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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**
Phase out and replacement of Gateway
- 1/27/12

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MR. GREGG BETHEIL: This is a joint public
3 hearing for the Department of Education, the
4 Community Education Council 8 and the School
5 Leadership Team to discuss the proposed phase
6 out of Gateway School of Environmental Research
7 and Technology, 8-X295, the date is the 2012-
8 2013 school year, and the proposed opening and
9 co-location of new high school 8-X561, with
10 existing schools, Gateway School of
11 Environmental Research and Technology, 8-X295,
12 the School for Community Research and Learning,
13 8-X540, Bronx Guild, 8-X452, Millennium Art
14 Academy, 8-X312, Pablo Neruda Academy for
15 Architecture and World Studies, 8-X305, Bronx
16 Community High School, 8-X277, Antonia Pantoja
17 Preparatory Academy, 8-X376, and Bronx Bridges
18 High School, 8-X432, in building X450 beginning
19 in the 2012-2013 school year. Again, my name is
20 Gregg Bethel from the Department of Education,
21 and I'll be acting as tonight's moderator-
22 facilitator. My role is to make sure that you
23 have an opportunity to go through the proceeding
24 in terms of the formal part and also to make
25 sure that anybody who would like to make a

1 public comment or has a question that they'd
2 like to pose has an opportunity to do so.
3 Tonight's proceedings will be recorded and
4 transcribed. Before we begin the hearing, we
5 ask that anyone who wishes to speak during the
6 public portion and comment of the evening sign
7 up at the table out in the hallway. Sign up
8 will end at 6:15. If you would like a question
9 you would like addressed during the question and
10 answer portion of the agenda, please write that
11 question on the index cards provided outside and
12 submit them to a volunteer at your table. Only
13 people who have signed up to speak will be able
14 to participate in the public comment. Again,
15 all panel participants were asked to be here no
16 later than 5:30. Now that we've started, if a
17 panel member arrives late, he or she will be
18 given time to speak at the first opportune
19 moment. We want to be respectful, not only of
20 their time, but of yours, and thank you again
21 for coming out tonight. If there are any
22 elected officials who arrive at any time
23 throughout the evening--and we are expecting a
24 couple this evening--if they wish to speak, we
25 will do our best to accommodate them at the

1 first opportune moment. Those who are here at
2 the start of the public comment section will be
3 asked to speak first. Now that we've begun the
4 hearing, I would ask everybody--the agenda is
5 available outside on the posters. The format
6 tonight will include a presentation of the
7 proposal, a presentation by the various
8 participants up here on the stage, followed by
9 public comment. Speakers should have already
10 signed up at the table in the lobby. Public
11 comments will be no longer than two minutes
12 each. The time will be strictly followed, and
13 speakers will be informed that their designated
14 time has ended. There will be the timekeeper -
15 - return the microphone. I'll let the speaker
16 know when about 30 seconds are remaining, and
17 when time is up at two minutes. I would ask
18 everybody to please try and respect the two
19 minute time period, simply so that things can
20 move on quickly because we do have a number of
21 speakers that have signed up to speak tonight
22 and we do want to make sure that everybody has a
23 chance to be heard. If you have a question,
24 again, we ask you to write it on the cards that
25 were provided at the end of the table this

1 evening. While public comments are taking
2 place, a staff person from the Department of
3 Education will organize the questions into
4 categories and get them ready for the question
5 and answer period. Some of the questions will
6 be asked directly, and others will be batched
7 together if they are under a common heading to
8 avoid repetitiveness. Even though all
9 individual questions will not be addressed at
10 the forum tonight, the answers will be on the
11 Department website prior to the panel hearing.
12 If at the end of the hearing you still have
13 questions we encourage you to direct them to us
14 by calling the number at the bottom of the fact
15 sheet or sending them to us via email--that
16 address also at the bottom of the fact sheet
17 that is available outside. I'd now like to
18 introduce the panel members that are here, and
19 assembled for this evening's joint public
20 hearing. We are joined this evening by Deputy
21 Chancellor Laura Rodriguez, also joined by
22 District Superintendent Karen Staple [phonetic],
23 and representing Community Education Council 8
24 this evening is Mr. Otis Thomas. Thank you for
25 joining us this evening. We do have some

1 members of the SLT sitting here this evening.
2 I know that from the Gateway School of
3 Environmental Research and Technology, Principal
4 Clifford Siegel is here in the, in the room, but
5 is not joining us at - - this evening. Mr.
6 Siegel, you are welcome to join us if you choose
7 to. The same is true for Roosevelt - - from
8 Pablo Neruda Academy, who is - -. You are also
9 welcome to join us here, but also I would like
10 to acknowledge your presence. We have from
11 Bronx Bridges High School Kenneth Miller
12 [phonetic] who is representing Principal Pablo
13 Villavicencio. If other members arrive this
14 evening, we will certainly make sure that we
15 acknowledge them. And those of you who arrived
16 on time, we certainly thank you for allowing us
17 - - so that members of the public can be heard.
18 We do not have any elected officials that are
19 here yet. Should they arrive, we will make sure
20 they will be treated - - . With that, I will -
21 - turn it over to Deputy Chancellor Laura
22 Rodriguez who will present the proposal.

23 MS. LAURA RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, everyone.
24 Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Thank you
25 for being here this evening. This joint public

1 hearing is convened to discuss the proposed
2 phase out and replacement of Gateway School of
3 Environmental Research and Technology. The
4 decision to phase out a school is not an easy
5 one. We do not take these decisions lightly.
6 We examine many factors and data before we
7 propose a course of action. We also reach out
8 to families and community members. Before I
9 present the Gateway School of Environmental
10 Research and Technology proposal, I'd like to
11 say a few words about why we are here. All of
12 us count on our schools to provide a high-
13 quality education to students, and we must hold
14 all schools to the same standard of excellence
15 because every child in this city deserves the
16 best education possible. When a school isn't
17 getting the job done, we have to take action to
18 ensure its current students don't fall even
19 further behind and that new students will have
20 better options. Gateway School of Environmental
21 Research and Technology is located in building
22 X450 at 1980 Lafayette Avenue in Community
23 School District 8 in the Bronx. Gateway serves
24 students from grades 9 through 12, and it admits
25 students through the city-wide high school

1 admissions process. On December 22nd, 2011,
2 the New York City Department of Education
3 published proposals to phase out and replace
4 Gateway based on its longstanding department
5 struggles. Gateway's performance data indicates
6 the school has struggled and confirms the
7 Department of Education's assessment that the
8 school lacks the capacity to turn around quickly
9 to better support student needs. For example,
10 Gateway earned an overall D grade on its 2010-11
11 annual progress report with a D rating on
12 student progress, a C rating on student
13 performance, and an F rating on school
14 environment. Graduation rates at Gateway have
15 been declining over the last four years.
16 Gateway's four year graduation rate, including
17 August graduates is 52% in 2011, well below the
18 2010 citywide average of 65.1%. In 2010-11,
19 only 69% of its first year students at Gateway
20 earned at least 10 credits. This rate of credit
21 accumulation puts Gateway in the bottom 20th
22 percent of high schools citywide. Because of
23 these evaluations, the Department of Education
24 conducted a comprehensive review of the school
25 to determine which supports and interventions

1 would best benefit its students and the
2 community. The Department of Education also
3 consulted superintendents and other expert
4 educators who have worked closely with the
5 school and held community meetings with parents
6 and school staff to solicit feedback. Based on
7 this comprehensive review and evidence that
8 additional supports were not working, the
9 Department of Education believes that only the
10 most serious intervention, the gradual phase out
11 and eventual closure of the school, will address
12 its longstanding performance levels, and allow
13 for new school options to develop that will
14 better serve future students and the broader
15 community. Gateway is currently co-located in
16 building X450 also known as the Stevenson
17 campus, with seven other schools and two
18 programs. Bronx Hills, which is an existing
19 high school serving students in grades 9 through
20 12, Millennium Art Academy, an existing high
21 school serving students in grades 9 through 12,
22 Pablo Neruda Academy for Architecture and World
23 Studies, an existing high school serving
24 students in grades 9 through 12, Bronx Community
25 High School, an existing transfer school serving

1 students in grades 9 through 12, Antonia
2 Pantoja Preparatory Academy, an existing
3 secondary school serving students in grades 6
4 through 10 and still phasing in that will serve
5 6 through 12 at scale, Bronx Bridges High
6 School, an existing high school serving students
7 in grades 9 and 10 that is still phasing in will
8 serve grades through 9 through 12 at scale,
9 School for Community Research and Learning, an
10 existing high school currently in its second
11 year of phasing out, the pre-kindergarten
12 program aligned to PS138 Samuel Randall, and the
13 Young Adult Borough Center, Stevenson YABC. A
14 co-location means that two or more school
15 organizations are located in the same building
16 and they share large common spaces like the
17 auditoriums, gymnasiums, libraries and
18 cafeterias. Good Shepherd Services, a
19 community-based organization is also located in
20 the school building. Adjacent to the Stevenson
21 school building, there are transportable
22 classroom units currently housing an alternate
23 learning center which does not use any space in
24 the main building and is not impacted by this
25 proposal. In a separate educational impact

1 statement also posted on December 22nd, 2011,
2 the Department of Education has proposed to open
3 and co-locate a new district high school, 08-
4 X561 in building X450 in September 2012. 08-561
5 is a new high school which would serve students
6 in grades 9 through 12 when it reaches full-
7 scale in 2015-16. 08-X561 would admit students
8 through the high school admissions process. The
9 school would have a limited unscreened
10 admissions method, giving priority to students
11 who reside in the Bronx. The new high school
12 would provide a new option for students with
13 families in the Bronx and would replace the
14 students lost by the proposed phase out of
15 Gateway. The new high school would be co-
16 located in school building X450 with Gateway as
17 it phases out, and with the other existing
18 schools and programs in the building. The
19 Department of Education does not anticipate that
20 the proposed phase out and replacement of
21 Gateway would impact the permanent co-location
22 of the schools, programs, and the CBO currently
23 housed in the building. Before we move to the
24 public comment section of this meeting, I would
25 like to briefly discuss the impact of this

1 proposal on permanent Gateway students and
2 families if it is approved. Most current
3 students will complete high school at Gateway.
4 As the school becomes smaller, students will
5 receive more individualized attention through
6 graduation to ensure they're receiving the
7 support they need to succeed. Current ninth
8 grade students who are on track to graduate will
9 also have the opportunity to apply to a
10 different high school during round 2 of the high
11 school admissions process in March if they
12 choose. Current students who are not on track
13 to graduate should meet with their guidance
14 counselor to discuss their options. Depending
15 on their age, academic profile and credit
16 accumulation, some students may be better served
17 at a transfer high school or a Young Adult
18 Borough Center. These programs have strong
19 track records for helping over-age under-
20 credited students get back on track for
21 graduation. Gateway would close in June 2015.
22 The Department of Education will arrange a new
23 placement for any students who haven't
24 accumulated sufficient credits and those who
25 have not passed the minimum number of Regents

1 exams to graduate by June 2015. Thank you.
2 We look forward to hearing your comments and
3 questions now.

