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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING
P.S. 114 Ryder Elementary (K114)
1/28/11**

1 [START 110128_001.MP3]

2 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: ...a little bit and
3 actually talk about the, the process of this
4 evening's, uh, joint public hearing. Um, and,
5 and then, uh, turn the floor over to, uh, our,
6 our members at the dais. Um, so let me, let me
7 begin and make sure - - . Um, my name is
8 Anthony Conelli [phonetic].

9 I'm actually going to moderate the, uh, the
10 meeting for this evening. Um, and so we, uh, we
11 begin. Uh, this is a joint public hearing of
12 the Department of Education Community Education
13 Council and the School Leadership to discuss the
14 proposed phase-out of P.S. 114. Um, tonight's
15 proceedings will be recorded and transcribed.

16 Um, as I said earlier, if anyone wishes to
17 speak, um, that I believe we're going to be, uh,
18 closing it up in a minute or two, but, uh, you
19 need to sign up. You'll be given a number and,
20 um, over the course of the evening when the,
21 when the public comment time is, uh, is open,
22 we'll ask people to come up by number to speak.

23 Um, the evening will proceed by, a, uh, a,
24 an opening from our, our deputy chancellor, um,
25 and then we'll invite members of the, of the

1 dais to, to speak. Um, we will close out that
2 portion. We will follow that by, uh, opening up
3 the, the public comment section. Um, we have a
4 number of, uh, of, uh, public representatives
5 here who will, who will speak first.

6 Um, and then we will follow through with the
7 sign-up sheet. Um, after that, there will be a,
8 a period for, uh, questions and answers. As I
9 said earlier, questions and answers are--the,
10 the structure for that is if you have a
11 question, you need to, to jot it on one of the,
12 uh, the cards that we have available outside.
13 Um, I also ask, if you have a question, now
14 would be the time to get it in so this way we
15 can sort them, uh, to the appropriate, uh,
16 person in terms of response.

17 Um, and I think we're ready to start. So at
18 this point, I'd like to introduce to you, uh,
19 let me introduce to you the members of our, our
20 dais. Um, we have with us this evening, uh,
21 Deputy Chancellor Shael Suransky, um,
22 Superintendent Beverly Wilkins, um, School
23 Leadership Chair Jimmy Orr [phonetic], um, PA
24 President Crystal King [phonetic], and CEC
25 President James Dandridge. And at this time,

1 I'd like to introduce Deputy Chancellor Shael
2 Suransky.

3 MR. SHAEL SURANSKY: Thank you, Anthony.
4 Um, I want to thank everyone for coming out
5 tonight. I know that the--can you hear me okay?
6 The weather isn't great and it wasn't easy to
7 get here for everyone, but I want to recognize
8 the fact that, um, there are folks in this
9 community and beyond who care deeply about
10 what's happening in this school. And I hope
11 that as we go through the process this evening,
12 everyone who has an opinion will have an
13 opportunity to share that opinion.

14 I think one thing that brings us all
15 together is the fact that we're interested in
16 seeing the best for the kids, um, in this
17 school. And we may disagree about the best way
18 to strengthen and improve this school, but I
19 think that is something that we share deeply.

20 Uh, it's always a difficult decision when
21 the Department of Ed decides to phase out a
22 school, and it's not something that's taken
23 lightly. We examine many different factors and
24 engage stakeholders before the final decision.
25 Um, we take action if we believe that it's not

1 possible, um, to get to improve student
2 outcomes, um, without taking that action. And
3 our goal, ultimately, is to create a, uh, a
4 system of great schools where kids and parents
5 have options that they feel good about and
6 excited about.

7 P.S. 114 is a zoned elementary school
8 located at 1077 Remsen Avenue in Brooklyn's
9 District 18. It currently serves students k-5
10 and has a full day pre-k program. On December
11 17th, the Department of Ed published a proposal
12 to phase out and eventually close P.S. 114 due
13 to poor performance and assessment that the
14 school lacks the capacity to quickly turn around
15 to better support students' needs.

16 Now, when we talk about phasing out a
17 school, I want to be very clear that many of the
18 students currently enrolled in this school will
19 continue, um, and graduate from this school.
20 It's a process that happens over several years.
21 And the school does not close down in the sense
22 that there will be schools in this building that
23 continue to serve this community.

24 In 2010, 34 percent of the students were at
25 grade level in math, and 35 percent were at

1 grade level in ELA. Um, on the progress
2 report, there was a D grade with an F on school
3 environment and student performance and a D for
4 student progress. On the most recent quality
5 review, the school got an underdeveloped, um,
6 including serious problems in the way in which
7 the school was organized to support student
8 learning.

9 As a result of this data, we initiated a
10 comprehensive review to assess what supports and
11 interventions would be most effective to benefit
12 students in this community. We looked at both
13 this past year's and historical performance. We
14 looked at enrollment data and how many kids were
15 coming into the school and consulted with the
16 superintendent and other experienced educators
17 who have worked with the school closely over
18 several years. We also went through a process
19 and gathered community feedback.

20 Based on this review, the DOE believes that
21 the most serious intervention, gradual phase-out
22 and closure, is the appropriate step to take in
23 order to create an option in this community, uh,
24 that will really serve the needs of the kids
25 moving forward.

1 In a separate EIS on January 14th, the DOE
2 proposed to open two elementary schools in the
3 K114 building. Um, P.S. 521, which would be a
4 zoned school for grades k-5 as well as pre-k
5 when it's fully phased in, as well as explore a
6 charter school which would serve k-5 students
7 and provide admission preference to students in
8 District 18. The replacement proposal is the
9 subject of a public hearing on February 16th and
10 voted on by the panel on March 1st. That
11 proposal is a separate proposal that will come
12 here first and then the panel, um, in March.

13 Uh, on January 12th, we revised the, um,
14 impact statement to make a few small
15 corrections, um, to talk a little bit about the
16 enrollment details, um, during phase-out,
17 identify the charter school that would be one of
18 the two schools coming in, and clarified some
19 issues in the text around building utilization.

20 Um, we also, um, corrected a few erroneous
21 references to the State Education Department as
22 charter authorized and we clarified that the
23 lottery for Explore Charter School would give
24 preference to students currently attending the
25 school that is phasing out, um, which is

1 different to what's happened in other schools,
2 um, where a charter has come in.

3 If this proposal is approved, P.S. 114 would
4 be phased out gradually over the next several
5 years, as I explained a few minutes ago. Um,
6 they would no longer admit kindergarten students
7 or serve pre-k, first, second or third grade
8 students at the end of this school year. The
9 current students in grades three and four would
10 be supported as they progress towards completion
11 of their elementary school here at P.S. 114.
12 Students in grade five will be supported in the
13 District 18 Middle School Choice process, um,
14 consistent with the current practice.

15 Kindergarten, first and second grade
16 students at P.S. 114 would be guaranteed a seat
17 at the new zoned elementary P.S. 521. Explore
18 would admit incoming kindergarten, first, second
19 and third grade students through the charter
20 lottery application process this spring.

21 I know there are a lot of people that want
22 to speak tonight, and so I'm going to reserve
23 any further comments, um, until after we've had
24 an opportunity to hear from the many folks who
25 have signed up to speak.

1 Um, I'm going to now pass this to the other
2 folks from the School Leadership Team and the
3 CEC, who have some comments to make. Thank you
4 for coming and I look forward to the
5 conversation.

6 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Excuse me. We're not
7 going to sit here and have a neat meeting, while
8 you sit here and vote--

9 [Applause]

10 [Crosstalk]

11 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Sign up to speak
12 meeting. They're only doing this just because
13 by law they have to. By law they have to. They
14 got busted the last time shutting down schools
15 and not doing this. So they're going to sit
16 here and they're going to let you, you know, say
17 what you have to say, we want your input and all
18 of that stuff, sign up and see what your letter
19 is, put your questions on the card. And then
20 when it's all said and done, they're going to
21 say: thank you and we are shutting you down.

22 [Applause]

23 [Crosstalk]

24 MR. CHARLES BARRON: We're not going to sit
25 back here and let that happen. We're not going

1 to sit back here and let that happen. The
2 least you could do--and they can say whatever
3 they want to say, but after this, I ain't even
4 going to bother to stay in the hearing. The
5 bottom line, we have to organize. You know who
6 failed 114? The DOE failed it.

7 [Applause]

8 [Crosstalk]

9 FEMALE VOICE: DOE.

10 MR. CHARLES BARRON: The DOE failed it. I'm
11 not going to sit back and allow schools not to
12 have the resources--

13 FEMALE VOICE: [interposing] That's right.

14 MR. CHARLES BARRON: --not to have the
15 systems because you give them a leader who was a
16 failure--

17 FEMALE VOICE: [interposing] Yeah.

18 [Applause]

19 MR. CHARLES BARRON: That's the leader that
20 you gave them, a leader that was a failure. And
21 then tell us after four or five years: hey, you
22 got a D. We know we're not doing well because
23 you set it up for us not to do well.

24 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

25 [Applause]

1 [Crosstalk]

2 MR. CHARLES BARRON: I'm not sitting back.
3 I don't care who's angry. I am angry. You're
4 right. It's about our children, not their
5 children.

6 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

7 [Crosstalk]

8 MR. CHARLES BARRON: None of their children
9 go to this school.

10 [Applause]

11 MR. CHARLES BARRON: These are our children.
12 So I'm not going to sit here in some elite
13 little meeting.

14 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

15 MR. CHARLES BARRON: You don't get nothing
16 done like that, sitting and needing everybody's
17 name on the stuff and sign up for this.

18 [Laughter]

19 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Speak when we tell you
20 to speak. No. The bottom line is this: when
21 they bring in this new--two new schools or
22 whatever, 90 percent of your teachers are gone.

23 FEMALE VOICE: Got that right.

24 [Crosstalk]

25 MR. CHARLES BARRON: They're going to get

1 rid of them. They're going to bring in what
2 they want to bring in.

3 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

4 [Crosstalk]

5 MR. CHARLES BARRON: You know what makes
6 schools work? One, when they have a school
7 leader--

8 FEMALE VOICE: [interposing] That's right.

9 MR. CHARLES BARRON: --who is a great
10 manager, visionary, knows about education and
11 knows how to teach teachers how to teach.

12 [Applause]

13 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Knows how to help
14 people develop curriculum. That's a leader.
15 Schools work when teachers know how to teach,
16 want to teach and have all the support they need
17 to teach.

18 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

19 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

20 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Schools work when they
21 have smart boards.

22 FEMALE VOICE: That's right

23 [Crosstalk]

24 MR. CHARLES BARRON: We had to count on Lew,
25 Council Member Lew Fidler, somebody from our

1 office gave more to this school than DOE did.

2 [Applause]

3 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Schools work when they
4 have computer labs. Schools work when they have
5 science labs.

6 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

7 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Schools work when they
8 have after school programs.

9 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

10 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Schools work when they
11 have arts.

12 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

13 MR. CHARLES BARRON: When they have science,
14 when they have an athletic program.

15 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

16 MR. CHARLES BARRON: When they have
17 facilities that motivate children to want to
18 come to school and want to learn. And since
19 every child in this district is educable, then
20 whoever's not educating them needs to be held
21 responsible.

22 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

23 MR. CHARLES BARRON: And that's DOE.

24 [Applause]

25 MR. CHARLES BARRON: You want to phase

1 something out, we should phase out the Tweed
2 Building.

3 [Cheering]

4 MR. CHARLES BARRON: The Tweed Building,
5 they have no respect for you. And to show you
6 how much they disrespect you, every teacher in
7 here is more qualified than Cathy Black.

8 FEMALE VOICE: Cathy Black.

9 [Applause]

10 [Crosstalk]

11 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Than Cathy Black.
12 Every teacher in here is more qualified than
13 Cathy Black. - - . Just because you managed
14 magazines, that don't mean you can manage
15 children--

16 [Crosstalk]

17 MR. CHARLES BARRON: --and teachers. Why
18 would they give us a chancellor who's not even
19 qualified to teach in a classroom?

20 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

21 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Give us a chancellor
22 who if she saw a lesson plan wouldn't know what
23 it was.

24 [Laughter]

25 MR. CHARLES BARRON: So here we have that,

1 and I'll tell you why, when you have a \$23
2 billion, \$23 billion Department of Education
3 budget and \$11 billion five-year capital budget-

4 FEMALE VOICE: [interposing] That's right.

5 MR. CHARLES BARRON: --\$23 billion and they
6 want to incrementally take money from that and
7 give it to charter schools.

8 [Crosstalk]

9 MR. CHARLES BARRON: And then when they get
10 charter schools in the system, then they do
11 everything right. We know what it takes to
12 teach children.

13 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

14 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Smaller class sizes.

15 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

16 [Crosstalk]

17 [Applause]

18 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Get some smaller class
19 sizes. The other schools will get that. So
20 don't come--and we need a culturally relevant
21 curriculum.

22 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

23 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

24 MR. CHARLES BARRON: A curriculum that
25 children can see themselves and their history in

1 that curriculum.

2 [Applause]

3 MR. CHARLES BARRON: This is a game.

4 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

5 MR. CHARLES BARRON: We got a businessman as
6 mayor. We got a businesswoman as the
7 chancellor.

8 [Crosstalk]

9 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Unqualified--not--you
10 know, when you have to waive your credentials,
11 that mean that--that means that you have a
12 master's degree and you were principal and you
13 had some years of education experience, but you
14 didn't have the superintendent's license. So
15 we'll waive that. But when you have nothing--

16 FEMALE VOICE: [interposing] Nothing.

17 [Laughter]

18 MR. CHARLES BARRON: --and you have to waive
19 everything? That means that she didn't have a
20 single qualification to lead the largest,
21 largest education system probably in the world.

22 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

23 MR. CHARLES BARRON: You're going to put
24 someone up here who thinks the answer to
25 overcrowded classrooms is birth control.

1 [Applause]

2 MR. CHARLES BARRON: I'm going to sit here
3 for two minutes and I just can't take it. We
4 have to take this on another level. Uh, some of
5 us are going to get arrested on Monday for civil
6 disobedience. We're going to make sure, don't
7 ever think because they got over this far that
8 the fight is over.

