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

**Opening of Girls Prep Charter
School Grades 6-8 at X120**

October 22, 2013

5:30pm

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MS. REBECCA RAWLINGS: Good evening. This
3 is a joint public hearing of the Department of
4 Education, Community Education Council, and
5 School Leadership Team for the proposed co-
6 location of Grades 5th through 8th of Girls
7 Preparatory Charter School of the Bronx 84 X487
8 with existing school M.S. 301 Paul L. Dunbar, 08
9 X301, and P.S. X188, 75 X188, in Building X120
10 beginning in 2014-2015.

11 My name is Rebecca Rawlings. I'm the
12 Chancellor's Designee, and I will be
13 facilitating tonight's hearing.

14 We have asked the District 8 Community
15 Education Council and School Leadership Teams
16 from the schools in the buildings to participate
17 in this joint public hearing. I'm joined
18 tonight by Principal Castile from M.S. 301's
19 FLT, Nancy Storms from P.S. X188 FLT, Janet
20 Bosch and Bryan D'Otavi from - - B as well as
21 District 75 Superintendent Gary Hat [phonetic].

22 This hearing is being recorded. The purpose
23 of this hearing is for you to provide comments
24 about this proposal. Before I describe the
25 proposal, I want to make sure you're all aware

1 of the opportunity to provide your insight.

2 All those who wish to speak must sign up in
3 the speaker sign-up area located outside of the
4 auditorium. So sign up list will close in 15
5 minutes. Speakers will be given the floor in
6 the order that they are signed up. All comments
7 are limited to two minutes.

8 There may be elected officials who arrive at
9 different times throughout the evening. If they
10 wish to speak, we will do our best to
11 accommodate them at the first opportune moment.
12 Those who are here at the start of the public
13 comment segment will be asked to speak first.

14 All comments will be mentioned in the
15 announcement of public comment to be published
16 and provided to the Panel for Educational Policy
17 the evening before the panel votes. That vote
18 is scheduled for October 30th, 2013.

19 In addition, we welcome any comments and
20 feedback you may have at any time before the
21 panel votes on this proposal. The email address
22 and phone number where comments may be made are
23 d08proposal@schools.nyc.gov and (212)374-5159.

24 Now I'm going to read the proposal summary.
25 "The New York City Department of Education, or

1 DOE, is proposing to co-locate Grades 6 through
2 8 of Girls Preparatory Charter School of the
3 Bronx, or Girls Prep Bronx, in Building X120
4 located at 890 Cauldwell Avenue, Bronx, NY
5 10456, beginning in the 2014-2015 school year.

6 If this proposal is approved, Grades 6
7 through 8 of Girls Prep Bronx will be co-located
8 with M.S. 301 Paul L. Dunbar 08 X301 or M.S. 301
9 and one site of P.S. X188, 75 X188, or P188X.
10 M.S. 301 is an existing zoned middle school that
11 serves students in Grades 6 through 8.

12 P.S. X188 is a multi-sited District 75
13 school that serves students in Grades 6 through
14 8 in the X120 building. Girls Prep is an
15 existing charter school that current serves
16 students in Kindergarten through 5th Grade in
17 Building X052, which is 0.8 miles from the X120
18 building.

19 In August 2013, Girls Prep Bronx submitted
20 an application to the State University of New
21 York Trustees"--

22 [Background Noise]

23 MS. RAWLINGS: --"to renew and expand its
24 charter to serve Grades 6 through 8. For the
25 purposes of this proposal, it is assumed that

1 SUNY will approve Girls Prep Bronx's
2 application. Should SUNY deny Girls Prep
3 Bronx's application, this proposal will be
4 withdrawn, and the DOE may propose an alternate
5 use of space in X120 that involves a significant
6 change in school utilization, which would be the
7 subject of a separate educational impact
8 statement.

9 Girls Prep Bronx admits female students
10 through a charter lottery, giving preference to
11 returning students, siblings, and students
12 currently enrolled at Girls Prep Bronx and
13 District 8 residents. Girls Prep Bronx's middle
14 school grades will enroll students articulating
15 from a lower grade, and any remaining seats will
16 be filled by weight-listed applicants.

17 Building X120 has a confined target capacity
18 to serve 720 students. During the 2013 and 2014
19 school year, the building served a total of
20 approximately 407 students, yielding a building
21 utilization rate of 55%. Based on the projected
22 enrollment, the DOE believes that there will
23 continue to be underutilized space in Building
24 X120 next year.

25 If this proposal is approved in 2014 to

1 2015, Girls Prep Bronx will serve 70 to 85
2 students in 6th Grade in the X120 building. The
3 school will then add one grade each year until
4 it serves approximately 210 to 255 students in
5 Grades 6 through 8 in 2016-2017.

6 In 2016-2017, when Girls Prep Bronx's middle
7 school grades reach full scale serving students
8 in Grades 6 through 8, X120 is projected to
9 serve approximately 575 to 658 students from
10 Girls Prep Bronx, M.S. 301, and the site of P.S.
11 X188, yielding a building utilization rate of
12 78% to 89%.

13 The DOE believes that Building X120 has
14 space to accommodate the co-location of Grades 6
15 through 8 of Girls Prep Bronx. For further
16 details on space allocation, please see the
17 building utilization plan attached to this
18 proposal."

19 And proposals are located right in the back
20 of the auditorium. This proposal is not
21 anticipated to impact the instructional
22 programming, admission processes, enrollment, or
23 extra circular opportunities of students
24 currently attending M.S. 301 or this site of
25 P.S. X188.

