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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF  
PORTFOLIO PLANNING  
Success Academy 4 5th Grade @ M149 -  
4/19/12**

1 [START 290\_291]

2 FEMALE VOICE: - - President of the - -  
3 Education Council here at wonderful District 3.

4 [applause]

5 FEMALE VOICE: Community Education Council  
6 are - - here whose sole purpose is to help all  
7 school children and their families in all public  
8 schools in New York City, and we are very lucky  
9 at CEC because we're in District 3, and we think  
10 it's the best district in the City.

11 [applause]

12 FEMALE VOICE: We have--because you - -  
13 we're going to handle this meeting a little  
14 differently. First of all, there are - - seats,  
15 folks standing behind, if you can ask your  
16 fellow parents and kids to move around, there  
17 are seats to sit down.

18 The second thing is, is that we do not have  
19 a microphone, not yet. So that's why I'm  
20 shouting, if you can't hear a speaker, we could  
21 lend him another one. But I'm pretty confident  
22 that - - four or five speakers you're about to  
23 hear from are used to using - - voice to - -  
24 electronic equipment.

25 So without further ado, I'd like to

1 introduce speakers, because - - .

2 [applause]

3 MALE VOICE: - - I just want to say thank  
4 you very much--thank you all for the support  
5 [phonetic] meeting, and I want to say thank you  
6 to all the people who have come out here, who  
7 are students, we have family members, parents  
8 and community activists. I wanted to join - - .

9 And this is the meeting of the District 3  
10 CEC, taking place right here at PS 149, one  
11 meeting where we need to show - - Department of  
12 Education really needs to take - - the education  
13 all over [phonetic].

14 Now I know it's been a pretty stressful  
15 three days, especially here in the sixth grade.  
16 I've got a sixth grader in public school myself  
17 and he's just finished with his three days of  
18 intensive testing.

19 So that's obviously important, but it's also  
20 about getting a well-rounded and comprehensive  
21 education for all the kids of our city.

22 Now over the last recent years, there has  
23 been more and more and more of so-called school  
24 closures, as well as co-locations of different  
25 schools. And it is not--the onus is not on and

1 should never be on the parents or the kids or  
2 the teachers in these particular school  
3 buildings. It makes little sense to me to have  
4 a half a dozen so-called schools in the same  
5 building where a school would have been  
6 operating very well as it has been for years,  
7 and in some cases, decades.

8       There's so much shuffling around of these  
9 closures of schools, of co-locations, students  
10 are required to use, for example, bathrooms on  
11 another floor, when they have a perfectly good  
12 renovated bathroom on the same floor.

13       You know, these kinds of issues detract.  
14 They don't add, they detract from the basic R, R  
15 and R, reading, writing, arithmetic, that the  
16 DOE, in my opinion, should be focused on, and  
17 not playing all these shell games with our  
18 students in the hopes of trying to claim some  
19 kind of victory.

20       It's a problem when--I think the Department  
21 of Education nowadays almost touts these  
22 closures of schools as if they were some kind of  
23 accomplishment. Closing a school is not an  
24 accomplishment.

25       FEMALE VOICE: No.

1 FEMALE VOICES: That's right.

2 MALE VOICE: And sticking another school in  
3 a building that already has other schools that  
4 are working fine and well for the students, that  
5 is not an accomplishment either.

6 When you announce, like they did this week,  
7 the opening of 54 new schools, most people think  
8 of schools as students, teachers, a principal  
9 and a building.

10 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

11 MALE VOICE: When you announce 54 new  
12 schools, and actually there's not a single new  
13 school building, but instead there are just  
14 groups of people being put into buildings that  
15 already house other schools and groups of  
16 people, that to me is not real progress. That's  
17 just a news release claiming that you've built  
18 or you've created 54 schools, when in fact  
19 nothing new has actually been created.

20 And in the process, you have parents being  
21 supposedly on different sides, when in fact  
22 parents have just one thing and one thing on  
23 their minds only, and that's the education of  
24 their kids.

25 [applause]

1           MALE VOICE: So I think part of the message  
2 that I'd like to say personally, I know we're  
3 going to hear from a lot of people, is that the  
4 Department of Education, it should get back to  
5 the basics. The basics of teaching our kids,  
6 the basics of letting teachers teach, and not  
7 shuffling all these things around, creating  
8 frictions among people within the same building,  
9 it's not right and it's not the way to go to  
10 educate our kids.

11           So I thank all of you for being out here at  
12 PS 149 tonight, this is an important meeting,  
13 the issues that get discussed, I'm not totally  
14 confident will necessarily make it down to the  
15 Tweed Building at the DOE headquarters. But  
16 certainly the voices will be heard, and we will  
17 do everything I can--I will do everything I can,  
18 and I know many people here, including Senator  
19 Perkins and Councilmember Dickens, will do  
20 everything they can to ensure that educational  
21 resources are actually being provided to the  
22 students and the teachers that need them to  
23 teach the kids, and not being directed into all  
24 this shuffling around that at the end of the day  
25 has a fiscal impact for the City of New York,

1 but doesn't actually add to the value of  
2 education.

3 I want to once again thank Christine, I want  
4 to thank our friend, Noah Gotbaum who is  
5 everywhere and at all these kinds of hearings,  
6 thank you Noah for being such an outspoken voice  
7 on this. And I want to thank all the parents  
8 and their children for being out here because  
9 this is an important issue, and this is an  
10 important hearing.

11 FEMALE VOICE: Sonia Hampton who is the--  
12 Sonia Hampton who is the--

13 FEMALE VOICE: Sonia Hampton - - .

14 MALE VOICE: And Sonia Hampton, that's  
15 right, Sonia Hampton, we were just talking  
16 before. Thank you for your leadership as well.

17 Thank you very much everybody, have a great  
18 meeting.

19 MS. CHRISTINE ANNECHINO: Next speaker, I'd  
20 like to have Senator Bill Perkins.

21 SENATOR BILL PERKINS: Are we loaded up? We  
22 fired up?

23 AUDIENCE: Yes.

24 SENATOR PERKINS: I'm always fired up. We  
25 fired up?

1 AUDIENCE: Yes.

2 SENATOR PERKINS: We fired up?

3 AUDIENCE: Yes.

4 SENATOR PERKINS: Good, because we're going  
5 to need to be. We're going to need to be much  
6 more fired up than we are right now. That's for  
7 sure.

8 I want to first thank the controller, John  
9 Liu for his presentation. He sort of took the  
10 words out of my mouth in many, many important  
11 ways.

12 I also want to recognize the Mid-Manhattan  
13 NAACP Chairperson, Eaton, Geoff Eaton. It's  
14 important that you know that the NAACP reminds  
15 us that this is about civil rights. The NAACP  
16 reminds us that education was a struggle for our  
17 civil rights as a community and as a people. It  
18 reminds us that--and I'd like you to repeat  
19 after me, separate and unequal.

20 AUDIENCE: Separate and unequal.

21 SENATOR PERKINS: Hurts school children.

22 AUDIENCE: Hurts school children.

23 SENATOR PERKINS: Does not lead to success.

24 AUDIENCE: Does not lead to success.

25 SENATOR PERKINS: Okay class, one more time.

1 Separate and unequal--

2 AUDIENCE: Separate and unequal does not  
3 lead to--

4 SENATOR PERKINS: Follow the teacher.

5 Separate and unequal--

6 AUDIENCE: Separate and unequal.

7 SENATOR PERKINS: Hurts school children--

8 AUDIENCE: Hurts school children.

9 SENATOR PERKINS: And does not lead to  
10 success.

11 AUDIENCE: And does not lead to success.

12 SENATOR PERKINS: This is a very, very  
13 important message that we have to keep in mind  
14 as we move forward, because that's what we are  
15 experiencing. These co-locations are not just  
16 creating a whole lot of disruption, but they're  
17 not creating the success that we want for all of  
18 our children.

19 And let me say this for all the parents,  
20 whether your children are in charters or not, my  
21 office is available to be of assistance to you  
22 individually or collectively. And I'd like to  
23 introduce my Chief of Staff, Cordell Cleare, to  
24 make sure--

25 [applause]

1           SENATOR PERKINGS: To make sure that you  
2 understand that we're here for you.

3           But we also have to be clear about the  
4 drama, the trauma that is taking place in our  
5 community as a result of this so-called Success  
6 Movement, which is not creating success, in fact  
7 quite the opposite.

8           But I think we also have to be clear about  
9 something else. There is, beyond this day, a  
10 plan to get involved in making sure that what  
11 Mayor Bloomberg started continues. It's a  
12 political agenda that we're looking at, not an  
13 educational agenda. Some people think we're  
14 here because it's all about education. We are.  
15 But there's something bigger than that that's at  
16 stake that we have to be aware of. And so I'm  
17 going to--I want to make sure that you  
18 understand the political agenda that's about to  
19 unfold, that you have to be aware of and prepare  
20 for.

21           They are organizing right now, they're  
22 organizing right now to decide who is going to  
23 continue the Bloomberg agenda. They are  
24 organizing folks from Wall Street and others  
25 like the success allies to decide, is the next

1 mayor going to be somebody that will continue  
2 what is going on, that we are experiencing right  
3 now?

4 It's very important for us to understand  
5 that this is not just about today, that this is  
6 about a political agenda that's unfolding as we  
7 speak. This is in a way a distraction. It's  
8 not only distraction from their education, but  
9 it's also distraction from the realities of the  
10 political agenda that's unfolding.

11 We have to understand that when you get Wall  
12 Street involved in public education, it's not  
13 about education. Wall Street is about profit,  
14 Wall Street is about privatizing the public  
15 education system. What does that mean? We call  
16 them not-for-profits now, but right now in  
17 Albany--I just came from Albany, and there's a  
18 bill to create for-profit charter schools. Our  
19 children are being looked at as a for-profit  
20 opportunity.

21 What we see right now is really the wolf in  
22 sheep's clothing. What we see right now really  
23 is the wolf in sheep's clothing. Because no  
24 sooner than later, you will see what the real  
25 movement about these charters is about.

1           So we are recommending that as an  
2 alternative, that you get involved and--

3           FEMALE VOICE: What is the alternative?

4           SENATOR PERKINS: Is somebody chairing this?  
5 Or do I have to--

6           [crosstalk]

7           SENATOR PERKINS: Okay, let me--if you let  
8 me answer you--would you like me to answer you?

9           FEMALE VOICE: No man [phonetic].

10          SENATOR PERKINS: You don't want me to  
11 answer you?

12          FEMALE VOICE: Okay, I'm sorry.

13          SENATOR PERKINS: Okay, because I'll answer  
14 you.

15          I think the alternative is number one, to  
16 make sure that whoever comes next to run this  
17 city, has an education agenda that speaks to our  
18 children, not to a privatized for-profit model  
19 of education.

20          Number one. Number two--I'm answering your  
21 question. Number two, there has to be some  
22 transparency and some accountability, you know,  
23 they are claiming success, but in fact, that we  
24 don't have the records that prove that there's  
25 success.

1           Number three--

2           [background noise]

3           SENATOR PERKINS:   Number three, you've got  
4           to let me finish.  You're going to have your  
5           choice, you're going to have your choice, I'm  
6           here with you.

7           [background noise]

8           SENATOR PERKINS:   Okay, let me just finish.  
9           You're going to get your chance, you're going to  
10          get your chance.  You're going to get your  
11          chance.

12          MS. ANNECHINO:   Let the speaker finish  
13          please.

14          SENATOR PERKINS:   I'm going to be here for a  
15          while, so don't worry about it.  And you can  
16          always see me out in the streets, I'm in the - -  
17          but don't worry about it.

18          The other thing is, the other thing is how  
19          many people--how many of you have seen these co-  
20          location issues time and time again leading to  
21          all kinds of disruption in our school?  All  
22          kinds--is anybody having a problem hearing this?  
23          Hello?

24          FEMALE VOICE:    You guys have always had - -

25          .

1 [crosstalk]

2 SENATOR PERKINS: let me answer your  
3 question, I'm going to--

4 [crosstalk]

5 AUDIENCE: Let him speak.

6 SENATOR PERKINS: Now listen to me folks,  
7 listen, listen. Let me--

8 [background noise]

9 SENATOR PERKINS: I'm going to conclude.

10 [background noise]

11 SENATOR PERKINS: Let me conclude, because I  
12 don't want--

13 [background noise]

14 SENATOR PERKINS: My man, my man, let me  
15 finish. So I'm going to conclude because--

16 MS. ANNECHINO: Senator Perkins, do you want  
17 to use this, because that--

18 SENATOR PERKINS: No, this is fine. Okay,  
19 put your hand down. Put your hand down for a  
20 second. Listen to me, just let me do this and  
21 I'll get to you, I promise, I promise. I  
22 promise, I'm going to conclude and then we can  
23 talk, okay?

24 All I want to say in conclusion is this--  
25 just listen to me, listen to me. The most

1 devastating thing that has happened to our  
2 children is because of mayoral control. All  
3 these wars between parents and the charter  
4 parents or regular public school parents, it's  
5 because of mayoral control.

6 So in conclusion all I want you to do is to  
7 repeat after me. End mayoral control.

8 AUDIENCE: End mayoral control, end mayoral  
9 control.

10 SENATOR PERKINS: God bless you. Thank you  
11 very much.

12 MS. ANNECHINO: Our next speaker is Pastor--  
13 oh, Inez is here? The next speaker, I'm sorry,  
14 is Inez Dickens.

15 MS. INEZ DICKENS: Hey you all, how are you  
16 parents? - - is in the house and voicing their  
17 opinions and say no.

18 AUDIENCE: No.

19 MS. DICKENS: Say no.

20 AUDIENCE: No.

21 MS. DICKENS: Say no.

22 AUDIENCE: No.

23 MS. DICKENS: No.

24 AUDIENCE: No.

25 FEMALE VOICE: What are you saying no to?

1 MS. DICKENS: You're saying no to co-  
2 location, you're saying no to co-location,  
3 you're saying no to co-location, you're saying  
4 no to co-location, you're saying, give our  
5 public schools a fair chance, run [phonetic] our  
6 schools the way it's supposed to be, and the  
7 State that should vote that Mayor Pedrosa  
8 [phonetic] in.

9 [applause]

10 FEMALE VOICE: --does he have the records  
11 that prove there is no success? Where those  
12 records at?

13 [crosstalk]

14 MR. GEOFFREY EATON: Excuse me. Excuse me,  
15 my name is Geoffrey Eaton, I am Chief of Staff  
16 to - - Charles Rangel. Can you all hear me now?

17 AUDIENCE: Yes.

18 MR. EATON: Let me ask your patience, and  
19 everybody take a deep breath. Everybody relax.  
20 Because what's happening is, we're fitting one  
21 against the other, separate and unequal. That's  
22 not what this is about, we're not against  
23 charter schools, we're not against public  
24 schools.

25 We're against--we're for parental choice,

1 and every opportunity to raise our children  
2 and give them the best education that we--that  
3 our tax dollars pay for. We are all on the same  
4 page, separate and unequal.

5 Now in 1955 a revolution took place in  
6 Topeka, Kansas. And I think because some first  
7 grader parents, just like yourselves, on both  
8 sides of the aisle got tired and said we're sick  
9 and tired of being tired.

10 NAACP came in and then we had Brown v. Board  
11 of Education. Because they found that education  
12 in the south were separate and unequal,  
13 education in the north was separate and unequal,  
14 education in the west was separate and unequal,  
15 and the Supreme Court said that is not going to  
16 happen anymore.

