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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF  
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**  
**Sheepshead Bay High School - 3/28/12**

1 [START 290\_178]

2 MS. JENNY SILVERMAN: Good evening ladies and  
3 gentlemen. My name is Jenny Silverman, and I  
4 will be serving as the facilitator for this  
5 evening's joint public hearing. This is a joint  
6 public hearing of the Department of Education  
7 Community Education Council 22, and the School  
8 Leadership Team, to discuss the proposed closure  
9 and replacement of Sheephead's, Sheephead's Bay-  
10 -

11 [Crosstalk]

12 MS. SILVERMAN: I think they've made it  
13 clear. Sheephead's bay High School.

14 [Crosstalk]

15 MS. SILVERMAN: I apologize. Okay, so let  
16 me just make a couple notes before we go on.  
17 This evening's hearing will be transcribed and  
18 recorded, and there's also interpretation  
19 services available. We had an announcement  
20 earlier. We can make another if folks need  
21 trans interpretation services, they are in the  
22 back. And then a couple other notes, there are,  
23 there's agendas here in English and Spanish down  
24 front. So we'll go through the agenda. There's  
25 a presentation from the Deputy Chancellor,

1 presentation from other members of the panel,  
2 and then there is an opportunity for public  
3 comment. So if you're interested in  
4 participating in that portion of the agenda, I  
5 would encourage you to make your way to the  
6 back, where you can sign up at the table as you  
7 were entering, and each person - - hello, oh,  
8 excuse me. Each person who signs up is given  
9 two minutes to speak and we'll have a gentleman  
10 down here in the front, who will hold up a sign  
11 to let you know you've gotten to 30 seconds, and  
12 then that your time has elapsed. And we do have  
13 a pretty long list of speakers, so I am going to  
14 try and keep us on track, just reminding you  
15 that we've got other folks, so asking that we  
16 keep going and keep it as close to two minutes  
17 as possible, and I do hope that we can all  
18 remain calm and, and listen to each other and  
19 our neighbors. And then after we have exhausted  
20 that list, we'll move into question and answer.  
21 So also at the back, there is index cards  
22 available. So if you have a question that you  
23 would like to pose to anyone on the panel,  
24 please again, make your way to the back; write  
25 down your question; there are volunteers and

1 staff in the room, or you can take it to the  
2 back. And then again, once we get through the  
3 speakers, we'll have an opportunity for question  
4 and answer. And I will say in advance, that we  
5 may have some repetitive questions, so we'll  
6 batch them together so we're not answering the  
7 same question over and over. And there also  
8 maybe questions that we don't respond to  
9 tonight, and all the questions that are  
10 submitted will be included in the analysis of  
11 public comment, which is published online prior  
12 to the panel vote, and also made available to  
13 the panel members. And I don't believe we have  
14 any elected representatives here with us yet,  
15 but if they do join us, we'll give them an  
16 opportunity to speak if they would like to. So  
17 again, the agenda is here, and you can sort of  
18 keep track of where we are. I went through the  
19 speakers and the Q&A, so also another note, if  
20 at the end of the hearing you have additional  
21 questions or comments, you can submit those up  
22 until the day before the panel meeting, which is  
23 April 26<sup>th</sup>, and there is an email, which is d22,  
24 the number two, two, proposals, @  
25 schools.nyc.gov, and also by phone, to (212)

1 374-0208. And again, any comments or questions  
2 that are included there on either of those lines  
3 will be in the analysis of public comment that's  
4 published online and made available to the panel  
5 members. Okay, and so now I'm going to briefly  
6 just introduce the panel, and then turn it over  
7 to the Deputy Chancellor. We have Deputy  
8 Chancellor Mark Sternberg. We have from the CEC  
9 Mr. Christopher Spinelli from the SLT Thaddeus  
10 Russell, and from the Citywide, Citywide Council  
11 on High Schools, we have Monique Lindsey. So I  
12 will now invite the Deputy Chancellor to present  
13 the proposal.

14 MS. MARK STERNBERG: Thank you Jenny. Thank  
15 you everybody for being here. I want to thank  
16 the Principal and the SLT for having us here  
17 this evening.

18 [Crosstalk]

19 MR. STERNBERG: Again my name, can you hear  
20 me? Sorry, thank you. Again, my name is Mark  
21 Sternberg, Deputy Chancellor for the Division of  
22 Portfolio Planning. It's a pleasure to be here  
23 this evening. I want to start by--

24 [Background Noise]

25 MR. STERNBERG: Let's try that again. So as

1 we know, we're here this evening for a joint  
2 public hearing, convened to discuss the proposed  
3 closure and replacement of Sheepshead pay High  
4 School. I want to, I want to start by talking  
5 for a moment about what this evening should be,  
6 and what it is expected to be, and what it is  
7 not expected to be. And I'll start with what I  
8 think this evening is not. This evening is not  
9 a moment in time when the department comes and  
10 expects to convince the people in the room that  
11 they are wrong in how they feel about what is  
12 proposed. That is not what we expect this  
13 evening. Neither, uh, nor is it true that this  
14 evening is a decision point. This evening is  
15 intended to be a forum for the department to  
16 hear the concerns and feelings of students,  
17 parents, teachers, administrators, folks in the  
18 Sheepshead Bay Community. It is an opportunity  
19 for members of this community to voice concerns  
20 and to be heard. It is not the evening on which  
21 we make our decision. It is a, an opportunity  
22 required by law, when a school is proposed for  
23 closure, for the department to again hear these  
24 voices and these current concerns. And I fully  
25 expect this evening, to hear many passionate

1 voices from many individuals, students and  
2 teachers and parents who feel they have been  
3 well served by Sheepshead Bay over the years. I  
4 will emphasize throughout my comments this  
5 evening that our decision to close the school is  
6 a difficult one, perhaps the most difficult one  
7 that we make at the department. In this  
8 instance it is made more difficult by some of  
9 the real strengths we see here at Sheepshead  
10 Bay. And it will be made more difficult by the  
11 voices that we hear this evening, in what I  
12 hope, as Jenny articulated, can be a reasonable  
13 conversation in which we hear each other, we  
14 answer each other's questions, and, uh, and  
15 everyone is heard. But fundamentally, the view  
16 of the department is that when we find a school  
17 where improvement is not happening at the pace  
18 where we want it, and when there are populations  
19 of students who are not well served, we are  
20 compelled on behalf of current students and  
21 future students, to make a decision. And the  
22 proposal we have made, as you all know, is to  
23 propose for panel vote on April 26<sup>th</sup>, the closure  
24 and replacement of Sheepshead Bay High School.  
25 In this proposal, our hope is that new

1 structures will be introduced here at the  
2 school that many of the talented faculty who are  
3 here, and there are many, will join new faculty  
4 in the creation of a new team, under new  
5 leadership that will serve students well across  
6 all grades, all content areas, and produce  
7 dramatically better outcomes. Let me be clear  
8 that it is our full expectation that this new  
9 school will be built on the strengths, that is  
10 the strongest elements, already in place here.  
11 And again, we acknowledge that there are strong  
12 elements, and I will, I will discuss some of  
13 those, and we will hear about many of those.  
14 But I also want to be clear, that our belief is  
15 that only by closing and reopening, by building  
16 on those strengths, by bringing new structures  
17 to the school, and the infusion of new talent  
18 that will surround the talent that exists here,  
19 can we hope to see the kind of dramatic gains  
20 that we all want for students who are served  
21 here at this school. So a few technical notes  
22 here, Sheepshead Bay High School is located here  
23 at 3000 Avenue X, in community school district  
24 22 in Brooklyn. It currently serves students in  
25 grades nine through 12. It is co-located with

1 P811K here at K495. That is a district 75  
2 inclusion program in building K495. As we know,  
3 co-location means that two or more school  
4 organizations are located in the same building  
5 and may share some large common spaces like the  
6 auditoriums, gymnasium and cafeterias. On  
7 February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the Department of Education  
8 published a proposal to close Sheepshead Bay  
9 High School in the form of an education impact  
10 statement. I believe we have copies of this in  
11 multiple languages here. By closing Sheepshead  
12 Bay and opening a new school, the department is  
13 seeking to improve student learning from the  
14 levels currently seen here and represented both  
15 in the qualitative and quantitative data that we  
16 see coming out of the school. I mentioned  
17 before that there are many strings here. So let  
18 me, let me spend a moment discussing some of  
19 those. First I want to acknowledge that the  
20 graduation rate in recent years here at  
21 Sheepshead Bay High School has begun to improve.  
22 As recently as 2008, only 55% of students  
23 graduated of an incoming class, and that  
24 graduation rate has increased to 63% with the  
25 class of 2011.

1 [Applause]

2 MR. STERNBERG: Additionally, Sheepshead bay  
3 appears to be having some success serving  
4 students who arrive at the school learning  
5 English as a second language. Over 62% of  
6 English Language Learner (ELL) students  
7 graduated in four years, which puts--

8 [Applause]

9 MR. STERNBERG: This places Sheepshead Bay  
10 High School in the 58<sup>th</sup> percentile citywide of  
11 all high schools on this measure, which is  
12 certainly a strength. However, based on the  
13 data that we have collected and pay attention  
14 to, both the data that shows up in a progress  
15 report, and the data that we see anecdotally and  
16 qualitatively here at the school, in addition to  
17 feedback, how are we doing here guys? In  
18 addition to feedback, we've received from  
19 members of the leadership of the New York State  
20 Department of Education and the Board of Regents  
21 who have commented that the pace of change in  
22 New York City's persistently low achieving  
23 schools is not satisfactory and not quick  
24 enough. The department has concluded that  
25 Sheepshead Bay should be closed and replaced

1 with a new school that again will build on the  
2 strengths and the structures that are in place  
3 that have led to the increase in the graduation  
4 rates and the good service to students learning  
5 English as a second language, but address other  
6 weaknesses across the school, that the new  
7 structural and programmatic elements to a  
8 school, combined with the infusion of talent,  
9 can help address a series of very serious  
10 concerns, some of which I will list here.  
11 First, as I've mentioned, Sheepshead Bay was  
12 identified in 2009 by the State Education  
13 Department, and the Board of Regents as a  
14 persistently low achieving school, for it's  
15 consistently low graduation rate, and, uh, and  
16 the ability to serve sub-populations well. The  
17 progress report published by the Department of  
18 Education measures progress of certain student  
19 populations and proficiency of the overall, of  
20 the overall student population of the school,  
21 compared to 39 other schools serving similar  
22 populations, and similar need profile of  
23 students across the city. And on that progress  
24 report, Sheepshead Bay has not done well.  
25 Sheepshead Bay earned an overall D grade on its

1 annual progress report for the 2010/11 school  
2 year, with a D grade in, on student performance,  
3 a D grade on student progress, a D grade on  
4 school environment, which measures safety and  
5 security among other things, as measured by, uh,  
6 in a survey from students and staff. This  
7 represents a decline from an overall C grade on  
8 its annual progress report from the 2009/10  
9 school year. We also know that Sheepshead Bay  
10 is not adequately preparing students for the  
11 rigors of college and career. Only 10% of  
12 students in the class of 2010/11 were prepared  
13 for college after four years in high school,  
14 well below the city average of 25%. If Regent's  
15 Diplomas alone counted toward graduation, as  
16 will be the case for most students in the  
17 2012/13 school year, the four year graduation  
18 rate here at Sheepshead bay would drop to just  
19 50%, placing the school in the 36<sup>th</sup> percentile of  
20 all high schools citywide. Our prior support  
21 also looks at credit accumulation among first  
22 year students, as this is a key predictor and  
23 indicator of future student success. In  
24 2010/11, only 62% of students here at Sheepshead  
25 Bay earned at least 10 credits. This places

1 Sheepshead Bay in the bottom 11% of all high  
2 schools citywide on this metric. So it's based  
3 on our comprehensive review of these data, both  
4 qualitative and quantitative, of the strengths  
5 that we see here, which are real, of the  
6 weaknesses we see here, which are also real,  
7 that we have arrived at a decision to propose  
8 the closure and replacement of this school.  
9 We'll comment later on the impact to families  
10 and students. Students currently attending the  
11 school who do not graduate this year, will be  
12 guaranteed a seat at the new school, and we'll  
13 have an opportunity to seek alternate placement  
14 through established mechanisms, uh, enrollment  
15 mechanisms. We'll also talk about the process  
16 for staffing the new school over the course of  
17 the evening. Let me say a quick word about the  
18 SIG Applications, the School Improvement Grant  
19 Applications. As many of you know, the federal  
20 government has funded a School Improvement Grant  
21 Program for the country, and for school  
22 districts across the country. As it persisted  
23 in the low achieving school, Sheepshead Bay is  
24 eligible for these SIG dollars. The department  
25 has, in conjunction with this proposal, the

1 Education Impact Statement, which is to be  
2 voted on on April 26<sup>th</sup>, the department has  
3 submitted a school improvement grant  
4 application--

5 [Background Noise]

6 MR. STERNBERG: Apologies, are we good? The  
7 department has, the department has submitted a  
8 school improvement grant application to the  
9 state education department to implement the turn  
10 around model at the new school. If approved,  
11 this would make the school eligible for up to  
12 1.5, actually just, just north of \$1.5 Million,  
13 uh, in addition to the school's normal operating  
14 budget with federal funds. Again, a quick note  
15 about enrollment implications for students and  
16 families, and then I think, uh, we'll hear from  
17 some of the other panelists this evening. All  
18 current Sheepshead Bay students will have a  
19 guaranteed seat at the new school. This  
20 includes current 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade  
21 students, as well as any 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who  
22 do not graduate by the beginning of the 12/13  
23 school year. All incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who  
24 have applied to Sheepshead Bay, and are matched  
25 to the school in the high school application

1 process, will again be guaranteed their seat  
2 at the new school, and all of the students will  
3 have the option to seek alternate placement if  
4 they so choose. Additionally, I want to note  
5 that if this proposal is approved, beginning at  
6 September 2012, the students at, in the District  
7 75 program, that's P811K at K495, who are  
8 currently served here in Sheepshead Bay's  
9 general education classes, will be enrolled in  
10 the new school, uh, in the new school's general  
11 education classes, as they are this year. Thank  
12 you for your attention, Jenny, over to you.

13 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Deputy Chancellor.  
14 So the next presentation is going to be--

15 [Background Noise]

16 MS. SILVERMAN: --hopefully that second mic  
17 is going to work for you, um, from Christopher  
18 Spinelli from the CEC.

19 MR. CHRISTOPHER SPINELLI: Okay, thank you.  
20 I want to first introduce myself. My name is  
21 Chris Spinelli, and I'm the President of the  
22 Community Education Council for District 22. I  
23 am the President of the District where  
24 Sheepshead Bay High School sits. We represent  
25 the parents and the students of District 22,

1       ironically, not the High School Students of  
2       District 22, which is the way the law is  
3       written, which is a little craziness that we  
4       would be asked to be at this meeting, and  
5       required to be at this meeting. It, it speaks  
6       volumes about the failure of the Department of  
7       Education--

8               [Applause]

9               MR. SPINELLI: When we arrive, when we  
10       arrive at a hearing like this, this really  
11       represents an epic failure on the part of the  
12       Mayor, who wanted to be known as the education  
13       Mayor--

14              [Applause]

15              MR. SPINELLI: --and who has had 10 years to  
16       improve Sheepshead Bay High School. Sheepshead  
17       Bay High School is not a perfect school, but let  
18       me tell you, there are very few perfect schools  
19       out there. It was certainly a school that has  
20       improved in the recent past, as, as indicated by  
21       the Deputy Chancellor. There have been many  
22       strengths that Sheepshead Bay has shown of late.  
23       And ironically, it's at a time when they are  
24       showing strength, is that we are proposing to  
25       close them down.

1 [Applause]

2 MR. SPINELLI: And this is not a very  
3 creative solution. This is not a very creative  
4 solution, for us to take a school that is making  
5 progress, maybe not as fast as the Mayor or the  
6 Chancellor would like, but is showing progress,  
7 and a school that has obviously been here for a  
8 long time, and has served a, you know, quite a  
9 wealth of students here in the Sheepshead Bay  
10 community. So this is really a failure for our  
11 students, for the teachers, and for the  
12 administrators here, to really look and say  
13 wait, you know, what did we do? We were doing  
14 what we were asked to do. We made progress.  
15 The students were making progress here, and the  
16 answer to that is that we're going to, we're  
17 going to close the door, and we're going to  
18 reshuffle the chairs here. So I have a note on  
19 this process as a whole. This educational  
20 impact statement was first put out in February,  
21 February 27<sup>th</sup>. Here we are one month later  
22 having the public hearing. And in one month,  
23 the Panel for Educational Policy will vote on  
24 this. The Panel for Educational Policy has  
25 never voted no to a recommendation of the

1 Department of Ed., or of the Mayor. So this  
2 is not good, because they, the one time that  
3 there was a chance that they may vote no, the  
4 Mayor replaced half of the members of the Panel  
5 for Educational Policy. So this is not a  
6 process--

7 [Applause]

8 MR. SPINELLI: --that really respects  
9 parents. It doesn't respect students. And it  
10 really doesn't respect the hard work of the  
11 educators, and the administrators that have been  
12 here at Sheepshead Bay.

