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

**Performance Conservatory High School
(12X262) Phase Out & Replacement
1/28/11**

1 [START TAPE 1 SIDE A]

2 MS. OLIVIA ELLIS: Good evening. My name
3 is Olivia Ellis and I will be acting as the
4 facilitator for the joint public hearing.

5 This is a joint public hearing for the
6 Department of Education, Community Education
7 Council, School Leadership Team to discuss the
8 proposed phase out of Performance Conservatory
9 High School and proposed collocation of new
10 school replacement 511 in building 98.

11 Tonight's proceedings will be recorded and
12 transcribed.

13 Before we begin the hearing we ask that
14 anyone who wishes to speak during the public
15 comment portion of the evening, sign up at the
16 table in the back. Sign up will end at 6:30.

17 If you have a question that you want to be
18 addressed during the question and answer portion
19 of the agenda, please write the question on the
20 index cards provided on the table in the back.

21 Only people who have signed up to speak will
22 be able to participate in the public comments.
23 All panel participants were asked to be here no
24 later than 5:30. Now that we have started if a
25 panel participant arrives late, he or she will

1 be given a time to speak at the first opportune
2 moment. We want to be respectful of everyone's
3 time.

4 There may be elected officials who show up
5 at different times throughout the evening. If
6 they wish to speak we will do our best to
7 accommodate them at the first opportunity.
8 Those who are here at the start of the public
9 comment section will be asked to speak first.

10 This hearing officially begins. Please look
11 at the agenda. The format will include the
12 presentation of the proposal and presentations
13 by hearing participants followed by public
14 comment. Speakers should have already signed up
15 at the sign up table in the lobby. Public
16 comments can be no longer than two minutes each.
17 The time will be strictly followed and speakers
18 will be informed when their designated time has
19 ended.

20 There will be a question and answer period.
21 Members of the audience if you have a question
22 each of you have to write your question on a
23 postcard that was supplied at the sign up table
24 when you arrived this evening. While the public
25 comments are taking place staff members will

1 organize the questions into categories to get
2 them ready for the question and answer period.
3 Some questions will be asked directly and others
4 will be batched under headings in order to avoid
5 repetitiveness.

6 Even though all individual questions will
7 not be addressed this evening, the answers will
8 be on the website prior to the panel meeting.

9 If at the end of the hearing you still have
10 questions we encourage you to direct them to us
11 at only the number at the bottom of the fact
12 sheet or sending them to us via email to the
13 email address provided on the fax sheets.

14 I would now like to introduce the panel that
15 has been assembled for this evening's joint
16 public hearing. Raul Garcia, SLT member from
17 Explorations Academy, Elka Rios, an SLT
18 representative from IS-98, Susie Batiste, an SLT
19 representative from Performance Conservatory,
20 Patricia Delaney, an SLT representative from
21 Performance Conservatory High School, Shamilla
22 Barrett from the Network, Maria Giaconi from the
23 Network, Carmen Taveris, President of CEC-12,
24 Laura Rodriguez, the Deputy Chancellor and Mona
25 Rodriguez, Community Superintendent.

1 I will now turn the program over to the
2 Deputy Chancellor Laura Rodriguez who will
3 present the proposal.

4 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Olivia. Good
5 evening, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for
6 being here this evening.

7 This joint public hearing was convened to
8 discuss the proposed phase out of Performance
9 Conservatory High School and the proposed
10 collocation of the new school replacement 12X511
11 in Building X098.

12 The decision to phase out a school is not an
13 easy one. We do not take these decisions
14 lightly. WE examine many factors and data
15 before we propose a course of action. We also
16 reach out to families and community members.

17 Before I present the Performance
18 Conservatory Proposal, I would like to say a few
19 words about why we are here. All of us count on
20 our schools to provide a high quality education
21 to students and we must hold all schools to the
22 same standard of excellence because every child
23 in this city deserves the best possible
24 education.

25 When a school isn't getting the job done we

1 have to take action to insure its current
2 students don't fall even further behind and new
3 students will have better options.

4 Performance Conservatory is located at 1619
5 Boston Road in Community School District 12 in
6 the Bronx. It currently serves students in
7 Grades 9 through 12. On December 20, 2010, the
8 New York City Department of Education published
9 a proposal to phase out Performance Conservatory
10 High School based on its poor performance and
11 the Department of Education's assessment that
12 the School lacks the ability to turn around
13 quickly to better support student needs.