17 See, I know your history, this is not about-  
18 -excuse me, ma'am. Excuse me, we have to work  
19 together as a community. I live around the  
20 corner in a painted house on 18th Street, 8  
21 West. I've been involved in schools since I've  
22 been living here, since 1982. I see the  
23 disruption that occurred in this building  
24 because of separate and unequal. I know parents  
25 are frustrated because they're trying to get

1 their kids the best education.

2 But our problem is that we should not  
3 sacrifice one over the other, that's it.

4 I'm here with the Regional Director of the  
5 NAACP, Mr. Ken Cohen. Ken, come over here and  
6 say something to the audience. He's the  
7 Regional Director for the Metropolitan Council  
8 of Branches. Please hear him out.

9 MR. KEN COHEN: Good evening everybody.

10 AUDIENCE: Good evening.

11 MR. COHEN: Who here is for excellent  
12 education? Stand up.

13 MR. EATON: Stand up.

14 MR. COHEN: Stand up if you're for excellent  
15 education.

16 MR. EATON: That's everybody.

17 MR. COHEN: Everybody in this room should be  
18 standing up for excellent education. If you're  
19 not then there's an issue here. There is no--  
20 we're not here to fight for one or the other in  
21 this community, we're here to fight for the best  
22 education possible.

23 I just left the New York City Council  
24 hearing, where the NAACP said, no to co-  
25 location. And we say no to co-location because

1 we have been in this school before, we have  
2 walked the hallways, we know what's about 50  
3 feet beyond the doors to my right, and we know  
4 what's about 50 feet to the doors to our left.  
5 We know what's behind the stage here, and we  
6 know that this isn't right for schools to be  
7 divided. This is not a fairy tale, this is not  
8 The Tale of Two Cities, this is New York City  
9 public school education, and we want the best  
10 for our students, we want fair, equal, excellent  
11 education.

12 We don't want to see one school better than  
13 another school co-located. This school--this  
14 city can find space for anything it wants to  
15 build. So let's see it find space for new  
16 excellent schools. Thank you.

17 MR. EATON: Thank you everybody. Let's have  
18 a really nice debate, let's not fight each  
19 other, okay?

20 MS. DICKENS: No, it shouldn't occur, it  
21 shouldn't occur. Because--and we are all one  
22 community, we all need affordable housing. We  
23 all want good quality education for our  
24 children, all of us do.

25 I was born and raised at home, and never

1 have I seen such division between parents, and  
2 you all live here in the same community. And it  
3 is about good education from the public schools.  
4 It is not anti-charter, and it's not anti-Harlem  
5 Success. It is not about that.

6 It's about, you are neighbors, you know one  
7 another, your children work together in schools,  
8 your children play together. And we should say  
9 that if it's crowded here, then we can't bring  
10 in another public school or a charter school. I  
11 don't care what it is, I don't care what it is.

12 And should charter schools exist, should  
13 parents have free choice? Yes, they should.  
14 There's no doubt about it, but the parents whose  
15 children do not go to charter schools, whose  
16 parents don't want their children in charter  
17 schools, they should be able to have their  
18 choice also, and they should be able to have a  
19 good education for their children as well.

20 All of us have to survive into the future,  
21 because if we don't look after all our children,  
22 we've got no future. None, we die. And I do  
23 not want to let anyone come into my community  
24 with my parents--and I don't care whether it's  
25 charter school parents or public school parents,

1 I don't want anybody to come into my community  
2 and divide us up. They will not a divided - -  
3 there will not be a divided - - . We must stick  
4 together so that everybody gets a good  
5 education.

6 You know, it seems like we're fighting each  
7 other, but you know what, I said it at a rally.  
8 It's not about charter schools, it's not about  
9 whether Harlem success survives, it's about my  
10 community surviving. And I don't want my  
11 parents disrespecting each other when we all  
12 want the exact same thing, we all want it.

13 And so I ask the charter school parents, be  
14 tolerant, listen to my public school parents.  
15 And my public school parents, understand if they  
16 chose that, that's okay. It's okay, nothing  
17 wrong with that.

18 But what is wrong, is when our public school  
19 children are forced to be in tighter spaces,  
20 when the resources and--let me let you know, the  
21 resources are not given to the charter schools,  
22 they raise their money. Now let's be truthful  
23 about it, they raise their money. But then why  
24 isn't the Board of Ed putting the necessary  
25 resources in our public school education?

1 That's what we want, that's what we're asking  
2 for, and that's why--if someone asked me, why do  
3 I say no, that's why I say no, because you all  
4 are in our community.

5 I live here just like you do. I was born  
6 and raised here, so it's not about you are  
7 somewhere and you are over there, we're all here  
8 together united as one. And we need to work  
9 together for all of our children.

10 Are you--no questions, I apologize, they  
11 told me no. I apologize.

12 [crosstalk]

13 MALE VOICE: Not yet, not yet. After this.

14 MS. DICKENS: All right, so please, please,  
15 I love all of you, whether you're charter school  
16 or whether you're public school, because these  
17 kids are our future, and our future will  
18 survive, our future will continue and our future  
19 will be educated to the best of our ability. I  
20 will see to that, I will fight for it, and we  
21 will work together for it. If we have to march  
22 on, we will see to--that all of our children  
23 being educated to the best.

24 Thank you, God bless, and we will continue  
25 to do what we have to do for our kids.

1 PASTOR MICHAEL WALROND: Good evening.  
2 Hello, my name is Michael Walrond, I am the  
3 Senior Pastor, First Corinthian Baptist Church,  
4 116th in Adam Clayton Powell.

5 I've been to these rallies, these sessions,  
6 these hearings before, and I have to be honest,  
7 that oftentimes when I've come to these  
8 sessions, I've felt and heard the anger, the  
9 frustration on both sides.

10 And tonight I come a little bit differently.  
11 I came here, or rather to other hearings, upset  
12 and enraged about what I thought was something  
13 evil, not the Success students, but what was  
14 being done.

15 My wife is a former principal, she used to  
16 be a Director for Special Needs Services. One  
17 of the young ladies from Harlem Success who is  
18 here, the young girl who was sitting in the  
19 back, turned to my wife and asked my wife, are  
20 you one of the people who've come to close my  
21 school? I want you should hear this.

22 So a young girl, she could have been no more  
23 than six, is under the impression that there are  
24 people who've entered this space tonight through  
25 clear misinformation, that we've come to close

1 Harlem Success.

2 Well, oftentimes, those who manipulate  
3 information are operating under the assumption  
4 that those of you who are emotional are also  
5 ignorant. I want you should hear this.

6 They operate under the assumption that many  
7 of you in here who are emotional are also  
8 ignorant. So that if you're ignorant, in their  
9 minds, they can feed you information, and  
10 there's no critical reflection on your part, and  
11 they do this.

12 So for my young sister--daughter, I have two  
13 children, my son is 21 and my daughter will be  
14 18. But for my young daughter who's back there,  
15 no one, no parent, no elected official here has  
16 the power to close this school, only if a  
17 charter is not renewed can a school be closed.

18 So if she's under the impression or her  
19 parents feel we've come here to close Harlem  
20 Success, that means then that the anger is based  
21 on illegitimate information--let me not be cute,  
22 a lie. It's a lie.

23 Now as I sit here, my heart is completely  
24 grieved, because whether you know it or not,  
25 this strategy is as old as many of us who got

1 here not by choice on these shores. And the  
2 strategy is to divide and conquer.

3 Now--watch this, the movement--this new  
4 charter school movement instituted by Mayor Eva  
5 Moskowitz, by our mayor, watch this. Who now--I  
6 want you to refocus this for a second. Who  
7 cares about your children. Hold on.

8 So this young man--that young man right  
9 there, how old is he?

10 FEMALE VOICE: This here?

11 AUDIENCE: Five.

12 PASTOR WALROND: Five. God help you with  
13 this same man, this five-year-old boy when he's  
14 15 and looks suspicious. I want you to hear  
15 this. No, I want you to hear this. Don't let--  
16 listen to me, don't lead with your emotions,  
17 because that's what they want. They want you to  
18 be mad. No, I want you to see this.

19 The charter schools, right, operate under a  
20 fact where there's no charge for you to be in  
21 this space. Hold on, watch this, not you the  
22 parent, I'm talking about the charter school.

23 FEMALE VOICE: But I know my child has done  
24 very well--

25 PASTOR WALROND: Yes, I agree--no, you see--

1 hear me, I want you to hear me. I want you--  
2 can you hear me? Thank you, I'll never  
3 disrespect anybody. Let me speak.

4 That is the smoking mirror. You all hold  
5 on--you're going to let me finish? You think  
6 that someone's upset with your--watch this, all--  
7 -you just said it, all you know, is your child  
8 is doing better--watch this.

9 FEMALE VOICE: In a public school.

10 PASTOR WALROND: No, let me finish. All  
11 right? Your child is doing better, right, in a  
12 charter school, right, in an institution, right,  
13 that could have provided the resources that  
14 would have made the necessity for your child to  
15 be here unnecessary. Hold on.

16 So in that school where your child was  
17 before--let me give you an example. Some  
18 schools and some children in public schools,  
19 where the DOE cuts your funding, cuts your  
20 money, where your child is at public school.  
21 Takes away resources, takes out tutors, gym  
22 teachers, guidance counselors, tells your  
23 teachers now, with limited resources, that they  
24 better maintain the grade, or else it justifies  
25 the rationale for bringing in a charter school.

1 I want you to hear this. I want all  
2 parents to hear this. This is the message--and  
3 I want to be clear, this is no public school  
4 versus charter school, that's where we fall for  
5 the okeydoke all the time. That isn't the  
6 issue, I'm talking to my charter school parents.  
7 That isn't the issue. They are using your  
8 presence to do a work that they don't want to  
9 do.

10 You cannot go to a school, slash their  
11 budget, don't support their teachers, and then  
12 tell them to perform. The flipside is--but  
13 watch this, the flipside is they then cut--I  
14 want you to hear this, they cut that budget,  
15 bring in Harlem Success, have Harlem Success  
16 raise the private money, so they do the work  
17 that the public money should have done if they  
18 took your child seriously. I want you to hear  
19 this. I want you to--watch this.

20 It is the DOE, it would not happen without  
21 mayoral control through the DOE. Now this is my  
22 problem--hold on, I want you to hear me. This  
23 is my problem. Quiet.

24 If the DOE and our mayor, right, would have  
25 shown, right, through statistics how when you

1 give supportive infrastructure, and real,  
2 authentic administrative support, and real  
3 resources to--not with - - but real resources to  
4 a school, if you provide all the resources  
5 necessary, support infrastructure, support  
6 administrative necessity, support teachers  
7 completely, and that school fails, look for an  
8 alternative.

9 But if you don't do that, and cut the wings  
10 of the school, and then say, perform at the  
11 highest level, and compare, right, it to a  
12 school that has full resource support, there is  
13 no comparison. More than that--hear me, I want  
14 you to hear this, because I have no--I'm not in  
15 here fighting against nobody. Hear me.

16 What I am fighting against is the gross  
17 hypocrisy of our mayor and the DOE. I'm not  
18 fighting against--and the inconsistency. You  
19 cannot convince me that you care so much about  
20 the future of these young kids, and treat them  
21 like dogs when they get older. You can't  
22 convince me, that in this--I'm going to start  
23 with you.

24 Two weeks ago--I know, I'm finished. Matter  
25 of fact, I'm going to take my time. Two weeks

1 ago I met with Mayor Bloomberg in a breakfast  
2 with some clergy. I want you to hear this, I  
3 want you to hear this. They just wrote about  
4 this.

5 I met with the mayor, and the topic of stop  
6 and frisk came out, I know this has nothing--but  
7 actually it is very related, came up. And over  
8 650,000 cases of stop and frisk. Some of you  
9 have family members, older children, 85% of  
10 those stopped and frisked, Black and Latino  
11 children--hold on, listen, listen.

12 The two highest precincts of stop and frisk,  
13 the 28th and the 32nd. Hear me.

14 The mayor brought us together and said, we  
15 need some ideas on how to ease tensions. I  
16 said, I was taught a long time ago, I'm not  
17 going to pay you and then give you ideas too.  
18 Taxpayers subsidize these salaries. We can't do  
19 that and then come on and you know what, our  
20 mayor, who cares so much about these children  
21 said--he told me, actually, Reverend, that  
22 doesn't apply to me because I only take a dollar  
23 a salary from the taxpayers. I want you to hear  
24 this.

25 Cold and callous, he is doing what he wants

1 to do because he can, period. But you have to  
2 understand, don't be mad and think that these  
3 parents are here tonight because they don't want  
4 the success of your children, are you kidding  
5 me?

6 I want every child in Harlem to be  
7 successful, but I don't want you or these  
8 children to become the political pawns of people  
9 who are false when it comes to their sincerity  
10 about the children in this community. That's  
11 what I'm upset about. I'm not going to fall for  
12 that.

13 And what I'm telling you is that, there's no  
14 need for us to be adversarial. There is a--hold  
15 on. The solution is that you all as--watch  
16 this, this is one quick solution. Watch this,  
17 all right?

18 You, the parents of Harlem Success Academy,  
19 who've experienced success with you children,  
20 right, push the DOE to provide resources for all  
21 the schools equal to which you have, be allies  
22 in the fight, not enemies, come together and you  
23 tell the mayor, hold on, my child is successful  
24 in HSA, my child has done good because you have  
25 seen to it that my child got the resources. But

1 his cousin on the other side of the school, he  
2 don't have the same resources. And although we  
3 like our success, we want the whole community to  
4 be successful. That don't mean you lose your  
5 spot, your child loses space, that means you  
6 recognize that the fight isn't about you and the  
7 other parent over here, your fight is about this  
8 system doing what it needs to do for the entire  
9 community, instead of pitting us against one  
10 another while they manipulate our emotions and  
11 disregard what really matters. That's real. So  
12 that's one solution. I'm done.

13 [applause]

14 MR. PAYMON ROUHANIFARD: Hi everybody. My  
15 name is Paymon Rouhanifard, I'm the Executive  
16 Director of the Office of Portfolio Management  
17 with the Department of Education.

18 And so we're going to kick off the formal  
19 part of the hearing. We wanted to accommodate  
20 the elected officials and some of the community  
21 leaders like Reverend Walrond.

22 And so now that they've spoken, we're going  
23 to jump in. But before we do, Christine and I  
24 were just talking, and we want to make it very  
25 clear, we want you guys to be advocates tonight,

1 we want you guys to take advantage of your  
2 opportunity to speak, but let's not shout over  
3 one another, let's be as respectful as we can  
4 be.

5 Clearly there are moments we're going to  
6 agree to disagree, but to the extent we can all  
7 respect one another it's going to make for a  
8 much better evening for everybody here. And  
9 particularly when it comes to setting examples  
10 for the younger folks here.

11 So I'm going to jump in into the proposal  
12 and we'll go from here.

13 So this is a joint public hearing as you  
14 know, the Department of Education, Community  
15 Education Council and the School Leadership  
16 teams for the proposed co-location of one grade  
17 of Harlem Success Charter School 4 in M149, M207  
18 for the 2012/13 school year. This hearing is  
19 being recorded.

20 So as you all know, we've asked the District  
21 3 Community Education Council and the School  
22 Leadership teams of PS 149, Harlem Success  
23 Academy 1, and PA11M [phonetic] to participate  
24 in this joint public hearing.

25 I'm going to quickly introduce the folks

1 sitting up here on the dais.