13 [Applause]

14 MR. SPINELLI: It's also a little  
15 disturbing. I'm not going to say that that  
16 statistic about the Sheepshead Bay students are  
17 only 10% prepared for college, but the city wide  
18 average is 25, that's an absolute disgrace that  
19 only 25% of graduates of New York City public  
20 high schools are ready for college. That's  
21 unbelievable that that could even be given in a  
22 public hearing as a strength of the New York  
23 City public school system.

24 [Applause]

25 MR. SPINELLI: As a parent, as a parent of

1 students in this district, and as a parent who  
2 has been involved in this district, you should  
3 be mad as hell, and you really should not take  
4 this.

5 [Applause]

6 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Mr. Spinelli.

7 [Applause]

8 MS. SILVERMAN: And I also just want to let  
9 folks know that the speaker sign up list is  
10 closed. So I hope you had an opportunity to  
11 make your way back. But again, if you have  
12 questions that you'd like to pose, there are  
13 folks with comment cards, or question cards. So  
14 take advantage of that. The next presentation  
15 is from Mr. Thaddeus Russell, representing the  
16 SLT.

17 [Applause]

18 MS. SILVERMAN: Oh, CCHS first, I apologize.  
19 Okay, so the next presentation is going to be  
20 Monique Lindsey from the Citywide Council For  
21 High Schools.

22 [Applause]

23 MS. MONIQUE LINDSEY: So first I would like  
24 to thanks, I hope everyone can hear me. Good  
25 evening everyone.

1           AUDIENCE: Good evening.

2           MS. LINDSEY: I would like to thank the  
3 Principal, the teachers, the staff, the  
4 students, and of course your parents for  
5 allowing us into your wonderful school. That's  
6 my first thing to say.

7           [Applause]

8           MS. LINDSEY: My name is Monique Lindsey. I  
9 represent the Citywide Council on High Schools.  
10 I am one of two Brooklyn representatives. The  
11 Citywide Council on High School, we advise  
12 comment on educational instruction policy  
13 involving high schools. We issue an annual  
14 report, and this is going to be something with  
15 the turn around, on the effectiveness of city  
16 districts in providing services to all Brooklyn  
17 high schools. I have one question; and my  
18 question is, show us that the turn around model  
19 will work.

20           [Applause].

21           MS. LINDSEY: I am also a parent of an 11<sup>th</sup>  
22 grade student in William E. Grady High School,  
23 that is also affected by the turn around model.  
24 And I need parents to be appalled, to be upset,  
25 for the students to be upset, and the teachers,

1 and the staff, because how dare they use our,  
2 on our children's backs, decide what's going to  
3 happen in their schools? We were in  
4 transformation, and we were in our restart  
5 models. They did not allow them to complete  
6 because of politics.

7 [Applause]

8 MS. LINDSEY: Okay, so I, as a  
9 representative who represents parents in  
10 Brooklyn, who represents my son who is a  
11 student, who represents all parents who cannot  
12 be here tonight, because they have to work more  
13 than one job, and who are tired of our  
14 children's education being questioned, you tell  
15 us that you want our children to be college and  
16 career ready, well it's about time that we say  
17 as parents, that we will not be turned around.  
18 Thank you and I waive--

19 [Applause]

20 MS. LINDSEY: --I waive the remainder of my  
21 time to Mr. Russell, who is your SLT, School  
22 Leadership Team Representative. Thank you  
23 everyone.

24 [Applause]

25 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Ms. Lindsey, Mr.

1 Russell.

2 MR. THADDEUS RUSSEL: Good evening everyone.

3 AUDIENCE: Good evening.

4 MR. RUSSELL: We're, we're all here this  
5 evening for a very serious situation. We've,  
6 we've placed, we've placed, I'm going to get  
7 feedback.

8 [Background Noise]

9 MS. SILVERMAN: If you, if you'd like to, do  
10 you want to use this microphone? 'Cause this  
11 one isn't having as much trouble with feedback.

12 MALE VOICE: Try it. Go ahead and try it.

13 MR. RUSSELL: Thank you.

14 MS. SILVERMAN: You can come down here, or--

15 MALE VOICE: [Interposing] Yeah, take it.

16 [Background Noise]

17 MS. SILVERMAN: Do you want to, do you want  
18 to come down here and speak at the podium?

19 MALE VOICE: Yeah - - .

20 MS. SILVERMAN: Yeah.

21 MR. RUSSELL: Standing here at the rostrum,  
22 I know I've been accused of speaking long in  
23 church circles. So I, I will try not to preach.

24 [Crosstalk]

25 [Applause]

1 MR. RUSSELL: We're here this evening at  
2 Sheepshead Bay High School because of the  
3 education college readiness for the young adults  
4 and students of this community. The communities  
5 of this great borough of Brooklyn, and the  
6 surrounding boroughs of this great city of  
7 multiple and first generation families. I know  
8 I've said a lot there, but I'll explain each  
9 part. We've been accused of not having our  
10 students college ready. That can begin with the  
11 elementary schools. The elementary schools of  
12 this city have not been changed before today, or  
13 before the expectations of the Department of  
14 Education, so that the middle schools and high  
15 schools can accept middle school and high school  
16 ready students. Take into consideration  
17 Sheepshead bay accepts students from all over  
18 Brooklyn, and it's not just a level one, two,  
19 three or four in Mathematics or English. But as  
20 some of you have heard me say in the past, we  
21 accept the zeros. And what I mean by that, we  
22 have the immigration of families and students  
23 from the Eastern Block countries, the former  
24 Soviet controlled countries, families that  
25 realize that those countries weren't advancing

1 their educational systems fast enough, so they  
2 applied to come to this country. We have the  
3 Caribbean families, who began immigrating to  
4 this country in the 1960s, hoping for a better  
5 education for their, their children.  
6 Unfortunately, the communities that they were  
7 allowed to live in, those schools were not  
8 supported by the Board of Education, continued  
9 on of not being supported by the Department of  
10 Education of New York. In, um, Mr. Sternberg's  
11 division, Portfolio planning, it specifically  
12 says that the Department of Education will fully  
13 support every student in the city of New York.  
14 All of you know here, and in other districts  
15 throughout the city, because of the particular  
16 families that live in those communities, know  
17 that the Department of Education has not  
18 supported the schools and the education of our  
19 children. My eldest daughter began at  
20 Sheepshead Bay High School in September of 1993.  
21 She didn't graduate on time. I'm glad she's not  
22 here at the moment. But I said that to say, she  
23 went on to graduate from college in four years.  
24 She graduated from graduate school in two years,  
25 took two other majors, graduated in two years.

1 My second daughter, who graduated from here in  
2 1999, who is currently a schoolteacher, a school  
3 not too far from here down on Nostrand Avenue,  
4 she graduated on time. She graduated from  
5 college on time. She became a schoolteacher.  
6 But based upon the department of education  
7 philosophy that has changed, some for the good,  
8 but most for the bad during the last 10 years,  
9 her job is in jeopardy. I have a son that  
10 graduated from here two years ago. Ah, we had  
11 to fight with him as far as being college ready,  
12 as far as getting a Regent's Diploma, but we  
13 were successful. Our last child, who is a  
14 senior here now, he wants to be different from  
15 his brothers and sisters. So he is the problem  
16 right now. But I stand here before all of you  
17 because just as Chancellor Walcott wants to take  
18 his grand children in Cambria Heights to their  
19 middle school, to their elementary school, I  
20 want to take my two grand children to school,  
21 and to have them come to Sheepshead Bay High  
22 School like their parents.

23 [Applause]

24 MR. RUSSELL: It does no good for the  
25 current freshman, sophomore, juniors in this

1 school, to have them see more than half of  
2 their teachers disappear.

3 [Applause]

4 MR. RUSSELL: We know that up to 50% of them  
5 couldn't be rehired, but they are professionals.  
6 They live in other neighborhoods. They have  
7 possible opportunities in other areas. Why  
8 should they fight the Department of Education  
9 now? So that means these same freshmen,  
10 sophomore and juniors will come back in  
11 September with maybe 20% of the teachers that  
12 they had before. That's not good. That's not  
13 good for our children. That's wasting, that's  
14 wasting those years that have been developed in  
15 this school for those students to continue in a  
16 safe environment, an educational environment, a  
17 progressive environment. Teachers that spend  
18 the time, stay here, spend extra times, and they  
19 do it with my son who, current son who does not  
20 see the whole picture yet. They spend the time  
21 with him, because one day he will see, just like  
22 his two brothers and two sisters saw. But every  
23 child sees at a different time, simple as the  
24 students here at, at Sheepshead Bay High School.  
25 The immigrant families that come here, whether

1 they come here from Eastern European  
2 countries, whether they come from the Caribbean  
3 countries, whether they come from the African  
4 countries, which we have, that do not speak  
5 English when they come here, we cannot, in all  
6 honesty, in all fairness, graduate them in four  
7 years. But we have graduated them in five and  
8 six years. And they've gone on--

9 [Applause]

10 MR. RUSSELL: [--they've gone on to be  
11 successful citizens of this city, and this  
12 country. My older two daughters have friends  
13 who did not speak English in their freshman  
14 years here. A few of them have better jobs than  
15 my, my daughters have presently. But, you know,  
16 we're not upset about that. But they took the  
17 opportunity. That's what the teachers here at  
18 Sheepshead Bay instill in the students. Some do  
19 not listen right now. But some listen once they  
20 leave. That's why we need the teachers that we  
21 presently have.

22 [Applause]

23 MR. RUSSELL: We all see in the Educational  
24 Impact Statement, the quote, modest improvements  
25 of Sheepshead Bay. But given what the

1 Department of Education has not accomplished  
2 as supporting the elementary and middle schools  
3 in this city, what else could we accept? Our  
4 parent coordinator accepts children and  
5 families, almost every day, who are not in any  
6 school system in this country, and we gladly  
7 show the families around this wonderful school.  
8 I know with our current Principal, Mr.  
9 O'Mahoney, he has carried on some of the most  
10 important directives that our previous Principal  
11 had initiated, along with the SLT, things that  
12 we put together in the comprehensive educational  
13 plan of 2010. So what you see in this school  
14 now, is something that was started when everyone  
15 said we were persistently low achieving. Those  
16 progress reports, if you notice the, the  
17 percentage of response, I think the parents  
18 respond less than 20%. That's detrimental to  
19 our progress report. It has to be a weighted  
20 average progress report. The parents of the  
21 students at this school do not live in this  
22 neighborhood. Most of them live throughout  
23 Brooklyn, some in Queens, some in Staten Island.  
24 There's some in Manhattan. They work in  
25 Manhattan most of them, or downtown Brooklyn.

1 For them to come here, they pass their home to  
2 come out here, get home, it's time for them to  
3 go to work the next day. That's why it's hard  
4 for us to have parent participation the way it  
5 should be. But if we were a community school,  
6 that wouldn't be the problem. We have the  
7 surrounding schools of Madison, Midwood,  
8 Goldstein. Okay, we know that they accept a  
9 certain level of students to attend there, and  
10 because of the negative name that Sheepshead Bay  
11 has been given, a lot of it because of what  
12 shows up on the website of the Department of  
13 Education, to discourage parents from allowing  
14 their children to come here, that's why we  
15 receive the level two, level one. But those  
16 children still graduate. They would not  
17 graduate at those other schools, Midwood,  
18 Madison or Goldstein, because those schools  
19 don't take the time that our teachers here take  
20 with the children.

21 [Applause]

22 MR. RUSSELL: I haven't been keeping track  
23 of the time, but I'm pretty sure I'm probably  
24 over.

25 FEMALE VOICE: - - yeah - - a lot - - .

1           MR. RUSSELL:   Okay, right, but one last  
2           thing I would, I would like Mr. Sternberg to  
3           take back to Chancellor Walcott and the  
4           executive staff there at the Department of  
5           Education, this school was promised the money  
6           last year. We put it in our CEP last year.

7           [Applause]

8           MR. RUSSELL:   Let us continue the way it was  
9           agreed to, last June, so that we don't  
10          detrimentally affect the freshman, sophomore and  
11          junior class of this school presently.

12          [Applause]

13          MS. SILVERMAN:   Thank you so much Mr.  
14          Russell. So that concludes the presentations  
15          from the panel. We have been joined by a couple  
16          elected representatives who are going to have an  
17          opportunity to speak. And then, just to let  
18          folks know, we've got space here. There is a  
19          couple rows that are set-aside for people who  
20          are speaking. So once we hear from our two  
21          elected representatives, I'll call some names,  
22          and if you just make your way down the outside,  
23          they can direct you into the isles so you can  
24          sit comfortably. So now, we've been joined by  
25          Councilmember Lew Fidler, Sir.

1 [Applause]

2 MS. SILVERMAN: Can you make that mic taller  
3 for him?

4 [Crosstalk]

5 [Background Noise]

6 MR. LEW FIDLER: It's on, yes. So Deputy  
7 Chancellor Sternberg, we, so we meet again. And  
8 actually, I'll probably be one of the few people  
9 here who says it's a pleasure to see you. And I  
10 mean that, because we have dealt in good faith,  
11 and you know, the fact of the matter is, for  
12 everyone here, I'm sure they all understand that  
13 your presence here is the, is akin to the grim  
14 reaper, that you're the guy they send out to  
15 tell us a decision has been made, and we're  
16 going to close your school. Now you and I know  
17 that doesn't have to be the case, and I'll get  
18 back to that in a second. I know pretty full  
19 well that Frieda who is here for Assemblywoman  
20 Weinstein, who is of course up in Albany working  
21 on the budget. State Committeewoman Roberta  
22 Sherman is here. Her son teachers here at this  
23 school. And probably, I think there are 53  
24 people signed up to speak. All 53 of them are  
25 going to say this sentence in their, in, in, in

1 their time, do not close this school.

2 [Applause]

3 MR. FIDLER: I have no pretense in my mind  
4 Deputy Chancellor, that I am ever going to  
5 convince you, nor you convince me, that the  
6 Bloomberg policy on closing schools makes any  
7 sense. And--

8 [Applause]

9 MR. FIDLER: --there are 150 different  
10 issues that are getting dragged into all of  
11 this. But the bottom line is, the community,  
12 the kids, the teachers, the administrators who  
13 are being punished for it, are the people who  
14 are sitting in this room right now. And--

15 [Applause]

16 MR. FIDLER: --you actually mentioned some  
17 very salient facts. You said that this school  
18 is improving its graduation rates. Yes it's not  
19 a perfect school as Chris mentioned. No school  
20 is. But in 2008, you started picking on  
21 Sheepshead Bay High School.

22 [Applause]

23 MR. FIDLER: And not just you, the state as  
24 well, all the educational bureaucrats started  
25 picking on Sheepshead Bay High School. And in

1 spite of that, these very same teachers that  
2 you want to get rid of half of, have improved  
3 the graduation rate, even though you were  
4 telling them you were coming for them next. And  
5 it was so obvious, I mean, you know, look, I  
6 represent the communities in and around Tilden,  
7 South Shore and Canarsie, and, and I said on the  
8 floor of the council, that they were coming from  
9 Sheepshead next, because that's your policy.  
10 That's your plan. You want to do these things.  
11 Now I don't, we, I, it's, it's, it's, it's,  
12 it's, by you, I don't mean you Deputy  
13 Chancellor, I mean the educational policy of the  
14 Bloomberg Administration. You want to be able  
15 to excess teachers at will. You want to be able  
16 to, you know, move administrators around as  
17 well, and you're forgetting that it's really all  
18 about the students. And what--

19 [Applause]

20 MR. FIDLER: It's great that you said that  
21 every student who is in this school today will  
22 be welcomed in your new re-branded school in the  
23 same building with different teachers next year.  
24 But what message have you sent to them? What  
25 are you telling them? That you come back to a

1 school that you have said has failed, all  
2 right. Now I don't think that makes any sense.  
3 And I don't think anyone who is going to come up  
4 here after me is going to say it makes any  
5 sense. And I don't think anyone at the other 32  
6 schools that you're trying to close right now is  
7 going to say it makes any sense, all right.

8 Maybe we are right. Maybe you're not. And so--

9 [Applause]

10 MR. FIDLER: So I want to, you know, suggest  
11 to you, that we try something different here.

12 Now, you and I are obviously well aware of what  
13 we did at PS114 in Canarsie. PS114 in Canarsie,  
14 and for those of you who don't know, it's  
15 another part of my district, was on the closing  
16 list. And in an extraordinarily rare moment of  
17 clear thinking, we came to an agreement with the  
18 Department of Education, that we could fix 114  
19 without closing it.