14 On January 26th the Education Impact
15 Statement was amended to correct typographical
16 and formatting errors, correct a utilization
17 rate, include an explanation of the methodology
18 for calculating such rates, correct the
19 anticipate rate spans of the new school 12X511
20 over the next several years and clarify the
21 over-the-counter enrollment process but does not
22 modify or revise the proposal itself.

23 Performance Conservatory performance data
24 indicates that the school has struggled. Last
25 year Performance Conservatory's four year

1 graduation rate including August graduates was
2 49%, well below the Citywide average of 63%.
3 Performance Conservatory's graduation rate
4 ranked in the bottom 7% of high schools citywide
5 and in the bottom 10% of high schools in the
6 Bronx.

7 If regents diplomas alone counted toward
8 graduation, as will be the case next year, the
9 2009-2010 four year graduation rate at
10 Performance Conservator would drop to 17%, well
11 below the citywide average of 46%.

12 Performance Conservatory earned an overall F
13 grade on its progress report last year with F
14 grades on the student performance, student
15 progress and school environment sections.
16 Performance Conservatory's progress report score
17 ranks in the bottom 1% of high schools receiving
18 a 2009-2010 progress report.

19 Safety issues have been a concern at
20 Performance Conservatory in recent years. On
21 the 2009-2010 New York City School Survey, 20%
22 of the students reported feeling unsafe in the
23 hallways, bathrooms and locker rooms. That same
24 year 20% of parents expressed concerns about
25 their children's safety. In addition, 83% of

1 teachers reported that discipline and order
2 were not maintained at the school.

3 Based on these evaluations the Department of
4 Education conducted a comprehensive review of
5 the school to determine which supports and
6 interventions would best benefit its students
7 and the community. The Department of Education
8 also consulted superintendents and other
9 experienced educators who have worked closely
10 with the school and held community meetings with
11 parents and school staff to solicit feedback.

12 Based on this comprehensive review and
13 evidence that additional supports were not
14 working, the Department of Education believes
15 that only the most serious intervention, the
16 gradual phase out and eventual closure of the
17 school will address its long standing
18 performance struggles and allow for new school
19 options to develop that will better serve future
20 students and the broader community.

21 Performance Conservatory is located in Build
22 X-098 and is collocated with a high school,
23 Explorations Academy and a junior high school,
24 Junior High School 98, Herman Ritter.
25 Exploration serves students in grades 9 through

1 12 and Junior High School 98 serves students in
2 grades 6 thru 8.

3 This building also offers free child care
4 and support services for student parents through
5 the Living for the Young Family through
6 Education Program.

7 Regardless of whether this proposal is
8 approved, these schools and the LYFE program
9 would continue serving students.

10 In a separate Education Impact Statement the
11 Department of Education is also proposing to
12 create a new high school, 12X511, which would
13 provide District 12 families with new and higher
14 quality education options as Performance
15 Conservatory phases out gradually.

16 12X511 would begin enrolling 9th grade
17 students in September 2011.

18 Before we move to the public comment section
19 of this meeting, I would like to briefly discuss
20 the impact of this proposal on current
21 Performance Conservatory students and families
22 if it is approved.

23 One, if this proposal is approved
24 Performance Conservatory would no longer admit
25 new 9th grade students after the conclusion of

1 the 2010-2011 school year. Current students
2 would be support as they progress towards
3 graduation while remaining enrolled in
4 Performance Conservatory. More detailed
5 information about enrollment options for
6 students is provided in the fax sheet and
7 enrollment of frequently asked questions
8 available here tonight.

9 In cases where students do not complete
10 graduation requirements by June 2014 the
11 Department of Education would help students and
12 families identify alternative programs or
13 schools that meet students' needs so that they
14 may continue their high school education after
15 Performance Conservatory completes phasing out.

16 Thank you. We look forward to hearing your
17 comments and your questions.

18 MODERATOR: Thank you. At this time does
19 anyone from the SLT want to present? Anyone
20 from the SLT like to Present? [No response]
21 Will the representative from the CEC like to
22 present?

23 MS. TAVERIS: I know that and I know that our
24 schools are in trouble, we have trouble,
25 especially middle and high schools. You know

1 that District 12 had like 13% of students
2 either in special ed or bilingual education. If
3 the principals of the schools are not providing
4 the services for bilingual education or English
5 as a second language, they are in more trouble,
6 because you know the students are not prepared
7 to be best anyway.