2 So from my right all the way over, we have  
3 Esther Friedman who is the Superintendent of  
4 District 3, we have three members of the 149  
5 SLT, Richard White, is to Esther's left, to the  
6 left of Richard is Sonia Hampton, and to my  
7 immediate right is Patrick Walsh.

8 You all know Christine Annechino, the  
9 President of CEC 3, Laurie Frye from CEC 3, Noah  
10 Gotbaum, it looks like he just got up a minute  
11 ago, but he's sitting right over here. And  
12 representing SUNY, who's the Authorizer of  
13 Success Academy is Tom Frank, all the way over  
14 to my left.

15 The purpose of this hearing is to provide  
16 you comments about the proposal.

17 Before I describe the proposal, I want to  
18 make sure that you are all aware of the  
19 opportunity to provide your input. All of you  
20 who wish to speak must sign up in the speaker  
21 signup area located right there in the back of  
22 the auditorium. The signup list will close at  
23 6:45, although I think we're--you know what time  
24 it is exactly?

25 FEMALE VOICE: 6:45.

1 MR. RAHANIFORD: It's 6:45. There it is,  
2 great.

3 Speakers will be given the floor in the  
4 order that they have signed up. All comments  
5 are limited to two minutes.

6 The timekeeper, sitting upfront over here  
7 will notify you when you have 30 seconds  
8 remaining and also when your time is up. So  
9 again, can the timekeeper please raise your hand  
10 so you can see where she is? Okay.

11 If you have a question that would like to be  
12 addressed during the Q&A portion of the agenda,  
13 which will take place following the public  
14 commentary, please write that question down on  
15 an index card in the back of the room, and  
16 submit them to a volunteer by the table. We  
17 will also respond to questions from the dais  
18 during the Q&A following the public commentary.

19 There may be other elected officials who  
20 show up at different parts of the evening, and  
21 if they wish to speak, we will do our best to  
22 accommodate them at the first opportune moment.  
23 Those who are here at the start of public  
24 comment segment will be asked to speak first.

25 All comments will be mentioned in the

1 analysis of public commentary to be published  
2 and provided to the Panel for Educational Policy  
3 the evening before the panel votes. That vote,  
4 as some of you may know, is scheduled for  
5 Thursday, April 26th, 2012 at the Prospect  
6 Heights Campus, and that's at 883 Classon Avenue  
7 in Brooklyn.

8 In addition, we also welcome any other  
9 comments and feedback you may have, any time  
10 before the panel votes on this proposal. The  
11 email address and phone number where you can  
12 provide those comments are  
13 d03proposals@schools.nyc.gov, and the phone  
14 number is 212-374-3466.

15 I'm going to quickly read the proposal  
16 summary and then we're going to then move to the  
17 presentations by the CEC and the SLTs.

18 The New York City Department of Education is  
19 proposing to co-locate one grade of Harlem  
20 Success Academy Charter School 4 in Tandem  
21 Buildings M149 and M207, located respectively at  
22 34 West 118th Street and 41 West 117th Street,  
23 in Community School District 3 for the 2012/13  
24 school year.

25 Tandem Buildings are two separate buildings

1 with separate entrances which are joined by a  
2 central core containing large shared spaces such  
3 as auditoriums, gymnasiums and/or cafeterias.

4 If this proposal is approved, Harlem Success  
5 Academy 4 would serve its fifth grade students  
6 in this building in the 2012/13 school year.  
7 The single grade cohort of HSA 4 would be co-  
8 located in M149, 207 with existing schools PS  
9 149, Sojourner Truth, a district elementary  
10 school that serves students in kindergarten  
11 through eighth grade, and offers a pre-  
12 kindergarten program.

13 Harlem Success Academy Charter School or HSA  
14 1, a public charter school that currently serves  
15 students in kindergarten through sixth grades,  
16 and PS 811, Mickey Mouse School, a District 75  
17 school serving students with autism or who are  
18 emotionally disturbed.

19 A co-location means that two or more school  
20 organizations are located in the same building,  
21 and may share common spaces like auditoriums,  
22 gymnasiums and cafeterias.

23 HSA 4 currently serves students in  
24 kindergarten through fourth grade, in Building  
25 M113, located at 240 West 113th Street, also in

1 Community School District 3, where it is co-  
2 located with PS 241, an opportunity charter  
3 school. M113 is about half a mile from this  
4 building.

5 HSA 4 is currently authorized to serve  
6 students in kindergarten through fifth grades.  
7 However, there are not sufficient rooms  
8 available in M113 to accommodate HSA 4's fifth  
9 grade, in addition to its current grade span.

10 HSA 1 currently serves students in  
11 kindergarten through sixth grades, and in this  
12 Building M149 and 207.

13 In a separate EIS that was posted on  
14 December 10th, 2010, and approved by the Panel  
15 for Educational Policy on February 1st, 2011,  
16 the DOE proposed the re-siting of HSA 1's  
17 current fifth and sixth grades, and future fifth  
18 through eighth grades, as the school expands to  
19 full scale, to Building M088 [phonetic]  
20 beginning in the 2012/13 school year.

21 As a result of that proposal, in 2012/13 and  
22 future years, HSA 1 will only--will serve only  
23 students from kindergarten through fourth grades  
24 in M149 and 207.

25 Under this proposal, HSA 4's fifth grade

1 students will be served in M149 and 207  
2 alongside students of HSA 1, which will serve  
3 students in kindergarten through fourth grades  
4 in M149 and 207, beginning in '12/13.

5 This co-location of HSA 4's fifth grade is  
6 being proposed for one year. The proposal will  
7 not change the amount of space allocated to each  
8 school in the Building Utilization Plan approved  
9 last year.

10 The DOE will consider all long-term options  
11 to accommodate HSA 4's fifth grade in the  
12 future, and if necessary, we'll propose those  
13 options in a separate EIS. That concludes the  
14 summary of the proposal.

15 So really quick before we jump into the SLT  
16 and CEC presentations, I understand that the PS  
17 149 SLT wants to lead us in the Sojourner Truth  
18 chant.

19 And before I hand the microphone over,  
20 Spanish interpreters are available, I just want  
21 to make that clear.

22 MS. SONIA HAMPTON: Good evening everybody.

23 AUDIENCE: Good evening.

24 MS. HAMPTON: First would like to welcome  
25 all our public officials, my pastor, community

1 leaders, family and friends. On behalf of Ms.  
2 Barbara Derigo [phonetic], our Principal, our  
3 Assistant Principal Mrs. Briggs [phonetic], and  
4 Ms. Jones [phonetic], we welcome you to a  
5 marvelous Thursday here at PS MS 149.

6 And not forgetting the - - family because  
7 you are our family. I don't know what's going  
8 on, somebody trying to sell a movie, but I'm not  
9 trying to be - - okay?

10 Now like I said, and we're not going to  
11 forget our 811 babies either. Like my Pastor  
12 said, we are family, I'm your PTA President,  
13 your PTA President and your PTA President. And  
14 with all that said, every Monday we give honor  
15 to the flag, because you know we got one Black  
16 President, we so proud, we so proud, we so  
17 proud.

18 So right now we--I wrote a chant to keep the  
19 children motivated, you know, and I was kind of  
20 upset when they cut it off so my other babies in  
21 Harlem Success didn't hear [phonetic], but you  
22 know, because I was like to write a chant for  
23 you guys also.

24 And so I wrote one for the little people,  
25 and it goes like this. 'We are Sojourner Truth,

1 and we're number one. We came to learn and  
2 then have fun. The staff has told us that we're  
3 the best and we're here to prove it to the rest.  
4 Now if they can't hack it then go on home  
5 because Sojourner's on the move and going  
6 strong. Go Truth go [phonetic].'

7 So when you see the little pre-k kids,  
8 they'd be so happy, they'd be so happy.

9 Now, we couldn't forget our middle school  
10 children, so they act like they was too big to  
11 sing now when they got older, so we did a little  
12 something like this.

13 'S-O-J-O-U-R-N-E-R, Truth, Truth, Truth,  
14 Truth, we're the smartest, we'll go far, Truth,  
15 Truth, Truth, Truth, knowledge is power, Truth,  
16 Truth, Truth, Truth, we learn this by the hour,  
17 Truth, Truth, Truth, Truth, Education is the  
18 key, Truth, Truth, Truth, you can't take that  
19 from me, Truth, Truth, Truth. And with  
20 education comes elevation, Truth, Truth, Truth,  
21 and you can't get that without dedication,  
22 Truth, Truth, Truth, Truth, Truth. Say it one  
23 more time, Truth, Truth, Truth, Truth, Truth'.  
24 This concludes this rhyme, see, the pastor was  
25 trying to school you all, and let you all know

1 we got to get at the truth.

2 Mayor Petrona did us wrong, and you can't  
3 have no bed buddies, you know what I'm saying?  
4 We got to educate everybody, you understand?

5 And you know what hurts me so bad my--school  
6 parents, I'd be outside trying to get to know  
7 you all, and trying to come and see you all, but  
8 Eva won't let me do that, you know?

9 And I don't like when I see your all babies,  
10 I do want to hug your all babies so bad, but  
11 they tell me I can't hold them babies. We've  
12 got to be community; we've got to be family.  
13 Like I said, a lot of people helped build that  
14 name up called Harlem, you know, and somebody  
15 told me the Harlem name couldn't go on a few  
16 things, Harlem Hospital and the Harlem  
17 Globetrotters [phonetic] - - we did now, we're  
18 going to pass it over to the dais, and let's not  
19 try to argue, we want to know because we were  
20 going to sue [phonetic] you and we need to love  
21 one another, amen.

22 MR. RAHANIFORD: Thank you very much Sonia.  
23 So I'm going to hand this over now to CEC 3 and  
24 Christine to kick off their presentation.

25 MS. ANNECHINO: Good evening everyone, I'm

1 going to start with Mr. White and work our way  
2 down, everybody have about three to five minutes  
3 to discuss this hearing and why we're here.

4 MR. RICHARD WHITE: My position on--my name  
5 is Richard White and I'm SLT Secretary here in  
6 Sojourner Truth.

7 AUDIENCE: We can't hear you.

8 MALE VOICE: Speak up.

9 MR. WHITE: My name is Richard White, I'm  
10 School Leadership Team Secretary here at  
11 Sojourner Truth PS 149.

12 And my position is clear as it has always  
13 been, that we need to work together as parents,  
14 watch the behavior of our children while they're  
15 in school, because I have observed some  
16 children, unfortunately, judging other children  
17 here at 149 in reference to our co-located  
18 school upstairs.

19 And this is not the fault of children; this  
20 is the fault of educators and politicians. The  
21 core of our problem, and we have an opportunity  
22 upcoming in this mayoral election, we need to  
23 take back control of the Department of Education  
24 from the Mayor. If we can do that during the  
25 next election, and it may be as simple as not

1 voting for the guy who wants control of the  
2 DOE, it may be focusing on that one issue.

3 If we want our children to be educated  
4 fairly, equally, so that children won't judge  
5 each other as they walk down these hallways,  
6 saying those kids that they're special than  
7 them, they're different. They think they're  
8 smarter than we are. I've heard children say  
9 that on both sides of the fence.

10 So my firm position on co-location is we can  
11 exist together as long as we don't push each  
12 other out of the picture. And unfortunately,  
13 that's one of the things that occur here in this  
14 school, where PS 149 is almost a thing belonging  
15 into a museum, a thing of history, a relic.

16 I mean we would've been--we were almost up  
17 to 1,000 students when my child, Mia [phonetic],  
18 first enrolled in this school. We're down to a  
19 measly 350? 348? What happened to hundreds of  
20 our Sojourner Truth students?

21 I would love to think that they're graduated  
22 and moved forward, but they've been pushed  
23 aside, transferred along, gotten rid of to make  
24 space for other things and other ideas. And the  
25 other things and other ideas are political, and

1 that's where we need to channel our focus,  
2 channel our energies, to elect a mayor who no  
3 longer wants control of the Department of  
4 Education, that should be our chief question of  
5 the next mayor, the next candidate for mayor, no  
6 matter who's running. "Do you want control of  
7 the DOE?" "No." "Then I'll consider your  
8 election."

9 If we can start from there and stop  
10 bickering amongst ourselves, then I--as School  
11 Team Leadership Secretary, I have encountered  
12 many parents who express dissatisfaction with  
13 both our schools. Who have expressed  
14 dissatisfaction with parent participation in  
15 both our schools, and some of our children have  
16 been withdrawn from both our schools out of mere  
17 frustration with both our schools.

18 So not only do we need to focus here in the  
19 school, chiefly we need to impact political  
20 reasoning. Attend political events, examine the  
21 candidates who come out to these type of  
22 meetings. Examine the candidates who will soon  
23 be running for mayor, and that's a golden  
24 opportunity for us as parents.

25 It was a golden opportunity for us that

1       Obama is in office, as parents we took to the  
2       streets six o'clock in the morning. When it  
3       comes to the mayoral election in terms of him--  
4       of that office controlling DOE, we need to take  
5       to the streets, 6:00 a.m., to out-vote the  
6       candidate who wants control, to outnumber him,  
7       her or them. And then we can come back to these  
8       schools and--not redesign them, but put them  
9       back in order, put them back to the way they  
10      were 15, 10 years ago that was working for our  
11      kids.

12             Public schools accommodated hundreds of  
13      thousands of people, it is time-tested that it  
14      has put out educated, able-bodied, some of the  
15      very political--politicians that spoke here  
16      tonight was educated in public schools.

17             FEMALE VOICE: That's right, where are they  
18      now?

19             MR. WHITE: Some of the very people who are  
20      fostering charter schools' proliferation have  
21      been educated in public schools, and obviously  
22      they haven't done too bad for themselves because  
23      they have put a devastating scheme together.

24             And while we're bickering against each other  
25      saying who's getting the better this, who's

1 getting more of this than I am, they're  
2 constructing a scheme that they're going to put  
3 in concrete and stone that will last for years  
4 to come if we fail to focus on this upcoming  
5 mayoral election.

6 If the mayor wants control of the DOE, he's  
7 out of here. If he's willing to relinquish  
8 control of the DOE and our schools, return  
9 control back to the parents, we may consider his  
10 election. Is this a person worth voting for?

11 What else does he got going on, or she has  
12 going on? But this is enough to draw my  
13 attention towards that candidate, and it is  
14 truly from my heart when I say it is for the  
15 children. Because I don't do well with adults,  
16 I tolerate them, I get along okay with them, but  
17 I do better with children. I do better with  
18 children, and what I'm here for my child and all  
19 her friends, because that's what I want you to  
20 come out for when we have this upcoming mayoral  
21 election, come out for my child and all of her  
22 friends, and say no to further expansion of the  
23 charter schools, because I don't--when I say,  
24 say no to charter schools, I don't want to  
25 stigmatize or hyperbole the charter school, I'm

1 just saying you're expanding too much in this  
2 one building.

3 I mean you're pushing things like my child  
4 no longer has dance, cooking, many cultural  
5 experiences, music class, drama, it's gone. It  
6 is gone as a result--and all that was five years  
7 [phonetic] when my child started here, right in  
8 here in PS 149. And now gone, no more dance, no  
9 more cooking, many cultural experiences gone,  
10 music classes gone, my daughter took the violin  
11 when she--her first year here. Drama classes we  
12 had are gone, and that's because they're  
13 expanding too fast in this one building.  
14 They're pushing our children out to make room  
15 for others.

16 Come out to the next mayoral election,  
17 please, and vote for the candidate--at least  
18 consider voting for the candidate who is--who  
19 does not want control of our schools. I mean  
20 the city is a whole enough to run, as opposed to  
21 including our schools in that line.

