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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION – DIVISION OF  
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**

**The Urban Assembly Academy for  
History and Citizenship for Young  
Men (09X239)**

**January 20, 2011**

**6:00 PM**

1 [START 181\_960.MP3]

2 MS. MELISSA HARRIS: This is Melissa Harris  
3 and I will be the moderator for the joint public  
4 hearing. Excuse me one second.

5 [Pause]

6 MS. HARRIS: This is a joint public hearing  
7 of the Department of Education, Community  
8 Education Council District 9, and the School  
9 Leadership Team to discuss the proposed phase  
10 out of The Urban Assembly Academy for History  
11 and Citizenship for Young Men. Tonight's  
12 proceedings will be recorded and transcribed.  
13 Before we begin the hearing we ask that anyone  
14 who wishes to speak during the public comment  
15 portion of the evening sign up at the table in  
16 the back. Sign-up will end at 6:15. If you  
17 have a question that you want to be addressed  
18 during the Q & A portion of the agenda, please  
19 write that question on the index cards provided  
20 at the back and submit them to a volunteer by  
21 the table. Only people who have signed up to  
22 speak will be able to participate in the public  
23 comment. All panel participants were asked to  
24 be here no later than 5:30 PM. Now that we have  
25 started if a panel participant arrives late, he

1 or she will be given the time to speak at the  
2 first opportune moment. We want to be  
3 respectful of everyone's time here tonight.  
4 There may be elected officials who show at  
5 different times throughout the evening. If they  
6 wish to speak we will do our best to accommodate  
7 them at the first opportune moment. Those who  
8 are here at the start of the public comment  
9 segment will be asked to speak first. Please  
10 look at this agenda--or there was an agenda that  
11 was posted when you walked in. The format will  
12 include a presentation of the proposal and  
13 presentations by hearing participants followed  
14 by public comment. Speakers should have already  
15 signed up at the sign-table in the lobby.  
16 Public comments can be no longer than two  
17 minutes each. The time will be strictly  
18 followed and speakers will be informed when  
19 their designated time has ended. There will be  
20 a question and answer period this evening.  
21 Members of the audience, if you have a question  
22 each of you must write your question on a po--on  
23 the postcard that was supplied at the sign-in  
24 table when you arrived this evening. While the  
25 public comments are taking place staff members

1 will organize the questions into categories and  
2 get them ready for the Q & A period. Some  
3 questions will be asked directly and others will  
4 be batched under headings in order to avoid  
5 repetitiveness. Even though all individual  
6 questions will not be addressed in the forum  
7 tonight, the answers will be on the website  
8 prior to the Panel meeting. If at the end of  
9 the hearing you still have questions we  
10 encourage you to direct them to us by calling  
11 the number at the bottom of the fact sheet or  
12 sending them and--to us via email to the email  
13 address provided on the fact sheets. I would  
14 now like to introduce the panel which has been  
15 assembled for this evening's joint public  
16 hearing. Starting all the way down there.

17 MS. MARILYN ESPADA: Marilyn Espada--

18 MS. HARRIS: [Interposing] Okay it's okay I  
19 have it. Um. Marilyn Espada, Rod Bowen,  
20 Florentino Rosa, Jay Werner, Adhin DeVeaux.

21 MR. AZIM DEVEAUX: [Interposing] Azim  
22 DeVeaux.

23 MS. HARRIS: Azim DeVeaux. Carols Bermudez,  
24 Superintendent Elena Papaliberios, Deputy  
25 Chancellor Marc Sternberg.

1 [Pause]

2 MS. HARRIS: I will now turn the program  
3 over to Deputy Chancellor Sternberg who will  
4 present the proposal.

5 [Pause]

6 MR. MARC STERNBERG: Thank you Melissa.  
7 Good evening ladies and gentlemen, panel, thank  
8 you for being here this evening. I want to  
9 present--I will present the proposal, uh, that  
10 we, uh, are here to consider and discuss this  
11 evening. Before I do that let me first say a  
12 few things about, uh, our process at the  
13 Department of Education, our investigation  
14 process of schools and--and the purpose of the  
15 evening. As you know this joint public hearing  
16 was convened to discuss the proposed phase out  
17 of The Urban Assembly Academy for History and  
18 Citizenship for Young Men. The decision to  
19 phase out a school is the toughest one that we  
20 at the Department of Education make. And I can  
21 assure you that it is one that we do not take  
22 lightly. In reaching this decision we examine  
23 many factors and data points about and from a  
24 school. In addition we reach out to community  
25 members, elected officials, Department of

1 Education staff, superintendents, and into the  
2 school itself to speak with students and  
3 families about these decisions. All of us at  
4 the Department of Education, all of us, count on  
5 our schools, every one of them, to provide a  
6 high quality education for all students across  
7 this City. And we must hold all of our schools  
8 to the same high standard of excellence because  
9 every child in New York City, in all five  
10 Boroughs, at all grade levels, every child  
11 deserves the very best in public education. And  
12 so when a school is not getting the job done for  
13 students and when the data bears that out and  
14 when we see a trend over time, where students  
15 are not being served, it is our obligation to  
16 take action to ensure that current students have  
17 better options and do not fall further behind  
18 and future student who may consider applying to  
19 the school in question also have better options.  
20 One final note about this evening before I  
21 proceed to a description of the proposal, I want  
22 to be clear that the purpose of this evening is  
23 not to decide on this proposal. That  
24 responsibility falls to the Panel for Education  
25 Policy which will meet in early February to have

1 an official vote. Our purpose this evening is  
2 to conduct a hearing. And we're here to do--do  
3 just that. We're here to hear you and to hear  
4 each other, uh, and we look forward to an honest  
5 conversation this evening. So on to the  
6 proposal itself. The Urban Assembly Academy for  
7 History and Citizenship for Young Men is located  
8 here at the William Taft Campus, 2--at 240 East  
9 172<sup>nd</sup> Street in Community School District 9 in  
10 the Bronx. It currently serves male students in  
11 grades 9 through 12. On December 17, 2010 as  
12 many of you know the Department of Education  
13 published an Education Impact Statement which  
14 proposed the phase out and eventual closure of  
15 The Urban Assembly Academy for History and  
16 Citizenship based on its poor performance and  
17 the Department of Education's assessment that  
18 the school lacks the ability to turn around  
19 quickly to better support its students. Urban  
20 Assembly for History and Citizenship performance  
21 data suggests that the school has struggled.  
22 And I'll share three overall data points. One  
23 on grad--graduation rates, one on its progress  
24 report status and the other on concerns about  
25 safety here at the school. Last year the 4-year

1 graduation rate including August graduates at  
2 the school was 43%, 20 points lower than the  
3 citywide average of 63%. Further if Regent's  
4 diplomas alone counted toward graduation as they  
5 will next year, the 2009-2010 graduation rate at  
6 this school would drop to 16%, 30 points below  
7 the citywide average of 46%. The school's  
8 progress report paints a similar picture. The  
9 school earned an over all F grade with an F in  
10 student performance and student progress, and a  
11 C grade on school environment. Progress report  
12 results for this school put the school in the  
13 bottom 2% of high schools citywide that received  
14 a 2009-10 progress report. And finally safety  
15 issues have been a concern at UA for History and  
16 Citizenship in recent years. On the most recent  
17 progress report, 36% of students reported  
18 feeling unsafe here at school in hallways,  
19 bathrooms and lockers. That same year more than  
20 10% of parents expressed concerns about their  
21 child's safety. In addition 35% of teachers  
22 here reported that discipline and order were not  
23 maintained in the school. So it based on these  
24 evaluations and these data points that the  
25 Department of Education engaged in a

1 comprehensive review of the school's  
2 performance to determine which supports and  
3 interventions best suited the needs of this  
4 school. As I mentioned in doing this the  
5 Department consulted superintendents and other  
6 experienced educators who have worked closely  
7 with this school and held community meetings  
8 with parents, students and school staff to  
9 solicit their feedback. While seeking to better  
10 understand the root causes of this school's low  
11 performance the Department continued to offer  
12 support to the school including extensive  
13 training for... extensive training for school  
14 leadership and teachers, helping the school  
15 implement a student advisory program, providing  
16 additional staff and supports to the school and  
17 resources for staff training as mentioned,  
18 supporting teacher teams in the use of data to  
19 improve their practice and specifically their  
20 work with students with disabilities and  
21 students performing below grade level. Based on  
22 our comprehensive review and the evidence that  
23 additional supports were not working, the  
24 Department of Education believes that only the  
25 most serious intervention, the phase out and

1 eventual closure of this school will address  
2 long-standing performance struggles and allow  
3 for new school options to develop that will  
4 better serve future students here on this campus  
5 and--and the broader community. And now I want  
6 to say a quick word about the rest of this  
7 campus and the impact of this proposal--that  
8 this proposal would have on the other schools  
9 located here. As many of you know, Urban  
10 Assembly is currently collocated with five other  
11 schools here on the Taft campus. All six  
12 schools opened within the past decade. All are  
13 fully phased in. Five of the schools, US  
14 History and Citizenship, Bronx Expeditionary  
15 Learning High School, Dream Yard Preparatory,  
16 Bronx High School of Business and Jonathan Levin  
17 School for Media and Communication, many of  
18 which, uh, many of the other schools are also  
19 represented here this evening I should note.  
20 All schools serve students in grades 9 through  
21 12. The Bronx High School for Medical Science  
22 serves students in grades 6 through 12. The  
23 building also houses a Life program, Living for  
24 the Young Family through Education. Currently  
25 the schools within the Taft building enroll a

1 total of 2,334 students of whom 2,172 are in  
2 grades 9 through 12. In the 2010-11 school year  
3 the projected utilization of this building X-410  
4 is 81%. So if this proposal is approved in  
5 February by the Panel for Education Policy, the  
6 5 other schools located here on the Taft campus  
7 would continue to serve students, their current  
8 students, at their current enrollment levels.  
9 The Department does not anticipate introducing  
10 any other new schools onto the Taft campus at  
11 this time. Before I turn it back over to  
12 Melissa for public comment, I'd like to briefly  
13 discuss the impact that this proposal, if  
14 approved, would have on current UA students and  
15 families. So if approved, UA would no longer  
16 admit new 9<sup>th</sup> grade students after the conclusion  
17 of this school year, the 2010-11 school year.  
18 Current students would continue to be supported  
19 here at UA throughout the phase out process over  
20 the next number of years. More--more detailed  
21 information about enrollment options for current  
22 students is provided in the fact sheet and the  
23 EIS. And, uh, we have folks from the enrollment  
24 office available this evening for questions if  
25 there are questions. In cases where students

1 currently enrolled at UA do not complete their  
2 course of study and graduation requirements by  
3 June 2014, and I should note June 2014 is when  
4 the school would complete its phase out, the  
5 Department will help students and families  
6 identify alternative learning settings where  
7 they can complete their education and continue  
8 to work toward graduation. So here concludes my  
9 comments. Uh, Melissa I'll had it back over to  
10 you.

11 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. One final call for  
12 public comment, um, or questions. If you wish  
13 to sign up for public comment you can do so  
14 right now. Um, out in front of the auditorium  
15 as well as if you have any questions you were  
16 provided with index cards, if you write your  
17 question down, there's a volunteer in the  
18 audience that's collecting questions now. We  
19 will now have a presentation from Azim DeVeaux,  
20 representing the school's SLT.

21 [Applause]

22 MS. HARRIS: Mr. DeVeaux, one second. We  
23 have translation services available and I wanted  
24 them to give an announcement.

25 [Off mic comment]

1 MS. HARRIS: I'm sorry. Thank you. We  
2 have translation services available in Spanish  
3 so I just--um, interpretation services available  
4 in Spanish so, uh, this gentleman will give the  
5 announcement.

