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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF  
PORTFOLIO PLANNING  
Bronx High School of Business**

1           [START JOB\_290285\_AUDIO\_MASTER.MP3]

2           MR. ANTHONY SETTLE: Good evening. My name

3           is Anthony Settle and I am the facilitator for

4           this evenings proceedings. This is a joint

5           public hearing of the Department of Education

6           Community Education Council and the school

7           leadership team to discuss the proposed closure

8           and replacement of Bronx High School of

9           Business. Tonight's proceedings will be

10          recorded and transcribed. Before we begin the

11          hearing we ask that anyone who wishes to speak

12          during the public comment portion of the

13          evening's proceedings please use the sign in

14          table at the back of the room. Sign up will end

15          very, very shortly. If you have a question that

16          you want to have addressed during the question

17          and answer portion of the agenda please write

18          that question on an index card provided at the

19          back table. Volunteers from the table will

20          collect them and assemble them. Only those who

21          have signed up to speak will be able to

22          participate in the public comment. All panel

23          participants are asked to be here no later than

24          5:30 p.m. So now that we have begun if a panel

25          participant arrives he or she will be given the

1 time to speak at the first opportune moment.  
2 We want you to be respectful of everyone's time.  
3 There may be elected officials who arrive at  
4 different times throughout the evening. If they  
5 wish to speak we will do our very best to  
6 accommodate them at the first opportune moment.  
7 Those who are here at the start of the public  
8 comment phase will be asked to speak first. I  
9 ask that you now please take a look at your  
10 agenda. The format will include a presentation  
11 of the proposal and presentations by hearing  
12 participants followed by public comment,  
13 speakers who have already signed up at the table  
14 in the rear. Public comments we ask be no  
15 longer than two minutes in length. The time  
16 will be enforced and speakers will be informed  
17 when their designated time has come to an end.  
18 There will also be a question and answer period.  
19 If you have a question we ask that you write  
20 your question on the post card that was supplied  
21 at the sign in table at the rear of the  
22 auditorium. When the public comments are taking  
23 place staff members will organize the questions  
24 into categories and get them ready for the Q & A  
25 period. Some questions will be asked directly

1 and others will be asked under headings in  
2 order to avoid - -. We will not take questions  
3 from the floor. Even though all individual  
4 questions will not be addressed in the forum  
5 this evening answers will be online posted on  
6 the DOE website prior to the panel for education  
7 policies immediately. If at the end of the  
8 hearing you still have questions we encourage  
9 you to direct them to us by calling the phone  
10 number on the bottom of your fact sheets or  
11 sending them to us via email at the address also  
12 on the bottom of your fact sheets. Please allow  
13 me at this time to introduce the panel which has  
14 been assembled for this evening's joint public  
15 hearing. Norma Decado [phonetic] from the  
16 Community Education Council, Carmen Ramos  
17 [phonetic] from the Community Education Council,  
18 Barbara Poe [phonetic] from - - 11, Hakeem Devoe  
19 from Urban Assembly, William Gatana [phonetic]  
20 from Medical Science, Jay Warner, Bronx  
21 Collegience, Alicia Warlow [phonetic], Dream PR  
22 [phonetic] Vincent Rodriguez, School of  
23 Business, and Deputy Chancellor Laura Rodriguez.  
24 I will now turn the program over to our Deputy  
25 Chancellor Laura Rodriguez who will present the

1 proposal.

2 MS. LAURA RODRIQUEZ: Thank you, Anthony.  
3 Good evening ladies and gentlemen, thank you for  
4 being here this evening. This joint public  
5 hearing was convened to discuss the proposed  
6 closure and replacement of Bronx High School of  
7 Business. Bronx High School of Business is  
8 located at 240 East 172st Street in Community  
9 School District 9 in the Bronx. It currently  
10 serves students in grades nine through twelve.  
11 On March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012 the New York City Department  
12 of Education published a proposal to close Bronx  
13 High School of Business and a new school 09X574.  
14 By closing Bronx High School of Business and  
15 replacing it with a new school we are seeking to  
16 rapidly create a school environment that will  
17 prepare students for success in college, work,  
18 and life. The new school will build on the  
19 strongest elements of Bronx High School of  
20 Business, and will incorporate new elements in  
21 order to create a rigorous culture of teaching  
22 and learning. Students will have access to a  
23 higher quality educational option while they  
24 continue to attend school in this very building.  
25 We believe this process will ensure that all

1 students are set on the path for  
2 accomplishment. In conjunction with this  
3 proposal as a way to support additional school  
4 improvements the Department of Education  
5 submitted a school improvement grant application  
6 to the state education department to implement  
7 the turnaround model at the new school. If  
8 approved this would make the new school eligible  
9 for up to \$800,000 in supplemental federal  
10 funding. I want acknowledge the students and  
11 families to feel your certain - - as being well  
12 served by Bronx High School of Business.  
13 Tonight we will hear about the success stories  
14 happening at Bronx High School of Business.  
15 There are success stories and we honor those,  
16 but we also need to consider the many students  
17 who started as a child in the ninth grade and  
18 have not experienced the same success and they  
19 deserve better. Despite the number of  
20 challenges the school has faced some data  
21 indicates that elements of Bronx High School of  
22 Business are worth preserving at the new school.  
23 For example, while third year credit of team - -  
24 for the 2010/11 school year at Bronx High School  
25 of Business is in the bottom 12% citywide. The