9 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

10 MR. CHARLES BARRON: All over the world,
11 people are rising up.

12 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

13 MR. CHARLES BARRON: The people have the
14 power.

15 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

16 MR. CHARLES BARRON: People have power.

17 MALE VOICE: Exactly.

18 MR. CHARLES BARRON: And people rise up no
19 matter what they see. See they think they bad
20 now.

21 [Laughter]

22 MR. CHARLES BARRON: You know, you all know
23 what I mean by bad, right?

24 FEMALE VOICE: Uh-huh.

25 MR. CHARLES BARRON: They think they're bad

1 now 'cause they just going to tell you,
2 they're going to oh God it. They're going to
3 listen to you.

4 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

5 MR. CHARLES BARRON: We had one of the most
6 intelligent conversations, Council Member
7 Fidler, myself and others, uh, Senator Sampson
8 was on the phone, with the, uh, deputy--one of
9 the deputy chancellors. They have so many
10 deputy chancellors now.

11 [Crosstalk]

12 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Every time I turn
13 around there's another high paid deputy
14 chancellor of something.

15 [Crosstalk]

16 MR. CHARLES BARRON: We get on the phone
17 with them and Council Member Fidler laid out
18 stuff and said, look, this is what happened. We
19 all said, listen, what, what's the problem? You
20 define this as a hopeless case and you got to do
21 this kind of restructuring. We said give us two
22 years.

23 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

24 MR. CHARLES BARRON: That's what we said.

25 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

1 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Just give us two
2 years.

3 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

4 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Leave the school as it
5 is.

6 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

7 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Give us two years.

8 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

9 MR. CHARLES BARRON: All the elected
10 officials will get together. Give us two years.
11 We'll get together with you. Give us two years.
12 Give us access to all the resources we need.

13 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

14 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

15 [Crosstalk]

16 MR. CHARLES BARRON: We'll even get other
17 educators that know about education. Give us
18 two years. We can make 114 work. Don't shut it
19 down.

20 [Crosstalk]

21 [Applause]

22 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Give us a chance. Give
23 us a chance. Give us a chance. We can make it
24 work. And I believe parents working with the
25 teachers, working with elected officials,

1 working with community leaders--

2 FEMALE VOICE: [interposing] Yes.

3 MR. CHARLES BARRON: --we can turn this
4 around.

5 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

6 MR. CHARLES BARRON: There's nothing magic
7 in the word charter. There's nothing magic in
8 some--a new district school coming in. What
9 kind of madness is this? Since when is shutting
10 down schools--they shut down 91 schools already.

11 FEMALE VOICE: Sell out.

12 MR. CHARLES BARRON: 91. So they can make
13 room for the 100 charter schools that they need
14 to make room for, 'cause charter schools don't
15 have enough capital money for space.

16 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

17 MR. CHARLES BARRON: So they want to take
18 your space.

19 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

20 MR. CHARLES BARRON: And they set up the
21 failure.

22 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

23 MR. CHARLES BARRON: So I decided that I'm
24 just going to speak when I feel like it.

25 [Laughter]

1 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Since you are
2 disrespecting us--

3 FEMALE VOICE: [interposing] Yes.

4 MR. CHARLES BARRON: I'm not going to come
5 here and sit through no neat meeting and hear a
6 bunch of garbage, because that's what they're
7 going to give you.

8 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

9 MR. CHARLES BARRON: And when you finish,
10 and when you give them your bleeding heart and
11 when you tell them how important it is for this
12 to stay, they're going to say: we heard you.

13 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

14 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Thank you very much for
15 your input. And then they're going to go back
16 and do what they planned on doing before they
17 came here.

18 [Crosstalk]

19 FEMALE VOICE: You got that right.

20 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Because we gave them
21 every reason--

22 FEMALE VOICE: [interposing] Right.

23 MR. CHARLES BARRON: --to change their mind.
24 So they're not going to do that. I say we got
25 to bring it up a notch y'all.

1 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

2 MR. CHARLES BARRON: We got to take it up on
3 another level.

4 [Applause]

5 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Once they realize that
6 there are 1.1 million children in this system
7 and all of them have parents, if they realize
8 that they cannot govern if we don't allow them
9 to, if we decide that we're going to rise up and
10 say no, we're going to be respected, we're going
11 to protect our children and you can't do
12 whatever you feel you want to do. And don't go
13 for all the stats on, you know graduation rates
14 are higher now.

15 FEMALE VOICE: No, they not.

16 MR. CHARLES BARRON: You remember all the
17 stats they gave us and then the state came out
18 with something and uh-oh--

19 [Crosstalk]

20 MR. CHARLES BARRON: --it wasn't what they
21 said. And you know what they do to get
22 graduation stats up? Somebody could not be
23 graduating and what they'll do is give them a
24 summer project.

25 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

1 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Give them something
2 extra to do.

3 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

4 MR. CHARLES BARRON: So now that person that
5 has a little extra to do becomes a graduate.
6 You could do what you want with statistics.
7 We've learnt that. But the bottom line, we have
8 the main ingredients sitting right in this room
9 today to make 114 work.

10 [Cheering]

11 MR. CHARLES BARRON: And the only thing we
12 want answered tonight--

13 [Crosstalk]

14 MR. CHARLES BARRON: We demand a chance to
15 make 114 work. This is our school--

16 [Cheering]

17 MR. CHARLES BARRON: It's our children.
18 It's our--

19 [Cheering]

20 AUDIENCE: 114. [Chanting]

21 [Crosstalk]

22 FEMALE VOICE: The parent association and
23 the SLT. Where for these past five years we had
24 an education that sabotaged all efforts made by
25 the school community to create a vibrant and

1 nurturing academic institution for its
2 students, including the - - for four years the
3 principal who was considered incompetent by
4 staff, parents and DOE support staff and who
5 investigators ultimately found guilty of serious
6 misconduct and using school funds for unrelated
7 business.

8 Ignore the voices of parents and teachers
9 who alerted the DOE to their serious concerns
10 about the school's leadership and letters to the
11 chancellor, resolutions, emails and even
12 protests.

13 Removing the principal only after a gas leak
14 placed the students in immediate danger while
15 she was missing from the school.

16 Creating a field empowerment structure that
17 gave principals complete authority, does
18 disempowering parents, teachers and even DOE own
19 staff such that the network leader of this
20 school who knew--not who knew about the
21 principal's incompetence and could do nothing
22 even if she wanted to.

23 Relying far too heavy on bogus progress
24 reports and inflating test scores to judge
25 school needs as is clear after charges against

1 the principal were substantiated and the DOE -
2 - tells the press that the Ryder progress report
3 grade was a substantial academic improvement
4 that certainly influenced our decision to allow
5 Penaherrera to continue on as principal.

6 Forcing the school to pay back \$180,000 in
7 funds misused by the principal as long last
8 removed, even though the DOE was aware of the
9 budget irregularities long before the
10 investigation.

11 Does - - funding intended for our children,
12 but has contributed to the loss of guidance
13 counselors, teacher coaches, workbooks and other
14 basic classroom supplies for children and
15 standard academic support services for our
16 students who struggle.

17 Ignoring the voices of teachers and parents
18 who filled out the DOE survey have been telling
19 them for years that essentially--essential
20 conditions for our students' success were not in
21 place.

22 2007-2008, parent and teacher response
23 compared the school in the bottom 5 percent of
24 all elementary schools citywide for safety.
25 2007, 95 percent of schools were also found to

1 have a more collaborative culture. 2008, over
2 a third of parents said that bullying was a
3 problem. 90 percent of teachers said they did
4 not trust the principal at her word. 75 percent
5 teachers said the principal did not put learning
6 needs of children ahead of other interests.

7 Already, the conclusion that this, it has
8 been fulfilled its obligation to improve student
9 safety regardless of what the survey warned by
10 providing things like a best practice handbook,
11 a building response kit and other bare bones
12 provisions that are standard operating
13 procedures for all schools and the - - DOE - -
14 EIS.

15 Conducting quality reviews that failed to
16 investigate what parents and teachers were
17 saying. In spite of glaring safety issues, the
18 October 2007 review only notes in passing that
19 the school is committed to creating a safe
20 environment and in spite of parent
21 dissatisfaction, remarks that parents feel
22 welcome.

23 All the while, the DOE review process ignore
24 core issues, favoring instead the review of
25 testing and similar data. Eventually, it sent

1 in a new principal through a broken process
2 that did not find a candidate committed to our
3 community and who transferred after a few months
4 on the job in Queens, therefore increasing the
5 general instability of the school environment.

6 Ignoring the evidence in 2008 when 66
7 percent of the teachers responded to the DOE
8 survey in 2008 said that the principal was
9 failing to even observe teachers, let alone
10 support them. And eventually firing the
11 teachers because of what they were failing to
12 observe.

13 Whereas no school can survive long without
14 support from the system, it is a part of
15 support, not closure, especially important to
16 K114, an open enrollment that served more ELL
17 students than any other school in the district,
18 including students from the Haitian earthquake,
19 where one in ten students is not yet proficient
20 in English.

21 Whereas the DOE now claimed it support the
22 school by providing it things like best
23 practices handbook, a building response kit and
24 other bare bones provisions that are standard
25 operating procedures for all schools.

1 And where the DOE claimed that they
2 support the school with a program called
3 educated for social responsibility, it's
4 laughable since the program is only being now
5 brought into the school. And the DOE moves to
6 shut us down.

7 And where the staff and parents of this
8 school can tell DOE what real support would have
9 looked like, ongoing engagement of support of
10 new teachers. Supporting an elementary school-
11 wide proactive approach to our students' social,
12 emotional and behavioral need so that students
13 feel safe and we can all put the focus on
14 learning.

15 A genuine quality review that focuses on the
16 root cause of failure, the quality education
17 environment that surrounds the classroom rather
18 than simply being a check on a test graph, and
19 one that includes a follow up and support in
20 areas of weakness.

21 A reform - - structure that improves the
22 hiring, support and oversight of principals so
23 that - - of the - - does not put children in
24 harm's way. Whereas the potential for success
25 exists in every school and at K114 we have shown

1 our potential in many ways. On their own and
2 voluntary staff members come to me and support
3 quality instruction at all levels. Teachers
4 wrote grants for funding that led to, led to the
5 resurrection--the restoration of the standard
6 ESL program to serve our large immigrant
7 population. Our librarian worked to get grants
8 to fund the library that is finally being
9 opened.

10 We welcome our refugee from the Haitian
11 earthquake with open arms, backpacks and teddy
12 bears and are committed to give them, the
13 students, a great education. The 2008 fall
14 review had led to potential staff saying that
15 our staff have effective features in our
16 practice and that provide a basis on which to
17 build. Some of the great leaders have made a
18 good start in modeling good assessment practices
19 to their colleagues. Parents appreciate that
20 more teachers are welcoming should they have
21 concerns about their children's learning.

22 Whereas closing the school to open a new one
23 is no answer and is evident by the fact that
24 many of the DOE closing for reopen were opened
25 by the DOE just a few years ago. Whereas

1 charter schools are also no answer since 85 of
2 elementary school charters that receive progress
3 reports grades were really below average, below
4 the 50 percentile when compared to the city
5 other elementary school, even through their
6 students arrive at school with aides.

7 Charters currently make up a dis-appropriate
8 number of very low scoring schools. There were
9 23 elementary schools with lower progress
10 reports, scores and percentile rankings than
11 K114 and K260. Of those score, 17 were--percent
12 were charters. Yet, charters make up only four
13 percent of elementaries citywide that got a
14 grade.

15 Thus, while charters make up only four
16 percent of the school, they constitute 17
17 percent of the 24 lowest scoring schools.
18 Whereas K114 has be a long tradition and place
19 in this community and we should not be scrapped
20 simply by the DOE incompetence.

21 Therefore, it is resolved that we urge the
22 Panel for Education and Policy to support not to
23 close this neighborhood school and reform the
24 school system to ensure that children, not
25 Tweed, come first.

1 [Applause]

2 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: Our next speaker is
3 James Dandridge, CEC president.

4 [Applause]

5 MR. JAMES DANDRIDGE: Good evening, parents,
6 students. I'm here as a parent to a grave
7 concern. We've been to meetings after meetings
8 after meetings. Personally, I'm tired of going
9 to meetings.

10 [Laughter]

11 MR. JAMES DANDRIDGE: I want to follow up on
12 what City Council Member Barron said. This is a
13 call for action. Those who have come before the
14 CEC know that we've expressed the concern about
15 what's next. I'm not going to sit here and talk
16 to you about statistics, about the problems. We
17 all know what the problems and as statistics go,
18 statistics come and they leave and it's still
19 the same results.

20 My concern to you is what's going to happen
21 next. We have our political leaders here.
22 They'll be speaking to you in a few minutes.
23 You need to support them because they're the
24 ones that can put the weight on the decision
25 making process that will make the changes that

1 are necessary. But they need your support.
2 They need you to be there. When they call for
3 you to show up, you need to be there.

4 We're here tonight in the middle of a
5 snowstorm relaying the messages for our
6 children. It's the future of our children and
7 our grandchildren that's our concern. I have
8 four children in the system now and I'm
9 concerned about their future. As a
10 representative of the district representing the
11 Education Council, all the children in District
12 18 are our children.

13 So we are here today to support you in
14 whatever means necessary but we say to you as
15 the Education Council coming from the district-
16 wide concern, support your political leaders
17 because they're the ones with the voice, they're
18 the ones that could make the changes. Listen to
19 what they have to say and let's support them by
20 all means.

21 It's time as parents in District 18 that we
22 rise up. P.S. 114 is just another example of
23 the callousness that the Department of Education
24 has for the concerns of the parents and our
25 children. It's time to stop asking them what we

1 want, it's time to start demanding and telling
2 what you want to see in this school building.
3 Two years, three years, four years, whatever it
4 takes, we need to tell them what it is that we
5 want in this building for our children. Because
6 only those of us that live in this district,
7 those of us who have children in this district
8 know what's best for this district. I thank you
9 and please rise up.

10 [Applause]

11 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: Thank you. And we're
12 going to move to our public comment section of
13 the evening. And what we'll do is, uh, during
14 the course of the evening, we'll ask people to
15 come around this way and we'll set the
16 microphone up here, um, approach to speak. Um,
17 before we ask folks to come up, um, we have, uh,
18 a number of, uh, a number of, of our, our
19 representatives here to speak and we'll
20 introduce them one at a time.

21 [Crosstalk]

22 MALE VOICE: Thank you.

23 FEMALE VOICE: Yes, thank you.

24 [Crosstalk]

25 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: Our first speaker is

1 Assemblyman Alan Maisel.

2 [Applause]

3 MR. ALAN MAISEL: Good evening, uh, good
4 evening ladies and gentleman, boys and girls,
5 teachers, parents, uh, community activists, um,
6 Charles Barron was great, wasn't he?