8 Special education students are another
9 story. We know that most of the special
10 education students in our district are
11 behavioral problems. And if you have 100
12 children with behavioral problems then you can't
13 teach and all the children are going to suffer.

14 We keep having this problem. We keep having
15 problems find proper people to be supervisors
16 for basics. I know that most of the people
17 came to hold this person is responsible. We
18 stop, it is the children. In the high schools
19 and the middle school level it is the children
20 that are responsible for whatever is going on.

21 And I know it because you know I visit the
22 schools and I go inside the schools and I know
23 what is going on and especially in high schools.

24 I am sorry for the parents who are here in
25 the audience. You have other options, because

1 you know high schools and middle schools are
2 choice and you can select any school in the area
3 for your children. But a school like this is
4 not necessary and the children deserve better.

5 Thank you, very much.

6 MODERATOR: Thank you. We have now
7 concluded the formal presentations. I ask the
8 following person to line up for public comment.
9 Wilfredo Pagan.

10 MR. PAGAN: Good morning. My name is
11 Alfredo Pagan, I am the President of the
12 President Council for District 12. One of my
13 concerns as I have a lot of conversations with a
14 lot of parents and I find ways and I try my best
15 to find ways to find some type of bands as to
16 what is going on within my district.

17 One of my biggest questions is what plans,
18 if any, for any changes that are happening with
19 these phase outs that honestly can provide the
20 parents insurance that the changes that are
21 being made will benefit their child or the other
22 children that are willing to come to the new
23 schools, they are not going to go through the
24 same things that their old school is going
25 through, because I am realizing that a lot of

1 the schools are all basically suffering from
2 the same thing, the environment that is playing
3 a big part in all the schools. And if that is
4 not a good environment then I guess you know
5 putting a new school, if it is not part of the
6 plan when it comes to dealing with that
7 environment in the phase out then I think that
8 if you are not prepared for that, then just
9 changing the name of the school it is not going
10 to make any difference.

11 So, what I really pinpointing as I am
12 speaking with these parents, what I want to get
13 at is that is there going to be like any type of
14 social cultural resources for the parents that
15 are really going to help them change the
16 environment to the school that will also help
17 the school as a whole.

18 So basically, there is a new school, you
19 know what are the plans you know to deal with
20 the issues, because I think the issues could
21 carry over to the next school, if I am not
22 mistaken.

23 Thank you.

24 MS. TAVERIS: Mr. Greco is a new president
25 of the President Council in our district. Mr.

1 Greco very intelligent and he is doing a great
2 effort in order to help the schools.

3 For two years, you know we don't have the
4 proper President Council and the parents were
5 like orphans. But this year Alfredo is there to
6 help the parents. Alfredo, you asked a
7 question. You are responsible to work with us
8 very closely, very closely to us and any
9 questions that you have you know that we have an
10 answer for you.

11 Next year if we have parents here who want
12 to interact with our Education Council, I think
13 that Alfredo is well prepared to deal with those
14 questions.

15 Also somebody does know that the CAC exists.
16 We have CAC of eleven members. We have nine
17 parent members and two appointees by the Borough
18 President, that is myself and somebody else. We
19 are there to provide help to any parent who
20 comes into the district, because if the parent
21 call 311 the call is going to the district in
22 Long Fellow, according to Long Fellow on the
23 fourth floor, room 409.

24 Please, if you have any questions in the
25 future, come to that office. Wilfredo's office

1 is right next to our office. And any
2 questions we are going to find an answer. Thank
3 you.

4 MODERATOR: Okay, thank you, Carmen, thank
5 you, Wilfredo. And that was part of the comment
6 portion. And we are going to move into the
7 question and answer portion at that time, and to
8 answer the questions that you asked.

9 MR. RAND: Hi, my name is Heyman Rand for
10 the Department of Education. They way I respond
11 to that is you know the determination to phase
12 out a school pending staff approval is a
13 difficult decision we have to make, it is a
14 difficult process for us to go through.

15 And you know it is one that we ask the
16 community to really understand that effectively
17 we are saying it is not just the principal's
18 fault, we are not saying it is their fault, the
19 teaching staff's false. What we are proposing
20 is a fundamental reorganization of the school,
21 you know the processes, the systems, the culture
22 and we would be starting from scratch again.
23 And to quickly summarize, what we are trying to
24 do is just provide a better principal, provide a
25 better staff, to reorganize and to say these

1 parents and students will now have access to
2 that.

