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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF  
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**  
**Leadership Village Expansion at M045**  
**- 3/30/12**

1 [START 290\_188.MP3]

2 MS. LUZ CORTAZZO: Okay, we have a lot of  
3 kids in attendance, that's nice.

4 Good evening, this is a joint public hearing  
5 of the Department of Education, Community  
6 Education Council and School Leadership Team, to  
7 discuss the proposed grade expansion of Harlem  
8 Village Academy Leadership Charter School 84M335  
9 to include grades K through 2 in building M045,  
10 beginning in 2012/2013.

11 I am District 4 Superintendent, Luz  
12 Cortazzo.

13 We have representatives from M045, the  
14 Principal, Mr. Thomas Grabski.

15 Next to him is the principal of 04M409  
16 Coalition, John Sullivan, and next to Mr.  
17 Sullivan is Sam Fragomeni representing 84M335.

18 We are waiting the arrival of the Community  
19 Education Council representatives. As soon as  
20 they arrive, I will be introducing them.

21 For your information, the hearing is being  
22 recorded.

23 The purpose of this hearing is for you to  
24 provide comments about the proposal. Before I  
25 describe the proposal, I want to make sure you

1 are all aware of the opportunity to provide  
2 your input.

3 All those who wish to speak must sign up in  
4 the speaker sign-up area, located just outside  
5 the auditorium. The sign-up list will close in  
6 15 minutes.

7 Speakers will be given the floor in the  
8 order that they sign up. All comments are  
9 limited to two minutes.

10 There may be elected officials who arrive at  
11 different times throughout the evening. If they  
12 wish to speak, we will do the best to  
13 accommodate them at the opportune moment.

14 Those who are here at the start of the  
15 public comments will be asked to speak first.

16 All comments and questions will be addressed  
17 in the analysis of public comments to be  
18 published and provided to the Panel to  
19 Educational Policy the evening before the panel  
20 votes. That vote is scheduled to take place  
21 April 26th 2012.

22 In addition, we welcome any comments and  
23 feedback you may have at any time before the  
24 panel votes on this proposal. The email address  
25 and phone number where comments may be made are

1 district04proposals@schools.nyc.gov and the  
2 phone number is 212-374-3466.

3 Now I will provide you with the summary of  
4 the proposal.

5 The DoE, Department of Education is  
6 proposing to expand Harlem Village Academy  
7 Leadership Charter School 84M335, HVA Leadership  
8 to serve early childhood grades.

9 Harlem Village Academy Leadership is an  
10 existing public charter school serving students  
11 in 5th to 11th grade.

12 Harlem Village Academy Leadership serves its  
13 fifth through eighth grade students in building  
14 M045, at 2351 1st Avenue, New York, New York  
15 10035 in Community School District 4.

16 Harlem Village Academy Leadership middle  
17 school grades are co-located in M045 with a  
18 district middle school, M.S. 45 STARS Prep  
19 Academy, and a district high school, Coalition  
20 School for Social Change, 04M409.

21 A co-location means that two or more school  
22 organizations are located in the same building,  
23 and may share common spaces like auditorium,  
24 gymnasiums and cafeterias.

25 This proposal will expand the grades served

1 by Harlem Village Academy Leadership in M045 to  
2 include kindergarten through second grade.

3 Harlem Village Academy Leadership is managed  
4 by Harlem Village Academy, a childhood  
5 management organization that operates Harlem  
6 Village Academy Middle School, and Harlem  
7 Village Academy High School.

8 In addition to Harlem Village Academy  
9 Leadership, in 2002, Harlem Village Academy's  
10 charter authorizer, the State University of New  
11 York approved the Childhood Management  
12 Organization to open both schools. Harlem  
13 Village Academy opened HVA Leadership in 2005,  
14 and the school currently serves students in  
15 grades 5th to 11th.

16 As stated earlier, students in the fifth to  
17 eighth grade are served here at M045. Students  
18 in the 9th to 11th grade are served in private  
19 space located at 413 East 120th Street in New  
20 York, New York 10035.