4 MR. BETHEIL: We've had a number of members
5 of the SLT team to arrive. I just want to make
6 sure they've been introduced. I believe, from -
7 - Academy, Maxine Adele [phonetic] has arrived,
8 now that she's here; from Bronx Community High
9 School, Mr. Francis Desouza [phonetic]; from the
10 School of Community Research and Learning,
11 Principal Jacqui Boswell, as well as - -
12 coordinator Peggy - -. Thank you for joining
13 us. I also believe we've been joined by Alfredo
14 Pagan.

15 MALE VOICE: I'm from the SLT.

16 MR. BETHEIL: I'm sorry?

17 MALE VOICE: From the SLT.

18 MR. BETHEIL: And from SLT as well. And I'd
19 like to welcome - - educational policy,
20 represented by - - President - - Alfredo Pagan.
21 The way we will proceed from here--we will
22 invite comment from the CEC and any other
23 relevant SLT members, and after that we do that,
24 we will proceed to the public comment. I don't
25 believe - -. Thank you very much. Is there a

1 representative from the Gateway School SLT
2 planning to make a statement this evening?

3 MALE VOICE: - -

4 MR. BETHEIL: Join us up here.

5 [background noise]

6 MR. BETHEIL: Would you join us up here, - -
7 speak to the audience from the table, or - -?
8 Come on up.

9 [background noise]

10 MR. RAUL GIAOSANTE: I'd prefer to talk to
11 the audience on the table.

12 [applause]

13 MR. GIAOSANTE: Okay. My name is Raul
14 Giaosante; I'm a member of the SLT and the
15 school, also the president of the parent
16 association. I don't think that closing the
17 school is the solution over here. I don't think
18 that by putting a new name to the school,
19 spending a lot of money on the stationary and
20 changing the school is going to be any solution.
21 I think that the solution that we have on our
22 hands is to put more money into the location.
23 You cannot pretend that the school can get a
24 good data that you are looking at the data than
25 having a good, a good education if the Board of

1 Education doesn't give us money to have
2 teachers. We have--we are an environmental
3 school of technology. This year, we don't have
4 a chemical teacher, and we don't have an
5 environmental school. How do you expect the
6 students to be, to take out numbers for the
7 city, if we don't have enough teachers, because
8 the Department is not giving us the money? In
9 the science teachers, they have to bring their
10 own materials from outside of the school, from
11 their own pocket, to pay for the, to bring the
12 lab materials, because the board of education is
13 not giving us money. So in the name of the
14 students and the parents and the SLT I think the
15 best solution for us is not to change the name
16 of the school and open a new school in the same
17 place. We can change the direction of the
18 school. It's a lot--it's less money for that.
19 I don't think that the Board of Education, the
20 Department of Education has the idea that if we
21 change the direction, we can have more money and
22 we can have better results from the school.
23 That's it.

24 [applause]

25 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you, Mr. Giaosante. The

1 members any of the other School Leadership
2 Teams that are here with us tonight, - - would
3 like to make a comment or - - before we move on
4 to the formal presentations? Are there any
5 other CEC or SLT members that planned to speak
6 this evening? Okay. With that, we've now
7 concluded the formal presentations and before we
8 move on to begin the full public comment I would
9 allow for the opportunity to - - Alfredo Pagan,
10 - - comment - - Mr. Pagan?

11 [background noise]

12 MR. ALFREDO PAGAN: Good evening, everyone.
13 My name is Alfredo Pagan. I am the leading - -
14 representative - - of education policy - -. On
15 February 9th, I will be the person who will be
16 voting on the policy. I just wanted to come
17 talk with you to you to know that - - supporting
18 you guys completely. This is all new
19 information to me, but I am going over it as far
20 as, you know, information I need to know so that
21 I can argue whatever I need to argue - - and - -
22 so I'm hoping that everyone here--teachers,
23 parents, students - - with me to inform me of
24 whatever you think I should know about what the
25 DOE has not done for this school so that I can

1 be clear about what I need to say. And
2 basically I just want you guys to know that - -
3 tonight, which - - community. Okay? So thank
4 you very much and have a good evening.

5 [applause]

6 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you, Mr. Pagan. We've
7 now concluded all the formal presentations and I
8 would ask the following people to line up for
9 the public comment. If someone wants to submit
10 their comments, when they're done, if you have
11 them written down, feel free to hand them to me
12 so that we make sure that they can be accurately
13 reflected in the record. Your reminder, the
14 public comment has been limited to two minutes.
15 Time will be kept and we'll signal when you have
16 about 30 seconds remaining and when your time is
17 up. We'll allow you to finish your thought,
18 we'll try not to cut anybody off, but the more
19 everybody can try and respect that time, the
20 more we can make sure everybody is heard. We
21 have 35 speakers that have signed up this
22 evening. If everybody takes their full time,
23 that will take us to about 70 minutes. We're
24 happy taking all that time, but we want to make
25 sure that those who are signed up at the bottom

1 of the list do have an opportunity to be heard
2 this evening. I will call out the names in
3 groups of five - - and I would ask number one,
4 Bob Jeannette, speaker number two, Nayla Robin,
5 speaker number three, Mr. Giaosante, you're
6 welcome to speak again if you like, speaker
7 number four, Gene Smith [phonetic], and speaker
8 number five, Denis--it looks like Lord. I would
9 ask you to line up behind the microphone here.
10 And with that - - Mr. Jeannette, you have two
11 minutes.

12 MR. BOB JEANNETTE: Good evening. I am Bob
13 Jeannette, Assistant Field Director, Bronx High
14 Schools for the Council of School Supervisors
15 and Administrators and I'd like to read the
16 following statement: The DOE has scheduled 25
17 more schools for phase out and closure and said
18 that the new schools opened under Mayor
19 Bloomberg are better than those they replaced.
20 Yet in the latest round of closings, 11 schools
21 were opened during this mayor's administration.
22 The New York City public school system is not a
23 place for experimentation where we open and
24 close schools for students who have already been
25 traumatized by previous school closings. Then

1 there is the tragedy of all the young people
2 who have not been saved, even briefly, by the
3 city's new school safety net, but have been
4 turned away from new schools for reasons of poor
5 academic achievement or for other reasons and
6 sent to be warehoused in other low-performing
7 schools that will probably be closed, too. This
8 is a losing strategy for turning around low-
9 performing schools, which are invariably
10 attended by children of color from economically
11 disadvantaged communities. The endgame of the
12 strategy is to eliminate schools that the
13 administration has had at least a decade to fix,
14 and to improve its data by closing new schools
15 that won't have their own data for as long as
16 four years--by creating new schools that won't
17 have their own data for as long as four years.
18 The fact is that closure is an admission of
19 failure by City Hall. The Bloomberg
20 administration needs to take more
21 responsibility, not less for schools that are
22 not doing well, rather than turning them over to
23 private entities or closing them and washing
24 their hands of a deep-rooted problem that it has
25 been unsuccessful in remedying. Thank you.

1 [applause]

2 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. - -

3 MS. NAYLA ROBIN: Hi, I'm...

4 MR. BETHEIL: Speak into the microphone so
5 everyone can here you.

6 MS. ROBIN: Yeah. Hi, I'm Nayla Robin, a
7 junior at Gateway High School. I am in honors.
8 We have so many honors programs up to last year.
9 I want to know why we don't have any this year.
10 What happened to them? Who is responsible for
11 them? We had internships up to last year. We
12 don't have any internships this year. Why we
13 don't have internships? We don't need budget
14 for internships. We just need one free period
15 for internships. Without internships, our
16 school, our students, our students are willing
17 to have so many other programs without any
18 teachers. If the teachers are ready to helping
19 us, we don't need anything else. We are ready
20 to have more programs and more, more
21 opportunities without any budget problem or
22 without any other problems. I want to know why
23 we don't have those things. We had technology
24 and environmental programs a few years ago. We
25 don't have any now. Why we don't have them?

1 What happened to them? Where are the teachers
2 for them? We don't have any chemistry teacher
3 right now. Where are the chemistry teachers? I
4 really want to know why we don't have those
5 programs, why we are not getting what we're
6 supposed to get. The closing the school is not
7 the answer. We should change the things that
8 need to be changed and we should make it better.
9 That is my main point. Thank you.

10 [applause]

11 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you, - -. Before Mr.
12 Giaosante begins, often there are a number of
13 questions that are embedded in the comments.
14 We're taking notes and will attempt to answer
15 some of them during the question and answer
16 period, but I will remind everybody, if you do
17 have questions even if you're not scheduled to
18 speak, there are cards outside - - should be
19 provided later this evening or - -. With that,
20 I just want to confirm Mr. Giaosante--you're
21 done?

22 MS. JIUSENIA LOPEZ: - - I'm going to speak
23 instead.

24 MR. BETHEIL: If you could just provide us -
25 - introduce us.

1 MS. LOPEZ: Okay. My name is Jiusenia
2 Lopez, and I am a parent of a Gateway student.
3 My daughter is Rosa Delgado [phonetic]. She is
4 a junior here. I'm part of the PTA; I'm also
5 part of the SLT. I'm here just as a parent
6 concerned that we tend to take these strategies
7 that are put into place but ultimately the ones
8 who suffer are our children. What are we
9 teaching our children by always giving up,
10 because that's what it seems like? The school
11 is suffering--forget about it, close it down,
12 and open a new one.

13 [applause]

14 MS. LOPEZ: And I really don't feel, just
15 like the two people that spoke before me, that
16 this is the answer. All of the sudden, as soon
17 as a school is closed, magically all this money
18 appears in order to open new schools to begin
19 new programs instead of taking the existing
20 schools and helping them along.

21 [applause]

22 MS. LOPEZ: Okay? This school--my
23 daughter's been here three years already. This
24 school also has a lot of good programs.
25 Unfortunately, like the young lady that spoke

1 before me is saying, the programs are being
2 taken away. These children are graduating.
3 What is going to happen next year when my child
4 is a senior and she doesn't have the opportunity
5 to do internships, which we all know that
6 colleges look for these things and these
7 qualities in our children? If we as a school
8 are not implementing these services and not
9 giving it to our children, what are we really
10 showing them? We encourage them--we tell them
11 do hard, work hard, do this, do that, and then
12 the doors are closed in their face. We need to
13 stop this. We need to stop it now, and we need
14 to do what we have to in order to improve what's
15 here and now. Forget about--you know, tomorrow,
16 next year, the new school, whatever--no. Let's
17 fix Gateway now however we need to fix it and
18 let's get it done fast and let's give our
19 children the opportunity.