20 [Applause]

21 MR. FIDLER: And the early returns are  
22 pretty good. You know, against, you know, every  
23 grain of my body, I consented to allow a charter  
24 school to be co-located in the building with  
25 114, and guess what happened. With the

1 committed teachers, with a committed  
2 Principal, with committed parents, with  
3 committed students, PS114 is over enrolled; the  
4 charter school is under enrolled.

5 [Applause]

6 MR. FIDLER: And I actually had a wonderful  
7 conversation just yesterday with Deputy  
8 Chancellor Saransky. He says how are things  
9 going at 114? We hear good things. He's  
10 hearing good things. I'm hearing good things.  
11 The parents are telling me good things. The  
12 teachers are telling me good things. We got a  
13 Principal in there who is working, and elected  
14 officials who are all working together to make  
15 it work. Let me suggest to you that you need a  
16 similar laboratory on the high school level.  
17 Let that be Sheepshead Bay High School.

18 [Applause]

19 MR. FIDLER: The same commitment that DOE is  
20 showing at 114, the same commitment the elected  
21 officials are showing at 114, the same  
22 commitment that the teachers are showing at 114,  
23 the same commitment that the administrators are  
24 showing at 114, we can do that here.

25 [Applause]

1           MR. FIDLER: You don't need to disrupt the  
2 lives of everyone involved. You don't need to  
3 send the wrong message to the students of this  
4 school. You can acknowledge that in the face of  
5 being picked on and targeted for four years,  
6 that this school has improved anyway. And we  
7 can make that happen. And so, I am asking  
8 again, as I did at 114, let's try a different  
9 way Deputy Chancellor. Let's keep this school  
10 open. Let's keep it improving. Let's all work  
11 together, come together on a plan. Maybe we can  
12 take some of the \$1.5 Million in federal funds  
13 that - - are - - eligible for and substitute  
14 some city tax levy funds. Show us here at  
15 Sheepshead Bay. Let's see if it works, all  
16 right. And then maybe we'll find out, maybe.  
17 'Cause I believe, and I do in my heart of hearts  
18 that you want our kids to succeed too, all  
19 right. Maybe we'll find out that you don't need  
20 to close the school to make it work, to make it  
21 better. Let's work together and make that  
22 happen, and let's keep Sheepshead Bay High  
23 School open. I beg you, thank you.

24           [Applause]

25           MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much

1 Councilman. So our next speaker is going to  
2 be a representative from Assemblywoman Helene  
3 Weinstein's office, Frieda Menos.

4 MS. FRIEDA MENOS: Can't really follow the  
5 good Councilman Lewis Fidler, but I, I say yes  
6 to everything he just said on behalf of  
7 Assemblywoman Weinstein. But I also wanted to  
8 let you know in addition to that, back on March  
9 15<sup>th</sup> when the Assemblywoman found out that  
10 Sheepshead Bay High School was again on the  
11 target list by the Mayor, she immediately joined  
12 with 19 of her members in the state assembly and  
13 basically asked for the commissioner of  
14 education to deny the request. It's not fair to  
15 the community, and the Assemblywoman stands with  
16 the parents, and the teachers who are going to  
17 be affected by this. And that's pretty much the  
18 message from the Assemblywoman, thank you.

19 [Applause]

20 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much. Okay, so  
21 now we're going to move into the speaker signup  
22 list, and as the Councilmember said, we have 53  
23 people signed up. So I am going to read the  
24 names in batches, and just again, ask folks to  
25 come down the outside isle, and then there are

1 seats right there where you can sort of sit  
2 comfortably, and I apologize in advance if I get  
3 the names mixed up. So the first speaker will  
4 be Mercedes Qualls. The second speaker is  
5 Gloria Woods. Number three is Ekaterini  
6 Wingate-Gee.

7 FEMALE VOICE: Is he here?

8 MS. SILVERMAN: Number four is Brenda  
9 Stephano. And then number five is actually  
10 number six, Minerva Caroli. So if speaker  
11 number one would like to approach the mic, and  
12 as I said, just one quick note. So there is a  
13 gentleman in the front here who is going to be  
14 keeping time. And when you get to 30 seconds,  
15 he'll give you a little sign that says 30  
16 seconds. And then when the time has elapsed,  
17 he'll turn it over. And as I said, we've got a  
18 long list so I'm going to try and keep us moving  
19 so everybody has an opportunity to speak. Go  
20 ahead ma'am, thank you.

21 MS. MERCEDES QUALLS: Okay, so it's, I have  
22 two minutes. Good evening to the Sheepshead Bay  
23 High School community.

24 [Applause]

25 MS. QUALLS: Good evening to the panelists.

1 My name is Mercedes Qualls. I'm here on  
2 behalf of the council of supervisors and  
3 administrators, and in support of the Sheepshead  
4 Bay High School community. The New York City  
5 Department of its latest attempt to close 33  
6 schools, which were already in the process of a  
7 three-year reform program, is a political  
8 maneuver that is not rooted in sound educational  
9 practice. Rather, it began as a ploy designed  
10 to avoid negotiations with CSA and the IFT over  
11 the new Principal and teacher evaluation  
12 systems. The motivation behind that ploy was to  
13 follow a turn-around model, a model that does  
14 not require Principal and teacher evaluations,  
15 and allows the city to close and immediately  
16 reopen schools under new names. What else would  
17 be new about them? 50% of the teachers would be  
18 new, while 50% of the former teachers would be  
19 put into excess willy nilly. There is nothing  
20 educationally sound about this intervention  
21 plan. It is being introduced for cynical  
22 reasons, not to help children. It will not  
23 contribute to the development of sound principal  
24 and teacher evaluation systems. Furthermore, in  
25 removing half the staff from these schools and

1 recruiting replacements form other schools,  
2 the DOE will destabilize schools throughout the  
3 system, one after the other like dominoes, while  
4 these human costs are the most important ones,  
5 our children and our faculty. There are fiscal  
6 costs too. Removing 18,00 teachers and tossing  
7 them into the ATR, that's Absentee to Reserve,  
8 where they will work as substitutes at full  
9 salary, will cost the city approximately \$180  
10 Million annually, thank you.

11 [Applause]

12 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much. So  
13 speaker number two is Gloria Woods.

14 MS. GLORIDA E. WOODS: I'm Gloria E. Woods,  
15 and I'm a grandparent of a 12<sup>th</sup> grader, and I'm  
16 proud that he is here. It appears that the  
17 Department of Education seems to be more  
18 invested in allocating money for charter schools  
19 rather than providing the needed resources to  
20 bring existing schools up to par. The reality  
21 has been that there are some charter schools  
22 that have not been successful, therefore they do  
23 not seem to always be the answer. No one is  
24 looking at the impact these changes will have on  
25 the students or the community. It will be

1       destroying support systems and relationships  
2       between the students, teachers and the  
3       community. Let's explore how we can build on  
4       the foundation that has already been built as  
5       opposed to tearing everything down and starting  
6       over, thank you.

7               [Applause]

8               MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much. So the  
9       next speaker is, I'm hoping I'm getting the name  
10       correct, it's number three.

11              MS. EKATERINI WINGATE-GEE: It's Ekaterini  
12       Wingate-Gee, thank you.

13              MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you.

14              MS. WINGATE-GEE: I have, um, I have a  
15       speech prepared, but I think at this point, a  
16       lot of what I wanted to say was already said by  
17       others. I am a child of immigrants. I did not  
18       go to Sheepshead Bay High School, but I did come  
19       up through the New York City public school  
20       system. I went to middle school, elementary  
21       school and high school here in the city. I want  
22       to a private school for college. And then I  
23       went back to CUNY School for my graduate  
24       degrees. I cannot wish more than anyone else in  
25       this room, how important it is to make the

1 connections with our children. The crime of  
2 losing half the staff is not that they're going  
3 to get better teachers or worse teachers or the  
4 ridiculousness of moving people around for  
5 whatever reasons, political, budgetary,  
6 economic. The crime is that the relationship  
7 that we establish with a child, usually a child  
8 that does not have very many relationships  
9 outside of school, it is that relationship that  
10 we are damaging when we are moving people around  
11 like this. In the last three months I've had  
12 more PD than I've had in the last five years.  
13 Mr. Omahoni [phonetic], our new EPO that has  
14 been working in partnership with us, our  
15 restructuring of the school, we're building new  
16 academies; we have the kids on board; we have  
17 the staff on board. Please allow us to continue  
18 the work that we are doing. We can only really  
19 go up from here. But if you close us, you  
20 really are putting our children at a  
21 disadvantage. So please take that back to Tweed  
22 [phonetic], and tell them to let us do our good  
23 works, 'cause we are the few, the happy few, we  
24 band of brothers.

25 [Applause]

1 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much, and the  
2 next speaker is speaker number four, Brenda de  
3 Stepano.

4 MS. BRENDA DE STEPANO: Hi, I'm parent of a  
5 senior right now. I had three sons graduate  
6 from, two sons graduate from Sheepshead Bay back  
7 in 2000. My oldest son came to Sheepshead Bay,  
8 went onto American International College on a  
9 football and a scholastic scholarship. My  
10 middle son graduated Sheepshead Bay, maybe three  
11 months late, but he graduated anyhow. And in  
12 doing so, there was such support from the  
13 teachers, 'cause he was my trouble child,  
14 support from the teachers, from the guidance  
15 counselors, it was tremendous, even from the  
16 Principal. My third child is now a senior, and  
17 he has a 92.65 grade point average, and he's  
18 been accepted to many universities. The reason  
19 why I say this, is that the teachers have done a  
20 tremendous job. The support system here is  
21 excellent. It's of none that I, I didn't have  
22 the support system when I was going to Canarsie  
23 High that they have here at Sheepshead Bay High  
24 School. Two teachers left here, the school, and  
25 came to my home when my son was out sick, and

1 brought him homework. One teacher lives out  
2 in Long Island. The other teacher lives in my  
3 neighborhood, but she cared enough to bring the  
4 homework home to him. He failed the Math  
5 Regents. The teacher cared enough to call my  
6 home to encourage him, and give him material to,  
7 so can pass the Math Regents. He passed the  
8 Math Regents with a 77. In taking the teachers  
9 out of this school, you're going to impact these  
10 kids in a bad way, because the children need the  
11 support. I know there are some children that  
12 come home, come from homes who are just one  
13 parent in the house, who don't have anyone to  
14 speak to, and they reach out to these teachers  
15 and to the counselors to speak to, to encourage  
16 them. And if you move, remove these people, it  
17 would be devastating to their lives. Sheepshead  
18 Bay has - - , Sheepshead Bay has many, many  
19 programs that were in place before we brought up  
20 the academies, which they have enhanced and  
21 added to it. So please do not close Sheepshead  
22 Bay.

23 [Applause]

24 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much. So the  
25 next speaker is speaker number six, Minerva

1 Caroli, and before you get started, let me  
2 just call up the next group of speakers. We  
3 have speaker number seven, Jay Appelblatt,  
4 number eight is Charles Turner, number nine is  
5 Sherry Satchell, number 10 Alisa Alexander, and  
6 number 11 Shanicia Johnson, ma'am.

7 MS. MINERVA CAROLI: Okay, hi, my name is  
8 Minerva Caroli, and I'm a school counselor here  
9 at Sheepshead Bay High School. I might be  
10 reiterating some of what we heard before, but I  
11 feel that it's worth going over it again. And I  
12 wrote it so that this way I know I have two  
13 minutes to finish. So timed myself. Why are  
14 we closing this school when we have a new  
15 Principal? Sheepshead Bay High School is  
16 improving under the city's interventions, while  
17 presently going on restart. There are 138  
18 teacher staff at Sheepshead Bay, including 37  
19 teachers who have been at the school for between  
20 one to three years. Of these teachers, 93% are  
21 highly qualified. Sheepshead Bay is no longer  
22 an impact school. A review of data revealed an  
23 improvement in student attendance from 75% in  
24 2007 to 82%. There has also been an increase in  
25 parent involvement. Now 43 parents attend

1 parent teacher association meetings. Our  
2 school has been restructured in order to  
3 increase learning opportunities for our  
4 students. Houses with academic themes and  
5 curricula based on students' interests have been  
6 created, nursing, law academy, sports medicine,  
7 new commerce etcetera. Annualization of year  
8 long course such as Global Studies, Integrated  
9 Algebra, English, and other Regents level and  
10 year long courses have been organized. Our  
11 school is in network with Diplomas Now to  
12 provide support, guidance and problem solving  
13 issues, including chronic absence and discipline  
14 problems. Our new Principal is maintaining and  
15 implementing the recommendations of the joint  
16 intervention team. 23% of the school's  
17 population are ELLs. The graduation rate for  
18 this group has increased. The SIFE [phonetic]  
19 program, Achieved 3,000, Destination Math,  
20 Title Three, Saturday Academy, among others,  
21 have increased their reading and writing  
22 efficiency, 30% improvement in classroom  
23 performance, 20% increasement in the ELLs  
24 graduation rate. The school's fourth year  
25 graduation rate has improved. Since 2001, the

1 graduation rate remained in the 50% range.  
2 However, the school's four year graduation rate  
3 increased, 57% in 2000, 63% in 2010. Our goal  
4 is to make it 70% by the end of the school year.  
5 Mr. Bloomberg, we will not allow you to allow  
6 Sheepshead Bay High School to be turned around,  
7 and have our name changed and be replaced with  
8 the new staff members. We already have over 93%  
9 of highly qualified teachers at Sheepshead Bay  
10 High School. The best possible staff is right  
11 here with us, along with parents, students and  
12 community support.

13 [Applause]

14 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much. So the  
15 next speaker is number seven, Jay Appelblatt.

16 MR JAY APPELBLATT: Good evening ladies and  
17 gentlemen. About a month ago, a series of  
18 tornadoes swept through the mid-west and 48  
19 people lost their lives during the early part of  
20 the spring. Now, if you close Sheepshead Bay  
21 High School, you're not giving the hard working  
22 children and hard working staff here a chance to  
23 restart their lives. Those 48 people that  
24 perished in early March in Indiana and  
25 throughout the southern states aren't getting a

1 second chance. If you give us this second  
2 chance, you can be guaranteed that those numbers  
3 that some of my colleagues have said, will  
4 continue to grow and grow and grow, because  
5 you're looking at the most dedicated staff in  
6 New York City, thank you.

7 [Applause]

8 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir. Speaker  
9 number eight is Charles Turner.

10 MR. CHARLES TURNER: Let's get this thing  
11 going here.

12 MS. SILVERMAN: Yeah, Isaac can you help?

13 MR. TURNER: There we go.

14 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you.

15 MR. TURNER: Hi everybody, okay, my name is  
16 Charlie Turner and I'm the UFT district rep for  
17 Brooklyn high schools, and Sheepshead Bay is one  
18 of my schools. I first have to tell you that  
19 this EIS thing, it's a sham and a lie, okay.  
20 Everybody knows that the decision to close these  
21 schools is not about educating our kids. This  
22 is a political decision, okay. We are all here  
23 because our mean, narcissistic, vindictive,  
24 blood sucking Mayor--

25 [Applause]

1 MR. TURNER: --okay, could, could not get  
2 the UFT to bend to his will regarding new  
3 teacher evaluations - - okay. Let's be clear,  
4 the mayor and the chancellor walked away from  
5 the bargaining table, not the UFT. We're with  
6 you, okay. The Mayor's plan was always to blow  
7 up the negotiations to create political pressure  
8 in Albany so he could change the teacher  
9 evaluation law so he could fire teachers at  
10 will. But Albany threw him a curve, okay.  
11 Albany and the governor refused to change the  
12 law, and instead, helped, helped negotiate a new  
13 appeals process for the teachers, okay, which is  
14 a very good thing, okay. Now, make no mistake  
15 about it, with this new appeals process for  
16 teachers settled, there is, there is absolutely  
17 nothing standing in the way for the city to  
18 reapply for restart or transformation for these  
19 schools, except for this one little man, okay.  
20 But, because our mean vindictive Mayor lost his  
21 fight with the UFT, he and his minions hatched  
22 this hair-brained idea of closing 33 schools,  
23 uh, in turn around model, okay. This whole mess  
24 is a perfect example of mayoral control that is  
25 out of control, okay. Through this unchecked

1 mayoral control, this mean little man is  
2 allowed to hold us all as hostages to his  
3 political posturing.

4 MS. SILVERMAN: Sir, if you could wrap up.

5 MR. TURNER: Almost, okay, he is gambling  
6 with our students' education and their future,  
7 and we should not let it happen. Tell the DOE  
8 to free the 33. End mayoral control; don't  
9 close Sheepshead Bay High School.