21 If this proposal is approved, Harlem Village  
22 Academy Leadership will begin enrolling  
23 kindergarten students for the 2012/2013 school  
24 year, and will serve students in kindergarten  
25 through second grade, and fifth through eighth

1 grade in M045.

2 Harlem Village Academy Leadership will  
3 continue to serve its high school students in  
4 private space.

5 The DoE will consider available options for  
6 siting HVA Leadership's third and fourth grades  
7 for 2015/2016 and beyond, and will propose any  
8 re-sitings or co-location in a future  
9 Educational Impact Statement, subject to  
10 approval by the Panel for Educational Policy.

11 Harlem Village Academy Leadership currently  
12 admits fifth-graders via the charter school  
13 application process, with preference to District  
14 4 residents.

15 M045 has sufficient space to accommodate all  
16 existing schools along with the proposed  
17 addition of elementary grades for Harlem Village  
18 Academy Leadership.

19 At this time, I would like to introduce the  
20 members that are sitting here at the - - , that  
21 would like to speak.

22 The first speaker will be Mr. Grabski,  
23 Principal of M45.

24 Oh I'm sorry, I forgot about that. If you  
25 need translation or interpretation services,

1 please see--raise your hand please. [Foreign  
2 language]. Okay, we got it? Thank you, thank  
3 you.

4 Okay, Mr. Grabski. You have two minutes.

5 MR. THOMAS GRABSKI: Good evening everyone.  
6 It is great to see members of the three schools  
7 community come tonight to discuss the expansion  
8 of the Leadership Village Academy.

9 Welcome neighbors, [foreign language].

10 We welcome parental choice and the  
11 educational options that the new school will  
12 offer to the children of East Harlem.

13 I wish for the three schools to become true  
14 partners in working out quality of life issues  
15 that will arise in September of 2012.

16 I can assure you that M.S. 45 STARS Prep  
17 Academy is ready and willing to partner with the  
18 Coalition High School, and Leadership Village  
19 Academy to create a safe and collaborative  
20 environment that centers around equity for the  
21 students from all three schools.

22 Since every student from every school  
23 represented here this evening has the right to  
24 education of the 21st Century, I would like to  
25 ask the representatives from the Office of

1 Portfolio and the Office of School Facilities,  
2 who can help our campus to resolve the  
3 continuous problem we've been experiencing with  
4 access to the internet, as this persistent  
5 problem has our students and teachers without  
6 access to the internet or the phones, sometimes  
7 for several weeks at a time.

8 Since this campus is an old building  
9 designed originally to house only one school,  
10 how will this fundamental technology issue be  
11 addressed so that the students and adults on  
12 this campus have access to the phone service  
13 should there be an emergency? As well as access  
14 to the internet consistently.

15 I'm looking forward to our continuous  
16 partnership and opportunities and benefits for  
17 all students. Thank you.

18 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you.

19 The next speaker will be teacher [phonetic]  
20 representing the SLT from 0445, Ms. Rachel  
21 Cranston.

22 MS. RACHEL CRANSTON: Good evening.

23 Not only do I sit on the School Leadership  
24 Team at Middle School 45, but I've been teaching  
25 here for over 10 years. So I've seen this

1 school change as well as the community. I also  
2 live in the community, and I just want to speak  
3 from the perspective as educator and as a  
4 community member.

5 I really feel that our students as well as  
6 our parents have felt disenfranchised in a large  
7 sense while seeing their neighborhood change,  
8 and now, seeing their school change. I feel  
9 that our students deserve to have a school  
10 within their community that they can go to and  
11 get a quality education.

12 I feel that if we begin to downsize, they  
13 will--the students as well as the parents will  
14 no longer feel that this school is an option for  
15 them. And I feel that no one should have to  
16 leave their own community to get a quality  
17 education. They should be able to stay right  
18 where they live, if they choose, to have a  
19 quality education.

20 So as a dedicated teacher to this community,  
21 I choose to stay at M.S. 45, and I hope the  
22 opportunity for our students to continue to come  
23 here, and for M.S. 45 to continue to serve its  
24 students continues to in the future.