20 [applause]

21 MR. BETHEIL: - -

22 FEMALE VOICE: Wait.

23 MR. BETHEIL: Ladies and gentlemen, I, I do
24 appreciate that folks want to be supportive. I
25 want to make sure that all the speakers have a

1 chance to speak and that we don't - -.

2 FEMALE VOICE: That is one hard act to
3 follow. The problems found in our school
4 reflect the problems found in society at large.
5 As an experienced teacher, I know the people I
6 work with at this school have been not only
7 extremely professional and well-prepared, but
8 they have gone far beyond their required duties
9 to help our students advance. We have reached
10 out to parents so that as a team, school
11 personnel and parents, with school personnel and
12 parents, we could collaborate in helping our
13 students succeed. I am confident that my
14 statement will be supported by the parents and
15 staff here tonight. This school should remain
16 open. Stop closing our schools. Thank you.

17 [applause]

18 MS. DENISE C. LARD: Okay. One of the
19 purposes of education is to help our students
20 become good citizens, if not the most important
21 thing. In order to become good citizens, you
22 have to be part of a community. In order to
23 have an active part in that community, you need
24 the community. The policy of killing schools
25 rather than to investigate what would fix them

1 deprives children of an essential part of all
2 communities--that is, their school. Children
3 need roots. Children deserve their legacy.
4 Stop erasing their stability, their community,
5 their history. This summer, I had the privilege
6 of going to my 45th grammar school reunion and
7 my 40th high school reunion. I feel that
8 belonging to a group that has a school to go
9 back to, they can share the memories, it
10 inspires people to want to give back to that
11 community that they either have moved away from
12 or still belong to. Don't deprive our students
13 of their experience. Stop closing schools and
14 don't close this one.

15 [applause]

16 [background noise]

17 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. - - Todd Young,
18 Jennifer Carchetta, Jeff Lidowski, Angelique
19 Christian Pegian, and it looks like Steve
20 Oezust. - -.

21 [background noise]

22 [applause]

23 MR. BETHEIL: - -

24 MR. TODD YOUNG: We've been telling our
25 students about the gravity of this public

1 hearing, and they've taken it very seriously,
2 as have the parents and the teachers of Gateway.
3 Shame on you. That there are three people
4 sitting here...

5 [applause]

6 MR. YOUNG: And ten empty seats at a hearing
7 that is supposed to be about the life and death
8 of a school is offensive, and it goes towards
9 the disingenuousness of this entire procedure.
10 Certainly one of the policy questions I have--
11 and it's completely rhetorical--is where are the
12 other people? It's hurtful. There are people
13 who are perhaps a little bit less cynical than
14 I, who believe that their voices matter, they
15 believe that there are things worth fighting
16 for, they believe that there is a process and a
17 policy, they believe in their community, they
18 believe in their government. And then when we
19 see all these seats it's, it's fantastically
20 disappointing to us. We've had people already
21 talk about the message that we have, that we are
22 responsible for, to impart to our children, to
23 our students. Looking at all these empty seats,
24 I'm not sure that we're sending the right
25 message out. I'm grateful for the three people

1 who showed up, but shame on all of the others.
2 Frankly, I find it embarrassing. Thank you.

3 [applause]

4 MR. BETHEIL: - - I do want to take the
5 opportunity to clarify the statement that was
6 just made relative to how we started the
7 hearing. There are actually eight members of
8 the school leadership teams represented by the
9 seats here. I introduced each of these members
10 before; they've chosen this evening to sit in
11 the audience. They are not required to be up
12 here. Representatives from the superintendent's
13 office, from the Department of Education, the
14 Community Education Council are all here, and I
15 don't want people to leave the room believing
16 that the empty seats up here reflect people that
17 did not show up. We have eight folks who were
18 introduced before who are here. Some of them
19 have spoken and returned to their seats. I
20 don't want to leave the impression that in fact
21 they did not make the effort to come out tonight
22 when in fact they did. Those are members, not
23 of the Department of Education or the Community
24 Education Council, but in fact the School
25 Leadership Teams - - . Now with that, I will

1 turn to our next speaker, Jennifer Carchetta.
2 Jennifer?

3 MS. JENNIFER CARCHETTA: Thank you.

4 [applause]

5 MS. CARCHETTA: Good evening, everyone. I'd
6 simply like to ask the question of who is harmed
7 by closing a school? The only people that are
8 actually hurt by this are the students and the
9 families that actually attend these schools, the
10 students and the families that are part of the
11 community. Our school has both a special
12 education population of 25% and an L population
13 of 15%, and anyone who can do simple math would
14 know that that is almost half of our entire
15 school population. But I am not here to
16 complain about that, because we welcome these
17 students into our school, we embrace them, we
18 want them here, we ask them to come here,
19 because they are part of this community, and as
20 educators we want everyone that is in the
21 community--not hand-picked students, not hand-
22 picked families, but every single one of the
23 members of this community. And all that we ask
24 is that we are, we are given the support from
25 the Department of Education to help these

1 students. Help us help them--that's all we're
2 asking for, is for help, to help them. Nothing
3 is perfect, and it will never be perfect unless
4 we get help. By closing a school, all you do is
5 punish. All there is is a consequence. You're
6 telling students that they, that they've been
7 part of a school that wasn't good enough to stay
8 open--that it's closed, that their school no
9 longer has roots, it no longer has a legacy. It
10 tells families that their community means so
11 very little that this is--we'll just create
12 another school and give it another name. It
13 tells teachers that they're bad teachers. It
14 doesn't solve anything. It only hurts the
15 community. Help us to help everyone here--build
16 this community up, make it strong--don't punish
17 it. So please, do not close our school. Stop
18 closing schools. Support us--don't punish us.

19 [applause]

20 MR. BETHEIL: Okay. - -

21 MR. JEFF LIDOWSKI: Yes. You know, I can
22 remember at one time the Bronx was burning, and
23 the Bronx isn't burning anymore. The Bronx--
24 real estate values are up. The Bronx is on the
25 upswing. But for the life of me, I don't

1 understand the desecration of the school
2 districts in the Bronx. For an example--Lehman
3 [phonetic] going from an A to an F, literally
4 overnight. It is a concern that I have. The
5 other concern I have is I cannot help notice
6 that almost all of the school closings in New
7 York City seem to be minority-based--they're
8 either coming from the Bronx or Brooklyn.

9 [applause]

10 MR. LIDOWSKI: They're not closing the
11 schools in Queens. They're not closing the
12 schools in Bayside. They're closing the schools
13 in the Bronx and Brooklyn, and at a time when
14 New York City is on the upswing, the desecration
15 of certain districts and neighborhoods I think
16 is nothing short of a disgrace. This school
17 will take any student--we will take them under
18 our wing. We will do our darnedest to try and
19 get that kid through school, and the Bronx and
20 New York City need to staff and they need
21 schools like ours to stay open, not closed.
22 These students deserve, 10, 20 years from now to
23 be able to go to a high school reunion. What--
24 oh, I went to Gateway High School; it doesn't
25 exist anymore. I went to this school; it

1 doesn't exist anymore. Pretty soon, nobody
2 from the Bronx is going to have a school that
3 exists anymore. If you ask these--

4 [applause]

5 MR. LIDOWSKI: If you ask these students,
6 many of them have parents that attended these
7 local high schools, but you want, you want to
8 know what they're going to tell you now? My
9 mom's school's not open anymore. So I really
10 believe, not only in my heart but in my mind,
11 Gateway definitely has a purpose, and our
12 purpose is to take any student regardless of
13 their level and to work as hard as we possibly
14 can with them. Please, give us an opportunity
15 to survive. You give us one more year; we'll
16 show you results.

17 [applause]

18 MR. BETHEIL: - -

19 MS. ANGELIQUE CHRISTIAN PEGIAN: Good
20 evening, everybody. My name is Angelique
21 Christian Pegian, and I am also a, a student
22 parent here at the Gateway School. My child is
23 a senior at the school of the, at the Gateway
24 School, and I understand, and, and am aware of
25 the politics related to why the school should

1 close. However, we're talking about a
2 minority neighborhood with minority students,
3 and why are we closing? This school district is
4 far, is, is open to children as far east as
5 Parkchester and beyond, and as far south as
6 Hunts Point, - - Street and beyond. Every time
7 I think about the fact that my child is
8 graduating from high school, I'm overwhelmed
9 with pride, and the issue is, let's assist and
10 let's assess and assist the problem. I used to
11 go to this school when it was just Adelai
12 Stevenson back in 19, blah, blah, blah. And...

13 [applause]

14 MS. PEGIAN: And it's sad, right? It's
15 really, really sad that we have--and I realize
16 that you're going to advocate for the people
17 that are not here, but you expect for the
18 children to come to school. You expect them to
19 do their homework. When I was going to school,
20 they were coming to the kids' house and asking
21 what's the problem, why are the kids not in
22 school? What's wrong with that, because it's
23 not appropriate? Let's forget about what's
24 appropriate and do what we can to fix what is,
25 what the problem is in the school. If the kid

1 is on drugs, get the kid in a problem, if the
2 parent is on drugs, get the parent into a
3 problem, in, into a program. Let's fix the
4 problem instead of just saying throw it away.
5 It's like having a herd of cows and all the cows
6 are doing their work and you have just one cow
7 that's not doing what they're supposed to be
8 doing. Do you throw the cow out, throw the cow
9 out to pasture? No. You fix it, and bring the
10 cow back into a situation where the cow is
11 helpful and loving, and, and important to the
12 community.

13 [applause]

14 MR. STEVEN OEZUST: Okay, hello, my name is
15 Steven Oezust. I am a former Stevenson High
16 School student. I am a former Stevenson High
17 School teacher. And I'm soon to be, if things
18 go their way, a former Gateway teacher. For the
19 last ten years, under Bloomberg's
20 administration, we have been suffering his
21 reforms, his reforms that have not been proven
22 statistically to have any positive impact on our
23 students, on our system. We have been subjected
24 to newspaper articles that talk about graduation
25 rates, but we are given numbers and statistics.