22 Thank you for your attention and thanks for  
23 coming out.

24 MS. HAMPTON: You all know I'm Mrs. Hampton,  
25 but I'm also an SLT Chairman. When I look out

1 in the crowd and I look at all my parents I  
2 get angry.

3 I'm angry at Mayor Bloomberg and I'm angry  
4 at - - because you promised my people some spots  
5 and you haven't got no space for them. And then  
6 when you're promising them spots and you put it  
7 in a school, now see you--they tell you my  
8 school was a failing school, no, it wasn't.  
9 when crack [phonetic] was here we was failing,  
10 but we went from a C to a A.

11 Bloomberg, he came by to see you guys, but  
12 he didn't come by to see my babies and tapped  
13 them on the back, you understand? And that's  
14 what's hurting my heart now because then you got  
15 my community fighting, and arguing against one  
16 another, and disrespecting political officials  
17 up in front of their children, you know?

18 Before you promise me a space and you  
19 promise me this dream, God doggone, make sure  
20 you got some room for me. Because I'm not going  
21 to come and step on my cousin and ride my butt -  
22 - when there isn't any room. You lied to me,  
23 you lied to me.

24 Now what did my school lose? My school lost  
25 a lot of things. Mr. White done tell you about

1 it. But I had a nice little thing that I was  
2 going to read about statistics and all that, but  
3 811 never has a voice, District 75 children  
4 never have a voice.

5 See, I'm a voice for them also, so I'm going  
6 to read--I have two beautiful boys, one name is  
7 Eddy Durant [phonetic] and one name is Johnny  
8 Veniso [phonetic]. This is Eddy's statement,  
9 that's my little general.

10 'My name is Eddy Durant and I'm in a New  
11 York City DOE student of 149. I have been  
12 attending classes for three years'. He is in  
13 eighth grade. 'The third floor problems always  
14 affected me since I started middle school; I  
15 have nothing against the charter school, the  
16 people behind this is really Department of  
17 Education. The DOE allowed a charter school to  
18 take control of the entire third floor. The DOE  
19 needs to know how much it's going to affect all  
20 of 149 students. I say the 149 needs to take  
21 the stand as one family to have this situation  
22 resolved as soon as possible, we better wake up  
23 and find out we're in trouble'. That's Eddy,  
24 Eddy Durant, eighth grade.

25 See, it's not about me, I'm not here for

1 show, I'm here for the children, and I mean  
2 that from the bottom of my heart, I even went to  
3 jail for them.

4 FEMALE VOICE: Yes, you did, yes, you did.

5 MS. HAMPTON: It's all about love, and this  
6 is little Johnny, now and if you see Johnny and  
7 Eddy together, they like look like two little  
8 business partners. So that's why I have to  
9 fight so much for education because I know they  
10 could be COE--CEO of something.

11 I--I'm--now is this Johnny, 'I'm a well-  
12 educated student named Johnny Veniso, I am so  
13 mad about the charter taking away the third  
14 floor. Turns out the charters was innocent, so  
15 the culprit is the NYC DOE'. This is beautiful  
16 you all.

17 'Now I predict the same day we will have to  
18 move to a school very far away because the  
19 charter school took over. Without the third  
20 floor we can't use enough space for many useful  
21 things. I'm trying to work hard as I can to  
22 persuade the New York City DOE to keep our space  
23 in school'.

24 Now see now you have to be thinking. Think  
25 about what the reverend just told you. Didn't

1 he tell you that they play us against one  
2 another? See, it's not about the - - you all,  
3 it's about gentrification. Harlem does not  
4 belong to Eva Moskowitz, it belongs to the  
5 people.

6 FEMALE VOICE: That's right, that's right.

7 MS. HAMPTON: Now you see John now, I've  
8 been going to every politician in this city, and  
9 as they get--so don't think, don't be thinking  
10 your political officials is not here for you.  
11 They are here for you, somebody else is not  
12 there a team player, he wants control.

13 Now I'm going to go home and I'm going to  
14 pray for us, because like Eddy said, we is in  
15 trouble, tell Mr. Bloomberg his time is running  
16 out. Harlem is a beautiful community, we don't  
17 mind that the color is changing, but don't come  
18 in here dividing my people. I love you, peace,  
19 be still.

20 MR. PATRICK WALSH: Thank you, Sonia. My  
21 name is Patrick Walsh and I speak to you as a  
22 teacher, an SLT member and a parent of a child  
23 in an excellent public school. And also one who  
24 believes in the sacredness of education and of  
25 every human life.

1           Like of my colleagues here at PS 149, I  
2           have witnessed the slow, steady degradation of  
3           conditions here in this building that threaten,  
4           seriously threaten the sacredness of education  
5           and the sacredness of every human life.

6           We have, in the past six years, lost our  
7           music program, which was a joy to our kids and  
8           an essential part of any true education. We  
9           have lost our Save [phonetic] group despite the  
10          fact that the State has legally mandated its  
11          existence, and despite the fact that PS 49 does  
12          not have the luxury of counseling out a student  
13          who has a discipline problem.

14          FEMALE VOICE: Right.

15          MR. WALSH: We have lost our computer room  
16          despite the fact that the DOE never stops  
17          talking about the need for a technological  
18          intelligence in surviving in this world.

19          And our children have in many ways lost the  
20          essential promise of this country, a fair and  
21          equitable education. This, I believe, is an  
22          abomination and should be called an abomination,  
23          and it is not a product of education but of  
24          politics, and that is simply wrong.

25          We have been blessed with a new principal,

1 with a new vision of what education can be,  
2 and our children deserve the right to see that  
3 vision realized.

4 Last year at this time at one of these  
5 hearings last year's co-location hearing,  
6 something remarkable happened at the end of the  
7 hearing. After a lot of screaming and fighting,  
8 parents from 149 and parents from Harlem Success  
9 Academy began to realize that they had been  
10 pitted against each other and that this was not  
11 an accident, but in fact was designed.

12 I am hoping, I am hoping that that insight  
13 is realized again tonight, because all of us  
14 want the same thing. All of us want the best  
15 thing for all of our kids, which as children of  
16 God, every single one of them deserve.

17 MS. ALICIA SIMPSON: Hi, my name is Alicia  
18 Simpson, I sit on the Education Council for  
19 District 3, and I just had one simple thing to  
20 say, and I've been attending these hearings for  
21 a little over a year, and I remember last year  
22 attending one similar to this, and I remember  
23 Ms. Hampton getting up and I remember one  
24 statement she said, and she said I'm trying to  
25 fix it where I'm at, and I thought that was so

1 profound.

2 She is not running away from the problems  
3 she perceives, she is trying to fix it, and a  
4 lot of parents are saying what's the solution?  
5 Well the solution is that you work together and  
6 not against each other, work together, you can  
7 do that. Just agree that hey, we all want the  
8 best thing for our kids and if that's the truth  
9 then work together. And that's all I have to  
10 say.

11 MR. NOAH GOTBAUM: My name is Noah Gotbaum.  
12 I am one of the--in CEC 3 I'm one of the  
13 liaisons here at 149 and Sojourner Truth, which  
14 many know is near and dear to my heart.

15 I actually want to--I'm going to want to  
16 hear from the teachers and the parents. I'm  
17 going to try to be brief which is hard for me.

18 I would say that what is important has  
19 already begun to happen tonight, and that is  
20 that the onus be put on the Department of  
21 Education to provide an equal, adequate  
22 education for all children.

23 That is not happening, it doesn't happen  
24 when you set up a capacity of 113%, it doesn't  
25 happened when you force our committed Special Ed

1 teachers to teach kids in the closets or  
2 hallways or rooms with curtains on them.

3 It doesn't happen when you give the same  
4 amount of space to a school with zero self-  
5 contained children as to a school with 25% self-  
6 contained children, that is not the same  
7 environment.

8 Your allocation of space, your capacity, the  
9 data says 149, you're over the limit, you've  
10 gotten more than your share of space. What does  
11 that mean? That means take your pick, you can  
12 have one art room or a music room or a science  
13 room or the garage, but you only get one. And  
14 library time, gymnasium time, lunchtime is catch  
15 as catch can, and you have special needs  
16 children to educate, what do you get? You get  
17 two half-size classrooms. For how many, okay?  
18 50, 60, 70 kids? That's closets.

19 Now the Success charter families have to  
20 understand, why is it a problem? Why are we  
21 standing up here? And that has to do with the  
22 fact that what they are saying, the DOE is  
23 saying it's adequate, it's okay for special  
24 needs kids to be educated in hallways and  
25 closets with curtains, and it isn't okay. And

1 why do we care? Because the DOE is saying  
2 it's okay for Success charter not to take self-  
3 contained kids. There are no self-contained  
4 kids at HSA 1.

5 AUDIENCE: How do you know?

6 MR. GOTBAUM: I know--we know--do you--tell  
7 me--wait, wait. You want to know something,  
8 that's a good question because to try to get the  
9 information is almost impossible. We are  
10 sitting up here, you see us, let me finish if I  
11 could. You asked a question, I'd like to answer  
12 it.

13 We have asked the Department of Education,  
14 we have asked the Success Charter for  
15 significant amounts of information. You know  
16 what they told us? You have to foil it. You  
17 know what foiling is? Freedom of Information  
18 Act. Means we have to go essentially file paper  
19 because it's not publicly available. So that we  
20 did, two years ago we did that. How much of the  
21 information do you think we've gotten?

22 FEMALE VOICE: It's still in process.

23 MR. GOTBAUM: Zero, why?

24 FEMALE VOICE: I know you know, I am a  
25 parent of a Special Ed child in Harlem Success--

1 MR. GOTHBAM: [interposing] So am I. I'm  
2 not saying that, but you are not hearing what  
3 I'm saying, you're--look I have, I have--we're  
4 not saying that. Look, what I'm saying is, is  
5 that I have, I have two of my three children  
6 have special needs, okay, and one of them gets--  
7 excuse me, excuse me. One of them requires  
8 self-contained services, okay? Huge importance.

9 And the other gets pulled out for speech  
10 once a week. Those are not the same children,  
11 and they do not require the same services, but  
12 the DOE allocates the same space, and you know  
13 and we know that they have hugely different  
14 needs. And what's happening is that the kids  
15 with the highest needs are being pushed out.

16 And if you look at the numbers that are  
17 available you'll see in Harlem Success 1 when  
18 you get to third grade all of a sudden the  
19 numbers start to fall. Take a look at it, it's  
20 right here in this proposal, boom, boom, boom,  
21 boom. You'll see it, I'll tell you, 15% of the  
22 kids start to fall out in third grade, why is  
23 that? What happens in third grade?

24 AUDIENCE: Testing.

25 MR. GOTBAUM: Testing. But that's all the

1 DOE looks at, it doesn't look at the heroic  
2 acts, okay? That your kid may be making  
3 progress, all they're caring about is testing,  
4 and unfortunately, that's all they are using  
5 right now.

6 And a successful school is one that educates  
7 all kids, and we need to put pressure on the  
8 Department of Education as Pastor Walrond, as  
9 our elected officials said, and stop saying I  
10 got mine, it's okay, screw you, and teach all of  
11 our children we've got to demand for everyone,  
12 for those special needs kids, for those English  
13 language kids, for the two dozen or three dozen  
14 kids who are sheltered at PS 149, the ACS  
15 [phonetic] kids, we should all be doing that.

16 And the DOE should be ashamed of itself for  
17 putting 113% capacity in this school next year  
18 or 112% and not checking it. And they should be  
19 ashamed of themselves for special needs kids to  
20 walk around the block, and they should be  
21 ashamed of themselves for giving two half  
22 classrooms and forcing Kay [phonetic], and  
23 forcing Helen [phonetic] and forcing those  
24 teachers and those kids to be educated behind  
25 curtains.

1           No one said take away you space, but we  
2           are saying we have to have equal, it's not  
3           right, and we all should be fighting for that.  
4           Thank you.

5           MS. ANNECHINO: Thank you. Just a few words  
6           and then we are going to get right to our  
7           speakers list.

8           It's interesting, 45, 50 years ago when  
9           there were two separate fountains and one was  
10          used for a certain group of people and another  
11          was used for another group of people, and we  
12          raised our hands and we said, what, how can this  
13          be? And all as a community we stood up and said  
14          you know what, we can't take this anymore, it's  
15          not fair if one group of people get to go over  
16          there and the other group of people have to go  
17          over there.

18          It's not fair and we all said that 45, 50  
19          years ago, and I believe everybody in this room  
20          was behind that, was saying like you're right,  
21          you know what, that's not right for anybody,  
22          whether it's water, whether it's a bus, whether  
23          it's where you live, your house, your job, it's  
24          just not right.

25          And now we find ourselves in 2012, I don't

1 care what school you go to. My child goes to  
2 school on 70th Street, a whole different--it's a  
3 whole different world. Is that right? No, but  
4 who was the source of it?

5 Again, I'm not the source of it, a lot you--  
6 the Harlem Success parents I recognize you  
7 because you have orange on, and I'm sure you  
8 recognize me because I'm always standing behind  
9 this microphone, yelling and screaming and  
10 complaining. But I'm not yelling and screaming  
11 and complaining at you, it's not--it's not you  
12 and it's certainly not your children.

13 If you are happy with you education, that's  
14 fantastic. The problem is, is it that the  
15 Department of Education has taken--has chosen a  
16 certain group to have a quality education, and  
17 for the others they said no.

18 So that's why we are here. We are not here  
19 because we disagree with you as parents, we're  
20 not here because--we love your kids, we love all  
21 of our kids. That's why we volunteer, we put 80  
22 hours a week in trying to help our schools, but  
23 our point is, is that it's not fair, it's like  
24 having two separate fountains, it's like having  
25 a front of the bus and a back of the bus.

1           So what I want to do here is that we have  
2 a signup sheet, and it's for the Harlem Success  
3 parents, and it's for any of you folks that  
4 attend Harlem Success. If any of you want to  
5 join us, the District 3 schools and go down and  
6 have a conversation with the Department of  
7 Education and demand that not only your child  
8 has a great education but everybody has a great  
9 education.

10           And I'm happy to work with all of you and  
11 any of you. So please I encourage you, we need  
12 to work together in this. So without further  
13 ado, we will start and we would love to hear  
14 from all the involved parents of all schools.  
15 Thank you.

16           MR. ROUHANIFARD: So we have concluded the  
17 formal presentations, we're going to open the  
18 floor to public comments. Speakers will be  
19 given the floor in the order that they signed up  
20 and all comments are limited to two minutes, and  
21 again, there will be a timekeeper up here to my  
22 direct left in the first row.

23           I'm going to call you guys by numbers. I'm  
24 going to call five at a time, a couple of folks  
25 who have already spoken have signed up, so were

1 going to skip over your numbers but I'm going  
2 to call five numbers at a time, and when I call  
3 your number, go ahead and line up.

4 So we can go ahead and begin with numbers 1,  
5 2, 3, 4 and 5. So numbers 1 through 5, if you  
6 can please go ahead and line up, whoever is  
7 speaker 1. Ben Taylor, if you can raise your  
8 hand. He's the gentleman over there with the  
9 microphone, you can show your number to Ben,  
10 he's setting up the mic, and starting with  
11 speaker 1, you can begin, you have two minutes.

