out of the school, to talk with
10 community organizations that support this
11 school, we did that in 55 schools across the
12 city. Yes, we are proposing for a small number
13 of schools. There are 1600 schools in the New
14 York City phase out or 25 this year. We know
15 that in 38 of the schools, when we went into
16 them, we saw that the school had the capacity to
17 serve the students who attend and will continue
18 to serve them.

19 FEMALE VOICE: I just want to add one more
20 thing. Everything tonight is on the record.
21 All your comments, questions you've submitted,
22 all the comments of this procedure, whether
23 they're by phone or email, we take all those
24 comments and we compile them and we provide
25 analysis to public comments.

1 We then provide both to everyone public,
2 online, prior to the panel vote but also to the
3 panel for educational policy members. So your
4 comments, you know, we stand by our proposal,
5 but we also stand by your comments and making
6 them available to the panel before they vote.
7 So I just wanted to make sure you understand
8 what happens to all of what you said tonight.

9 We've received a couple other questions.
10 One of them is why weren't - - . We released
11 two statements to this campus, one that was the
12 proposal to phase out Kennedy, and the other was
13 the proposal to phase in replacement schools.
14 There's two reasons why they were simultaneous.
15 One of them is that we wanted to make sure that
16 we have what we felt was the best - - plan for
17 Kennedy.

18 So we waited until we felt we had the right
19 school grading scores and the right - - to run
20 those schools before releasing that proposal.
21 The - - part of our high school proposal is what
22 we did a phase out is linked to the high school
23 business process. We do want to make sure all
24 the - - have an opportunity to resubmit their
25 high school application once these decisions for

1 phase out are made or not made - - next week.

2 And so there will be an opportunity
3 following - - to resubmit a high school
4 application.

5 MR. STERNBERG: So - - . So the last
6 question is this, where is the closest transfer
7 school? We will provide a list. We'll make
8 sure - - the public comment. I don't know that
9 there is a - - . Anyone can answer this
10 question specifically, let me know and I'll take
11 the information. There is a-- I remember that
12 there is an - - program for young adult - - here
13 in this building, - - is a program that, um, for
14 some student services and so that's the - - .

15 So those are our questions this evening.
16 I'd be happy to stay and answer additional
17 questions after the--

18 [Crosstalk]

19 MR. STERNBERG: I'd be happy to answer
20 additional questions and I will stay after the
21 meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

22 MELLISSA: Thank you. So we have concluded
23 the - - presentation. After that, Deputy
24 Chancellor said he would be available to answer
25 questions after the hearing is over as well as -

1 - . If you leave here this evening and you
2 have more questions, please direct your
3 questions-- please feel free to direct them to
4 us via the email address that's found on the
5 back of the fact sheets as well as a telephone
6 number that's also found on the fact sheet. I
7 will - - this evening. We appreciate your
8 feedback and contributions to this hearing. We
9 will share the information with the panel on
10 education policy, which will have its hearing on
11 Thursday, February 3, 2011 at 6:00 pm to vote on
12 this proposal. Thank you all for coming out
13 this evening. This joint public hearing is
14 officially adjourned.

15 [END TAPE 1]
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C E R T I F I C A T E

1
2 The prior proceedings were transcribed from
3 audio files and have been transcribed to the
4 best of my ability.

5 

6 Signature

7 Date January 29, 2011

8 

9 Signature

10 Date January 29, 2011

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13 Date January 30, 2011

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15 Signature:

16 Date: January 31, 2011

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