6 [Spanish interpreter speaking about  
7 procedures]

8 MR. DEVEAUX: I'm pleased with the turnout  
9 here. I don't actually have copies of the  
10 PowerPoint for everybody present but if anyone  
11 when it's over and concluded, if anyone would  
12 like a copy of it, I have extra copies up there.  
13 But I won't pass them out since I don't have  
14 enough for everyone. Um. This is probably one  
15 of the toughest things I've had to do to  
16 convince this panel here of the terrible  
17 disservice they're doing to the children here.  
18 But I'm going to do my very best. And I could  
19 take up all my time refuting all the lies that  
20 you were just told but I'm going to go ahead  
21 with this PowerPoint presentation and hopefully  
22 you will see the truth as it goes along. I do  
23 want to thank the parents who came out here. I  
24 see plenty of parents. I see alumni parents. I  
25 see the alumni here so it's good to see you with

1 all the students--

2 [Applause]

3 MR. DEVEAUX: I'd like to thank all the  
4 staff who were so helpful in showing their  
5 support in creating this presentation and  
6 helping me all through here. And so I thank you  
7 very much. I've discussed it, that some of them  
8 were threatened with coming to speak out against  
9 this panel, where they were told maybe their  
10 jobs would be in jeopardy or they would be  
11 blacklisted and schools wouldn't want them. You  
12 know, it--it disgusted me that we just took off  
13 one day to celebrate the birth of Martin Luther  
14 King and here we are 2011 trying to stifle  
15 educators' right to speak and advocate on behalf  
16 of the children so I'm disappointed in that but  
17 now we'll move on. Um. You know well let me  
18 just say this right from the jump instead of  
19 wasting a lot of time. When the superintendent  
20 came to speak to our staff and they gave all  
21 these stats that he just read out to the City,  
22 you know, I don't make excuses for our Black and  
23 Latino boys but the stats are what it is. And  
24 we know that our boys suffer in every negative  
25 category, they're leading it, and in every

1 positive category, they're falling last. And  
2 so all we ask is... what about it? I--I need that  
3 [talking to someone off mic]. Oh okay, yeah--  
4 yeah. You know, all we wanted to do was compare  
5 apples with apples. All that we ask is please  
6 give us the stats for what New York City is  
7 doing for Black and Latino males and compare us  
8 to that. All right I've been a teacher for 18  
9 years, both my parents are public school  
10 teachers. I would never want to disservice the  
11 children. I hate the implication that I would  
12 do otherwise. If it is true that New York City  
13 is doing a better job educating Black and Latino  
14 males than our school is then I'm all for it.  
15 Shut it down and let's move on and do what's  
16 best for the children. But if it's not true and  
17 I'm going to show you some stats that he did not  
18 read today, if it is true that even despite all  
19 that's going on, we're still doing a better job  
20 here than you are--than the City is doing with  
21 Black and Latino males then we want the help,  
22 the support, to continue what we're doing. And  
23 we don't want to be shut down.

24 [Applause, cheering]

25 MR. DEVEAUX: You know, the--our co-founder

1 here, he had a family emergency and so he was  
2 going to come up here and give the rationale of  
3 why it's so important that these schools exist  
4 but when he comes, you know, hopefully he'll get  
5 that chance to speak. But I'm pretty sure that  
6 people already know. You know, I was thinking  
7 about a movie. I like to tell stories. Those  
8 in my class know that. You know, Boys in the  
9 Hood, you might want to check that movie out if  
10 you haven't seen it, but at the end of Boys in  
11 the Hood, a character that Ice Cube played,  
12 let's get past all the violence and stuff, well  
13 Ice Cube played a character and at the end of  
14 the movie his brother was murdered. You know,  
15 his brother who just received a scholarship for  
16 collage. And Ice Cube was talking to one of his  
17 other friends, Trey, and he tells him I was  
18 watching the news last night and there was  
19 nothing on about my brother. And so then he  
20 comments either they don't know, they want to  
21 show, or don't care what happens in the Hood.  
22 And it's a very profound statement when you  
23 think about it. Is it true--so I'm really  
24 confused when I listen to the superintendent,  
25 deputy chancellor and the chancellor, I heard

1 her speak last night, do they don't know the  
2 plight of Black and Latino males in this City?  
3 Do they just don't want to show and tell the  
4 truth about the plight of Black and Latino males  
5 in the City? Or do they don't care about the  
6 plight of Black and Latino males in the City?  
7 But I will give them the information now. So  
8 they'll never be able to say they don't know.  
9 And let's see what they do about it. You know  
10 there's a problem in this country that's not  
11 being talked about. And it seems like, you  
12 know, I don't want to be accused of playing the  
13 race card, so to say, but for some reason we  
14 want to stay from this talk of race and just say  
15 we want to love all children. But I've learned  
16 from teaching 18 years that loving all children  
17 is meeting them where they are and trying to  
18 take them to where they need to be. It's not  
19 putting them in just this one big bunch and  
20 saying this is the percentage of the City and  
21 you don't meet that so you're closed down. It's  
22 looking at individual situations, looking at  
23 individual groups of people and making sure all  
24 people succeed. You know, uh, I was blessed  
25 last year, my wife gave birth to my second

1 daughter, back on June 5<sup>th</sup>. That's another  
2 story by the way. I'll try to be quick. But  
3 one thing, you know, it was a difficult  
4 pregnancy but actually going through certain  
5 pains as a man that my father taught me, I never  
6 tried to tell a woman how she should feel or  
7 what she should feel. I just helped support and  
8 listen. See it's easy for men and we understand  
9 that, that we don't go through the same exact  
10 things that women do. So we would be foolish to  
11 sit there and try to tell a woman how she should  
12 feel about her body. Now I find that's such a  
13 simple thing do to with gender and such a  
14 difficult thing to do with race. I don't know  
15 why there's so much pushback and why so many  
16 people from outside the Black and Latino  
17 community feel they have to come and tell people  
18 in the Black and Latino community how to educate  
19 their children. Why don't they just want to  
20 stay back--

21 [Applause]

22 MR. DEVEAUX: You know, put the arrogance  
23 aside and just listen. All right? Our school,  
24 this history of failure, I'm not sure where  
25 that's--that came from 'cause 2 years ago it was

1 a B school and I'm going to show you these  
2 stats here but if you would listen to what was  
3 going on here and show us the help and support,  
4 we can show you the best way to educate Black  
5 and Latino children. We don't need people from  
6 outside of the community telling us what's best.  
7 We appreciate the help. We love the support.  
8 But it's an insult when people think they can do  
9 a better job than the people who give birth to  
10 these children.

11 [Applause]

12 MR. DEVEAUX: You know, the DOD--the DOE has  
13 done a masterful job highlighting the worst our  
14 school has to offer. So I'm going to run  
15 through some of the positive things that they  
16 left out. Oh. Let me run through this quickly  
17 'cause my time is going to be short. Most of  
18 the students here can reflect some of these  
19 things here. This is culture is a big part of  
20 our school. So from our mantra that we're going  
21 to--in my presentation so I hope the students  
22 remember from our Men's Conference to our Europe  
23 Abroad [phonetic] program, as a matter of fact  
24 we're going to Egypt this year. I'm excited  
25 about that. But we've been to Japan and Costa

1 Rica from the constant town hall meetings, to  
2 the celebrations we have, our Kwanza dinner.  
3 Thank you for all the parents for all the good  
4 food. I love those feasts. I will miss them.  
5 And a mentoring program. We had academics  
6 'cause for some reason that--I was also insulted  
7 by people from our support network implying that  
8 the things we do culturally makes the children  
9 suffer academically. So I wanted to put all of  
10 this up here. And I'll hand these out if anyone  
11 wants to see it and the different courses of  
12 study that our children, uh, study while they're  
13 here. You know, along an academic note I just--  
14 our college advisor couldn't be here tonight but  
15 he gave me some statistics, information, on the  
16 amount of scholarships that our boys earn. Some  
17 of our guys here from the Class of 2009, where's  
18 2009, I have some of those here.

19 [Applause]

20 MR. DEVEAUX: That class... in our small  
21 little school, only 30-something people in their  
22 graduating class, if you could the 4-year  
23 scholarships, it was over \$1 million in  
24 scholarships from that.

25 [Applause, cheering]

1           MR. DEVEAUX: You can list that under some  
2 of the failures for our school. You know, if  
3 the Class of 2010 that just came last year,  
4 there was over \$400,000 worth of scholarship.  
5 Both years we've had students receive the Posse  
6 [phonetic] Scholarship, \$100,000 scholarship.  
7 This year it was Ray Vaughn Williams, where you  
8 at Ray Vaughn? Stand up.

9           [Applause]

10          MR. DEVEAUX: \$100,00 scholarship, please  
11 ask the other 5 schools about their Posse  
12 Scholars. Not trying to compare but if you're  
13 going to put it out there, let's put it all out  
14 here. Citizenship is a main--is a main part of  
15 our school here. So we talk about all of these  
16 things. I'd gladly like to go through each of  
17 these but I was told to keep my time as short as  
18 possible. So we definitely want to share the  
19 College Now piece, the mentoring piece, the  
20 organizations that partnered with us, and the  
21 work that we've done here. So all of this, the  
22 Museum of Modern Art Tee Program. So we'd love  
23 to share all of this information with people and  
24 I wish I had the time. And it's just an insult  
25 that they hit all--you with all this negative

1 information and you see we have pages and  
2 pages of positive things that are being done in  
3 our school. All right. Let's get to some of  
4 the real deals. So you heard these percentages  
5 on how bad we are. So let's see where New York  
6 State ranks and where New York City ranks in  
7 educating your sons, parents, the Black and  
8 Latino males. Here, this is from the Shot  
9 [phonetic] Report. What's up there is small so  
10 I'll read it and help you. This is the 10  
11 worst-performing states for Black males. At the  
12 very bottom of the list, the absolute worst  
13 State in all of the United States of America is  
14 New York. That blue thing right there is 25%.  
15 That's what they're educating in New York State.  
16 This is for Black males. So they're only  
17 educating 1 out of 4. So the percents that  
18 they're giving, I just want to keep you in mind  
19 that we're doing a better job than the City is.  
20 And if they're going to close us down, maybe  
21 they should start with revamping themselves.  
22 This is the 10 worst performing large districts  
23 and Black males. So if you look down here, look  
24 over to the left, New York City ranks in one of  
25 the worst 10 performing district in educating

1 Black males. They want to blame a whole lot  
2 of other people, the blue line, the blue bar,  
3 that's for, uh, Black males is at 28% that those  
4 are - - . That's what New York City is doing.  
5 See I wish I had time to give a math lesson.  
6 I'm a math teacher. But I know exactly what's  
7 going on. And they're trying to play games with  
8 us 'cause everybody doesn't know the  
9 percentages. When you put all these Black and  
10 Latino males together even though you could do  
11 some great things, and we're far bey--above  
12 these numbers you could still say well they're  
13 not doing better as a City overall. They  
14 didn't--they failed to tell you that the  
15 percentages that they read includes girls. All  
16 the girls in the City. The girls who are  
17 graduating at a higher rate than guys are. It's  
18 including White and Asian students who are  
19 graduating at a higher rate than Black and  
20 Latino students are. They don't tell you that  
21 part of the percentage. This is what I want you  
22 to remember if you ask any questions and parents  
23 are trying to ask, demand that the  
24 superintendent, your deputy chancellor, tell you  
25 what are the exact numbers towards Black and

1 Latino males. That's all we want to be  
2 compared to. It's apples and apples. Just tell  
3 us the truth. If this--if they can do a better  
4 job in educating Black and Latino males than we  
5 can do at this school, hey, I will bow out and  
6 I'll be the first to admit when I'm wrong. But  
7 don't sit there and let them give you stats that  
8 include an entire city that's predominantly  
9 females. Some of the schools that they  
10 mentioned here in this building, most of the  
11 classes are filled with females and say we  
12 compared it with that and so now the school's a  
13 failure.

14 [Applause]

15 MR. DEVEAUX: All right. So it--I just put  
16 it all on one graph here so we can see it. So  
17 here we go. There's the United States of  
18 America, 42% Black male graduation rate.

19 [Off mic comment]

20 MR. DEVEAUX: 47%. Thank you, good looking  
21 out. Here's New York State and New York City.  
22 Now this is--one of the things that all of our  
23 students can tell you about and all of our staff  
24 can tell you about that I've been happy about  
25 this school than any other school I've worked in

1 is the amount of reflection we try to do to  
2 become better. Even our detention room is  
3 called the Transformation Room. I would like  
4 maybe New York City can learn something from  
5 that reflect upon themselves. Maybe they can  
6 look at it and see their dismal job than working  
7 with Black males and reflect upon themselves of  
8 what they can do better instead of just trying  
9 to just hide them, throw them in the back of the  
10 classrooms, put them in other bigger schools,  
11 and so we don't even have to notice them or deal  
12 with them and just say oh our percentage rate is  
13 good for the City so we're doing well. This is  
14 what we're doing here at UAAHAC. This is what  
15 we want to be compared to. All right Over the  
16 past 3 years we're averaging right at 51%. I  
17 think it's 56%, 55% and then he mentioned this  
18 past year 43%. I'll do the average for you.  
19 It's 51% here. We're doing twice as good as New  
20 York City is in educating these Black males.  
21 I'm trying to add in the stats for Latino males  
22 but you'd be surprised at how difficult this  
23 information is go get. Why don't they want to  
24 share this information? Well you could see why.  
25 'Cause they're doing such a poor job at it. And

1 they don't want to admit this because then  
2 they're going to have to explain to people what  
3 they're going to do to address this situation  
4 instead of shutting down 28 schools.

