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

**Phase out and new school replacement
for Cornelius Vanderbilt (R014) -
1/25/12**

1 [START 264-569.MP3]

2 MS. OLIVIA ELLIS: Good evening. Please
3 find your seat. We are going to begin. My name
4 is Olivia Ellis and I will be the moderator for
5 this evening's joint public hearing. This is
6 the joint public hearing of the Department of
7 Education, community education council, and
8 school leadership teams to discuss the proposed
9 phase out of PS14 31R014 beginning in 2012 and
10 the proposed co-location of the new school
11 31R078 with PS14. Tonight's proceedings will be
12 recorded and transcribed. Before we begin the
13 hearing we ask that anyone who wishes to
14 speak...thank you. Before we begin the hearing we
15 ask that anyone who wishes to speak during the
16 public comment portion of the evening sign up at
17 the table in the back. Sign up will end at
18 6:25. If you have a question that you want to
19 be addressed during any portion of the agenda
20 please write the question on the index card
21 provided in the back and submit them to a
22 volunteer at the table. Only people who are
23 signed up to speak will be able to participate
24 in the public comments. Okay, people will not
25 be able to stand in the hall so please come

1 forward and find a seat. There are a couple of
2 seats here and if there is a seat available but
3 coats are there please remove the coats so
4 people can sit please. Thank you.

5 [crosstalk]

6 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. Okay, thank you. All
7 panel participants are asked to be here no later
8 than 5:30. Now that we've started if there's a
9 panel participant in the panel that arrives late
10 he or she will be given the opportunity to speak
11 at the first optimal moment. We want to be
12 respectful of everyone's time. There may be
13 elected officials who arrive at different times
14 throughout the evening. If they wish to speak
15 we will do our best to accommodate them at the
16 first opportune moment. Those who are here at
17 the start of the public comments segment will be
18 asked to speak first. For tonight's agenda the
19 format will include a presentation proposal and
20 presentations by hearing participants followed
21 by public comments. Speakers should have
22 already signed up at the signup table in the
23 lobby. Public comments can be no longer than
24 two minutes each. The time will be strictly
25 followed and speakers will be informed when

1 their designated time has ended. There will
2 also be a question and answer period. Members
3 of the audience if you had a question each of
4 you had to write the question on the postcard
5 that was supplied at the signup table when you
6 arrived this evening. While public comments are
7 taking place staff members will organize the
8 questions into categories and get them ready for
9 Q and A. Some questions will be asked directly
10 and others will be asked under headings in order
11 to avoid repetitiveness. Even though all
12 individual questions will not be addressed in
13 the forum tonight the answers will be on the
14 website prior to the panel meeting. If at the
15 end of the hearing you still have questions we
16 encourage you to direct them to us by calling
17 the number on the bottom of the fact sheet or
18 sending them into us via e-mail to the e-mail
19 address provided on the fact sheets. I would
20 now like to introduce the panel which has been
21 assembled for this evening's joint public
22 hearing, Deputy Chancellor Dorita Gibson,
23 Community Superintendent Ermina Claudio,
24 representing the Community Education Counsel Sam
25 Pirozzolo, Tameka Fairley, and Franca Okeiche.

1 We are pleased to have the following elected
2 officials with us this evening or their
3 representatives. Angel Daniels representing
4 Deputy Bowles' office--

5 [applause]

6 MALE VOICE: The get two minutes also right?
7 They get two minutes?

8 MS. ELLIS: They will get time to speak.

9 MALE VOICE: No do they get two minutes?
10 You didn't answer my question. Do the elected
11 officials get two minutes? I asked a simple
12 question. Do the elected--

13 MS. ELLIS: [Interposing] Yes, they do get
14 two minutes. I will now turn the program over
15 to Deputy Chancellor Dorita Gibson who will
16 present the proposal.

17 MS. DORITA GIBSON: Thank you Ms. Ellis.
18 Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I would like
19 to just recognize some other members of our
20 audience that are here. We have our member
21 leader Mr. Richard Gallow [phonetic], the UFT
22 Mr. Emanuel Petranomico [phonetic], and these
23 are some of the others. On this other side we
24 have Kathy Murphy and Charlie Labitsky
25 [phonetic]. Representing our parents of course

1 we have our very own LaQuita Thomas and from
2 Staten Island demolition Ms. Kathy Carlson. I
3 just saw Mr. Josey from the NAACP come in. To
4 all the CEC members that are here thank you and
5 I will start with the program. I first want to
6 say that this is not an easy thing to do. I
7 understand and I know that by looking out into
8 the audience and I see the community. When I
9 see the community is here really it's a
10 testimony of how a community can come together.
11 This joint public hearing was to discuss the
12 proposed things such as the replacement of PS14.
13 The decision to phase out a school is not an
14 easy one. We do not take these decisions
15 lightly. We examine many factors and data
16 before we propose a course of action. We will
17 also reach out to the families and community
18 members. Before I present the PS14 proposal I'd
19 like to say a few words about why we're here.
20 All of us count on our schools to provide a high
21 quality education for students. We hold all
22 schools to the same standard of excellence
23 because every child in this city deserves the
24 best possible education. When the school isn't
25 getting the job done we have to take action to

1 ensure the current students don't fall behind
2 any further and at least students will have a
3 better option as we move forward. PS14 is
4 located at 100 Tomkins Avenue in community
5 school district 31 in Staten Island. It
6 currently serves students in grades kindergarten
7 through five and offers a pre-kindergarten
8 program. On December 12, 2011 the New York City
9 Department of Education published proposals to
10 phase out or replace PS14 based on its
11 longstanding performance struggles. PS14
12 performance data indicated that the school has
13 struggled and confirms the DOE's assessment that
14 the school lacks the capacity to turn around
15 quickly better support the students need. For
16 example, PS14 earned an overall D on its
17 2010/2011 progress report including a D for
18 student progress and an F in school performance
19 - -. In 2010/2011 the majority of PS14 students
20 remained below grade level in English and math.
21 In 2010/2011 only 23% of students were
22 performing on grade level in English and only
23 41% of students were performing on grade level
24 in math. PS14 is not adequately helping the
25 students gain progress as demonstrated in the