7 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

8 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

9 [Applause]

10 MR. ALAN MAISEL: I don't always find myself
11 on the same side with Charles, but he really,
12 uh, told it like it was.

13 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

14 MR. ALAN MAISEL: Um, five year--let's see,
15 about three years ago, two years ago, uh, when
16 Canarsie High School was being closed, uh, those
17 of us who represented Canarsie were very upset
18 about it because basically what they were doing,
19 the Department of Ed was doing, was, uh, to
20 close a school without any community, uh, input
21 at all. And, uh, they had a hearing after the
22 fact. They didn't let the elected officials
23 know. They didn't let anybody know, teachers,
24 parents; they made a decision.

25 So when we did the decentral--the, uh, uh,

1 uh, Mayoral Control Bill, I was able to insert
2 into the bill a provision that would require a
3 public hearing in the school that was being
4 closed, and that was going to be before they
5 made the decision.

6 The spirit of the law is not being followed
7 in this case. The, the legalities are being
8 followed because we're going to have this
9 hearing and then the, uh, uh, uh, vote will
10 occur and they'll make a decision, which we
11 already know what the decision is. Basically,
12 this is what we call planned failure.

13 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

14 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

15 [Crosstalk]

16 MR. ALAN MAISEL: The Department of Ed, when
17 they took over--I still like to call it the
18 Board of Education, because legally this is
19 still the board of education.

20 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah, right.

21 MR. ALAN MAISEL: The Board of Education
22 came in, this new--these new people and they
23 have all the answers. They were going to
24 correct the problems of the old board. And they
25 were going to come in and they were going to

1 solve all the problems and we, we're going to
2 raise education to the, the highest levels.
3 They didn't do it. They were going to have
4 accountability. What is their accountability?

5 MALE VOICE: Nothing.

6 MR. ALAN MAISEL: They put in a principal
7 who was an absolute disaster.

8 FEMALE VOICE: Uh-huh.

9 MR. ALAN MAISEL: From day one, practically,
10 the community of P.S. 114 complained about this
11 principal. The Department of Ed was aware of
12 these complaints. It took five years to remove
13 a principal who forgot to have a graduation
14 scheduled for her school.

15 [Crosstalk]

16 MR. ALAN MAISEL: This is a principal that
17 the Department of Ed is now using. Her failures
18 are now going to be the failures of your
19 children and of the teachers. It was their
20 failure, not your school's failure. It was
21 their failure.

22 FEMALE VOICE: Yep.

23 MR. ALAN MAISEL: There is no accountability
24 here.

25 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

1 [Applause]

2 [Crosstalk]

3 MR. ALAN MAISEL: - - accountability, they
4 were all--

5 [Crosstalk]

6 MR. ALAN MAISEL: But their accountability,
7 their version of accountability is, is that we
8 close the school. As Councilman Barron said, 91
9 schools, if I were the CEO of a company and I
10 had people under me come to me and say, you
11 know, we have to close factories and we have to
12 close stores because they're underperforming,
13 I'd fire them.

14 What has Chancellor Klein done? We can't
15 blame Cathy Black here. What has Chancellor
16 Klein done? All he knew how to do was to close
17 schools. He didn't know how to support schools.
18 He didn't know how to do anything to raise their
19 performance. All he knew was to close schools.
20 And why? Because his commitment was not to the
21 public schools, his commitment was to charter
22 schools.

23 [Crosstalk]

24 MR. ALAN MAISEL: Because DOE--

25 [Applause]

1 MR. ALAN MAISEL: --have decided that the
2 only way they are going to get rid of the
3 teacher's union, get rid of collective
4 bargaining, bring us back to the 19th century
5 where no one had any kind of employee rights,
6 the only way we can do that is dissecting the
7 New York City Board of Education and its
8 schools.

9 So you close 91 schools and you declare that
10 the teachers in those schools, some of them were
11 incompetent and that's the reason why the kids
12 weren't doing well. But you know what, it
13 wasn't the teachers, it was the people and the--
14 whose vision it was, your vision--I don't know
15 if you were around at the time, but it was the
16 vision of the Department of Ed that made it
17 impossible for schools like this to succeed.

18 Because if you've already decided to close
19 the school and you've already decided you
20 weren't going to do anything to help them.
21 Well, of course they were going to lose, uh,
22 out. What you are doing is contemptible because
23 you put the blame on people who had no control
24 over anything.

25 FEMALE VOICE: A shame.

1 MR. ALAN MAISEL: You put the blame on
2 people who worked very, very hard to try to make
3 this school the best that it could be.

4 FEMALE VOICE: Right. Right.

5 MALE VOICE: Yeah, right.

6 [Crosstalk]

7 MR. ALAN MAISEL: Because you had already
8 decided, whether it was two years ago or three
9 years ago, we've got to make room for charter
10 schools. And that's all this is about is making
11 room for charter schools.

12 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

13 MR. ALAN MAISEL: And Cathy Black, or
14 whoever replaces Cathy Black, it doesn't really
15 matter because she's following Mayor Bloomberg
16 dictates.

17 FEMALE VOICE: Right. Right.

18 MR. ALAN MAISEL: This is all about what
19 Mayor Bloomberg wants. It's not about what you
20 want. And all the people who are involved in
21 the decision, they are all basically doing this
22 elite. You got the charter schools. It gets
23 rid of the unions, get rid of teacher
24 organizations, get rid of, uh, bargaining
25 rights. Because we're going to tell you what to

1 do. So if you have a complaint against a
2 principal, this is the future. If you have a
3 complaint against a principal, in this new world
4 of Mayor Bloomberg, you better not, because a
5 principal will fire you if you disagree with
6 them.

7 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

8 [Crosstalk]

9 MR. ALAN MAISEL: And that's what
10 Penaherrera did. She drove teachers out of the
11 school because she couldn't agree with them.
12 And you're going to use her tenure as an excuse
13 to close this school down. For shame on you.

14 FEMALE VOICE: Shame.

15 [Cheering]

16 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: The next speaker is
17 Councilman Lew Fidler.

18 MALE VOICE: Yeah.

19 [Applause]

20 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: I'm glad you guys brought
21 the mike down here. I prefer to be with the
22 people that I represent.

23 [Applause]

24 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: - - very, very special
25 opportunity - - . You almost never--I'm not

1 sure about never--have had the opportunity to
2 stand up in public and say I agreed with every
3 word that Charles Barron said.

4 [Applause]

5 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: If Charles knew I was
6 going to say that, he probably would have
7 stayed.

8 [Laughter]

9 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: You know, Deputy
10 Chancellor, the last time I was in this building
11 was earlier this year when we cut the ribbon the
12 library. It was a library that was funded with
13 Reso A money that I provided through the City
14 Council.

15 I--prior to meeting with, uh, your
16 colleagues earlier this week, I did a quick
17 check and over the short time that I've been the
18 Councilman, actually for across the street from
19 114, this building is in Charles' district, I
20 provided over a million dollars of capital
21 funding to this school alone.

22 [Applause]

23 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: That doesn't, that
24 doesn't include the after school program, uh, a
25 number of cultural programs that I've supplied,

1 all of which DOE should really be doing, you
2 know, and I don't say this, you know, for a, you
3 know, a hearty pat on the back. I say it
4 because I want you to know that I put my money
5 where my mouth is. I believe in our public
6 schools. I really do. My kids went to public
7 school. I went to public school. My mother was
8 the PTA of every--the president of every school
9 I went to and--

10 [Applause]

11 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: I remember the day when
12 the principal of the school used to quake in his
13 or her boots when the PTA president walked in.

14 [Laughter]

15 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: But, you know, the, the
16 Assemblyman talked about how teachers are
17 disregarded, and they are, but you've, you've
18 disregarded parents in this process from day
19 one.

20 [Applause]

21 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: And I understand, you
22 know, the dog and pony show that's going on here
23 tonight. And the Assemblyman and I were both
24 plaintiffs in the lawsuit that stopped you from
25 closing 19 schools last year. And so this year

1 you're going to make sure you don't make any
2 legal mistakes. I would rather you not make a
3 moral mistake as well.

4 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

5 [Applause]

6 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: You've heard from my
7 colleagues and the parents what happened here.
8 And there's a legal doctrine that's called clean
9 hands, that when you come in and you want to do
10 something equitable, you need to show the court
11 that you have clean hands. DOE does not have
12 clean hands with P.S. 114.

13 FEMALE VOICE: It does not--

14 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

15 [Applause]

16 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: Miss, Miss Penaherrera
17 was a product of your Principal Leadership
18 Cabinet.

19 [Crosstalk]

20 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: She came into this
21 school, mismanaged it in ways that you're aware
22 of: overspent the budget; hired four assistant
23 principals at the same time and two network
24 supports, whatever those are supposed, one of
25 whom told you guys that she was in over her

1 head; failed, as the Assemblyman mentioned, to
2 schedule a graduation ceremony one year. What
3 more did you guys need to know about what she
4 was doing here?

5 And I think at some point during those five
6 years, P.S. 114 hit the secret list of DOE, this
7 school is to be closed. And you followed Miss
8 Penaherrera, and this is--actually this is one
9 of my favorite stories--with Ms. Brouchard
10 [phonetic].

11 And I hadn't met Ms. Brouchard, but I'm
12 guessing that she had some idea that I had
13 delivered close to a million dollars to the
14 school that she was coming into. And when we
15 were having a problem with our after school
16 program, she was threatening to close it down.
17 Why? I can't imagine why you would want to
18 close down an after school program in a school.
19 And so I called her. And before she said hello
20 to me, she asked me whether I was tape recording
21 the conversation.

22 [Laughter]

23 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: I mean, that's a hell of
24 a way to say hello to your City Councilman. But
25 it suggested to me that you guys sent Ms.

1 Brouchard in here to chronicle all of the
2 things that were wrong with this building to
3 justify the decision to go on and vote for a
4 couple of weeks from now.

5 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

6 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: And so, you don't come
7 with clean hands into the process. And I, you
8 know, I, I would say this, that you have an
9 opportunity here. You really do.

10 I was as unhappy as many of the people in
11 this room are with the appointment of the new
12 chancellor. But you know what, I give everybody
13 an opportunity to succeed or fail before I
14 condemn that person.

15 And I was hoping, and we ask, Assemblyman
16 Maisel, Senator Sampson, Councilman Barron and I
17 asked for an opportunity to sit down and to
18 speak to the chancellor and just to explain to
19 her that the failure of the agency she now
20 heads, was responsible for why we're here now.
21 And to see whether or not she was going to
22 exercise independent judgment to say, you know
23 what, you guys are right; we did the wrong thing
24 in P.S. 114. We didn't get that meeting.

25 But you had an opportunity, Deputy

1 Chancellor, and I do have great respect for
2 you. You have an opportunity to go back to the
3 chancellor and tell her what happened here.
4 This school lost Project Read, lost Project
5 Math, lost its gifted program, lost two guidance
6 counselors, lost half of its gym teachers, lost
7 dozens of other things because of the
8 mismanagement of the principal you sent here.

9 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

10 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: And it's not like the
11 teachers and the parents didn't tell you so.
12 And now we're here.

13 Now, before I finish, I just want to say
14 something. There, there, I know there are some
15 parents that are here because they've been
16 enticed by the charter school. I'm sure. And
17 some of you may even live in the neighborhood.
18 But I just want to say to you that you wouldn't
19 be here interested in a charter school if the
20 school that was here hadn't been failed by them.

21 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

22 [Applause]

23 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: You would be just as
24 happy with 100 years worth of parents who sent
25 their kids to this school successfully if they

1 hadn't destroyed it. So we're not against
2 you. I'm not for charter schools. Everybody,
3 you know, who hears me knows that. You know, I
4 agree with the Assemblyman completely. It's
5 their agenda and it's union busting. We all
6 know that.

7 But we've asked for an opportunity. We're,
8 we're making you an offer that if you work with
9 this community and you work with all the elected
10 officials, if you work with the teachers here
11 and the teacher's union here, we can turn this
12 school around in two years.

13 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

14 MALE VOICE: Yes.

15 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: There's another way to do
16 it.

17 [Applause]

18 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: Thank you. Speaking
19 on behalf of State Senator John Sampson is
20 Brandon Bloomfield.

21 [Applause]

22 MR. BRANDON BLOOMFIELD: Good evening
23 everybody.

24 AUDIENCE: Good evening.

25 MR. BRANDON BLOOMFIELD: We've heard a lot

1 today, haven't we? A lot of your
2 representatives have worked very, very hard.
3 You might not see them every day, but I
4 represent one. You should listen on the phone
5 conversation that they had yesterday. Even
6 though we had a snowstorm, they were still
7 working, right, for you.

8 Everything that I could say, they have
9 already said. They've said so much to the DOE.
10 You've let them down; you let the community down
11 so much. There, there was no input from the
12 community at all. You say you worked with us
13 through outreach to the, um, to players, the
14 people who have invested. You haven't, because
15 if you did, you would heard, you would heard
16 this: the money that you're finding for the
17 charter school and the resources you're giving
18 them you could have gave them here.

19 [Applause]

20 MR. BRANDON BLOOMFIELD: You cut the head
21 off of the school.

22 [Applause]

23 MR. BRANDON BLOOMFIELD: You cut the head
24 off the school. You, you let them down with,
25 with the former principal. I don't even want to

1 say her name again. But you let them down,
2 right. But then you cut the legs off with the
3 resources, the programs, the after school, the
4 funding and then you want to know why the
5 attendance is down. What is enticing people to
6 come to this school when you, when you took away
7 everything from them.

8 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

9 MR. BRANDON BLOOMFIELD: The parents can't
10 trust what the DOE put in. They're not
11 investing the proper tools to keep up. Charter
12 schools aren't the own--aren't the answer, but
13 this seems to be your only answer.

14 What else? That's what we're asking, 'cause
15 charter schools are also on your failing list as
16 well. So what happens after this one fails?
17 What happens after that Plan A doesn't work?
18 What's Plan B? We need another choice. It's
19 not only charter schools.

20 The parents are outraged. The electeds who
21 represent them have told you we're here as that
22 this process is, is, is, is an exercise in
23 futility. It's, it doesn't work. You already
24 told us. We don't agree with what you just
25 said. We're going to agree to disagree and our-

1 -your opinion is the only one that counts.
2 How is that teaching--what are you teaching the
3 children in here today? You're teaching them
4 that you're not owning up to your own mistakes.
5 You're not abiding by your own rules.