1 first year and second year credit accumulation  
2 are both above the city average. The Department  
3 of Education believes that with new programs and  
4 a push to improve teacher quality the new school  
5 could expand the recent improvement in student  
6 outcomes. However, Bronx High School of  
7 Business's performance data overall and feedback  
8 from members of the New York State Board of  
9 Regents that the pace of change at New York  
10 City's persistently lowest achieving schools is  
11 not quick enough to meet the student needs,  
12 suggests that Bronx High School of Business  
13 should be closed and replaced with a new school  
14 with new programs and supports. Four year  
15 graduation rates at Bronx High School of  
16 Business have been consistently low, 55% or less  
17 for the last four years. In 2010/11 the Bronx  
18 High School of Business four year graduation  
19 rates was 51%. The progress report measures the  
20 progress and performance of students in a school  
21 as well as the school environment compared to  
22 other schools serving similar student  
23 populations. Bronx High School of Business  
24 earned an overall C grade on its 2010/2011  
25 annual progress report with C grades on student

1 progress, student performance, and school  
2 environment. The school received an  
3 underdeveloped, UD, rating on its 2010/2011  
4 quality review indicating serious deficiencies  
5 in the way the school is organized to support  
6 student learning. Before we hear from other  
7 members of the panel and move to the public  
8 comment I would like to briefly discuss the  
9 impact of this proposal on current Bronx High  
10 School of Business students and families if it  
11 is approved. All current Bronx High School of  
12 Business students will have a guaranteed seat in  
13 the new school. This includes all ninth, tenth,  
14 and eleventh grades students as well as any  
15 twelfth grade students who do not graduate by  
16 the 2012/13 school year. All incoming ninth  
17 graders who have applied to Bronx High School of  
18 Business and are matched to it in the high  
19 school admissions process will automatically be  
20 enrolled at the new school. In a separate  
21 educational impact statement published on  
22 January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012 the Department of Education  
23 proposed the opening of the collocation of the  
24 new English language learning school, 09X584 on  
25 the Taft Campus beginning in the 2012/13 school

1 year. The Panel for Educational Policy, PEP,  
2 approved that proposal after meeting on March  
3 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. The new L school, the new English  
4 language learning school is designed to serve  
5 English language learners who are of little  
6 English proficiency and will open the fall of  
7 2012 to serve students in the ninth grade  
8 gradually phasing into grades nine through  
9 twelve. The Department of Education does not  
10 anticipate that the proposed closure and  
11 replacement of the Bronx High School of Business  
12 will impact the collocation of any of the schools  
13 collocated on this campus, - - Academy for  
14 History and Citizenship for Young Men 09X239,  
15 Bronx Collegiate Academy 09X227, Dremnard  
16 [phonetic] Preparatory School 09X329, Bronx High  
17 School for Medical Science 09X413, Jonathan  
18 Levin [phonetic] High School for Media and  
19 Communications 09X414, and the English Language  
20 Learner School 09X564. Finally I want to  
21 clarify the process the new school will go  
22 through to hire the best possible staff if this  
23 proposal is approved. One, there is no quota of  
24 staff that must be removed as a result of this  
25 process. This proposal does not require the

1 turnover of any set percentage of staff. Two,  
2 pursuant to city's teacher contract if this  
3 proposal is approved - - staff who apply to work  
4 at the new school will be reviewed by a five  
5 person school based personnel committee. The  
6 committee is made up of a principal, two  
7 designees or the chancellor, and two designees  
8 of the United Federation of Teacher's president.  
9 The proposed new leader will develop  
10 qualifications for positions in the new school  
11 and the personnel committee will consider each  
12 candidate who applies. All teachers from the  
13 current school are eligible to apply to work at  
14 the new school. If sufficient numbers of staff  
15 from the closing school apply at least 50% of  
16 the new school's pathological positions must be  
17 selected from among the appropriately licensed  
18 most senior qualified applicants. Again there  
19 is no set percentage or limit on the number of  
20 staff from the closing school who can be hired  
21 to work at the new school, and the decisions are  
22 made by the personnel committee of the new  
23 school. Once again thank you and we look  
24 forward to hearing your comments and your  
25 questions.

1 MR. SETTLE: Thank you, Deputy Chancellor.  
2 Our next presenter at this time will be  
3 Elizabeth Solis from school - -.

4 MS. ELIZABETH SOLIS: Hello, my name is  
5 Elizabeth Solis, and I am a - - teacher and - -.  
6 I have been working with an extraordinary group  
7 of people. We have worked diligently and  
8 enthusiastically from day one. Some of us  
9 started the real work at the end of last year  
10 way before - -. Turnaround, what a refreshing  
11 word, it implies - - changes and hope, the  
12 opportunity to correct deficiencies and to  
13 implement building of concepts and ideas that  
14 would allow our students to soar. The brightest  
15 and most energetic staff are hired. At our  
16 interviews we were bombarded with questions and  
17 hypothetical scenarios to test our ability to  
18 provide this great student body with expert  
19 teacher knowledge. Repeatedly we were asked are  
20 you up to the challenge, can you become a team  
21 player in the - - of our student body. Our  
22 students - - they've got so much work to do.  
23 They've got appropriate language - -, they've  
24 got the socioeconomics' that clearly don't - -  
25 college resume because - - society. The staff

1 said it best because we believed that blood,  
2 sweat, and tears would eventually pay off. For  
3 the teachers it's not wholly about the paycheck.  
4 The payoff is far greater than that, the payoff  
5 is limitless. Teaching is a job whose affects  
6 will have rippled on our students, community,  
7 city, country, and teacher. We have a great  
8 believe in that. The effects of what we do in  
9 and to our students will be all encompassing  
10 whether we have a stake in it or not. The - -  
11 it's about the children. Keep your eye on the  
12 prize because it's about to break. The closing  
13 of Bronx High School of Business is not about  
14 the children. In all of my years of teaching I  
15 have never seen such blatant disregard for the  
16 children. We have risen to the many challenges  
17 of educating a 17% - - population and a special  
18 ed population of 19. We have implemented  
19 different programs to help our children - - with  
20 writing, second language education, and  
21 mathematics. We have identified those students  
22 who are in serious danger of not getting ahead.  
23 We have - - in order to help the most at risk to  
24 overcome deficiency and to give them a chance at  
25 success. Our period assessments demonstrate