1 fact that PS14 was in the bottom 19, 9th
2 percent of elementary schools citywide in
3 learning growth of English and on the bottom 10%
4 in terms of learning growth in mathematics. If
5 these results persist PS14 students will fall
6 further behind their peers and other schools.
7 Because of these evaluations the DOE conducted a
8 comprehensive review of the school to determine
9 which supports and interventions would best
10 benefits the students and the community. The
11 DOE has also consulted with the superintendents
12 and other experienced educators who will work
13 closely with the school and the community, the
14 parents and the school staff to illicit
15 feedback. Based on this comprehensive review
16 the evidence that additional support were not
17 working the DOE - - offer new school options to
18 the voters that would - - future students and
19 the broader community. PS14 is clearly the only
20 school located in building 014. In a separate
21 EIS also posted December 12th, 2011 the DOE has
22 proposed to open - - a new elementary school at
23 31R078 in PS14 - - school scale 2015/2016. The
24 new school's also going to offer a clinicaid
25 [phonetic] program. This will be a zoned school

1 for the students of PS14. This elementary
2 school is a priority to students residing in
3 PS14 zone and located in R14. As PS14 phases
4 out and 31R78 phases in-

5 [crosstalk]

6 MS. GIBSON: - - session of this meeting I
7 would like to briefly discuss the impact that
8 this proposal has on the current PS14 students
9 and families if this proposal is approved. If
10 this proposal is approved on February 9 PS14
11 will be phased out gradually over several years,
12 over several years and will no longer admit a
13 new pre-kindergarten program, first grade or
14 second grade students at the end of this school
15 year. The current kindergarten and first grade
16 students will remain at PS14 until the end of
17 the school year and they will be assigned to
18 31R078. The new elementary school that will
19 open up at PS14 - - the current second, third,
20 and fourth grade students will be supported at
21 PS14 as they progress towards completion of
22 elementary school and transition on to middle
23 school. The current fifth grade students who
24 meet current promotional criteria at the end of
25 the year while continue to his or her zoned

1 middle school. PS14 will close after June
2 2014 - - as of the 2014/2015 school year. PS14-

3 [crosstalk]

4 MS. GIBSON: --to PS78. I will now turn
5 the microphone over so that we can have - - if
6 anybody has a question. Thank you.

7 MS. IRIS PEREZ: Good evening. We would
8 like to give you the opportunity to speak.

9 [crosstalk]

10 MR. SAM PIROZZOLO: - - I would also like
11 to thank our Superintendent Ermina Claudio for
12 being here - - support process. My name is Sam
13 Pirozzolo. I'm the president of the Community
14 Education Council 31. I do not agree with the
15 phase out of PS14. I have been here just like
16 many of you and I have two children in the
17 public school system. I do not want to be part
18 of this. I'm an active parent volunteer who
19 advocates for the parents of children of Staten
20 Island. We're all here to demand answers to
21 the questions the Community Education Counsel 31
22 has been asking for months. Now the questions
23 have gone unanswered. - - we will be given the
24 respect we deserve as students, parents, and
25 teachers, and we will get the answers we so

1 desperately seek. I would like to thank our
2 elected officials for the support they have
3 given to CEC 31 and the parents of the PS14 as
4 this process isn't over. I would like to thank
5 the UFT, Emanuel Petranomico, LaQuita Thomas,
6 along with the Staten Island Federation of PDAs,
7 the NAACP, my fellow CEC members, Iris Perez,
8 your PTA president. Staten Island is truly
9 blessed that we have been able to come together
10 as a community and recognize that there is an
11 injustice happening at PS14. - - and what is
12 wrong with the system. So here we are this is
13 where we stand with PS14 today. The Department
14 of Education has used some sort of rating system
15 to determine that PS14 no longer meets the
16 educational needs of the children. This is the
17 same rating system that only two short years ago
18 indicated that PS14 was a grade A school. - -
19 PS14's great change is because the New York
20 Department of Education has raised the bar for
21 our students in an ongoing effort to approve the
22 quality of education. I will tell you that is
23 not correct. It is my opinion that what the New
24 York State Department of Education said was that
25 the test are being too easy, test scores have

1 been inflated by lowering standards. All of
2 the so called academic gains that New York City
3 has made in the last nine years have been wiped
4 away because they didn't exist. Let me also
5 remind you that sense PS14 received that rating
6 their school budget has been devastated. - - the
7 families and our teachers and our staff and our
8 students when they constantly take away the
9 funding that is so desperately needed to
10 succeed. - - whole other story that out of 30
11 schools that Mayor Bloomberg wants to close
12 seven of them have an A or a B, so you kind of
13 have to wonder what kind of rating system would
14 close a school with an A or a B. Any kind of
15 rating system that would do that would be rating
16 system that is broken and a rating system that
17 doesn't work. You should change the way you
18 evaluate you own schools before you even think
19 about evaluating teachers. If PS14 is not
20 going to be phased out then we really need to
21 try something different. It is sad that the
22 definition of insanity is to do the same thing
23 over and over again. We do not need to create a
24 new school based on the conditions of the past.
25 If we do then by definition that would be

1 insane. We need something different. How
2 about a school where children are grouped by
3 their ability to learn? - - a program to help
4 our children remember what they know. How
5 about a school that recognizes that are and
6 music and physical education-

7 [applause]

8 MR. PIROZZOLO: - - So if it's time for a
9 change then please tell us what you have in
10 store for us tonight. One final comment I'd
11 like to make is that no matter what happens I
12 would like to give a very big round of applause
13 to principle Nancy Hargett - -.

14 [applause]

15 MS. TAMEKA FAIRLEY: I'd like to use my
16 time to talk to represent not only my views but
17 the views of the parent coordinator, the
18 parents, the PTA Board, and the staff that I had
19 the pleasure of meeting with over the past few
20 weeks. No one that I spoke to is against making
21 changes to the school. No one is - - everyone
22 in the community would like to see changes but
23 they would like support and partnership.
24 Closing this school will be demoralizing to the
25 people who have worked the hardest to make this

1 school - - because they have to go there and
2 drop their kids off but those who have put their
3 muscle and tears into the school are just going
4 to be crushed by closing the school. PS14 has
5 been a hallmark, a landmark in this community.
6 There's a lot of support across the island for
7 PS14. PS78 is going to be met with skepticism,
8 resistance, and it's just not meant to work. If
9 they would like to implement PS78 they should
10 implement PS14.