1 The DOE supports Girl Prep Bronx's
2 placement in X120 and anticipates that the
3 school will provide additional educational
4 opportunities for families in District 8.

5 So I'm going to turn it over to the CEC to
6 make any comments that they would like at this
7 point. Janet or Bryan.

8 [Crosstalk]

9 FEMALE VOICE 1: We're just looking over
10 your projected enrollments. - -

11 FEMALE VOICE 2: We're discussing the
12 projected enrollments.

13 MS. RAWLINGS: Okay. Janet--

14 [Crosstalk]

15 FEMALE VOICE 1: I'm just looking at the end
16 where you have your projections for 2016-2017.
17 In the end, the building will still be under-
18 utilized, from what it looks like here.

19 MS. RAWLINGS: Okay.

20 FEMALE VOICE 1: So can we--

21 FEMALE VOICE 2: That's what we're
22 discussing.

23 [Crosstalk]

24 MS. RAWLINGS: Did you have any formal
25 comments to make before we turn it to public

1 comments?

2 MR. BRYAN D'OTAVI: Yeah, I would like to
3 speak before Janet. Are you done with your--

4 MS. RAWLINGS: [interposing] Yeah, yeah.
5 The floor is yours.

6 MR. D'OTAVI: How you doing? I want to
7 thank you all for coming tonight. My name is
8 Bryan D'Otavi. I'm the president of the CEC.
9 For those that don't know, I'm going through
10 this. I went through this with two other
11 schools as well, 131 and 192, IS 192, except
12 it's a little bit different. They're not
13 looking to put charters in. But the concept
14 that they want to put a K through 5 into middle
15 schools is crazy.

16 They want to add another five to six grades
17 into two separate buildings--I'm going to say
18 three separate buildings, because I'm going to
19 include 301 now. They want to put another
20 school, another six grades, in with middle
21 schools. They're already jockeying for space.

22 Now, I know in one of the schools, IS 192,
23 6th Grade lunch starts at 10:30 in the morning.
24 8th Grade, the last 8th Grade lunch is at
25 quarter to 2:00.

1 Now, in September, they're going to start
2 adding Kindergarten this year in 2014-2015
3 school year. Then the following year, they're
4 going to add another Kindergarten, which they'll
5 have Kindergarten through 1st Grade. And it
6 will progress every year until they finally
7 reach the K through 5.

8 Now, my question was, "When are these kids
9 supposed to eat?" At 9:30 when they walk in the
10 door right after they had breakfast? Or at 3:00
11 in the afternoon when they're supposed to go
12 home? Either way, if they make the little kids
13 a spot in the middle of the day, there's still
14 other children being pushed aside that are going
15 to suffer.

16 I think it's crazy. In IS 192 campus, they
17 said that it's community needs. I agree. It is
18 a school that's overcrowded. But I don't
19 understand why they want to take a K through 5,
20 Kindergarten through 5th Grade, out of that
21 school and put them in with the middle school,
22 add another school, instead of just taking the
23 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade out of that school and
24 mesh them into an already existing curriculum.

25 That's working. It isn't perfect, but it's

1 working. Now, you want to add another school,
2 another six grades, and just create mayhem.
3 They're setting the administration up to fail as
4 well as your children. They're using your kids
5 as pawns. It's sad.

6 From my understanding, one of the schools in
7 this building now is a District 75 school. That
8 alone should be not should be touched, should
9 not add to it. Those kids should be
10 concentrated on and given the attention that
11 they need and that they deserve, not just
12 crowding it like sardines and make matters
13 worse.

14 My other thing that I'm going to go on is
15 that you haven't had your pep vote [phonetic]
16 yet, but you will. And you know when it will
17 be? About this time out in Brooklyn on a work
18 and school night. So for those who get home at
19 5:00 and still got to pick up their kids, do
20 homework, and feed them will never make it there
21 in time. But that's okay. Because you know
22 why? It's a done deal. They're going to put
23 this building in anyway no matter what.

24 There's only one way this isn't going to
25 happen. And I hate to say this, and I hate to

1 put the burden on you. But without the
2 community--and I'm sorry. I thank you all for
3 coming that have come. I know we'd all rather
4 be somewhere else. But it goes to show you how
5 much this means to you.

6 So use it to go out there and get the word
7 out to the public and let them know they need to
8 start an uproar. That's the only way this isn't
9 going to happen. If you feel for your kids and
10 the children in your community and you think
11 this is a bad idea, you've got to get more
12 people involved. You know why? We're just
13 enforcers. I go and I scream and I yell and I
14 say this and I say that. And they look behind
15 me and they say, "Well, Mr. D'Otavi, you only
16 had 25 people in your audience." They take that
17 as the community don't care.

18 It's sad. These are people that are bad
19 with tax payers' money. That's right. They
20 work for us. We're supposed to be telling them
21 what to do, what's good for our community, what
22 our kids need, not them telling us, "Well, this
23 is what we feel is good."

24 You know why? Because they go home to
25 another place where it's not even affected.

1 Their decisions have no bearing on them, their
2 community, or their children. But it does with
3 ours. And I find that wrong. It's
4 incomprehensible. I don't understand how the
5 tables got turned.

6 They're civil servants. They work for us.
7 They're telling us what's good for our
8 community, what our community needs? How could
9 it be? They don't walk one step in any of our
10 shoes. They don't know how we live. They see
11 the school. Okay, the school. To them, the
12 school is all numbers, and their numbers don't
13 even add up, and they want to justify it.