25 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you Ms. Cranston.

1           The next speaker will be Mr. Sam  
2 Fragomeni, representing Harlem Village Academy  
3 Leadership.

4           MR. SAM FRAGOMENI: Good evening everyone.

5           So this is a really exciting time for us at  
6 Harlem Village Academies, we've been a 5th  
7 through 12th grade school so far, and this is  
8 our first venture into the realm of elementary.  
9 And particularly in this space we're very  
10 excited, we've had a great relationship with the  
11 other school since we moved in here four years  
12 ago, I was actually--I was the Principal of our  
13 middle school that time, and was for the last  
14 four years and I had a great relationship with  
15 the other principals in the school, and I expect  
16 that to continue.

17           We've had a very good experience in this  
18 building, so we've really excited to be  
19 expanding our school in this building, at least  
20 for the years K-1 and 2 for our school, we know  
21 that that will offer our families the benefit of  
22 getting to travel to one place for the families  
23 with more than one child.

24           It's also exciting for us just to be able to  
25 offer these spots, there's a shortage of high

1 quality elementary spots in District 4. And  
2 it's a real thing, we see it every year because  
3 our students come to us in fifth grade and we  
4 see how far behind they often come to us in  
5 fifth grade, and it's truly because they're  
6 coming from schools that aren't necessarily  
7 preparing them.

8 So we're excited to be able to start at a  
9 lot younger age, to be able to start at  
10 kindergarten and really prepare our students  
11 with a very rigorous curriculum and get them to  
12 where they need to be right away so that when  
13 they enter our fifth grade, they're truly at a  
14 fifth grade level.

15 And of course we do give preference in our  
16 lottery to District 4 students so that we are  
17 serving this community that this school building  
18 is in.

19 Again, we're just very excited to continue  
20 the relationship with the other schools in the  
21 building, the great relationship that we've had,  
22 and we're excited to get started in  
23 kindergarten.

24 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you. We have now  
25 concluded the formal presentation.

1           Before I move on, do we have a  
2 representative from Assemblyman Rodriguez's  
3 office? No. What about Melisa Viverito's  
4 office? I would like to acknowledge Ms. - -  
5 from Councilwoman Melisa Viverito office. Thank  
6 you Ms. - - for being here.

7           Would you like to speak or you're not  
8 speaking tonight? Okay, thank you so much.

9           So now we have concluded the formal  
10 presentations, so now we will open the floor for  
11 public comments. Speakers will be given the  
12 floor in the order in which they sign up.

13           Remember that all comments are limited to  
14 two minutes.

15           So I will call numbers one to five to please  
16 come forward. You could sit on the second row,  
17 yes, right here, please numbers one to five.

18           Number one you could go up to the microphone  
19 at this time.

20           Before we begin with the public comments, I  
21 would like to make an announcement that no one  
22 is here yet from the CEC. Although they  
23 confirmed their participation, no one is here,  
24 so then we are going to move the public  
25 comments. So please begin.

1 MS. CLARA SOLIS: [Foreign language].

2 INTERPRETER: I'm here because I'm coming  
3 from pre-K, and good afternoon.

4 MS. SOLIS: [Foreign language].

5 INTERPRETER: I like pre-K and my child is  
6 in pre-K in this--at this school, and I would  
7 like him to stay in this school.

8 MS. SOLIS: [Foreign language].

9 INTERPRETER: Because I have my other child  
10 here also who goes to school on the fourth  
11 floor, and I like the school a lot because of  
12 the respect that's given.

13 MS. SOLIS: [Foreign language].

14 INTERPRETER: The education they give they  
15 give to the children here, and overall, the help  
16 that they do provide for the students.

17 MS. SOLIS: [Foreign language].

18 INTERPRETER: And it's easier for me to  
19 bring my children to one school, this school.

20 MS. SOLIS: [Foreign language].

21 INTERPRETER: And since I live in the Bronx,  
22 it makes it easier for me to come here and bring  
23 them both to this school, as opposed to moving  
24 them to a different school.

25 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you.