5 [Applause, cheering]

6 MR. DEVEAUX: You know, I'm sorry I'm all  
7 fired up but I--I think Devern [phonetic]  
8 Dixon's father said it well last time that--no  
9 it's not aggression, I don't mean any  
10 disrespect, uh, but we are passionate about our  
11 children. And I know they're just numbers to  
12 you so the feeling's a little bit different.  
13 But I just have to let the truth be known. You  
14 know because this is a much more serious thing.  
15 As I came across these stats and when you look  
16 at New York City where over 70% of the Black  
17 males are not graduating high school, this  
18 dropout rate is attached to a lot of other  
19 figures that are quite disturbing. You know,  
20 students who are not graduating high school have  
21 higher unemployment as you may have guessed.  
22 Students who are not graduating high school have  
23 a higher poverty rate. And then they have a  
24 higher incarceration rate. And I even found,  
25 you may not know this, that less education is

1 even connected to a higher death rate. That  
2 people are dying, so, you know, my question is,  
3 for all these questions is, if it is true, and  
4 please check these numbers and tell me if I'm  
5 false, that New York City is doing such a poor  
6 job and you want to close our school and put our  
7 students back in the situation where they're  
8 graduating at only a 28% graduation rate. I  
9 just want to know why the DOE wants these Black  
10 children to have a higher unemployment rate.  
11 'Cause that's essentially what you're saying  
12 when you're putting them in a school that's  
13 going to graduate them in a less rate than what  
14 they are now. Why do they want Black and Latino  
15 males to have this higher incarceration rate?  
16 Why do you want Black and Latino males to have  
17 this higher death rate? Why aren't you looking  
18 at examples where they're being successful and  
19 improve those instead of trying to hide them in  
20 the school system that's serving them so poorly-  
21 -

22 [Audience outburst, cheering, applause]

23 MR. DEVEAUX: You know another thing that  
24 they're not mentioning when they compare us to  
25 other schools is some schools are screened

1 schools. Now we're not. Now for those that  
2 are not all familiar with the terminology,  
3 screened schools, they're schools, including one  
4 in this building where they don't accept all  
5 students. So we accept all children. Right?  
6 If you look at here, you know, let's talk about  
7 some of the children often neglected and  
8 underserved by New York City. Our reading below  
9 grade level, it's hard to see that stat there, I  
10 believe it's 80, 85%?

11 [Off mic comment]

12 MR. DEVEAUX: Thank you brother. Who aren't  
13 even reading on grade level. So when you talk  
14 about what we're graduating, how poor we're  
15 doing, let's see what we're accepting. And when  
16 we talk about our Title I recipients, students  
17 who are getting free or reduced lunch, uh-oh.  
18 79%. Let's take a look at the special ed  
19 population, wow, 19%. 30%. Good lord. It's  
20 time for glasses, I turn 40 next month, y'all,  
21 I'm sorry about that. Okay and then we talk  
22 about our ELL, our English language learner  
23 student population, right at 11%. So you know  
24 what's important there is this. We don't turn  
25 any students away. We accepted all children

1 here. The whole purpose of the school when  
2 Brother Batah [phonetic] and Brother Foyer  
3 [phonetic] made the school and they called me up  
4 down in Maryland to come up and be their first  
5 math teacher, they told us about how we're going  
6 to accept anybody. We're going to take our  
7 Posse Scholars with \$100,000 4-year scholarship  
8 and we're going to take the guy who just came  
9 out of jail. And we're going to take them all  
10 and we're going to transform and work with them.  
11 Now when did loving children become a crime in  
12 this City? Why are we taking a hit 'cause we  
13 didn't accept--but we accepted all children. We  
14 could have kicked a lot of kids to the curb and  
15 our rates would have been much higher. But  
16 that's not the kind of school we are. So--

17 [Applause]

18 MR. DEVEAUX: Please go home and do some  
19 reflection and think of what type of system we  
20 serve that punishes schools for loving all  
21 children, accepting all children to them? You  
22 know and despite all of that, I don't just want  
23 to get on the negative 'cause despite all of  
24 that we still beat the City on graduating Black  
25 males. So we took all the stuff, people that

1 you didn't want and we had a lot of students  
2 that were put out of other schools and we still  
3 did twice the job that you guys did in  
4 graduating Black males. So think about that.

5 [Applause]

6 MR. DEVEAUX: All right. If I can approach  
7 it right, deputy chancellor, I believe you  
8 talked about the pattern of failure for our  
9 school. So I'm going to talk about our report  
10 card for the past 3 years. Student progress,  
11 yeah, this year was a bad one, no doubt about  
12 it, F. 2008, B; 2009 B. then it's F this year.  
13 Student performance: 2008 B, the 2009 year B.  
14 So we took a hit this year and there's a lot of  
15 reason that we want to talk about now. Matter  
16 of fact one of the parents brought it up. I  
17 won't even go there. There's things that  
18 happened in the last couple of years. Some  
19 things about our past principal. Some things  
20 about our network that we feel have caused this  
21 decline. But don't let the City talk about a  
22 pattern of failure 'cause there is no pattern of  
23 failure. Do you see a patterns of failure? I  
24 saw a pattern of success and then something  
25 changed that caused it to fail. I'd like to

1 talk about that. That's when we get back to  
2 what we were doing, you know, our students can  
3 tell you the motto of our school, the motto of  
4 saying - - . anybody want to say what it is?  
5 It's on your shirts.

6 [Audience responding]

7 MR. DEVEAUX: Retrieve the past to create  
8 the future.

9 [Applause, cheering]

10 MR. DEVEAUX: That's our past, deputy  
11 chancellor, there's the past right there. B, B,  
12 all right, so we want to retrieve that past so  
13 we can go on and create our future. Okay let's,  
14 how am I doing on time, probably terrible.  
15 Let's go on here. By the way also those years,  
16 from New York State when they came, we were well  
17 proficient, excuse me, well developed and  
18 proficient, proficient. I believe I got that  
19 right for 3 years going. So the State came here  
20 and through their, uh, process evaluation, they  
21 felt we were doing good things also. All right.  
22 Let's talk about some solutions. Let's end off  
23 on a good note here. You know this is New  
24 Jersey by the way, Newark, New Jersey, back in  
25 2002 they were trying to find a way to close

1 their achievement gap between Black students  
2 and White students. So you see right on the  
3 left here, Black students were graduating at 47%  
4 back in the 2002 year, White students 70%. And  
5 through the 6 years, the 2008, you can see the  
6 great strides they made in closing the  
7 achievement gap. So you see it went from 47% up  
8 to 75%, so it was a 28% increase over 6 years.  
9 These are things we're looking at and ways to do  
10 better. And not just shutting things down. By  
11 the way there was some pushback where you hear  
12 in the education community that if you focus too  
13 much on Black and Latino males that this somehow  
14 hurts, you know, the White and Asian  
15 counterparts. But as you can see here with  
16 Newburgh, what they found is when they actually  
17 targeted a population, they actually--the White  
18 percentage also went up too. So you see if  
19 there was 70% in 2002 but it went up to 78% in  
20 2008. so closing the achievement gap doesn't  
21 hurt one group of people by focusing on another.  
22 I think President Obama said it in his speech  
23 that a rising tide lifts all ships. So we want  
24 to definitely help everybody out here.

25 [Applause]

1           MR. DEVEAUX: So if you--if you truly care  
2 as you say you do, let's look at some of the  
3 things New Jersey have done and let's see if any  
4 of those things would work here in New York.  
5 They talked about equitable resources to support  
6 students to master rigorous content standard-  
7 based education. Universal and high quality  
8 preschool education. Programs to address  
9 student and school needs attributable to high  
10 poverty including intensive early literacy,  
11 small class size, after school, summer  
12 programming, social and health services. New  
13 and rehabilitated facilities to adequate house  
14 all programs, relieve overcrowding and eliminate  
15 health and safety violations. State  
16 accountability to ensure progress in improving  
17 student achievement. Notice there was no school  
18 closures during that time. Now. Actually look,  
19 let me start to wrap up here. You know, one  
20 thing, my wife's a psychology major and she told  
21 me one of the definitions of psychology, of--  
22 excuse me of insanity. Insanity is so you're  
23 doing the same thing and expecting a different  
24 result. So we know this school used to be Taft.  
25 They closed Taft. Now it's UAAHAC. Now you

1 want to close UAAHAC. There's two schools in  
2 this building have D's. I guess we could be  
3 back next year as you probably look to close  
4 some of them. You know the solution to solving  
5 these problems as New Jersey already shows you,  
6 our neighboring state, you don't just close a  
7 school. That's now how to make thing better.  
8 It's going to be the same students, the same  
9 population. You don't change the economics--

10 [Applause]

11 MR. DEVEAUX: --you don't change the reading  
12 level.

13 [Applause, continues]

14 MR. DEVEAUX: In just opening up another  
15 school, that's not how you solve the problem  
16 here. All right. Insanity is doing the same  
17 thing and trying to expect different results.  
18 You know, uh, last night, I'm going to talk to  
19 you, I went to one of the P & P hearing so I  
20 invite you all back February 1<sup>st</sup>, it'll be in  
21 Brooklyn Tech. And I think that's, uh, when  
22 they do the vote. Am I right about that? On  
23 February 1<sup>st</sup>. But last night I was listening to  
24 the chancellor speak. The no educational  
25 background chancellor. And she spoke on her

1 plans to improve schools. She mentioned some  
2 key things. She talked about taking away job  
3 security for teachers. She talked about  
4 reducing teachers' pension, so taking away from  
5 teachers' pensions. And she spoke about closing  
6 schools. You know, after all of that she  
7 mentioned the new buzz phrase you're going to  
8 hear a lot and you probably already heard it  
9 today, we must put children first.

10 [Audience laughing]

11 MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: Oh mercy.

12 MR. DEVEAUX: You know. Now I know why the  
13 Mayor chose a non-educator because you would  
14 have to have never taught a day in your life to  
15 think that attacking teachers and closing  
16 schools is what's best for children.

17 [Applause]

18 MR. DEVEAUX: You know I believe the No  
19 Child--No Child Left Behind Act was a Federal  
20 mandate and, uh, you know, one thing in the No--  
21 No Child, Child Left Behind Act, I can't say I  
22 love it completely because there wasn't enough  
23 funding to implement it but I did like the fact  
24 that they wanted to look at each group of  
25 children. So whether it was gender, male or

1 female, or race, economic, they wanted to look  
2 at each group to ensure that all children were  
3 being served. So what I ask in conclusion that  
4 if you truly do care, that you research this  
5 data for yourself, you don't have to take my  
6 word for it but I gave you a copy and if we are  
7 doing a better job than New York City is in  
8 graduating Black and Latino males, then help us  
9 do it better and give us a network that supports  
10 us in doing so.

11 [Applause, cheering]

12 MR. DEVEAUX: I'd like to end with our  
13 school's mantra. We do this every third period.  
14 It's part of our third period ritual and at the  
15 conclusion of all of our assemblies and  
16 meetings. So I'd like for all the members of  
17 the UAAHAC family and staff would just stand up.

18 [Audience responding]

19 MR. DEVEAUX: Put your right fist in the  
20 air. And repeat after me. Sharpen your eyes.

21 AUDIENCE: Sharpen your eyes.

22 MR. DEVEAUX: Tune your ears.

23 AUDIENCE: Tune your ears.

24 MR. DEVEAUX: So you know what you see.

25 AUDIENCE: So you know what you see.

1 MR. DEVEAUX: And understand what you  
2 hear.

3 AUDIENCE: And understand what you hear.

4 MR. DEVEAUX: Minute by minute.

5 AUDIENCE: Minute by minute.

6 MR. DEVEAUX: Hour by hour.

7 AUDIENCE: Hour by hour.

8 MR. DEVEAUX: And we know our story.

9 AUDIENCE: And we know our story.

10 MR. DEVEAUX: We know our power.

11 AUDIENCE: We know our power.

12 MR. DEVEAUX: U-HAC, U-HAC, U-HAC.

13 AUDIENCE: U-ah, U-HAC, U-HAC.

14 [Applause]

15 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. We will now have a  
16 presentation by Mr. Jay Werner, um, representing  
17 the SLT or excuse me the School Leadership Team  
18 of Bronx Expeditionary Learning High School.

19 [Applause]

20 MR. JAY WERNER: Is that working? There we  
21 go. I don't really have a presentation per se  
22 but I--I do have a few comments. Uh, I heard  
23 Mr. DeVeaux here give a wonderful speech there.  
24 That was spectacular, thank you.

25 [Applause, cheering]

1           MR. WERNER: Um. My concern is for the--  
2 the students current at UAAHAC and for the  
3 students who would have liked to go to UAHAC in  
4 the future. Where are they going to go? What  
5 schools will they go to? Is there going to be  
6 another school opened here and what success and  
7 what support--if--if--if UAAHAC is closed and I  
8 really hope you don't close it because I think  
9 they do a spectacular job but if indeed UAAHAC  
10 is closed, how are you going to change things?  
11 How will things change? That--that's my  
12 concern. My concern is for the students, for  
13 the children at UAAHAC, for the children in this  
14 building in fact. How are things going to  
15 change for theses kids here, for these kids,  
16 from the--from all the same neighborhoods when  
17 you closed Taft. Taft got shut down. All these  
18 schools got put in here and instead of one  
19 principal's office, we now have six principals'  
20 offices. Instead of one teachers' lounge or  
21 teachers' center, we now have six teachers'  
22 centers. So we have far fewer classroom here  
23 than we did when it was just Taft which I think  
24 is, hum, maybe not the smartest move 'cause we  
25 still have the same kids. And if they--if we--

1 if they weren't successful there, why would  
2 they be successful here? What--what have you  
3 done to change? What support have you done--  
4 have you given to any of the schools here? What  
5 support will you give the schools here in the  
6 future to improve? They should all be A  
7 schools. Every city in New York City should be  
8 an A school--

9 [Applause]

10 MR. WERNER: --and if they're not, rather  
11 than close them, you should support them. You  
12 should give them whatever they need to become an  
13 A school. Thank you.