1 that we are making progress. The closing of  
2 Bronx High School of Business is not about the  
3 children. I can't - - however, at the end of  
4 the day I know that it's not - - it's not about  
5 the children because if it were we would be  
6 given the opportunity to address our student's  
7 challenges, to help our students, and to bask in  
8 the fruits of our labor. If it had been about  
9 the children we would have been given the  
10 opportunity to see the - - of framework turn all  
11 our - - into highly effective educators or at  
12 least reside in that domain. If it had been  
13 about the children we would have been given the  
14 opportunity to become experts in the new  
15 programs implemented so that we, so that there  
16 would have been an increase in our students  
17 reading and writing level. If it had been  
18 about the children we would have been allowed to  
19 bond with our students and their families to  
20 produce a strong and cohesive community. A  
21 strong community would never stand by - - and  
22 quietly and watch slowly - - seek and destroy  
23 public schools from the inside out. It is that  
24 I ask you now in the name of the children keep  
25 Bronx High School of Business open and let us

1 continue to work this hard. Thank you.

2 MR. SETTLE: At this time Mr. Hakeem Devoe  
3 will have the opportunity to speak.

4 MR. HAKEEM DEVOE: I'd like to stand up,  
5 thank you - - keep my statements short because  
6 clearly it's not about the children. I think  
7 you drove that point home. More clearly in  
8 case anybody missed it you heard \$800,000 that  
9 the Deputy Chancellor said they were keeping  
10 hostage that they wouldn't release until they  
11 got what they wanted in closing up the school.  
12 Nothing's clearer than that it's not about the  
13 children. Everybody here who's a parent know you  
14 would never do that to your child withhold  
15 resources to help your child be successful and -  
16 - best unless you've got - -. A matter of fact  
17 if you did try to withhold - - from your child -  
18 - you'd probably go to jail, but for some reason  
19 we're in a system that prolongs them - - across  
20 the city until this administration, the  
21 Bloomberg administration can make the political  
22 case about the strong public education. You  
23 know when we're just looking through this report  
24 that the Deputy Chancellor went through and she  
25 went back to the seat in here; I looked back two

1 years and saw a B so I said well what  
2 happened. I suppose I learned some of this  
3 situation last year. You had a B, two years  
4 later you have a C, and then by the way we're  
5 just going to close you. Clearly after - -  
6 educates. As a teacher for 19 years if I have a  
7 student who is a B student and I saw for the  
8 first time they dropped to a C - - do what I do  
9 to try to help them improve. Certainly I  
10 wouldn't throw them away like the government.  
11 Clearly I wouldn't be so foolish to think I'd  
12 change their name that would help their grades.  
13 Who would thank that? [Background Noise] So I  
14 would try to think what would help them right  
15 then and there, what program would I ask for.  
16 You heard that I asked for the things at school  
17 that - - school to this building - - the special  
18 ed population - - building. Now after two  
19 schools are being closed and other schools are  
20 afraid of being on the chopping block now  
21 they're going to bring in the school to help  
22 serve the population that we said we were going  
23 to help with - - four years ago. Actually I'm  
24 going to pass here because this is kind of  
25 personal for me. I was - - and when you prove

1 that the city that I'll always - - at a higher  
2 - - from the city itself you know it don't hurt  
3 the fellow - - or deputy chancellor back then  
4 who was present and they told the school anyway.  
5 I actually want to - - talk to the staff at the  
6 school of business and just - - keep doing the  
7 work that you're doing. Don't let this corrupt  
8 system ruin the way you - - of making  
9 questionable - - understand this political game  
10 don't let it interfere with your missions in the  
11 classroom. Do it for the children. I was  
12 crushed to see how the children's moral in that  
13 school was broken this year, and as a - - and  
14 never think about what happens to the child that  
15 goes to this school for two or three years and -  
16 - all of a sudden the school doesn't have a  
17 name and they're afraid to come back to. Alumni  
18 will come back to our school where will we be in  
19 a couple years when the school doesn't even  
20 exist anymore. They don't think about the  
21 children. They're not even close to thinking  
22 about the children because there's no - -  
23 anywhere on this that says close the schools  
24 benefits children. They made this up. Nobody  
25 think of leaving, do your best to keep your

1 children's head held high. Tell them the  
2 truth about the system and tell them they will  
3 succeed despite what this administrations - -  
4 education is doing for them. Thank you very  
5 much.

6 MR. SETTLE: At this time I also would like  
7 to - - Jay Warner from Bronx Collegiate.

8 MR. JAY WARNER: My name is Jay Warner. I'm  
9 originally from Queens. I'm a Met fan, not very  
10 popular here. Oh there is a Met fan out there,  
11 that's great, but I chose wisely. I met  
12 wonderful woman from the Bronx that I married.  
13 Turns out my mother in law went to this school  
14 when it was called Taft [phonetic] and when she  
15 found out that Taft, her wonderful school, was  
16 closing she was horrified. She said - - stop it  
17 from being closed but as you know it was closed.  
18 Now three years later there are six small  
19 schools in the building and they're opening,  
20 they're closing, they're opening, they're  
21 closing. Again it's not about the children.  
22 It's not about the children at all. It's about  
23 the dollars. That's all it's about. It's about  
24 the dollars and I feel really bad for the  
25 teachers of business. I feel really even worse

1 for the students - - I feel horrified that  
2 this is going on. That we're sitting here on a  
3 panel that has very little power - - and it's  
4 just a travesty of justice.

5 MR. SETTLE: At this time I'd like to invite  
6 to the microphone Yves Filius who is  
7 representing assembly woman Vanessa Gibson.