1 MS. SOLIS: Gracias.

2 INTERPRETER: Thank you.

3 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you. Number two?  
4 Moreno Benivensio [phonetic]? Okay, number  
5 three? Mr. Disarnu?

6 MR. CARL DISARNU: Thank you. Good evening.

7 My name is Carl Disarnu, I teach eighth  
8 grade Social Studies on the second floor of this  
9 building at M.S. 45.

10 Like I said, I work on the second floor of  
11 this building with the middle school, but there  
12 also is a high school on that floor.

13 I also just became a father recently, and no  
14 matter where the building is, as a parent, I'm  
15 not sure I would be comfortable sending my five-  
16 year-old child to share a facility or a floor or  
17 education with 18, 19-year-old children.

18 Sharing a bathroom, sharing a library. I just  
19 don't know as a parent if I would feel  
20 comfortable, and I just want to make sure that  
21 everyone here realizes that on the second floor  
22 of this building, where this proposal is--the  
23 school was proposed, there's a high school. And  
24 I'm not knocking the students of that high  
25 school, but they are young men and young women.

1 And as a parent, I don't know if I'd be  
2 comfortable sending my child--my five-year-old  
3 to share a facility with them.

4 One other slight concern is, I feel like  
5 this building, when it was built, was built to  
6 service this community right over here. And I  
7 think that taking away space from the public  
8 schools in this building limits their choice.  
9 It doesn't allow this building to serve this  
10 community, which is what it was built for.

11 And that's it.

12 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you. Number four?

13 MS. CYNTHIA CHERRY: Good evening.

14 I just want to introduce myself. I'm  
15 Cynthia Cherry, I'm the P.A. President for M.S.  
16 45. I also am a parent of the Coalition High  
17 School.

18 And I have two concerns. The first one is,  
19 why should our children of the Wagner Housing  
20 Development be relocated because they're being  
21 pushed out of their school? The school was  
22 built for the Wagner Development. So if you  
23 push us out, where will our kids go? They will  
24 have to travel other places.

25 The second concern I have is--my concern is,

1 the middle school and the high school  
2 interacting with a four-year-old. Sometimes  
3 emergencies erupt that they have to share  
4 bathrooms or gyms. What do you expect from the  
5 high school and the junior high school, when you  
6 have 18-year-olds, 14-year-olds sharing a  
7 bathroom with a four-year-old?

8 It's a safety issue. We don't want our kids  
9 accused of any wrongdoing by sharing a facility  
10 together.

11 So before you come in with your kids, I  
12 think you really need to think about it. I'm  
13 speaking to you as a parent. This is an  
14 excellent building for our kids that are here.  
15 We don't mind sharing with the kids that we  
16 already have from the charter school, but to  
17 bring in babies, I don't think is a very good  
18 idea. I think that with--the charter schools  
19 have other buildings, you should seek other  
20 places to take your kids because this is not a  
21 place for a baby. This is for junior high  
22 school and the high school students only.

23 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you. Number five?

24 Now number 6 to 10 could come and sit on the  
25 second row please. Number 6 to 10.

1 MR. FOREY KAMARA: Good evening everyone.

2 My name is Forey Kamara [phonetic], my  
3 daughter is in seventh grade class, Fatmata  
4 Kamara [phonetic], and the youngest Bintu Kamara  
5 [phonetic] will joining soon the class of  
6 kindergarten in August 2012 school year.

7 It has been suggested in a well known  
8 African proverb that it takes a whole village to  
9 raise a child. This is certainly true, Harlem  
10 Village Academy.

11 Board members, it is an honor, a privilege  
12 and our collective passion to educate and raise  
13 young leaders and gentlemen--young ladies and  
14 gentlemen who will become our hope for the  
15 future, and ultimately adults that world can--  
16 that the world can and will depend on.

17 With the board members, support the adults  
18 that the world can and will depend on. With the  
19 board members' support, the collective community  
20 of Harlem Village Leadership Academy exposes our  
21 children to a sound yet innovative and global  
22 curriculum of our village and our community.