14 [Applause]

15 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. Okay. Uh, we have  
16 been joined by Denise Sullivan, uh, representing  
17 the Citywide Council on High Schools. We've  
18 also been joined by Ted Garcia, President of CEC,  
19 District 9. We have also been joined by  
20 Assemblywoman Vanessa Al [phonetic] Gibson who  
21 would like to say a couple of words.

22 [Applause]

23 ASSEMBLYWOMAN VANESSA AL GIBSON: Good  
24 evening everyone.

25 AUDIENCE: Good evening.

1 MS. GIBSON: Good evening Urban Assembly  
2 students and teachers, how's everyone tonight?

3 AUDIENCE: Good.

4 MS. GIBSON: Good evening to Deputy  
5 Chancellor and to the Department of Education,  
6 to my CEC President Ted Garcia, Marilyn Espada  
7 and many others who are here, as parents, as  
8 advocates, as human beings and as Bronx  
9 residents who simply care so much about Urban  
10 Assembly and what it stands for in this  
11 community. I have a statement that I'd like to  
12 read very briefly, um, just to talk about what  
13 my familiarity is and the history of Urban  
14 Assembly here in the Borough in which I  
15 represent. And so let me just begin. Good  
16 evening everyone, I am Assemblywoman Vanessa  
17 Gibson and I represent the thousands of families  
18 who live in the 77<sup>th</sup> Assembly District here in  
19 Bronx County which includes Claremont,  
20 Concourse, Highbridge, Morris Heights, Mount  
21 Eden as well as the community in which we are  
22 all currently located. This evening I am here  
23 to simply express my concern about the proposed  
24 closure of the Urban Assembly Academy for  
25 History and Citizenship for Young Men that is

1 currently housed in the Taft Educational  
2 Complex. More importantly I am--want to express  
3 deep concern about the unfortunate state that so  
4 many of our young men, particular our young men  
5 of color, in our community are facing due to the  
6 ongoing challenges that are faced by the New  
7 York City Department of Education to adequately  
8 educate them. The Urban Assembly Academy was  
9 designed as an all male school, tailored to meet  
10 the specific needs of our young men who are  
11 often alienated from the traditional educational  
12 process--

13 [Applause]

14 MS. GIBSON: The initial--thank you. The  
15 initial results for this school were quite good  
16 and the data regarding the school performance  
17 and the school progress supports that. During  
18 its first academic year the overall progress  
19 report grade for the Urban Assembly was a B.  
20 And the performance grade and the progress grade  
21 for the school was also a B. Further indicating  
22 the initial success of the Urban Assembly  
23 Academy when it was first created and brought  
24 into this District. Since that time the Urban  
25 Assembly Academy located in this building has

1       fallen dramatically with the school being  
2       given a grade of less than a B. Despite this  
3       drop in performance and the proposed closure  
4       before us tonight, as we sit here we have not  
5       heard detailed information about what will  
6       replace the Urban Assembly School and also if  
7       phased out and ultimately closed what are the  
8       plans to assist our young men of color? What  
9       are the plans to allow our young men the  
10      academic excellence they so deserve and the  
11      opportunity to gain a high school diploma as  
12      well as move towards our college. In  
13      maintaining the high level of achievement that  
14      is so essential for our young people if they are  
15      to receive the education that they so richly  
16      deserve and must have if they are to compete in  
17      our global economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Let me  
18      be clear for everyone here. I believe that our  
19      community supports having a school based on the  
20      Urban Assembly Academy model that is available  
21      for our young men of the Bronx. Particularly  
22      our young men who face a unique set of barriers  
23      and obstacles that they must overcome to  
24      successfully get ahead in life. The Urban  
25      Assembly Academy has offered our parents the

1 option of a small setting, an all male school  
2 that was designed to meet their educational  
3 challenges, faced by so many of our youth in  
4 this community. The Department of Education  
5 should do everything possible, everything  
6 possible to make sure that this option remains  
7 available to the parents and the students in  
8 this community, in this Borough.

9 [Applause]

10 MS. GIBSON: That we are having a discussion  
11 about the proposed phase out and the closure of  
12 the existing Urban Assembly Academy without  
13 having a detailed plan for the school that would  
14 take its place is a significant concern for me  
15 and many of our families in the community.  
16 Additionally it is incumbent upon the Department  
17 of Education to address the long-term need to  
18 develop an approach and a strategy that goes  
19 beyond the current revolving door approach to  
20 school closures by more effectively supporting  
21 and encouraging schools that clearly  
22 demonstrate, clearly demonstrate, a potential  
23 for success. As part of developing this  
24 strategy it is important for the Department of  
25 Ed to examine why so many of our small schools

1 are ultimately facing a possible closure or a  
2 possible restructure while a substantial amount  
3 of the available research has indicated that  
4 small schools provide a more effective  
5 educational environment. We have had too many  
6 schools in our community, in our city, and  
7 certainly in the Bronx that have been phased out  
8 all too quickly. And the uncertainty that is  
9 caused by the current system has left many of  
10 our families increasingly uneasy about the  
11 future of their children's education with each  
12 passing school year. Enhancing the resources  
13 that are dedicated to making our schools  
14 creative and innovative such as the Urban  
15 Assembly has done particularly by providing  
16 greater mentoring, counseling, and training  
17 opportunities for our students could  
18 significantly improve upon the results that are  
19 being achieved by the current approach. By  
20 making these critical investments in our public  
21 schools the Department of Education can make a  
22 substantial difference in the quality of  
23 education that many of our young people receive,  
24 encourage the spread of innovation and enhance  
25 the opportunities available to so many of our

1 families and their children. On behalf of all  
2 of the families that I am proud to be their  
3 State legislator I urge the Department of  
4 Education to commit the necessary resources to  
5 innovative schools like the Urban Assembly to  
6 provide them with the greatest opportunity for  
7 success and empower our families with the  
8 opportunity to make the choices that best suit  
9 our children as they strive to reach their full  
10 potential. Clearly something is wrong and  
11 clearly something happened along the course of  
12 the years that Urban Assembly has been in this  
13 building. We must address alternative solutions  
14 and not a one-size-fits-all approach. This  
15 school is so unique to my community and I want  
16 to make sure that my young men, the young men  
17 that look to me for leadership have those  
18 educational opportunities. So I will not turn  
19 my back as your Assemblywoman I will not turn my  
20 back on Urban Assembly. And I am simply asking  
21 the Department of Education to do the same and  
22 not turn its back on Urban Assembly and all of  
23 the young people--

24 [Applause]

25 MS. GIBSON: --that you see here.

1 [Applause continues]

2 MS. GIBSON: All of the young people that  
3 you see here with all the challenges and limited  
4 resources that many of our schools including  
5 Urban Assembly have, we simply ask for help.  
6 And we simply ask for assistance. So I as a  
7 State legislator have worked with the Department  
8 of Education on many different issues in my  
9 community in School District 9 and I will  
10 continue to work with you as we try to identify  
11 alternative measures instead of closing the  
12 Urban Assembly School. I want to keep the  
13 uniqueness of this model in my district so that  
14 all of the young men that you see here will  
15 still have an opportunity to stay in their  
16 community and hopefully obtain their high school  
17 diploma and move on to college. So that is what  
18 our task is as educators, as legislators, as  
19 parents, as advocates, as people who represent  
20 children, we must continue to work and not turn  
21 out backs on the very population that we have a  
22 duty to serve. Thank you for listening  
23 everyone.

24 [Applause]

25 MS. GIBSON: I thank you for listening and I

1 look forward to continuing to work with you.  
2 Many of you know me. You know my office or you  
3 know that I will continue to work with you as  
4 your partner and as your advocate. And I extend  
5 a hand to the Department of Ed as well to work  
6 with you on identifying alternatives to this  
7 proposal before us this evening. Thank you so  
8 very much for being here and I look forward to  
9 working with you. Thank you.

10 [Applause]

11 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. We will now have--  
12 uh, hear from Denise Sullivan.

13 [Applause]

14 MS. DENISE SULLIVAN: Good evening everyone,  
15 my name is Denise Sullivan. I'm the Citywide  
16 High School representative to all Bronx high  
17 schools. A phase out is not what our community  
18 members want and is not what they desire. But  
19 if a high school fails, it's not meeting the  
20 standards for a child to graduate and show that  
21 the child receiving the proper education. For  
22 minorities education begins in the educational  
23 institution. And phasing out a school hinders  
24 the development of that institution. But an F,  
25 as we all know, is an unsatisfactory grade.

1 Thank you.

2 MALE VOICE 1: Melissa.

3 [Pause]

4 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

5 [Pause]

6 MS. HARRIS: Okay everyone. We have now  
7 concluded the formal presentations. You are  
8 reminded that the public comment period--that  
9 public comment must be limited to two minutes.  
10 Time will be kept and we will signal you when  
11 you have 30 seconds remaining. The timekeeper  
12 is sitting right here. And when your time is  
13 up.

14 [Audience laughing, background  
15 conversations]

16 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. Okay. So I now ask  
17 numbers 1 through 5, that would be Tracy Acampo  
18 Gaskin [phonetic].

19 [Applause, whistling]

20 MS. HARRIS: I'm sorry everyone, I got a  
21 little distracted. Okay. Tracy Acampo Gaskin,  
22 Matthew Morgan, Alberto Torres, and Annette, um,  
23 Rogers. You want to turn it this way.

24 [Pause]

25 MS. TRACY ACOMPO GASKIN: Greetings

1 everyone. My name is Tracy Acompo Gaskin  
2 [phonetic]. And I'm glad that the panel is  
3 here. Um. But I really want to address my  
4 students and my parents and the teachers that  
5 are here. This is a political situation. I was  
6 out in Brooklyn last night with Mr. DeVeaux.  
7 And a lot of people were saying things like come  
8 to our schools, see what we do. Well we've been  
9 here for the past seven years and if there was  
10 concern about our school failing, um, I'm sure  
11 that you would have been to our school a lot  
12 sooner than today or last month or the month  
13 before. Okay? Um. What I want to say is that  
14 folks need to vote because I want everyone here  
15 to understand that closing this school and  
16 trying to shut down our young men is sending a  
17 wrong message. This is the future. These young  
18 men that you see right here, these are the  
19 doctors, they're the lawyers, they're the  
20 engineers, they are the people who are going to  
21 rebuild this community.

22 [Applause, cheering]

23 MS. GASKIN: It is not about, um, a school  
24 to prison pipeline. It is not about going to  
25 jail and increasing the costs of the State of

1 New York because people are unemployed. This  
2 is what our governor said in his State of the  
3 Union address. That if you need a job, going to  
4 jail shouldn't be the reason that you have a  
5 job, okay. We are educators here. We will not  
6 be insulted by these scores and these numbers  
7 because my children are not numbers. Okay? You  
8 said 35% of the people feel unsafe, 65% feel  
9 safe. 10% of the parents are feeling like it's  
10 not clear, 90% feel that they are in a safe  
11 environment. So let's look at the positive side  
12 of this. All right? The fact of the matter is  
13 I love my children. And I think that people  
14 here need to vote and I think people need to be  
15 clear that if you do not do right by us, when we  
16 vote in the next election, we will not do right  
17 by you. Thank you.

18 [Applause, cheering]

19 MS. HARRIS: Okay next we have Matthew  
20 Morgan and could you just line up for me please?  
21 Matthew Morgan, Alberto Torres and Sonya  
22 Livingstone.

23 [Pause]

24 MR. MATTHEW MORGAN: Good night everybody.

25 AUDIENCE: Good night.

1           MR. MORGAN: All right I'm going to hear,  
2 I'm going to read you my feeling of what UAAHAC  
3 means to me, okay? Greetings. Uh, UAAHAC is  
4 much more than just a school. It's a community.  
5 It's a family. Um, this incredible staff and  
6 administrators make me want to wake up every  
7 morning and come to school early. And when I  
8 first came here I could care less about school,  
9 neither would I would have come to school early.  
10 Um. Something new that I can, eh, maybe come to  
11 school and learn new knowledge so I can use it  
12 and disseminate it to all of my community and  
13 empower others as it empowered me. Another  
14 component of the UAAHAC experience that I was  
15 quite enlightening for me was the successful  
16 efforts to help me find my identity as a wise  
17 man of color who has an entire history that  
18 stretches far beyond slavery. Okay? In  
19 addition to the cultural piece that UAAHAC has  
20 instilled into me, came the slash--solid  
21 leadership qualities. Not only do I look as  
22 myself as a leader, I also know that I can be a  
23 follower whenever the time permits. I've taken  
24 part in several voluntary research projects for  
25 New York kids during the school year and in - -

1 during the summer. The reason why I have such  
2 an intense passion for volunteer service work is  
3 partially because of UAAHAC. UAAHAC has  
4 implanted within me such a sense--a strong sense  
5 of--of community. That I've already ended up,  
6 hum, sorry, that I've already ended up  
7 intrinsically wanted to reestablish in my own  
8 neighborhood. The several principles of the  
9 school, the Negusa Saba [phonetic], creative--  
10 creativity, collective work and responsibility,  
11 unity, faith, purpose, responsibility, self-  
12 determination, these principles, uh, are--should  
13 be at the core of all communities, all  
14 organizations and they have inspired me to  
15 engender a nonprofit organization called WISE.  
16 That--this is interesting to me by their uses of  
17 the rites of passage that is also in our school.  
18 Uh, being a 19-year old Black man who has  
19 graduated from an all boys public school, uh, in  
20 a country that has done just about everything  
21 possible to suppress and oppress my people, it  
22 made me feel blissful and honored to share my  
23 services with mankind as long as I live. In  
24 conclusion I can con--I can sincerely say that  
25 I've entered Urban Assembly Academy for History

1 and Citizenship for Young Men as a citizen of-  
2 -of immorality and ignorance and I will graduate  
3 as a citizen of humanity. Thank you.