10 [Applause]

11 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir. And the next  
12 speaker is speaker number nine, Sherry Satchell.

13 MS. SHERRY SATCHELL: Good evening  
14 Sheepshead, and thank you very much to all of  
15 you awesome, I don't know how to follow Charlie  
16 Turner, oh God. I've been a guidance counselor  
17 in this school for a little over 11 years, one  
18 of the schools deemed bad, and set to close. I  
19 have seen many changes here in the past 10  
20 years, some changes for the betterment of the  
21 school and its students, others for the worse.  
22 When I first came to this school we had a large  
23 honors program. Students had many types of  
24 course to choose from. There were 11 different  
25 advanced placement classes, and honors classes

1 for scholastically gifted students in every  
2 subject area on each grade level. Music and  
3 arts were plentiful. There were seasoned  
4 teachers and mentor teachers to help pull in the  
5 newer teachers and show them how to implement  
6 effective teaching strategies. There was an  
7 extensive teacher center with abundant materials  
8 available. When mayoral control of the school  
9 system was instituted, the Mayor and Chancellor  
10 of schools saw their job as to conform the  
11 schools into a business model. The teachers  
12 with talent became stilted and demonized. Then  
13 the school closings began. What words are there  
14 to describe that? Many of the quality teachers  
15 with many years of experience retired earlier  
16 than they normally would have. New people came  
17 in. New administrations took over. I've seen  
18 five principals here in 11 years.

19 Redistricting, rezoning, and more school  
20 closures took place. Students were shuffled  
21 around. There was no more sense of community,  
22 no more abundance of arts and music, but plenty  
23 of ramp up courses to get students back on  
24 track. My goal and the goal of many of the  
25 teachers in this school has always been, not to

1 have students just achieve a diploma, but to  
2 receive an education.

3 [Applause]

4 MS. SATCHELL: Thank you, to teach them how  
5 to study and prepare, and watch with pride as  
6 they turn the corners towards success. I've  
7 watched as the most unlikely students have  
8 surprisingly made it into prestigious colleges  
9 and even into Ivy League schools.

10 MS. SILVERMAN: Ma'am , if you could wrap  
11 up.

12 MS. SATCHELL: Last Friday, as we were  
13 preparing for mid-winter break, my Principal  
14 called us in to tell us that we would become a  
15 turn around school, and possibly 50% of us would  
16 be hired back, and that the school will be  
17 renamed and broken into academies. I worked  
18 hard to help my students, as many of my  
19 colleagues have everyday for the past 11 years  
20 in this school, and now I have to apply for my  
21 job. You got to be kidding. I compiled a list  
22 of words to describe how this feels, demeaning,  
23 degrading, demoralizing, to just name a few.  
24 This whole idea is disgusting and despicable.  
25 There may be a small number of educators who

1 need help, or who may not be cut out for the  
2 job. The vast majority of us, we devote  
3 ourselves to this school, and to these students.  
4 If a patient gets an illness, is it the doctor's  
5 fault?

6 MS. SILVERMAN: If you could wrap up please.

7 MS. SATCHELL: Why, I am wrapping up. Why  
8 are teachers always to blame? We are  
9 professionals who work hard for years to earn  
10 college degrees. We try to help each student to  
11 do their best. We deserve better, and we  
12 deserve respect.

13 [Applause]

14 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much. The next  
15 speaker is speaker number 10, Alisa Alexander.

16 MS. ALISA ALEXANDER: For most who don't  
17 know, my name is Alisa, and I'm total - - . I'm  
18 here to tell you why Sheepshead needs to stay  
19 open. For most of us, the school is a second  
20 family, especially in one of our programs - - .  
21 Some of us come from broken homes, other  
22 countries, and just want to fit in somewhere.  
23 Here you can, whether you're Spanish, black,  
24 white, dork or an athlete, you'll definitely  
25 find people just like you. Other schools don't

1 have the luxury, but we do, and if this school  
2 gets taken away from us, we have to go back to  
3 being social outcasts. - - Sheepshead we have  
4 our drama family. We have our upcoming play,  
5 "Till Death Do Us Part" on May 19<sup>th</sup>, and you know  
6 what, if I didn't join the play, I wouldn't have  
7 discovered my passion for acting, or even just  
8 the program in general, and to see it go hurts,  
9 and that, that we're not good enough, oh, I'm  
10 sorry. And to see it go hurts, that we're not  
11 good enough according to the government's data.  
12 Well, I hate to break it to you. Your stats are  
13 wrong. We're more than good enough. We're  
14 better. And going back to what you said before  
15 Chancellor Sternberg, um, we do get prepared for  
16 - - and our colleges. We have a special program  
17 - - day, where we recently just finished job  
18 interviews that we practice, and a lot of us are  
19 actually doing jobs. Some of us got jobs at  
20 Macys and other stores around Brooklyn. Also,  
21 we just finished college, we also have a college  
22 tour coming up this spring break, which I, and a  
23 few of our students are actually going on  
24 throughout the south. So just to tell you, we  
25 are doing better, and for what you said before

1 about the colleges that we're not preparing  
2 for, now we are, so thank you.

3 [Applause]

4 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you very much. So the  
5 next speaker is speaker number 11, Shanicia  
6 Johnson. And let me just call up the next group  
7 of folks. So number 12 is Donna Tapper; number  
8 13, Leo Casey; number 14 Teri D'Ambrosio; number  
9 25, Bruce Sherman; number 16, I think it's a  
10 group of AP Calculus students, number 16 and 17.  
11 So if you're number 12 through 17, if you would  
12 make your way down the side isle, and Shanicia,  
13 feel free to get started.

14 MALE VOICE: Let's go Shanicia.

15 MS. SHANICIA JOHNSON: Hi, my name is  
16 Shanicia. I've been attending Sheepshead Bay  
17 High School for approximately--

18 [Crosstalk]

19 MS. JOHNSON: Hoi, my name is Shanicia.  
20 I've been attending Sheepshead Bay High School  
21 for approximately two years now. I'm a student  
22 previously from - - High School. I came to  
23 Sheepshead Bay on a safety transfer. Since I've  
24 been enrolled in Sheepshead Bay High School,  
25 I've learned a lot of life lessons, and now

1 getting ready to graduate this summer. Being  
2 in this school has taught me a lot. I had my  
3 ups and downs, but there was always someone to  
4 push me back in the right direction. There are  
5 teachers and other adults that support me and  
6 give me the right advice to better myself. So  
7 with that said, please keep Sheepshead open as a  
8 restart school, and see it as a school that's  
9 making progress step by step, thank you.

10 [Applause]

11 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much, speaker  
12 number 12, Donna Tapper.

13 MS. DONNA TAPPER: Good evening ladies and  
14 gentlemen. I'm here this evening; my son is a  
15 freshman in this school. In the beginning, my  
16 son had choices. He visited the school, and he  
17 fell in love with both the faculty he met here,  
18 and ever since that day, the teachers have been  
19 very, very supportive. I must tell you that in  
20 the beginning I was not in favor of my son  
21 coming here, but after working with both the  
22 past Principal, and all the faculty, and I've  
23 even been working with Mr. O'Mahoney [phonetic],  
24 it's team effort. If my child starts to slip  
25 along the way, I can guarantee you that there

1 will be a phone call home, you know. Right  
2 now, he's devastated. He's like mom, what is it  
3 they are doing to us? What is going to happen  
4 to my teachers who work so tirelessly to see me  
5 pull through? This is not fair. Please do not  
6 close Sheepshead Bay High School. These  
7 teachers deserve better, better. I am from the  
8 nursing industry, and I tell them every day, I  
9 could not do what they are doing, not do what  
10 they are doing. And to all the teachers and  
11 psychology staff that are here this evening, I  
12 support you 100%. I will take every day off  
13 that I have to come here to support you all. I  
14 love you for the deposit you make in my son's  
15 educational bank. Continue with the hard work.  
16 I support you wholeheartedly, love you.

17 [Applause]

18 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much. So  
19 speaker number 13 is Leo Casey.

20 MR. LEO CASEY: Good evening. My name is  
21 Leo Casey, and I am a Vice President of the  
22 United Federation of Teachers. And I am here  
23 tonight to tell you that there is no possible  
24 educational justification for the decision that  
25 is being considered here today, no possible

1 educational justification. Don't take my word  
2 for it. Don't take Michael Mulgrew's word for  
3 it. The Department of Education itself,  
4 including the Deputy Chancellor who sits on this  
5 stage, engaged in a process earlier this year,  
6 in which they looked at this school and they  
7 said this school had the capacity to improve,  
8 had the ability to do what is right by their  
9 students, had the means to provide a good  
10 education to their students, and it said we are  
11 not closing Sheepshead Bay High School.

12 [Applause]

13 MR. CASEY: So why are we here today? We  
14 know we're not here because there is an  
15 educational reason. We know we're not here  
16 'cause it's about the students who attend this  
17 school. This closure process is going to have  
18 all of the students who attend this school now  
19 walk through these same doors in September.  
20 We're here because of a political process, a  
21 political process, which is designed to target  
22 teachers., a political process which is without  
23 honor, a political process that can only be done  
24 when you have a person sitting in City Hall who  
25 does not care one whip about what happens to the

1 students in Sheepshead bay High School.

2 [Applause]

3 MS. SILVERMAN: If you could wrap up Sir.

4 MS. CASEY: Brothers and sisters, you are  
5 noble teachers. You're noble educators. You  
6 are the people who come into this school every  
7 day and teach the young people that are sent to  
8 you. You are far, far better than the people  
9 who are visiting this decision upon you.

10 [Applause]

11 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir. The next  
12 speaker is speaker number 14, Terri D'Ambrosio.

13 FEMALE VOICE: Ma'am, you got two minutes to  
14 speak. He's going to let you know when your 30  
15 seconds is up, okay.

16 MS. TERRI D'AMBROSIO: Good evening  
17 everyone. I'm the chapter leader here. I am a  
18 para-professional for 19 years. And I'm vested  
19 in this school. I'm vested in these kids. And  
20 I'm vested with this staff. We finally now,  
21 we're told we were going to be restart, and it  
22 was a breath of fresh air. We have a Principal  
23 that said to me, I'm going to work in  
24 collaboration with you. And we were working  
25 together to achieve that. I see Mr. Serretti

1 [phonetic] here, 'cause Special Ed. is dear to  
2 my heart, and he's been here to help us. We had  
3 a student this past fall that committed suicide,  
4 and it was a very overwhelming thing that  
5 happened, and all his friends came back to  
6 Sheepshead Bay High School for closure, for  
7 help, and if you close us, we're not here for  
8 them anymore. We're invested in this school.  
9 They come from broken homes. They don't need to  
10 come from a broken school, because we're not  
11 broken.

12 [Applause]

13 MS. D'AMBROSIO: We are not a failure. We  
14 are here for these kids. And we will continue  
15 to be here for these kids, because that's what's  
16 important. And we've been kicked and punched.  
17 The junior high schools, they don't apply here,  
18 because they've been told year after year we're  
19 closing. Well guess what, we're still here.  
20 And we're still going to be here. And these  
21 kids, even if I'm not here, and I get another  
22 school, they will know where to find me if they  
23 need me. I've written Russian. I was with a  
24 student that was Russian. How did I know their  
25 alphabet? I had to write. And this kid

1 graduated, and I was her prom date. But you  
2 know something, you're not going to take away my  
3 love of the school. You're never going to take  
4 that away of my dedication to this building.  
5 And I was hoping that you would give us that  
6 chance with the restart, because there is no  
7 difference with transformation restart. But  
8 turn around makes no sense to me. I know, I'm  
9 just a para-professional. But I'm also somebody  
10 that has a master's degree, probably my 30  
11 above, and chose not to be a teacher, 'cause I  
12 work individually with the students that are in  
13 Special Ed. And please, please, please, use  
14 some common sense. Give us the chance that we  
15 deserve.

16 [Applause]

17 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much. Speaker  
18 number 15 is Bruce Sherman.

19 MR. BRUCE SHERMAN: Once again, I'm going to  
20 scrap my speech. I'm very emotional because I  
21 know a lot of these people. I just, I'm so  
22 happy and so honored to hear their words because  
23 they are really sincere words. And I don't know  
24 how the panel on educational planning, I don't  
25 know how an educator, I don't know anybody who

1       cares about a community and about children  
2       could just sit here and not really care what we  
3       say and what we do and what is actually  
4       happening. Because as far as we and all  
5       understand, none of it makes any sense. So, I  
6       happen to know a lot of these people, and I've  
7       seen for 25 years, different changes in this  
8       school. I have seen this school eight years ago  
9       be a zoo, and I wanted to close it down myself  
10      because it's my heart and soul. But I have seen  
11      it improve. I have seen these people work their  
12      butts off. I have seen them stay after school.  
13      I have seen them work and work and work with the  
14      promise in September that we, hey guys, you have  
15      another two, three years because we are, you  
16      know, restart this, put money - - year, all  
17      these things. Keep working guys, keep working,  
18      because we're going to keep your school open.  
19      And the dishonor to take a community and to take  
20      a heart and a soul, and execute their hearts and  
21      pull it out is just completely unethical and  
22      dishonorable. Now the last thing I have to say  
23      is I do challenge, I put a big challenge here.  
24      Because if there is any ounce of decision making  
25      ability left in anybody who is here today, or

1 anybody who makes decisions, please, 'cause I  
2 have to, when I get up in the morning and at  
3 night, I look in the mirror and I say, hey  
4 Bruce, did you do the right thing today? 'Cause  
5 I work with kids, and I better do the right  
6 thing, 'cause I have to help these kids like  
7 every single person here has to help kids every  
8 day. So I say to you people, look in the mirror  
9 and look in your hearts and say, is this the  
10 right thing to do? Now, if this is a sham, and  
11 it's not the right thing to do, and the Mayor  
12 has complete control over everybody, well then  
13 attach the puppet strings to us all, because  
14 it's really pathetic. Thank you for your time.

15 [Applause]

16 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir. So the next  
17 speakers are a group of AP Calculus students,  
18 and I am told they are going to take four  
19 minutes. They signed up for two slots, and so,  
20 our time keeper will monitor that we'll let you  
21 know when you get to 30 seconds and then when  
22 you've reached two minutes, or four minutes,  
23 excuse me.

24 DHEKAA: Good evening everyone. Sheepshead  
25 Bay High School is more than a school. It's a

1 community, a community where individuals form  
2 all different cultures come together to work and  
3 to succeed. I know students who came to this  
4 school completely unmotivated. Our teachers  
5 have aided these students, have motivated these  
6 students, have given these students a reason to  
7 want to continue learning. It is because of our  
8 teachers that we have students who have won  
9 various competitions in many fields, such as  
10 Law, English and Science.

11 [Applause]

12 NAYAB: I have learned to love Science  
13 because of my AP Biology teacher. I have  
14 learned to think more correctly because of my  
15 English teacher. I have learned to view History  
16 a more distinct manner because of my Global  
17 History teacher. There is a common theme in my  
18 education, and that theme dedication, of my  
19 teacher. The dedication and the drive of my  
20 teachers gave to me in order to learn. It is my  
21 teacher and faculty of Sheepshead Bay High School  
22 that have inspired me to learn and to succeed.

23 [Applause]

24 TEEBA: My teachers are great. Do you know  
25 why? Because I have built a special bond with

1       them. They are great because of their  
2       commitment, support, and motivation that was  
3       built on a personal relationship. Don't rob me  
4       of the people who have helped me realize my  
5       potential, and have molded me into the person I  
6       am today.

7               [Applause]

8               MERINET: Our teachers are more than just  
9       faculty members. They are our friends. We as  
10       students need inspiration in order for use to  
11       succeed. And that inspiration comes from our  
12       teachers. Taking them away would be  
13       counterproductive. We are Sheepshead, and  
14       therefore, we are a family.

15              [Applause]

16              FEMALE VOICE: On a more personal note,  
17       I've, I haven't really done well in my middle  
18       school years. I came to Sheepshead Bay with a  
19       determination to do better, to get higher than  
20       90s, to thrive, and I know the students in this  
21       school has come to Sheepshead Bay to strive.  
22       They don't want to be a failure in, in this  
23       life. The teachers have always helped us. I  
24       have always seen teachers stay after school,  
25       even when they don't have to, to tutor these

1 kids to pass their tests to do everything they  
2 can. These teachers go above and beyond the  
3 requirements of what they should do, and I  
4 believe they should not be punished for that.

5 [Applause]

6 SAMIROL: Hi, uh, my name is Samirol. I  
7 came here three years ago as a sophomore from  
8 Pakistan, and simply, what I have to say is that  
9 without my teachers, my calculus teacher, my AP  
10 Biology, AP Biology teacher, my community  
11 service advisor, without them, I wouldn't be  
12 here today. They have supported me. They have  
13 made me to the person I am today, and yeah, the  
14 whole concept of not being prepared for college,  
15 well that's a scam, really. My teachers, my,  
16 are my advisors, my mentors. They have always  
17 been with me, and I know they will always  
18 support me, thank you.