6 The principal was removed from a school.
7 Isn't that a form of restructuring? Isn't that,
8 isn't a way that, okay, the school, it, it--we
9 made a mistake, the principal wasn't doing
10 right. We own them money. They owe us money
11 because of the failure, we did something wrong.
12 Own up to those mistakes. Own up to what you've
13 done in the past that isn't working. Charter
14 schools is not the only answer.

15 Senator Sampson and the elected officials
16 are dismayed. It's nothing--you're telling us
17 there's nothing you can do. You're going to do--
18 -you got to walk the walk. You got tell us
19 okay, we're going to do the legalities of it but
20 then, uh, we're going to do what we want to do
21 anyway. Your decision is not the only one. We
22 have to live with your decisions. It is our
23 children that are here. This is our community.
24 This is one of the oldest buildings here.

25 Take into account the environment. This

1 school has taken on so many kids that were
2 already, uh, already come from, from a, uh,
3 from, from another country. That they're not,
4 they're not--they, they already have, um, they
5 already have English as a second language.

6 So you take that into a fact and you grade
7 it. If they already have that in their
8 environment, of course it's going to add to a,
9 to a D. You don't have money. You're not
10 having the proper after school. Of course,
11 write that down. That's a good thing. Write,
12 write that down, because, oh yeah.

13 [Applause]

14 MR. BRANDON BLOOMFIELD: It doesn't make
15 sense. Everyone in here, you know, smarter than
16 a fifth grader, if, if that--one, one thing is
17 add it and subtract this and you're going to get
18 this number, maybe every case is not a case
19 study. You kill me with the case studies.
20 Because school children aren't products.
21 They're not magazines, like Charles Barron said,
22 right? The product is going to have variables
23 in it because they're humans.

24 Take into account the environment outside
25 the school, what's going in, and then what comes

1 out. Look at it from the human perspective
2 and see the mistakes that you've made. Don't
3 just say, oh, we made the mistake. We're going
4 to disagree and then fall back and say, oh, but
5 we're going to do this anyway. It's pointless.
6 You're taking the power away from the people.
7 Thank you.

8 [Applause]

9 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: The next speaker is
10 the Assistant Majority Leader for the New York
11 State Assembly, N. Nick Perry.

12 [Applause]

13 MR. N. NICK PERRY: Good evening.

14 AUDIENCE: Good evening.

15 MR. N. NICK PERRY: I'm really pleased to
16 see that there are so many parents out here
17 tonight, even with the inclement weather,
18 because that makes a big statement, and I hope
19 the folks here from DOE pay some attention to
20 that and take it as an indication that you're
21 not ready to give us on P, P.S. 114.

22 I know that we call this process we're doing
23 here this evening, and if you really think about
24 it, it would appear like it's a fancy name: a
25 public hearing. Because the folks from DOE,

1 they're really here to pay their last rites.

2 FEMALE VOICE: Uh-huh.

3 [Laughter]

4 MR. N. NICK PERRY: This is supposed to be a
5 funeral.

6 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

7 MR. N. NICK PERRY: Because they, a long
8 time ago, even though they knew that the school
9 was ailing, they did nothing about it, nothing.
10 They put in an order: do not resuscitate.

11 [Laughter]

12 [Applause]

13 MR. N. NICK PERRY: Because somewhere in
14 those ivory towers of the Tweed Building, a
15 decision was made that they were going to get
16 rid of this school. And nobody, I mean you
17 can't make this up.

18 How do you get the reports coming in to you
19 year after year, the parents, they plead with
20 you year after year. You got all of that data
21 and you don't do nothing and then you issue this
22 nice report this school is failing and it can't-
23 -it won't improve and we pay big bucks to those
24 folks. They're high paying consultants,
25 millions and millions of dollars. And they are

1 supposed to be advising the chancellor,
2 telling him how to run this system. All those
3 smart folks, and they couldn't see that this
4 school would not survive without some help, I
5 mean some real help. It just shakes my
6 imagination. No wonder, maybe because of his
7 conscience he quit. Because one more that isn't
8 here tonight.

9 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

10 FEMALE VOICE: That's right

11 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

12 MR. N. NICK PERRY: Mr. Klein.

13 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

14 MR. N. NICK PERRY: Because he was head of
15 the ship and I think he should take full
16 responsibility for all that happened in the
17 attempt to kill this patient.

18 So you're here for the funeral. But the
19 parents are here to tell you that they're
20 willing to blow some breath of life into what
21 you think is dead. And if you listen to the
22 parents, if this is indeed what the process
23 before, uh, purports it to be, where you listen
24 and then you make your decision, then you'll
25 want to listen and you'll want to consider that.

1 Because of your failures, the community
2 shouldn't punished. Because of your failures,
3 you shouldn't write out a school with a, with a
4 proud history of good performance where there
5 are lots of loyal graduates.

6 People in this community want to have a
7 school where their kids can come here, those
8 bright eyes and smiling faces that dream of
9 being great leaders, great artists, great
10 doctors. Those dreams they can realize right
11 here at the Ryder School.

12 And so, I want to admonish you to rethink
13 that plan. It's not too late to blow a little
14 oxygen into this patient because you have the
15 money to do it, but you decide to spend it
16 elsewhere. And the parents are here to let you
17 know that they're not so pleased with that. And
18 they also want to say shame on you.

19 [Applause]

20 [Crosstalk]

21 MR. N. NICK PERRY: And, you know, the most
22 frustrating thing for my experience for me in
23 public life and activism is to sit before a
24 school board and try to make a point when they
25 already had the meeting earlier in the evening

1 and voted and decided what the vote was going
2 to be. That's very frustrating. And folks are
3 looking at you and hoping that that's not the
4 case, even though we don't have a lot of, uh,
5 uh, reasons to think otherwise.

6 But surprise us. You go back to, to, to, to
7 the Tweed Building and you tell that new
8 chancellor that you think we should change the--
9 they should change their minds and give the
10 parents a chance to rebuild this school because
11 we ain't done yet.

12 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

13 MR. N. NICK PERRY: Thank you.

14 [Applause]

15 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: We're going to move to
16 our, our public comment section of the evening.
17 Um, so a couple of things; one is, uh, we have
18 about 35 folks who have signed up to speak. Um,
19 what we're going to ask is that you, you keep to
20 two minutes. Um, I know that two minutes
21 doesn't sound like a lot of time but you do get
22 a lot to say in that time. Um, um, so if, if
23 you don't know me, I, I am a lenient person with
24 time. Okay, I was an English teacher.

25 Um, but, but I'm asking that--and I know

1 that we want to make sure everybody has the
2 opportunity to speak and also we want to make
3 sure that there's actually equity in voice and,
4 and I know that, uh, I know that folks have a
5 lot to say. We're going to ask you really to
6 try as much as you can to keep it within the two
7 minutes. Um, and that will, that will, uh, that
8 will give us about, I'm saying about an hour and
9 a half, an hour and 45 minutes for the public
10 comment section. Okay?

11 Um, we'll have somebody giving you a heads
12 up when you have 30 seconds left and time's up.
13 And then I'll give you a little bit more time to
14 make sure you have--if you, if you weren't able
15 to finish, to gently say that you need to wrap
16 it up. I try to be gentle. Um, and--but I
17 appreciate your, your cooperation in that.

18 Okay, so what we're going to do is have
19 folks come over here and line up. We'll start
20 with--everybody received a number to speak if
21 you signed up. We'll start with numbers 1 to
22 10.

23 [Background noise]

24 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: Um, the other thing
25 I'd like to say is, um, that while, while we

1 have a speaker at, um, over here sharing their
2 thoughts and feelings, I'll ask if, if the group
3 that we're, we're all respectful and that we
4 listen. Okay, I'd appreciate that. Thank you
5 very much. Our first speaker?

6 [Background noise]

7 Ms. ALLY BALL: All right, good evening
8 everyone. My name is Ally Ball [phonetic]. And
9 I'm a Haitian American teacher and parent.
10 Today I'm speaking to you not only as an
11 educator but more importantly as a parent.

12 I believe that all children should be
13 afforded a developmentally and age appropriate
14 education. Every child should be given
15 opportunities to strive and succeed in their
16 school. It is crucial that parents and students
17 are given a choice to receive a quality
18 education. It is critical that we're thinking
19 of the students and the needs of the P.S. 115
20 community. Every second counts--

21 [Background noise]

22 MALE VOICE: We're 114.

23 [Background noise]

24 MS. ALLY BALL: 114.

25 MALE VOICE: They'll close them next year.

1 [Laughter]

2 MS. ALLY BALL: Every second counts and we
3 have no time to waste when it comes to our
4 children's future. As in the words of Hillary
5 Clinton, it takes a village to raise a child.
6 Let's give this community the option to decide
7 their child's educational fate. Thank you.

8 [Applause]

9 [Background noise]

10 MS. SUZANNE LOPEZ: Good evening everyone.
11 My name is Suzanne Lopez [phonetic] and I'm a
12 teacher and a parent in Brooklyn. I come to you
13 not only as a teacher but as a parent who has
14 been fortunate to experience what it is like for
15 my son to be part of a school that truly cares
16 and supports its education growth. Every parent
17 deserves to feel that their child is receiving
18 the best that life has to offer.

19 My son attends a public school in Brooklyn,
20 not a charter school, and I am happy that he's
21 excelling. The only thing that matters to me is
22 that he's getting the best education. If his
23 school was not providing an excellent education,
24 I would want to have the option of giving him
25 another opportunity. This is the point that you

1 are at now.

2 As a teacher, I want to say that time is
3 very important when it comes to educating a
4 child. You and your children deserve the best
5 because your future and the future of our nation
6 depend on their success. Demand the best for
7 your children because time lost can never be
8 regained. It is up to you to provide them with
9 what they truly deserve, an excellent public
10 education and a chance for a successful future.
11 This is about the children, it's not about us.

12 FEMALE VOICE: Not as long as we're--

13 [Crosstalk]

14 [Applause]

15 FEMALE VOICE: Charter schools, we don't
16 want none.

17 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: Good evening everyone.
18 I'm Scott Schwartz [phonetic], phys ed teacher
19 at P.S. 114. And first, I would like to
20 acknowledge the backbone of our school, which
21 would be the parents and the students. It is so
22 great to see you here tonight, and it's so great
23 to see so many--

24 [Applause]

25 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: It is so great to see

1 so many former students here that have gone on
2 to do great things. The first thing I would
3 like to know, you too, Joy, the first thing I
4 would like to know is where was this hearing
5 five years ago when we needed it?

6 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

7 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

8 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: Why is this hearing
9 taking place now when it's almost too late?
10 Where was this hearing five years ago?

11 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

12 [Applause]

13 FEMALE VOICE: I will say..

14 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: I would also like to
15 throw a number out. The number is \$128,000.
16 That is the salary that Maria Penaherrera,
17 former principal of 114 is collecting now as an
18 AP in the Bronx.

19 FEMALE VOICE: For shame.

20 [Background noise]

21 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

22 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: I find that hard to
23 believe and I hope you're garnishing some of her
24 wages to pay us back.

25 [Laughter]

1 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

2 [Applause]

3 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: You know, the stories
4 you're going to hear tonight sound like fiction.
5 Believe me, they're facts, and they were written
6 by the Department of Education and Maria
7 Penaherrera. And I am not ready to close the
8 chapter at 114. Do you know who ran this school
9 for five years? Right over here.

10 FEMALE VOICE: She did.

11 [Applause]

12 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: Half the time we didn't
13 know where the principal was.

14 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

15 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: Where was she? Was she
16 sleeping in the office?

17 FEMALE VOICE: Yes-

18 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: Was her train late?
19 Was she feeding the dogs? Nobody knows where
20 she was. But you know why they kept her--

21 FEMALE VOICE: - - upstairs.

22 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: They kept her because
23 our grade was a B. Do you know why our grade
24 was B?

25 MALE VOICE: The teachers.

1 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: That's why our grade
2 was a B.

3 [Background noise]

4 [Applause]

5 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: So how can you blame
6 the same teachers that got the B, that are the
7 same teachers here now, working just as hard and
8 they got a D. You know why? Because you failed
9 us.

10 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

11 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: You failed to provide
12 the proper resources.

13 [Applause]

14 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: If we had the proper
15 resources, we could have gotten that grade. It
16 is unbelievable to me that the people at the
17 Department of Education could put their heads
18 down on their pillows at night.

19 [Background noise]

20 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: You were warned about
21 this principal and did nothing about it. I'll
22 say two more things. I'm can't; my time's up.

23 [Laughter]

24 [Background noise]

25 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: I need my glasses for a

1 second.

2 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: I said we would go
3 three minutes.

4 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: Nah, - - .

5 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: Thank you.

6 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: You know, two last
7 things. The people never want hear about Maria
8 Penaherrera. We know it's a broken story, but
9 it is the truth. And the height of hypocrisy is
10 this: our former chancellor, Chancellor Klein,
11 who wants to take away our pensions, the day he,
12 the day he retired from the Department of
13 Education, walked into the pension office, filed
14 his papers for pension and after eight and a
15 half years of service, got \$38,000. So if we
16 got to give up our pension, he's got to give up
17 your pens--his pension.

18 [Applause]

19 MR. SCOTT SCHWARTZ: And parents, again, I
20 want to thank you for your support. And you
21 know what, all of the children deserve phys ed
22 and because of what's going on here, only half
23 of them get it. Thank you.

24 [Applause]

25 MS. MARLENE NEED: Good night everyone.

1 FEMALE VOICE: Good night.

2 MS. MARLENE NEED: Special welcome to all
3 the parents. My name Marlene Need [phonetic]
4 and I'm a teacher at P.S. 114. And I'm, I'm the
5 first of three people who--uh, speakers who
6 address the DOE's data inconsistencies. I am
7 going to speak especially about the quality
8 review reports. There are several misleading
9 interpretations that formed by the DOE regarding
10 the data for P.S. 114. I would like to speak
11 about the errors and omissions that were made,
12 as well as some of the much needed clarity.

13 As part of the evisent--evidence presented
14 in support of closing P.S. 114, the DOE
15 represents the quality in the grades,
16 specifically in 2006-2007, the school is rated
17 as proficient with significant strengths in
18 professional development. In 2007-2008, the
19 school is rated under development, under
20 develop, but with official features. In 208,
21 209, the school is rated under developed.