1 Well, if you think back to what Mark Twain
2 said--there are lies, there are damned lies, and
3 then there are statistics. Statistics can be
4 manipulated. When we look behind those
5 statistics, we find that those numbers are not
6 significant. I'm a science teacher. I know
7 about significance. There has not been any
8 significant improvement under the present
9 administration. And now we have been asked to
10 close this school. Closing schools is not the
11 answer. The schools that have been closed and
12 replaced by new schools have not been proven to
13 be effective. Closing schools is not the
14 answer. We are not addressing the real
15 problems. We are only looking at the surface,
16 and teachers and administrators of the
17 individual schools are easy targets. We are
18 not...

19 [background conversation]

20 FEMALE VOICE: - - Yeah, he's on the phone.
21 We'll wait. We'll wait.

22 [background noise]

23 [background conversation]

24 MALE VOICE: I'm sorry.

25 [applause]

1 [background noise]

2 MALE VOICE: Wait... wait...

3 MR. BETHEIL: - -

4 MALE VOICE: Let's...

5 [background noise]

6 MALE VOICE: First off, I wanted to
7 apologize. That was a CEC board member that was
8 on the way over here--that's number one. Number
9 two, I for one am from this neighborhood but I
10 didn't go to Stevenson. My friends did go to
11 Stevenson as well. Number three, not only that
12 Gateway is about to close--my high school, - -
13 is also closing down, as well as - - and Jane
14 Adams [phonetic]. So I'm sitting here
15 listening--I sit here, listening to everyone,
16 and I'm wanting to say that I'm with you 100%.

17 [applause]

18 MALE VOICE: Even though it's been 20, 22
19 years ago that I graduated in 1988 at - - and my
20 school is closing down, not only it hurt me but
21 also the alumni of 1988. So I stand, sitting
22 here up there listening to everybody and I will
23 support you every step of the way. - -

24 [applause]

25 MALE VOICE: So I apologize for taking that

1 phone call, and I want everyone to know that
2 everything is going on very well - - come over
3 here, so please, I'm with you. Thank you.

4 MR. OEZUST: Uh, okay... Yeah. I just
5 wanted to just add to--just wanted to add that
6 we have been hoodwinked by this administration.
7 We have been victims on one of the greatest
8 sleight of hand tricks every perpetrated on the
9 American public. While we are focusing on
10 teachers and principals, we are not seeing the
11 pink elephant in the room. We are not seeing
12 that 800 pound gorilla. We are not tackling the
13 real problems. Closing schools is not the
14 answer. Thank you.

15 [applause]

16 MR. BETHEIL: The next round of speakers,
17 number 11, Keri Rodgers, number 12, Tom DeCruze,
18 number 13, it looks like Paul Traver, number 14,
19 Judy Nusbaum Antoine, and number 15, Jonathan
20 Orellena. Sorry for having trouble with the
21 names. - - ?

22 [background conversation]

23 MS. KERI RODGERS: Good evening. My name is
24 Keri Rodgers. I was a New York City teaching
25 fellow and a founding member of this school. I

1 realize that two minutes does not allow for a
2 complete argument or statement, and I also
3 realize that the Department of Education has
4 already made its final decision, that our space
5 that our school occupies has already been
6 allocated to school 08-561. Today's hearing is
7 merely a legal formality. With this in mind, I
8 would like to pose three questions--since I
9 don't have time for anymore, sorry--to parents,
10 students, the media, and members of our
11 community here tonight: First, why is more than
12 61% of the panel for educational policy
13 appointed by the mayor, who himself has no
14 background in the education? In this country,
15 we are all guaranteed an impartial hearing by a
16 jury of our peers. Our school, parents, and
17 students have never had this opportunity. In
18 addition, our school was part of the plan for
19 reform of special education, phase 1 pilot, to
20 close the achievement gap for students with
21 disabilities. As an advocate and former special
22 education student myself, I would like to
23 question the department of education's follow
24 through on its promise to provide training to
25 our staff and assist us in developing research-

1 based proven strategies and programs to serve
2 our most struggling students. Lastly...

3 [applause]

4 MS. RODGERS: I'm not done. I'm not done.
5 Lastly--we were repeatedly instructed by the
6 department of education officials that one of
7 the best ways to improve our progress report
8 grade was by focusing on recruitment, under the
9 theory that if we had better students then we
10 would have a better report card grade. My job,
11 as an educator, is not to recruit and teach only
12 the best students. My job, as an educator, is
13 to level the playing field for all children to
14 the best of my abilities. Why doesn't the Mayor
15 and the Department of Education do the same?
16 Thank you.

17 [applause]

18 MR. BETHEIL: - - Mr. DeCruze?

19 MR. TOM DECRUZE: Thank you. Tom Decruze,
20 teacher and UFT chapter chair, Gateway High
21 School. I have a very simple message, 'cause
22 I've been here before about 10 years ago. I
23 think Miss, Miss Rodriguez is on the stage at
24 Adlai Stevenson. Stop closing schools. You
25 can't turn it around until you stop going the

1 wrong way, and for 10 years, this
2 administration has been going the wrong way and
3 it continues to close schools as a substitute
4 for truly supporting struggling schools.
5 Closing schools is not educational policy. It's
6 a failure of leadership. Here's one small
7 example of what closing schools has done: Ten
8 years ago, there was one principal in this
9 school, twelve assistant principals. Now there
10 are eight principals. Next year there will be
11 nine principals, and God knows, maybe twenty or
12 more assistant principals--this is \$2 million in
13 extra, redundant, cost for administration that
14 is not going to the education of our students.

15 [applause]

16 MR. DECRUZE: And yet, you continue closing
17 schools. You continue a policy that recent
18 research has shown to have brought no benefit to
19 the education of our students. You continue a
20 policy of substituting dubious statistics for
21 substance, such as implying that graduation
22 rates have been falling when last year they rose
23 13%. You continue a policy of separating the
24 community from their schools. You continue to
25 deny funding to support struggling students.

1 You continue a policy of playing whack a mole
2 every time a school pops up with numbers you
3 don't like. Your duty is to frame educational
4 policy. Your duty is to support struggling
5 schools, because you can't turn it around if you
6 keep going the wrong direction. Stop closing
7 schools.

8 [applause]

9 MR. BETHEIL: - -

10 MR. PAUL TRAVER: Yeah, I, I think I might
11 represent something that the administration
12 forgot, and what Mr. Siegel remembered. I'm a
13 music instrumental band teacher. I work for the
14 Gateway school. I not only represent the only
15 music that's on campus, but I represent a
16 vestige of what is left of what was Stevenson
17 High School, which had a performing arts
18 department, an auto shop, a wood shop, drafting,
19 cooking, curriculum, that helps bring students
20 to school and generates interest. I want to
21 apologize to Miss Medill [phonetic], our
22 wonderful dance teacher, who is at the - -
23 School, and we have a half a dance room that's
24 hardly used. I just want to bring this up
25 because I represent Gateway and - - thought

1 enough to keep the arts alive in this
2 building, and I think I mentioned it to remind
3 the administration that the Renaissance man is
4 not dead. A holistic approach to training a
5 student is not just reading and math, but
6 teaching him how to think about anything as long
7 as they develop a discipline, and the arts are
8 the discipline, and a reflection of human
9 society. Thank you.

10 [applause]

11 MR. BETHEIL: - -

12 MS. JUDY NUSBAUM ANTOINE: I come from a
13 family of educators. I'm short. Okay, I come
14 from a family of educators. I am a special
15 education teacher. I love teaching. I've been
16 in this building since 1984. I have 32 years of
17 teaching for the New York City Public School
18 System. I could have retired when Stevenson
19 closed. Instead, I chose to join the Gateway
20 staff, because I knew that this staff is highly
21 qualified and some of the most dedicated
22 teachers that you will find anywhere. Gateway
23 needs to be given the proper resources to
24 succeed, to meet the needs of our students. Our
25 students have so many challenges, including 25%

1 special needs. Most are level 1 and 2
2 readers. Many are ESL students. Despite all
3 this, we have supported and encouraged our
4 students to pursue a college education. We
5 created a partnership with Mercy College, a
6 private college. Many of our students are
7 attending Mercy College, other private colleges,
8 and SUNY colleges, as well as CUNY. However,
9 however, we are informed that only our CUNY
10 students were considered in our college
11 acceptance statistics. Gateway needs the
12 support of the mayor--not a death sentence.
13 Gateway has the potential to be a great school
14 if we are given the resources and support
15 necessary to be truly successful. The mayor's
16 office has an agenda to privatize New York City
17 public schools, not to provide the resources
18 necessary to turn around struggling schools. We
19 need to stop this trend with our school. Keep
20 Gateway open.

21 [applause]

22 MR. BETHEIL: - -

23 MR. JONATHAN ORELLENA: My name is Jonathan
24 Orellena. My mother, Peggy Orellena is one of
25 the - - coordinators. I am a graduate of

1 Stevenson, of Gateway High School. I am also
2 going to be a graduate in, in 2012 of SUNY
3 Canton. I have, I have gone through Canton,
4 I've, I mean, I've gone through Canton, I've
5 gone through Gateway, and I've gone through
6 Saint Ray's [phonetic]. I left Saint Ray's my
7 10th grade to come here to Gateway, a place
8 where I have understood over my two years of
9 going to this school of teachers that will
10 actually stay after school, help me out,
11 understand my struggles, understand, understand
12 my pain. I have Miss Blake that has never gave
13 up on me, I have Mr. - - that has teach me
14 social studies that actually helped me out, I
15 have Miss Rodgers that have talked to me so many
16 times and told me never to give up, and you're
17 giving up on this school already. That makes no
18 sense at all. That's what I believe. I also
19 believe this: I also believe that - - one of the
20 teachers of Gateway High School has done so much
21 to help out students. I am also an intern for
22 Miss Demiglio [phonetic]--for two years I have
23 done this after college, and you think that I
24 don't want to see my legacy go on and see my
25 teachers help out other students that they also

1 helped me out--I don't want to see that
2 happen. I never want to see that happen. And I
3 have people that graduated with me that have
4 gone into the military. They've also gone to
5 SUNY schools, they have gone to, you know,
6 schools that have gone from outside the state,
7 excelling the same way I'm excelling. I have a
8 3.0 average, over a 3.0 average; I'm damn proud
9 of it.

10 [applause]

11 MR. ORELLENA: I love, I love the fact that
12 all my teachers as I stand here are here
13 representing the school that's closing, no
14 matter what, no matter how hard they've tried,
15 they have, they have to stay here. I plead to
16 you guys. They have to stay here--because if
17 you don't have teachers like this, you will
18 never have teachers like this again, never
19 again. Thank you.

20 [applause]

21 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. - - Speaker number
22 20, Chamberlain--I can't read the last name; it
23 looks like Christien--Selene Munoz, Angelica
24 Gonzalez - - and... - -. That should be
25 speakers 16 through 20. Chamberlain?