19 MR. YURI OSTROZHYNKY: Hello, my name is  
20 Yuri Ostrozhynsky and this is my fourth year. I  
21 also participate in AP Bio, AP Calculus, and the  
22 teachers that are involved in these courses,  
23 they push what is beyond, they do above and  
24 beyond for us. For instance, for tutoring, we  
25 have class of course, in the day, however, we

1 are allowed to come before the class starts,  
2 in the morning before school starts, after  
3 school, during, the teachers sacrifice their  
4 breaks, their lunches, in order to help us, in  
5 order to help us achieve. This is what makes  
6 this a great school. And the teachers push us;  
7 because they have a personal with us, they know  
8 what to expect from us. And they push us even  
9 further to be the best that we can be.

10 [Applause]

11 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much. So I'm  
12 going to call the next group of speakers up,  
13 speakers number 18 through 23. Khadijah Cudjoe;  
14 number 19 is Christopher Llego; number 20,  
15 Doleysa Lockhart; 21 is Ray Monta [phonetic],  
16 Montodi [phonetic], I apologize. 22 is Dashka  
17 Fonrose; and number 23, Stefany Pedrozo. So  
18 number 18, Khadijah Cudjoe.

19 MS. KHADIJAH CUDJOE: I'm kind of nervous,  
20 uh,--

21 MS. SILVERMAN: [Interposing] Please go  
22 ahead and approach the mic.

23 MS. CUDJOE: Um, good evening.

24 [Crosstalk]

25 MS. CUDJOE: Okay, I'm a senior here at

1 Sheepshead Bay High School, and I'm on the  
2 track team. I have people, we have people here  
3 at Sheepshead Bay High School who help you to  
4 reach your goals, and the goals here are to, are  
5 to get above 85 averages, to go to college, to  
6 be the best that you can be at, in this school.  
7 And if certain people weren't here, I probably  
8 wouldn't be where I am right now. And that's  
9 being able to even step foot into colleges and  
10 being offered full scholarships and partial  
11 scholarships. And that's because of the  
12 education that my English teachers have giving  
13 me, my Math teachers have given me, my Science  
14 teachers have given me. Like, it's not easy for  
15 them to come here and deal with negative kids  
16 all the time. They have bad kids coming into  
17 the school. You have, um, you have kids who  
18 don't even show up to class, and they wonder  
19 everyday why they're not coming to school. They  
20 call up, they call their houses, they send  
21 letters there, and they want to know why they're  
22 not coming to school. It's not that they don't  
23 care. They do care, because they put out, they  
24 put out their energy everyday to come here and  
25 try to motivate them to come to school. And

1 they do reach up there, and they do get to  
2 some kids and help them to benefit themselves in  
3 the future.

4 [Applause]

5 MS. BERTINA RENEE: Hello, my name is  
6 Bertina Renee, and I am also on the track team.  
7 I'm a junior in this school, and closing down  
8 this school is basically like giving up on us,  
9 and you can't give up on hopes and dreams and  
10 futures that kids here want to do later on in  
11 their life. Students here enter with either F's  
12 or A's, but at the end, they always leave as a  
13 champion, as a success, and with a future ahead  
14 of them. Closing down the school is like giving  
15 up on people who care, come everyday to learn,  
16 come to practice to get better, come here to be  
17 good examples to those who think we can't  
18 improve, or become successful. You're talking  
19 about closing down a school due to academic  
20 levels. Have you ever thought about the  
21 academics starting before they entered  
22 Sheepshead Bay? Thank you.

23 [Applause]

24 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you ladies, speaker  
25 number 19, Christopher Llego.

1 [Applause]

2 MR. CHRISTOPHER LLEGO: Hello, my name is  
3 Christopher Llego, and I am a junior here at  
4 Sheepshead. To say that Sheepshead Bay High  
5 School is failing school would be absolutely  
6 wrong. In my three years here at Sheepshead,  
7 I've done nothing but learn, thrive and succeed.  
8 The knowledge and motivation that my teachers  
9 have given me has led to success and to  
10 accomplishments in a variety of different  
11 respected fields. Sheepshead Bay High School is  
12 home to a multitude of different clubs, teams  
13 and classes that spark interest in the lives of  
14 all of our students. Students from different  
15 ethnicities, cultures and economic backgrounds  
16 find inspiration all throughout our school. We  
17 give each student opportunities to not only  
18 succeed, but to gain a passion for their  
19 studies. Our school has an award winning moot  
20 court and mock trial team, which places higher  
21 than schools such as Thygeson, Brooklyn Tech,  
22 Bronx Science, Madison, Goldstein. Our students  
23 also participate in research and essay  
24 competitions in which students get opportunities  
25 to gain internships and connections with various

1 politicians, scientists and activists. We  
2 also have a community service committee, which  
3 teaches students about civics and morality. No  
4 matter what the interest, no matter what type of  
5 a student, Sheepshead Bay caters to every want  
6 and need. In my experience, it is my teachers  
7 who I have to thank for sparking my interest in  
8 law and creative writing. I have won essay  
9 contests, research contests, and recently placed  
10 first place at an international moot court  
11 competition. My teachers gave me hope,  
12 inspiration and motivation to persevere and to  
13 succeed. To take away our teachers would be  
14 counter intuitive, as the opportunities for our  
15 students lie in the relationships between the  
16 teachers and the students, thank you.

17 [Applause]

18 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much Sir,  
19 speaker number 20, Doleysha Lockhart.

20 MS. DOLEYSHA LOCKHART: Hi, I'm Doleysha  
21 Lockhart, and I'm a senior. After the  
22 confusion, the deal we left our school in with  
23 the constant threat of school closing, not just  
24 this year, but every year since I've been a  
25 student here, Sheepshead came together and

1 created an entirely new system of academies,  
2 with the help of the EOP, which was chosen by  
3 the DOE in a last minute decision just weeks  
4 before the start of the school year. Those  
5 teachers and staff members that have been called  
6 a failure, have taken every curve ball the  
7 department sends them, and made sure that  
8 students like me, and my peers not only  
9 graduate, but graduate with honors. For the  
10 people who work in this building, it's obvious,  
11 that this isn't just a job description. Many  
12 positions here can't just be filled by bringing  
13 in someone to do the job. These teachers and  
14 staff do so much more than what they are  
15 supposed to do, they care. They not only teach  
16 a curriculum, they do anything in their ability  
17 to make sure we make it. When we didn't qualify  
18 for after school tutoring, teachers gave up  
19 their lunch periods and stayed after school, not  
20 just some, but most, to make sure the students  
21 who came into the building the first day of  
22 school, knowing they wouldn't even try to  
23 graduate on time, would not only achieve better  
24 requirements, but Regents, maybe not on time,  
25 but they made it. Most seniors here have

1 teachers from freshman year who not only  
2 remember who they are, but remember their name.  
3 It shocks me every time, but they have hundreds  
4 of students annually, but they remember us all.  
5 They have anecdotes about each of us, small  
6 stories that we will no longer have to come back  
7 to if you close the school. We want, your  
8 policy of relocating teachers gives a 15 year  
9 old the permission to tell a teacher, or even  
10 staff, that they are disposable. That is a  
11 message the DOE is sending to students. So when  
12 you do bring in new staff and teachers, you do  
13 so with the message that a student can purposely  
14 not work, and say to their teachers, that if  
15 you, if I fail, you can lose your job. What  
16 kind of message is that.

17 [Applause]

18 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much, speaker  
19 number 21, Ray Montodi [phonetic]

20 MR. RAY MOTONDO: Motondo.

21 MS. SILVERMAN: Apologies.

22 MR. MOTONDO: Ray Motondo, I'm a teacher.  
23 Being a teacher, I continue to hear about  
24 accountability. I have one question. Who is  
25 Bloomberg accountable to?

1 [Applause]

2 MR. MOTONDO: That was a joke [laughter]  
3 obviously no one. Okay, teachers should be held  
4 accountable, only for what it is in their power  
5 to control. The conditions under which teachers  
6 currently teach do not fit this description.  
7 The innumerable array of preexisting situations  
8 students bring into the classroom, is a variable  
9 that cannot be quantified. Teachers should  
10 indeed be held accountable, in high regard, for  
11 attempting to educate these students, and  
12 improve their communities. Add to this, the  
13 fact that the DOE uses statistics that are  
14 skewed, along with regulations that are changing  
15 constantly. When factoring a school's  
16 performance, the DOE arbitrarily fails to  
17 include such variables as ELL students, special  
18 education, and serious student-family and  
19 personal problems. The omitting of these  
20 problems, should be in itself enough to prove  
21 negligence, if not incompetence on the part of  
22 the DOE, or at the very least, enough to show an  
23 ulterior motive. Everyone knows money talks.  
24 In fact, it screams.

25 [Applause]

1 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir, speaker  
2 number 22, Dashka Fonrose.

3 AIMEE: Hi, my name is AIMEE [phonetic] and  
4 I started off in Sheepshead Bay in my sophomore  
5 year. And I started off on a rough patch  
6 because I didn't know what to expect. But now I  
7 participate in AP Biology, AP English, and AP  
8 Spanish, and I also participated as the captain  
9 of the varsity volleyball team. And every since  
10 I was introduced to my teachers and my coaches,  
11 I, they have been there for me since the way  
12 beginning, and I don't know what I would do  
13 without them, And I have grown as a person, and  
14 this school has helped me a lot [laughter].

15 [Applause]

16 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much. The next  
17 speaker is speaker number 23, Stefany Pedrozo.

18 FEMALE VOICE: No, it's - - .

19 MS. SILVERMAN: Oh, I apologize.

20 MS. DASHKA FONROSE: All right, hi, my name  
21 is Dashka Fonrose. I've been I the school, in  
22 the sport--

23 [Crosstalk]

24 MS. FONROSE: All right, hi, my name is  
25 Dashka Fonrose. I've been in the school and the

1 sport program for three years now. My  
2 teachers motivate me to motivate in the morning  
3 to come to school. Teacher is not a dirty word.  
4 Sheepshead population is Brooklyn community. We  
5 are Brooklyn.

6 [Applause]

7 MS. SILVERMAN: This is speaker number 23.

8 MR. DAMIAN FREEMAN: No.

9 MS. SILVERMAN: Still part of, okay.

10 MR. FREEMAN: Yeah, um, hello, my name is  
11 Damian Freeman, and I'm an honors student here.  
12 I can say without a doubt that this school has  
13 prepared me for college. Without them, I  
14 wouldn't have gotten into my number one--

15 [Background Noise]

16 MR. FREEMAN: --okay, my number one college  
17 choice. So for you to close this school down is  
18 closing down potential help that can't be found  
19 in any other school. The turnaround idea is  
20 just a theory, and our future isn't an  
21 experiment, thank you.

22 [Applause]

23 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir, speaker  
24 number 23.

25 MS. STEFANY PEDROZO: Stefany.

1 MS. SILVERMAN: Stefany.

2 MS. PEDROZO: Yeah.

3 MS. SILVERMAN: Go ahead.

4 MS. PEDROZO: Okay, I'd just like to point  
5 out how stressed out he looks. Why? Because  
6 you're listening to common sense. We here, we  
7 are a family.

8 [Applause]

9 MS. PEDROZO: You cannot ruin us. I'm just  
10 saying. Okay, I came in here. I wasn't so, I  
11 was insecure. I had all these problems. And  
12 then I started playing sports. I started  
13 interacting with the teachers. They helped me  
14 out with my grades. They've made me grow as a  
15 better person. And if you're taking that away  
16 from me, it's like taking away my parents.  
17 Please don't close this school down, 'cause I  
18 seriously will lock myself up in the front of  
19 that school, stand there, 'cause you're not  
20 moving me.

21 FEMALE VOICE: All right.

22 [Applause]

23 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you, so I want to call  
24 up the next set of speakers, speakers numbers 24  
25 through 29. Speaker number 24 is Will Daskal;

1 25, Damaris Mejia; 26, Robin Tavert  
2 [phonetic]; 27, Natasha Palms [phonetic]; 28,  
3 Axel Joseph; and 29, Roberta Sherman. Speaker  
4 number 24.

5 MR. WILL DASKAL: Yup, good evening, Mr.  
6 Deputy Chancellor. I didn't come here with any  
7 prepared speech, and perhaps I may be the only  
8 one here who is not going to say the words,  
9 please keep Sheepshead Open. I am going to ask  
10 you to please keep an open mind, rather than say  
11 those words. I'm in a unique position. I drove  
12 through three states to get here tonight, just  
13 to be able to have my two minutes of time,  
14 because I live in Northern Pennsylvania, but 41  
15 years ago, I stepped foot into this building as  
16 a teacher. My late brother was a student at  
17 this school shortly after it opened. I started  
18 here in 1972. My two children graduated from  
19 this school, and I have a unique position in  
20 that I've worn many hats, from teacher, to a  
21 grade advisor, acting assistant principal, I've  
22 done counseling; I've done after school  
23 tutoring, and I've had the unique opportunity to  
24 work with students, not only during school time,  
25 but after school time. I've been the advisor to

1 Arkon, to Arista, put on school productions,  
2 the fishing club, the fishing team, and so many  
3 things I can't even remember. The bottom line  
4 is, that school is more than statistics. It's  
5 more than teaching to a test. It's more than  
6 dealing with numbers. It's about raising  
7 children to be good citizens by giving them a  
8 good education, to give them the skills to go on  
9 into society to become productive members. I  
10 can tell you in all honesty, that the two  
11 closest friends that I have in the world right  
12 now are two of my former students from the  
13 1990s. So we've kept in touch and we socialize,  
14 we do things. The bottom line is, that if in  
15 fact, your goal is to produce a better school,  
16 then I think you're, it's incumbent upon you, to  
17 draw upon the assets that are here. I can tell  
18 you that in the 31 years that I taught in this  
19 building, out of my 34 years in education, other  
20 than maybe a handful of teachers, who didn't  
21 deserve to be teachers, most of the people who  
22 walked into this building every day, came here  
23 devoted to their kids. And their only goal was  
24 to provide the best education possible, thank  
25 you.

1 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir, speaker  
2 number 25, Damaris Mejia.

3 MS. DAMARIS MEJIA: My name is Damaris  
4 Mejia, and my daughter here is a freshman, and  
5 at first I wasn't happy with her coming to this  
6 school, but it quickly changed around. The  
7 programs that offer her here is, um, it's  
8 excellent. This school is excellent. The staff  
9 is excellent. My daughter, as soon as she  
10 started, she was in the volleyball team, right  
11 after gymnastics. She is now in softball, and  
12 the manager of football, uh, flag football, and  
13 the law program that offers here too is  
14 excellent. The, I'm very happy with, with how  
15 this school is, and, um, I have a five year old,  
16 and I'm happy to say that she is going to be  
17 coming to this school, because this school will  
18 not be closing.

19 [Applause]

20 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you ma'am, speaker  
21 number 26, Robin Tavert [phonetic]

22 [Crosstalk]

23 MS. SILVERMAN: Speaker number 26, not here  
24 present, okay, so number 27, Natasha Pams  
25 {phonetic}

1 MS. NATASHA PRIMES: Primes, Primes,  
2 Primes, I just wanted to say that I know  
3 something about data, and data could be biased,  
4 and data could be misrepresented here. And this  
5 data is full of misrepresentation and biasness.  
6 But it does show something scientifically  
7 significant. It shows a growth rate from 53 to  
8 63% in graduation rate. What I want to bring,  
9 and what I want to say, is that something is  
10 wrong with the DOE if they can say that the only  
11 model to help Sheepshead Bay is a turnaround  
12 model. My mother always told me quick fix don't  
13 work. You talk about self-report and anti - - .  
14 Let me give you a small one. My son had a nine  
15 hours operation, and he wasn't coming out of  
16 anesthesia, and everybody was scared, and we  
17 were frightened. And then I, all of a sudden I  
18 say Kenneth, if, you have to come out if you  
19 want to go to sleep. And in 15 minutes he was  
20 out. He, if, I don't know if you know him, but  
21 he is a little boy who never wants to go home.  
22 We want to stay here. And what I want us to  
23 leave with, is that I think everyone should  
24 stand and show appreciation for any group of  
25 teacher that can create a 53 to 63 growth rate,

1 thank you.

2 [Applause]

3 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you ma'am. So the  
4 next speaker is speaker number 28, Axel Joseph.

5 [Applause]

6 MR. AXEL JOSEPH: Hi, I would like to say  
7 good night to all the parents and teachers for  
8 coming out to support our school. First off, I  
9 would like to start off by saying like, please  
10 tell me what is the real reason you really think  
11 Sheepshead Bay should close down. And another  
12 thing I would love for you to answer this  
13 question, how would you feel if your child was  
14 going to this school right now and this school  
15 was closing down. I want, I want you to really  
16 think that in your head.