4 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

5 [Applause, whistling, cheering]

6 MR. ALBERTO TORRES: How you all doing? My  
7 name is Alberto Torres. Um. To be honest  
8 UAAHAC is basically a family for me. Um. I  
9 came here not knowing how to speak English. I  
10 came here, um, not knowing how to read English.  
11 And during these three years I have developed my  
12 English vocabulary and I have developed my  
13 reading skills and I have also developed my, um,  
14 my mentality as a young man. I thank you all.

15 [Applause, cheering]

16 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

17 MS. SONYA LIVINGSTONE: Greetings. First I  
18 want to say how upset or disgusted and  
19 disappointed I am to see where our school is  
20 today. My son is here at the Urban Assembly  
21 Academy of History and Citizenship for Young  
22 Men. Impressive name isn't it? When my son  
23 graduated middle school I was looking for a home  
24 away from home. And I found it here at UAAHAC.  
25 I agree that some things have changed over the

1 years. But this is an all boys school and  
2 this is what I was looking for. And I said to  
3 our young men, stand up. My son is doing well  
4 here. He's a good all-round student. He has  
5 good grades. He speaks well. He's confident.  
6 And he speaks with authority. I'm sure there  
7 are other young men here who are doing as well  
8 if not better. At UAAHAC our scholars are not  
9 just taught academics. They are taught life  
10 skills. They are taught where they are coming  
11 from. They are taught to be men. And they are  
12 taught to know where they are going, hence we  
13 have the--the saying, if you know your history,  
14 you know your power.

15 [Audience responding, applause]

16 MS. LIVINGSTONE: When you take this away  
17 from them, okay. When you take this away from  
18 them where will they go? To the governor's  
19 mansion upstate? Think about it, Department of  
20 Education. We need to educate our young men.  
21 Thank you.

22 [Applause]

23 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. Next we'll have--  
24 and could you all line up, next we'll have  
25 Darnelle Brown, Angela Hawkins, Tiffany Braxton,

1 and Steven Palicia [phonetic].

2 [Applause]

3 MS. ANGELA HAWKINS: Hello my name is Angela  
4 Hawkins. Um. Just like the other parents,  
5 Sonya, that spoke, I too am very disappointed  
6 with the Department of Education. It seems like  
7 y'all are so quick to close a school instead of  
8 helping a school. You did all this research and  
9 you looked to see that we're not--as you say,  
10 approaching the par where the Board of Education  
11 should be but yet still you didn't go back and  
12 look at the first years where we got B's. And  
13 say--and determine what happened last year. Why  
14 we got an F. To see where you could come in and  
15 help us to improve so that we don't get another  
16 F. you know, you're so quick to want to come in  
17 and close the school. My son's been here, he's  
18 a senior now, he's been here four years. And  
19 like the other parent said, my son is positive.  
20 He holds his head high. He speaks well. He's  
21 do--getting great grades. So I mean I'm not  
22 sure why you want to close this school. They  
23 have a great staff. And this is a home away  
24 from home. My son knows when he comes here,  
25 these teachers represent me. They are mothers

1 to him. They are fathers. They're brothers,  
2 they're uncles. You know and you want to come  
3 in and you just want to take that way from them  
4 and I don't think that's right. These boys are  
5 positive. We have affairs here. These boys--it  
6 doesn't make a difference what parent comes in  
7 here, if you need help these boys will help you  
8 out. They're being taught mannerisms. Not just  
9 education. They're being taught a--to be well-  
10 rounded, you know and you want to come in and  
11 you just want to close them and I don't think  
12 that's right. I think you ought to come in and  
13 evaluate. Look at the first two years, see what  
14 happened. We got B's. We did great. Did you  
15 ever look at it to see whereas--where the first  
16 year, we had the whole fourth floor, maybe  
17 that's why we excel. Now we're sharing a floor  
18 with a co-ed school. You've got an all boys  
19 school now sharing a floor with a co-ed school.  
20 That means one, we've got less classrooms, more  
21 kids in the classrooms. So--did you look at this  
22 to see if maybe this could be a reason why we  
23 are so failing? You just want to come in and  
24 close it and just look at the stats. Oh we're  
25 not meeting the par. Come in and see what you

1 can do to help instead of just being so quick  
2 to want to close it.

3 [Applause]

4 MS. HAWKINS: And my time is up.

5 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

6 [Applause, continues]

7 MS. TIFFANY BRAXTON: Good evening everyone.  
8 My name is Tiffany Braxton. I'm a parent here.  
9 My son is a junior here at UAAHAC. UAAHAC, um,  
10 I fell in love with this school from the  
11 beginning It wasn't on our list. We didn't even  
12 know about this school. We went to a high  
13 school fair and seeing the love that the  
14 students had for their school and the dedication  
15 that the teachers showed made me want my son to  
16 come here. He didn't want to come here but when  
17 he got here, he learned to love his school.  
18 UAAHAC is a different type of school. They  
19 understand the importance of our young men, that  
20 they have to retried their past and understand  
21 their past in order to embrace and create their  
22 future. Okay--

23 [Applause]

24 MS. BRAXTON: When my son got here I was  
25 told and he was told that he will go to college.

1 And he will go to college. I believe that.  
2 And the teachers stand behind that. Um. One  
3 thing that I love about UAAHAC, the first--  
4 before school even starts the freshman had to  
5 come to the school for a week. They got to know  
6 each other. They had to understand the school  
7 motto and the culture of this school. Um. They  
8 had an opportunity to meet their other scholars  
9 and get to know each other. They have  
10 experienced enough betrayal already. They've  
11 been left by a--one of the founders and their  
12 principal. I can't even imagine that the Board  
13 of Education or the Chancellor would allow a  
14 principal just to leave the school in that  
15 manner. What did he know that we don't know?  
16 And what did he do? I want to know what's going  
17 to happen? Charter schools are popping up  
18 everywhere. Is UAAHAC going to be replaced by a  
19 charter school? They get five years to prove  
20 what they can do. Give UAAHAC a chance. You  
21 came in here two months ago and said that you  
22 were talking about closing our school. That was  
23 not enough time. We want to give it a proper  
24 chance to show what we can do. These students--

25 [Applause]

1 MS. BRAXTON: --deserve a chance. They're  
2 not just numbers and we will fight and we will  
3 fight because this school belongs here. Thank  
4 you.

5 [Applause continues, whistling, cheering]

6 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

7 MS. DARNELLE BROWN: Good evening my name is  
8 Darnelle Brown. My son--thank you. My son is a  
9 senior here at UAAHAC. I want to say first of  
10 all I have to piggyback on what everybody else  
11 said. UAAHAC was not a school that was on our  
12 list. We did not know about UAAHAC. UAAHAC has  
13 done great things for my son. My son has been  
14 kind of shy at times but this school has brought  
15 the best out in him. Not only that but he has  
16 peers that look out for him and the teachers and  
17 the staff here are awesome. I don't have to  
18 worry about feeling if my son is safe in this  
19 school because I always feel that way. I have  
20 teachers that call me and let me know, oh your  
21 son did this, he, you know, in a good, positive  
22 manner. If there's something that's not right  
23 they will call me and let me know. Okay Ms.  
24 Brown, this is what happened, this is what we're  
25 going to do to fix the problem, whenever there

1 is a problem. They--they are caring about my  
2 son. As Ms. Hawkins said, they are mothers,  
3 aunts, fathers, sons, to all these children.  
4 And the times that I've come to this school I've  
5 always felt very welcome. Not only by the staff  
6 and the teachers but by the students as well.  
7 These scholars here, they show respect. When  
8 you walk on the floor it's not cursing. I've  
9 never heard that with UAAHAC students. I've  
10 always felt very respected. I've even had kids  
11 say to me, oh, you're Jordan's mom. Jordan is  
12 over here. And they'll show me where I need to  
13 go. I really don't think that it's a good idea  
14 to close this school because there are so many  
15 other kids that need the opportunity that UAAHAC  
16 is bringing to the kids that are here now, the  
17 young men that are here now. And I think  
18 closing this school is a very big mistake.  
19 Please give our other kids, our other young men,  
20 the chance to prove themselves. We don't have a  
21 lot of male schools that a lot of kids can get  
22 into--a lot of males can get into. Give them  
23 that chance. UAAHAC will accept them. Give  
24 them that chance.

25 [Applause]

1 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

2 MR. STEVEN PALACIA: I'll just wait for your  
3 attention sir.

4 [Audience responding, applause]

5 MR. PALACIA: Okay so the DOE is supposed to  
6 be big on education so why would you close a  
7 school that's basically contradicting yourself?  
8 Um. Here at UAAHAC We learn to become young men  
9 and men of power. Men who could control a  
10 community. Here at UAAHAC we also learn a sense  
11 of community and, I'm sorry, I'm kind of  
12 nervous. Um. So to be a man of power and to  
13 control a community you need education. And I'm  
14 pretty sure that we've been getting that  
15 education that we need to be successful and  
16 powerful and by you closing this school that  
17 doesn't help the school's mission. And I don't  
18 think that you understand the mission so why  
19 don't you come as an alternative besides closing  
20 this school why don't you come for a week or so  
21 to see what the school is like before you decide  
22 closing it.

23 [Applause]

24 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. Would the following  
25 people line up? Francis Tehada, Franklin

1 Waters, Carmel Macklin and Denelle Blash [all  
2 phonetic].

3 [Applause]

4 MS. HARRIS: Again that was Francis Tehada,  
5 Franklin Waters, Carmel Macklin and Denelle  
6 Blash. Oh Denzel? I'm sorry Denzel. Okay, um,  
7 you can line up right behind the microphone.  
8 Um-hum. Francis Tehada? Franklin--Francis  
9 Tehada?

10 AUDIENCE MEMBER 2: He's right here - - .

11 [Pause]

12 MS. HARRIS--Francis--okay.

13 MR. KHAMAL PATAH: Good evening everyone, my  
14 name is Khamal Patah [phonetic]. I'm the  
15 Program Director and Co-Founder of UAAHAC. I  
16 want to begin by just talking a little bit about  
17 the intention and the vision and mission of our  
18 school. Looking and respecting the historical  
19 context of education we thought that it would be  
20 a much more powerful statement to make than to  
21 start an all boys school with the drastic,  
22 dismal, uh, conditions of education and the  
23 miseducation of young men of color. And a  
24 powerful statement that any responsible man  
25 would make would be able to try to address that

1 condition. And that was the intention of this  
2 school. Proactive side of the mission is to  
3 create an environment that in stores--and  
4 restores a concept known as rite of passage.  
5 We're missing systems and processes that help  
6 young men come into manhood. And clearly some  
7 of the condition is centered around an identity  
8 crisis. And one of the greatest thefts of our  
9 community is the loss of identity. So we focus  
10 around that in--within our mission.

11 Additionally responding to the dismal condition  
12 would be--was very, uh, uh, reactionary in terms  
13 of being able to try to address this prison of a  
14 school to prison pipeline which the numbers are  
15 continuing to grow and escalate, uh, as  
16 miseducation continues to happen. So it's very  
17 important to realize and request from the  
18 Department of Education, and I'm making this as  
19 a charge and as a statement, to really begin to  
20 analyze and study the success that has occurred  
21 here at UAAHAC and consider replicating it as a  
22 model because there has been something that this  
23 education experience has done in terms of  
24 helping to transform the identity. Taking  
25 someone who's not--does not necessarily

1 identify--identify with being a learner,  
2 identify with being a student, and helping them  
3 restore an identity that is committed to  
4 excellence and overcoming obstacles and being  
5 fathers and men that can help to build their  
6 communities. Thank you.