1 MR. CHAMBERLAIN CHRISTIEN: Good evening
2 everybody. My name is Chamberlain Christien.
3 I'm vice president of the student government and
4 student, and, in the Gateway School and I just
5 want to say that I don't think closing the
6 schools is the answer. There's so much that the
7 school could offer to everybody, and we should
8 all come together to try to help the school.
9 Just closing the school, turning your head,
10 turning your, turning the cheek to the problem
11 is not going to fix anything. I mean, so many
12 kids--I mean, I know a lot of kids in the school
13 that have messed up, but they're on the right
14 track to do what they have to do, but closing
15 the school down, it just gives them no hope. I
16 mean, say--we're all like a family. Say a
17 parent has a child who is messing up all his
18 life--is the parent just going to throw the
19 child out? The parent is going to help the
20 child to do what he can do, and we're all like a
21 family. We need to all come together to try to
22 save this school. Just closing the school down
23 is not going to help. We have to do what we can
24 do to keep, make the school, keep on moving
25 forward. I'm done.

1 [applause]

2 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. Miss Munoz?

3 MS. SELENE MUNOZ: Thank you. I would like
4 to thank you for coming today.

5 [crosstalk]

6 [background conversation]

7 [applause]

8 FEMALE VOICE: I watch him every day; I
9 watch them work hard every day to succeed. I
10 watch him, and I see - -.

11 MR. BETHEIL: Ma'am--

12 [crosstalk]

13 FEMALE VOICE: - -

14 MR. BETHEIL: There is, there is no question
15 at all that he's working hard. I think he
16 represented himself and his fellow students
17 admirable. I want to make sure we can hear the
18 rest of the speakers, so thank you.

19 FEMALE VOICE: - -

20 MS. MUNOZ: I would like to thank you for
21 coming in tonight, my name is--

22 MR. BETHEIL: Speak into the microphone.

23 MS. MUNOZ: Thank you for coming tonight.

24 My name is Selene Munoz, and I'm a junior at the
25 Gateway High School. Although I may seem like

1 an ordinary 16 year old, I can honestly tell
2 you that I'm not. I decided to take on the
3 challenge of going to semester schools all
4 throughout the United States for my tenth grade
5 all the way through my junior year which I'm
6 currently in right now, and I can tell you that
7 one of the greatest achievements is going to
8 Boston's top boarding school during the summer
9 to study math and science. It's been a pleasure
10 to have amazing memories and I couldn't have
11 done it without any of the staff members who are
12 here. I would also like to tell you that I'm
13 not here to tell you what I've done, but I don't
14 want to see students who are trying to achieve
15 the best they can lost and forgotten and just
16 other schools and overwhelming every single
17 school and high school that there is. I have
18 enjoyed my stay at Gateway and I will enjoy it
19 once again next year. I would not like to see
20 any students prevented from dreaming outside the
21 box. Gateway has become the new 21st century
22 school that some of us, some of us have been
23 dreaming of having. We know that in New York,
24 some Manhattan schools, every other school has
25 been doing this program of becoming the 21st

1 century--we're doing that, which might reflect
2 sometimes in low scores or low statistics, but
3 we're trying to give a new twist and a new
4 change. If the reason why you're closing down
5 our school is because of the grades and
6 graduating rates, or simply any other
7 statistics, I ask you to live our, our lives
8 like--sit in our shoes for a day, please. We,
9 as students, we don't have an easy life. We
10 have problems at home--we're teenagers, thank
11 you, and we're facing other challenges as we
12 grow up, and it's not easy for us, and I'm sure
13 it's not easy for our teachers. The school may
14 not actually be the problem; it may be us
15 students trying to face this problem as we go
16 on. In life, there are alternatives, and we are
17 asking for another alternative and a chance to
18 still have a school after graduating. In life,
19 we have choices and unfortunately we do not all
20 have the same lifestyles, but it's, it's not
21 how--it hasn't stopped any students who are here
22 today and who aren't here today to keep coming,
23 from attending schools or keep studying. It
24 actually has motivated us a lot. And as a
25 student, I really would love to have a school to

1 come back, and attending Gateway has literally
2 changed my life. I went to Colorado and North
3 Carolina, and in about three, four days, I'm...
4 Thank you very much.

5 [applause]

6 MR. BETHEIL: - - Translation?

7 MS. ANGELICA GONZALEZ (through interpreter):
8 Good evening. Good evening, my name is Angelica
9 Gonzalez and I am a member of Gateway. We
10 should all commit ourselves to our children's
11 education--you, as members of the Board of
12 Education, all the parents, our own children,
13 our teachers, and as well as our government. We
14 should think about the fact that the youth is
15 the future of this great nation. That is why I
16 ask you to think about this again, reflect on
17 this, and let's support every single student.
18 They have the right to receive a better
19 education. Let's think about that--the closing
20 down the school is not the best solution for our
21 children. That will be closing their future.
22 And then, we will see, sadly, more children,
23 more youth in the streets without an education.
24 That is not the right thing for our children.
25 Thank you.

1 [applause]

2 MR. BETHEIL: - -

3 MR. EUGENE LABOY: Hi, good afternoon. I'm
4 here to speak in place of Christine Laboy who
5 couldn't make it today because of her college
6 schedule. During the summer of 2004, she was
7 invited to join a summer program that allowed
8 her to meet the students that would create an
9 unexpected community on the third floor of Adlai
10 Stevenson high school. With less than 100
11 students in the 2008 cohort, herself and her
12 peers were able to attain the attention and
13 support from each other, from each teacher when
14 they needed it. They performed water samples at
15 Orchard Beach, City Island, and at nearby parks
16 for science classes, learned about the different
17 types of trees that could be found in their
18 communities, amongst other things. The school
19 was a dream, exactly what she was looking for,
20 exactly what a school should be. The obstacles
21 came when the school grew too much larger than
22 was foreseen. Students were being crammed into
23 classrooms with 25 to 30 students. One hallway
24 filled with other, with over 200 students,
25 carrying their coats and book bags, trying to

1 get to class in under three minutes, teachers
2 struggling to come up with a plan to control
3 students that misbehaved. What did the
4 department of education do then? What did you
5 all here today do then? When you heard about
6 these issues, what happened--when you heard
7 about these issues happening, not only at
8 Gateway, but all schools that were part of the
9 New York initiative? Let us take a moment to
10 breathe, to look at the faces that are here
11 today fighting against this injustice. Look at
12 us. We are not mere students that attend class
13 because we must. We are mere students--we are
14 not mere teachers or members of staff that come
15 to work every day in order to put back a dollar
16 in our wallets. We are united--we are uniting
17 the cause to creating a better community to
18 enlighten one another through the power of
19 knowledge. You all, as the Department of
20 Education, cannot see that. You have
21 continuously entered our community with all your
22 attention focused on the new application you
23 have installed on your newest mobile device on
24 the market. Thank you.

25 [applause]

1 MS. LISA CADERRO: I am Lisa Caderro
2 [phonetic] and I'm a senior of Gateway High
3 School and what I like about this school is that
4 it has an encouraging environment which
5 motivates me to learn and apply for colleges. I
6 will be going to college next year and if not
7 for the teachers here, I would not be in this
8 spot. Sorry... So, the school review is unfair
9 as it only includes students who went to only
10 CUNY colleges after graduation. What about
11 private universities like Kalamazoo? These
12 numbers do not reflect what our, what our school
13 is capable of doing. We have many issues--lack
14 of funding, sorry, funding for after school
15 programs that would help students to meet
16 graduation requirements, and need help for math,
17 English, SAT and etcetera. Thank you.

18 [applause]

19 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. - - 25 looks like
20 Madelyne Cocino, Maureen Flynn, Theresa Hardaway
21 and Eugene Laboy. Miss Cocino?

22 MS. MADELYNE COCINO: All right. I'm a
23 little short, so pardon me.

24 MR. BETHEIL: - -

25 MS. COCINO: All right. I'm Madelyne

1 Cocino. I am a former, former ELO student. I
2 am a graduate of 2007 from this institution. I
3 spent the summer at Cornell delving into
4 political philosophy. I spent a week in DC
5 learning firsthand how this nation's government
6 works. I spent a year immersed in the German
7 culture learning how they do their stuff and how
8 important that culture is. I also am about to
9 graduate from the United States military academy
10 at West Point in 2012.

11 [applause]

12 MS. COCINO: Yeah. I stand before you here
13 today because of group of people who believed in
14 me when I didn't believe in myself, and this
15 group of people are standing before you right
16 here, the teachers of Gateway--Miss Rodgers, Mr.
17 - - Mr. Oezust, just to name a few of the
18 individuals that helped me fill out these
19 multiple applications, copious applications that
20 took hours to fill, on their free schedule, not
21 being paid a dime to help me to attend these
22 different programs that I went to, and expand my
23 wings. They challenged me to go further, and I
24 did that, and I'm succeeding at that, and I
25 stand before you here because of them. All

1 right? This quality review report, that
2 doesn't reflect that. It doesn't reflect the
3 fact that we live in the nation's poorest
4 congressional district. Yeah, we're poor. But
5 guess what? Students are coming to school
6 without notebooks, without pens, and what do
7 these teachers do? They go to DonorsCHoose.Org
8 and they create grants to get the money that the
9 DOE can't give us, all right? To give us, to
10 give us the money that we need.

11 [applause]

12 MS. COCINO: Okay? I understand--we are
13 poor and we have problems. We need help. But
14 instead of investing all this time to find
15 reasons to close our school, why not invest
16 these very same funds to give us the money that
17 we need to improve these schools, to meet the
18 requirements that we're failing, all right?
19 There's potential in these kids and you're
20 giving up on them when you shouldn't be.
21 They're all capable of doing great things, and
22 this quality review report and these different
23 assessments don't reflect that. The fact that
24 we don't have the funds that we need to have the
25 after school programs, to get these schools at

1 the right reading level, which they enter the
2 school not at, which they can't even pass the -
3 - in English, in math, when they can't even read
4 these tests. And you guys don't reflect it.
5 You don't analyze that. These numbers don't
6 reflect that, and you're giving up on us when
7 you shouldn't be. I didn't give up on myself;
8 they didn't give up on me. I want to put South
9 Bronx on the map and reflect that my Gateway has
10 potential. I enjoy bringing my students, my
11 fellow classmates to the Bronx and educating
12 them that the Bronx has potential, because I did
13 it--so can they. Help me bring back more people
14 to educate them of what we're capable of by
15 keeping the school open instead of closing them
16 and giving up on them. Thank you.