14 It's ridiculous. I like to think we're all
15 smart people and we have more common sense than
16 this. The only thing we got going for us, from
17 what I hear citywide, there's going to be a
18 class action suit brought or--I'm sorry; I'm
19 losing my bearing. Administration. Let's see.
20 They want to start a class action suit. And if
21 I'm correct, it's for failure of a real process.

22 And what that means is, why are they having
23 the vote for this community in Brooklyn? Why
24 are they having the vote for my community in
25 Brooklyn? Better yet, why are they having a

1 vote for District 8 any other place than in
2 District 8, right? Shouldn't District 8 have a
3 voice? Shouldn't the vote be here where it's
4 easier? Because we well known that it's
5 impossible for 80% of the people to make it
6 there and voice their opinions.

7 So you want to take advantage of that and
8 use it to your agenda, to push what you want to
9 get through? Because it shows, "Oh, look, the
10 people don't care." That's not true. You're
11 making it conceivably impossible for them to
12 come and voice their opinions, especially in
13 certain situations in District 8, which upsets
14 me even further. They take advantage of us.

15 Again, these are civil servant worker
16 people. They get paid with tax dollars that you
17 pay and I pay. They work for us. We've got to
18 stop letting them tell us what's good for our
19 community and our kids. They say it takes a
20 village to raise a child. Then how come they're
21 not listening to the village? They're doing
22 what they want to do anyway.

23 This is the misconception of the DOE that I
24 have, because half of it's about numbers and
25 money, and the other half is about what's truly

1 right for your kids. And we all know there's
2 some bad apples in the bunch, no matter what it
3 is, no matter where you go. You can't let them
4 ruin it.

5 Not all of them are bad. I'm not here to
6 badmouth the DOE. What I'm here to do is let
7 you people know and understand what we need to
8 do if we don't want this done. I understand
9 everybody who's here tonight in portfolio
10 planning, this is their idea. They got a job.
11 They've got higher-ups they've got to answer to.
12 I get it. I'm with them on the overcrowding and
13 the underutilization. I get it.

14 But there's more common sense--there's more--
15 -I'm sorry. There's better plans than just
16 saying, "Hey, let's throw Kindergarten through
17 5th Grade in a middle school." Who wants their
18 kids with kids twice their age? Middle school
19 is the shortest period in time throughout a
20 child's life with the biggest growth span.

21 That's where they actually go from children
22 to mini-adults. They lose a little bit of
23 adolescence in that time period. They become a
24 little bit more vocal, a little bit more
25 opinionated, and in some cases a little bit more

1 rougher and a little bit more tough. Some
2 have more foul language than others.

3 Again, do you want these children around
4 your kids? I know they're going to tell you
5 they're never going to associate in the
6 building. Lies. Lies. It's impossible to be
7 in the same building, jockeying for the same
8 lunchroom, the same bathrooms, and the same gym
9 and not interact.

10 I say, if there's one instance too many,
11 it's too many. If one instance happens, that's
12 too many. And I don't want to be the one to
13 tell the parent, "Listen. I'm sorry, but this
14 is unfortunate that happened, but it's an
15 isolated incident." Why would you even do that
16 if you could just nip it in the bud to begin
17 with?

18 The main thing I'm just trying to get across
19 is because this is a subject that's very close
20 to my heart. I've been fighting with it for
21 months. This month it's been real bad. I
22 started smoking again. It's trying my patience
23 as a person. And you know what? I want you all
24 to know their decisions are not going to affect
25 my kids in any way.

1 So I'm not fighting for my kids like some
2 people would say I am. I'm fighting for all
3 your kids. I'm fighting for all District 8
4 kids. I'm fighting for all District 8
5 communities that this is a bad idea. You know
6 why? If the school goes south and the
7 administration goes south, where does that leave
8 the community? Up in arms. Nobody knows what
9 to do.

10 The people that they were trusting their
11 kids to educate have screwed them. Where do
12 they turn to now? It's set. And I'm sorry to
13 be the bearer of bad news, but there is a ray of
14 hope. Like I said, I hope this class action
15 suit is going through. I know the principals in
16 the other schools are going to appeal. The only
17 grace we have is that this is this mayor's last
18 - - . This is what he's trying--he's trying to
19 say, "You know what? I want," even though when
20 he was first elected in and there was 9/11--I
21 hate to bring this up, but it was 9/11. Juliani
22 said, "Please, give me 90 days," because it was
23 a time of chaos for a new mayor to just take
24 over.

25 Michael Bloomberg in turn told him, "Hey,

1 you had your chance. It's my turn now," and
2 denied him. He asked for 90 days, and that was
3 it, not another term, not another three years.
4 But you know what? When Michael Bloomberg's
5 turn was up, what'd he do? He bought himself a
6 third semester. "Oh, no, I can only do this.
7 Nobody else can." Come on.

8 All the sudden, it switched, where eight
9 years ago he was saying, "You had your turn.
10 Get out. It's my turn now." But he didn't want
11 to leave? So he got rid of the Board of
12 Education, which is the worst thing he could
13 possibly have done. Now it's the Department of
14 Education, all people appointed by him, all
15 people who have an agenda, who have a boss over
16 them, who are like this, because if they don't
17 make the right decision, they're screwed.