22 However, it should be noted that the
23 reviewer in his opening paragraph, and I would
24 quote, "although the school is underdeveloped
25 overall, there are effective teachers and is

1 practices that provide a basis on which to
2 build." He goes on to say: encouragingly, some
3 teachers have begun to develop strategies for
4 understanding students' learnings. This
5 reflects the real intent demonstrated by
6 teachers who are concerned in improving
7 students' achievement which is validated by the
8 positive attitudes to learning demonstrated by
9 the students.

10 This is hard to miss, yet the DOE does not
11 mention it. These quality review grades do not
12 reflect a pattern of failure. When speaking of
13 leadership, the reviewers say that the key
14 reason that the school is underdeveloped is the
15 weakness that exists in management structures
16 and in the whole school planning.

17 Comments about what the school does well
18 consistently praised the teachers and the
19 students. Comments about what the school needs
20 to improve overwhelmingly refer to the school
21 leadership. For the year 2009-2010, according,
22 according to the review could not be conducted
23 due to the fact that there were three different
24 principals within one year.

25 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

1 MS. MARLENE NEED: Imagine that. A
2 building cannot expect to thrive without stable
3 leadership. This is the result of the DOE's
4 failure to act on the former principal's
5 mismanagement. We certainly do not need to
6 upset the lives of all our students, parents and
7 staff by closing P.S. 114. Therefore, we ask
8 you to review the situation and consider before
9 you make the serious decision to close our
10 school. I thank you.

11 [Applause]

12 FEMALE VOICE: Good evening. I am a parent
13 here in this district and in this school
14 specifically. Three of my children have come
15 through this building. I am also a teacher here
16 at P.S. 114. According to the New York State
17 Education Department, P.S. 114 is rated as being
18 in good standing and has been for the past
19 several years.

20 [Applause]

21 FEMALE VOICE: Now this is documented on the
22 DOE website. Yet, according to the City of New
23 York's Department of Education, P.S. 114 is
24 performing below standard. Why are the city and
25 state guidelines not aligned? Students must

1 meet state standards, pass state exams, and,
2 and receive their high school diplomas from the
3 State of New York. Teachers must be licensed
4 and certified by the state in accordance with
5 federal guidelines.

6 FEMALE VOICE: Uh-huh.

7 FEMALE VOICE: We must align our lessons and
8 curriculum to the state standards. If we must
9 align ourselves to the state, why is not the
10 city doing the same? Why is the city being
11 allowed to supersede the state? Closing 114 is
12 another example of the DOE's contradictory
13 practices. The state measures a school in good
14 standing based on adequate yearly progress, a
15 statistical and objective measure. The city
16 measures a school based on the progress report
17 and quality review, subjective measures.

18 The leading--the learning environment survey
19 is part of the progress report. Our last
20 several surveys reflected a desire to show a
21 need for support. If we had not honestly voiced
22 our opinions on the survey, our grade would have
23 been higher.

24 No quality review of P.S. 114 was done last
25 year, due to our having an interim acting

1 principal. So the decision to phase out 114
2 is based only on the progress report. There was
3 no chance for a quality review to show our
4 attempts last year to address weaknesses in
5 previous quality reviews. Therefore, only one
6 out of three total measures was used to make
7 this decision. Yet, according to the EIS, no
8 single criteria leads to a phase out.

9 The state attempts to turn around a failing
10 school over three years, corrective action is
11 taken, professional development is offered,
12 there are teacher centers manned by a staff
13 developer, there are visits to other schools to
14 view best practices. None of these were given
15 to 114. The city's attempts to turn around a
16 failing school seem to be a fast track for
17 closure within one year. The same professional
18 development given to all other city schools: not
19 specifically addressing our needs, no mentoring,
20 no viewing of best practices.

21 There are schools in this district that are
22 not in good standing with the state and have not
23 been for years. They are not slated for
24 closure. Why 114? There are 23 elementary
25 schools with lower proper support scores and

1 percentile rankings than 114. How are you
2 making these decisions? What is the real reason
3 you're closing 114?

4 [Applause]

5 BARBARA: Good evening. My name is Barbara
6 - - and I am the second speaker who will be
7 addressing the overview of the progress report.
8 And if you just give me time, I'm going to read
9 it. I would like to speak about the progress
10 report for P.S. 114 and the misleading
11 conclusion drawn by the DOE.

12 It used to be that a school had to have a
13 substantial history of failing grades before
14 such drastic actions were taken. There is no
15 such history at P.S. 114. The amended EIS
16 refers to the 2009-2010 private support score of
17 the DE. It must be noted that for 2008 and for
18 2007, the school received overall grades of B.

19 One D does not indicate [background noise].
20 The overall D, along with student performance
21 and student progress reflects change in the
22 scoring - - that was not taken into account and
23 properly weighed. Results are therefore
24 misleading. It is simply a reflection of a
25 chance in scoring criteria.

1 The only unbreakable pattern that can be
2 noted is in the subsection of the school
3 environment which is a direct result of parent
4 and teacher surveys. What is clear on the
5 subjective and subsection is that the fact that
6 both parents and teachers have deep concerns
7 about the school environment which is directly
8 attributable to the school's prior leadership.

9 Parents and teachers have been grading the
10 school environment this way for three years as a
11 cry for help. When the former principal was
12 replaced in 2009, the new principal was shocked
13 to find that there was no comprehensive
14 educational plan, no safety plan, and no chain
15 of command in its place. This was solely the
16 responsibility of the former principal.

17 And finally, what is not so clear from the
18 above grades is that the, um, what's not so
19 clear is the direction in--I'm sorry--deception
20 embedded in the 2009 and 2010 progress report.
21 Student performance was rated F and students'
22 progress was rated D. These grades are notably
23 lower than the previous years' which were B.
24 They were, um, unfairly skewed due to the fact,
25 or due to the recent changes to testing,

1 content, format, grading, new scorings and
2 cutoffs. These grades do not reflect a pattern
3 of failure.

4 [Applause]

5 MS. LINDA KELLY: Good evening everybody.
6 My name is Linda Kelly [phonetic]. I'm a
7 teacher here at 114. I'm here this evening to
8 talk to you about the inconsistencies involved
9 in communicating to the community the, um,
10 educational impact plan.

11 This, um, communication that went out to the
12 community, I found confusing and misleading. It
13 would seem that the decision to phase out P.S.
14 114 and phase in another school and a charter
15 school was made long before the community was
16 informed. Meetings were called with little or
17 no notice to parents. Information at these
18 meetings was not forthcoming. The community
19 comments at these meetings were not welcomed.

20 There were four versions of this plan. How
21 can we fairly evaluate this plan, which has
22 already changed, and it changed four times in
23 one month? No documents were translated for our
24 sizable non-English speaking parent population.
25 Inaccurate facts, statements and notices were

1 sent home, but the complete EIS documents were
2 not sent home. Parents were advised that they
3 could view the ESI online but many do not have
4 access.

5 For EIS versions dated this December 17th
6 and December 29th, 2010 and January 12th, 2011,
7 no copies were made available in the main office
8 for the parents. The website had the December
9 17th original version posted until January 14th.
10 The community was kept in the dark and was not
11 properly updated as substantial changes were
12 made.

13 I know I have no more time left. I just
14 want to say that I find this very appalling that
15 they didn't communicate to the community what
16 was really going on. The document itself is
17 very difficult to read that they sent home. It
18 was in small print. It was printed on the back
19 and the front. And every time it was updated,
20 it looked the same. I had kids in my class tell
21 me: but Mrs. Kelly, you gave this to me
22 yesterday. I had to tell them you have to take
23 it home anyway, it changed.

24 It was, it was not right. It's just not
25 fair.

1 [Applause]

2 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: Before our next
3 speakers, if folks with the numbers 11 to 20
4 could come to, to--over here to, to speak, 11 to
5 20.

6 [Background noise]

7 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: Thank you. We'll have
8 our next speaker.

9 MS. MARIE BLACK: Thank you. Good evening
10 everyone.

11 FEMALE VOICE: Good evening.

12 MS. MARIE BLACK: My name is Marie Black
13 [phonetic]. I'm one of the technology teachers
14 in P.S. 114. And I'm proud to say I've been
15 here for 20 years.

16 [Applause]

17 MS. MARIE BLACK: And I think it's so, so
18 very true that all of us as parents and teachers
19 want the best and we want to raise the bar for
20 our students. You all agree with that, correct?

21 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

22 MS. MARIE BLACK: Yes. What we're talking
23 about is the purpose, the purposes of measuring
24 progress from year to year. You can't
25 accurately do that when the cutoff scores to

1 measure the proficiency have changed. In
2 2008-2009 and earlier, a student needed a scale,
3 a scale score of 650 in order to reach
4 proficiency in ELA and math. In 2009-2010,
5 students need either to reach a higher scale to
6 be considered proficient.

7 For example, on grade three, our first
8 testing grade, the scale score in ELA was raised
9 to 662 and 684 in math. So to measure true
10 progress, at least for these two years, we need
11 to measure both by the same cutoff.

12 When we look at the 2009-2010 scores, based
13 on the 2008 cutoff of 650, we find that our
14 students' proficiency was actually much higher.
15 The ELA proficiency rank jumped from a
16 misleading 35 percent to 61.2 percent when
17 properly measured against the same standards in
18 the prior year. For math also, the jump would
19 be from 34 percent to 77.7.

20 In conclusion, I'm going to jump to the very
21 last part. Our goal is for all of our students
22 to reach proficiency. To reach this goal, we
23 need a guarantee from the DOE that they will
24 live up to their commitment of a quality
25 education for every student. Thank you very

1 much.

2 [Applause]

3 MS. JACKIE STANDARDS: Good evening. My
4 name is Jackie Standards [phonetic]. I'm a
5 member of the Canarsie community and I have been
6 a member of Canarsie community for the majority
7 of my life. I attended P.S. 115 on to I.S. 211
8 and even attended Canarsie High School.

9 I'm an educator and as an educator, I
10 believe that each and every one of our students
11 deserve an outstanding, outstanding public
12 education. Um, no one views success as failure-
13 -failure as success. Failure is failure and
14 success is success.

15 Um, as parents, we always want our children
16 to go out and do their best. No one says, hey,
17 go have a good day, be the best failure you can
18 be. That's not what we want for our children.
19 We want the best.

20 If we decide that we want the best for them,
21 then we should keep their, their best interests
22 in mind at all times. Um, with that said, it's
23 not about a school's legacy. It's not about a
24 school's name or a school's type; it's about
25 what's best for our kids.

1 If we say we want them to have the best
2 education, then we're sending them to a school
3 where they're being provided with that
4 education. Um, it is only my hope that students
5 at Canarsie can have the same experience that I
6 have had each day for my education. I've always
7 felt prepared for the stage. Leaving elementary
8 school, I was prepared for junior high school.
9 Leaving junior high school, I was prepared for
10 high school and leaving high school, I was
11 prepared for college.

12 It's only, it's only necessary that our
13 students deserve the same experience.
14 Therefore, it's my opinion that they deserve
15 that option. They deserve to have the option to
16 go to a school that is performing, that is, um,
17 excelling because we want what's best for them.

18 The question is not why, but more
19 importantly, more importantly, why not. Thank
20 you.

21 [Applause]

22 MR. RICH MANTEL: Hi, my name is Rich Mantel
23 [phonetic]. I'm a teacher. I'm also a product
24 of District 18 schools. I went to P.S. 115,
25 I.S. 68 and South Shore. I actually agree;

1 every child does deserve a great education,
2 which is why it's a sin that you guys failed the
3 children of this school.

4 [Applause]

5 MR. RICH MANTEL: I have been actively
6 involved informing the Department of Education
7 about all the problems in this building. I met
8 with superintendents, - - that was five
9 reorganizations ago. And you know what they all
10 said when I complained about the principal that
11 was here? They said Rich, you're right. But
12 there's nothing we could do. And you went back
13 to headquarters in the ivory tower of Tweed and
14 you did nothing, nothing.

15 And now we're paying the price. This school
16 was--the principal overspent her budget by
17 \$180,000. And you know how you helped her? You
18 made a payment plan for the school. They had to
19 pay back \$45,000 a year, each year for four
20 years, and you cut services.

21 So you tell me, how are you helping
22 children? How are you giving children the best
23 opportunity available when because of that
24 programs were cut, services are cut, teachers
25 were excessed, extra--extracurricular activities

1 were cut. But, but yet you say that you
2 supported the school. That is an absolute joke.
3 That is a joke.

4 On top of that now, you say what's best for
5 the school community. Do you know how many ELL
6 kids this school community has? 102, 102 ELL
7 kids, okay? Charter schools historically rarely
8 have ever serviced ELL kids. The only stats I
9 could find on Explore were that they have
10 serviced two ELL kids that I could find that's
11 available. Two. So what's going to happen if
12 you have 100 from P.S. 114?

13 Where are they going? They're not going to
14 be given this chance for this great education we
15 heard about. Where are they going? Are they
16 going to be left to--you know, I got time. You
17 know, are they going to be left? For what? But
18 where is their chance for a great school?

19 Why don't you put the money where it
20 belongs, at 114, and let this school succeed?
21 Give the support you wouldn't give them. Why
22 not give them the money you're going to give the
23 charter school? There's - - .

24 [Applause]

25 MR. RICH MANTEL: One last thing. This

1 meeting was supposed to start at 6:00. You
2 didn't get here until 6:30. I think my time is
3 pretty important. I think everyone else's is
4 pretty important.

5 FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

6 MALE VOICE: Right.

7 [Background noise]

8 [Applause]

9 MR. RICH MANTEL: Just another example that
10 our Department of Ed doesn't care about the
11 public, just another example. And if you're a
12 teacher or an AP or a school aide in this
13 building, you get a letter to your file for
14 being a half hour late today.