17 [applause]

18 MR. BETHEIL: Miss Flynn?

19 MS. MAUREEN FLYNN: It's a little bit
20 difficult to follow somebody who's graduating
21 from the U of West Point. I'm here to advocate
22 for our students.

23 MR. BETHEIL: - - We'd ask you to speak into
24 the microphone so that we can hear you.

25 MS. FLYNN: Sorry.

1 MR. BETHEIL: - -

2 MS. FLYNN: I'm here to advocate for our
3 students, and this past September, our incoming
4 freshman are 90% level 1 learners, okay, and as
5 Madelyne said, these are coming from, from
6 families who are immigrants, who are in the
7 lowest of the lowest economic level in the
8 country. To date, our 10th graders are
9 struggling because they are, in math they're in
10 the bottom third of the city. We have the
11 highest number of English language learners and
12 special ed students in the campus. However, as
13 a community, we've improved our four-year
14 graduation rate, which is contrary to what was
15 said at the beginning, from 45% in 2010 to 52%
16 in 2011. That's a 7% improvement. The students
17 and the staff work to improve the number of
18 regions diploma grads from 19% to 37%. We were
19 on the right track, or at least we were. In
20 2010-2011, we received a grant that allowed
21 Gateway to offer AM and PM programs for our
22 students. The tutoring and the other activities
23 correlated directly to our improved graduation
24 rate and credit accumulation. The grants and
25 the other funds such as the operating budget--

1 the operating budget has been slashed.
2 Despite the financial challenges, the dedicated
3 staff continues to make inroads with the
4 students. Our students will graduate, and those
5 who can will go to college, to a trade school--
6 like Coop Tech--or into the military. The
7 teachers in our school do not recuse themselves
8 from the students during their off periods. The
9 teachers are willing to work through lunch,
10 prep, come in early and stay late to help the
11 students pass and graduate. When the word came
12 down that Gateway was closing, the students were
13 devastated, much more so than the staff, because
14 they love their friends and the staff, but also
15 the larger--a large number of them were fearful
16 because the safety of an extra year or two that
17 they may need to complete their studies has been
18 taken away. Many have been, have posed the
19 question, where will I go? Closing the school
20 is not the answer. And one last thing, which I
21 did not script--these kids are the proudest... I
22 am so proud of these kids, you can't even
23 imagine. They've come together...

24 [applause]

25 MS. FLYNN: And not just myself, the staff--

1 they're putting countless hours trying to work
2 to keep the school open. I can't, you can't
3 even imagine how much. Come together days off,
4 weekends, at night--they are the proudest kids
5 you can imagine, we are as proud of them as you
6 can possibly imagine. Thank you.

7 [applause]

8 [background conversation]

9 MR. BETHEIL: - - Number 23, is - - Still
10 here? We just go by what's written down--if she
11 gets here, if anybody knows who she is, - - let
12 her speak. We'll move on to speaker 24, Miss
13 Theresa Hardaway.

14 MS. THERESA HARDAWAY: Good evening,
15 everyone. I just basically wanted to first--

16 MR. BETHEIL: Speak into the microphone.

17 MS. HARDAWAY: First just say this: We all
18 know that yes, closing schools is not the
19 answer. However, I have yet to see our mayor or
20 his administration take responsibility for any
21 of the schools that they created. If they're...
22 Excuse me? This being one of them. You create
23 the schools. No one ever says, well, we were
24 wrong. We did something wrong. We need to
25 clean it up. We need to fix it. No--let's just

1 close it. That's the answer. But as we have
2 seen, there are no statistics that show that in
3 closing these schools, that, oh, miraculously,
4 oh, now, we have success. These charter schools
5 are failing. They're doing worse than the
6 public schools. So therefore this political
7 agenda that our mayor is on, we're wondering
8 why, because they're in these impoverished areas
9 in which of course we don't see the turnouts and
10 we don't have the money to stay open like--what
11 did Mr. Lidowski so eloquently say? Bayside?
12 Okay, all right, so this is why this is
13 happening. Also, I would just looking at this
14 material you all handed out to us. This looks
15 nice. But I really would like to see, and I
16 would like to know if you could actually,
17 something concrete, documentation you can
18 provide to us that says that we got all of these
19 supports that you say we've received, because I
20 haven't seen any of them.

21 [applause]

22 MS. HARDAWAY: Just a question. Any
23 documentation you might have on you that you can
24 provide us with that we can all see?

25 MR. BETHEIL: I don't want - -.

1 MS. HARDAWAY: No, nothing?

2 MR. BETHEIL: When we get to question and
3 answer - -.

4 [applause]

5 MR. BETHEIL: Eugene Laboy?

6 MR. EUGENE LABOY SR.: Good evening. At
7 this time, in 2004, I was looking for the school
8 in the neighborhood and I came to this school
9 with my daughter. My daughter was in the school
10 in Gateway between 2004 and 2008. Then, she
11 went to Colgate University upstate, and she went
12 abroad in different parts of the world, and last
13 year she won the Dean Honor in the school. I
14 think the Gateway school is one of the best
15 schools in this neighborhood around this area.

16 [applause]

17 MR. LABOY SR.: During, during the, the time
18 that my daughter was abroad in London, she found
19 a lot of students from this neighborhood in
20 different positions around the world--in London,
21 in Italy, in Spain, around there, and she, she
22 many times, middle of the night, she'd call me,
23 dad, I found people, from the, from Stevenson in
24 France, in, in Rome, in different, in different
25 positions, you know? I think we have the

1 students in this neighborhood--we only need
2 tools from the Department of Education. We need
3 money--we need more resources for, for make the
4 dream of the whole student in this neighborhood.
5 Thank you very much.

6 [applause]

7 MR. BETHEIL: Next our speakers will be
8 number 26, Ryan O'Connell, number 27 looks like
9 Stanley Blaus, number 28 - - Singh, number 29,
10 Tameka Blake, and number 30 will be Justin
11 Camacho - -. Mr. O'Connell?

12 MR. RYAN O'CONNELL: Good evening,
13 everybody. I'd like to speak and make two
14 points. The first on behalf of--

15 MR. BETHEIL: Mr. O'Connell, speak directly
16 into the microphone.

17 MR. O'CONNELL: Sure. Yes. Two points I'd
18 like to make this evening: One, as the Gateway
19 ESL coordinator and speak to the population that
20 I serve directly every day--over the last
21 several years, continually, academically, one of
22 the most challenging groups of students to work
23 with, we have produced three valedictorians...

24 [background conversation]

25 MR. O'CONNELL: Over the last three years,

1 the ESL students have served as valedictorian
2 of the school three years in a row. We will
3 continue to produce I believe currently our
4 number one student is an L in the next two years
5 in the graduating, also currently number one
6 students are L's, so for a population that needs
7 these services, they're meeting the challenge
8 themselves. We're here to provide it and
9 they're taking us up on the offer, so you've got
10 two groups that are very, very interested in
11 making it work, and they are. So to kind of
12 stop that midway, one quarter, however along we
13 are seems kind of self-defeating. The second
14 point that I'd like to make and kind of the
15 final point of the evening is for me, is that
16 the legacy that some of my colleagues spoke
17 about is right here, and they're the students
18 that are currently here, and the legacy
19 continues when the fact that their brothers and
20 sisters, their cousins, their neighbors have
21 expressed interest because of them in coming to
22 this school. None of them have expressed an
23 interest in attending your new x85000000 new
24 school. They've expressed a desire and a wish
25 to be part of this, so to stop that again seems

1 kind of defeating. Give students a chance.
2 Give their legacy a chance. Give their families
3 a chance. Thank you.

4 [applause]

5 MR. BETHEIL: - -

6 MR. STANLEY BLAUS: Okay. First, before...
7 Can you hear me? Before I get to my main point--
8 -you can't? How about now? Is that better?
9 Okay. Before I get to my main point, I just
10 want to make one comment. Miss Rodriguez, you
11 said that our graduation rate is less than the
12 city average, but I'd just like to point out
13 that our graduation rate is higher than the
14 average for our peer group, so I just wanted to
15 make that clear. Secondly, in the progress
16 report, your college numbers, talking about our
17 college bound students, tremendously understates
18 the college bound students from Gateway--this is
19 because your numbers are based only on students
20 that go to CUNY. Those students amount to only
21 50%, one half of our college bound students--one
22 half. The other half have gone to schools like
23 West Point, as noted previously, Cornell,
24 Colgate, Kalamazoo, Wabash, Binghamton--I could
25 go on. For some of our students where perhaps

1 college is not the best thing, or they don't
2 have money for college tuition, we've guided,
3 we've guided them towards Coop Tech, a technical
4 school that's free of tuition--so we've taken
5 care of them. We've guided many of our students
6 into the military, the armed forces, to protect
7 our country. My point is this: Gateway has done
8 a hell of a lot more for its students than you
9 give us credit for.

10 [applause]

11 MR. BETHEIL: - - The third speaker that's
12 commented on how the college data is used, I
13 just want to correct one of the inaccuracies.
14 What folks are referring to, the progress
15 reports issued for the first time included
16 information about students' college - -. That
17 data was - - CUNY was also drawn from the
18 national student clearing house, which includes
19 data on all colleges and universities in the
20 country as well as data submitted from the
21 school about students' post-secondary plans.
22 That data did not count this year in any school
23 progress report. It will begin to count next
24 year. So a number of statements that have been
25 made about the variety of pathways that students

1 should be helped to follow and value, whether
2 those college pathways, military, or technical
3 pathways--we're in agreement on that. I just
4 wanted to clarify the inaccuracy of the data is
5 only based on the CUNY--it is not. It is based
6 on a wider range of colleges and - - in the Q
7 and A period but I just wanted to call out the
8 inaccuracy - -. - - Singh? Okay. Miss Tameka
9 Blake?

10 MS. TAMEKA BLAKE: Good evening. Can you
11 guys hear me? All right, so I'm coming to you
12 on behalf, as a former graduate of Stevenson as
13 well as a teacher here at the Gateway School. I
14 teach with many of my former teachers which for
15 me is an honor, but I'll get more into that
16 later. Einstein's definition of insanity is
17 doing the same thing over and over and over
18 again, expecting different results. We closed
19 Stevenson because we said the same thing: Low
20 graduation rates, low test scores, we need
21 smaller classrooms. We had a whole list and a
22 lot of statistics to support the reason why
23 Stevenson should be closed, and I'm sure
24 everyone was here for our panel discussion, and
25 Stevenson was in fact closed. Now, here we are

1 again, ten years later, doing exactly the same
2 thing, closing another school, expecting
3 different results, so I have several questions
4 that I hope you can answer for me today.