8 MR. YVES FILIUS: Hello. Again I'm Yves  
9 Filius. I'm representing Vanessa Gibson - -  
10 school, and while she's currently unavailable  
11 tonight and I'm here to say her testimony - - to  
12 the public. Good evening everyone. I am state  
13 assembly woman Vanessa L. Gibson and I represent  
14 the Bronx communities of Claremont, Concourse,  
15 High Ridge, Morris Heights, and Mount Eden.  
16 This evening I'm taking this opportunity to  
17 express my grave concern about the proposed  
18 closure of the Bronx High School of Business  
19 located in District 9 to Deputy Chancellor Laura  
20 Rodriguez, Department of Education officials,  
21 District 9 Superintendent Esposito, CEC District  
22 9 President Espado [phonetic], CEC District 9  
23 members, and everyone else here tonight. I'm  
24 also requesting that this proposal be withdrawn  
25 until such time as a comprehensive educational

1 review of all high schools located in the  
2 former William Howard Taft educational campus is  
3 conducted. As you may recall it was just last  
4 year that the New York City Department of  
5 Education moved to close the Urban Assembly  
6 Academy for History and Citizenship for Young  
7 Men, and that school is currently in its first  
8 year of phasing out right there at the William  
9 Taft educational complex. The Urban Assembly  
10 phase-out has already raised substantial  
11 questions about the educational services and  
12 options that will be available to those District  
13 9 students in the Bronx who are entering high  
14 school in the near future and the closure of the  
15 Bronx High School of Business located in the  
16 same campus will only serve to compound those  
17 other - - issues and seriously complicate  
18 parental decision making. Along with seeking to  
19 make the transition already under way at the  
20 Taft Complex as smooth as possible for the  
21 students and families that are most likely  
22 affected as a matter of policy it is clear that  
23 an appropriate review of school closures require  
24 us to look at the educational impact of such  
25 actions and its proper contents. In the case of

1 schools located at the Taft Educational Campus  
2 such a review can only be accomplished through a  
3 full and complete understanding of what the  
4 NYCDOE intends to do with all of the schools on  
5 the campus as parents, educators, and community  
6 residents have not yet been given an opportunity  
7 to participate and discuss their point of view  
8 and the special comprehensive review has  
9 apparently - -. Instead the current process is  
10 designed to minimize opposition to school  
11 closures by utilizing a sudden approach that  
12 focus on individual schools while avoiding the  
13 essential comprehensive review. This approach  
14 undermines the affective public participation  
15 that the current review process puts immensely  
16 in - -. As such the current process falls far  
17 short of the spirit and intent of existing law.  
18 In addition to these process related concerns it  
19 should also be noted that the Bronx High School  
20 of Business should now be closed for another - -  
21 school specifically. This can be seen in the  
22 latest school progress report made available by  
23 the NYDOE and shows a marked improvement in  
24 parent and student satisfaction with the school  
25 from 2009 to 2011. For example, in 2011 a full

1 91% of parents were either satisfied or very  
2 satisfied with the education that their child  
3 received that year. That is a full 20  
4 percentage points - - 71% parents that provided  
5 the same response in 2001. Parents also gave  
6 the school - - marks but asked about the  
7 opportunity to embark in their child's education  
8 and 94% said that they were satisfied or very  
9 satisfied with - - alone. That's an 18% jump in  
10 satisfaction from responses from both of our  
11 campuses in 2009. In that same two year period  
12 there were also 25% increase in the number of  
13 parents who said they were satisfied, were very  
14 satisfied with how well the school communicates  
15 with - - Bronx High School of Business keep  
16 their 95% rating on that - - 2011 leaving them  
17 virtually no room for improvement when it comes  
18 to communicating with parents. Those parents  
19 are not alone. The Bronx High School of  
20 Business has also shown substantial improvement  
21 in student response as well. In 2011 there were  
22 - - reflected in the 75% of students who agree  
23 or strongly agree to - - to learn. That's a  
24 full 14 percentage point higher than the  
25 responses in 2009. In addition 85% of the

1 students said that - - remember education and  
2 the school knew their name. Educators in the  
3 school knew their name, up from just 7% two  
4 years before. This data clearly demonstrates  
5 that the Bronx High School of Business is well  
6 on its way to improve educational results and -  
7 - opportunity students. These - - and the hard  
8 work into making this improved educational  
9 environment a reality will make it possible for  
10 the Bronx High School of Business move beyond  
11 2010/2011 - - grade of C and provide a better  
12 quality education for its students, but that can  
13 only happen if the pending proposed school  
14 closure is rejected. The education of our  
15 children is a critical priority improvement. It  
16 - - and in building another future for New York  
17 City - - I urge - - objection of the proposed  
18 closure of the Bronx High School of Business and  
19 appreciate your consideration on this matter,  
20 thank you.

21 MR. SETTLE: This now concludes the formal  
22 presentation, and thus I would ask the following  
23 to please come to the microphone for the public  
24 comment portion of this evening's business. You  
25 will be reminded that during the public comments

1 we ask that you limit your comments to two  
2 minutes in length. Time will be kept and we  
3 will signal you when you have reached 30 seconds  
4 remaining before your time is up. So at this  
5 time I would like to call to the stand Bernard  
6 A. Lopez, Rashid Gladden, Kathryn Claborn, and  
7 Arturo Martinez.