18 You know what? What's the perfect example?
19 Look at the last pep vote. Look at who voted
20 nay and who voted yay. The three borough
21 presidents, Staten Island, Manhattan, and the
22 Bronx--I'm sorry, Brooklyn. Staten Island
23 killed it before it even got to a vote. You
24 know how they killed it? They came with 400 or
25 500 people from the community and said, "No, we

1 ain't doing this," at a joint public hearing.
2 And it got killed right then and there, because
3 they came with 400 or 500 people.

4 So again, I thank you all for coming. It
5 shows your commitment, as well as mine. But
6 we've got to do something. Thank you.

7 MS. RAWLINGS: Thank you. The next
8 presenter will be Eduardo Hernandez of the CEC,
9 who just joined us.

10 DR. EDUARDO HERNANDEZ: All right. Good
11 evening, everyone. I'm Dr. Eduardo Hernandez.
12 I'm a member of the CEC. Thank you all for
13 coming.

14 I'd like to say first, referring to what
15 Bryan's saying about parents' involvement, we
16 come to this issue--it really doesn't matter.
17 At this point, they've already made the
18 decision. For last PEP vote last week in
19 Brooklyn, they had 23 resolutions. 20, I
20 believe it was 20 co-locations. Out of those,
21 seven were just for our district.

22 There are some schools that--hey, we
23 mentioned the one in Staten Island that got
24 squashed. I don't know the detail of how they
25 got about, but I don't think it was only because

1 of parent involvement. I believe there was
2 other forces involved in that that it got
3 squashed, because some of the schools that were
4 affected last weeks boarding, they were allied
5 force.

6 In the town meetings, it was packed with
7 hundreds of people. It was covered by the
8 media, both TV, newspapers. We had a rally
9 before the vote. These people came out to the
10 meeting. They covered the first four to five
11 rows of the auditorium. They all dressed with
12 shirts representing their schools. So they were
13 out there in force. They did that. And guess
14 what? It did not matter. Okay?

15 You had people, everybody talking against
16 it. You have councilmen. You have lawyers.
17 That you have lawyers that were councilmen
18 threatening lawsuits. Everybody spoke against
19 it. And I hang out to stay over there until
20 around midnight to the end of the meeting just
21 hoping to see any of that was going to have any
22 effect on the panel members.

23 Just so you know, the configuration of the
24 panel, it consists of 13 members. Okay? Five
25 appointees by each borough, and then you have

1 eight appointees by the mayor, and majority
2 rules. So guess what? The mayors always rules.

3 So after all was said and done, everybody
4 was talking about charter schools against it.
5 No one spoke in favor of it. It did not mater.
6 At the end of the day, when it came to voting,
7 it looked like a choreographed scene. You could
8 see Mayor Bloomberg on top pulling the strings.
9 Everybody in favor, say, "Yay." All eight hands
10 went up, like unison. It was like they were all
11 kids. Okay?

12 I mean, I was hoping all these statements,
13 all this community support, would impact at
14 least even one member. None. They all stick to
15 the script. They all stick to Mayor Bloomberg's
16 agenda. The chancellor would say that there
17 was--everybody kept telling them that nobody in
18 their public hearings or anywhere spoke out in
19 favor of this charter co-location.

20 His reasoning for it, which for me is kind
21 of very lame, he claims that there is a need
22 because there's a waiting list for these charter
23 schools. That actually came out of his mouth.
24 He said, "There is a need, because these charter
25 schools have waiting lists, so that means there

1 is a need."

2 That is bologna. Those waiting lists are
3 created by the charter schools themselves, and I
4 can create a waiting list for anything. It
5 doesn't mean there's a real need for it. And
6 even if there's a need, there's not a need for
7 you to go and destroy the local schools about
8 it. Trust me. I have nothing wrong--there's
9 nothing wrong, I think, with the concept of the
10 charter schools, because what you do is you get
11 all this nonsense from the DOE and the UFT, and
12 you're just teaching the kids. You're going
13 back to the basics, which is a good concept.

14 The problem is you bring these schools into
15 already overcrowded schools. You're taking away
16 your resources from your local schools and
17 giving them to them. So, of course, they're
18 going to succeed. Your local schools are going
19 to fail.

20 But yet, the DOE is going to claim victory,
21 because the numbers for this co-located school
22 are great. Of course they're going to be great.
23 They pick and choose who they want. They send
24 the applications and the information to the kids
25 with threes and fours, not the ones with twos.

1 And I don't care what anybody say that say
2 it's blind. It's bologna, because there is no
3 way. How can they have access to the gifted and
4 talented kids all the way even in other
5 boroughs? Why is that when they're supposed to
6 be reaching out to their own community?

7 So they do know--they do have inside
8 information on who got the threes and fours.
9 Don't let them fool you, because that's how they
10 got the good students.

11 So you want to bring change to the community
12 and help the community? You want to come to
13 this school? You take the kids from this
14 school. Make it a zoned school to the kids, and
15 you take the same kids that the other school was
16 taking, and then you compare. Then you can
17 claim that you're better. You can't claim to be
18 better when you're picking and choosing what
19 ones you want.

20 And then, once you get it, the ones that
21 don't cut the grade, you get rid of them,
22 because that's what they do. If you're a bad
23 student, they kick you out. They tell the
24 parents either you transfer them or we hold them
25 back.