5 [applause]

6 MS. BLAKE: So, will the children that you
7 take into this new school be different and more
8 improved and renewed by a new school? Is
9 closing the door and opening a new one a magical
10 antidote that sprinkles fairy dust on our skills
11 and our students and our issues that suddenly
12 improves their skills and improves their
13 situation and makes the school all better?
14 That's one. Two, how will that help the
15 teachers to get resources that they need? As a
16 teacher myself, I know that most of the
17 resources that I get are either from Donors
18 Choose or from my own pocket, and I have yet to
19 see these resources that you guys are using to
20 support me. But I'm waiting to see them--maybe
21 my glasses are fogged, but I don't want to get
22 too upset. I have a problem with my mouth.
23 When will you be satisfied? Every year, the
24 criteria change. Today we get a memo and it
25 tells us this is what you need to do to make

1 your school better, and we do it, and then you
2 guys come in with quality review and it turns
3 out, oh, my god, you know, we forgot to tell you
4 this--the criteria has changed. What will
5 satisfy you? Will seeing our students out on
6 the street satisfy you? When will you be happy?
7 When is enough, enough? We're tired. We're
8 done.

9 [applause]

10 MR. BETHEIL: - - Your name?

11 NARCISSA: Hi, my name is Narcissa
12 [phonetic]. I was supposed to be number 28--oh,
13 hello? Can you guys hear me now? Okay. I'm so
14 sorry. I was late. I was supposed to be number
15 28--

16 MR. BETHEIL: Last name?

17 NARCISSA: Excuse me?

18 MR. BETHEIL: I just want to make sure we
19 have the right speaker.

20 NARCISSA: Narcissa - -, 28.

21 MR. BETHEIL: I have - - signed up as 28,
22 but please proceed, you have - -.

23 NARCISSA: Okay. I just want to make this
24 really quick. I'm a former student of Gateway.
25 I'm currently graduating from Cornell University

1 this year, and...

2 [applause]

3 NARCISSA: And I just wanted to say, I just
4 wanted to start off by saying that Gateway
5 really is the rose that grows out of the
6 concrete. If it wasn't for Gateway or any of
7 the teachers that stand here before you, I
8 wouldn't be where I am right now, and I feel
9 that all of the students that stand behind you
10 over there, all of them, you know, they do
11 deserve the same opportunities that I've
12 received, and that's one of the main reasons why
13 I feel that Gateway should remain open. Many of
14 you may not know this, but a lot of the students
15 that come here, they receive their first meals
16 here in the morning. They could wake up early
17 and they come here just to eat because they
18 don't have food at home, and that may not matter
19 to many of you, to many of you who are here
20 today, but to them that matters a lot, because
21 as you know, you know, food is important and you
22 need food to function. Another thing is that
23 you know, you have students who don't have
24 parents at home--either, you know, they have
25 their own problems or, you know, they may just

1 work endlessly, you know, to make ends meet.
2 And teachers here, you know, like, it was for
3 me, you know, the only support system that I had
4 was here. You know, it was pretty much like the
5 Gateway family, and when I came here, this is
6 the only place where I felt comfortable to talk
7 with an adult, a person that actually understood
8 me. And you know, with the help of you know the
9 teachers that stand before you guys, you know, I
10 was able to, you know, in the summer of 2006, I
11 attended the Smith Science Summer Engineering
12 Program on a full scholarship. I also went to
13 presidential classroom in DC, and then the
14 following year I went to Princeton University to
15 receive free SAT prep, which I would not have
16 received over here. So I just feel that you,
17 you know, you need to take into consideration
18 that if you do decide to close the school, you
19 need to think about the impact that it will have
20 on the community, because I do feel that,
21 especially in this area, and for a lot of
22 students that attend Gateway, this is their
23 home, and these are the only people that they
24 have, and they don't have no one else at home.
25 So I just, you know, just like many of you who

1 have children at home, you're going to go home
2 tonight and you're going to have dinner and your
3 children will be ecstatic to tell you, you know,
4 what they learned at school and how they want to
5 be astronauts and you know, how they want to go
6 on to be a scientist, and it's the same thing
7 for the students that stand behind you right
8 here. It's the same thing. But you know,
9 unfortunately, they're probably not going to
10 have anyone at home, you know, to say that to.
11 The only people that they have right now to say
12 that to are the teachers that stand right here
13 and the administrators that stand right here, so
14 that's the only thing that I wanted to say and
15 thank you for your time.

16 [applause]

17 MR. BETHEIL: Laverne - - from the Community
18 Education Council just joined us and I offer you
19 the opportunity to take the microphone.

20 LAVERNE: Good evening. You hear me?

21 MR. BETHEIL: Yes.

22 LAVERNE: Okay. I usually don't speak out
23 as far as I'm concerned, as far as CEC, the
24 Board of Education, but I am really disturbed.
25 I am upset, because I'm looking out here at all

1 the parents that are here and the faculty is
2 here--it's a shame that our DOE is doing this to
3 our children. Every time you turn around
4 there's always some school closing, some school
5 opening. Gateway is a very good school. These
6 kids have shown and have proved what they're
7 about, and for the DOE and for the mayor to sit
8 there and say the school is closing is a
9 disservice. His staff is here; the staff acts
10 on behalf of what the mayor's saying. You all
11 should listen to these people, listen to these
12 kids, listen to what they're doing, listen to
13 how they have improved and you need to keep the
14 school open because this is your future. You
15 all will be seniors one day, and these young
16 ladies and gentlemen are going to determine how
17 you're going to survive in this world, and
18 they're going to remember what you all did, what
19 you deprived them of, what they couldn't have,
20 so you all can go home, you all can sleep, you
21 can feel comfortable. But education's essential
22 for these youngsters, and they're doing it;
23 they're moving forward. I know you can't go
24 against your supervisors and whoever is telling
25 you what you need to do, but you need to think

1 about it. Let the school stay open. Let
2 these kids learn. Give them the materials and
3 the stuff they need to improve. Don't close
4 because as a wimp or you feel it's a good thing
5 to do. I have to commend the parents for coming
6 out here and the students coming out here, but
7 I'm telling you, it's a sad thing that education
8 is going to the dogs, 'cause that's what it is.
9 Thank you.

10 [applause]

11 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. I'll call our next
12 round of speakers to the microphone: number 31
13 is Justin Camacho; number 32, Zoila Rivera; Mr.
14 Alfredo Pagan signed up again--I don't know if
15 he plans to speak but he is welcome to; number
16 34, Justin Fort; and number 35, Emily Williams.
17 Mr. Camacho?

18 MR. JUSTIN CAMACHO: Hi, my name is Justin
19 Camacho and I'm a sophomore at Gateway High
20 School. And I just wanted to say that every
21 time I hear someone say something at this
22 hearing, it's all about numbers or we're not
23 doing something right or we're doing something
24 wrong. The kids at my high school are not
25 numbers. We're not numbers. We're students.

1 [applause]

2 MR. CAMACHO: Every day I walk into my high
3 school, I wake up in the morning and I want to
4 go to school. Everyone in my neighborhood
5 didn't graduate high school. Everyone in my
6 neighborhood didn't have the chance I have. And
7 I don't want you guys to take that away from my
8 younger siblings or my younger cousins 'cause
9 that's not fair to them. And the teachers here-
10 -they don't have to be here. They could be
11 somewhere else doing anything they want, but
12 they're not. They're sitting here listening to
13 this, and they're not doing this 'cause they get
14 paid a lot. They're doing this 'cause they love
15 their job. They stay after school, grade our
16 tests and help our students because they want to
17 see us successful and they want to see us where
18 they are. There's multiple teachers here who
19 could have retired when Stevenson was, got
20 closed down, but they didn't. And especially,
21 there's this teacher who always tells me Justin,
22 I want your spelling to get better, and I want
23 your vocabulary to get better, and he says it.
24 But every time I see him, he does something
25 about it. I walk into his room and I read a

1 word off of his wall and I see how to spell
2 it. And then there's another teacher here who
3 always tells me, before anything, attendance
4 comes first, and to me, it looks like there's a
5 lot of empty seats right there.

6 [applause]

7 MR. CAMACHO: So maybe Gateway or Gateway
8 teachers aren't doing something right, but I
9 know I learn something every day I go to school,
10 and maybe you guys should learn something: Don't
11 give up. Work harder. That's all I got to say.

12 [applause]

13 [background conversation]

14 MS. ZOILA RIVERA: Good evening everybody.
15 My name is Zoila Rivera and I'm very
16 disappointed in what the Department of Education
17 is doing to our children. How can you explain
18 to them that when something is not going well
19 you just close it, if that's what you're doing
20 to them? How you tell them, no, you keep going?
21 No, if something's not right, you repair it, you
22 fix it, you keep going, keep trying, but then
23 when they're in school, what's going to happen?
24 Their school is going to close. I don't think
25 that's fair to the children of this

1 neighborhood. My child is a special needs
2 child, and I'm going to tell you, I have four
3 children, and out of those four children I have
4 never met the teachers that I have met in
5 Gateway--never. My son's birthday--they even
6 got him a birthday cake. There is not so much
7 love that you get from these teachers. Don't,
8 don't close the school down. It's not fair to
9 us, our community, our children, our teachers,
10 to no one except you guys making money up there--
11 not to us, and it's not fair. It's not fair.

12 [applause]

13 [background conversation]

14 MR. BETHEIL: - -

15 MR. PAGAN: Yes. I want to take this
16 opportunity to direct myself to, to the fighters
17 like myself, and I want to make it clear: I am a
18 parent of two daughters, a five year old and an
19 eight year old. They're going to be in the
20 public school system for quite a while. I
21 respect teachers, I love teachers, and of
22 course, education is everything. But what's
23 most important is that every one of us should
24 look at each other and realize that the only
25 thing that's missing among us is unification,

1 communication, and organization. All of us,
2 teachers, parents, and community--at the end of
3 the day, educators know very well how the panel
4 sits. Everybody knows very well how decisions
5 are made. And everybody knows very well what it
6 takes to fight. I said it clearly that we
7 represent you guys and that we will fight to the
8 best of our ability, but at the end of the day,
9 some decisions, or one decision will be made.
10 However, we fight; we continue to fight for
11 Gateway and every other Gateway in the Bronx.
12 So please, keep that energy. I hope to see each
13 and every one of you on February 9th
14 representing the Bronx. I do not want to see
15 one parent representing the Bronx, because the
16 Bronx is hurting educationally--wise, okay? So
17 please, respectfully, stay strong, have a good
18 night, have a good weekend, God bless, and I
19 hope to see you all February 9th.

20 [applause]

21 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. The following two
22 speakers are Justin Fort and Emily Williams.