11 MR. FRANCA OKEICHE: Good evening. My name
12 is Franca Okeiche. I am a parent in the
13 community and I work with the CEC. At this time
14 I want to start by saying that I have a child.
15 I have five children. I can feel the same way
16 you are feeling and I understand what you're
17 going through tonight. What I want to say
18 tonight is if I say that if they - - the reason
19 is my son. I've had three kids that have
20 passed through PS14. - - my son is headed to
21 Harvard. - - I got a letter four months ago he
22 was invited to the White House - - PS14 for this
23 student who is out there, and one thing I know
24 is PS14 has gone a long way to stay, and the
25 only thing that I am here tonight is to let you

1 know that we support - - PS14 - -to bring them
2 this school not including PS14 into - - because
3 what it is is that they need to know what the
4 community needs. They need to feel what the
5 community is feeling. They need to understand
6 that this community needs more of this building
7 than a new school. I'm proud of PS14. Like I
8 said I'm a parent of PS14 and I will always be -
9 - as I was once a student of the school. As a
10 matter of fact my son - - tonight I asked him to
11 come and speak to talk about all the years that
12 he was in this school. It is a good school - - .
13 It is something that we need. The support that
14 they need they are not getting from the DOE.
15 According to - - we need each person realizing -
16 - for freedom, - -, self-respect, and the chance
17 to make an important contribution to families
18 and communities and the world. Without healthy
19 outlets the students - - depression, violence,
20 and other forms of self-abuse. Helping families
21 recognize and build constructive to understand
22 the principles of the communities - - it is a
23 practical guide for a family development. This
24 will help families build skills they need to
25 take good care of themselves and their family is

1 and the - - some kind of self-reliance and
2 independence. What PS14 community needs mostly
3 aside from the new school is someone for pushing
4 and mentoring the community - - some way to
5 reach our dreams reach our self-respect, self-
6 reliance, access to their one strengths and
7 needs- - and encourage communities to support
8 the families. PS14 needs to - - resuscitate - -
9 to be able to encourage the families that
10 communities that is living around this community
11 because from what they said they're trying to
12 build this school that is going to be zoned to
13 PS14. That is not going to work because you've
14 still dealing with the same community and the
15 same parent. Exact same what we need is - - you
16 cannot support this without supporting the
17 parent. They need to support the parents of
18 PS14. - - There is no way a child can progress
19 in school without the support of the parent - -
20 What we need is the support of the parents,
21 support of the community so that the parents can
22 support the children while they go to school.

23 MIKE REILLY: My name is Mike Reilly. - - of
24 31. I'm standing here representing John Inlet
25 co- chairman of the Citywide Council on Special

1 Education. He wanted me to leave a statement
2 for him. On behalf of the Citywide Council on
3 Special Education I'd like to thank my cohost
4 and the DOE for having me at this hearing
5 tonight allowing the parents of district 31 to
6 be heard. I speak to you this evening not only
7 as the co-chair of the Citywide Council on
8 Special Education but as a resident of Staten
9 Island. As someone who has attended countless
10 meetings throughout the other four boroughs and
11 advocated on behalf of children with IEP's this
12 is a sad day for Staten Island. It doesn't
13 matter what borough we reside in there's always
14 incentive on behalf of this administration to
15 roll up their sleeves and work with the parents,
16 teachers, and the school community to improve
17 the schools. There's no accountability.
18 There's a lot of behavior and posturing which is
19 reactive and punitive at best in behalf of the
20 families and the children in the school
21 community. First and foremost what we are doing
22 this evening is not an educational statement but
23 an environmental impact statement that talks
24 about building usage not education. Missing
25 from the educational impact statement are the

1 real issues that the families and the children
2 of this borough care about. Proper equipment
3 such as books, desks, and computers, reading
4 programs, prep periods, student activities,
5 testing accommodations, social interaction
6 between peers and students with disabilities,
7 after school programs EL programs ICTSC and
8 SCTCSS also during the school year
9 transformation, however what we were informed in
10 the EIS is that the availability of certain
11 offerings such as academic and extracurricular
12 programs would inevitably be impacted as the
13 school phases out. In other words the programs
14 necessary to support the students' needs will
15 disappear while we are told that children will
16 receive mandated services for EOL's or IAP's
17 will not be affected. I find that hard to
18 believe. We need to be focused on helping PS14
19 students succeed with targeted, customized, and
20 intensive supports aimed at the unique needs of
21 the school and its students. We need to do
22 differently embrace the school community and
23 improve positive outcomes for children. We are
24 Staten Island. I have jetted here to get
25 involved in this school. You have a major

1 school here and don't ever let anybody take
2 that away from you. It's time that they be held
3 accountable - - and be reflected in the
4 community - - represents a good service to the
5 community which will have greater consequences
6 for all of the children involved. Thank you.

7 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. I'd like to now call
8 a representative from the school leadership team
9 Mr. Harold Williams. If there is an empty seat
10 next to you please raise your hand. There are
11 people outside and we would love for everyone to
12 be able to come in. So there's plenty of seats,
13 thank you.

14 MR. HAROLD WILLIAMS: Good evening everyone.
15 I am a technology instructor and an - -
16 representative for PS14. I have lived within
17 the Stapleton community for 20 years including
18 running the Stapleton community center down the
19 street of which plenty of parents here attended
20 while I was president. I also am a member of
21 this community. I don't want to insult the
22 school or a union representative of the
23 Stapleton Community.