1 So it's a lot of games, but then they're
2 always going to claim, "Oh, we're better than
3 the regular schools," but the regular schools
4 are not given the chance to thrive. Every time
5 they come to the school, they say, "It's
6 underutilized." You go to the schools.
7 Everybody who is involved in the schools goes,
8 "What are you talking about? We are overcrowded
9 already." But they of course count closets and
10 any dead space as underutilization numbers.
11 They don't look at the reality of the schools.

12 So that's my issue with this. There is not
13 consensual idea on how to solve the problems of
14 our schools. Everything is just either shut it
15 down and rebuild it. And then, five years
16 later, it's going to shut it down again because
17 it fail again because nobody knew the reason why
18 it failed to begin with. Or if it's a big one,
19 let's break it down. Let's put three new
20 schools in it, triple the administration costs.
21 Meanwhile, the classroom sizes are the same or
22 worse. That is the problem.

23 So this is going to happen. I'm just going
24 to be honest with you. Don't fool yourself.
25 This is going to happen whether you're here or

1 whether we have a full auditorium. It doesn't
2 matter for these people. They're going to shove
3 it, and they rush into it. There's a lot of
4 pushing it through. The three appointees, they
5 try to table the vote for next year, give
6 everybody a chance, because they've been rushing
7 these co-locations in this last month.

8 And, of course, the vote was three in favor,
9 and all the mayor appointees say no, because
10 they wanted to push their agenda through. So
11 the next step I heard some of the lawyers
12 talking about, they're bringing up about
13 lawsuits. Another idea would be there is a
14 five-month process, the duration of the process
15 to revert all these changes.

16 So even with a new administration coming in
17 in January, there still should be time to bring
18 these votes back to the PP to reverse some of
19 this. Those are some of the ideas that were
20 thrown out in there.

21 MALE VOICE 1: Appeals of the principals.

22 DR. HERNANDEZ: Huh?

23 MALE VOICE 1: Appeals of the principals.

24 DR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, most of the principals
25 are already appealing, but trust me. That's not

1 going to go anywhere anyway, because it is
2 appealed to the DOE. And the lawyers, they have
3 a funny way to interpret always their way. It
4 doesn't matter.

5 Whether they actually did fail to follow
6 their own regulations, it doesn't matter. The
7 lawyer's going to come from any little tiny - -
8 and say, "Oh, yeah, they did, because on this
9 day, they contacted this parent here. So that
10 counts for parent information."

11 So the next hope after all the appeals is to
12 bring about this vote to a new panel, which is
13 better open-minded than this one and that can
14 reverse all the--because now, I mean, it's
15 ridiculous. The number of charter schools
16 coming in is ridiculous. They're just coming
17 through every month, every year. The district
18 is being pounded.

19 There was one school last week they were
20 getting seven charter schools, just seven in one
21 building.

22 So they're really pushing this through on
23 the last day. So just stay tuned and continue
24 to give us support. Thank you.

25 MS. RAWLINGS: Okay. I think we have one

1 more comment from the CEC from Janet Bosch,
2 and then we'll move to public comment.

3 MS. JANET BOSCH: They said a lot of
4 everything that you needed to hear. I just
5 wanted to point out to some of you who may not--
6 especially for the parent and the staff also,
7 how this will directly affect you and your
8 children.

9 They have the projected enrollments of the
10 school that might come in, but it also shows the
11 projected enrollments of the next years to 2017
12 for 301. 188 looks like it might stay the same,
13 but your enrollment will be declining, which
14 means the less students who come in, that
15 affects your budget. Less students means less
16 money coming into your school.

17 And I'm looking here, and you've got some
18 really nice programs that I'm pretty sure you
19 would like to keep, these special programs,
20 these core programs, the partnerships are
21 wonderful. Do you think when your budget
22 decreases that you get to keep those programs?

23 MALE VOICE 1: Nope.

24 MS. BOSCH: A lot of those programs will
25 start fading away, and that's aside from what he

1 was mentioning about lunch time, class times.
2 The gym classes are going to get affected,
3 because now you've got to share gym with another
4 school.

5 On that, less enrollment, that might mean
6 less teachers, so you might lose some of your
7 favorite teachers.

8 MR. D'OTAVI: Some of you might lose jobs.

9 MS. BOSCH: Exactly. So this is a concept
10 that would affect you guys directly. That's
11 just stuff that you need to know, because that's
12 what's really--everything else is good to know
13 how the whole process works. You need to know
14 how it's going to affect you and the kids. And
15 that's what's going to happen.

16 The stuff that your kids look forward to
17 after school might not be in the next couple of
18 years, especially if they're just starting this
19 year if they're 6th Graders. Okay? That's all
20 I wanted to point out.

21 MS. RAWLINGS: Thank you. So we've now
22 concluded the formal presentation. We will now
23 open the floor for public comment.

24 Speakers will be given the floor in the
25 order in which they signed up, and all comments

1 are limited to two minutes. So apologies in
2 advance if I mispronounce anyone's name. The
3 first speaker is Harry Sewpersaud. - - right
4 there. Hold on. Okay.

5 MR. HARRY SEWPERSAUD: Good evening. My
6 name is Harry Sewpersaud. My daughter is a 5th
7 Grader at Girls Prep Bronx. I'm privileged to
8 bring here tonight in support of Girls Prep
9 Bronx. Girls Prep is ready, willing, and able
10 to serve any student that is admitted by random
11 lottery. Girls Prep serves every student,
12 regardless of their special education needs,
13 English language learner status, or any other
14 student-specific needs.