8 MR. BERNARD LOPEZ: Good evening Deputy  
9 Chancellor Rodriguez, Principal Rodriguez,  
10 members of the SLT, and to the Bronx High School  
11 of Business Community. My name is Bernard  
12 Lopez. I'm the field director for the CSA - -  
13 school supervisors and administrators, the union  
14 that represents - - and principals in New York  
15 City Schools. I represent the principals of the  
16 Bronx High School as well as - - High School.  
17 The New York City Department of Education's  
18 latest attempt to close 27 schools, which will  
19 make the process of a three year reform program,  
20 is a political maneuver that is not proven in  
21 sound educational practice. Rather it - -  
22 designed to avoid negotiations with CSA and the  
23 USP over new principal and teacher evaluations.  
24 The motivations behind that point was to follow  
25 a turnaround model, a model that does not

1 require - - evaluations, and allows the city  
2 to - - of the schools under new names. What  
3 else do we know about that? Well 50% of the  
4 teachers would be new while 50% of the former  
5 teachers would be put into excess and they would  
6 understand there's been a change in that policy.  
7 There's nothing educational - - about this  
8 intervention plan that was introduced not to  
9 help children. It will not contribute to the  
10 development of - - principal and teacher that  
11 wishes it - -. Furthermore in moving up the  
12 steps from these schools and the - - replacement  
13 of the schools the New York City Department of  
14 Education will destabilize schools throughout  
15 the system. One - - while these - - are the  
16 most important ones that principal - - removing  
17 1,800 teachers and tossing them into a - - where  
18 they will work as substitutes at full salary  
19 will cost the city approximately \$150,000,000  
20 annually. I thank you for your time.

21 MS. KATHRYN CLABORN: Good evening, my name  
22 is Kathryn Claborn. I'm a student at Bronx High  
23 School of Business. I do want to let you know -  
24 - members. I'm here to speak to you about my  
25 school. I think you should give us another

1 opportunity to stay open. Our teachers - -  
2 taught me how to prepare for my tests. They  
3 called my house and helped me every day. I  
4 talked to them, but I have to get new teachers.  
5 Please keep us open. Give us another chance to  
6 get better, thank you.

7 MR. ARTURO MARTINEZ: Hi, my name is Arturo  
8 Martinez, and I am the - - School of Business  
9 and I would like to tell you what the concerns  
10 are - -. This is who - - for the DOE it just  
11 say how you stay in business - - Bronx High  
12 School of Business is one of the best schools in  
13 the program. Also I'd like to say I would love  
14 for the - - important part, the parents. I  
15 don't see the parents getting old - -. Today we  
16 will say we have 32. Why? Because several  
17 kids, several schools so this school they have  
18 to - - parents they have to share the town.  
19 They all family with the town and also bringing  
20 attention to the schools and the parents they  
21 need to stay - - for the parents. We have to  
22 educate ourselves in order to help our schools,  
23 thank you.

24 MR. RASHID GLADDEN: Good evening everyone,  
25 my name is Rashid Gladden. I'm a student at

1 Bronx High School of Business. I believe we  
2 shouldn't shut down the school because by  
3 shutting down this high school not only do you  
4 hurt the teachers, you will also hurt the  
5 students of the school. If you give us two or  
6 three more years and areas of improvement I  
7 guarantee you we'll be the best high school on  
8 the map in the Bronx. Also from my two years at  
9 Bronx High School of Business I've learned a lot  
10 of things from certain students and mostly all  
11 the teachers. If some need to become a better  
12 learner, a better leader, and to better  
13 persevere, and finally a better person, I owe my  
14 debt to all of you, thank you.

15 MR. SETTLE: Mark Mounsey, Wilfredo Pagan,  
16 Joanna Giddings, and Melody Cooper.

17 MR. MARK MOUNSEY: Good evening, my name is  
18 Mark Mounsey. I am a math teacher at the Bronx  
19 High School of Business. I've been here eight  
20 years, and one of the first pep talks I was  
21 given when I came here was that our students are  
22 on a six year program so that was the original  
23 expectation I had. I moved from Colorado where  
24 I taught for 13 years in Denver, which we  
25 considered to be a huge difference. In Denver

1 we have four classes of teachers when I moved  
2 to New York there are 31,000 teachers. It's a  
3 massive group of people that I found from the  
4 beginning that it is very hard to get support  
5 for the majority of sanction. Last year we  
6 thought we were going to find that we had a B on  
7 this year's report card but we got a C. Our  
8 principal told us the reason was because  
9 substitutes were misclassified and we were  
10 within one to two passing regent's scores of  
11 having a B. Next thing we knew we were a - -  
12 school and after that we found out we were  
13 restart, which was - - to the Center for  
14 Educational Intervention and Public Education  
15 Association. Most people came in and they've  
16 been working hard to improve our school this  
17 year, but we haven't even one regents, one full  
18 - - already close the school. I don't  
19 understand how you could - - give them one year  
20 to prove what they could do, and here's another  
21 issue. If we are in such dire need of  
22 improvement how come we've never had anybody  
23 come in and really take a look at us and see  
24 what we could change? I never saw any of that  
25 happen. Everything had to come to an end. We

1 were the ones who were having problems like  
2 why wasn't there support from the Department of  
3 Education? Our faculty has great people on it  
4 and a bunch of them have left because of the - -  
5 close schools. We're failing in the amount of  
6 support we need. When you saying you're going  
7 to be hiring excellent faculty I promise you in  
8 two years you'll find - - schools that have  
9 students that come in a little better prepared.  
10 You have to be tough to stay here. One year we  
11 had a class that had a low graduation rate  
12 because they had English first period. There  
13 were kids in that class that had advanced  
14 regent's scores in English and math, but they  
15 didn't pass their English AP because it was  
16 first period. Now were we supposed to lower our  
17 standards to raise our graduation rate or were  
18 we supposed to say you know what if you don't  
19 show up you're going to not graduate. We had  
20 high standards. That's - - caused the  
21 graduation rate to be a little low. I wouldn't  
22 - - standard. I wouldn't want to raise my  
23 graduation rate because we lowered our standards  
24 - - third period. This is the first year that  
25 our students have been from class to class,

1 prior to that they sat in the same classroom  
2 all day. Students said to me Mister, I have  
3 been in elementary school. How come I have to  
4 sit in the same room all day? We finally  
5 changed it this year. We're not having a chance  
6 to see if that's going to help bring in more  
7 students who want to come here. Finally I've  
8 never heard of an organization that was closed  
9 before they ever had one change in leadership.  
10 They've told us we're closing and then the next  
11 week our principal is gone. It seems to me you  
12 would have tried something before you closed it.  
13 So I ask that you reconsider the closure. Give  
14 us the chance to do the things that we started  
15 this year. Let Mr. Rodriguez come in and work  
16 his magic with us and thank you for your time.