24 [crosstalk]

25 MR. WILLIAMS: When I first came here to

1 work at this school I came here because there
2 was a great need in the school and in this
3 community for someone who cared about children,
4 who loved children, and would make sacrifices
5 for them. I chose this school. I wasn't placed
6 here. I could go almost anywhere I wanted to go
7 but I chose PS14, and since being here I have
8 developed many lasting relationships with the
9 parents and students of this community. Now I
10 am told that I might not be able to work here
11 anymore. I am told that I might not be able to
12 work in the community that I live in, the
13 community that I work in, and the community that
14 I helped develop because some-

15 [crosstalk]

16 MR. WILLIAMS: Because some other people
17 have decided that I am ineligible to work here.
18 They say they want to bring in strangers who
19 know nothing about this community, know nothing
20 about these children - - PS14 has been an
21 essential home for this community for a long
22 time. It has the honor and history of producing
23 well known and dedicated citizens. Over the
24 last century the dynamics of Stapleton have
25 change dramatically. As the community changed

1 so did the needs of PS14, but these increasing
2 needs were only met with budget cuts in and a
3 total disregard - - I have no doubt that money
4 and politics are at the root of this fight. - -
5 they have no say in how this community is - -
6 these decisions are made by strangers who have
7 no stake in this community. - - with our
8 children's future and the lives of many
9 dedicated educators. They give control of our
10 education system to people who have no clue as
11 to the - - emotional development of our
12 children. We have given authority to the 1% of
13 our society who don't care about us. All they
14 care about is themselves and their own personal
15 interests. We have become little more than
16 pawns in their - - political schemes. The only
17 thing they're concerned about is making money
18 and making more money. You see they say that
19 money is the root of all evil so we are - - as
20 long as we allow the super rich to buy their way
21 into public office and manipulate anything - -
22 is Mayor Bloomberg because he is the one the
23 controls of all the people who make the
24 decisions to close the schools - - they are out
25 so they do whatever he tells them to do so he is

1 the - - problem today. - - to be concerned
2 with our school and then little by little they
3 come in and destroy our school and our history.
4 That's what renaming the school does. It
5 removes part of the history. Change the name
6 and destroy the history and demoralize the
7 people to the point that they will be grateful
8 for whatever they get. Give them only enough to
9 sustain their basic needs and lock them into
10 their garden where there is no escape. Take
11 away any sense of control they need just to show
12 what existed. Break them down and make them
13 come crawling back looking for a job. That's
14 what happened to PS14 and that's what's
15 happening in our community now. PS14 was an
16 easy target for the DOE, and they get the bull's
17 eye. They got as little resistance as they
18 expected and they are going to do whatever they
19 want to do regardless of what I say here and
20 what you say here today, but we as a community
21 people and representatives of the school need to
22 voice our opinion to let them know that it's
23 wrong. Disheartened and broken is how so many
24 teachers feel after making so many sacrifices.
25 Some teachers work 12 to 14 hour days here are

1 working on the needs of their students - - no
2 matter how hard you work, no matter how
3 exceptional your students are, you're going to
4 be treated as though you are the root of the
5 problem no consideration. Yes our schools have
6 failed, but not because teachers are not working
7 hard. If the test scores and students
8 performance go up Mayor Bloomberg and the DOE
9 are going to take credit, then why don't you
10 take credit when the school's failing. - - for
11 the successes of our schools DOE take
12 responsibility and support our schools and stop
13 playing the blame game - -.

14 MS. ELLIS: Can the following people come to
15 the mike, Angel Daniels from Debbie Rose's
16 office?

17 MALE VOICE: Two minutes right? Two
18 minutes.

19 MS. ANGEL DANIELS: Good evening Deputy
20 Chancellor Dr. Dorita Gibson, CEC president Sam
21 Pirozzolo, CEC board Tameka Fairley and
22 distinguished members of our panel, also Iris
23 Perez of the school leadership team and
24 superintendent Ermina Claudio. Council member
25 Debbie Rose deeply regrets she cannot be here

1 this evening. She is healing from a recent
2 knee surgery but she asked that I, Angel
3 Daniels, her council manic aide represent her
4 here this evening. Council member Rose would
5 first like to express her appreciation for the
6 placement of Mike Reilly of State Island
7 Community Education Council 31 on the ad hoc
8 community to explore sharps citywide. Council
9 member Rose is committed to the ongoing
10 improvement and continuation of the PS14 and
11 urges the Department of Education to engage in
12 this commitment as well. Just this year
13 council member Rose supported PS14's initiative
14 to improve technology and awarded them 35,000 in
15 capital funding. Council member Rose also
16 awarded 20,000 in constant funding to PS14 last
17 year. The council member also recognizes the
18 need for and supports after school programs
19 offered to PS14 students by the Police Athletic
20 League through discretionary funding. The
21 number of students served by these and other
22 programs demonstrate the need for ongoing
23 support from the Department of Education
24 community based organizations members of the
25 community, elected officials, and city

1 agencies. Thank you for coming here this
2 evening to conduct this hearing. The decision
3 of the Department of Education to phase out the
4 PS14 frankly is a decision that is ill advised
5 and premature. The decision to close this
6 school which is the one constant in this
7 transient community is perplexing and
8 unsettling. Stapleton is a community in need of
9 increased resources, not diminished resources.
10 I challenge you to fulfill your mandate to
11 educate all children and abandon politics and
12 the perpetuation of a culture of failure, and
13 make a commitment to the children parents and
14 committee members that PS14 will be given
15 resources and opportunities to succeed. Thank
16 you.

17 MS. ELLIS: - - from Senator Alonzo's
18 office.

19 MR. ANTHONY REINHARDT: Good evening.
20 Thank you all for being here. Thank you so much
21 on the behalf of Senator Alonzo to the members
22 of the community around PS14 thank you for
23 coming out tonight. I'm here tonight on behalf
24 of Senator Alonzo. My name is Anthony Reinhard
25 and I am his district director. Sorry, here we

1 go. Is that better? I am m here today on
2 behalf of Senator Alonzo to request that this
3 decision be reviewed and overturned. There are
4 many valid reasons to keep PS14 open including
5 that three years ago the school had an A rating
6 as has been discussed already, and as funding
7 and has been cut so has the rating of the school
8 and really with added support...by providing the
9 support the programs, the professional
10 development, the supplies for the students that
11 can be turned around and these students can be
12 given opportunity to really thrive. The school
13 needs the support that the Department of
14 Education has previously stated that would be
15 coming. Students in many cases don't have books
16 that they need. Teachers have been known to
17 make copies of workbooks in an attempt to
18 provide the adequate learning for the
19 tools...learning and tools for the students
20 Senator Alonzo asks and implores that the
21 decision be reviewed and overturned. Thank you
22 so much.