15 The Girls Prep community lives by four core
16 values: Scholarship, merit, sisterhood, and
17 responsibility. Girls Prep students learn to be
18 active citizens as well as scholars. Girls Prep
19 teachers - - to compassion and fairness and
20 teach students to use the same behavior with
21 their peers.

22 Girls Prep teachers encourage exploration
23 and joy in learning, as well as the importance
24 of persistence and effort. Girls Prep offers a
25 well-balanced education that emphasizes

1 creativity and health alongside academic
2 excellence. It is with great respect and
3 appreciation that I say Girls Prep has not only
4 made my daughter a better student but also a
5 better person.

6 I'm proud of how found my daughter is of
7 Girls Prep, the administration, the teachers,
8 and her peers. She looks forward to learning
9 and is encouraged to achieved her absolute best
10 every day. I'm a true believer in the Girls
11 Prep model and its academic rigor. Girls Prep
12 brings value to the community, providing an
13 environment for learning that is unique and
14 respectful.

15 Girls Prep goes above and beyond to make
16 certain that the students are successful, while
17 keeping the parents informed and involved. I
18 know this, because my daughter talks with me
19 enthusiastically about her day at Girls Prep
20 every single night.

21 I know that Girls Prep teachers take care to
22 care for every single student to make certain
23 that no one falls behind. At the age of 9 in
24 5th Grade, my daughter actively talks with me
25 about her college and career aspirations. My

1 daughter started at Girls Prep Bronx in the
2 1st Grade. And I want to see her graduate Girls
3 Prep Middle School after completing the 8th
4 Grade.

5 Thank you for the opportunity to allow Girls
6 Prep to serve the families of the Bronx.

7 [Applause]

8 MS. RAWLINGS: The next speaker is Gretel
9 Awata and followed by Cesar Guerrero.

10 MS. GRETEL AWATA: Good evening. My name is
11 Gretel Awata, and my daughter's name is Crystal
12 Awata. She attends Girls Prep Bronx. I'm here
13 tonight in support of Girls Prep Bronx. At
14 Girls Prep, students are in a safe, nurturing,
15 and responsible environment.

16 This is an official environment that is open
17 to all students regardless of the - - school
18 district, family finances, or certificate - - ,
19 and students are admitted through a random
20 lottery process.

21 Over the last four years that my daughter
22 has attended Girl Prep, I have seen teachers and
23 administrators treat every girl and every family
24 with the utmost respect. Every morning, the
25 girls are greeted by an administrator with a

1 warm handshake.

2 This, I believe, sends a direct message to
3 the students and their families. And this is to
4 say, "I am here for you, and we are here to do
5 important work." It's also modeling on a daily
6 basis how to treat each other with respect.

7 My daughter started attending Girls Prep in
8 the fall of 2009 when they first opened. She
9 was in the 1st Grade. I remember that first
10 visit that the teachers made for the beginning
11 of the school year. I was impressed how well
12 prepared and excited - - .

13 My daughter started 5th Grade. Her teachers
14 and the administrator have been there every step
15 of the way. They have supported her in all--

16 [Background Noise]

17 MS. AWATA: The teachers challenge her to
18 think big, to support her ideas in writing, to
19 acquire skills, to advocate for her, and to
20 develop - - that will help her to achieve
21 success. My daughter knew that I was going to
22 be here tonight, and she said, "Please, do not
23 forget to mention how safe I feel in school, how
24 we all know in school what is expected of us,
25 how we - - scholarship, merits, sisterhood, and

1 responsibility."

2 I firmly believe that the teachers and the
3 school administrators at Girls Prep are dedicate
4 individuals who are willing to go to the extra
5 mile to help our daughters succeed. Thank you
6 for the opportunity to allow Girls Prep to serve
7 the families in the Bronx.

8 [Applause]

9 MS. RAWLINGS: We need an interpreter.

10 MR. CESAR GUERRERO [Through Interpreter]:
11 There is a very famous phrase in Spanish that
12 says that, "Education is the passport towards
13 your future." The future belongs to those who
14 prepare well in advance and in their present.
15 This evening, I'm here today with other parents
16 to support the Girls Prep of the Bronx.

17 This school is one of the charter schools
18 here that gives our children a very good
19 education, especially here in the Bronx. It is
20 sad any time parents have to beg for a good
21 education that is affordable or free. As a
22 father, I would like to say today that I feel
23 very proud and happy that my daughter is
24 attending Girls Prep from the 1st Grade to 5th
25 Grade, and she's in 5th Grade now.

1 I'm also very happy, because I have seen
2 the discipline in my daughter, dedication, and
3 most of all she's very respectful towards
4 everyone in her community. I know that in the
5 future she will be able to accomplish her goals
6 and that her dreams will become a reality,
7 because I know that her teachers are very well
8 prepared to accomplish the mission.

9 I feel very proud as a father that--I'm very
10 happy to see as a father the chains that are
11 being broken and the obstacles that are being
12 overcome. I would like to see my daughter
13 graduate and complete her education. Thank you,
14 Girls Prep, for opening up their doors and for
15 supporting our family here in the Bronx. Thank
16 you for the dedication and sacrifices and for
17 the good education and also - - our children and
18 our students.

19 I want to thank also Girls Prep, and I want
20 them to be part of the community here in the
21 Bronx. Thank you.

22 [Applause]

23 MS. RAWLINGS: The next speaker is Natasha
24 Munoz and then Uriel Ben Levi.

25 MS. RONALD: There was a switch. There was

1 a switch. That's - - .