15 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

16 MALE VOICE: Yeah.

17 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

18 [Applause]

19 MS. RHONDA TURNER: Good evening. Good
20 evening to all present. My name is Rhonda
21 Turner. And I, I'm a parent in this building.
22 I have been actually a parent continuously for
23 the past nine years. And I have seen this
24 school start from a magnet school down to where
25 it is today. And though the department has

1 claimed that they've implemented measures to
2 save that school, based on the facts that we've
3 heard tonight, and that's all been on the
4 website of the DO--DOE, it is my opinion, and
5 I'm sure the opinion of many here, that the DOE
6 has certainly failed the said people--

7 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

8 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

9 [Applause]

10 MS. RHONDA TURNER: This building has some
11 of the best and most dedicated teachers and
12 parents. And I know, and I trust by what we see
13 here tonight, and I have seen over the years
14 that they're here and they're going to put in
15 the effort to help and assist and make P.S. 114
16 back to where they were before or even better
17 than the DOE--

18 [Background noise]

19 [Applause]

20 MS. RHONDA TURNER: Parents and students in
21 this community deserve to have a school which
22 they can be, once again, proud of, a school from
23 pre-k to grade five and nothing less. This
24 community deserve to have P.S. 114 dedicated a
25 historic school void of being dissolved because

1 it has served this community for over 100
2 years. Therefore, extreme measures should be
3 placed by the DOE to help save us.

4 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

5 [Applause]

6 MS. RHONDA TURNER: How does a school come
7 from being a magnet school to a failing school?
8 The answer is simple, it is sabotaged by the
9 DOE.

10 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

11 MS. RHONDA TURNER: P.S. 114 a fair chance
12 to really turn things around. Thank you.

13 [Applause]

14 FEMALE VOICE: - - from 114.

15 [Background noise]

16 FEMALE VOICE: Let them hear every word you
17 have to say, baby, don't worry about the time.

18 FEMALE VOICE: Hello, ladies and gentlemen -
19 - . I'm a former graduate here of the year 2008
20 of 114 which I call my home. I want to give
21 thanks to my former teachers because they didn't
22 only teach--

23 [Background noise]

24 FEMALE VOICE: --but - - . Without them, I
25 wouldn't be here, achieving my goals in life,

1 achieving my goals in life. I was able to use
2 my performing art skills as well as the academic
3 skills - - .

4 FEMALE VOICE: Take your time.

5 FEMALE VOICE: - - . In my eyes, 114 is a
6 fine school.

7 [Applause]

8 [Background noise]

9 KEISHA: My name is Keisha and I'm a student
10 in P.S. 114. I just wanted to say this school
11 is a wonderful school. It's been standing nice
12 and strong for over 100 years. I started coming
13 to P.S. 114 in kindergarten. I'm the oldest of
14 two daughters and both my mother and I were
15 excited about my starting school. My sister is
16 now a second grader in this school. My mother
17 is a volunteer and my whole family is involved
18 in this school community.

19 Sad to say, this is my fifth and last year
20 in P.S. 114. I've had many wonderful
21 experiences in my school career. For example,
22 this past year, Ms. Shoenfell [phonetic], Ms.
23 Chinery [phonetic], Ms. Santana and Ms. Ward
24 Russell [phonetic] took 40 fifth graders on a
25 trip to Washington, D.C. where we visited the

1 White House and many other places.

2 And I think another exciting unusual
3 experience was a visit from the D.A. I'm
4 looking forward to wonderful things for my
5 gradation. Because of a wonderful education in
6 Ryder School, I was accepted to Urban Assembly
7 for Criminal Justice. I'm going to be a lawyer,
8 and I'm very proud of myself and my school.

9 [Applause]

10 KEISHA: I want to thank Ms. Rhode
11 [phonetic] and all the other teachers that
12 taught me by helping me throughout my school
13 year. And know this school is named after a
14 soldier. Don't phase this one out. Keep it
15 open.

16 FEMALE VOICE: Go girl.

17 [Applause]

18 [Background noise]

19 MS. CANDICE MARSHALL: Good evening
20 everyone. My name is Candice Marshall
21 [phonetic] and I'm a former student from 114. I
22 graduated here in 2008. My current school is -
23 - . While I'm here, I would like to thank all
24 of my former teachers, not only giving me the
25 best academic skills but they have given me life

1 lessons that carry me on and I wouldn't be
2 here where I am today without all of them.

3 Here in this school--

4 [Applause]

5 [Laughter]

6 MS. CANDICE MARSHALL: Here will always be
7 my first home, no matter where I go in life.
8 This will always be my first home.

9 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

10 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

11 FEMALE VOICE: Amen.

12 MS. CANDICE MARSHALL: Thanks to Ms. West--
13 [Laughter]

14 MS. CANDICE MARSHALL: --I've gained a
15 passion for dance. This stage is where I
16 started and where I realized where I want to be
17 in life. Um, here I feel comfortable, I feel at
18 home. Whether I know any kids in here or not,
19 they are family, I embrace them. They taught me
20 very well over the years being here.

21 And I said earlier, the fight is not over.
22 Even children that have passed and gone from
23 here, our hearts are still here and my heart
24 will always be here. No matter what the grade,
25 graduation rate, it doesn't matter. I'm here,

1 this school is here, my heart is here. Thank
2 you.

3 [Applause]

4 ELIZABETH: Hi, good night. My name is
5 Elizabeth [phonetic]. Um, I believe that my
6 daughter Quitay [phonetic] already said
7 everything. Mr. Kyle [phonetic] said the
8 majority of everything I needed to say.

9 Um, all I'm saying that is I've been at this
10 school for nine years. My daughter Quitay came
11 in as a gifted student. My daughter Tiesha
12 [phonetic], she took the gifted and talent thing
13 last year, and because of the phasing of the
14 gifted program, she wasn't able to enter the
15 gifted and talented class. Um, there were two
16 teachers that spoke: Ms., Ms. Mee [phonetic],
17 that was my daughter Quitay third grade teacher
18 and Ms. Escort [phonetic] is my second daughter
19 Tiesha. She's in--Tiesha's in second grade and
20 that's her teacher, Ms. Escort.

21 Um, I believe that P.S. 114 could fight the
22 fight because we've been here for so many years,
23 100 years and one--and the last question I want
24 to ask is if the DOE had all the, all the, all
25 the workers of the DOE, if they had their

1 student in P.S. 114, would you phase out P.S.
2 114. Thank you.

3 [Applause]

4 MS. ELIZABETH KING: My name is Elizabeth
5 King [phonetic]. I'm a fifth grade teacher here
6 at P.S. 114. I'm also a former student of the
7 gifted program in our school.

8 [Applause]

9 MS. ELIZABETH KING: I can't remember
10 exactly which seat I sat in, in 1974 in this
11 building that opened my love of learning, but
12 it's one of them.

13 Um, I am speaking on behalf of the community
14 that investigated budgets, budget mismanagement
15 and loss of services. Uh, we've spoken at
16 length about the mismanagement, but I do want to
17 focus on the services that were lost.

18 Our students no longer have Project Read and
19 Project Math after schools. Our students no
20 longer have literacy and math developers. This--
21 --our students--sorry. - - . Oh no, here, this
22 school lost testing coordinators, data
23 specialists, two of our best guidance
24 counselors. We lost our academic inter--
25 intervention teachers for students who needed

1 extra help in reading and math. There's been-
2 -there have been a considerable number of
3 teachers who were excessed over a two year
4 period. We have lost supplies such as
5 workbooks, manipulatives, and even copy supplies
6 and services.

7 The loss of extracurricular activities,
8 which are so important to our students were
9 lost. We used to have chess club. Not anymore.
10 We used to have drama club. Not anymore. We
11 used to have dance club. Not anymore. I don't
12 claim to be an art teacher. There are no visual
13 arts program in this school. Not anymore.

14 Schools to which we are compared still have
15 all these resources. Students at P.S. 114 are
16 not getting the services to which they are
17 entitled because the Department of Education
18 stood by and watched ineffectual principal drive
19 the school into the ground and did nothing about
20 it.

21 So let me just say one more thing. Um, we
22 have now--I think it's one in seven students in
23 this school is an ELA English language learner.

24 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

25 MS. ELIZABETH KING: Um, I have a number of

1 English language learners in my class, and you
2 want to tell me this school is failing, I've got
3 a whole class set of business letters that my
4 students wrote, articulate letters, persuasive
5 writing, in which they outline the reasons why
6 they want their school to stay open. So if you
7 tell me that learning is not happening here,
8 you're wrong.

9 [Applause]

10 MS. MOYA KALANI: Good evening everyone. My
11 name is Moya Kalani [phonetic]. I'm a parent of
12 District 18. And I'm also a parent of - - . I
13 want to greet the parents by saying to you when
14 you go home, make sure you let your children
15 know they have no faith that the Department of
16 Miseducation - - .

17 [Applause]

18 MS. MOYA KALANI: Uh, a lot of things were
19 said and not all factual. So much facts were
20 said and it doesn't make sense how you go for
21 them. Um, a lot of laws were stated. I'm not
22 going to go over that. As a parent and I'm
23 talking to the parents specifically here this
24 evening, we are not represented in the
25 Department of Miseducation. We are not

1 represented.

2 The teachers of the UFT union represent
3 staff. The principals have a union, CEC
4 [phonetic]. We are not represented. We are the
5 key holders in this school system and we are not
6 represented. I am saying to you if a
7 premeditated murder takes place, the penalty for
8 that is higher than murder that takes place or
9 self defense. This what take place here was
10 premeditated murder.

11 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

12 [Applause]

13 MS. MOYA KALANI: I am saying, I am saying
14 to you parents I'd like to be radical, I just
15 wish I had more with me. Why are we not suing
16 the Department of Miseducation for miseducating
17 our children?

18 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

19 [Applause]

20 MS. MOYA KALANI: - - in Albany, our
21 community, how are they going to help the
22 parents to form a union that they can be
23 represented for their children in this system.
24 Our children have no representation. It's time
25 we wake up and smell the coffee. It is time

1 that we stop letting our children come in a
2 school that they say is failing. It's time that
3 we as parents close the school down and change
4 the whole system. The legislative members have
5 to help us. They are responsible. The
6 Bloomberg is now the mayor of Mayoral Control,
7 so therefore, they have to help us get rid of
8 Mayor Control.

9 FEMALE VOICE: Amen.

10 MALE VOICE: Yeah.

11 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

12 [Applause]

13 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: Um, if folks, folks
14 have the numbers 21 to 30, you can line up over
15 here. Thank you.

16 [Background noise]

17 MALE VOICE: Hello? I'm a concerned parent
18 here about P.S. 114.

19 FEMALE VOICE: Shhh.

20 MALE VOICE: And, um, I've been coming to a
21 couple of meetings and I'm just very confused
22 about how the DOE have really been leaving the
23 parents in the dark. And it's just a shame
24 what's been going on. I mean I've grown up in
25 the--I grew up on Long Island, but I've come out

1 to the Canarsie area and this is a community
2 of many different people. I'm Irish. My wife
3 is Haitian and my, my daughter is Irish and
4 Haitian. And, yo, yo, yo, I'm Brooklyn too.

5 [Laughter]

6 MALE VOICE: That's what we are, we're
7 Brooklyn. You know, it doesn't matter where
8 you're from. You can be from Mars, you know,
9 we're all here together. And the thing is, it's
10 like the school, uh, this school is great. I
11 mean they, they want to put money into a charter
12 school. For what? We have everything here. We
13 have the foundation. We have the teachers. We
14 have all the great teachers here. There's no
15 excuse for this. You know, and, and they're
16 keeping the parents in the dark.

17 I mean 90 percent of the people here like
18 from another country and they sent letters home
19 in different, you know language that they don't
20 understand. It's crazy.

21 All I wanted to say is I can keep it short
22 is that it's not the school that failed us, it's
23 the Department of Education. We knew that this
24 was going on. I've heard from this four years
25 from children about what was going on. And

1 until Mr. Orr and Ms. Crystal over here, Ms.
2 King, I--I mean this is ridiculous. I have to
3 find out from a child on the street that the
4 principal is, you know, misleading the school
5 and all that. And it's disgusting. It's--and
6 that's why I'm upset.

7 [Applause]

8 [Background noise]

9 MS. FRAN COLEMAN: Good evening everyone.
10 My name is Fran Coleman [phonetic] and I'm a
11 third grade teacher here at P.S. 114. I stand
12 here before this audience on behalf of the most
13 important, the little ones being affected, the
14 commodities of our future, the innocent, the
15 unheard. Today, I will ensure that they are
16 heard, the children.

17 The year was 1939, a class that came to
18 life. History was written, The Wizard of Oz.
19 Dorothy said there's no place like home. This
20 is our home. This is the home of our students.
21 This is the home of our children.

22 In 2011, history is being rewritten, done so
23 by the kids of P.S. 114 on their lunch hour, at
24 home, this is what they've done. This
25 overwhelming collection of writing pieces and

1 artwork is an outpouring of dedication, pride,
2 devotion and loyalty to a place that the
3 children call home.

4 Their writing reflects feeling of an
5 educational, physical, emotional and social
6 attachment to P.S. 114. The, the children give
7 strong reasons and arguments based on their
8 positive experiences as to why they believe and
9 hope that their school will not be closed.
10 Their writings ask for a chance. A chance for
11 P.S. 114 to shine once again as it has always in
12 the past.

13 On January 25th, 2011, the president of the
14 United States of America, Barack Obama, gave his
15 State of the Union speech. He said, and I
16 quote, "We sit here together tonight, but can we
17 work together tomorrow." For the sake of the
18 children, I urge us to please let's work
19 together to keep one--P.S. 114 alive for the
20 children.

21 [Applause]

22 MR. HOWARD SHORE: Thank you. Uh, my name
23 is Howard Shore [phonetic]. I'm the Brooklyn
24 Borough rep with the United Federation of
25 Teachers. This is the fifth meeting I've been

1 to in the last two weeks with a closing
2 school. Uh, I think it's a dog and pony show.
3 Their, uh, decision is already made.

4 Last year we went through the same process
5 to get 19 schools to close. The PEP was a
6 rubber stamp. They closed them all. They
7 forgot to do one thing. You know what that was?
8 Follow the law. They broke the law. The UFT
9 with the NAACP and some other, uh, parties sued
10 them and we won.

11 Those schools, those schools are still open.
12 In fact, I believe four of those schools that
13 they threatened to close last year, they're not
14 closing this year because they got a second
15 chance and they, they moved their scores. So
16 schools that were given a second chance because
17 of the UFT lawsuit have succeeded. This school
18 should also be given a second chance.

19 Now, this is--what happened to this school
20 is mismanagement by the Department of Education.
21 And let me explain what they did. When they
22 came in, this is - - Mr. Suransky, I don't know
23 how long you've been, uh, with the department
24 but, uh, if you are - - but for all of these
25 years, this is what they've done. First, they

1 broke up the districts. They made regions,
2 right?