23 Honor, integrity, personal endeavor and  
24 accountability, a strong and determined work  
25 ethics, and encouragement to achieve one's

1 personal best.

2 In addition, it will only work if we come  
3 together to make it work. With the support of  
4 the board members, parents, Harlem Village  
5 Leadership Academy needs some time in this  
6 facility.

7 Up to this, our beautiful village like  
8 surrounding modern state of this facility,  
9 supportive and committed teachers and staff,  
10 parents and children, and a council--

11 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you Sir, your time is  
12 up.

13 MR. KAMARA: Okay. Thank you.

14 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you. Thank you very  
15 much.

16 Number six?

17 MR. ALEX IRIZARRY: Hi, my name is Alex  
18 Irizarry, I'm a member of M.S. 45, and I'm in  
19 the CFES class.

20 Part of my concern of the new second through  
21 K program that's coming to the school, some of  
22 it concerns me because of part of what was said  
23 earlier about the facilities and being together.

24 I'm--as an older brother to my younger  
25 brother--sister, I'm wouldn't want them being

1 around 14 to 18-year-olds and in a place where  
2 that should be for only high school and middle  
3 school.

4 I also think that the charter school, since  
5 they're privately funded, I think that they  
6 should take these schools, for example these  
7 abandoned schools 100th Street, and 107 and a  
8 whole bunch in Washington Heights that I've  
9 seen, that I think they should go to those  
10 schools and build their community there.

11 I like the charter schools they way teach,  
12 and the way they're built, but I'm not for them  
13 when they kick out--when they like push out the  
14 school that was there.

15 I also think that since this school was  
16 built for the M.S. 45 community, it should stay  
17 like that.

18 And I don't mind sharing with the high  
19 school or the charter school that we have right  
20 now, but with the smaller kids, I think that  
21 will be a bad idea.

22 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you Alex.

23 MR. ROGILIO LAWRENCE: Hello, my name is  
24 Rogilio Lawrence, and I agree with every parent,  
25 school member and what student has said, but I

1 feel, honestly, bringing children to this  
2 school is a major health hazard, because if  
3 there's a fire, I think it's going to be hard  
4 getting a group of kids together and to leave.

5 Also, if--no offense to any school, but I  
6 believe that 45 should have been the only school  
7 in here, because it says it on the building, but  
8 with more space, there's more--well room to put  
9 more classes, and with less students, it will  
10 more easier to learn and to pass and succeed.

11 So that's why when some people say, oh, 45  
12 is a bad school, I don't want my child to go  
13 there, it really isn't, it's the amount of space  
14 we have and when it's like, a lot of students  
15 together, they want to show off other students.

16 Like for example with the uniform policy, if  
17 you wear uniform a lot, people are going to want  
18 to show what they have at home, and like show  
19 what they can get and make other people feel  
20 bad. That's why right now bullying is such a  
21 problem in our community, because there's not  
22 enough space for every student to learn on their  
23 own and individually.

24 Thank you for your time.

25 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you.

1 MS. NASHONDA SIMMONS: Hello.

2 My name is Nashonda Simmons and I'm a parent  
3 of a child that goes to Harlem Village Academy,  
4 she's in the seventh grade, she's been here  
5 since fifth grade, and I am--so I'm an advocate  
6 for Harlem Village Academy.

7 In terms of the space, I'm not really sure  
8 as--I agree with--some parent would say, well we  
9 don't want the babies being with teenagers, and  
10 I totally understand that, and that was one of  
11 my concerns with my daughter coming into the  
12 fifth grade, but Harlem Village, the principal  
13 made it clear that they wouldn't be interacting  
14 with one another, they wouldn't be getting out  
15 at the same time, so it wouldn't be much  
16 interaction. And she's been here for three  
17 years, and I really didn't have a problem with  
18 that.

19 I totally trust Harlem Village that they  
20 would see to it that the children K through 2  
21 would be safe. I completely leave my child in  
22 their hands. She's here from 7:30 in the  
23 morning till sometimes 6:30, and I never had a  
24 problem. Not with the building, not with the  
25 children, not with the teachers. I totally I'm

1 for Harlem Village Academy, that's why I was  
2 so happy when they said they're opening up a  
3 kindergarten because my son is going to  
4 kindergarten in the fall. So I was just  
5 excited.