17 [Applause]

18 MR. JOSEPH: I have been here for the past  
19 two years of my life, and I can tell you this,  
20 the past two years of my life have been the  
21 best. I could tell you that for sure. I have  
22 been on the track team. I have played for the  
23 soccer team. The track team was, I would say we  
24 have had our ups and downs. But our coach is  
25 one man that we could say, he has been through

1 it all with us, and he stands by us for  
2 everything that we does.

3 [Applause]

4 MR. JOSEPH: All right, another thing I  
5 would like to touch on, is developing, is the  
6 development with chemistry with our teachers  
7 that we have had here at Sheepshead Bay. All  
8 the teachers that I have had this year, have  
9 always looked out for me, made sure I have done  
10 my work, made sure I had done my homework, made  
11 sure I am well behaved in class, and they would  
12 never stop looking out for me. I could tell you  
13 that for sure. Another thing I would like to  
14 say, is I blame you all for our school being  
15 really on this, how can I say, low achiever, low  
16 achievement program thing, because, as I was  
17 sitting down, I looked up what a low achiever  
18 is. And a low achiever is someone, is achieving  
19 lower than people around you. I would love to  
20 know the grades of the other schools around us  
21 that is making you want to close down just this  
22 school.

23 FEMALE VOICE: Thank you.

24 MR. JOSEPH: Another thing I would like to  
25 say is, the budget cuts that you have done to

1 this school, all right, 30 seconds, thank you.  
2 The budget cuts that you have done to this  
3 school, this year, well the, these two years, I  
4 can say the learning has been, well, yeah, the  
5 learning has improved, but another thing is that  
6 you all have cut down on money so we have less  
7 text books to give to students to take home. So  
8 without, without text books to study, how do you  
9 think our exam grades are supposed to improve?  
10 So you really need to think about what you are  
11 doing right here, and please don't shut down  
12 Sheepshead Bay.

13 [Applause]

14 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir. So the next  
15 speaker is speaker number 29, Roberta Sherman,  
16 and actually, as Ms. Sherman is making her way  
17 to the mic, I'm going to call up the next set of  
18 speakers. We have speaker number 30, Robin  
19 Kovat; speaker number 31, Maria Feld; number 32-  
20 -

21 FEMALE VOICE: What number are you?

22 FEMALE VOICE: 30 and 31.

23 MS. SILVERMAN: I'm not sure.

24 FEMALE VOICE: I've got it.

25 MS. SILVERMAN: You've got it, excellent.

1 Number 33, if you just, if, when you come up,  
2 just introduce yourself. I apologize. Number  
3 33 is Mile Kahan [phonetic], and number 34,  
4 Susan Crichlow. So number 29, Roberta Sherman.

5 MS. ROBERTA SHERMAN: Mr. Deputy Chancellor,  
6 please listen, hi, members of the panel, and all  
7 the students and parents and educators in this  
8 room who have so eloquently expressed their  
9 desire for their school to remain open. Now, my  
10 name is Roberta Sherman as you said. I am a  
11 retired educator, having been a classroom  
12 teacher, a reading teacher, a supervisor  
13 administrator for the New York City Board of  
14 Education, and also have been an active parent,  
15 had been an active parent when my four sons went  
16 to public schools in the city of New York.  
17 Education is a passion that I have. This is not  
18 something to be taken lightly. This turnaround  
19 model, I can no longer tolerate keeping still.  
20 I have not spoken out, but I have to now,  
21 because I cannot take this program because it is  
22 so chaotic and ineffective. It does nothing to  
23 change the tenor of the school. And one of the  
24 key questions that you have been asked over, no  
25 30 seconds please.

1 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

2 MS. SHERMAN: One of the key questions that  
3 you have been asked over and over again, how  
4 will the turnaround program change the school?  
5 How will it make it better? No one has answered  
6 that question yet. And that is a question that  
7 has to be answered. Now in the environment, the  
8 educational impact statement, it had been stated  
9 that Sheepshead Bay High School was supposed to  
10 be closed in June of 2011. In May of 2011, it  
11 was determined that the school would, rather  
12 than closing it, have a restart model and  
13 partnership with John Hopkins Diploma Now.

14 MS. SILVERMAN: If you could wrap up ma'am.

15 MS. SHERMAN: What?

16 MS. SILVERMAN: If you could wrap up.

17 MS. SHERMAN: Back up, okay, I'm too loud,  
18 that's unusual for me.

19 MS. SILVERMAN: No, if you could wrap up  
20 your comments, come, bring them to a close so we  
21 can go on to the next speaker.

22 MS. SHERMAN: The program was to be funded  
23 by SED. In October of 2011, it was decided that  
24 the program, in spite of the fact that the EIS  
25 said that the school had been following the

1 precepts and the principles and working  
2 effectively to achieve restart, in spite of the  
3 fact that our Deputy Chancellor has indicated  
4 that it has made strides, because there has been  
5 no agreement for an assessment of teaching  
6 staff, the school will have to have a turnaround  
7 model, which, in effect would be to close the  
8 school and reopen it, just using another name.

9 Now--

10 MS. SILVERMAN: [Interposing] Thank you  
11 ma'am, if you have a written statement that  
12 you'd like to submit the balance for the record--  
13 -

14 MS. SHERMAN: [Interposing] No, I would like  
15 to read it. I'm sorry.

16 MS. SILVERMAN: Okay, but if you could--

17 MS. SHERMAN: [Interposing] Okay, I just  
18 have a few more things--

19 MS. SILVERMAN: [Interposing] If you could  
20 bring your

21 MS. SHERMAN: [Interposing] -to say.

22 MS. SILVERMAN: That's great, that's great.  
23 Just bring it to a close, because we do have  
24 other people who are prepared to speak as well.

25 MS. SHERMAN: Recently, I listened to

1 several governors of various states. They  
2 made education a priority.

3 MS. SILVERMAN: It's okay.

4 MS. SHERMAN: Strides have been made to  
5 improve the education. I heard the following.  
6 Stable good communities must have stable  
7 schools, respect for teachers and the teacher's  
8 union, replicate what works, collaborative  
9 effort and input from schools, teachers,  
10 students, parents, administratives, unions and  
11 elected officials, power teachers, support  
12 teachers so that they can be creative and  
13 innovative, meetings of small groups of teachers  
14 so that they can interact and discuss what works  
15 and what doesn't. Different programs for  
16 different--

17 [Applause]

18 MALE VOICE: Guys, just ma'am, ma'am, if you  
19 could just--

20 MS. SILVERMAN: [Interposing] If you could  
21 just wrap up quickly okay.

22 MALE VOICE: --finish up please.

23 MS. SHERMAN: Okay.

24 MALE VOICE: We have, we have 20 more  
25 speakers, so we--

1 MS. SHERMAN: [Interposing] Okay,  
2 different programs for different schools best  
3 serve the teachers and staff, and thereby best  
4 serve the students and schools. Not once did I  
5 hear a word about closing schools, substituting  
6 half of the staff, a cha cha cha of all kinds of  
7 programs that have been tried all through the  
8 Mayor's tenor as the head of the school system,  
9 and herein lies the problem.

10 MALE VOICE: Ma'am.

11 MS. SILVERMAN: Please wrap up. Yes, no,  
12 I'm just asking that you bring your comments to  
13 a close.

14 MS. SILVERMAN: What happened to the  
15 microphone.

16 MALE VOICE: Guys, guys, turn up the mic.

17 MS. SILVERMAN: Is there a problem with the  
18 microphone? Oh, sorry, okay, no apparently, no,  
19 there is a problem with the microphone, so--

20 MS. SHERMAN: [Interposing] I don't know if  
21 this thing--

22 MS. SILVERMAN: [Interposing] There you go.  
23 If you could just please bring your comments to  
24 a close.

25 MS. SHERMAN: Okay, the point is, that you

1 allow, as an educator, Mr. Deputy Chancellor,  
2 you should understand this better than anybody  
3 in this room. You cannot have a program,  
4 institute a program, have people working on it,  
5 pay for consultants, have a restart program  
6 start in September of 2011, and then determine  
7 in October of 2011 that it is going to close.  
8 This is not educationally, or statistically  
9 sound.

10 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much.

11 MS. SHERMAN: You better than anyone know  
12 that a school has to have time for a program to  
13 grow and be nurtured.

14 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much.

15 MS. SHERMAN: Okay, oh incidentally, on  
16 other - - .

17 MS. SILVERMAN: Ma'am, if we could--

18 MS. SHERMAN: [Interposing] I am--

19 MS. SILVERMAN: [Interposing] --move on to  
20 the next speaker please.

21 MS. SHERMAN: I just, I noticed that you  
22 allowed elected officials time. I was, I am the  
23 state democratic committee member. I am an  
24 elected official--

25 MS. SILVERMAN: [Interposing] No, I

1 appreciate that, and you have, we have  
2 indulged--

3 MS. SHERMAN: No, you don't appreciate it.  
4 I was told--

5 MS. SILVERMAN: [Interposing] We have gone  
6 over the time. So I was just asking you--

7 MS. SHERMAN: [Interposing] I was told to  
8 sit--

9 MS. SILVERMAN: [Interposing] -to wrap up.

10 MS. SHERMAN: --behind all of the speakers,  
11 and I am glad I did it, because I heard positive  
12 things coming out of everyone's mouth. It was a  
13 pleasure to hear students laud their teachers.  
14 It was an absolute pleasure. And I am sorry  
15 that I can't finish what I was going to say,  
16 'cause I had something nice to say about the  
17 Mayor, which nobody else did. But Mayor  
18 Bloomberg, my message is this. Tear down this  
19 turnaround program, and let these schools follow  
20 the program, the restart, and be nurtured, thank  
21 you.

22 [Applause]

23 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much. Okay, so  
24 before we go onto the next speaker, I'm just  
25 going to remind folks we still have quite a

1       lengthy list of people, so if we could just  
2       trying and keep it to two minutes. Again there  
3       is a gentleman down here who is going to let you  
4       know when you've gotten to 30 seconds, and when  
5       your time is up. So let's try and keep it to  
6       two minutes. So speaker number 39, Robin Kovat.

7           MS. ROBIN KOVAT: No, 30, wait, wait, 30 and  
8       31.

9           MS. SILVERMAN: I'm sorry, 30; I apologize.

10          MS. KOVAT: And I'm speaking for the both of  
11       us, so I have four minutes, but I won't take it  
12       all. Okay, my name is Robin Kovat. I'm the  
13       senior advisor at Sheepshead Bay High School.  
14       I'm also the Law Academy coordinator. This is  
15       Maria Feld. She is the COSA and Phys. Ed.  
16       teacher. Okay, first of all, Sheepshead Bay  
17       High School, guys you listening, oh - - .  
18       Sheepshead Bay High School is not a factory,  
19       thank you. Our school is not a business, and if  
20       you were, and if, if we were, you would be  
21       right, we would be a failure as factory or  
22       business. But we are a school, We are a  
23       community. We are a family, and our job is not  
24       to churn out widgets and clones. Our job is to  
25       create a community of thinkers, of life long

1 learners, and toward that end, we are a huge  
2 success, even if it's not in the time you have  
3 allotted to us. The DOE likes data, so we'll  
4 give you some data. I have researched the  
5 success of turnaround schools, and I have found  
6 there are no conclusive results. Some studies  
7 indicate it works, many other studies indicate  
8 not so much. Scholarly research shows several  
9 school districts have failed as a result of  
10 implementing this turnaround model. The Century  
11 Foundation, a public policy research foundation,  
12 sites extensive research in California, Ohio,  
13 Maryland, Chicago where we get a lot of our  
14 programs from, and elsewhere, that school  
15 turnaround efforts have fallen short and have  
16 seen lackluster results, their words, not mine.  
17 Research shows schools are driven by students,  
18 parents, faculty. Getting rid of the teachers  
19 does nothing to improve the schools. As a  
20 matter of fact, getting rid of the teachers who  
21 know and form bonds with the students just will  
22 make matters worse. The turnaround model has  
23 never, ever been implemented in New York City.  
24 So in essences, our students are not the DOE's  
25 guinea pigs. Thank you very much for that. We

1 are a huge experiment. I know from personal  
2 experience that we teach students effectively.  
3 We teach them successfully. How do I know this?  
4 Because they graduate and then they come back  
5 and tell us, okay. Where are they coming back  
6 to if we are no longer here. A school is more  
7 than four walls. It is more than the programs  
8 you put into place. It is the people. It is  
9 the relationships. It is the bonds that are  
10 formed to make the difference. And each of our  
11 teachers can tell you a story, tell you many  
12 stories that show how we impact on students'  
13 lives. I'll tell you a few. Student comes in  
14 as a gang - - , failing classes, miserable,  
15 comes to school, takes one class he enjoys, gets  
16 a B, and he has hope. Now he is a 27-year-old  
17 married, nursing student, keeps in touch with  
18 me. Another student, comes into ninth grade  
19 knowing three words of English, yes, no, okay.  
20 She graduates in four years with honors, becomes  
21 a school leader, is now on a mock trial  
22 scholarship at John's Hop-, I'm sorry, at St.  
23 John's. Another student, resource room, Special  
24 Ed., joins the mock trial team, becomes an honor  
25 student, a leader, now is in an honors program

1 in college. Another one, cuts classes his  
2 freshman year. He doesn't want to be here. He  
3 fails. He meets a teacher he feels comfortable  
4 with. He begins to pass. He joins teams,  
5 activities, clubs, and is now a successful  
6 businessman and a college graduate. He tells me  
7 that what Sheepshead gave him was confidence.  
8 These stories don't show up in your data. You  
9 cannot measure the impact of teachers on the  
10 lives of students. Programs maybe  
11 interchangeable, people are not. Statistics can  
12 be played with. Do not play with the lives of  
13 our students. You can't take away the impact  
14 that we have already had on the students that we  
15 have now. But you can take away the impact on  
16 the future. Please don't take that away.

17 [Applause]

18 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much. Speaker  
19 number 32, and if you could just introduce  
20 yourself.

21 MR. YURI OSTROZHYSKY: My name is Yuri  
22 Ostrozhynsky, and I'm a, and I'm a senior at  
23 this school.

24 FEMALE VOICE: He was already up there, so.

25 MR. OSTROZHYSKY: Sheepshead Bay High

1 School, over the last four years has become my  
2 home, as there were weeks and days where I spent  
3 more time in school, than I did at home  
4 sleeping. It gives you a sense of belonging.  
5 It offers you a sense of community. It offers a  
6 variety of opportunities and bonds that it  
7 creates with the faculty. Sheepshead Bay High  
8 School offers a variety of programs both  
9 academic and athletic. Throughout my four  
10 years, I was involved in moot court, mock  
11 trials, law and research. I participate in  
12 essay and research competitions. I got to work  
13 with real life attorneys and judges to create  
14 legal documents. I had the chance to work with  
15 an IT professional, who showed my that school  
16 was not simply about getting the right grades,  
17 and going, taking the right classes. It's about  
18 the lessons you learn and the abilities that it  
19 teaches you, so that you can become the  
20 individual, so that I became the individual that  
21 I am today. I cannot begin to imagine coming  
22 back to this school for a reunion, or for a  
23 visit, and not seeing the teachers that have  
24 made a tremendous impact in my life. It would  
25 not be the same seeing the teachers who have

1 made me into the individual that I am today,  
2 thank you.

3 [Applause]

4 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir, speaker  
5 number 33, Mile--

6 MR. MILE KATUSA: [Interposing] Mile Katusa.

7 MS. SILVERMAN: There you go.

8 MR. KATUSA: I just actually want to start  
9 off with two questions. Earlier you said that  
10 it is difficult to make a choice to close the  
11 school, but it is not a choice you felt, um,  
12 that is not a choice you felt was necessary  
13 merely three months ago. There were no new  
14 numbers to compel the choice you were making.  
15 As a matter of fact, all statistics you cited  
16 were from last year, which is, gave you plenty  
17 of time to make the decision over the summer  
18 let's say. But you decided that you're going to  
19 have a three-year, give us three years to work.  
20 So why make the change now if it's not a  
21 political one? My second question is, you said  
22 you want to build on the structures that are in  
23 place, and on the structures that are being  
24 built. Why remove, or threaten to remove the  
25 teachers who are working hard to build those

1 structures, and how those structures will be  
2 any different? And finally, we talk a lot about  
3 numbers, and you have a lot of numbers in your  
4 databases, and you're proposing to changing the  
5 number - - the number of the school from K495 to  
6 whatever it might be. And it's easy to make  
7 choices when you are dealing with numbers, but  
8 if we were, and if we were a business, perhaps  
9 that would be enough, but you are dealing with  
10 more than numbers. You are dealing with young  
11 men and women whose needs are not always  
12 reflected in the numbers, with students whose  
13 needs cannot be adequately addressed in some  
14 artificial timeframe, with young women and men,  
15 and with who, with young women and me, excuse  
16 me, with young women and men who have developed  
17 these painstaking bonds. You're dealing with  
18 community, and you're undermining it. You are  
19 dealing with teachers who are working hard to  
20 create a structure you referred to earlier, and  
21 you are undermining them, and you are dealing  
22 with the students who long for these bonds, and  
23 who love this community, and you are undermining  
24 them. You are dealing with a community, and you  
25 are undermining it, thank you.