12 MR. RAKIM SMITH: It's okay? Testing,  
13 hello. Hello, you can hear me? Microphone  
14 check. Hello? Good afternoon, my name is Rakim  
15 Smith, I'm up here with my daughter, Diamond  
16 [phonetic], and Harlem Success Academy 4--

17 FEMALE VOICE: We can't you baby, come to  
18 the mic.

19 MR. SMITH: Hello?

20 FEMALE VOICE: Go and use the mic from the  
21 dais.

22 MR. SMITH: Hello? How you doing everyone,  
23 my name is Rakim Smith. My daughter, Diamond  
24 Smith, goes to Harlem Success Academy 4.

25 I'm not a politician but I've noticed a lot

1 coming up here that politicians came through  
2 here, very well-spoken people came through here,  
3 but not a lot of parents had a chance to speak.  
4 You hear parents trying to express their voice,  
5 speaking out from the crowd and they are being  
6 silenced.

7 Of course everybody deserves a turn to  
8 speak, but I think it's most important that the  
9 parents should be able to speak, and speak about  
10 the kind of atmosphere, or the kind of place  
11 they would want their children.

12 Everybody has a choice, like I had a choice,  
13 I've made my choice. My daughter actually  
14 started kindergarten in PS 149, her kindergarten  
15 teacher is here now, a very beautiful woman, my  
16 daughter learned a lot. And as she goes on in  
17 the future, I would hope that she continues to  
18 learn more through life as well as education.

19 You spoke about fountains and - - familiar  
20 with how it was in the civil rights era. And  
21 this shouldn't be the political arena for that  
22 type of stuff, but this school building becomes  
23 that fountain, and because it's like that  
24 fountain, it should be shared, it shouldn't be,  
25 well, who can get it or who can't get it or

1 maybe some kids could get it or whatever the  
2 case may be, I don't know any of that.

3 All I know is that I would like my daughter  
4 to come back to her original starting place,  
5 come full circle to the school she began her  
6 education in and try to get an additional  
7 education and move further in life.

8 And also I go 30 seconds so I'm not going to  
9 keep it long, but hopefully good can come out of  
10 this, I agree with what you said, as far as the  
11 DOE being responsible, but I think that fight  
12 should not be parent against parent, but more so  
13 at the DOE, at their location, because no one  
14 from there is here, we're arguing with one  
15 another and it should help you [phonetic], DOE  
16 we're going to get you.

17 I'm sure you're going to take the message  
18 along and let them know people's concerns and  
19 then in the future may be some sort of  
20 resolution could come about. Time is up, and  
21 that's all I have to say.

22 MS. ANNECHINO: Thank you.

23 MS. BOATWRIGHT: Good evening everyone. My  
24 name is Ms. Boatwright, I am a Special Ed  
25 teacher in a self-contained classroom, and I can

1 tell you that co-location is hurting our  
2 special needs children.

3 My students are relegated to receive their  
4 legally mandated OT services in a closet, this  
5 is the width, this is the curtain that hangs  
6 between two desks in the office where they  
7 receive their OT services, it is too small.  
8 This OT teacher had a classroom, but because of  
9 co-location she shares a closet. Is this what  
10 you want for your child?

11 MS. TAVIA TURNER: Good evening. My name is  
12 Tavia Turner and I'm a mother of four students  
13 at PS MS 149. They are four boys, ages 13, 11,  
14 9 and 6.

15 I taught my boys how to read from an early  
16 age. When I brought them to school I made sure  
17 that they had the basics because that's my duty  
18 as a mother. I also send them to school to  
19 learn and I became a member of my student team,  
20 the SLT.

21 I've noticed from not having space, my son  
22 who was nine, he is not getting the services  
23 that he needs because he needs behavioral  
24 therapy and the person called me on the phone  
25 and said he did not have the space to help my

1 son, and I told you this last year and you're  
2 still taking more rooms.

3 My children are still eating with your nine  
4 to six [phonetic], at 10:45 in the morning after  
5 eating breakfast at 8:15 in the morning.

6 I receive food stamps, so lunch they need  
7 because I could barely feed them throughout the  
8 month because they are boys and they do eat a  
9 lot.

10 Secondly--or thirdly, due to not having  
11 music program and things that will enrich them  
12 during their education, my sons, because you,  
13 the DOE, could give a rat's patootie about them,  
14 you've taken away things that make them want to  
15 come to school, so that statistically my sons  
16 are going to wind up in prisons that this system  
17 keeps building and creating because you don't  
18 want to build schools to get these people  
19 buildings so that you could teach them and give  
20 them the space that they need.

21 So--and when my son turns 16 and you all are  
22 pulling him over and arresting him because I'm  
23 doing what I got to do to make sure they come to  
24 school and they get an education, I'm in the  
25 building and I'm doing what I have to do for

1       them to learn, then what?

2               And as far as my son who's not getting his--  
3       the room so he could get his behavioral  
4       assistance and his teacher's in here, one of his  
5       teachers. I just got another letter today  
6       saying that he needs help with his behavior and  
7       I did what I needed to do to get him to get the  
8       services and he's not getting those services  
9       because you took the rooms.

10              MS. ZANETA DI COSTA HUMPHREYS: This morning  
11       on my way to school, I was thinking about the  
12       hearing that we would have about co-location,  
13       and while I was walking along the lines of cars  
14       in my neighborhood, I saw this bumper sticker  
15       that says coexist.

16              So I started thinking and asking myself this  
17       particular word is appropriate for this  
18       particular situation about co-location. I was  
19       wondering if we are really coexisting.

20              So I was asking myself, can you really  
21       coexist when the third graders and our  
22       supervisor, Ms. Jones, have to vacate their  
23       rooms so the HSA can occupy the whole third  
24       floor?

25              Can we really coexist with the speech

1 teacher, Ms. - - have to share a teeny-tiny  
2 room that her grown middle school students  
3 complain that they are so uncomfortable because  
4 they don't--they are being squeezed up in the  
5 seats, and likewise they are adjacent to the  
6 conference room and by the street where it's so  
7 noisy for them to have instruction?

8 Can we really coexist if our occupational  
9 therapist needs to divide the small PTA room  
10 with the cloth that Ms. Boatwright just showed,  
11 so she can give the services the students need  
12 so that they can do the appropriate treatment.

13 Can we really coexist when we lost most of  
14 our rooms that houses the music rooms? Use  
15 which--okay, last thought [phonetic]. So  
16 parents of 149, do you want your children to be  
17 left without school? Do you want them to travel  
18 to another location to get their education? I  
19 don't think so.

20 Indifference and complacency might close the  
21 school, but it doesn't have to happen. There is  
22 a strength in your acting together to keep this  
23 school open, because in unity there is strength,  
24 the power is in your hands.

25 MS. CAROLINE STARKEY: Can you hear me? Hi.

1 Good evening everybody, my name is Caroline  
2 Starkey, I'm a literacy teacher here at PS 149.  
3 I started here in 1998 so I've seen this  
4 building go through a lot.

5 I do want to say right now that one of the  
6 things that I really want to focus and has  
7 really been on my mind a lot, is that every time  
8 I turn around, the thing I hear the most is what  
9 excess space we have in this school, excess  
10 space. That term just drives me crazy. Because  
11 as someone who has had to share a room and run  
12 around and half my classes are running around  
13 from class to class, with all my things in my  
14 hand, I usually drop them as I'm running down  
15 the hall to get to a class on time.

16 Or even the--when I think about all the  
17 programs that our school does not have anymore.  
18 One of the things that I want to pass around and  
19 I have in my hand to make sure that you all get  
20 a copy, I didn't think putting up a thing up on  
21 the screen for you to see for 30 seconds and  
22 then walk out the door, that it would make an  
23 impact.

24 So I thought it would make a bigger impact  
25 if I made a sign. And the sign says, where's

1 our music program? Look below and see for  
2 yourselves. Keyboards and stands, it's in the  
3 closet. Violins and horns, it's not just in the  
4 closet, it's in the closets, plural.

5 No space equals no music program and  
6 enrichment for our children. Don't all children  
7 deserve the best in their school? Notice I use  
8 the word 'all' because I think all children,  
9 charter school children included, are all--we're  
10 all here for children.

11 I don't know about you, but when I became a  
12 teacher, I became a teacher because I love  
13 children, all of you, everyone in this room. So  
14 please let me pass this around because I think  
15 the pictures say a lot. And so I made enough  
16 for everybody, some people may not want to take  
17 a copy but I made a copy so that everybody can  
18 see one. And I hope you'll all take one.

19 I also want to make one quick comment  
20 because I think I'm still on my time. And  
21 that's that--what? Time is up, okay. So I'm  
22 going to use 30 seconds of my--this is--I want to  
23 say now that--I will spit it out quickly. And  
24 in response to what Mr. White said about where  
25 the numbers have gone, where our children have

1 gone. Over the years, many years in a row,  
2 our catchment zone has been changed. So, so  
3 many of our children are coming in to the office  
4 to sign up to go to our school and they're being  
5 told, you don't go here anymore. That's where  
6 our children are going. They're being told, you  
7 don't go here anymore.

8 All right, let me please go on and please  
9 read something from Mr. Hill [phonetic]. Mr.  
10 Hill used to be our music teacher--

11 MR. ROUHANIFARD: Ma'am, I'm going to need  
12 you to wind things down here.

13 MS. STARKEY: What was that?

14 MR. ROUHANIFARD: You're over your time. I  
15 got to move on--

16 MS. STARKEY: I know, I'm just now Mr. Hill.  
17 I was assigned by Mr. Hill, now I'm speaking for  
18 Mr. Hill.

19 So Mr. Hill, now I'm reading his letter.  
20 This is from Mr. Hill, written by Mr. Hill.  
21 There was a time not long ago when many of our  
22 little ones got to sing in the chorus. Many of  
23 them went on to sing in our middle school vocal  
24 program. Many of them are studying music in  
25 special high schools, like Celia Cruz and

1 Talented Unlimited, and in college. This  
2 artists not only realized a penchant for  
3 creativity but understood that this is how they  
4 would define themselves. However, we no longer  
5 have a music room.

6 Every student in the elementary school  
7 learned to play the keyboard, reading rhythms  
8 and notes. At the same time, they acquired the  
9 context and history of music, melodies by  
10 Beethoven and Brahms, lyrics in French and  
11 Swahili. However, we no longer have a music  
12 room.

13 Our first graders learn the techniques and  
14 discipline of the violin, they understood that  
15 practice and hard work led to fulfillment.  
16 However, we no longer have a music room.

17 The reductionist nature of the current  
18 educational practice has eliminated the  
19 opportunities for children to grow into  
20 sophisticated and accomplished young adults, and  
21 instead crowds them into tiny spaces where math  
22 and reading alone fail to be substitutes for  
23 depth and experience.

24 Expanding opportunities for all children is  
25 right, expansion at the expense of some is

1 wrong. Case in point, we no longer have a  
2 music room. Mr. Kevin Hill, teacher at PS 149.

3 MR. ROUHANIFARD: Please listen carefully to  
4 the numbers I'm calling because they're not  
5 going to be in order as some folks have already  
6 spoken. Number 6, 9, 11 and 13, number 6, 9, 11  
7 and 13, please come on up. Speaker number 6 is  
8 up next, 6, 9, 11 and 13.

9 MS. SIMONE SEMPLE: Good evening everyone,  
10 my name is Simone Semple and I have a son  
11 attending PS 149, his name is Shaka Antonio  
12 [phonetic].

13 I'm here tonight, I'm angry, I am hurt and I  
14 am very disappointed, but I am also going to  
15 humble myself. My son has two lovely teachers,  
16 Ms. Limpkins [phonetic] and Ms. Gutierrez  
17 [phonetic]. They take very good care of him,  
18 they teach him. I know I only have two minutes,  
19 I love to talk, especially when I'm speaking the  
20 truth, so I know I have to keep it short.

21 Okay, I went to an open house for a charter  
22 school, not because of my son's teachers, not  
23 because of PS 149. But I went because there's  
24 no arts here, children need the arts, okay?  
25 It's the same as education, they need that.

1           Now why should I have to hurt my head  
2 trying to look for another school because it has  
3 been taken away? That's my problem now, I don't  
4 want to remove my son from here, he's happy,  
5 he's learning, he's being cared for. And that  
6 is important to me.

7           Please take into consideration what I have  
8 said tonight and what all of the other concerned  
9 parents have said.

10           Also in addition, I frequently take my son  
11 to the playground at the school, and it's not  
12 fair when the charter school comes out and tell  
13 me that my son has to leave and also he cannot  
14 play with the other children, okay? I've had an  
15 experience, my son had an experience.

16           When he went to the playground at another  
17 park and he did not want to play. And I said,  
18 Shaka, why you don't want to play? He said,  
19 mommy, because the teachers there, they do not  
20 want me to play with the children. I said, no.  
21 He said, but at my school, I cannot play with  
22 the children from the other school.

23           That's not fair, he's a child. What you're  
24 doing is wrong, it is hurting our children. You  
25 should not be trying to separate them, they are

1 the same. I am very proud that my son is in a  
2 public school because he is learning a lot.  
3 With my help and with his teachers' help, he is  
4 excelling. Thank you very much.

5 MS. KAREN MCLEAN: Hello everyone. My name  
6 is Karen McLean, I actually have twin boys  
7 that's in first grade in PS 149, six-year olds.  
8 They both have IEPs.

9 My biggest concern is that both of my boys  
10 is either on a stage behind the curtain in the  
11 PTA room, which I'm a part of the PTA secretary  
12 getting services. One of the teachers display  
13 the curtain, I kid you not, that is the curtain-  
14 -that is the space. Because I'm in the PTA room  
15 and my son is like, I can peep through the  
16 curtain and see my son getting services. He's  
17 distracted, because we're doing stuff in the PTA  
18 room, we have no space, it's ridiculous. My  
19 kids is only six years old and the environment  
20 sucks.

21 Like parents we have--I don't understand why  
22 we're beefing and coming at each other because  
23 at the end of the day, it's not us, it's the  
24 kids. Your child is not better than mine, my  
25 child is not better than yours. What your child

1 deserves, my child deserves 10 times the same  
2 thing. Everybody should be equal.

3 You understand this is kids that in the same  
4 community, that live on my block, that they  
5 talk, they laugh, they play. But when it comes  
6 to school, it's like you're in the military, you  
7 can't look at them, you can't say nothing to  
8 them.

9 And my kids got to be like, mommy, but in  
10 school he don't say nothing to me but when we on  
11 the block, they're like in a different world.  
12 Like kids, how kids are supposed to be. Parents  
13 is fighting, kids is--you see the kids going  
14 back and forth, it makes no sense.

15 We should be fighting with the DOE, not  
16 parents. People shouldn't get ignorant, I'm  
17 hearing all this different stuff in the back of  
18 me and it makes no difference because at the end  
19 of the day, parents is a reflection of their  
20 kids. Kids is a reflection of their parents,  
21 you understand?

22 So you can go sit down baby. This is my  
23 son, this is my six-year-old son, and I kid you  
24 not, my child, Friday, every spelling test, 10  
25 out of 10. He reads well, he excel well. He

1 may be having his little moments as every  
2 other kid, but he's doing well.

3 Public school work for me and my children.  
4 I have no problem with public school, you could  
5 take your kid anyway, but at the end of the day,  
6 public school work for me. And this child right  
7 here is a representation of me.

8 MS. SYMONE MANNING: Good evening all. My  
9 name is Symone Manning, I'm a PTA President in  
10 PS 208.

11 I'm here representing the school, we oppose  
12 this proposal. We, like many other schools,  
13 have a co-location. We have four schools in one  
14 building, and starting in September, it will be  
15 six.

16 My son's school will have 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>  
17 grade on one floor. This is a school that's  
18 part of a federally-funded management [phonetic]  
19 grant. Hydroponic Garden, they have a green  
20 theme. Hydroponic Garden 101 Technology, 5<sup>th</sup>  
21 graders have an iPad each. It is absolutely  
22 sabotage, what the DOE is doing.