3 It is not to guarantee, to be perfectly
4 candid it is not a guarantee things are going to
5 work. Our track record has proven that you know
6 90 to 95% we provide better options for the
7 students in balancing community. But eight of
8 the schools we are proposing to get out this
9 year to be perfectly honest are new schools that
10 we have started. But we have started over 500
11 new schools and this is less than two percent of
12 the new schools that we started.

13 So the track record has shown the new school
14 move is successful. And we do believe that the
15 community should, you know, reach out directly
16 to the principals to better understand what
17 support systems they can provide.

18 You know once we have approval the community
19 will have direct access to the new proposed
20 school here, the one that we propose to phase
21 into this building and to better understand what
22 type of culture, what type of systems and what
23 type of staff we are going to have on board.

24 MODERATOR: Thank you.

25 MR. GRECO: The reason why I directed that

1 question because you know it is a lot of
2 hardship for the community, right, and my
3 biggest task is to find some type of facts, like
4 I said. I take my responsibility highly, you
5 know I appreciate my position a lot and I am
6 going to do the best I possibly can as an
7 engaged and involved parent.

8 What I want to do is help my community
9 easily accept certain changes, because what
10 happens is that within my community and my
11 district there is a lot of misinformation, you
12 know as far as these changes and this phase outs
13 and stuff like that and people think that oh, my
14 kid can't go to that school no more, now what am
15 I going to do and they feel somewhat confused.

16 I know that, I know what's really going on
17 because I work in the district and I am able to
18 gain information and also provide information.
19 That's my responsibility at the President's
20 Council, to be able to provide information to my
21 parents, through my PTAs.

22 So that was the reason why I wanted to ask
23 that question, because it is very important
24 because as President's Council my biggest task
25 this year is to complete the communication stage

1 that I am sending out, so that by the end of
2 the year I will be able to have a lot of parents
3 engaged and involved in the schools within the
4 districts.

5 But what hit me by surprise is these phase
6 outs and stuff like that. So that's the reason
7 why I am kind of getting engaged with these
8 questions now. I got full support by the
9 superintendent and CEC and all that and my DLT
10 team with regard to these schools, and I am
11 gathering information. But I just really want
12 to pinpoint that because the communities that
13 are happy to deal with these phase out schools,
14 that's their biggest concern and all. What am I
15 going to do, what am I going to do right now?
16 Or why this happened? If you, the Department of
17 Education knew this for so long, why these
18 things are happening now? It is a little
19 confusing for a lot of parents.

20 Basically, is there information like data or
21 stuff like that that is going to be provided to
22 the parents as far as the success of some of the
23 schools have been transformed, because I think
24 that really helps a lot, if you want put
25 communication out there as positive, you know

1 what I mean, because like I said at the end of
2 the day I want District 12 to be on top of the
3 map, not at the bottom you know what I mean,
4 because I think that everybody in District 12
5 work extremely hard and they really deserve the
6 opportunity for the parents to understand that,
7 like you said, you know some things are
8 difficult, some changes have to be made, but
9 they are being made for the best purpose. But
10 if you involve people in what is going on, you
11 know how we can move forward. If there is,
12 please provide us with it. I would appreciate
13 it. Thank you.

14 MR. PAGAN: I will just quickly say you
15 shouldn't hesitate to reach out to the
16 superintendent, to the DOE to provide you access
17 to resources information.

18 With regard to the data you are asking about
19 on average the schools that we phased out under
20 Bloomberg, the graduation rate of the high
21 schools has been between 40 and 50%. And the
22 graduation at the new small schools that we have
23 opened up in their place has been over 70%.

24 So the data is compelling and we can show it
25 to you case by case on certain campuses.

1 MODERATOR: Thank you. If you have any
2 additional questions at the conclusion of
3 tonight's proceedings we ask that you direct
4 them to us via phone or email that's on the back
5 of the fact sheet.

6 We have heard many comments this evening and
7 we appreciate your feedback and contributions to
8 this hearing. The information will be shared
9 with the Panel on Educational Policy, which will
10 have its hearing on February 3, 2011 to vote on
11 this proposal.

12 Please use the phone number or email address
13 on the bottom of the fact sheet, if you have any
14 other questions or concerns.

15 Thank you for coming out. This joint public
16 hearing is officially adjourned.

17 [END TAPE 1 SIDE A]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature 

Date 1/29/11