23 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

24 LONNY: Good evening everyone. My name is
25 Lonny and I'm here on behalf of Assemblyman

1 Matthew Tatom. Assemblyman Tatom doesn't
2 believe that schools fail but that the
3 bureaucracy fails schools. As the son of a
4 mother who was an English teacher for 42 years
5 who faithfully served students in Brownsville
6 and state Staten Island I can attest to the
7 venomous corruption that is corroding our
8 education system. There is a problem of
9 politics and political games being played with
10 the children of Staten Island, the children of
11 New York, and their futures. It is disgusting,
12 despicable, and deplorable. I ask only and I
13 will wrap up with this, I ask only are we not--
14 perhaps unintentionally--but are we not
15 stigmatizing those third, fourth, and fifth
16 graders who will continue to learn until the
17 banner of the school that has been deemed a
18 failure by those unwilling to give it the help
19 it needs.

20 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. I am going to begin
21 calling numbers when you come up please say your
22 name into the mike and begin speaking. Please
23 be reminded that you will have two minutes and
24 you will be signaled when you have 30 seconds
25 remaining. I'd like to call down to the mike

1 numbers one, two, three, four, and five.

2 MR. TOM WEISS: I'm going to do it in one
3 minute alright? I'm going to do it in one
4 minute. I speak as a former schoolteacher. I
5 also speak as a candidate. Matthew Tatom if
6 you want to do a debate will do it but I'm also
7 speaking not representing. I'm glad to be
8 among the 99 percent. This is one of the
9 reasons there is an Occupy and an Occupy Staten
10 Island of which I am a part. I have one comment
11 to make. A mayor that is able to afford to give
12 \$50,000,000 tax break to build an unnecessary
13 stadium in the Bronx when we had a perfectly
14 good one so that George Steinbrenner could
15 continue paying Alexander Rodriguez to strike
16 out in the clutch okay, can afford this. A
17 state legislature Mr. Tatom that is prepared to
18 take a salary increase for a part time job.
19 Give the money back Matthew, give the money back
20 Diane. We need it here. Thank you bye. My
21 name is Tom Weiss and I published Upfront News
22 the answer to the Staten Island Advance
23 otherwise known as the Staten Island retreat.
24 Thank you.

25

1 MS. LORETTA PRISCO: Good evening. My
2 name is Loretta Prisco. The advanced ask that
3 the children in the doomed PS14 that has been
4 deemed a failure by the DOE are going to be
5 relegated to a lower tier in the DOE's eyes. No
6 crystal ball is needed. PS15, the students,
7 and the staff will follow the exact same path as
8 other phase out schools and it's not a rosy one.
9 The good intentions of the superintendent, the
10 staff, the parents, the CEC, will not keep it
11 from traveling this inevitable path worn down by
12 so many phasing out schools. Parents are going
13 to get a letter stating that the school is being
14 phased out which should be more aptly labeled
15 going through a slow and painful death, and they
16 will be given the opportunity to transfer out.
17 The children of the parents you can negotiate
18 the system usually test hire and they're going
19 to transfer out. The children left behind,
20 though we're not supposed to have any children
21 left behind, will be the lower achieving,
22 traditionally have poorer attendance, and have
23 parents who are the least connected to the
24 school though not necessarily the least caring.
25 As the population diminishes so will the

1 resources, with those with low scores who
2 transfer out will be seen as pariahs as they
3 take their low scores with them to the receiving
4 schools that will be held accountable for them.
5 To the DOE these children are throwaways. The
6 teachers will know that their days are numbered
7 and those who can will understandably leave to
8 secure jobs to avoid the death of becoming an
9 ATR. The remaining staff will be completely
10 demoralized and lack the resources needed to
11 teach. The principle rather the parent, the
12 newly appointed will know that this is a short
13 term assignment. The new school is going to get
14 lots of extra money, painted classrooms, lots of
15 equipment, computers, smart boards, resources,
16 support staff, and a renewed sense of mission
17 which is not a bad thing for those children.
18 But the children in the old school...my time is
19 not up. I tested myself. It's not up, it's
20 not up. My time is not up. I tested myself
21 three times it's less than two minutes. But
22 the children in the old school will suffer
23 terribly; differences will be stark and of all
24 will be painfully aware of it. There will be
25 turf fights and old PS14 will inevitably lose.

1 They will be shortchanged on the use of the
2 gym, the library. The staff and the school have
3 not failed the failure falls squarely on the
4 shoulders of the captains of the ship, Bloom,
5 Cline, Black, and Wolcott. For ten years...for
6 ten years of mismanagement in competencies, poor
7 leadership, and lack of support. One thing we
8 can count on this is that decision is not being
9 made in the best interest of children. Thank
10 you.

11 MS. ELLIS: Alright thank you very much.
12 Everyone please be reminded we have it limited
13 to a number of two minutes. We have a number of
14 speakers tonight so we want for everyone to
15 speak. There are over 50 people here that would
16 like to speak tonight. Thank you.

17 MR. RUSSELL JOHNSON: Good evening ladies
18 and gentlemen. My name is Russell Johnson. I
19 represent local 372 of district council 37 with
20 24,000 members here who service the
21 schoolchildren throughout the city of New York,
22 school crossing guards, school aides, family
23 paraprofessionals, parent coordinators, and all
24 the lunch room staff. I'm here to support this
25 afternoon in this evening to read into the

1 record a statement from President Santos
2 Prestos Jr., and it's titled when will the
3 insanity stop. Albert Einstein defines insanity
4 as doing the same thing over and over again
5 expecting different results which was stated
6 earlier today. Mayor Bloomberg in his infinite
7 public educated wisdom decided that the way to
8 fix the school system was to throw out the baby
9 with the bathwater. The first step on this road
10 to perdition for our schools is when the mayor
11 uses an assessment system which ignores the
12 voices of you the parents, the community, and
13 the workers of the school, such pivotal markers
14 as classroom size and student assessments and
15 using the schools as a benchmark for his
16 political bang. The next step is to isolate,
17 devalue, and disenfranchise students and
18 parents. Next the voices of the school workers
19 who are part of the community and have dedicated
20 their lives to the service of the children are
21 undermined entirely. Schools are marked as
22 failing, closed, and reopen only to fail our
23 children further. Class sizes are not getting
24 smaller, support staff is being slashed, and
25 teachers are constantly squeezed more and more.