6 And like I said, I completely trust Harlem  
7 Village's Mr. Fragomeni, I completely trust  
8 that--

9 When you have your child go to a school,  
10 it's about trust, and it's about trusting those  
11 teachers, and making sure that their--your trust  
12 is in their hands, that they will do their best  
13 to see that your child is taken care of  
14 throughout the day that they are in their hands.

15 So all I can say is I'm completely for  
16 Harlem Village, and I hope all is well. You  
17 know, safety, that's number one. And I'm happy  
18 that they're opening up the K through 2. Thank  
19 you.

20 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you. Number nine?

21 Numbers 10 to 14, please line up or sit in  
22 row two. Numbers 10 to 14, please get ready.

23 All right, Ms. - - .

24 MS. CRYSTAL ASHBY: Yes, my name is Crystal  
25 Ashby, and I have a daughter that goes to Harlem

1 Village Academy as well. And as she said, I  
2 have never had a problem with my daughter coming  
3 home--that was one of my concerns because I do  
4 live in the area and I do know the basics of  
5 what goes on around.

6 My daughter is doing great, I would love to  
7 see my other daughter do great.

8 There was definitely a concern as this  
9 parent has explained, about the kids being with  
10 the older kids and learning those habits that we  
11 don't completely want them to learn, but this is  
12 the real world, you see certain things on TV.

13 And I must admit, Mr. Fragomeni has really  
14 protected our kids. We haven't had a concern,  
15 and I appreciate that.

16 And as I said again, I do live in the  
17 neighborhood, so I do know.

18 I think it can work, I think it takes  
19 teamwork, and I think if all the principals are  
20 willing to work together, it can happen. We're  
21 going to have what we have in these  
22 neighborhoods and there's so many good children  
23 within the school, and after a while, everybody  
24 will get used to it. And it won't be so bad.  
25 They'll be like big brothers. At the end of the

1 day, it's a village that raise kids. Right?

2 So I just want to say I hope it goes well,  
3 I'm looking forward to it. Of course I have my  
4 concerns, but I'm looking forward to it. You  
5 have to have an open eye. And I just want to  
6 say thank you.

7 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you. Number 10?

8 MR. LUIS DIAZ: Good evening everybody, and  
9 Buenos noches.

10 My name is Luis Diaz [phonetic] and I have  
11 several hats I wear. Number one, I was born and  
12 raised in East Harlem, back in 1948.

13 Right here in the streets, and I ran these  
14 streets with some of the meanest junkyard dogs  
15 that grew up.

16 Somebody save me by getting me into sports  
17 and here I am as a teacher today, teaching in my  
18 neighborhood polishing diamonds in the rough.  
19 Because if I ever write a book, I want to write  
20 who's who from East Harlem, of all the pros,  
21 judges, doctors, lawyers, professional people  
22 that succeeded in life that didn't go to charter  
23 school. Came out of the public school system  
24 that I went through, junior high school 13, P.S.  
25 72 right here in East Harlem. We don't need

1 charter school.

2 See? Charter school is a game played by  
3 hedge funds, okay? And what saddens my heart is  
4 that I feel like I'm playing the Chicago White  
5 Sox game, the Black Sox game here. And there's  
6 when there was a fix set.

7 This is a fix. All you wonderful parents  
8 with all your wonderful hearts, I bless you, I  
9 love you. You have a right to fight for your  
10 kids. But it's a setup. Call a spade a spade.  
11 When, I grew on the streets, spade is a spade.  
12 Why they stopped bringing students into 45. Why  
13 they cap our school. Who did the capping? Why?  
14 Not charter school, somebody stopped it. You  
15 know why? Because East Harlem is being  
16 gentrified. Sooner or later there ain't going  
17 to be no more black and Latino faces in here.  
18 Million dollar condo, somebody got to pay for  
19 them, and some schools got to be used.