2 MS. RAWLINGS: - -

3 MS. RONALD: There was a switch - - me.

4 MS. RAWLINGS: Okay. What's your name?

5 MS. RONALD: - - Ronald.

6 MS. RAWLINGS: Okay. Is Natasha, did she -

7 - ?

8 MS. RONALD: Yeah.

9 MS. RAWLINGS: Okay. Can you just state
10 your name so that we have it on record?

11 MS. RONALD: Good evening. My name is - -
12 Ronald. I am a parent. My daughter - - she is
13 - - in Girls Prep. I'm very happy to be here.
14 And I just wanted to--

15 [Background Noise]

16 MS. RAWLINGS: I'm sorry; can you just speak
17 up a little bit for the transcription?

18 MS. RONALD: I just wanted to say a few
19 things based on some of the things the parents
20 said. The first thing that I wanted to say was
21 charter schools are regular schools. We get the
22 same education as a regular school. It's a
23 public school. They don't pick and choose. We
24 were co-located - - . We are co-located with a
25 middle school, and we work great with our middle

1 school.

2 We have a great relationship with the
3 parents as well as the staff. We have a good
4 relationship with the middle school as well as
5 our own staff. We care very deeply about our
6 children's education as well as the children
7 that are in the building as well.

8 All the parents that go to Girls Prep, we're
9 concerned with the other children, whether they
10 be Girls Prep students or the middle school
11 students during whatever activity outside.
12 There's always the concern. We are always
13 looking out for the other school as well as our
14 own.

15 We always try to work well with the other
16 schools. - - I felt I needed to say something,
17 because we work great with our school that we're
18 in now, and we would love to be in another
19 school and build a relationship with this school
20 so we can make each other better.

21 Our girls learn merits, scholarship,
22 responsibility. Our girls are well learned.
23 They're very responsible. They're well behaved,
24 and that's all I would like to say. Thank you.

25 [Applause]

1 MS. URIEL BEN LEVI: My name is Uriel Ben
2 Levi. I'm here tonight in support of Girls Prep
3 Bronx. As the parent of two students currently
4 attending the school, I have experience in
5 witnessing the nurturing, dedication,
6 acceptance, and the devotion to success of each
7 and every child enrolled in the school.

8 Each child is chosen through a random
9 lottery, which means that at the beginning the
10 school administration and the faculty have no
11 idea of what to expect from each student in
12 terms of learning abilities, language barriers,
13 or even health issues that would interfere with
14 the child's ability to learn.

15 Girls Prep Bronx effortlessly accommodates
16 all circumstances, whether it's calling on a
17 translator to communicate with the students and
18 families, arranging separate learning groups
19 with students who may need extra attention while
20 learning, or accommodating chaperones who
21 accompany students in class due to health
22 issues.

23 All students, no matter what their
24 circumstance, are accepted and treated fairly.
25 The Girls Prep community lives by four core

1 values: Scholarship, merit, sisterhood, and
2 responsibility. My daughters have learned to
3 not only carry these values at school, but also
4 at home and into adulthood for the rest of their
5 lives.

6 This is the second year that my children and
7 I have been a part of the Girls Prep Bronx
8 family. This school opened its doors to us and
9 made me as a parent feel welcome and included,
10 me and my daughters--

11 [Coughing]

12 MS. LEVI: Since being accepted into Girls
13 Prep Bronx, my children have become excited
14 about learning. While in Kindergarten, my
15 daughter asked me to help her look for colleges
16 where she can learn to be a better - - . She
17 chose Cornell University. That was when I
18 realized that this school is special.

19 She is now a 1st Grader, and my oldest
20 daughter is a 5th Grader. For my 5th Grader,
21 this will be her last year at Girls Prep Bronx
22 Elementary School. For her to continue on
23 through junior high school as a Girls Prep Bronx
24 student would be a dream come true.

25 At that age, the children are most

1 impressionable, the values and the standards
2 that the school instills in their students
3 ensures that my children and all Girls Prep
4 Bronx children will be among the leaders of
5 education in the future.

6 I support Girls Prep Bronx and their efforts
7 to ensure the success of our children. Thank
8 you for the opportunity to allow Girls Prep to
9 serve the families of the Bronx.

10 [Applause]

11 MS. RAWLINGS: I'm going to call the next
12 three speakers, Cherisse Sexton, Regina Davdeli,
13 and Kynniah Rodriguez.

14 MS. CHERISSE SEXTON: Hello. My name is
15 Cherisse Sexton, and I am a parent of Olivia
16 Sexton, a 5th Grader at Girls Prep Bronx. I am
17 here tonight in support of Girls Prep Bronx. We
18 have been with the school since 1st Grade, and
19 in choosing a school for our daughter, we wanted
20 a school that had good values, great teachers,
21 and had a challenging curriculum that would push
22 our daughter further. We entered the lottery
23 and hoped for the best.

24 We ended up on the waiting list and was
25 accepted in August. It was the best thing to

1 happen to our family. The lottery works to be
2 able to accept everyone without judgment. Girls
3 Prep takes everyone and provides resources for
4 each child with all levels.

5 If more girls with IEPs are enrolled, then
6 the staff is hired to meet those needs. They do
7 not turn them away. They make sure they work
8 with them to meet their needs.

9 When Olivia passed the gifted and talented
10 test, there was no school in my district to meet
11 her needs. When I visited the G&T class in
12 Riverdale, the work they were doing was exactly
13 the same pace and rigor of Olivia's class at
14 Girls Prep. Olivia continues to excel in her
15 studies, score highly in math and science, which
16 she was, and exhibits the core values of
17 scholarship, merit, responsibility, and
18 sisterhood.