1 Public money is being funneled into private
2 consultant's pockets while other schools
3 deteriorate under this mayor. PS14 is the next
4 one on the chopping block.

5 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

6 MR. JOHNSON: If students and staff are just
7 another list to add to the victims of Mayor
8 Bloomberg's rampage against the public
9 education. This same school scored an A in the
10 progress report in 2009. It later dropped to a
11 C and then a D. Where was the DOE to help?
12 They claim to have worked hard at helping the
13 schools in implementing strategic improvement
14 efforts. What does that mean? When were
15 materials provided to the students? Were
16 classes made smaller, in addition to teachers
17 provided for tutoring? Were the parents asked
18 to come in and help strategic execute a
19 solution? We need to reinforce our public
20 schools not close the them. We need to take a
21 community approach which involves the people who
22 care about the school's the most, you the
23 parents and the school staff. We need more
24 support staff, more teachers, more money for
25 healthy school meals, more money for physical

1 education, and arts and an end to private
2 consultants. Having a new education plan every
3 six months is not fixing the system. Getting
4 space over the charter schools is not fixing the
5 system. Money to consultants is not fixing the
6 system. Perhaps it's not the system that needs
7 fixing; it's your administration and your
8 politics and your policies. Thank you very
9 much.

10 MS. ELLIS: Thank you, just want to remind
11 you again please keep - - be respectful of your
12 time. Thank you.

13 MALE VOICE 2: I promise to do my best.
14 I've watched the DOE close and phase out many
15 schools over the last five years as Staten
16 Island's representative to the Citywide Council
17 on High Schools. We should only support the
18 DOE if it moves to being more open towards this
19 community. Its newest phase out strategy is
20 called a targeted action plan which keeps the
21 school from being closed if it makes specific
22 benchmarks standards over a two year time frame.
23 It should provide this option to PS14 before
24 phasing it out to give the school a chance to
25 improve and the community a chance to understand

1 the reasons. The DOE is not forthcoming
2 regarding how it phases out or closes schools.
3 For the first few years of this administration
4 it did so without telling anybody then the state
5 legislature set down rules then the DOE didn't
6 follow then they close them a year anyway after
7 a lawsuit . Now it is providing us a lot of
8 information on these EIS statements during the
9 engagement process but we still don't know why
10 they are closing this school. The DOE phase out
11 process has become virtually the same as the
12 state's process which last six or seven years.
13 The city will take action after three years
14 based on progresses reports then two years on a
15 targeted action plan but the state has already
16 started closing this school to restructuring as
17 an improvement school two years ago. Oh and
18 PS16 has been completely restructured already.
19 Does anybody else remember crowds like this when
20 PS16 was restructured? No because maybe the
21 state's existing process should be used. Most
22 of the schools in this city and the state's list
23 are the exact same and we stopped making
24 everybody angry and the kids filling lousy about
25 themselves if we maybe used a different process.

1 Mr. Blumberg and Mr. Wolcott it is at about
2 the kids as evidenced by the progress reports
3 the bottom 1/3 of students at this school
4 performed the exact same the last two years but
5 this year's quality review said the teachers
6 don't understand differentiation but last year
7 they did. It's the exact same kids. The
8 quality reviews say different things. Last
9 paragraph, I represent the parents--let me
10 finish the paragraph--someone in DOE had
11 discretion to close this school and they should
12 report to us the reasons for doing so. Why hit
13 everybody over the head with data unless you can
14 tell us why the school will be closed. Data is
15 great to address failing schools but this
16 administration has angered parents so much all
17 the next mayor has to do on education to win
18 votes is to say I'm not going to do it the way
19 Bloomberg did and he or she will win. It's a
20 shame because the kids in this neighborhood
21 still will have the same issues. We need to
22 continue to break down the wall of silence until
23 DOE explicitly explains their reasoning. I hope
24 this process continues to make DOE better at
25 working with the community. Today it is a work

1 in progress only.

2 MS. ELLIS: Number five, numbers six, seven,
3 eight, nine, and ten.

4 MR. WASIL AMINE: This is not meant to
5 disrespect you in anyway but I want to direct my
6 comment to the people that may be able to help
7 us change this situation for the better. My
8 name is Wasil Amine. I am a parent in this
9 school and I am a member in the school
10 leadership team. The beginning of October the
11 school was informed that it was in pre-
12 engagement and two months later it was then
13 determined that the school must phase out.
14 Where was the help? The plan to help PS14 turn
15 around? I do strongly feel before the meeting
16 in October the DOE has already made up their
17 mind. Where is the help DOE? All these people
18 I see trying to help our kids are the
19 principles, the teachers, the staff, that
20 principle Mrs. Hargett has come up with a new
21 math and English program, and she is working
22 very hard with the teachers to work with our
23 children and all these programs needs time to
24 work. DOE is not giving this staff a chance to
25 prove themselves with the new program for at

1 least the end of the school year. Does the
2 DOE even know what the new programs that are in
3 place this school year? Just curious when
4 cutting funds every single year and cost of
5 living rising how does the DOE expect PS14 to
6 succeed with little or no money? PS14 needs
7 fixing not closing with the advocates, friends,
8 and help PS14 can be turned around. Why is my
9 community being targeted? Why? There is always
10 a saying the devil you know is better than angel
11 you don't know. There is a kindergarten class
12 with 27 kids with only one teacher. I mean come
13 on that is too much. There is so much that PS14
14 needs. We need support. I have two children in
15 this school. My son has been here almost five
16 years. I have never seen any help from the DOE
17 and I'm in this school. I work at night but I'm
18 always in this school. We need help. This
19 school does not need closing. That's what we
20 need please. We're sick of hearing the same old
21 thing, the same things, we need help. There is
22 so many schools that have been phased out so
23 many of them haven't been as successful so come
24 one, give us the help. That's what we need.