7 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

8 [Applause]

9 MR. FRANK WATERS: Good evening everyone,  
10 how are you? My name is Frank Waters. I'm the  
11 PA President, um, for UAAHAC. Basically I just  
12 want to say, you know, it's wonderful to see so  
13 many people out here supporting this--this  
14 hearing because UAAHAC is definitely a school  
15 that needs to be in place. It needs to be here.  
16 Um. So many things have been going on. So many  
17 people have spoke on so many different topics.  
18 So I'm just going to be brief and--and speak on  
19 something that President Obama loves to say over  
20 and over again: accountability,  
21 accountability, accountability. Like that's the  
22 main thing that we need to focus on. Every PA  
23 meeting that I've been in, every Federation  
24 meeting that I've been in, it all comes down to  
25 the same question. What happened when you guys

1 finally seen the first time that there was a  
2 problem? Now the network has been brought up,  
3 the DOE has been brought up, but I'm new to this  
4 school. My son is in the ninth grade so I  
5 haven't been here for the previous years. But  
6 what I've done is I've went around and I've  
7 spoke to many teachers. I spoke to  
8 administrators and what I hear is that there has  
9 been no support. People are saying what  
10 network? Who's the network? Where's the  
11 network? What help? Who came to the class? No  
12 one came to the class. No one talked to me. No  
13 one, no one, no one, no one. So if that's being  
14 said on a regular basis then when will we take  
15 time and pay attention to the problem? I mean  
16 this is an F. Last--last year I believe was a  
17 D. And so forth and so on but it's important  
18 that as soon as we seen the problem, we were  
19 supposed to do something about it. And if we  
20 didn't do nothing about it--

21 [Applause]

22 MR. WATERS: --then that's a problem. And  
23 if we did do something about it and the school  
24 still had a bad grade then that means we need to  
25 look at the support system because that's where

1 the problem is. Thank you.

2 [Applause, cheering]

3 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

4 MS. CARMEL MACKLIN: What time is it?

5 AUDIENCE: UAAHAC time.

6 MS. MACKLIN: What time is it?

7 AUDIENCE: UAAHAC time.

8 MS. MACKLIN: What time is it?

9 AUDIENCE UAAHAC time.

10 MS. MACKLIN: Hello my name is Ms. Macklin  
11 and I'm a special ed--educator here at UAAHAC.  
12 And I'm highly upset with what's going on right  
13 now. First of all we are not a failing school.  
14 We are not a failing school.

15 [Applause]

16 MS. MACKLIN: Let's be clear. We have had  
17 three report cards. Our first two report cards  
18 we got a B in student progress and student  
19 performance. One year we get an F and we are  
20 getting closed down. I imagine if my student  
21 got one F on a paper and I told them to go home--  
22 -

23 [Applause]

24 MS. MACKLIN: --it would--imagine if he got...

25 [Applause, cheering]

1 MS. MACKLIN: I've only got two minutes.  
2 Imagine if he got one F on a report card and I  
3 told him to get out of school. You--you're  
4 done. Your life is over. Imagine if he failed  
5 one year and I told him to drop out, get your  
6 GED. No we don't do that. What we do is we  
7 find a way to make it happen. We find a way to--  
8 --no next paper you're going to get an A. Next  
9 year you are going to pass. You are going to  
10 school. And every single one of you out there,  
11 if you were to say if--if we did that to a  
12 student you would say that was wrong. You would  
13 say that was wrong after one F to just write him  
14 off. But what do you? You do that to a whole  
15 school.

16 [Applause]

17 MS. MACKLIN: You--you close down a whole  
18 school. One year. We got an F one year. And  
19 we--at our lowest point, we still do better than  
20 the City.

21 [Applause, cheering]

22 MS. MACKLIN: At our lowest point. At our  
23 lowest point we still do better than the State.  
24 At our lowest point we are on average with the  
25 United States of America.

1 [Applause, cheering]

2 MS. MACKLIN: One year. I would never do  
3 that to my students. I would never write them  
4 off after on F, one year of failing, who would  
5 do that? No, that you guys need to give us  
6 support. We are working to change things and to  
7 make them better. But let us do that. Don't  
8 cut us off at the legs. We are--we are here and  
9 we are working and these students show up every  
10 day and they are working. We got one F, one  
11 year. Let us work.

12 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

13 [Applause, cheering]

14 AUDIENCE: UAAHAC. UAAHAC.

15 MR. DENZEL BLASH: Good evening. Um,  
16 tonight y'all heard the testimonies on, uh, from  
17 parents, from teachers, telling you how we can  
18 fix UAAHAC. I'm going to tell you a little bit  
19 about the students that UAAHAC have put out. My  
20 name is Denzel Blash [phonetic]. I was grown in  
21 the Bronx, South Bronx McKinley Projects. A  
22 single mother, a common story. But right now  
23 currently I'm a sophomore at St. Lawrence  
24 University with a full scholarship.

25 [Applause, cheering]

1           MR. BLASH: That full scholarship totals  
2 \$250,000 that's money that I won't--I probably  
3 won't ever touch again. I won't see it again  
4 but it's money that I'm putting towards my  
5 education. And I thank UAAHAC every day I wake  
6 up in my dorm. I thank UAAHAC every day I be in  
7 my psych--my psychology papers and my econ  
8 papers, I thank UAAHAC 'cause it was them who  
9 put me in college. They put my brothers in  
10 college and they're putting these young men in  
11 college. And to close this school, is to say  
12 that y'all can't make it in college. You--you  
13 close schools, you put them in what school? You  
14 put them in Gompers or a Medgar Evers, where do  
15 you put them? It's--they--they're the same  
16 students in this school, when they fill the--  
17 they fill the community and they talk and you  
18 tell us my brothers, all these men here, from  
19 way back there, these are all my brothers. And  
20 when they closes the school and they don't have  
21 that anymore what do they have left?

22           [Applause]

23           MR. BLASH: I'll tell--I'll tell you why I  
24 would have--thank you. I'll tell you why I  
25 would have less than--if my ninth grade year

1 this school was closed. I would have dropped  
2 out. I had a friend who dropped out. His name  
3 is Hakim. He dropped out. I would have dropped  
4 out. I would have had kids right now. But I  
5 don't. Thank you.

6 [Applause, cheering]

7 MS. HARRIS: Thank you Denzel.

8 [Applause continuing]

9 MS. HARRIS: Okay. Thank you. Okay.  
10 Anthony Harmon from the UFT. Okay.

11 MR. ANTHONY HARMON: You know, good evening  
12 everyone.

13 AUDIENCE: Good evening.

14 MR. HARMON: My name is Anthony Harmon. And  
15 I'm the Director for Community and Parent  
16 Outreach at the United Federation of Teachers.  
17 And I'm here today to say, uh, to everyone  
18 involved that the United Federation of Teachers  
19 stands behind Urban Assembly and particularly  
20 uh--uh--uh, this school closing, um, uh, that  
21 the--Mr. DeVeaux in his presentation, I have to  
22 tell you I was thoroughly impressed. You  
23 brought out some statistics that I don't think a  
24 lot of people--

25 [Applause, whistling]

1 MR. HARMON: --realized... The United  
2 Federation of Teachers, we--we're on record as  
3 saying that we question this policy of school  
4 closures. You know I started my teaching career  
5 in 1987. 1987, I've never heard of so many  
6 school closures in any given year than I've  
7 heard under this current administration. I  
8 wonder why our current Department of Education  
9 would rather--or choose to hang their hat on the  
10 number of schools that they closed rather than  
11 saying these are the number of schools that we  
12 saved.

13 [Applause, audience response]

14 MR. HARMON: I'm--I'm deeply troubled by  
15 that. And even in your worst year, your worst  
16 year, the year of the F, the State still said  
17 that you were in good standing. On your quality  
18 review it still said that you were proficient.  
19 I was looking at the Educational Impact  
20 Statement and it said that the Superintendent  
21 held a--a meeting of the community. I question  
22 what community was here. Who is that community-  
23 -

24 MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 2: [Interposing] Yeah.

25 MR. HARMON: --because I can tell you the

1 number of phone calls, emails and letters that  
2 I get at the United Federation of Teachers, and  
3 they're from parents and community residents,  
4 they all are saying that they oppose these 26  
5 schools that, uh, are currently, uh, being  
6 slated. And it's so good to see so many parents  
7 and students here tonight but you've got to  
8 understand that it doesn't end here tonight. On  
9 February 1<sup>st</sup> at that Panel for Educational  
10 Policy, at Brooklyn Tech High School, we need to  
11 see all of y'all there. You know I'm from the  
12 South and when we say everybody, we say all  
13 y'all.

14 AUDIENCE: All y'all.

15 MR. HARMON: We need to see all y'all there.

16 AUDIENCE: All y'all.

17 MR. HARMON: All y'all there on February 1<sup>st</sup>  
18 at Brooklyn Tech High School. And again we want  
19 to go on record that we oppose the closing of  
20 this school.

21 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

22 [Applause, cheering]

23 MS. HARRIS: Jonathan... Jonathan Worthy.

24 [Audience reaction]

25 MS. HARRIS: Rayvon Morehand?

1 [Audience reaction]

2 MS. HARRIS: Rayvon Williams. Sorry. Ray  
3 Vaughn Williams [phonetic]. And Devon James.

4 AUDIENCE MEMBER 4: Let's go brothers.

5 [Cheering, applause]

6 MR. JONATHAN WORTHY: Um. I'm high  
7 disgusted how someone can--how someone thinks  
8 that Urban is not a fit school. When I entered  
9 here in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I thought I was going to get  
10 accepted to one college, maybe two. I got  
11 accepted to 15 colleges.

12 [Applause]

13 MR. WORTHY: I got accepted... to Hampton  
14 University, Hardwick University, Utah State  
15 University, Bridgeport, just to name a few. And  
16 I got the school basically free with all of  
17 them. Thanks to Urban.

18 [Applause]

19 MR. WORTHY: You can sit there and look at  
20 the statistics and say that they're failing but  
21 what I was taught UAAHAC was, statistics can be  
22 wrong. By statistics I'm supposed to be either  
23 be dead or in jail and obviously--

24 [Whooping, applause]

25 MR. WORTHY: Obviously I'm not in cuffs and

1 I'm not six feet underground. So you can take  
2 your statistics and put them to the side because  
3 I'm not a statistic, I'm not a number. These  
4 gentlemen out there, they're not statistics.  
5 They're not numbers. They're not points.  
6 They're not anything. These are young men going  
7 to make something better with their lives. And  
8 personally I want to have a career in politics  
9 so to end if off just look out for 2041.

10 [Applause, cheering]

11 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

12 MR. RAYVON MOREHAND: Hello everybody. Um.  
13 How you doing Ms. Gus. My name is Rayvon  
14 Morehand [phonetic] and, um, I'm a graduate of  
15 UAAHAC. I gradated at the Class of 2009 along  
16 with my fellow brothers, Jonathan Worthy and  
17 Denzel Blash. And the funny thing is we came in  
18 this school together so we've been through  
19 everything. So not only is they my brothers but  
20 this whole school is my--this is my family. So  
21 excuse me if I get a little emotional, if I  
22 think y'all try to take my family or at least  
23 break us apart because I grew up here. I came  
24 in here as a pre-teen and I gradated as a young  
25 man with so many options that I'm sure that had

1 I not came to UAAHAC I wouldn't have. So I  
2 appreciate this school. To the--to the highest  
3 extent. I come anytime I can to give a helping  
4 hand. Just to shake a hand with a brother who's  
5 a freshman. Jus to complement them on a shirt  
6 and tie because you don't see a lot of African  
7 American males even dress like that at school.

8 [Applause, cheering]

9 MR. MOREHAND: With that said, um, you--you  
10 feel the love in the room. I don't have to tell  
11 you how much--how much love this school has.  
12 And at the end of the day I have options, like I  
13 said, I go--I'm currently at Manhattan Vo  
14 College. I'm doing my--I'm majoring in  
15 communications and sociology. And I feel like  
16 without UAAHAC none of this would have been  
17 possible. So I love this school. As I once  
18 said and I just hope that y'all know even if  
19 y'all call the statistics that we are failing,  
20 we're going to use that as stepping stones and  
21 we're going to bypass all of that because I know  
22 the capabilities of my school, because I've been  
23 here, and I've seen the honor rolls and the 90  
24 averages and I was a part of that so you cannot  
25 take that away from us. Thank you.

1 [Applause]

2 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

3 MR. RAYVON WILLIAMS: Good evening my name  
4 is Rayvon Williams [phonetic]. Um, Class of  
5 2011 and Posse Scholar--Scholarship recipient to  
6 Franklin Morse from Lancaster, Pa.