23 As a charter school parent, if your child  
24 had to be in a classroom, in a room like that  
25 with a piece of fabric separating them from

1 someone else, that's a shame, you would be  
2 highly upset. That is so many violations on so  
3 many levels, privacy, confidentiality.

4 And other parents say what is the problem  
5 with the child going from the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor down to  
6 the first floor to use the bathroom? There's a  
7 problem when that child has health issues and  
8 goes and has an accident. That's a problem.

9 The DOE wants to muddy the waters to confuse  
10 us all as far as what is really at stake. What  
11 is really at stake is the dignity of our  
12 children and it continuously is children of  
13 color.

14 I am a mother of a child, of a young man  
15 that I raised to treat everyone to treat  
16 everyone with dignity and respect. As far as  
17 I'm concerned, the DOE just sticks up their  
18 middle finger at children in Harlem. It is  
19 absolutely disgusting.

20 So at 208, the SLT, the PTA, the parent  
21 body, we are behind 149, we are against co-  
22 locations, we are against this particular  
23 proposal. It must end, parents must come  
24 together and really fight for what is right for  
25 their children. Thank you.

1 MR. ROUHANIFARD: Let's have speakers, 16  
2 through 20, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20, go ahead and  
3 line up.

4 MS. ELAINE SACRIS: Yes, good evening. My  
5 name is E. Sacris, I'm the speech language  
6 therapist here at PS 149.

7 I'm actually reading something for a  
8 colleague of mine who doesn't really like to  
9 speak in public. We as teachers sometimes, we  
10 use literature to express a point and this is  
11 what she did. This is based on the book--I  
12 don't know of you might have heard--

13 FEMALE VOICE: Use the mic.

14 MS. SACRIS: I'm sorry, heard the book, If  
15 You Give a Mouse a Cookie. Now I'll read you a  
16 little bit of that book.

17 If you give a mouse a cookie, - - . If you  
18 give a mouse a cookie, he's going to ask for a  
19 glass of milk. When you give him the milk,  
20 he'll probably ask you for a straw. When he's  
21 finished, he'll ask for a napkin. Then he'll  
22 want to look in the mirror to make sure he  
23 doesn't have a milk moustache.

24 When he looks into the mirror, he might  
25 notice his hair needs a trim, so he will

1 probably ask for a pair of nail scissors. And  
2 the book goes on and on and the mouse keeps  
3 asking and asking for things to no end, until it  
4 begins over and over again and repeats the  
5 cycle.

6 Here's another version of that same story.  
7 If you give HSA a space, they will take more of  
8 your place. When they get half of the third  
9 floor, they will take the whole floor. They  
10 said that this was temporary, a promise they did  
11 not keep. If you give HSA your space, they'll  
12 want more of your place. But really in the end,  
13 who will be displaced? Our students, our  
14 teachers and our community. Thank you.

15 MS. ADRIENNE BLACKWOOD: Good evening. My  
16 name is Adrienne Blackwood and in my lifetime I  
17 have been a teacher, I've been a parent and I  
18 have been a student. And in all three of those  
19 cases one of the main things I have always  
20 learned is that children may see something that  
21 a grownup does. They'll hear a grownup but they  
22 pay more attention to what a grownup does.

23 The parents that are dedicated that are  
24 here, they're trying to look out for their  
25 children. This all seems to take me back to a

1 time when W.E.B. Du Bois was fighting  
2 throughout the south dealing with the conditions  
3 of Black schools, or where the first classroom  
4 usually was in a church because the conditions  
5 were deplorable.

6 We're in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and we're still  
7 going through this? It is appalling to me as  
8 one who has had the opportunity to study the  
9 arts. If I hadn't studied the arts I wouldn't  
10 have learned the discipline that I did in  
11 studying because of music, because of dance,  
12 because of art. Because when you got 13% of  
13 Black and Latino kids who are not college-ready,  
14 knowing dang blasted well confounded that most  
15 colleges you can't even get into if you do not  
16 have an understanding of the arts, because most  
17 of the standardized tests have art-based  
18 questions. It is also ludicrous to have  
19 students being tested in the third grade.

20 No matter what the bottom--the bottom line  
21 is that at this point the DOE is sabotaging.  
22 It's not going to work, there are too many  
23 dedicated teachers and dedicated parents and  
24 little kids who are working so hard to make  
25 their parents proud. Because we cannot have the

1 image of a Black president who probably took  
2 the arts and did all the things that he did in  
3 order to get into Harvard, so you cannot set an  
4 example for all of these kids and the DOE does  
5 not do what it's supposed to do to step up. God  
6 bless you. Thank you.

7 MS. SACRIS: Excuse me. the teacher that I  
8 spoke for earlier was Ms. Debra Schneider  
9 [phonetic] one of our special education  
10 teachers, I meant to mention that.

11 As I'm speaking to a teacher in our school  
12 Mrs. Ceese [phonetic], who comes from the  
13 Philippines, and she was saying in her country  
14 she had never experienced any form of  
15 discrimination until the charter school, Harlem  
16 Success Academy, occupied space in our school  
17 and we came back to school and she saw that they  
18 had renovated the classrooms, they had renovated  
19 bathrooms, renovated hallways, new furniture and  
20 materials that were inferior what we had. And  
21 she said she felt a sense of being demoralized  
22 and devalued at that point.

23 And we discussed that we as adults may feel  
24 those things, but how do we think that if we are  
25 feeling those things, we have the mechanisms to

1 cope with those feelings, but think about our  
2 children and what they would be feeling in that  
3 circumstance and may be feeling in this  
4 circumstance.

5 I heard someone speak earlier about our  
6 students and where they've gone on to, and I  
7 have had a number of students that have been  
8 successful in this community school.

9 I have Bernel [phonetic] who was an autistic  
10 student who was biting herself when she came in,  
11 not speaking, who ended up getting an academic  
12 diploma, is now in a community college majoring  
13 in Photography. I had Thomas Brown [phonetic]  
14 who was a speech student, whose mother came back  
15 and said he's attending his first year studying  
16 engineering at MIT.

17 I had Olajuwon [phonetic], who actually left  
18 here to go to a charter school, Promise Academy,  
19 but all of those parents said thank you for the  
20 foundation. I thank the teachers, I thank you  
21 for the foundation my child received. So we see  
22 that charter schools and community schools can  
23 benefit students, but if they are to coexist,  
24 one cannot coexist at the expense of the other.

25 My students said last year, their comments

1 about the co-location were that this is  
2 segregation, it is. We will be cramped into a  
3 tight space not able to move, that's true. And  
4 they said that the charter school is better  
5 because they look better and they have more  
6 money, and so therefore, they were internalizing  
7 these feelings of this elite status that the  
8 charter school has making themselves feel less  
9 that.

10 And this has perpetuated to this day as our  
11 students are still carrying over these feelings  
12 and saying that why can't we use the third floor  
13 bathroom and why can't the charter school use  
14 all of the bathrooms in the school? They're  
15 also carrying on stories and remembering stories  
16 of when they did share the third floor and tried  
17 to use the bathroom and they were told that they  
18 had to go downstairs to use another bathroom,  
19 which by contrast was an inferior facility to  
20 their own.

21 MR. ROUHANIFARD: [Interposing] Ma'am, if  
22 you could please wrap up - - .

23 MS. SACRIS: We even have one student who  
24 was a model student who stumps and yells every  
25 time she goes to the third floor, says I hate

1       them, I hate them, I hate them. So what kind  
2       of feelings have our students internalized?  
3       Last year I spoke about--

4               MR. ROUHANIFARD: [interposing] Ma'am,  
5       please wrap up, you're over your limit.

6               MS. SACRIS: --Brown versus Board of  
7       Education and the separate and unequal  
8       circumstances. Having students receiving  
9       service in an inferior facility is separate and  
10      unequal. Having students receive occupational  
11      therapy with a curtain as a divider in the PTA  
12      room is separate and unequal. Having speech  
13      therapy students receive therapy, hearing  
14      impaired students, students that have attention  
15      deficit, students that have learning differences  
16      in a library with classes coming in and out all  
17      day is separate and unequal.

18              Okay, I have another teacher Ms. Watson  
19      [phonetic] who says that this is an unacceptable  
20      form of unacceptability.

21              MR. ROUHANIFARD: There are a lot of people  
22      here that are waiting to speak. Ma'am, there  
23      are a lot of people here that are waiting to  
24      speak, and you've gone well over your time.

25              MS. SACRIS: We cannot perpetuate a

1 situation where we're providing an unequal  
2 educational opportunity which is separate and  
3 unequal.

4 MR. ROUHANIFARD: All we can ask of you all  
5 is to please abide by the two-minute rule. I'm  
6 not going to come down and steal the mic from  
7 you, but for all the folks that are waiting and  
8 we've still got a pretty long list of names  
9 here, it's not fair to them, okay?

10 MS. ERICA DIAZ: Hi, God bless everybody.  
11 My name is Erica Diaz and my son's name is  
12 Ezekiel Martis [phonetic].

13 I am very grateful with--some people think  
14 bad about us but I am very--and I cry because in  
15 the school that my son was before they said to  
16 my son, no, he can't. As soon as I got him in  
17 the charter school that he's in, Harlem Success  
18 Academy, my child has been improving.

19 And I'm very grateful because he's in that  
20 school, and I think we should all work together  
21 and you know, but we're not bad. We don't want  
22 to--I'm so sorry, I'm sorry. I just--all I want  
23 to say is that I'm grateful when we got to work  
24 together to see what can we do, but our school  
25 are not bad. We are a good school.

1 MS. ANNECHINO: I hope you signed the  
2 list. I hope you signed the email list. Did  
3 you sign the email list to help us out?

4 MS. DIAZ: Yes.

5 MS. ANNECHINO: Thank you.

6 MR. CARL PRESSLEY: Hi. My name is Carl  
7 Pressley, I'm Co-President of Wadleigh PTA.  
8 Thank you.

9 Now we're here tonight because we have  
10 failed our civic responsibility to educate our  
11 kids. That's both Success parents and public  
12 school parents. What we need in this community  
13 is an educational agenda so that we can ensure  
14 that each and every one of our kids learn what  
15 they're supposed to learn at the appropriate  
16 level.

17 Now none of these politicians here have an  
18 educational agenda, they're satisfied with the  
19 status quo. Now we have an election coming up  
20 like this brother said over here. We must make  
21 that a priority that the next mayor of this city  
22 has an educational agenda to ensure that all our  
23 kids know how to read, write and do math at the  
24 appropriate level so they can get jobs and have  
25 a good life when they're adults. Thank you.

1 MR. ROUHANIFARD: Speakers 21, 22, 24, 25  
2 and 26 come up. So 21, 22, 24, 25 and 26.

3 MS. YASMIN SILVERA: Good afternoon  
4 everyone, my name is Yasmin Silvera. I'll make  
5 this brief.

6 I just want to start off by saying that I'm  
7 a product of the public school system. Being  
8 raised in the Bronx, going to high school at  
9 Randolph and I'll be graduating with two degrees  
10 this December in Mathematics and in Business  
11 Administration concentrating in Law, and I'm a  
12 product of the public school system.

13 And I hope that everyone can support  
14 something like that, but what I want to address  
15 is that when it came to me searching out a  
16 school for my son, Nikaya Young [phonetic], who  
17 entered kindergarten at Harlem Success Academy  
18 last year, I looked to those same public schools  
19 that I attended when I was a little girl and I  
20 didn't see the same things that I had growing  
21 up.

22 When I was at public school there was a  
23 segregation there as well. I was in a SP  
24 program, which is a gifted and talented program.  
25 It ran separate from all of the rest of the

1 kids, and it was done like that for a reason,  
2 and all of you parents know you don't want your  
3 children around bullies, you don't want your  
4 children around thugs, and I think all of us are  
5 ignoring the pink elephant in the room which is  
6 us.

7         You know, I take my son to school, we travel  
8 45 minutes to get to his school. We're up at  
9 5:45 in the morning. We go to basketball and  
10 soccer camp on Saturdays. I attend class  
11 fulltime, I work.

12         You don't have that same quality in a lot of  
13 parents out here. You don't have the same  
14 community complaining about the parenting or the  
15 behinds [phonetic] or the cursing on the buses.  
16 I know I feel your pain and I was there and I  
17 understand it and I don't disrespect what we're  
18 trying to do here, but you got to understand  
19 that you guys are a small portion of a bigger  
20 scale out there.

21         A lot of these parents out here, they don't  
22 have the passion that you do. A lot of these  
23 teachers out here don't have the passion that  
24 you have. My mother was a teacher, an art  
25 teacher for 15 years, PS92 and PS200.

1           She crossed over to Jeffer Kennedy's  
2 organization, a children's home, and explained  
3 to me and showed me and I saw the stress being  
4 lifted from her, the difference in the quality  
5 and the wholesomeness and the sensitivity that  
6 she was able to see there. And I hope that we  
7 can also have the same for the public schools  
8 system, but the honesty is, is that it's not  
9 happening.

10           And I'm trying to figure out where the  
11 private sector is going to come into play in  
12 this. I'm trying to figure out what we can do--

13           MR. ROUHANIFARD: Please wind up, please  
14 wind up.

15           MS. SILVERA: --what we can do to bring in  
16 private organizations like Harlem Success has,  
17 because it's a combination of both public and  
18 private funds, correct me if I'm wrong. So I  
19 think a lot of us need to do our homework in  
20 terms of not pointing our finger to the mayor  
21 but pointing our fingers to our councilmembers,  
22 our district people, the businesses in the  
23 community, everybody. The community centers--

24           MR. ROUHANIFARD: Ma'am, please wrap up.

25           MS. SILVERA: --that are closed and need to

1 be reopened so you can have the tutoring and  
2 the music and the science and the engineering,  
3 all the things that I had when I was growing up,  
4 it was my community center that was there. I  
5 didn't have to rely on my school for that. It  
6 was my community center and my mother that did  
7 these things for me.

8 So I think that is something that we need to  
9 pay attention to. Thank you.

10 MR. ISAIAH SIMMONS: How're you doing,  
11 how're you doing? My name's Isaiah Simmons.  
12 You all can hear me?

13 AUDIENCE: Yes.

14 MR. SIMMONS: All right. You can hear me,  
15 right? My name's Isaiah Simmons. You all can  
16 hear me, right?

17 AUDIENCE: No.

18 FEMALE VOICE: Use the mic.

19 MR. SIMMONS: My name is Isaiah Simmons.

20 AUDIENCE: There you go.

21 MR. SIMMONS: I'm a first-year  
22 paraprofessional here, I volunteer as a  
23 basketball coach also here and at Millbank  
24 [phonetic] on Fridays and Saturdays.

25 And when I walked down the hallway some of

1 the kids here that go to Millbank are afraid  
2 to speak to me because they go to Harlem  
3 Success. And that bothers me on so many  
4 different levels.

5 I coach them, teach them how to play the  
6 game of basketball and not get paid for it, as I  
7 do here. I do it because I love kids and I love  
8 my community. I grew up a block away here, - -  
9 I went to Millbank all my life. And what's  
10 going on in this building is just wrong on so  
11 many levels, the division that is between  
12 students and kids in the school yard, in the  
13 staircase, in the hallways shouldn't be accepted  
14 by any parent, teacher or administrator, period.