1 [Applause]

2 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir, speaker  
3 number 34, Susan Crichlow.

4 MS. SUSAN CRICHLLOW: Good evening ladies and  
5 gentlemen, and the students. Deputy Chancellor,  
6 I could not help but take some childish glee, in  
7 seeing the frustration you showed with our sound  
8 system. That is the kind of resource that we  
9 have to work with at Sheepshead. This is the  
10 last beacon for ELLs, and special needs  
11 students. I have worked here for about 10 years  
12 now, and in the last five years, it's been a  
13 sacrilege to the bone that education should be,  
14 seeing the amount, being under the fear of  
15 closure for five years. Do you have any idea of  
16 what it is like to work with that fear every  
17 semester? How trying to achieve these goals  
18 that you have set, working 16 hour days, and  
19 still having the bar raised at every time we are  
20 able to make some sign of success? I would like  
21 to let you know that by now, you should be aware  
22 that it takes five to seven years for a student,  
23 for someone to learn a new language, and yet we  
24 are expected to graduate ELLs in three to four  
25 years. I wonder, could any of you do what you

1 are asking us to do.

2 [Applause]

3 MS. CRICHLLOW: And not only that, do any of  
4 you speak a second language? The young people  
5 in this school, why should they be held to  
6 higher standards than other students? What are  
7 the new structures you hope to put in place?  
8 Because we haven't heard that yet. And in all  
9 these schools that are mushrooming around the  
10 city that have been closed, opened and closed  
11 several times, what is the success of these  
12 schools? I see that I am, my time is almost up,  
13 so I need to say with the Danielson Rubric, the  
14 union busting ploys, when do you give us time to  
15 teach? We can work with Bloom's Taxonomy, but  
16 we cannot work with Mayor Bloomberg's  
17 irrationality, thank you.

18 [Applause]

19 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you ma'am. So before  
20 we call up the next set of speakers, we're going  
21 to take a five-minute break. So don't go very  
22 far, and let me call the names of the next few  
23 speakers who we are going to have, speakers  
24 number 35 through 40, Mitchell Kun; number 36,  
25 Michelada [phonetic] McFarlane [phonetic]; 37,

1 Fariha Inam; 38, Saba Parvez; 39, Amir  
2 Almerdie; and number 40, Denise Mendes. So  
3 we'll get started again in just about five  
4 minutes, but if the group of speakers could make  
5 their way towards the front, that would be  
6 great.

7 MS. SILVERMAN: For indulging that brief  
8 break. So we're going to come back to the  
9 public comments section, and just a reminder  
10 that each speaker has two minutes, and there'll  
11 be a gentleman in the front here who'll let you  
12 know when you've reached 30 seconds and when the  
13 time has elapsed. I just want to acknowledge I  
14 really appreciate how respectful everyone's been  
15 of that time, and I'm also really enjoying the  
16 public comments section. So number 35 is  
17 Mitchell Kun.

18 MR. MITCHELL KUN: Hello, my name is  
19 Mitchell Kun, and I've been attending Sheepshead  
20 Bay High School from 2008, up to this year. I'm  
21 currently a senior, and my time at this school  
22 has forever changed my life as a student  
23 athlete, and a person. When I first entered, I  
24 was just a typical student wanting to get my  
25 education. Today I am a different person. I've

1 learnt so much about my future goals.  
2 Throughout my years at Sheepshead Bay High  
3 School, I have been supported by my teachers, my  
4 guidance counselor, and all of my friends that  
5 attend this school. I was provided with the  
6 outstanding passion that all of my teachers have  
7 shown. In the sports medicine program, I was  
8 provided with the education that I need to  
9 become a physical therapist and move on in life.  
10 At Sheepshead Bay High School every teacher and  
11 faculty stays in school for after school  
12 tutoring to help struggling and motivated  
13 students. I'm also in the track and field  
14 program here at Sheepshead Bay High School. My  
15 coaches have always motivated me to succeed.  
16 Our team has traveled around the country to  
17 compete at the national level, and we have won  
18 several national championships, in many events.  
19 Every since I entered Sheepshead Bay High  
20 School, I have had the chance to experience and  
21 learn about how I can be the best I can be.  
22 This school has had a place in my heart, because  
23 I have met many people that are here, not just  
24 to get their paycheck, but are here because they  
25 have the pleasure to teach us and see us move on

1 in life, thank you.

2 [Applause]

3 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir, speaker  
4 number 36, Michelada [phonetic] McFarlane  
5 [phonetic].

6 MR. SPENCER KIM: Hey, my name is Spencer  
7 Kim, I'll be speaking on behalf of Michaela  
8 [phonetic] McFarlane [phonetic]. My uncle  
9 graduated in 1977, and my mom graduated in 1986.  
10 My two aunts graduated in 1991, all from  
11 Sheepshead Bay. I graduated in 2011. So over  
12 my four years at Sheepshead Bay High School, I  
13 have participated in the student government, the  
14 Angels Community Service Club, countless  
15 research competitions, numerous mock trials, and  
16 also many moot court cases. And over my four  
17 years, I have learned that simply this, a  
18 school's success cannot be expressed  
19 formulaically. Rather, its success is  
20 determined by the efforts of the faculty,  
21 students and it's parents. And of all I know,  
22 that cannot be expressed formulaically. Rather,  
23 success is gauged, as my grandparent put it,  
24 [foreign language], or in Korean, which means,  
25 with your efforts, with everything, give it your

1 best efforts. And that is why believe that  
2 every teacher here and student does. Sheepshead  
3 Bay is more than a school, and it's not a  
4 business, as my former mock trial coach said.  
5 It's a community. And it is through that  
6 community and efforts that I am here today. The  
7 school has provided me, as well as every student  
8 here, with every tool that they need to succeed,  
9 and it is our responsibility as students to take  
10 that opportunity, thank you.

11 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir, speaker  
12 number 37, Fariha Inam.

13 MS. FARIHA INAM: I think there has been  
14 some confusion, I was going to speak on behalf  
15 of Michaela also, but I actually want to speak  
16 on behalf of the former students that Ms. Kovat  
17 was talking about in her speech, that come back  
18 to this school, and speak of the impact, how  
19 great this school has been in my life, and the  
20 impact that it has had. I was a former student  
21 here. I graduated in 2005. I went onto going  
22 to Hunter College with, in, I graduated with my  
23 Bachelor's in Sociology. And had it not been  
24 for the teachers that I had in this school, I  
25 don't know where I would be today. I have to

1       thank personally Ms. Kovat, my guidance  
2       counselor Ms. Satchell [phonetic]. I was  
3       recently, I was just going in through some  
4       paperwork there today, and I went into, I found  
5       a whole bunch of paperwork from this school, and  
6       it just took me back. I found old school  
7       newspaper that I worked with, on with Ms Fiango  
8       [phonetic]. I found old music sheets that I  
9       went in the band with Mr. Graber [phonetic].  
10      This school has so many great opportunities and  
11      such great teachers that you cannot take these  
12      teachers away from these students. It would be  
13      such a detrimental thing, You're trying to re-,  
14      you're trying to build the school up. You wont  
15      be doing that if you take these teachers away.  
16      I have to personally thank these teachers for  
17      the great impact that the had in my life. And I  
18      am glad that I have this opportunity today to  
19      come back after so many years and say thank you,  
20      from the bottom of my heart, I really appreciate  
21      your help.

22                [Applause]

23                MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you, okay, so speaker  
24      number 37.

25                FEMALE VOICE: Who is 37? You got the

1 paper.

2 MS. SILVERMAN: Fariha Inam.

3 MS. FARIHA INAM: Yup, that's me. My name  
4 is Fariha Inam. I am currently a senior at  
5 Sheepshead Bay High School Scholars Academy.  
6 When I entered this school as a freshman, I was  
7 on a dangerous path. I was having way too much  
8 fun, until my guidance counselor Ms. Satchel  
9 helped me down the right path. My teachers and  
10 guidance counselor helped me find strength,  
11 unity, motivation and confidence. For every  
12 struggle I've encountered, whether academic or  
13 personal, there has always been someone to help  
14 me. The entire community instills confidence in  
15 everyone. Because of Sheepshead Bay, we are who  
16 we are. We are stronger. We are one. So  
17 Sheepshead, Sheepshead, don't you cry.  
18 Sheepshead Bay will never die.

19 [Applause]

20 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you, speaker number  
21 38, Saba Parvez.

22 MS. SABA PARVEZ: I came here almost four  
23 years ago. I was too afraid to stand up, too  
24 afraid to speak up, and too afraid to try. I  
25 came to Sheepshead Bay High School with no

1 direction and with no hope. My teachers gave  
2 me hope. They set me in the right direction. I  
3 am now graduating from Sheepshead Bay High  
4 School stronger than I could have ever imagined.  
5 The academics gave me hope. The sports teams  
6 gave me pride. My teachers gave me a family.  
7 My name is Saba Parvez, and I am Sheepshead Bay.  
8 I will stand up; I will speak up; and I will  
9 fight to save my school. I will fight to save  
10 my family.

11 [Applause]

12 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much, speaker  
13 number 39, Amir--

14 MALE VOICE: [Interposing] - - .

15 MS. SILVERMAN: Almer [phonetic]

16 MR. AMIR ALMERDIE: Good afternoon, all  
17 right, good afternoon there. My name is Amir  
18 Almerdie, and I have attended Sheepshead Bay  
19 High School for three years. I can honestly say  
20 that these three years changed my life. When I  
21 entered this school I had no hopes of learning  
22 or even graduating high school. I came in with  
23 a blank mind, no hopes or a dream. But day  
24 after day, class after class, I started to  
25 change. My grades are increasing, and I started

1 to have this open up relationship with my  
2 teachers. And for every class I go to, I get  
3 inspired, and motivated to make something out of  
4 myself, to pursue a career in which suits me in  
5 the future. Sheepshead Bay High School stu-,  
6 Sheepshead Bay High School has changed me in a  
7 way that satisfies me and my family. I am a  
8 Sheepshead Bay High School student, and I want  
9 to graduate as a high school, a Sheepshead Bay  
10 High School Student, and my little siblings too.  
11 And I want to graduate next to the teachers that  
12 opened my eyes to see the future, and  
13 contributed to my success, thank you.

14 [Applause]

15 MS. SILVERMAN: So the next speaker is  
16 speaker number 40, Denise Mendes. And before  
17 you start, let me just call up the next groups,  
18 speakers 41 through 46. James Mendes, Edith  
19 [phonetic] Caesar [phonetic], Mark Anthony  
20 Blounte, and then we have two folks who signed  
21 up from number 44 together, Anisa Fadel and Noor  
22 Hussein; 45, John Padula; and 46, Michael-

23 FEMALE VOICE: Turovsky.

24 FEMALE VOICE: Turovsky.

25 MS. SILVERMAN: Turovsky, great, Ms. Mendes.

1 MS. DENISE MENDES: Hi, my name is Denise  
2 Menedes, and I have, uh, oh that's loud. I have  
3 an 11<sup>th</sup> grader, Chris Menedes; and a 10<sup>th</sup> grader  
4 Nick Menedes. Oh, um, uh, a lot of things was  
5 said tonight, and I really commend the students  
6 for all the things that they've said. I, they  
7 really love their school, and my kids feel  
8 really upset about what's happening. This is  
9 our zone school, and my kids weren't prepared to  
10 come to this school. My husband came to this  
11 school, and his two sisters graduated from this  
12 school, and it's had a bad reputation for years.  
13 My sons went to a private small parochial  
14 orthodox school from Pre-K to eighth grade.  
15 Chris graduated valedictorian and he planned to  
16 go to Goldstein, as well as the other son.  
17 Apparently they got lost in the shuffle, and the  
18 wound up at Sheepshead Bay, and everyone was  
19 telling me you should transfer them. All these  
20 things are going to happen. They are not going  
21 to learn. They were doing so well in school.  
22 They are going to fail. And this is what I  
23 expected, and now my son Christopher, the 11<sup>th</sup>  
24 grader has not gotten a grade lower than 90, and  
25 he is in college classes at this time. So when

1 they say, I don't know how they are preparing  
2 them for college, why are we giving college, why  
3 are we offering college classes? How are we,  
4 how are they excelling? My son is in honors  
5 classes. He is taken Regents. He never took a  
6 Regents in a private school, and he, um, he  
7 succeeded and did really well here. The last  
8 thing I'm going to say before I end is, my son,  
9 as well as three other students that are in the  
10 law program, they were involved in an essay  
11 contest. Five students from each high school of  
12 the five boroughs were chosen. Okay, four  
13 students from Sheepshead Bay High School were  
14 chosen out of 10 contestants, out of five  
15 boroughs. Four from our high school were  
16 picked, okay. And there is going to be a grand  
17 winner soon. But four students from our  
18 supposed horrible high school, thank you.

19 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you ma'am.

20 [Applause]

21 MS. SILVERMAN: Speaker number 41, James  
22 Menedes.

23 MR. JAMES MENEDES: Ms. - - , thank you for  
24 this chance to speak. I want to say I'm very  
25 happy to hear of the students, how they are

1 expressing their feelings, and what this  
2 school means to them. My wife did steal a lot  
3 of my thunder. I wanted to mention about the  
4 four students out of 10 out of the whole city  
5 that were picked from the school for that  
6 judicial essay that they wrote. Chris, who  
7 spoke earlier, who was part of the mock trial,  
8 won the national championship. These are all  
9 positive things, positive things that need to be  
10 heard. Because unfortunately, negative, um,  
11 negative rumors, rumors of the school closing,  
12 have forced a lot of people not to even consider  
13 Sheepshead Bay High School. Sheepshead Bay High  
14 School ends up with the zero students, the one  
15 students, the twos. Are they getting the threes  
16 and fours? Your statistics on our graduating  
17 rates, uh, percentages, are they compared to the  
18 schools that have the zero students as well?  
19 That is the question I want to know. You're  
20 comparing us against all the other schools. Do  
21 they have the zero students? Do they have the  
22 one students? We don't get the threes and the  
23 fours that these other schools are getting. And  
24 I think for every zero student we get, maybe we  
25 should get a four student. Maybe that should

1 be, that should be part of the change. I  
2 think, uh, if you want to start comparing us to  
3 other schools, let's all be on the same playing  
4 field, thank you.

5 [Applause]

6 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir, speaker  
7 number 42, Edith Caesar. Is speaker number 42  
8 with us? Okay, speaker number 43, Mark Anthony-  
9 -

10 FEMALE VOICE: [Interposing] Blounte.

11 FEMALE VOICE: Blounte.

12 MS. SILVERMAN: --Blounte.

13 MR. MARK ANTHONY BLOUNTE: Hi, my name is  
14 Mark, actually stop make, uh, this is actually  
15 for Mayor Bloomberg. Stop mixing politics with  
16 education. Politics plus education equals  
17 chaos. And it doesn't necessarily mean that  
18 change is going to be, like a important thing  
19 for this school. Sometimes change can corrupt  
20 this, corrupt the whole school system. Enough  
21 said, go Sheepshead.

22 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much.

23 MALIKA: Hi, my name is Malika, and I just  
24 wanted to add something into what he just said.  
25 Since Bloomberg is not one of the teachers in

1 this school, why is he making decisions? He  
2 is not the teachers who know what we need help  
3 on. So why is he choosing what we need help on?  
4 He doesn't know what we struggling with. He  
5 doesn't know why people failing. And he doesn't  
6 know why graduation rate is so low. So why is  
7 he making the decisions? He should ask the  
8 teachers before he make decisions, thank you.

9 [Applause]

10 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much. Okay,  
11 speaker number 44, Anisa Fadel and Noor Hussein.

12 MS. ANISA FADEL: Hi everyone, my name is  
13 Anisa Fadel.

14 MS. NOOR HUSSEIN: And my name is Noor  
15 Hussien

16 MS. FADEL: And we are currently students at  
17 Sheepshead High School.

18 MS. HUSSEIN: Why not let educators educate.  
19 Mayor Bloomberg, can you please not drown the  
20 sharks? We are trying to improve. Classes are  
21 actually entertaining. Students are actually  
22 coming to school We're actually, we actually do  
23 care. You say you're only closing the school,  
24 but you are also erasing hundreds of memories.  
25 It breaks my heart to know teachers who are here

1 with us today, might not be with us next  
2 year.