7 [Audience shouting all right]

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Um, I'm attending... thank you.  
9 I've attended UAAHAC since my freshman year, uh.  
10 I transferred in, uh, beginning of the first  
11 marking period. I came from New Jersey. And,  
12 um, when I first came to UAAHAC I wasn't this  
13 person I am today. And that's largely in part  
14 to the UAAHAC community. I--I can go to any one  
15 of these teachers and have a conversation about  
16 anything. And I think just having--being able  
17 to go to any of my teachers to talk about  
18 anything, whether it be about academics or  
19 social issues, anything that I have--I'm having  
20 problems with during my--during my day or  
21 whatever, I think that that's what UAAHAC--  
22 that's what differ--differentiates UAAHAC from  
23 any other schools. Because of my past where I  
24 didn't have that close teacher relationship that  
25 I have with any teachers here, I can--I can

1 email any of my teachers and talk about  
2 anything. And I think that that's a huge, huge,  
3 huge--it just helped me so much because now I'm  
4 here today, going to college and I don't think  
5 freshman year when I first came into UAAHAC that  
6 would have never been. I would never be where I  
7 am today because the path I was going down, I  
8 wasn't--it wasn't conducive to who I am. And I  
9 know that if I--to continue down that path I  
10 would not be going to college today. And I  
11 thank the UAAHAC community and everybody, the  
12 parents, the students. I can call any of my  
13 fellow brothers, that's what we call each other  
14 here, we call each other brothers because we  
15 really feel that we are blood brothers. I can  
16 call any one of them and they'll pick up the  
17 phone. It could be 2:00 in the morning. I'm  
18 struggling with this math problem in Trig. And  
19 they'll--they'll be there for me. I can  
20 honestly say that. And I think that the UAAHAC-  
21 -that's what's different about the UAAHAC  
22 community. If you close UAAHAC down you're  
23 going to send everybody else to different  
24 schools and what are they going to do? They're  
25 going to be in--in a community where everybody's

1 walking around, sagging their pants, calling  
2 each other the N word, this and that. What is--  
3 what is UAAHAC here for then? You don't--

4 [Applause]

5 MR. WILLIAMS: --don't call each other the N  
6 word, we call each other brothers. Thank you.

7 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

8 MR. DEVON JAMES: Um, my name is Devon James  
9 [phonetic]. And as my brother Rayvon said, when  
10 I first came to this school, I was pretty much a  
11 bad kid. I didn't like to come to class a lot  
12 but my teachers helped me and now I'm passing  
13 Regents, I'm passing Regents with flying colors.  
14 And, um... oh gosh I forgot what I was going to  
15 say.

16 [Applause]

17 MR. JAMES: Um, UAAHAC has transformed me so  
18 much because when I first came here, I didn't  
19 know what this school was about at all. To tell  
20 you the truth I didn't even pick this school.  
21 But now I can honestly say that if I was to  
22 pick--if I was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade I honestly would  
23 say that I could... I could, um... yeah, this would  
24 be the first school that I would pick. And I  
25 could say that I recommend this school to

1 anybody because this school has helped me so  
2 much, in so many ways. And also that, um, that  
3 if this school was to close down, I mean you're  
4 pretty much, you're pretty much killing off--  
5 pretty much killing us off as is right now  
6 because we--we're already statistics as is. And  
7 what you're doing now is--it just isn't right.  
8 So thank you.

9 [Applause]

10 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. Cornelia James--

11 MR. DEVEAUX: [Interposing] He has more  
12 time. He has more time. So we're going to say  
13 the mantra. Oh okay he's the last student.  
14 Just follow after me, all right--

15 MS. HARRIS: [Interposing] I'm--I'm sorry.  
16 We need--actually we have about--we have more  
17 people on the list and we want to just make sure  
18 that we get through everyone. Get--but--I know  
19 but we want to get through everyone--

20 [Audience response]

21 MR. DEVEAUX: So open your eyes--

22 AUDIENCE: Open your eyes.

23 MR. DEVEAUX: Tune your ears.

24 AUDIENCE: Tune your ears.

25 MR. DEVEAUX: So you know what you see.

1 AUDIENCE: So you know what you see.

2 MR. DEVEAUX: And understand what you hear.

3 AUDIENCE: And understand what you hear.

4 MR. DEVEAUX: Minute by minute.

5 AUDIENCE: Minute by minute.

6 MR. DEVEAUX: Hour by hour.

7 AUDIENCE: Hour by hour.

8 MR. DEVEAUX: And we know our story--

9 MS. HARRIS: [Interposing] Thank you.

10 AUDIENCE: And we know our story.

11 MR. DEVEAUX: We know our power.

12 AUDIENCE: We know our power. U-HAC, U-HAC,  
13 U-HAC.

14 [Applause]

15 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. Cornelia James.

16 Emso Ashimoto. Dave Haverstock. Seku

17 Brackwaith. Sayko Brackwaith. Cornelia James?

18 Emso Ashimoto? Dave Haverstock? [all phonetic]

19 Okay.

20 [Pause]

21 MS. CORNELIA CHISHOLM: Good evening. My

22 name really is Cornelia Chisholm [phonetic].

23 Okay it's just an error on the paper. Okay. I

24 am the proud parent of a scholar attending Urban

25 Assembly Academy of History and Citizenship. My

1 son is enrolled in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade at the school.

2 I was very excited and proud that he was

3 accepted into the school and now I feel quite

4 the opposite because of the possibility that

5 this school may be phased out. I have quite a

6 few adjectives that I could use to describe how

7 I feel about the prospect of this happening.

8 But I--I am only going to use two.

9 Disappointment and sadness. This school is very

10 unique in the fact that it is designed for

11 African American and Hispanic young men who have

12 already been marginalized because of who they

13 are. This school is about building character

14 and responsibility for our young men. I think

15 that many of us in this room have great

16 expectations for our children. That they would

17 one day achieve the goals and dreams that they

18 aspire in order to succeed. I know that it is

19 sometimes difficult to make decisions that are

20 right but the right decision tonight concerning

21 this school is to keep this school open and

22 provide it with the right support and services

23 and to help our young men and other young men to

24 achieve. Thank you.

25 [Applause]

1 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

2 MR. DAVE HAVERSTOCK: Hi, my name is Dave  
3 Haverstock and I'm a teacher at one of the other  
4 schools here in the building. I'd like to  
5 comment on standards and fairness. The, uh,  
6 DOE's gone to great lengths to, uh, try to  
7 standardize this grading system that they have  
8 giving all the schools now, uh, report cards.  
9 And we know stan--uh--uh--standardized tests  
10 shows minimum ability. If someone gets, uh, uh,  
11 you know, a 1250 on the SAT, they're at least  
12 that. They're probably more than that. And I  
13 think as Mr. DeVeaux, uh, showed us, a clear  
14 patterns of success, that's--that's just the  
15 minimum of what this school has done. But also  
16 fairness, to think that, uh, it's my  
17 understanding that the Urban Assembly was  
18 promised a, a, a place of its own. How can you  
19 run--how can you run an experimental, uh, school  
20 like this, a school that has a very specific  
21 purpose and design, how can you do that and not  
22 fulfill the promise that you gave form the--from  
23 the get-go? And then--

24 [Applause]

25 Mr. HAVERSTOCK: --how... can you then judge

1 it based on the--on, uh, unfulfilled promises.  
2 And as a teacher, uh, in another small school I-  
3 -I'd just like to know if it's--if it's possible  
4 that you can have--we can have the rug pulled  
5 out from under us, judged unfairly the way, uh,  
6 Urban Assembly is being judged right now, that  
7 really is a concern for me. Thanks.

8 [Applause]

9 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

10 MR. SAYKU BRACKWAITH: Uh, thank you, um, I  
11 hope that everyone on the panel or whoever, uh,  
12 are the decision-makers or helping the decision-  
13 makers make the decision, I hope that you're  
14 still present with us right now. Um. I--there  
15 are a few points that I'd like to make. One,  
16 um, about statistics, a lot of people have  
17 already said this but, um, my position is that  
18 about 92% of all statistics are made up on the  
19 spot and so, you know, a lot of times those  
20 statistics don't really matter when you talk  
21 about real people and the hearts of these  
22 people. I coordinate an arts program. I don't  
23 know what the arts situation is like at Urban  
24 Assembly--at this particular school. I'm not--  
25 I'm unaware of it. However I know that there

1 are two young men who are in the arts program  
2 that I coordinate. And the contributions that  
3 they make to this program are outstanding. All  
4 right. The, the, um, the--what they make to the  
5 conversation, what they bring to the  
6 conversation--and these are students who are  
7 coming from the top private schools in New York  
8 City, all right, from some of the top schools in  
9 New York City period. And the--what they bring  
10 to it artistically and what they bring to it  
11 intellectually is certainly up to standards.  
12 All right? In fact even above standards. So  
13 I'd just like to speak to that. I--I really,  
14 um, I'm--I'm really--I don't know, I'm even  
15 passionate about this and I don't have, uh, that  
16 deep of a relationship with this particular  
17 school but the students who are a part of this  
18 particular program, this arts program, are  
19 outstanding. And I know that a lot of that came  
20 from, you know, how their--their lives and how  
21 their hearts and their spirits have been  
22 cultivated here at this particular institution.  
23 All right. So, um, I'd just like to say that.  
24 And, um, I'm really actually proud of what you  
25 all have done here at the Urban Assembly. And

1 so I would like to thank you all for your  
2 contribution to the community at large.

3 [Applause]

4 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

5 MS. EMSO ASHIMOTO: Good evening everyone,  
6 hey that's loud. Thank you. My name is Emso  
7 Ashimoto [phonetic], I'm a math teacher from  
8 Bronx Expeditionary Learning High School,  
9 another small school in this campus. However  
10 it's been a joy having all--just looking at all  
11 the schools in this--in this building. There is  
12 something that each school brings to this campus  
13 which is--that's what we call it. UAAHAC comes  
14 with that flair. They have that color. They  
15 have that, um, ambiance. When the girls see the  
16 UAAHAC boys coming, I'm talking about my school,  
17 they say Miss, take a look at them. They are  
18 all dressed. Okay have you ever seen this?  
19 Look at them. All neatly dressed. It--it tells  
20 them something. It puts a picture in front of  
21 them and that discipline goes across the board.  
22 Now that's not the only school with uniforms in  
23 the building. We have other schools on this  
24 campus. They all have their uniforms as well.  
25 Media, Medical, Image, they all have their

1 uniforms. However with that uniform there is  
2 something that goes on with all the schools.  
3 Number two, you're talking about the school  
4 having an F. And I heard one teacher mention,  
5 since when does just one F make you close down  
6 something? We don't shut down students when  
7 they have an F. I teach math. F is quite a  
8 good name. It's a big name in math class. And  
9 when a child comes in with an F grade, that  
10 teacher sits with that child. And you start  
11 asking where is this child lacking that skill?  
12 Is it in--are they having some computational  
13 difficulties or errors? Thank you Sir. Or are  
14 they having difficulties in this area. You  
15 begin to target that area and work with them.  
16 So I'm asking in a nutshell or just draw it up  
17 that you get them the right help they need. Get  
18 them the tools to make what they have in place  
19 work even better. Thank you very much.

20 [Applause]

21 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. Etua Binet  
22 [phonetic]. Angela Hawkins, Melanie Martinez,  
23 Francis Pena and Chauncey Young. Etua? Angela  
24 Hawkins, oh. Okay. It's got to be a choice.  
25 Melanie Martinez. Francis Pena and Chauncey

1 Young.

2 [Applause]

3 MS. HARRIS: Etua?

4 [Audience talking]

5 MR. ETUA BINET: Yeah. Um, all I have to  
6 say is I'm one of the Spanish students that had  
7 came to this school without knowing English. I  
8 didn't...

9 [Audience shouting]

10 MR. BINET: All right. I didn't--I didn't  
11 know how to speak no English or nothing. This  
12 school has helped me understand how to speak,  
13 how to communicate myself with others. And it's  
14 not--I'm not saying that it's just the school  
15 that showed me how to speak English 'cause I  
16 have been to other schools before but no other  
17 school have--have gave me time to like--they--  
18 they--they put the time to show me the--how to  
19 speak English or how to--you know how to read  
20 and write. So that's just all I have to say,

21 [Applause]

22 MS. ANGELA HAWKINS: Good evening everyone.  
23 I'm the mother of a student in UAAHAC and I just  
24 have two observations right now. One is this  
25 board of, um, Department of Education said at a

1 meeting that I was--that I attended before  
2 that they wanted to help the school to do the  
3 best they can to make it right and they were  
4 willing to do anything they could to see that  
5 happen. If that is true why would you give the  
6 principal of this school a free pass to transfer  
7 and be a principal to a--to a new school and not  
8 tell him to stay here and assist with these  
9 students if you didn't know that this was going  
10 to happen, if you weren't just so sure that this  
11 was going to be the end result. That's one  
12 question that I have.

13 [Applause]

14 MS. HAWKINS: My second question to you  
15 tonight is ask your boss, Mayor Bloomberg, if he  
16 would ever do this to a Yeshiva school. And I  
17 believe that the answer is no he would never do  
18 this to a Yeshiva school, to a Jewish school.  
19 With that said I just have a statement. I want  
20 to say to you Department of Education, I do not  
21 buy into your manipulated statistics, your  
22 calculated figures, your poor excuses that  
23 you're trying to sell us here tonight. I have  
24 seen you at work in the past. I watched you  
25 destroy establishments that uplifted and

1 strengthened and promoted young Black and  
2 Latino males. I saw you tear down the Boys  
3 Choir of Harlem which is where my son attended  
4 school before he came here. And I see the same  
5 pattern now. I see you bringing down any  
6 establishment that promotes through culture and  
7 pride the advancements of Black and Latin males  
8 and if that school does it too well, you bring  
9 that establishment down. And I challenge you  
10 here tonight to ask yourselves why. Thank you.