20 I'm being radical, because I ran the streets  
21 with the Young Lords and the Blank Panthers.

22 This generation is asleep. You don't see  
23 it. You don't see what's going on. They're  
24 chasing the poor out, because public education  
25 now is only special needs. Do you understand?

1 MS. CORTAZZO: Mr. Diaz, I'm sorry, but  
2 your time is up.

3 MR. DIAZ: So as a teacher, chapter leader,  
4 I can't speak for the community because I don't  
5 see my parents here. Before we would have had  
6 this auditorium filled.

7 So all you people, the real facts are  
8 gentrification. Race reverse, discrimination  
9 and they're chasing the poor out. It's not  
10 them, they're doing their job. It's the hedge  
11 funds and the people that just bought up all the  
12 community. And you don't even know who they  
13 are. It's your mayor and Trump and those  
14 people. That's where the real deal is.

15 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you.

16 MS. DANIELLE PHIFER: Okay, I got--I don't  
17 know how I can come back after that, but I do  
18 respect--my son is seven years old, he goes to  
19 the Harlem Village--in the seventh grade, he  
20 goes to Harlem Village Academy, and I do respect  
21 community board or the school 45 and the passion  
22 that you feel with your community, but I just  
23 want you guys to understand that the  
24 communities--and I'm sure I can speak for most  
25 of the parents of HVA School, we come from

1 similar communities, and unfortunately the  
2 communities we come from, they can't provide our  
3 children with the level of education that they  
4 need.

5 Me personally, we live in the South Bronx  
6 where it's plagued with guns, crime, and it's  
7 unfair. The community should provide our  
8 children with the school and education that they  
9 need. But that's not the case.

10 And while the politics are being figured  
11 out, our children are just passing by.

12 My child got here in the fifth grade and  
13 even though--I mean HVA is great. like I can  
14 call on a cell phone, I can get through the  
15 support, just--the young man that I see--that  
16 I've seen my child becoming in these two years,  
17 and the neighborhood that he grows up in, I have  
18 to--it's all from HVA, and I just want my  
19 kindergarten to be able to get that same  
20 opportunity also. I mean I know the issues with  
21 little kids, it's going--being in the same  
22 building as high schools, and those issues  
23 cannot be ignored. But I'm sure if those issues  
24 are addressed and it's paid attention to, I'm  
25 sure solutions can come up to make everyone

1 happy.

2 But HVA is a blessing for families that come  
3 from similar situations and similar  
4 neighborhoods, we won't have any other option.  
5 Thank you.

6 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you. Number 12?

7 MS. CELESTINE CLEE: My name is Celestine  
8 Clee and I'm also an Educator in East Harlem. I  
9 teach right here at M.S. 45.

10 I have been in this community for  
11 approximately 18 years. I am also from the  
12 community.

13 My statement or questions today is, with the  
14 large number of charter schools entering our  
15 East Harlem community, which is made up of first  
16 generation immigrants, English language learners  
17 and students with special needs, such as  
18 learning disabilities, emotional disturbances,  
19 students requiring self-contained classes, and a  
20 need of multiple interventions.

21 Why aren't the charter schools servicing  
22 this population? How will these students get  
23 service when you insist on decreasing the  
24 enrollment of public schools and expanding the  
25 charter schools within our community?

1           It is very difficult to work here over the  
2 past 18 years, and see that the very--I'm the  
3 very public school child that have come out the  
4 school community--the public school community.

5           It is disenfranchising to see that our  
6 children are out in terms of money, they do not  
7 receive the same amount of money per child, we  
8 do not have the same amount of computers, space,  
9 we don't receive a lot of the funds that the  
10 charter schools receive. But we do--we come  
11 here everyday as educators dedicated to what we  
12 do, and dedicated to our community and the  
13 children that we service within this community.

14           My concern is, how will we continue to  
15 service the community here? I've heard several  
16 parents speak, they're from the Bronx. And I  
17 also recognize that as--what you're saying in  
18 terms of safety there and public schools there.  
19 But what will our children have, if you continue  
20 to decrease us, to expand the charter schools  
21 within this community?