3 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

4 MR. HOWARD SHORE: You were in region 6,
5 how'd that work out? Not too good, right? They
6 did away with it. Then they made networks.
7 Everybody's in the network. How'd that work
8 out? Not too good. They did away with it,
9 right? Then they had the, uh, the, uh, uh,
10 these, um, these, uh--

11 [Background noise]

12 MR. HOWARD SHORE: --but they had these
13 other, other groups to, uh, make decisions and,
14 and now they're going to the CFS, which all the
15 reports that we get are not working out either.
16 So they'll probably do away with that. And, and
17 what they've done is they've taken away the, uh,
18 supervisory position that they had.

19 Their mantra is this: the principal is in
20 charge of the building. They can do whatever
21 they want to do. And whatever they do, they're
22 right. If they fail, we're going to remove them
23 or close the school. That is their mantra.
24 That is their policy. That is what they're
25 doing. That's the mismanagement of this group

1 of people that, uh--well not all of them, but
2 the people in the city up there representing the
3 DOE. They've mismanaged the system. They're
4 going to continue to mismanage it until they're
5 able to tell principals you're doing the wrong
6 thing.

7 In, in 2000--in the fall of 2007, - -
8 myself, uh, met with Lou [phonetic] within the
9 region six, uh, uh, uh, division and told him
10 that, uh, the school was \$108,000 over, uh, over
11 budget already. They couldn't hire no, no, uh,
12 uh, assistant or no, uh, uh, uh substitute
13 teachers. They had four assistant principals
14 for 500 kids. And the principal was spending
15 money she didn't have. You know what he told
16 me? There's nothing we can do about it. We
17 cannot tell a principal how to spend their
18 money. Really? \$180,000 over budget, we cannot
19 tell them what to do. What kind of department
20 is this? Close Tweed, close Tweed.

21 AUDIENCE: Close Tweed. [Chanting]

22 [Applause]

23 FEMALE VOICE: Hi, I'm a paraprofessional at
24 P.S. 114. I'm also a student. Um, an old
25 student.

1 [Laughter]

2 MALE VOICE: A young student.

3 FEMALE VOICE: Thank you. Yeah, I'm 21
4 yesterday. Um, you heard everything you needed
5 to hear. It's just about what Bloomberg is in
6 control of. Bloomberg is in control of Tweed.
7 Bloomberg is in control, control of the Board of
8 Education. He's the one who's pulling the
9 strings to all of what's going on.

10 We're only losing our school because it's
11 prime real estate. It's what they need for the
12 charter school. Young people of the charter
13 schools, you don't know what good public
14 education is until you come into a public
15 school. Okay, because whatever you do, you're
16 not going to have the experience of all the
17 teachers that have been in a school for 15 to 20
18 years, even 45, to help you understand what you
19 need to get by and to educate a child.

20 You're not going to have any type of
21 experience like that unless you're in a public
22 school. You're going to come up and you're
23 going to be teaching your children and when it
24 comes to test time, you're going to be another
25 failure.

1 And unless we go out and have a snowstorm
2 of people at Tweed and cover all of Chamber
3 Street, if I'm wrong--is that the right address--
4 -there--we are not going to get to keep 114. we
5 are not going to have the great school we've had
6 for 104 years. We are not going to have the
7 children get the education they deserve.

8 One parent said that some parents aren't
9 advocates for their own children to help, to,
10 um, for people to help them and they don't have
11 a union. You have the teachers to back you.
12 You have all the teachers at P.s. 114 to help
13 fight for your school to stay P.S. 114. You
14 don't have to worry that you're not here. We
15 know you have to work. We know you have jobs
16 just like the rest of us. But we will fight for
17 your children. We will--we know what the proper
18 education is for your children.

19 So please, on February 3rd, come to Brooklyn
20 Tech, it's a pep rally to, to speak to the
21 chancellor herself and express your feelings on
22 what is happening to your child's education, not
23 to what, what's happening to 114, what's
24 happening to our child's education.

25 We sit here and we get three minutes to

1 talk. It's a lifetime of education and we're
2 only allowed three minutes to speak. That's got
3 to tell you something about the Board of Ed.
4 They want to tell you lies. They want to give
5 you--they want to talk to the parents by
6 letters. The chancellor doesn't want to come
7 here and speak because she knows that everything
8 that's said from the board is a lie. They don't
9 want to have any conversation with you face to
10 face because they can't face you. They can't
11 even look you in the eye and tell you that they
12 failed P.S. 114.

13 And please be there on February 3rd.

14 [Applause]

15 MALE VOICE: Yeah, good evening everyone.

16 I, I do not have any, uh, children in this
17 school. Not one of my kids attended this
18 school. And, uh, but they did attend public
19 school. And when I heard that, uh, there was
20 the efforts or that P.S. 114 was to be closed,
21 that there, there was a plan to close it, uh, I
22 had to come to give my support. I have to come
23 and stand up--

24 [Applause]

25 MALE VOICE: And I have been listening to

1 our elected officials and the speakers
2 before, I realized that they have made a good
3 case to keep this school open.

4 [Applause]

5 MALE VOICE: And so what I would ask that,
6 uh, officials from the DOE do for us, uh, this
7 evening, when you go back, please tell the
8 chancellor that, uh, despite the inclement
9 weather, a lot of parents and teachers and, uh,
10 and, uh, and officials turned out this evening.
11 Please let the chancellor know that the
12 consensus of this meeting is that this school
13 deserves a chance. Let the chancellor know that
14 the parents and teachers and elected officials
15 are passionate about this school and that they
16 are convinced if given a chance they can turn
17 this school around.

18 [Applause]

19 MALE VOICE: And all they are asking is for
20 the Department of Education to give this school
21 the resources that it needs in order to succeed.
22 Give this school the opportunity. Provide them
23 with the tools and they will succeed. The
24 consensus here tonight is that the Department of
25 Education has failed the school so it's about

1 time that the department give this school a
2 chance. If we had the opportunity, if we had
3 the, the chance, we would fire the DOE instead
4 of closing this school. And maybe they would
5 have the results that we need at this school.

6 I, I strongly urge all parents here tonight,
7 everyone here, to continue this fight, to
8 continue this struggle, because a people united
9 cannot be defeated.

10 [Applause]

11 MS. ANN DAVIS: Good evening. My name is
12 Ann Davis [phonetic] and I'm one of the two ESL
13 teachers in the school. Happily, I tell you
14 that P.S. 114 has the largest population in
15 District 18 of ESL students. I'm also proud to
16 tell you that I firmly believe they have added
17 luster and beauty to our school. Without them,
18 they would just be--we would just be another
19 elementary school, but they have added to our
20 community in ways that you cannot imagine.

21 [Applause]

22 MS. ANN DAVIS: I'm not going to bore you
23 with the mismanagement, you know that. These
24 people who stood by will have to deal with their
25 own conscience. We have the building blocks

1 right here in this building to make change.
2 We have a staff of determined hard working
3 teachers who can challenge our students and give
4 them the education they need.

5 What we need are the tools to create a
6 learning environment guaranteed to succeed. I
7 ask you from the Department of Education: give
8 us the books, give us the funds, give us the
9 guidance counselors, give us everything you took
10 away from us. We will do the job in half the
11 time at half the money.

12 MALE VOICE: Yeah.

13 MALE VOICE: Yeah.

14 [Applause]

15 MR. ROBERT LEE: Good evening. My name is
16 Robert Lee [phonetic]. I'd like to say a few
17 words to the teachers, parents and--I would like
18 to thank Ms. Davis and Ms. Burkowitz [phonetic]
19 for helping me on my way to bigger things. I
20 really have a lot of good memories in this
21 school and I also--and also, if it wasn't for
22 this school, I wouldn't be the person I am
23 today, which is smart, well-behaved and good
24 looking and visual.

25 [Laughter]

1 MR. ROBERT LEE: If this school is being
2 closed, I won't just stand still. I will, I
3 will stand up and fight for what I love. Now, I
4 will stand with the following teachers I believe
5 mentioned before that helped my brothers and
6 sisters - - : Ms. Kankill [phonetic], Ms.
7 Corelli [phonetic], Ms. Roberts, Ms. Betty, Ms.
8 Carl--

9 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

10 MR. ROBERT LEE: Thank you. Ms. Fawcet
11 [phonetic], Ms. Delora--Delores [phonetic], Ms.
12 Kelly, Ms. Oster [phonetic] and Ms. Brown.
13 Thank you.

14 [Applause]

15 [Background noise]

16 FEMALE VOICE: Good evening everybody. My
17 name is - - . I am a resident in this
18 community, but, um, more important, I'm a
19 parent. As a parent, I think it's important
20 that we advocate for our children.

21 FEMALE VOICE: We can't hear you.

22 FEMALE VOICE: We have to have choices and
23 with those choices we have to utilize those
24 choices. If something's not working for our
25 children, we have to move on and go with a new

1 choice. Um, I'm not here to advocate for
2 anything else. Like I said, I'm a parent first
3 and foremost before anybody is anything else.

4 Um, as parents, we have to stand for
5 something or we're going to fall for everything.
6 Our children are the most important thing and
7 I'm glad to see that, um, so many people came
8 out tonight here advocating for our children. I
9 think that's just what it needs to be and it
10 needs to stay there. It always should be about
11 our children. Thank you.

12 [Applause]

13 MALE VOICE: Good evening. Thank you for
14 giving me the opportunity to talk. Um, I'm
15 standing here as a former student of the
16 Department of Education and as a parent. And
17 I'm not here to bash P.S. 114. I enjoyed
18 watching the kids talk. It touched my heart.
19 I'm not here to bash DOE, even though they may
20 deserve it, I'm not here for that. I'm here to
21 talk about an opportunity that I wanted to
22 provide my child that I did not have.

23 My child right now is 19 years old. He's in
24 his second year in college, and I'm very proud
25 of him. But in order to give him that

1 opportunity, I had to act on the choices I
2 was not given as a child and that was the choice
3 to provide - - provide success. So it probably
4 meant taking him out of the system that I
5 thought was not working. And instead of, um, if
6 the system is not working, you know we can't
7 waste time by trying to fix it. If any attempts
8 to fix it does not work, then we have to get a
9 new system. We can't keep changing the parts.

10 So I just wanted to exercise that
11 opportunity. And we talk about being a proud
12 patriot of the United States, it's all about
13 options. And whether you like it or not, you
14 have to act on your options. So don't be
15 intimidated by the fact that there's 20,000
16 people talking to your one voice. Think about
17 your children and providing them with the best
18 option possible, because they cannot afford
19 another year of failure, not one more year.
20 Thank you.

21 [Applause]

22 FEMALE VOICE: Thank you. My name is - - .
23 I'm a - - . I don't live in the area but I'm
24 interested. Now, I listened with an objective
25 mind and I listened to everything that was said,

1 with an objective mind. And I think if I
2 were in a jury, I would say guilty. Because all
3 the evidence that I've heard indicate that the
4 Board of Education representatives had an
5 opportunity to correct what was wrong and they
6 missed that opportunity. They lost it.

7 I also went to the hearing on Tuesday at
8 City Hall with Councilman Jackson. And the
9 Board of Education that came there could not
10 answer, even though they knew they would come to
11 the hearing, they did not come prepared to
12 answer questions to many of our council people.
13 That is an indication of their indifference
14 perhaps, or lack of knowledge, or not having
15 their head right to the ground to know what's
16 really going on in our schools. And that is not
17 good.

18 I also object to the fact that very often
19 schools are closed without the community input
20 and even awareness. And that is not acceptable.
21 Is it not because you're forced to respond that
22 this is taking place? And I'd like to ask, when
23 was the decision made to close the school? At
24 what point was the assessment made and now it's
25 going to whom?

1 And, you know, when we look at television
2 and we hear the kids in China doing so well.
3 They're way above United States children. What
4 is our reason? What, what is our feeling about
5 that? Are we feeling responsible for our
6 children not taking part and doing well? We
7 need to ask ourselves those questions.

8 And finally, I think when I as a committee
9 person - - many of my friends, many of my family
10 collected \$800 to give to a school in our area
11 because they didn't have books. From our
12 pockets. That should not be. Because that
13 might be - - if they don't have the tools. And
14 I really think that you as a Board of Education
15 need to really examine what is being done. And
16 not by rhetoric but by an honest assessment of
17 what's being done in our schools. Thank you.

18 [Applause]

19 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: Um, before our next
20 speaker if I can ask that, uh, folks who have
21 tickets number 31 to 35, if you could come over
22 to this, uh, side of the auditorium. Thank you.
23 We now have our next speaker.

24 [Background noise]

25 MR. PETER GOODMAN: Good evening. My name

1 is Peter Goodman [phonetic]. If there's one
2 person in this room who truly was a great
3 principal, it's Shael Suransky. I visited his
4 school, Bronx International High School. He was
5 the founding principal. It is a spectacular
6 school. Every single child is an ESL child, in
7 the poorest section of the Bronx and the school
8 is highly successful. So he knows that the
9 secret to building great schools is a great
10 principal who can hire great teachers who can
11 work with parents to bring the best possible
12 education to every child regardless of the needs
13 of the child.

14 The Department in the case of 114 failed.
15 You made a mistake. Pencils have erasers. We
16 have to correct mistakes. We shouldn't be
17 enemies. The Department of Ed should not be
18 sitting on the stage like - - and the audience
19 looking at the board and saying we don't trust
20 you; you're our enemy.

21 Next week, the governor is going to make a
22 speech and he's going to announce enormous
23 budget cuts. Schools are going to be faced with
24 enormous cuts in service like we've never seen
25 before. The people on this stage, the people in

1 audience, parents, grandparents, teachers,
2 unionists, everyone has to fight together to
3 save schools.

4 Now Lew Fidler and the other elected
5 officials made an offer. They said whatever is
6 the past is the past. Let's sit down, give the
7 school two more years. Let's get goals and
8 timetables. Tell us exactly what we have to
9 achieve. Give us a concrete amount of time. If
10 we can achieve it, great; if we don't, then the
11 school should be closed.

12 We live in a world where many of us believe
13 in redemption. We believe that we sin
14 occasionally. But we should have a chance,
15 always a chance to wipe away our sins. And I'm
16 asking Mr. Suransky and the other members of the
17 board to simply give us another chance. We all
18 commit mistakes. We all deserve again. We all
19 deserve to be redeemed.

20 Parents, teachers, children, we should be
21 working together for 1114, not fighting. We're
22 not enemies. We're all here for the children.
23 And you can see it, if you could give the school
24 a few more years, word of Mr. Fidler, word of
25 the other elected officials, this could be a

1 great success. Thank you.