15 When I'm in a school yard and my kids are  
16 playing, I--we have basketballs and all the  
17 Harlem Success School come out there, I allow  
18 them to play with each other. I don't know if  
19 that's wrong on my behalf or whatever, but I  
20 don't see no reason why a kid should not shoot a  
21 basketball together with another child. There  
22 is nothing wrong with that when they obviously  
23 do it at Millbank when time's over at school.  
24 So whatever we could do to get this situation  
25 solved, I'm for it.

1 I'm not against Harlem Success. I have  
2 nieces that go to Harlem Success. I have a  
3 niece that goes to Fillmore [phonetic] Academy.  
4 I'm not against charter schools, I'm against  
5 taking over a building when they have the funds  
6 to build their own.

7 MS. DI COSTA HUMPHREYS: Good evening, peace  
8 everyone. My name is Zaneta Di Costa Humphreys.  
9 My daughter goes to PS 149. She hasn't been  
10 there very long, only since January now, but  
11 what I basically want to touch on is that I grew  
12 up, there were many issues with abuse and other  
13 things that happened, and as right now a massage  
14 therapist, writer and artist and my daughter is  
15 as well aspiring.

16 And I know the importance of having that  
17 outlet. You can't take that away from anyone.  
18 It's something that just opens you up regardless  
19 of background education. In terms of having a  
20 better education I'm also a product of both  
21 catholic school--but later on in life and  
22 graduating with honors, public school.

23 Your parents are the ones that are your  
24 primary examples. You can't put all that into a  
25 school or into any outside facility. So parents

1 have to take some type of accountability as  
2 well. As far as everything else, the biggest  
3 part and problem that I have is space. Even at  
4 home you want somewhere spacious where you can  
5 stretch out, where you can do things.

6 No one wants to run all the way across the  
7 field to go to a bathroom or to just stretch out  
8 and to be themselves and express themselves  
9 somewhere where they spend the majority of their  
10 time of their lives. Space is important and  
11 space is needed. I don't see why they can't  
12 have separate buildings. I was never in a co-  
13 location type of atmosphere and it's just the  
14 imposition that's the problem, the imposing.  
15 Not the children because they're precious. The  
16 arguing will go on regardless because we're  
17 human beings and we're parents and those are our  
18 own faults.

19 All I want is space for our children, not  
20 only for their bodies but also for their minds.  
21 Take that into consideration please. I thank  
22 you.

23 MS. WENDY MARTINEZ: Good evening everybody.  
24 My name is Wendy, my daughter, Briana  
25 [phonetic], attends Harlem Success 4.

1           You know, I completely understand the  
2 feeling of the PS 149, but we are talking about  
3 space. We are also crowded. We also need room  
4 for our kids. I mean I'm fighting for Briana,  
5 I'm glad that I have a choice to where she can  
6 actually attend school. It's a positive school.

7           I mean we are crowded as well, so don't  
8 think that your children are the only one that  
9 are running out of space. We are fighting for  
10 space. I'm fighting for the space that my  
11 daughter deserves. I live on 118 Street in  
12 Madison Avenue, I have to travel as well.

13           For the DOE, I completely understand. For  
14 all these politicians that were actually here  
15 and the whole liberal agenda, I have to say I do  
16 not--I choose not to have my daughter in public  
17 school around this district.

18           And I choose that because I was a product of  
19 the Board of Education. I had to actually take  
20 two years of remedial courses when I went to  
21 college. It took me five years to get a four-  
22 year degree because I was not prepared when I  
23 graduated. And that's what I don't want for  
24 Briana, that's not what I want for her brother  
25 and her sister. I want her to be able to

1 actually go out there and be prepared, that  
2 when she actually graduates high school, she's  
3 able to attend Penn State, she's able to go to  
4 Cornell, she's able to go to any of these  
5 schools.

6 She doesn't have to actually be allowed to  
7 wait in a classroom and see if there's actually  
8 a good teacher that's actually going to take the  
9 time to give me a call, that's going to know her  
10 problems and her issues and they're going to  
11 touch base with me all the time.

12 We have the right just like you do to  
13 actually choose for our kids. And I choose to  
14 have her at Harlem Success Academy, I choose to  
15 receive 200 phone calls a day, I choose to be  
16 here when I have twins at home. So I choose not  
17 to have her enrolled in public school in Harlem  
18 because I was a product of that. I'm sorry to  
19 say that. My sister graduated from the school,  
20 both of them. You are struggling.

21 And I know time is up but you know what?  
22 When they were all talking about this whole  
23 political thing there was no time sign. When  
24 she was singing, there was no time sign. So  
25 with that in mind, yes, I want her to be able to

1 walk from school.

2 MR. RAHANIFORD: Ma'am, please wrap up.

3 MS. MARTINEZ: And I want her to stay here  
4 so we do need the space just like you do. Thank  
5 you.

6 MR. ROUHANIFARD: Speakers numbers 27  
7 through 31, 27 through 31. Yolanda [phonetic],  
8 if 27's not there we can just jump to 28.

9 MS. K. WOMACK: Good evening everyone, my  
10 name is Ms. Womack. I'm the art teacher for PS  
11 149.

12 I've been in the building since 1997. I'm  
13 also the Harlem Success Academy children--I'm  
14 their art teacher at Millbank, so I'm not here  
15 talking about taking space. I'm here to remind  
16 us that it's a shame how this problem has  
17 divided the community, and this is what I'm  
18 talking about.

19 We all know the problem, we don't have  
20 space, they took our art room, they take our  
21 music space, they took everything, but the  
22 problem is now they're dividing the community.  
23 They've taken your schools, now they're going to  
24 take your community. It's a shame.

25 I've seen cousins, I've seen family members

1 fight against each other. You live next door  
2 to each other and you fight with each other.  
3 It's affecting the kids, it's affecting us and  
4 it's time for us to stop.

5 I personally believe that we all in here,  
6 Harlem Success and PS 149, need to band together  
7 and sign that email and we all--with all this  
8 anger and all this energy that we all have in  
9 this building because we all are for the  
10 children.

11 Now we all need to get together and take it  
12 down to the Board of Ed and that's it. I don't  
13 need no more third floor [phonetic].

14 [crosstalk]

15 MS. PAT SHERWOOD: Good evening, my name is  
16 Pat Sherwood. I used to teach here. The DOE  
17 has snatched my license for teaching and I don't  
18 know why. I'm going to make a statement about  
19 history and a strong foundation of education.

20 Education started with New York City public  
21 education. It started with strong people as  
22 politicians, Shirley Chisholm, who also started  
23 the No Child Left Behind Act. No child left  
24 behind, think about it. Why are we behind?  
25 Because of Mayor Bloomberg who doesn't care

1 about children at all. You have to care, you  
2 have to have a good heart, you have to care.

3 The politicians that we have today look at  
4 them, look at their hearts, look to see how they  
5 are helping the strong foundation in which  
6 education was founded. It was within the New  
7 York City public schools.

8 Now all you have to do is look at the public  
9 school teachers that have taught your children  
10 and have allowed those children to pass the New  
11 York State exams. It started within the New  
12 York City public schools. Thank you.

13 MS. PAT CRISPINO: My name is Pat Crispino  
14 and I'm here because I can tell you co-location  
15 does not work.

16 I have not heard that your school is bad and  
17 your school is bad or your school's great or  
18 your school's great, that's not what I'm  
19 hearing. What I'm hearing is a plea from both  
20 sides.

21 I worked in the same school for 24 years.  
22 This mayor and his administration decided to put  
23 a school in one half of one floor. We used to  
24 work together. It was a beautiful building,  
25 seven storeys. They took one half of one floor,

1 then they took the rest of that floor.

2 And then he put another school in because  
3 this mayor's been fooling you all, okay? He  
4 said, oh, little schools, they work. What he  
5 didn't tell you is he's cramming them into  
6 buildings and making them more overcrowded than  
7 they ever were before, which causes kids to  
8 fight.

9 We're fighting. Why are we fighting? I  
10 want your kids to succeed. I want to retire.  
11 You're kids are not successful, I can't retire.  
12 I want every child to graduate and bring back to  
13 the community what I've put in the community.  
14 What I haven't heard is how much is Eva  
15 Moskowitz making? Why does she not have to pay  
16 for the space she uses? Why? Because she wants  
17 her programs to be successful. If she had to  
18 pay for space it would take away from your  
19 program.

20 I want you to think about something else.  
21 If I, like Eva Moskowitz, came up with an idea--  
22 can I borrow this? I'm having a hot flush, I'll  
23 give it back. If I, just like Eva Moskowitz,  
24 came up with an idea to start a school, okay?  
25 And I came in here and Harlem Success took over

1 this whole building, now I'm coming in. What  
2 would you be saying in this auditorium now? You  
3 need to think about that. Because we're not  
4 here to fight with each other, we are in this  
5 community together.

6 Make Eva Moskowitz lose some of her money  
7 and pay for the space and do what she's telling  
8 you her programs are meant to do, except if that  
9 happened it would not be successful.

10 MR. ROUHANIFARD: Please wrap up ma'am.

11 MS. CRISPINO: I did.

12 MR. ROUHANIFARD: Thank you.

13 MS. MICHELLE LIPKIN: Hi, my name is  
14 Michelle Ciulla Lipkin and I am the Co-President  
15 of the District 3 Presidents Council. The  
16 Presidents Council supports all the 32 parent  
17 associations in District 3.

18 I'm here on behalf of the Presidents Council  
19 to say that we are 100% opposed to this  
20 proposal. We do not want to see the co-location  
21 of one grade of HSA 4 in this building. I  
22 thought the book when you give--what is it?  
23 Give--

24 AUDIENCE: Give a mouse a cookie.

25 MS. LIPKIN: Now, I thought that was an

1 interesting example, but I feel like we--it's  
2 more like the hunger games where we truly, truly  
3 are fighting to the death for space.

4 The DOE and the Chancellor always talk about  
5 choice and choice is the buzzword and we heard  
6 choice tonight. What I would like to tell the  
7 DOE, what I would choose if I could choose and  
8 if I could make the decisions, and if it was up  
9 to me, I'd choose for schools like PS 149 to not  
10 have to fight for their simple rights.

11 I would choose for the Special Ed students  
12 in this building to get the education they  
13 deserve. I'd choose for the students at PS 149  
14 to have a music room, a computer lab and space  
15 for services.

16 I would choose not to see charter school  
17 parents and public school parents fight against  
18 each other. I choose to have my community  
19 listened to, I choose not to be misled and  
20 misunderstood and I'd choose to end this  
21 nonsense.

22 We sit here at hearing after hearing  
23 fighting over the same thing, the co-location of  
24 charter schools in public schools. I was in a  
25 citywide meeting where every borough said the

1 same thing we know here tonight, these co-  
2 locations, they don't work. If every child  
3 deserves to be a first class citizen we need a  
4 system that allows that, not one that continues  
5 to look at our public school students as second  
6 class.

7 MR. ROUHANIFARD: So we have six speakers  
8 remaining. If you guys could all just go ahead  
9 and come on up, starting with speaker number 32.

10 FEMALE VOICE: Good evening and at about  
11 8:17 at night I am the parent of two HSA  
12 students. I think there's a lot of opinions and  
13 a lot of passion being brought forth here this  
14 evening, and I agree, I agree that there should  
15 be space. I agree that the Department of  
16 Education does have a huge responsibility in  
17 providing adequate space, professional teachers,  
18 teachers who are trained appropriately.

19 I do agree here that for years being within  
20 the community I didn't hear a lot of parents  
21 coming to these meetings screaming about how  
22 their children were not educated. I didn't hear  
23 parents screaming and standing, fighting to say  
24 wow, if these teachers or if these schools do  
25 not or cannot educate my children, well, let's

1 shut them.

2 I don't have an issue shutting down an ill-  
3 performing school. I don't want one. If my  
4 doctor was not performing up to the--his board's  
5 or the accreditation shut him down. Don't let  
6 him kill me slowly.

7 And so the first thing, not saying that that  
8 is the case here, I'm just speaking to the point  
9 that if it doesn't work, yeah, let's fix it but  
10 let's not have it going forever. I think the  
11 matter here that we should address clearly is  
12 that HSA 1, their middle school will be leaving  
13 this building in the fall.

14 So you'll have a 5<sup>th</sup> grade and a 6<sup>th</sup> grade  
15 leaving this building. When HAS 4--because I  
16 read a little bit up on it as everybody was  
17 talking--when HAS 4, that middle school moves  
18 into this building, because that is what's being  
19 proposed, correct? That means, as opposed to  
20 filling it with a 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade for one year  
21 for September of 2012, there'll only be one  
22 grade in there. So, there will be more room, so  
23 more room will not be consumed.

24 MR. RAHANIFORD: The space stays the same.  
25 There's not going to be room.

1 FEMALE VOICE: Correct. So, therefore,  
2 we're not asking for more space and that is my  
3 point. Because only HSA 4, their 5<sup>th</sup> grade will  
4 be here because HSA 1, they will move their 1<sup>st</sup>  
5 and 2<sup>nd</sup>--they will move their 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade as  
6 you've read to Wadleigh and I'm--but if they're  
7 talking, I can't finish my one sentence.

8 MR. RAHANIFORD: Please wrap up and for  
9 everyone, let's please not shout over her.  
10 She's going to quickly wrap up, okay?

11 FEMALE VOICE: You know, sometimes we all  
12 know that change doesn't come easily and I'm  
13 willing to suffer. You can--I'm a HSA parent,  
14 put me in the classroom. I taught in a public  
15 school behind a stage because my principal--  
16 because yeah, it was a space issue and we were  
17 the only school. I will suffer, I will fight,  
18 change did not come easily. So, as HSA 4 moves  
19 into this building in September, we will  
20 continue to fight. I will go downtown to the  
21 DoE and I will fight for space but I say change  
22 doesn't come easily and I will fight. But let's  
23 also fight for those failing--those parents of  
24 failing schools who continue to have to keep  
25 their kids there.

1 MR. RAHANIFORD: Please wrap up.

2 MS. IDA WATTS: Hello, my name is Ida Watts.  
3 And can everyone hear me?

4 AUDIENCE: Yes.

5 MS. WATTS: Thank you. I'm a 6<sup>th</sup> grade  
6 teacher at PS MS 149 and I'm there because I  
7 love my community, the Harlem community. I was  
8 born and bred in Harlem. And I see Harlem  
9 Heights as being the most sophisticated,  
10 politically-aware people that I've ever  
11 encountered, and I've traveled all over the  
12 world. We thought we--I grew up with hearing  
13 Malcolm X speaking on the corners. I grew up  
14 going to Columbia University, learning my  
15 history and I am so saddened that we are being  
16 bamboozled to the point that we're fighting each  
17 other.

18 Women, we never behaved like this before.  
19 We came from a history of people that would take  
20 in children. There was no such thing as a child  
21 without a home when I was growing up in Harlem.  
22 We took on children and here we are fighting  
23 children and saying we're fighting for space.  
24 Instead of fighting for space, fight for a  
25 building. That's what you should be fighting

1 for. You should go back to Eva and tell her  
2 we want a building of our own. We're not going  
3 to fight children. We're not--whatever you're  
4 doing, whatever your agenda is, we're here with  
5 you for a quality education because that's what  
6 you're saying.

7       You're not here, you didn't bring your  
8 children to this school to fight some hidden  
9 agenda to push children out, to show that you  
10 don't care about yourselves, you don't care  
11 about your community. I just had a great  
12 conversation with a young woman in the back, we  
13 hugged each other because I have been watching  
14 her. I watched her after the good minister, the  
15 good reverend spoke and I saw that this young  
16 woman, she was getting it. She was getting back  
17 to her roots of being a woman from Harlem,  
18 that's for all the children and not saying that  
19 I got mine.