22           Thank you.

23           MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you.

24           MS. LINDA MATTISON: My name is Linda  
25 Mattison from M.S. 45, and I feel that the

1 school is pushing everybody out because  
2 there's a lot of students in this community,  
3 and--that if there's more Village Academy  
4 Students then there won't be a lot of space for  
5 M.S. 45, and eventually I think that M.S. 45  
6 won't have a school, because there's already  
7 problems with spacing in the school, like the  
8 auditorium and the gym, and even outside for  
9 recess.

10 There's a lot of students in the school  
11 building, and just to fit like 30 kids in a  
12 classroom just distracts everybody else and  
13 prevents learning pretty much.

14 Plus I feel that it's unsafe for the  
15 kindergarteners to walk through the second floor  
16 with the high schoolers, because they are big  
17 and they don't walk in lines. They scatter to  
18 their classes, and I think that is just unsafe  
19 for the kindergarteners to walk through that  
20 area, because it's chaotic when it--at some  
21 points in the school.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you.

24 MS. LAURYN SAYDES: Hi, I'm Lauryn and I go  
25 to M.S. 45 on the CFES class.

1           And I feel that it's unfair that Village  
2 Academy has to push our students out of--like  
3 they're just decreasing the size, the space, for  
4 the students in M.S. 45, and I feel that new  
5 sixth graders coming in and there might be some  
6 eighth graders getting left behind, there's not  
7 going to be enough space for everybody to fit on  
8 one floor. And for that to happen, they're  
9 going to have to cramp at least 30 to 35 kids in  
10 one classroom, and that's a health hazard, a  
11 safety hazard, and like Linda said, it prevents  
12 learning.

13           And as a student at M.S. 45, I feel that--I  
14 feel it's unfair that we have to be pushed out  
15 of our own school for UVA to come in and just  
16 like take our space away. And that angers me  
17 inside and M.S. 45 is trying to make the  
18 community a better place by having a lot of kids  
19 come inside the school to make boys and girls  
20 into young women and men.

21           And so if the school is decreased, how is  
22 that going to happen? And they're going to have  
23 to turn away a lot more kids.

24           MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you. Number 15?

25           MS. MAYRA RUIZ: Good afternoon, my name is

1 Mayra Ruiz and I'm a parent of a student on  
2 fifth grade from Harlem Village Academy.

3 Personally I prefer Harlem Village because  
4 they have offered my son a good education with  
5 structure, I'm very grateful for them because  
6 they are very strict in separating Harlem  
7 Village kids with the public school kids.

8 So as far as my kindergartener are coming  
9 here, I trust them completely with them keeping  
10 them separated.

11 I would also like--I would also appreciate  
12 for my kindergartener to come here because it  
13 would also help her with the transition,  
14 considering that she's in a pre-K at this  
15 moment, and her coming here knowing that she's  
16 coming to school with older brother.

17 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you.

18 MS. RUIZ: Hopefully everything else so far  
19 as spacing is resolved, and everything will work  
20 out.

21 MS. CORTAZZO: Thank you.

22 There's one more person that signed up.  
23 That person had number two. Moreno Benivensio?  
24 Moreno Benivensio is here? Moreno Benivensio.  
25 Okay, so he doesn't want to speak.

1           Okay, so--no? Okay. Thank you so much.

2           So now we have called all the names that  
3 have signed up to speak, so now the speaker list  
4 is now exhausted.

5           So before we conclude this meeting, I would  
6 like--we would like you to--we welcome any  
7 comment and feedback you may have at any time  
8 between now and before the Panel for Educational  
9 Policy votes on this proposal on its April 26th  
10 meeting.

11           The email address and phone number where  
12 comments may be made available are  
13 d04proposals@schools.nyc.gov, and the number is  
14 212-374-3466. Again, the number is 212-374-  
15 3466.

16           Thank you for your participation, this joint  
17 public hearing is now closed.

18           [END 290\_188.MP3]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

5  
6 Signature *Carille Clarke*

7 Date April 3, 2012  
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