19 My daughter will be in the first graduating
20 class of Girls Prep Bronx. She will go to
21 college not only because Girls Prep instilled
22 this fact into the girls from the first day they
23 start, but because she can't imagine begin
24 successful without a master's degree.

25 The teachers and staff brings out the best

1 in her, sharing their lives and experiences,
2 opening her world to new ideas and ways of
3 living. They have health food policies. They
4 instill healthy eating habits.

5 MS. RAWLINGS: 30 seconds.

6 MS. SEXTON: She is taught that women can do
7 anything, and it empowers me to follow my dreams
8 and aspiration. Her success is my dream. Girls
9 Prep is the only school that she knows. She
10 needs this school. The thought of going to a
11 school that doesn't continue to 8th Grade has
12 been a bear of mine since the day she started.

13 The way of life as a Girls Prep student is
14 unsurpassed, and if she has to change - - next
15 year, I think it would set her back
16 academically. As we enter these teenage years,
17 our family would like to have the opportunity to
18 continue to be part of an all-girls school
19 environment like Girls Prep, keeping her away
20 from distractions and where she will gain the
21 confidence and knowledge to be a success.

22 Thank you for the opportunity to allow Girls
23 Prep to serve the families of the Bronx.

24 [Applause]

25 MS. RAWLINGS: Regina? Oh, sorry.

1 MS. NATASHA MUNOZ: Good evening,
2 everyone. My name is Natasha Munoz. Regina
3 couldn't be here, so I'm just going to - - . So
4 my name is Natasha, and I've lived in the Bronx
5 my whole life, in the community my whole life.
6 I have a daughter Isabella, and she's 7 years
7 old. And she also attends a co-located school.
8 She's in an elementary school co-located with
9 another elementary school. And we actually work
10 very well together.

11 We have a shared space committee, which I'm
12 a part of. We meet quarterly, and we talk about
13 our concerns and any ideas that we would like to
14 share with one another.

15 I just wanted to say something about Girls
16 Prep. I know firsthand that Girls Prep students
17 and families are great partners in shared
18 spaces. Girls Prep Bronx will continue to be a
19 great partner and eager to work to ensure that
20 all kids get access to an excellent education
21 here.

22 What a better way to set an example of
23 working together for kids in our communities?
24 Girl Prep Middle School will not only give the
25 girls of the elementary to further their

1 education and sisterhood, but it will most
2 definitely be an asset to the community. There
3 are so many families here in the Bronx that want
4 - - . There's something about 900 and something
5 applications that were submitted last year for
6 80 spots for Girls Prep.

7 So right there, that just shows you that
8 people want a choice. The parents of the Bronx
9 want Girls Prep to serve the community and
10 educate our girls.

11 I want to thank you for the time, and we're
12 eager to work with all the families in the
13 building to support this campus in any way we
14 can. Thank you.

15 [Applause]

16 MS. RAWLINGS: Kynniah Rodriguez and then
17 Shanel Santiago. Kynniah? Okay. Shanel
18 Santiago?

19 MS. KYNNAH RODRIGUEZ: My name is Kynniah
20 Rodriguez. I am 10 years old and have been at
21 Girls Prep Bronx for five full years. I think
22 Shanel wants to - - .

23 MS. SHANEL SANTIAGO: Hi, my name is Shanel
24 Santiago. I am 10 years old, just like Kynniah.
25 Me and Kynniah - - education. We don't want - -

1 . We want to have a good education.

2 MS. RODRIGUEZ: - - and our own class
3 schedule and - - . So - - our education. This
4 is a chant that me and Shanel do - - .

5 MS. SANTIAGO: Who do you think you are?

6 MS. RODRIGUEZ: I'm a - - super star.

7 MS. SANTIAGO: I - - .

8 MS. RODRIGUEZ: - - sisterhood.

9 MS. SANTIAGO: - -

10 MS. RODRIGUEZ: - - my trust and - - .

11 MS. SANTIAGO: - -

12 MS. RODRIGUEZ: I will take - - and I - - .

13 MS. SANTIAGO: Some say I can't.

14 MS. RODRIGUEZ: But I know I can.

15 [Crosstalk]

16 [Cheers]

17 [Applause]

18 MS. RAWLINGS: The last three speakers I'm
19 going to call, Jalynn Bailey, Tyler Latimer, and
20 Carmen Keynonez [phonetic]?

21 FEMALE VOICE 3: Jalynn - - .

22 MS. RAWLINGS: Jalynn's not here? Okay.
23 Tyler Latimer?

24 MS. TYLER LATIMER: Hi. My name is Tyler.
25 I go to Girls Prep Bronx Elementary. I really

1 love my school and all that I do there. I
2 hope that I can continue to learn at Girls Prep
3 Middle School.

4 [Applause]

5 MS. RAWLINGS: The last speaker, Carmen
6 Keynonez?

7 FEMALE VOICE 3: She left.

8 MS. RAWLINGS: She left? Okay. So the
9 speaker list is now exhausted. Again, we
10 welcome any comments and feedback you may have
11 at any time before the Panel for Educational
12 Policy votes on this proposal at its October
13 30th meeting. Again, the email address and
14 phone number where comments may be made are
15 d08proposals@schools.nyc.gov and (212)374-5159.

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

18 [END RECORDING]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature

Date October 25, 2013

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