20       The crab, what we call the crabs in the  
21 barrel syndrome, showing how traumatized we've  
22 been that I want to be better than you. we  
23 never did that before and that's why my heart is  
24 breaking and that's why I went back and give  
25 this young woman a hug because I saw that she

1 got it.

2 MS. BETH CERVITAR: Good evening, my name is  
3 Beth Cervitar and I'm freezing. I'm the parent  
4 of two public school kids in District 3, I'm on  
5 the PTAs at our middle school and our elementary  
6 school and I've been coming to these co-location  
7 hearings for a couple of years now. And while I  
8 admire the love that the success families have  
9 for their school and the passion that they have,  
10 I never at single one of these hearings heard  
11 concrete argument for why the co-location was on  
12 the table is a good thing, why it's a positive  
13 thing, why it works.

14 And I do hear the negative things, the loss  
15 of rooms, the poor delivery of services, the  
16 low, the feelings that the kids have of being  
17 lesser. And I just--it falls on deaf ears and  
18 it makes me really sad. There's nothing to back  
19 up this being a good thing. And so at 113%  
20 capacity in this building, I can't imagine an  
21 upside and I'm waiting to hear one. But it's a  
22 product of a system that's been by success or  
23 really untenable, irresponsible method of  
24 growth, right? They've said that they want to  
25 it to cater to eight schools and there's just no

1 space planned for them, there's no planning  
2 involved here.

3 And so actually, my comment to Sonia, since  
4 you're here, is that you need to stop approving  
5 charters for districts that don't have space for  
6 those schools and they just--particularly,  
7 without a specific space attached to the  
8 proposal. It seems like you can say yes all you  
9 want and then they just have to figure. And  
10 it's really a shame for the families that are in  
11 the school and are even the slightest bit  
12 vulnerable. They've lost an awful lot and they  
13 just want to know when it's working out. They  
14 still have years of growth ahead and no  
15 planning.

16 MR. TOM PURNA: My name is Tom Purna, I've  
17 come out tonight to speak in--on behalf of the  
18 success of charter network. My son attends HSA  
19 1. We are constantly challenged as parents, all  
20 of us, to educate our children as my parent  
21 challenged me. About 40 years ago, I asked my  
22 father what a word meant. And then he choked  
23 up, he looked at me and goes, that means you're  
24 going to have to work harder. The word was  
25 dyslexia, all right? He knew this because he

1 also suffered from dyslexia.

2 The Success Academy Network is the first  
3 public school--and I'm sorry, it is a public  
4 school--that has challenged students to work  
5 harder. They do not subjugate, they do not  
6 categorize, they do not tag as ELL, they do not  
7 tag as Hispanic, White, Asian, et cetera. We  
8 have one word for the children here, it's  
9 scholar. And if they can't pass the test or  
10 they have a hard time with the subject, it means  
11 one thing, they're going to have to work harder.

12 I'm very sorry, there has been a lot of  
13 statements in the press and by a lot of people  
14 who came up here to speak tonight about testing,  
15 and testing is bad. I've got some bad news for  
16 you. I've been tested throughout my entire  
17 life, all right? To get into high school, to  
18 get into college, to get a job, to take it--to  
19 get a license, I am tested, all right? There's  
20 a recent article in the paper that said that the  
21 testing for the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders is excessive because  
22 it is greater than the test for a number of  
23 different professions.

24 I think it prepares them for the tests for  
25 those professions. We do not make the game when

1 we're trying to play the game as well as we  
2 can for ourselves and for all students. And I  
3 challenge Mr. Walsh because this is the first  
4 time I had a union representative call me a  
5 child of God, they've called me a lot of other  
6 things in a lot of hearings. And I'd just like  
7 to say that we have joined forces, we have  
8 protested for more educational funding. I went  
9 up to Albany for the rest of the top funds and  
10 what happened to those, sir? Thank you very  
11 much.

12 MR. RAHANIFORD: So, the speaker list is now  
13 exhausted. We're going to--is there--I'm sorry.  
14 You were standing aside, I didn't see, I  
15 apologize. Go ahead.

16 MS. JUDY FISHER: Yes. Good evening, my  
17 name is Judy Fisher and I'm the school counselor  
18 in the PS MS 149 building. And I just want to  
19 testify to the committee as to--in my daily work  
20 schedule, I frequently run into the other  
21 service providers. I'm fortunate I have  
22 adequate space, I have a very decent space. I  
23 have been in the building for over two decades  
24 so that--but I have observed what the other  
25 related service providers are doing and

1 specifically the speech teacher.

2 Over the course of a couple of weeks, I  
3 observed that she was working in a different  
4 space almost every time I saw her. Sometimes  
5 she'd be in the back of the library, sometimes  
6 she'd be in the cafeteria and sometimes she'd be  
7 in the conference room. Now, this has great  
8 impact on services when you're constantly  
9 changing your space. Consistency, as any  
10 educator or therapist can tell you, is very  
11 important. And each of these spaces that she  
12 went to were places where there were a great  
13 number for distractions, which is difficult for  
14 any small child, let alone a special needs  
15 child.

16 Then I had a conversation with the physical  
17 therapist and she said, well, I work whenever I  
18 can get a space. At the back of a stage, in the  
19 hallway, in the stairway, et cetera. So, there  
20 is, has not been a consistent space. Because  
21 yeah, she does have the library most  
22 consistently which is far from a suitable but  
23 sometimes the library space is taken as well,  
24 and sometimes the cafeteria is taken. So, she's  
25 in the position where she's constantly looking

1 for another space, okay.

2 But my service has also been affected and I  
3 will tell you why. I have about 95% of my  
4 schedule is with mandated students. And even if  
5 they were to get the money to get another  
6 counselor--which they don't have--they wouldn't  
7 have the space to put in another counselor. So,  
8 we have a situation where the general education  
9 population does not get counseling services.  
10 So, they had a brainstorm put in a student--

11 MR. RAHANIFORD: Please wind up.

12 MS. FISHER: Okay, that's it.

13 MR. RAHANIFORD: You had two minutes of your  
14 time.

15 MS. FISHER: Put in a student but there was  
16 no space for the student to work because her  
17 services came for free. And we had a community  
18 organization providing services to our general  
19 population but they no longer have a space as  
20 well. Okay, so I'm told that I have to stop.  
21 Okay. The OT and the PT, they can't--you're  
22 supposed to have, like, a big ball for century  
23 integration. They can't get equipment, they  
24 can't use equipment with the children.

25 MR. RAHANIFORD: Thank you. So, I believe

1 that now officially exhausts the speaker  
2 list. We have a couple of questions which I'll  
3 jump to you in a minute. I do want to belatedly  
4 thank Principal Barbara Derigo for having hosted  
5 us here. Thank you very much.

6 So, there are three questions submitted in  
7 the note cards and if anyone on the dais has  
8 questions, I'd be happy to entertain them as  
9 well. The first two questions are the same.  
10 And they state that why can't--some of them  
11 we've heard tonight from some of the folks here  
12 in the audience. Why can't Success Academy  
13 moved to a private space? Is in essence what  
14 the question is asking.

15 So, I'll make two points on this. And I  
16 think on the first one, some folks where will  
17 agree and other folks here may not agree. And  
18 that is, as a charter school, Success Academy is  
19 a public school and it does serve public school  
20 students. It is independent of the department  
21 of the Department of Education and so far as  
22 their governance structure is different. They  
23 have a board of directors that's accountable to  
24 the school. But at the same time, we have an  
25 accountability structure here at the Department

1 of Ed and we work really closely to make sure  
2 that success as all charters and all district  
3 schools are serving their students properly.

4 The second point has to do with the  
5 utilization of space. And so, we all live in  
6 the city here where space is at a premium. And  
7 whether you're in Brooklyn, whether you're in  
8 Brooklyn, whether you're in Manhattan, Corona,  
9 Queens, all the way up to the Bronx, we  
10 literally all live on top of one another. It is  
11 a three-dimensional city and we all in our daily  
12 lives and our personal lives have to use space  
13 as efficiently as possible. And the fact of the  
14 matter is, it is no different when it comes to  
15 our schools. And when we do have buildings--and  
16 I again will acknowledge the fact that there may  
17 be an honest disagreement on this fact.

18 But when we do have buildings that are 40,  
19 50, 60% utilized and that space is not being  
20 used efficiently, the Department of Education do  
21 believe in choice. And where there is a lack of  
22 access to high quality schools and high quality  
23 seats, we want to use that space as efficiently  
24 as possible and invest it in our highest  
25 capacity, highest quality operators. And so

1 that is that is the theory of action behind  
2 the work of co-locations and I believe I heard  
3 somebody earlier say, what is the benefit of co-  
4 location?

5 And one of the facts that I think is often  
6 forgotten is that the vast majority of our  
7 schools in New York City are co-located. In  
8 fact 900 schools, I think the precise number is  
9 895 schools out of 1,724 schools are co-located.  
10 And out of those 895 schools that are co-  
11 located, only 102 of those re charter schools.  
12 So, the vast majority of co-locations are  
13 actually district schools co-located with  
14 district schools. And so we really ask our  
15 schools--and really, we're asking our principals  
16 to band together, work together to make the best  
17 use of that space. And it is not an easy thing  
18 to ask of them and I'll be the first person to  
19 acknowledge that.

20 Co-locations take a lot of effort. Not just  
21 at the leadership level but also amongst the  
22 staff members and amongst the family members.  
23 But we know they work. Now, we've heard  
24 concerns about this co-location, we've heard  
25 them over the last couple of years. Our sense

1 is that the dynamics have improved in this  
2 building but at the same time, we have to  
3 continue to monitor. But let me make one last  
4 point to this question, which, the vast majority  
5 of the co-locations we have in the city, we  
6 don't have these types of concerns. In fact,  
7 the buildings really do band together again to  
8 make the best use of that space and they work  
9 collaboratively. And what it leads to is more  
10 choice for families throughout the city.

11 The second question is, why was Success  
12 allowed--and you guys I know you may have some  
13 questions you want to jump in. Why was Success  
14 allowed lunch periods and afternoon rest? PS MS  
15 149 students have a 10:45 a.m. lunch period. I  
16 can't speak to the specifics of this question  
17 but what I will say is that we had a governance  
18 structure where, on the building council, the  
19 principals work together to build a shared space  
20 schedule that makes the most sense for their  
21 building. The Department of Education comes in  
22 and intervenes where--in instances where  
23 principals can't--I didn't shout over you. I'd  
24 appreciate if you give me the opportunity to  
25 respond to the question.

1           In instances where principals are not  
2           able to come together, we have someone at the  
3           Department of Education, his name is Meg  
4           Mitchell [phonetic], the former superintendent  
5           and leads our building council citywide, she  
6           intervenes. To the extent Meg is not able to  
7           resolve the issue, other folks in the  
8           department, whether the superintendent or  
9           cluster network leader, other folks within the  
10          department or a senior come in and help resolve  
11          matters. But fundamentally, we ask our  
12          principals again to work together on building  
13          councils to resolve these questions and issues.

14           MS. ANNECHINO: Kamen, first of all,  
15          fiction, nonfiction. Fiction is that co-  
16          locations work and everybody's happy and  
17          everybody decides what the space is going to be.  
18          The non-fiction, we've actually seen it, we've  
19          experienced it. The DoE comes in and says,  
20          we're taking [sounds], we've seen it. So again,  
21          fiction, nonfiction. I think it's very  
22          interesting that the Department of Education sat  
23          and Kamen is the voice right now of the DoE. He  
24          said that, we wanted to give people an access to  
25          quality education, that's why we started charter

1 school.

2 Well, I ask you, sir, what about the--if  
3 you're calling these other, we wanted to give  
4 access--that's what you said--the quality  
5 education. Therefore, a charter school exists,  
6 that's the choice so what do you say to that  
7 other school?

8 MR. RAHANIFORD: The point I was making was  
9 about the efficient--using space efficiently.  
10 It wasn't about taking resources, which is how  
11 maybe some folks interpreted it to be. We're  
12 talking about using space more efficiently and  
13 we have support structures within the department  
14 of education to support all of our district  
15 schools. And so it is certainly our intention  
16 to make sure that all of our schools thrive.  
17 Increasing choice doesn't mean you're taking  
18 something away from another school. But again,  
19 there's an honest disagreement here but it is  
20 about using the space more efficiently.

21 And when you look at this building--and I  
22 understand that there are a lot of folks here  
23 that have lived through this co-location and I  
24 have noted their concern this evening. PS IS-  
25 149 has, according to the educational impact

1 statement, 383 students. Ad in total, in  
2 terms of full size equivalent classrooms, they  
3 have 29 and a half. Success academy has 738  
4 students using 39 full-size equivalent  
5 classrooms. So, we are as fair as we can be with  
6 enrolment nearly twice the size PS IS-149, yet  
7 only 10 additional classrooms. So, we are trying  
8 to use space as efficiently as you can.

9 MS. ANNECHINO: I have a specific question,  
10 can you--one second, please. Can you please  
11 help us understand why the children at PA-11 are  
12 let off, are dropped off on 118<sup>th</sup> Street and have  
13 to walk around the block or be pushed around the  
14 block in wheelchairs or supported by other  
15 adults, have to walk around to go into another  
16 door.

17 FEMALE VOICE: To the second floor.

18 FEMALE VOICE: To the second floor.

19 MR. RAHANIFORD: I don't have personal  
20 knowledge of the situation, we're happy to  
21 follow up. All questions that are asked this  
22 evening on the record will be responded to in  
23 the analysis of public comment, which will be  
24 published online. So we'll follow up on that.

25 MS. ANNECHINO: I ask that question every

1 co-location hearing. Any other questions?

2 FEMALE VOICE: Can I comment on the space  
3 efficiency? I'd really like to comment on that.

4 MR. RAHANIFORD: Let me make one comment  
5 here. Everyone had an opportunity to fill out a  
6 question at the back of the room. I will stick  
7 around after this meeting and answer folks'  
8 questions. We do want to respect everyone's  
9 time here. You had the opportunity to ask the  
10 questions, I'll stick around. I'm going to give  
11 you the opportunity to make one quick statement  
12 and then we're going to adjourn.

13 MR. WALSH: I just one say about your  
14 statement that a charter school is a public  
15 school, because it is run by a board of  
16 directors, because it is not beholden to the  
17 same rules and regulations of a public and most  
18 importantly, because not every child is not  
19 guaranteed a seat. It is an absurdity and it is  
20 offensive to call this a public school, it is  
21 publicly-funded but it is by no means a public  
22 school.

23 MALE VOICE: Can I answer that, Christine?  
24 Christine?

25 MS. ANNECHINO: Julius [phonetic], I can't

1 do it. I got to have to do it for everybody.  
2 Yes, speak up now. I mean, they're just going  
3 to close the hearing but you could speak up and  
4 everybody will hear you.

5 MALE VOICE: But Mr.--

6 MR. RAHANIFORD: [interposing] Guys, again,  
7 we welcome any comments and feedback you may  
8 have at any time before the Panel for  
9 Educational Policy votes on this proposal on  
10 April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

11 The email address and phone number where  
12 comments may be made, again, on  
13 d03proposals@schools.nyc.gov, and the phone  
14 number is 212-374-3466.

15 We appreciate your participation, I'm happy  
16 to stick around and answer more questions but  
17 this concludes the public hearing.

18 Thank you.

19 [END 290\_291]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

5  
6           Signature



7           Date April 24, 2012  
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