17 MR. WILFREDO PAGAN: Good evening everyone,  
18 my name is Wilfredo Pagan. I'm the  
19 representative - - policy. I represent the  
20 Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz and I would  
21 like to read a statement on his behalf. To the  
22 Department of Education, this is the - -  
23 process. The Department of Education should  
24 never be allowed to - - more resources into  
25 schools to produce better student outcomes and

1 increase opportunities for more students. The  
2 - - process should not be used to fire more  
3 teachers in the schools. We have more - -  
4 necessary remedy for these schools. The  
5 Department of Education has not made a  
6 sufficient case that this process is - -. This  
7 process only serves to tell them to destabilize  
8 the school community and no one benefits from  
9 this process. Instead the Department of  
10 Education must - - our resources to bring the  
11 necessary change to help these schools to  
12 succeed. Thank you.

13 MS. JOANNA GIDDINGS: Good evening, my name  
14 is Joanna Giddings. I'm the assistant principal  
15 at the Bronx High School of Business. I've been  
16 working, teaching in this school for eight  
17 years, and I want to speak again for the closing  
18 of the school because in my opinion this entire  
19 process has not been serving the best interest  
20 of the children in our care. We have made  
21 many changes as others have already spoken to  
22 within the past year. We have a new talented  
23 principal - - and the process is simply serving  
24 as a distraction for the important work that  
25 needs to be done. Again it's not serving the

1 best interest of the children in our care. We  
2 have many strong excellent teachers on our  
3 staff. They because of this process, the  
4 timeframes, the mysteries surrounding it, have  
5 begun looking for other positions because they  
6 have families to feed. They're concerned about  
7 where they are going to work next year. Some of  
8 them are outstanding and are already starting to  
9 line up other opportunities with as I just said  
10 students who come to high school better prepared  
11 ninth grade that are in some ways easier to  
12 teach. To lose those teachers would be a  
13 travesty and that's what we're in danger of  
14 doing so losing a teacher's not in the best  
15 interest of the children in our care. I have  
16 been one of the primary recruiters of new  
17 teachers - - school for the last few years or so  
18 and I can say that the proposal as I read it  
19 does not adequately address how the Department  
20 of Education plans to improve the quality  
21 teacher that is needed in this school. For  
22 example, last year - - had an opening for an  
23 earth science teacher and I screened over 75  
24 candidates and was not able with the support of  
25 the Department of Education's Office of Teacher

1 Recruitment I was not able to fill that  
2 position with a qualified teacher. We can't  
3 afford to lose the good teachers we have. It  
4 doesn't serve the best interests of the children  
5 who are here. So when I ask tonight since I  
6 realize that the closing's probably going to  
7 happen is that I implore you to move this  
8 process forward as quickly as possible so that  
9 our new principal has every opportunity or as  
10 much opportunity as possible to retain the  
11 excellent teachers who we have because that  
12 would be in the best interest of the children -  
13 -.

14 MS. MELODY COOPER: Good evening, my name is  
15 Melody Cooper and I am a special educator at the  
16 Bronx High School of Business. While I am  
17 removed to the community and still - - as a  
18 developing professional I do understand the  
19 power of public education, I do understand the  
20 power of using my voice, and I do understand the  
21 power of unity. Therefore I stand here with the  
22 community to lend my voice to the movement that  
23 will ensure the stability and success of all of  
24 our students. Thank you for the opportunity to  
25 speak.

1           MR. SETTLE: I'd like to acknowledge the  
2 presence of Ms. Scarlett Murdock [phonetic] who  
3 is assistant principal - -. I asked the  
4 following please to approach the microphone,  
5 Craig Antelmi, Esteban Nembhard, Kenneth Harper,  
6 and Jericho Duroche.

7           MR. CRAIG ANTELM: Good evening, my name is  
8 Craig Antelmi. I'm a math teacher and current  
9 BETA specialist at Bronx High School of  
10 Business. I have been a BETA specialist since  
11 the beginning of this whole process since 2007,  
12 and my commentary kind of focuses on the reason  
13 why our school is where it's at at this time.  
14 For those that don't know the - - graduation  
15 rate - - 60% or higher we can come up with  
16 specifically low performing high school and that  
17 puts you on the stage - - city - -. One of the  
18 things I've noticed over the years is that our  
19 cohorts have been so big and a lot of that has  
20 been dead weight in the since that when a kid  
21 gets discharged and they either don't die, go  
22 to another colloquial school, public school,  
23 leave the country, or go to another state they  
24 stay under the cohort of what may not happen in  
25 the school, which means you have - - control

1 over that outcome, and I hope you wonder how  
2 come we didn't have two sets of numbers. - -  
3 which is the total number of kids that have come  
4 in at the ninth grade at one time, let's say 100  
5 kids, and let's say you guys have 15 of them,  
6 that means you have a 15% graduation rate after  
7 40 years, but what if that graduation overall  
8 had 30 dropouts that were - - and other ones we  
9 had no control over. Why would you have another  
10 number that reflects what the school board - -  
11 instead of the students that are actively in the  
12 school? So out of 75 kids that are active in  
13 the school you take 50 out of 75 you have a  
14 different graduation rate? Now if you're  
15 worried about schools gaining in the system  
16 marking the average of those two rates so you  
17 get a better sense of what the school can do.  
18 The second area that you can hit on - - is how  
19 will kids do on the English language arts  
20 regents and math regents. That looks at by the  
21 time students are seniors what percentage  
22 sometimes scored a 65 or higher, and then - -  
23 the student why do you - - the AMO, which is the  
24 annual measure objective, when you're  
25 debilitating the school. For all the resources