25 MS. ELLIS: Number seven come up.

1 KATHY CARLSON: Kathy Carlson president of
2 Staten Island's Federation of PT A's. We are
3 hearing that a principle has been selected for
4 PS78 if indeed an interacting principle for the
5 proposed for PS78 then tonight is just another
6 example of the Department of Education
7 bulldozing their way through our children's
8 lives and not listening to parental or community
9 input on educational issues. We are the
10 parents...we the parents are our children's first
11 teachers. We the parents know what our schools
12 need and the support we would like to see within
13 them. We the parents are tired of not being
14 considered an important part of our children's
15 education and by continually shutting us out and
16 making policy without any parental input tell us
17 that you do not care what we have to say. We
18 the parents know the importance of a good
19 community school and we the parents say give
20 PS14 the support it needs to be a viable
21 thriving school. Although the impact statement
22 regarding PS14 does highlight many concerns
23 nowhere in the educational impact statement of
24 the PS78 school does it say how it will address
25 any of these concerns? The impact statement

1 goes on to say that the DOE solicited
2 community feedback via telephone and email. Was
3 there any ongoing conversation with Councilman
4 Rose or the other elected officials? Were
5 community concerns addressed with Ed Josey or
6 other community and parent leaders? I don't
7 know because we are not being told and who is
8 responsible for reviewing this community
9 feedback and what are they doing with it? What
10 does changing the number on a building do other
11 than tell its community that they are not good
12 enough to keep a community school? We need to
13 fix PS14. The Department of Education in
14 conjunction with school leaders, parents, and
15 the community must work together as a team in
16 order to fully address the concerns of this
17 community, fix PS14.

18 MALE VOICE 3: Good evening everybody and
19 representatives of all different institutions.
20 It's not right to close the school. What you
21 need is more support so that the students can be
22 better prepared. I was a student once. Mike
23 Bloomberg wants to close the school I am telling
24 you now do not close it. We need support. I
25 have a question. My question is do you think

1 that the solution is to close the school?
2 What are the reasons for closing PS14? The
3 other question is do you want this country to be
4 like other countries where the children are
5 illiterate? I want that answer right away. I
6 don't want to wait for the answer. I want the
7 school to keep on functioning as PS14.

8 MS. AMINE: I am reading this statement for
9 Irma. She says you say that there is not enough
10 student achievement at PS14 but the DOE provided
11 no help to us so how can we improve if you give
12 us no support like so we can't help progress. I
13 have a child who is progressing in kindergarten
14 and she started not knowing anything and now she
15 reads to me. Mrs. Dale and Mrs. Fishman have
16 taken time to teach my child. A new number on
17 the school means nothing. How would you make
18 sure that PS78 would not fail my daughter?

19 MS. IRIS PEREZ: My name is Iris Perez. I
20 am the PS14 PTA president. I am here in this
21 community and I have two children here. I am
22 here for each one of the children in this
23 community. PS14 is targeted because this is a
24 poor community with compromised parents
25 environment so you can do this without much

1 outcry, no support for instruction on
2 students' achievement. Cut in fundings
3 preventing federal programs in high need in
4 populations like PS14. No professional
5 development target for PS14 until too late. No
6 parents input at any point of this process. How
7 much of the consensus can you allow for the
8 school to remain in assistance for three more
9 years when you have determined that it is
10 failing and needs to close? What message are
11 you sending to the remaining grades of PS14? At
12 the beginning of October the school was informed
13 that it was a pre-engagement and two months
14 later it was then determined that the school
15 must be phased out. Where was the plan to help
16 PS14 turnaround? Fix the school don't close it.
17 No one needs to get rid of PS14's number that
18 has been a cornerstone of the Stapleton
19 community for decades. Co-location of schools
20 around the city does not work with the phasing
21 out schools are not charter schools. Schools
22 are being treated like the hated stepchild. I'm
23 going to thank everybody to be here. All of the
24 parents I want to give you this information.
25 Right now what happened is to PS14 parents we

1 have to get together as a team. Get involved
2 in your kids' education. It is very important
3 that you be involved. It's very important for
4 parents to be involved in kids' education.
5 They need us like we need them. Thank you very
6 much.

7 FEMALE VOICE: Hello, I'm a teacher here at
8 PS14. I want to thank all the parents for
9 coming out. You heard me in the community
10 asking you to come out and save your community
11 school. This is your community school. This is
12 nobody else's. I want to see Bloomberg. I want
13 to see the chancellor. I want to see the
14 borough president come in here and try to do
15 what we do here. Can't nobody walk through this
16 door they've never been in this school. They've
17 never been here. I've been here a long time as
18 a teacher here. None of them have ever come
19 here but they want to phase us out. You can't
20 phase us out until you see what we go through
21 here. We work hard in this school. It's not
22 easy to work with nothing. We don't have the
23 resources. We don't have the money, and we
24 definitely don't have the support and we need
25 that for us to stay open in here and for us to

1 succeed. Thank you.

2 MS. ELLIS: Numbers 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15.

3 Thank you, number 11.

4 MS. JENNIFER JENNINGS: My name is Jennifer
5 Jennings. As a concerned parent the fact that
6 we are having this discussion is quite
7 disturbing. The early engagement process should
8 be renamed the late conspiracy process. Why
9 PS14 has to pay out their budget this year for a
10 support system that undoubtedly failed us. PS14
11 did not lose the capacity to turn around.
12 Principle Nancy Hargett, Mr. Dorta, and Ms.
13 Geralinee are exceptional leaders. Let's be
14 clear that the DOE is responsible not the
15 administration of PS14. Instead of having a
16 public hearing why not have a solution driven
17 discussion on how we can solve issues and
18 support the students, parents, teachers, and the
19 community as a whole. I am a member of the
20 school leadership team, the PTA treasurer, and
21 I'm district 31 designee for CPAC. I am an
22 evolved and proud single parent of my daughter
23 Trinity who is a six year old first grader here
24 at PS14. I raised two of my siblings. I
25 assisted my cousin Shagoon [phonetic] in his

1 first semester at Penn State. He was a
2 graduate here at PS14. My other cousin Toyoshi
3 [phonetic] is obtaining her doctorates chemistry
4 at Brigham. She also came to PS14, and another
5 cousin Eyabo [phonetic] is doing her residency
6 in Manhattan as an anesthesiologist. She was
7 also a graduate of PS14. We the parents of PS14
8 do care, and we are involved. I have faith.
9 Please support PS14 to stay open.