2 [Applause]

3 MALE VOICE: How are you doing, parents,
4 students? Um, I'm the proud husband of a
5 teacher here at 114. And over the past few
6 years, I've gotten very, very close to all the
7 teachers, and I can say that I'm family. And,
8 um, I have to tell you, about five years ago I
9 knew there was a problem with this school when,
10 uh, my wife came home and asked me for a ream of
11 paper.

12 Now, kids need a lot of things and paper is
13 one of them. And if they're not getting paper,
14 they can't write, they can't learn. Having said
15 that, there's a couple of things that I know
16 your children don't need, and that's a CEO and
17 that's a staff from God knows where, not from
18 Canarsie, not from here, to teach your children,
19 because you've got a fine staff right here doing
20 the job--

21 [Applause]

22 CHRISTOPHER: Hello, my name is Christopher
23 Dean - - . And, um, and I've been here for, um,
24 for seven years, since it was in pre-k. This
25 school is, is, is a very cooperative school.

1 The teachers, the teachers take you step by
2 step through your work. And they have proof.
3 If you go inside the classes, you will see lots
4 of charts, signs and stuff like that.

5 [Laughter]

6 CHRISTOPHER: The work, the, um, the work
7 ethics, the, the work ethnics has improved from
8 last year. All I'm trying to say is P.S. 114
9 should not be closed down.

10 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

11 [Applause]

12 [Background noise]

13 SAMMY: Hi, my name is Sammy.

14 FEMALE VOICE: Hi, Sammy.

15 FEMALE VOICE: Go, Sammy.

16 [Background noise]

17 FEMALE VOICE: It's okay, Sammy, you can do
18 it.

19 SAMMY: And the school should not be closed
20 down because the teach--my teachers teach good
21 teach and if they stop then the kids won't get a
22 good education because the school is closed
23 down. My, my--I want to say that the school
24 should not be closed down and I want to thank
25 the teachers like Ms. Cohen [phonetic], Ms.

1 Mangino [phonetic], Ms. Davis, Ms. Burkowitz
2 and Ms. Roberts. Thank you.

3 [Applause]

4 [Background noise]

5 MALE VOICE: Good evening everyone.

6 FEMALE VOICE: Good evening.

7 MALE VOICE: - - support P.S. 114. - -
8 closing school.

9 [Background noise]

10 MALE VOICE: - - closing schools, that's I
11 don't know what I can say about it, but only one
12 thing I'd ask DOE. Give P.S. 114 a chance,
13 especially the children just spoke about. But,
14 uh, closing school, when you close the school
15 down, you open another door. You know what door
16 it is? How about somebody in the audience give
17 me the what sort of door open when you close the
18 school door? When you close the school door?

19 FEMALE VOICE: You open a prison door.

20 MALE VOICE: --exactly, you open a prison
21 door. - - . I actually think about it - - .

22 - - .

23 [Applause]

24 PAUL: Hello, Paul - - from learning
25 development. Uh, some names in the paper - -

1 give us Sasha Diago, Daren Ajada [phonetic],
2 Doreen Anita, Dominique - -, uh, my favorites
3 here, Mercy, Brandon, these are only a few as
4 faces that came up and these are all the
5 students that you teach, the teachers.

6 Passion is within this school and I know we
7 keep referring to the table up here, in all due
8 respect, I know that you've heard everyone's
9 concern, but I think it's also the people that
10 are holding up the cue cards to the right and to
11 the left. If the ESL teacher had you reading
12 the book a little bit more rather than holding
13 up a cue card that says 30 seconds, I'm sure you
14 could use an extra person or more books in your
15 hand.

16 So all these, uh, staffers here from DOE,
17 all hundred of you that might be in the room, to
18 support this staff, can you imagine the heights
19 and the mountains we can reach? The
20 superintendent of District 18, can you imagine
21 all of them from Tweed helping all of your
22 schools rather than coming here to try to close
23 one of your schools?

24 And the, the secret here is that we're here
25 to help. We have an after school program here,

1 our director is here. Today she handed me
2 the list and she said, Paul, we have 100 percent
3 attendance here in the after school program
4 today. And this is what it's about. It's about
5 the teachers that are passionate about what they
6 have. Those boxes of letters, I want to take
7 them to every senior center in this neighborhood
8 so that every senior in this neighborhood knows
9 that their children came to this school, that
10 their grandchildren came to this school, that
11 their grandchildren came to this school, and to
12 know that they are not alone in this effort.

13 And I know, uh, uh, Deputy Chancellor, uh,
14 that you're here tonight to represent and I know
15 down deep there's a passion in your heart. You
16 hear this all the time, um, and it's not you.
17 It's not you and it's not you. Okay, it really
18 isn't. It is one person who has a different
19 plan. And it's the charter school people. You
20 guys are here to open up a business. This is a
21 business.

22 FEMALE VOICE: Right.

23 MALE VOICE: And the business here is to
24 hire one teacher, right, but at the cost of
25 three of our teachers. So of course you give

1 people higher rates and you try to, you know,
2 jiff it up and raise the money, when this school
3 cannot raise the money because they can't even
4 sell candy anymore. We can't even sell things
5 that we did for years. You guys - - . Who
6 baked this and who baked that? But we can't do
7 that no more because our hands are tied and our,
8 and our representative here is shaking his head.
9 You know because you probably were one of the
10 guys that were baking and also buying at the
11 same time.

12 MALE VOICE: Absolutely.

13 MALE VOICE: You know, you give us a plan,
14 we follow it, the teachers are passionate about
15 this. They come up here and, you know, I heard
16 some of the teachers say, you know, - - nervous
17 and shaking. No. You know what we saw tonight
18 from these teachers and parents? What'd you see
19 tonight? Dedication that if tomorrow morning
20 the principal said I need you, right here, that
21 if today they said you know what, don't hold up
22 the 30 second cue card, but I need you to help
23 read the book, right here. Hey, you know what,
24 the young man that just came and was, was, was
25 sharing in his own word, I bet, you know, that

1 student is loved by every one of you.

2 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

3 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

4 MALE VOICE: You know, because you're here
5 to dedicate--I'm sure it's not the money.

6 [Laughter]. It's the travel. You travel from
7 where, here, everywhere and, uh, and, uh, the
8 teacher - - that is a former student here.

9 You're proud to, to, to sit in these chairs that
10 Councilman Lew Fidler funded. Or the millions
11 he's brought to this school, because why,
12 because we have a councilman that cares, that
13 hears, that cares.

14 We can't sell him brownies, but he's up at
15 City Hall fighting for an after school program
16 with 100 attendance today, for teachers that are
17 dedicated to be here, for people that are here
18 to be here. And I'm sure, you know, Councilman
19 Fidler, the next hearing that you have that you
20 chair, you have one of the highest - - council
21 people in the City of New York and I'm sure that
22 when you do this, when you do this hearing, uh,
23 Lew, one last thing, when you do this hearing,
24 can we get some of these helpers that the deputy
25 assistant, the deputy chancellor is having

1 helping, can we have them read with the
2 students? Can we have them march with the--
3 maybe they could help us march today?

4 So we need the school open. And to our
5 principal back here in the crowd, um, you kind
6 of got the end results of the past principals
7 and the past principals, um, you have a staff
8 here that cares. You have a staff there that
9 wants to move on and we hope, and I'll use the
10 last name in here. The young lady's name Mercy
11 and another thing I was talking to her, I hope
12 that we can use her name in the future and say
13 that DOE had Mercy on 114 because 114's doors
14 remained open forever. God bless you all.

15 [Applause]

16 MALE VOICE: - - use his two minutes. Okay.

17 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: I know it's been a long
18 night, Deputy Chancellor and I, I will try to be
19 brief. But I just, you know I wanted to stay
20 here to hear my community speak and make sure
21 that I heard everything that you heard. And in
22 fact, I was right, that this community in fact
23 is adamantly in support of retaining this
24 building as P.S. 114 and I think we heard that.

25 Um, I think there were four or five speakers

1 who did not speak specifically against
2 closing this school. I don't think any of them
3 identified themselves as either a parent, a
4 teacher or a student of 114. So I think it was
5 kind of unanimous.

6 I'm a Mets man, Deputy Chancellor.

7 [Laughter]

8 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: What that means is that I
9 always have hope.

10 [Laughter]

11 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: Despite the odds.

12 [Applause]

13 MR. LEWIS FIDLER: I'm not going to ask you
14 on behalf of this community to change the policy
15 of DOE. You and I will probably debate this
16 until we're dead and buried. We disagree on so
17 many things. I don't in any shape, way, manner
18 or form question your dedication and your belief
19 that your policies are right. I'm sure you
20 don't question my motivation here.

21 But I think you have to be our messenger of
22 vision to recognize the exception to your rule,
23 to accept responsibility for what happened on
24 your department's watch. I promise you, I can
25 only speak for myself, that I will work with

1 this chancellor to turn this school around
2 and give the students that are in this building
3 and in this community the quality education that
4 they all deserve.

5 I think they've been failed, not by the
6 teachers, not by their parents and not by
7 themselves. I would like you to take that
8 message back to the chancellor. She's new. She
9 has an opportunity here to say volumes not just
10 to this community but to teachers, to parents,
11 to citizens throughout the City of New York that
12 she will exercise independent judgment.

13 I also happen to be a fan of Star Trek,
14 Deputy Chancellor. And in one episode, Mr.
15 Spock tells the captain that every revolution
16 there's one man or woman with a vision. We need
17 you to be that man of vision. I am asking you,
18 I'm pleading with you on behalf of the kids in
19 this school, on behalf of the teachers here, on
20 behalf of this community, take the message back.
21 Give us the chance to work with you to make this
22 school work well.

23 [Applause]

24 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: That concludes the
25 public comment portion of the evening. Um, a

1 number of questions, uh, were, were
2 generated, um, and, and I also know that, uh,
3 the Deputy Chancellor was taking notes, um,
4 during, during the, uh, the, the public comment.
5 And so what we'd like to do at this point is,
6 is, uh, turn the floor back over to, uh, Deputy
7 Chancellor Suransky so he can comment and
8 respond to the questions.

9 [Background noise]

10 MR. SHAEL SURANSKY: So I want to thank
11 those of you who came out again. Um, what's
12 clear in this community from what I've heard
13 tonight is that there is tremendous dedication,
14 there are some remarkable teachers and kids who
15 are very passionate about the work underway in
16 this school. And I want to recognize the fact
17 that in, in the view of the faculty of the
18 school and the view of many of the parents that
19 we haven't done what we needed to do to support
20 you. And that came through loud and clear.

21 And I think that I want to be clear with you
22 that we do see this school as our
23 responsibility, five years ago, three years ago
24 and today. And the decision that we're
25 considering about how to improve the school is a

1 sincere attempt to think about what's going
2 to work best for the kids in this school and the
3 kids in this community in the future.

4 And so that responsibility weighs very
5 heavy, and there has been no decision made yet.
6 We've made a proposal and we've gone through a
7 process that's included a lot of conversation
8 with people tonight but also before tonight.
9 And everything that was said tonight is
10 something that will be incorporated into the
11 decision that we'll recommend to the chancellor.
12 And then the Panel for Educational Policy will
13 make a vote.

14 And I want to say that whatever that
15 decision is, there is an opportunity to do what
16 one of the parents who spoke this evening said
17 very eloquently, is to create a school in this
18 building that people can be proud of, that kids
19 can dream, and aspire to. And I think that
20 there have been many--someone mentioned 91
21 schools, uh, I think it was Mr. Barron earlier,
22 that have been closed. But what he didn't
23 mention is that there have been over 400 schools
24 that have been opened. And this is not about
25 closing the door on kids or on a community.

1 This is about trying to figure out together
2 how do we create something that's really going
3 to work over time. And we may end up
4 disagreeing about the best strategy to do that.

5 There were folks here also tonight who asked
6 about having options. And the 500 hundreds, the
7 400 district public schools and the 100 charter
8 schools that have been opened over the past
9 eight years in place of those 90 schools that
10 were closed, have created options for parents,
11 for kids and for teachers.

12 Because, and I'll tell you a story from my
13 own experience, uh, Peter mentioned that I was
14 principal in the Bronx with a school - - . That
15 was a school where there were 1,600 kids and
16 probably 200 teachers. They took in 700 kids
17 every year and about 70 were graduated. And we
18 created several schools in that building. I was
19 principal of one of them. Today you see about
20 75 percent of the kids graduating in that
21 building.

22 But what's interesting is if you look at
23 who's teaching in those schools, a lot of the
24 same teachers are still there. It's not about
25 getting rid of all the teachers, as someone

1 said. It's about creating an opportunity to
2 do create, create a structure that really works.
3 And while a lot of folks tonight spoke strongly
4 about where they felt there wasn't leadership in
5 the past, I think that whatever we do as we move
6 forward, part of the solution is going to be to
7 build leadership in this school. But part of it
8 is also going to be including the teachers who
9 have been leaders in that process.

10 So whether there are new schools or whether
11 114 continues, the passion and the commitment
12 that teachers expressed tonight needs to be a
13 part of that. And the commitment that
14 Councilman Fidler and other leaders from this
15 community expressed, that needs to be a part of
16 this too.

17 So that, that is my certain commitment. I
18 cannot commit that we're going to change our
19 proposal. I definitely will share what you said
20 tonight and will consider it carefully. But I
21 can commit that whatever we do moving forward,
22 it does need to be a partnership with the folks
23 who are in this community.

24 And I hope that you'll see your way to
25 working with us as we go forward. Thank you.

1 [Applause]

2 MR. ANTHONY CONELLI: Folks should be aware
3 that the information sheets that were provided
4 outside, if you haven't picked one up, um, at
5 the bottom of it, there is an email address and
6 a phone number so that if you have questions or
7 comments that you'd like to add, um, please take
8 advantage of that. Um, everything will be
9 posted and responded to, um, on the, on the
10 website.

11 Um, I should also--I also want to make note
12 that, um, the, um, on February 3rd at 6:00 at
13 Brooklyn Tech is the Panel for Education Policy,
14 um, which will be having its hearing to vote on
15 this proposal and, um, and - - .

16 Um, I want to say thank you for everyone,
17 um, for this evening. And at this point, this
18 meeting is adjourned.

19 [Applause]

20 [Background noise]

21 [END 110128_001.MP3]

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23

24

25

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 *Donna Lutz*

7 Date February 2, 2011

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