1 - - the students are trying to improve your  
2 school why is it that they are being ask to take  
3 new members every year as if you're in a high  
4 jump competition. Once you are labeled a - -  
5 school or a - - school middle school counselors  
6 are not going to send their best kids to your  
7 school, and no matter what you do at middle  
8 school fairs or what you do to advertise for  
9 the school no amount of - - is going to get  
10 those people to send you good kids. We get good  
11 kids, but we get the kids who end up here  
12 sometimes by default and that's the challenge.  
13 So I think this is something that should be  
14 considered that you can't use one - - as far as  
15 graduation when you consider discharge - - you  
16 can't do anything with those kids, and from the  
17 English language arts and math perspective you  
18 should freeze the AMO for those schools that are  
19 in a restart - - status so then they can see how  
20 did they do over two to three years. Are we  
21 getting the same number as opposed to who like  
22 anyone else in this city is doing? Thank you.

23 MR. ESTEBAN NEMBHARD: Thank you, my name is  
24 Esteban Nembhard. I'm a New York - - my friends  
25 say - - organization that has a membership here

1 in the Bronx of newly members - - various  
2 residents of - - in the Bronx, and there are  
3 people who depend on the system of public  
4 education so that's why we - - to be here today.  
5 This is not the first school closing meeting  
6 I've been to, but I've heard, although I'm  
7 happy to hear from the panel but this is not  
8 their opinion, but I've heard the reason is  
9 formalities and consider the order to made to  
10 close the school. So if that's the case no  
11 offense I would like to talk to the people that  
12 can make a difference here and that's the people  
13 in the audience or I would like to agree on that  
14 background - - and with that business that I've  
15 heard a lot of things spoke about today, but I  
16 feel like one thing that is very blatant and has  
17 been missed is what does the value represent? I  
18 myself am a father of the public school system  
19 of New York City, and I heard talk about that by  
20 closing down the school we can possibly qualify  
21 for more state funds. I've heard that we're  
22 going to be taking the best aspects of Bronx  
23 Business and transferring that to the new  
24 school. I guess my first question to that would  
25 be have any of you been asked by the DOE board

1 or by the mayor what are the best aspects of  
2 Bronx Business High School so that they can be  
3 transferred or is this the communication telling  
4 them - - my other question is, is there any  
5 sensitivity here to the realities of I'm  
6 normally - - my community, how many other  
7 schools here, how many - - in jail right now?  
8 Does anybody know somebody who has a family  
9 member or member of support - -, and I just want  
10 you to understand maybe the customer - - we want  
11 them to be, but everyday a young person wants a  
12 school that's - - not going to attend, and  
13 that's a real thing. That's a real thing. I  
14 hope that we keep that in mind as we're talking  
15 about closing down this school. Like I said I'm  
16 a product of the public school system. My first  
17 time coming into the building I came in to  
18 speak to different educators here, and I  
19 remember being shocked by the sense of people  
20 not knowing if they were going to have a job  
21 next year. - - just trying to figure out what  
22 we would do to help the kids, what is the  
23 situation of the students here, and everyone  
24 preferred by the students, but they're also  
25 wondering am I going to have a job next year?

1       Where am I going to be assigned, and that's a  
2       terrible situation for - - people that are  
3       dealing with so many issues not to be able to  
4       have to - - school where they go to. That's  
5       something that's not right. With that in mind I  
6       just hope you all know that across the city  
7       there are students, there are parents, there are  
8       community members who are fighting against this.  
9       Who are fighting against the closing of the  
10      schools? On the 26<sup>th</sup> there we be a meeting of  
11      the - - where is that going to take place - -  
12      Brooklyn - - economics. It's going to be taking  
13      place at - - Heights High School in - - all that  
14      it takes is that when you're working together to  
15      have the best - - school to bring everybody that  
16      wants to come. I have a book right here that  
17      I'm going to be writing down anybody's number  
18      who wants to work with me, work with the other  
19      parents here to start the words, let people  
20      know that we can - - participate - - with that  
21      in mind let's set the word. This - - this is a  
22      crime what's happening here - - closing down the  
23      school at this time. The Board of Education has  
24      put like 5% - - time they agree, and that's not  
25      an issue I mean let's go - - with our fantasy.

1 Let's stop - - you know if that's not an  
2 emergency what's going on? So let's make our  
3 own - - I've got this book here, there's some  
4 pens, you can go write and - - let's do it.  
5 This is a movement around here; they're messing  
6 with the wrong community.

7 MR. KENNETH HARPER: Good evening everybody,  
8 my name is Kenneth Harper and I'm a student.  
9 I'm a senior student at Bronx High School of  
10 Business. There are a couple of things I want  
11 to talk about like Bronx High School of  
12 Business. It's a school that is slowly coming  
13 together. It appears that we are going to close  
14 down, but as a student here for the past four  
15 years I've progressively developed a - - and I  
16 never - - before. To me is school is just a  
17 place full of papers, books, and answers, and  
18 since I came to the Bronx High School of  
19 Business teachers have taught me otherwise.  
20 They've showed me the importance of learning,  
21 the benefits of the truth, and the importance of  
22 economics. These teachers helped me find my  
23 future and myself, and though my future may not  
24 be in business they have tried to feed my - -  
25 knowledge by opening up clubs and such. I have

1 a few ideas throughout my four years like  
2 opening a chess club, a book club, and currently  
3 right now a Japanese club. Each one had - - and  
4 like all clubs they have the ability to - - like  
5 it also has helped students find friendship  
6 within each other, and that brings - -. They've  
7 developed friendships and because we are able to  
8 integrate togetherness people from the ninth  
9 grade, students from the ninth grade told the  
10 college students that was here prior to them  
11 and get together to find out things about  
12 college and what they need to know, but to  
13 conclude instead of ending the seven years of  
14 Bronx High School of Business try to fund us and  
15 help us provide more clubs, more activities for  
16 the students, the students are the ones I have  
17 mentioned, and it would provide more fun,  
18 interesting, and knowledge - - environment for  
19 students and for the - - as a student my  
20 classmates. Thank you, that was all.