23 Mr. Fort?

24 [applause]

25 [background conversation]

1 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you.

2 MR. JUSTIN FORT: I'm sorry, I'm nervous.

3 [applause]

4 MR. FORT: You hear that? That's the
5 students of Gateway. They're cheering for me
6 'cause they know I could do this--even though
7 I'm nervous, I could still do it. The same
8 support from my teachers, the same support from
9 my fellow basketball players, the same support
10 from my school--they support me. I'm going to
11 tell you a story: I grew up in foster care, I
12 always had it hard. Grew up on the streets
13 fighting, but when I came to Gateway I got an
14 opportunity. The teachers, they worked with me--
15 -I wasn't fighting no more. My head was
16 fighting in those books and now I have an
17 opportunity to go to college. I'm doing what I
18 have to do to take care to be who I have to be.
19 No more fluctuating from other classes, worrying
20 about other people bothering me, worrying about
21 what other people have to say because I know
22 what I have to do and I know that I have to
23 cultivate myself within those classes,
24 everything I'm contemplating on how to become a
25 better person, and that's what Gateway gave me.

1 I'm not fighting no more, and I don't want to
2 see that for other kids, because I'm graduating
3 this year and I'm a senior and honestly I feel
4 like the youth is the future. Without the
5 future, there is no us--where are we going to be
6 when that future's gone? You're getting rid of
7 Gateway, you're getting rid of everybody. Thank
8 you.

9 [applause]

10 MR. BETHEIL: - - Thank you. - -

11 MS. EMILY WILLIAMS: Hi, everyone. My name
12 is Emily Williams. I've been teaching at
13 Gateway for four years, and that's been my
14 teaching career. And I'm amazed at how quickly
15 I've become disenchanted with this whole system.
16 I don't lose faith in anything until I became a
17 teacher for these guys--I'm losing faith in
18 what's happening in these schools because we are
19 ruining these schools. We're ruining these
20 communities. We are taking the foundations of
21 the community which is the school and we're
22 chopping it up, and we're funneling millions of
23 extra dollars into administrative payrolls, and
24 all I want to do is teach an afterschool Regents
25 class, and I don't have money to do that. If

1 I'm losing faith in this, these guys are
2 losing faith in this, and this community is
3 losing faith in this. And you cannot expect
4 education to improve, and you cannot expect
5 education to be successful in this community if
6 you keep giving up on us and if you keep pushing
7 us away. And that's it. Thank you.

8 [applause]

9 MR. BETHEIL: That concludes the public
10 comment. We will now begin the question and
11 answer period. There were three, a number of
12 questions that were asked together in complete
13 headings. There were a couple of others that
14 were referred to in the comments that we will
15 try to speak to. Any question that has not been
16 answered tonight will be answered on the
17 Department's website. If you have additional
18 questions at the conclusion of this hearing, we
19 ask that you direct them to us at the phone
20 number or the email address at the bottom of the
21 fact sheet. It's incumbent upon us to make sure
22 we answer your questions prior to the public
23 hearing on February 9th. Let me start the first
24 question and I'll address it to Amanda Chan of -
25 -. What happens if after the school is closed,

1 my child needs any documents? Where will they
2 get them?

3 MS. AMANDA CAHN: Thank you, everybody. My
4 name is Amanda Cahn from the office of - - DOE.
5 So this question about documents and if the
6 school does - - when this happens, a school
7 that's on the same campus that--so we have
8 several other schools on this campus that retain
9 and maintain the documents for a schools that
10 have closed so that way we have a student that
11 can still go back to the same building and - -
12 records.

13 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. The second
14 question is why doesn't the - - score recognize
15 students who choose to serve in the armed forced
16 in the same way as those who have college,
17 community college? I think - - some of that
18 before, but I don't know if you have anything
19 additional.

20 MS. CAHN: Well, just to repeat: The
21 readiness measures for college, they did appear
22 in - - they were not included in the - - for any
23 school this year. They were informative - -.
24 That said, our students are allowed and the
25 armed forces, for one, is truly admirable--

1 FEMALE VOICE: - -

2 MS. CAHN: Sorry. So what - - anyone
3 measures that - - is about the number of
4 students enrolled and that includes several
5 college-bound - - several colleges, not just
6 CUNY. That said, there are other measures that
7 go into this, looking at how the students do
8 when they're still on the high school campus in
9 terms of their college readiness, things, for
10 example, like how they do on the Regents class
11 and also how they do in the classes they take -
12 - AP courses or IB courses or similar. So while
13 the numbers - - we looked at it, it is one of
14 several to determine that college readiness
15 measure.

16 MR. BEETHEIL: Thank you. The next question
17 is one that was addressed to us during the
18 comments as well as it was written. Can you
19 describe the supports provide to Gateway to help
20 the school improve? And I believe Mr.
21 Prendegast - - school support is going to
22 address that.

23 MR. LAWRENCE PRENDEGAST: Good evening, I'm
24 Lawrence Prendegast. I am a network leader; the
25 network is a - - organization that is selected

1 by the school. This team has worked with the
2 school for a number of years. I was lucky
3 enough to join it this past summer and work - -
4 in full collaboration with the administration.
5 The network offers the number of supports to
6 schools, and over the past several years the
7 school's been offered support in a number of
8 these areas, - - instructional support
9 strengthening curriculum and instruction. In
10 looking through the work, we lead to the
11 administration, we offer community point
12 persons, and - - student performance - - to
13 inform the creation of school-wide goals and we
14 guide the processes of examining performance
15 data to perform the creation of lots of goals
16 and thinking of different departments about how
17 do they're trying to - - student performance.
18 That includes - - data, establishing target
19 relationships, and examining - -. We work on
20 reviewing and advising the schools on short-term
21 and long-term professional development plans.
22 Here, we supported the implementation of the - -
23 program. We provided, we offered - - funding to
24 teachers in the summer in the development of
25 curriculum, that is the - - for standards and

1 training for administrators utilizing
2 instructional - -. As an example of some of the
3 work that gets done, on English language
4 learning support, people work with the
5 department in creating, building on the work
6 that was done over the summer, in creating - -
7 for unit goals. We also...

8 FEMALE VOICE: Really?

9 MR. PRENDEGAST: Yes.

10 FEMALE VOICE: Sorry.

11 MR. PRENDEGAST: All right. And it's not
12 just instructional support. We also offer
13 operational support--for example, two previous
14 school years - - four access reserve teachers to
15 work at this school full-time for the duration
16 of the school year. This year, there was an
17 assistant principal who was assigned to the
18 school full-time for the duration of the school
19 year at no cost to the school's operating
20 budget. We have arranged interviews with highly
21 qualified - - candidates in - - areas. We have
22 to ensure that supplementary grants and
23 allocations are scheduled and are spent
24 according to city, state, and federal
25 regulations, and we provide support to

1 administration, deans, and campus managers
2 regarding safety and suspension related matters,
3 and provide professional development - -
4 regarding building response team and recent
5 safety data.

6 MALE VOICE: Why - - ? Why - - ?

7 MR. BETHEIL: - - Hold on for a second,
8 please. Everybody - - I don't want to see a
9 breakdown of this - -.

10 MR. PRENDEGAST: - - School support takes a
11 lot of different forms, many different forms in
12 many different areas. Not all of it gets seen,
13 but it's here--we're here. I'm happy to give
14 you, after this meeting to talk about any part
15 of it and answer the questions that you might
16 have.

17 MR. BETHEIL: - - Last questions that we
18 have, I do want to be respectful - - sir, your
19 question, and a couple of points that students
20 earlier made before we - -. Mr. Camacho in
21 making his comments before articulated that the
22 students are not just numbers, but that those
23 numbers represent real kids with real lives and
24 real challenges, and I believe Miss Munoz really
25 talked about the fact--she said one thing, that

1 students can believe they're the problem. And
2 I do respect the comments that have been made
3 this evening. We heard from a large number of
4 students tonight, and that's unusual for some of
5 our hearings. I think each one of them
6 represented themselves and their classmates
7 well, and they do reflect well on the teachers
8 and parents and administrators that are here
9 working tonight. I'm a former teacher and a
10 former administrator myself and I understand
11 that it's not easy. The reality is sometimes we
12 know that with all the effort we do, all the
13 successes we do have--and that doesn't take
14 anything away from any of the students that came
15 here tonight, those that are here and those that
16 have graduated that have told us about good
17 things they've done--that is real - -. But we
18 have to recognize that there are also too many
19 students that are not having the success that
20 all of us agree they should have, and the one
21 thing I think we can all agree on is that we may
22 disagree - - about the source of the problem and
23 the source of the solutions, and I think
24 everybody this evening was respectful and
25 articulating when they disagreed with the

1 Department, and we tried to offer our
2 rationale. But I hope that everybody walks away
3 with one understanding: that at no point is
4 anybody suggesting the students are the ones at
5 fault. We come to school every day. We work
6 hard. Every one of the additional students that
7 graduated at time at school, every student that
8 goes on to City University or to Cornell or to
9 the military or to a technical college is a
10 student is a student whose life has been changed
11 by the commitments that all of the adults
12 sitting in this room has made. And the reality
13 is that while we've made a great deal of
14 progress in this city in helping thousands of
15 students have improved, collectively we still
16 have a long way to go to make sure that every
17 student that lives here in the Bronx has the
18 opportunity to - - .

19 MALE VOICE: That's your answer? - - You're
20 not - - solutions - - .

21 MR. BETHEIL: Excuse me, I--folks,
22 everybody...

23 MALE VOICE: You should be ashamed of
24 yourself. Stop talking.

25 [crosstalk]

1 MR. BETHEIL: - -

2 MALE VOICE: Shame on you.

3 [crosstalk]

4 [applause]

5 MALE VOICE: Shame on you.

6 MR. BETHEIL: - - Ma'am...

7 MALE VOICE: Stop talking.

8 [crosstalk]

9 [background noise]

10 MR. BETHEIL: - - Not helping...

11 [background noise]

12 MR. BETHEIL: - - I would be happy to - -.

13 [crosstalk]

14 MALE VOICE: Hey, shame on you. Shame on

15 you.

16 MR. BETHEIL: - -

17 [crosstalk]

18 [background noise]

19 MALE VOICE: Stop talking. - - I've seen

20 what the teachers do. I've seen the hardships

21 that they suffer.

22 MR. BETHEIL: And no one is--

23 MALE VOICE: Shame on you.

24 [applause]

25 [background noise]

1 MR. BETHEIL: You can - - high school, but
2 - - will be voted on. Please use - - thank you
3 for your time. This hearing is now adjourned.

4 [background noise]

5 [END RECORDING]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

5
6 Signature 

7 Date February 1, 2012
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