11 [Applause, cheering]

12 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

13 MR. CHAUNCEY YOUNG: Good evening. My name  
14 is Chauncey Young and I'm a parent here in the  
15 Bronx and I'm actually an organizer also with  
16 the New York City Coalition for Educational  
17 Justice. I'm just going to take a moment to  
18 speak and then I'm going to ceded the rest of my  
19 time to Francis Tehada who made space for the  
20 co-founder of this school to speak. Um. What I  
21 wanted to bring forward is just what's been--  
22 I've been hearing tonight from a lot of the  
23 young men and the parents here who are speaking  
24 is that, you know, the reality of this school is  
25 that it really is a special school, a niche

1 school, and the fact that it's giving a space  
2 to young Black and Latino men who don't have a  
3 space of their own in the City and who need a  
4 space to be able to succeed. So for the issues  
5 that have here, you know, that have been brought  
6 up by the Department of Education for the  
7 reasons for the closing of this school, it seems  
8 odd when you look at the statistics in the fact  
9 that still given--given then fact that the worst  
10 times of this school, the school has still been  
11 outperforming Black and Latino men across the  
12 City and across the State. So if the school is  
13 still outperforming Black and Latino men across  
14 the City and across the State, why is the school  
15 on the closing list? The other issue that seems  
16 clear in talking to parents and--and students in  
17 the last week is just that there seems to be a  
18 big issue with the principal who left. And the  
19 principal left two weeks before this school year  
20 began. And that there was a connection with  
21 the--with--with Urban Assembly and maybe  
22 communication not happening with the support  
23 that was be--being provided. So it just seems  
24 that this school should be given a second  
25 chance.

1 [Applause]

2 MS. MELANIE MARTINEZ: Well there's not much  
3 time left. All I want to say is I've been a  
4 resident of this community for--I'm 47 years  
5 old, for 45 years. I knew this school when it  
6 was Taft and I--I've seen the changes. I'm a  
7 mother of 2 boys that both attended all boy  
8 schools and I can tell you the challenges of  
9 just being a Hispanic male growing up in this  
10 area. I also have 2 daughters, 1 who attended  
11 Medical Sciences here so I can tell you she  
12 graduated a year ahead of time. She's in Lehman  
13 College right now. That these--all small  
14 schools work. We're not always going to get the  
15 great scores but we need your support and this  
16 is the time that I'm begging you, I'm begging  
17 you, give it a second chance. Help them. See  
18 it through. Let's see what can happen next  
19 year. Give them another year just to see what  
20 we can do, please. Thank you.

21 [Applause]

22 MR. FRANCIS PENA: Hello, hi, how is  
23 everybody doing. Uh, my name is Francis Pena.  
24 Uh, I work with a community organization out  
25 here in the Bronx and from one--the one's that's

1 their wallet [phonetic] and other programs  
2 and, uh, we wanted to come to this school  
3 because, uh, we wanted to build--work with youth  
4 leadership, build a few leader--youth  
5 leadership, learn from youth leadership. And I  
6 know, uh, even though we worked with some  
7 schools in the Bronx, I know that Brother Patah  
8 especially and the UAAHAC band they were like,  
9 uh, the most open, the most supportive, you  
10 know, the most inspiring and they really were--  
11 though they--we learned a lot from them, you  
12 know, we together, you know, UAAHAC and our  
13 organization, you know, we did political  
14 Washington D.C. retreats and I see some of the  
15 people from--that went with us to the Washington  
16 D.C. You know, we also had like, uh, a youth  
17 fund green market, like the green market was  
18 entirely run by the UAAHAC young men. So they  
19 made all the economic decisions, all the  
20 investment decisions of what to buy, what to  
21 sell, the profits and whatnot. And, you know, I  
22 remember the first week, um, so when the profits  
23 and pay were greater than, you know, the  
24 investment, they said wait a minute this ain't  
25 the right kind of like model. We have to change

1 it up a little bit. You know, they learned  
2 and we learned and they did better and we did  
3 better. And I think we would do better with a  
4 greater chance. Thank you.

5 [Applause]

6 MR. EVERETT HAMLET: Good afternoon  
7 everybody. My name is Everett Hamlet.

8 FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 2: Hey Everett.

9 MR. HAMLET: Uh, hello. Being here at  
10 UAAHAC allows me to develop my voice. I know  
11 four years ago I wouldn't be able to do this,  
12 just stand in front of a bunch of people and  
13 just talk. Like I've been told here one of the  
14 fears of mankind of whatever is public speaking  
15 so I applaud myself for coming up here.

16 [Applause]

17 MR. HAMLET: Being at this school allowed me  
18 to broaden my mind and it allowed me to question  
19 things. So I question you. Why are you closing  
20 us down? I learned you cannot change something  
21 without fully understanding it so you do not  
22 understand us. You're not in this school. You  
23 don't know what's going on within these four  
24 walls during our classroom, during our mantras,  
25 during third period. That means a lot to us.

1 So you taking away is like taking away part of  
2 our lives. It's like ripping a part of heart  
3 and just throwing it on the floor and stomping  
4 on it. I would not allow you to stomp on my  
5 heart.

6 [Applause]

7 MR. HAMLET: So...

8 [Applause continues]

9 MR. HAMLET: I just wish I can give you my  
10 eyes and so you can see the school the way I see  
11 it.

12 [Applause]

13 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.

14 [Applause continues, shout-outs from the  
15 audience]

16 MS. HARRIS: We have now concluded the  
17 public comment portion of the agenda. We will  
18 now begin the question and answer period.  
19 Remember there will be some individual questions  
20 and others that have been bucketed into  
21 categories where we will have representative  
22 answers--answers at. Any question that is not  
23 answered here tonight will be answered on the  
24 website. If you have additional questions at  
25 the conclusion of tonight's proceedings we ask

1 that you direct them to us via the telephone  
2 number and email address found on the fact  
3 sheet. Deputy Chancellor?

4 [Pause]

5 MR. STERNBERG: There are several questions.  
6 I'll read them and give our answer and I  
7 appreciate, uh, that we've been here to listen,  
8 uh, and we'll offer our answer here and  
9 appreciate your respect for those answers.  
10 First question is how does closing this--how--  
11 how closing this school will make things better  
12 for my son who is graduating with honors? So  
13 we're certainly pleased that some graduates,  
14 some students at this school graduate. This  
15 child will graduate with honors. We're happy  
16 about that. The fact remains though that 57% of  
17 this school, of this graduating class, most  
18 recent graduating class, did not graduate. And  
19 we know from our work across New York City in  
20 developing schools that we can do better. That  
21 the citywide graduation rate in the last eight  
22 years has gone from 49% to 63% and that the  
23 graduation rate of small schools, in fact, is  
24 much higher. That answers the question.

25 AUDIENCE MEMBER %: What's the graduation

1 rate for men?

2 MR. STERNBERG: There are additional  
3 questions and I appreciate your patience as we  
4 get to those. There are additional questions  
5 about that and we'll get to those questions. So  
6 the next question asks, uh, asks what the City  
7 graduation rate is for boys of color. And I, I  
8 will not, this evening dispute the numbers that  
9 were shared earlier. And I appreciate the  
10 presentation so do not--I do not dispute those  
11 numbers and have--I--I do not have a different  
12 number. I do not have a number that the  
13 Department of Education published on this but  
14 accept the number that you offered. I would  
15 offer, I would offer two thoughts, uh, in  
16 response to the question though. This school is  
17 a part of a network of schools, the Urban  
18 Assembly network of schools. And the graduation  
19 rate for Black and Latino males in aggregate  
20 across all Urban Assembly schools is 77%.

21 MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 3: Really? That  
22 sucks.

23 MR. STERNBERG: The graduation rate across--  
24 I appreciate your respect as I respected you.

25 [Audience continues to talk then settled

1 down]

2 MR. STERNBERG: The graduation rate with  
3 Regents diploma across--diplomas across all  
4 Urban Assembly schools is 60% and I'll remind  
5 you that the graduation rate here is 43% and the  
6 Regents rate is 16%. Again we are pleased for  
7 students who have felt well-served by this  
8 school but a 43% graduation rate, a graduation  
9 rate that is so significantly below the city  
10 average is not a number that we can be pleased  
11 with and is not a number that we can accept and  
12 is not good enough. There were several  
13 questions about the supports that teachers have  
14 received and the school has received, uh, so  
15 I'll combine those here. When did teachers  
16 receive resources to meet the needs of our--of  
17 our scholars? And then another question, did  
18 UAA--did Urban Assembly get support for helping  
19 its most vulnerable students? So, uh, what I  
20 will say, uh, what I will say to this question  
21 is a--a few things, first of all like all  
22 schools across New York City funding is  
23 allocated to schools on a per pupil basis, a  
24 fair funded, per pupil basis. Uh, and respond--  
25 that is responsive to the specific needs of

1 children. So that's the first point. The  
2 second is that as mentioned this school is a  
3 part of a network, the Urban Assembly network.  
4 A network that has done strong work across New  
5 York City in supporting schools. Specifically  
6 that network has provided additional staff at no  
7 cost to the school including full-time special  
8 education teachers and staff and part-time  
9 college support staff. The network has  
10 underwritten teacher training programs including  
11 a week long professional development for staff  
12 in Vermont during the summer. The network has  
13 also provided achievement coaches to the school  
14 to provide operational and instructional support  
15 for the development of staff here at the school.  
16 The next questions responds to some comments  
17 about the principal, the prior principal of the  
18 school, the founding principal I believe. The  
19 founding principal? So if the DOE had an  
20 obligation to help and guide Urban Assembly why  
21 would they allow the principal to be transferred  
22 to another high school in the beginning of the  
23 school year? So contrary to the assumption in  
24 the question, the Department does not allow or  
25 disallow people to make decisions about where

1 they work. And this is not a decision we made  
2 for the principal. It is not an idea we put  
3 into the principal's head. And it was not done  
4 at a moment when we had investigated whether  
5 this school would stay open or not. So again  
6 this was a decision that the former principal  
7 made for himself, not a decision we made for  
8 him. The next question asks what will happen to  
9 the space on the Taft campus. As I mentioned in  
10 my opening comments, there is not a current plan  
11 to replace the school on the Taft campus. We  
12 are not presenting that plan in the EIS this  
13 year. We, uh, we will contemplate options for  
14 the campus in the out years, uh, and--but again,  
15 uh, do not have a proposal at present to replace  
16 this school on the Taft campus. The next  
17 question is can on-track juniors transfer easily  
18 to other schools? So two points to this  
19 question. One is that we, uh, we are open and,  
20 uh, even will--would encourage--we encourage  
21 students to do what they want to do. Uh, this  
22 school will remain open. It will not close next  
23 year. It will phase out over the course of the  
24 following years. The--the school will continue  
25 to serve students, uh. Juniors, on-track

1 juniors and students across the school should  
2 remain in the school, uh, if they are on--on  
3 track to graduate. They can choose to seek  
4 other options. We're happy to discuss those  
5 options with them after the vote, uh, by the  
6 Panel for Education Policy. Uh, and we  
7 encourage students who might be interested in  
8 transferring to speak with the guidance  
9 counselor here at the school, again, after that  
10 vote is taken. Melissa, there ends the  
11 questions.

12 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. We have heard many  
13 significant comments this evening and we  
14 appreciate your, um, feedback and your  
15 contributions to tonight's joint public hearing.  
16 All information we've received today will be  
17 shared with the Panel on Education Policy which  
18 will have its hearing on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 at  
19 6:00 PM at Brooklyn Technical High School. The  
20 information is found on the back of your fact  
21 sheet.

22 MR. STERNBERG: Excuse me. It has come to  
23 my attention, uh, that, um, the... Mr. DeVeaux,  
24 uh, is challenging the statistic that I gave,  
25 uh, the 77% graduation rate across Urban

1 Assembly schools, uh, which I said is the  
2 graduation rate for African American and Latino  
3 males, uh. That is my understanding. Uh, you  
4 are--you are saying that that is for male and  
5 female students. So, uh, if that is true I will  
6 certainly follow up and I will confirm that with  
7 you by email, uh, if--if--if it is mistaken I  
8 apologize. My understanding is that that is the  
9 correct statistic for male and female students  
10 across all Urban Assembly schools but we will  
11 check that data.

12 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. Thank you all for  
13 coming out this evening. This joint public  
14 hearing is officially adjourned.

15 [Meeting breaking up]

16 [Audio ends]

17 [END 181\_960.MP3]

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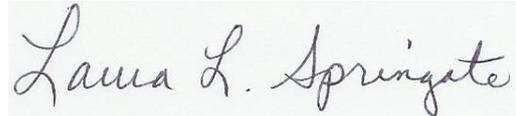
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura L. Springate". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Signature: Laura L. Springate

Date: January 23, 2011

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