21 MR. JERICHO DUROCHE: Good evening, my name  
22 is Jericho Duroche. Currently I am a math and  
23 science teacher of the students with special  
24 needs here at the Bronx High School of Business.  
25 First and foremost I would like to thank all

1 those in attendance. Parents, students,  
2 staff, and administrators, you're presence is  
3 truly - - here. Let me start by saying that my  
4 words are not meant to offend or disrespect, but  
5 are really out of love and out of a desire for  
6 us to think as rational human beings and any  
7 other country in the world that represented this  
8 as the Department of Education would be charged  
9 and convicted of treason for what they have done  
10 to the youth of America. There is no  
11 statistical evidence that indicates excessively  
12 - - progress in education on a nationwide level  
13 in nearly 40 years. If you want to see the  
14 results of our educational system just look at  
15 the current condition of our country. Our - -  
16 education dropped from the Department of  
17 Education is clearly demonstrative of a lack of  
18 understanding as to what education is. The  
19 Latin root of education means to draw out, draw  
20 out the internal knowledge of the student in  
21 helping them to get a purpose, but instead you  
22 have adopted a process of instilling our bias  
23 and - - concept of skills and intelligence for  
24 our youth. Rather than accept and acknowledge  
25 the fundamental flaws in finances of our

1 educational system policy makers have decided  
2 that it's easier to shift blame to those who are  
3 merely delivering those - - that they themselves  
4 condone. For example, Taft is closed and is  
5 broken into smaller schools to be for the  
6 benefit of the students and now half of those  
7 same schools have closed or are closing. To  
8 believe that closing a failing school and simply  
9 give them a new name will somehow lead to  
10 different results is insane - - and I for one  
11 would like to believe that those entrusted with  
12 educating are youth are sane and rational human  
13 beings. Most importantly however it's how this  
14 affects the students. Think about what you are  
15 putting these students through. Students with  
16 disabilities having to go into detail about  
17 their shortcomings to the new staff. Students  
18 with incredible - - once again to call that  
19 student to explain it to complete strangers,  
20 students who have developed meaningful  
21 relationships with teachers and are on the cusp  
22 of excellence suddenly having to restart - -.  
23 Students who have had little to no stability in  
24 their lives once again being abandoned - -. How  
25 warped can someone's mind be to honestly believe

1 that students being put in this position are  
2 going to achieve the level of success that they  
3 would otherwise be capable of? The continued  
4 power tricks, delusional policies, and failure  
5 to acknowledge the issue of students, their  
6 families, and the communities is only going to  
7 invoke the intended failure to educate our  
8 youth. It is up to we the people to throw off  
9 the shackles of this educational bondage and  
10 exercise our right to dictate the terms of our  
11 own learning experience. Thank you.

12 MR. SETTLE: This now concludes the public  
13 comments phase of tonight's proceedings.  
14 Remember there and we will now begin the  
15 question and answer portion. We are going to  
16 look at some individual questions and others  
17 that have been - - into categories where we will  
18 allow the representative to question and ask.  
19 Any question that is not answered here tonight  
20 will be answered on the department's website.  
21 If you have additional questions at the  
22 conclusion at the end of tonight's proceedings  
23 we ask that you will write them to us via the  
24 phone number of email address at the bottom of  
25 your fact sheet questions we will not be taking

1 publicly.

2 MR. DAVID DONALDSON: Good evening, we just  
3 have two questions tonight to go over. The  
4 first question is what support will the school  
5 and the staff receive to improve? The answer to  
6 that is if the school applied and is accepted  
7 for a school improvement grant the funded  
8 programs and supports previously mentioned  
9 tonight including the Educational Partnership  
10 Organization, CDIPEA [phonetic]. In addition  
11 the school received support from the New York  
12 City Department of Education through its network  
13 team and finally an educational impact  
14 statement, which is available outside these  
15 doors, on page seven under the heading Overview  
16 of Past Teaching Improvement Efforts at Bronx  
17 High School of Business there is a list of  
18 leadership support, structural support,  
19 operational support, and student support.  
20 Second question is must the school's name change  
21 and will the community be involved in choosing  
22 the new name? The answer to that is the new  
23 school needs a name and school identification  
24 number that is different from the existing  
25 school. Consistent with the chancellor's

1 regulation A860 parents and community members  
2 associated with the proposed new school will be  
3 able to make suggestions for the name of the new  
4 school. As with all school names the chancellor  
5 retains final decision making authority. Thank  
6 you.

7 MR. SETTLE: We've heard many significant  
8 comments this evening and appreciate your  
9 feedback and your contributions to the hearing  
10 this evening. The information will be - - at  
11 the Panel of Education Policy which will have  
12 its meeting on Thursday, April 26<sup>th</sup> to vote on  
13 this proposal. Once again I ask if you please  
14 do have additional comments or questions utilize  
15 the phone number and/or the website located at  
16 the bottom of your fact sheet if you have  
17 additional questions. Thank you all for coming.  
18 This joint public hearing is now officially  
19 adjourned.

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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 4-23-12