3 MS. FADEL: Since our years at Sheepshead  
4 Bay High School, our journey has been amazing so  
5 far. We are impacted in the most positive ways.  
6 I am a better student, a better friend, and a  
7 better person because of Sheepshead Bay High  
8 School.

9 [Applause]

10 MS. NOOR FADEL: Good evening, my name is  
11 Noor Fadel, and I am currently a student in  
12 Sheepshead Bay High School. A year ago, as a  
13 freshman at this school, I was a very shy and  
14 quiet girl who did not have the guts to ask  
15 questions when I needed help. I did not have  
16 the guts to speak up for what I believed in  
17 until I met my teachers who made me overcome my  
18 shyness, and they made me who I am today, a  
19 confident and brave 10<sup>th</sup> grader, who is ready to  
20 make a stand for what she believes in, and I  
21 believe that the teachers of Sheepshead Bay High  
22 School made a difference in my life, and they  
23 have the ability to make a difference in other  
24 students too, thank you.

25 [Applause]

1 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you so much.

2 Speaker number 46, oh no wait, sorry, I have  
3 lost track of myself, John Padula.

4 MR. JOHN PADULA: Padula, I'm coach Padula.  
5 I'm the coach of the track team, and I'm also in  
6 charge of the Sports Medicine Academy in this  
7 school. We've heard a lot about the things that  
8 have gone well in the past in this school. I  
9 know we are planning for the future. And I  
10 think what we're doing going forward in the  
11 future is really what's going to keep Sheepshead  
12 Bay successful. We've done a tremendous amount  
13 of work planning academies, going wall to wall  
14 with the academies next year having every  
15 student in the school being in the academy, not  
16 just the few that are in it now. All the  
17 academies have been extremely successful. If  
18 you look at the graduation rates of the kids  
19 that are in the academies, it is extremely high.  
20 It's not the 63%. Those, the kids that are not  
21 graduating, are the kids that are not involved  
22 in academies, and next year, every kid is going  
23 to be involved in an academy. So our planning  
24 going forward I think is really going to make  
25 the school successful, and going into transition

1 is really going to cut into that planning.  
2 And already, it's hurting some of the motivation  
3 for teachers to buy into that program. So I  
4 think if you, you give us this year, and give us  
5 this time to go forward with this academy plan,  
6 I think it will work really well, thank you.

7 [Applause]

8 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir. So then  
9 speaker number 46 is Michael Turovsky. And  
10 before you start, let me just call up the next  
11 group of speakers. Number 47, Valerie  
12 [phonetic] Wade [phonetic]; 48, Alona Geller;  
13 49, 50 is Hakeem Lait [phonetic]; 51, Wendy  
14 Saddler; and 54, Maria Doorsmond [phonetic]. Go  
15 ahead Sir.

16 MR. MICHAEL TUROVSKY: Yeah, just want to  
17 say that three years ago I was a freshman, a  
18 freshman who was afraid to walk the halls of  
19 this building, because of all the bad things  
20 I've heard about the school. But then I entered  
21 the school and I saw that, I said to myself,  
22 where are the fights? I mean, honestly, all I  
23 saw was a family. The teachers were helping the  
24 students, and the students were trying to learn.  
25 And so on my schedule for eighth period said

1 Social Science Research, but it was  
2 abbreviated. I thought it was band. I thought  
3 I had music class. But instead, I got an  
4 amazing class with an amazing teacher. Who  
5 eventually became my coach for mock, moot court  
6 and mock trial. And with mot court and mock  
7 trial I was able to improve my public speaking,  
8 writing skills, so forth. And I'm not afraid to  
9 speak publicly. And as well, with band class  
10 and the amazing teachers with band and  
11 everything, I've been able to learn a new  
12 instrument. I've been able to progress in  
13 playing the bass, as well as the English  
14 teachers. I've been able to improve my writing,  
15 my reading skills and basically, Sheepshead Bay  
16 is more than a high school. It's really a  
17 family, so.

18 [Applause]

19 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir, speaker  
20 number 47, Valerie Wade. Is Valerie Wade still  
21 here? Speaker number 48, Alona Geller.

22 [Applause]

23 MS. ALONA GELLER: Hello, good evening  
24 everybody. Give yourselves a round of applause  
25 for still being here.

1 [Applause]

2 MS. GELLER: Yes, we're up to number 48.  
3 Thank you Sir for still being here. You with  
4 me. How you doing? Thank you for still being  
5 here for up to number 48. My name is Ms.  
6 Geller. I'm an English teacher here at  
7 Sheepshead Bay High School. I'm also the  
8 cheerleading coach, and I teach an incredible  
9 class called Council for Unity, which has  
10 completely changed my life as a teacher. I'm  
11 actually going to share my two minutes with a  
12 student of mine who is in my Council for Unity  
13 class, Moses. Give him a round of applause  
14 please.

15 [Applause]

16 MS. GELLER: And I think you've heard from  
17 some amazing students, some amazing staff. I  
18 don't want to tell you a lot of what you've  
19 already heard. So I will say that we're here  
20 representing not just the students who are  
21 excelling or failing, but the average student,  
22 the student that I was. When I was in high  
23 school I was very unmotivated. I was bright but  
24 nobody ever took notice of that, and the kids  
25 who live in the neighborhood, the kids who grew

1 up with Sheepshead bay High School as, you  
2 know, a part of their community, and Moses is a  
3 student who does live in the community, and is a  
4 student here. So I'll let him speak for that,  
5 thank you.

6 [Applause]

7 MOSES: Sheepshead Bay is a landmark to the  
8 community. It has brought the best of students,  
9 as well as the bad. The staff in the building  
10 is very supportive with the students, and also  
11 giving extra hand to help provide the knowledge  
12 that is necessary. I was born and raised in  
13 this community, and Sheepshead Bay had, um,  
14 Sheep, pardon me. Sheepshead Bay High School  
15 has, um, - - . Sheepshead Bay High School is an  
16 icon to the neighborhood. My relatives have  
17 graduated from this school, and have proceeded  
18 to good colleges. My personal gain in this  
19 building was learning to be a better man, and  
20 being more responsible for my priorities. Along  
21 with the support of the school and Council for  
22 Unity, it has been a big impact with allowing  
23 the class to be more of a family and learn as a  
24 whole. Sheepshead Bay is more than just a  
25 school. It's a foundation that was built from

1 the bottom to the top, and is still achieving  
2 to strive to the top. I have been in this  
3 school for three years, and my mentality has  
4 changed over time. I have made mistakes along  
5 the years and have grown with myself, as well as  
6 with my teachers and staff, which showed me the  
7 light when I was in the dark.

8 [Applause]

9 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir, speaker  
10 number 50, Hakeem Lait [phonetic].

11 MR. HAKEEM TAIT: Hello, my name is Hakeem  
12 Tait. I'm a high school grad. You know, I  
13 think, as a matter of fact, I know this school  
14 is a great place. I learned that teachers that  
15 worked really hard, they have great teachers,  
16 great sports, coaches, um, track, basketball,  
17 football, all that kind of stuff right. I  
18 remember, and I'm going to share this with you  
19 guys. I remember when I was a freshman, right.  
20 It took me two years, two years to settle down.  
21 I was a guy that used to act all geekish and  
22 nerdish around. I never used to act mature,  
23 right. And it took God Himself to reach in  
24 these wonderful teachers' hearts and students to  
25 help my life to be much better than ever, right.

1 I'm going to share a little story. Just  
2 recently, two years ago, I was a junior, and in  
3 October 8, 2010, I had did a English essay. Out  
4 of 66 people I was the lucky winner to win, and  
5 even be interviewed on a daily newspaper, and  
6 won two tickets to see the big playoff in, um,  
7 Saturday night Yankee Stadium game. As a  
8 Jamaican, as a Jamaican-Indian American, I had  
9 applied to BIH. Those of you who don't know,  
10 it's Beginning Into, Breaking Into Hollywood.  
11 It's a acting school I want to major into. And  
12 just today, I thank God I went there, and I  
13 heard that I got accepted there, right. And if  
14 it wasn't for this school, if it wasn't for  
15 these teachers and all these people that worked  
16 on me so hard, I would not be here. I would not  
17 be a great success. Now I'm glad that I'm  
18 graduating. So let me break it down to you en  
19 Español. No cierre la escuela. Don't close the  
20 school, thank you.

21 [Applause]

22 MS. SILVERMAN: Thank you Sir, and  
23 congratulations. Number 52, Wendy Sadler, and  
24 number 54, Marie Doorsmond [phonetic]. Okay, so  
25 we have now exhausted the speaker sign-up list,

1 and we're going to transition into the  
2 question and answer. So as I said tat the  
3 beginning, folks who had questions wrote them  
4 down on index cards, and they've been submitted.  
5 As you've heard, questions have come up through  
6 the course of the evening, so we're going to  
7 respond to some of the questions now. All the  
8 questions that were raised, all the questions  
9 that are on the cards, it's all, we respond to  
10 them in a document that's called the Analysis of  
11 Public Comment, which is posted online, and  
12 provided to the panel members. So we're going  
13 to respond to some now. If more questions come  
14 to you, or you have additional comments, please  
15 do take advantage of the phone and email where  
16 you can send additional comments and questions.  
17 I'll tell you them again. It's  
18 [d22proposals@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:d22proposals@schools.nyc.gov). And the phone  
19 number is (212) 374-0208. So now I'm going to  
20 have the Deputy Chancellor respond to some of  
21 the questions that were submitted.

22 MALE VOICE: Okay, blue.

23 MR. STERNBERG: Are we on?

24 MALE VOICE: Blue.

25 MR. STERNBER: All right, here we go. First

1 of all, thank you Jenny. Thank you everybody  
2 for your comments. Again, Principal O'Mahoney,  
3 a lot of kind words for you this evening, and  
4 thank you for you hospitality. A number of  
5 questions were submitted, and some others were  
6 asked. I'll very briefly run through our  
7 answers, and again, all of these answers will be  
8 included in the analysis of public comment. I  
9 think we heard exactly what we thought we would  
10 hear here this evening, which was a passionate  
11 defense of a school by a number of folks across  
12 a different variety of constituencies, families,  
13 students, teachers, alum who have a deep  
14 connection to the place. So we acknowledge that  
15 and we honor those good experiences. Sadly, we  
16 did not hear from students who have not been  
17 well served by this school. And as I look at  
18 some of the data, in light of the strengths that  
19 we've commented on, what we see again are some  
20 very significant gaps in how students are being  
21 served. We see, just in, if you look at the  
22 class of 2010, this is a class of students that  
23 started with nearly 11 hundred students, and at  
24 graduation ended with less than 400 students.  
25 We see the class of 2011 starting with 871

1 students and at graduation, including less  
2 than 450 students. So we know that there are  
3 students who are well served. We heard from  
4 many of them, representatives of those well-  
5 served students this evening. Sadly we have  
6 students who are not well served here. And that  
7 explains the progress report grade for the  
8 school. It explains the D grade in performance,  
9 in progress. We also see in the overall grade  
10 of D, we see in the environment score survey  
11 data taken from parents and students that this  
12 school is not considered by the vast majority of  
13 parents and students to be safe. In fact, among  
14 parents, the school is in the bottom 10% of  
15 schools citywide in terms of its perception of  
16 being a safe place. So it is these data points  
17 in aggregate that have led us to the decision to  
18 close the school. A number of questions and  
19 comments this evening, and one here, ask why we  
20 are switching from restart to turnaround. And  
21 there are two, there are two answer to that.  
22 I'll give them in reverse order of importance.  
23 One is that absent, the turnaround model, the  
24 school is not eligible for a continuation of  
25 funds, uh, of the School Improvement Grant

1 funds, and that's important. However, what  
2 is most important, upon reflection of early  
3 implementation of restart and transformation  
4 across the 33 schools, across New York City, is  
5 that what we know, is that the new structures,  
6 and the new staff that are enabled by  
7 turnaround, by a formal, that is by, by a formal  
8 closure and reopening of the school, will enable  
9 an accelerated implementation of a reformed plan  
10 here that will build on the strings in place,  
11 that will build on the many talented educators,  
12 build around many of the talented educators who  
13 are here, and who we hope will remain here.  
14 There are a number of questions about the  
15 staffing protocol, the 18D Protocol that I'm  
16 going to answer quickly. The first asks whether  
17 half of the staff at the current school will be  
18 removed, and not hired into the new school. The  
19 answer to that is not necessarily so. As we  
20 have, as we have, as we have started publicly,  
21 and as, as we, as we have advised Principals in,  
22 in preparation for turnaround, uh, for the, that  
23 is for the, the closure and the reopening of the  
24 school, we are investing in them and in the  
25 personnel committees at each school, the

1 decision that is, first, the development of  
2 the criteria that will guide the hiring process;  
3 and second, the decisions, staff member by staff  
4 member on who will be rehired into the school.  
5 There is not a number that schools must hit.  
6 There is not a magic formula. What we want,  
7 what we are encouraging Principals to do, is  
8 look across their faculty and evaluate every  
9 teacher who reapplies for jobs at the school,  
10 and make a decision individually one at a time,  
11 and hire back every teacher who is talented, who  
12 is on board with the new mission and vision of  
13 the new school. The next question asks "Who  
14 makes up the 18D Personnel Committee?" So when  
15 we say 18D, we're actually referring to  
16 provision 18D of our contract, the city's  
17 contract with the UFT. And that provision  
18 codifies a personnel committee that when a  
19 school closes and one opens to replace the  
20 closure, a personnel committee will come  
21 together. That personnel committee must include  
22 five people. It will include the Principal of  
23 the new school. It will include two individuals  
24 designated by the Chancellor, and two  
25 individuals designated by the UFT President.

1 Those five people will come together, help to  
2 develop the criteria for the hiring process, and  
3 make the decisions by majority as a committee,  
4 again, one staff member at a time. The next  
5 question is, "How will teacher hiring decisions  
6 be made?" I think I've, uh, I've answered that  
7 question. These are, these are decisions that  
8 are made at the committee level by a personnel  
9 committee that will include the Principal and  
10 four other designees, two from the Chancellor,  
11 two from the UFT President. The Principal and  
12 members of the school community and committee  
13 will develop a set of criteria that they agree  
14 on, that will inform the work of the committee.  
15 So I want to emphasize here that these are  
16 school based, locally based decisions made here  
17 in the building by the principal and a committee  
18 of five. The next question asks where the  
19 teachers will be, the teachers being excessed  
20 will be placed. So, the teachers who are in  
21 fact not hired back as a result of the, that is,  
22 not hired into the new school as a result of the  
23 18D process, will be, of course eligible to  
24 interview at other schools for jobs for the open  
25 market system. If they are not able to do so,

1 they will be placed in the absent teacher  
2 reserve pool. The next question is, um, "Where  
3 will students get all the services and choices  
4 they currently receive at Sheepshead Bay?" And  
5 we heard about many of those services and  
6 programs that are in place and having success  
7 here at the school. So, I'll say again, that  
8 the new school will be built around the  
9 strengths and the effective programming in place  
10 at the old school. So we heard this evening  
11 about the moot court and debate program. We  
12 would have every expectation that that program  
13 would stay intact, and that programs like that,  
14 ones that are effective in the new school, we  
15 heard about Council For Unity, a program that I  
16 know well in other schools, what we would hope  
17 and expect is that programs that are reaching  
18 students and having an impact on student  
19 achievement will remain, or be brought forward  
20 into the new school, and that other, other new  
21 structures that promote student achievement, and  
22 a deep, sustained relationship between the  
23 school, the family and the student will be  
24 brought to bear for the new community. So, the  
25 last question, "Why is the DOE focused on the

1 numbers and not student success?" And I  
2 believe this came from a recent alum, and I  
3 think this is a good place to end. I want to  
4 reiterate that we acknowledge and celebrate that  
5 there are attributes here that we acknowledge.  
6 And I think we heard from some very dedicated  
7 adults who have, who have given many years to  
8 Sheepshead Bay. I think we acknowledge, while  
9 we acknowledge the strengths in those talented  
10 educators, we have to also acknowledge that  
11 there are serious weaknesses in this school.  
12 These are weaknesses that show up in progress  
13 reports. They show up in credit accumulation.  
14 The gentleman asked about how the school was  
15 being evaluated. I want to make clear that,  
16 that the progress report scores are evaluated  
17 against 39 other schools serving a very  
18 population of needy students. So we  
19 acknowledge, uh, we acknowledge the strengths.  
20 We have to confront the weaknesses, and, and we  
21 are confident that the new school will carry  
22 forward many of those strengths and provide a  
23 better option and better outcomes for students  
24 across Sheepshead Bay.

25 [END 290\_178]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature *Mausha G. Brandt*

Date: April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012

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