10 MS. MALAYSIA BEVERLY: My name is Malaysia
11 Beverly. Please do not close our school. It is
12 very important for the students and the teachers
13 and is a great school. Thank you.

14 DR. CARRIE ROBINSON: Good evening. Ladies
15 and gentlemen, distinguished panel, my name is
16 Dr. Carrie Robinson. I am a member of the
17 Stapleton community. I've served on the
18 community school board. I am a product of
19 district 31 and the high schools on Staten
20 Island since third grade. I live in this
21 community and I'm here to support PS14 not IS78.
22 Let me tell you why I support PS14. I was...I had
23 the pleasure of being the speaker at the
24 graduation in June. The children that come to
25 this school are our parent's best children. We

1 need to send back to them what they send to us
2 in better conditions. I am a tenured full
3 professor in the Department of Educational
4 Leadership at a public university in New Jersey.
5 I am responsible for teachers who want to become
6 principals, supervisors, and superintendents.
7 I've spent over a decade and tomorrow I will
8 have a conference to talk about the
9 accreditation of a teacher educated preparation
10 program in Virginia. I go all over the country
11 doing this and have for over a decade. With all
12 due respect I've read everything that has been
13 printed about this decision. If this is merely
14 the changing of the name on the building the
15 children that remain in 78 or 14 lose. We need
16 a school that addresses the academic needs of
17 every child in this building and this community.
18 Everybody that knows me knows that I have high
19 standards. I believe in high expectations and
20 high support but you can't raise the standards
21 and reduce the support and the resources. My
22 question is there are two things that concern me
23 about this decision and with all due respect
24 ladies and gentlemen I understand the two minute
25 rule and I understand in a hearing that with all

1 that needs to be said two minutes is
2 insufficient but I need to say it. I need to
3 say two quick things. One if we take the
4 resources away from this school 14 to give to 78
5 what are we doing to the children that are going
6 to remain in PS14? If we move to 78 today,
7 tomorrow if the school is in F the school should
8 not be open but the school is not an F because
9 of the teacher, because of the principle. The
10 school is an F because it hasn't been given the
11 tools to do what it needs to do. So I suggest
12 that we figure out how to ensure that every
13 child in this building gets the resources that
14 it needs for a quality education thank you very
15 much.

16 ABE: I am the UFT rep for Staten Island.
17 Alright first of all I just want to make a quick
18 statement. I have nothing but respect for the
19 people sitting on this panel and I think they're
20 wonderful people but they can do nothing for us
21 okay. I want to talk about what the process is;
22 you're talking about school governors. People
23 who are here tonight because the state Senate
24 wrestled with this and wanted to make sure
25 parents had a voice in a meeting and the

1 Bloomberg administration made this a mockery.
2 You are here after the decision has been made.
3 Kathy Carlson was up here a few minutes ago,
4 what I can tell you now is that they came to
5 school pre-engagement in October and November of
6 before Thanksgiving they were interviewing for a
7 principle for PS78 and before Christmas or right
8 around that time they chose one. Our borough
9 president--I'm embarrassed--our borough
10 president okay we invited him here nicely. We
11 invited him here by bringing 400 people to his
12 front steps. We invited him here by having the
13 children write cards to him. He is not here.
14 He said in the paper he will not visit here
15 until the school is restructured okay. Now the
16 other thing he said in the paper was he is
17 instructing his pep panel member to vote to
18 close the school. I don't see him here. I
19 don't see that pep panel member here either so
20 no one is hearing you. The bottom line here is
21 that we are not part of this decision. We have
22 to take this back to Albany because the mayor is
23 making a mockery of what the school governance
24 is all about. The mayor was giving mayoral
25 control to pick the chancellor. He wasn't given

1 control to be the chancellor. We need to take
2 this to our public officials and we have to let
3 our borough president know that we are unhappy
4 with him because I once made a statement to him
5 about this school and other schools and he told
6 me I represent the people who voted for me.
7 Well you know what Mr. Borough president? You
8 have to represent the people who didn't vote for
9 you to. Okay. Now this school my thoughts here
10 our borough president, his pep panel member has
11 voted every single time with the mayor's people
12 to close the schools okay. He hasn't found one
13 school he didn't like to close okay. This
14 school is now one of his. It's in his backyard.
15 We ask him to come see it, he would not come
16 here. He's going to vote to close your school.
17 We need to let him know. I need you to write in
18 the Advance, I need you to write him but the
19 bottom line here don't blame these people they
20 have no control over this. Thank you very much.

21 REVERAND MAGGIE HOWARD: Hi, my name is
22 Reverend Maggie Howard. I'm from Stapleton UAME
23 Church. I had two children who attended this
24 school and both of them graduated doing
25 extremely well. I have nieces and nephews who

1 graduated from this school and they are doing
2 well. I have children who attend of my church
3 who are in this school and who graduated from
4 the school and they are doing extremely well.
5 So my question is according to the enrollment
6 information PS14 December 2011 if the proposal
7 to phase out PS14 is approved so if means that
8 there is no definite final decision according to
9 this paper. So based on the word if because
10 again the word if is not too then there is a
11 misrepresentation going on. If this word in is
12 correct and if we're here to make a
13 determination or to consider something then the
14 consideration is the same information that you
15 would use in supporting the permit school if you
16 was to phase it out then the DOE needs to
17 consider this in order to keep the school so my
18 statement is we really need to fix it and not
19 close it.

20 MS. ELLIS: Numbers 17, 18, 19, 20

21 FRANK SKICHORINI: Good evening people.
22 Good evening, my name is Frank Skichorni. I'm
23 the first vice president of CEC 31. We're the
24 Community Education Counsel. Everybody here
25 keeps blaming Mayor Bloomberg for this. I say

1 we don't blame Mayor Bloomberg. You blame the
2 people who gave him the power to do this the
3 state legislator, the assembly, and the senate.
4 Two years ago myself, Tony Amboron [phonetic],
5 and Staten Island federation of PTA's we sat
6 down with the committee, Lisa Giagrant
7 [phonetic] from federation and put together an
8 itemized list and went over education law 2590
9 line by line and we could not believe how much
10 power the mayor was given to do this. There are
11 no checks and balances when someone has the
12 ability to pick 8 out of 13 members of the pep
13 panel how do you call that a pep panel? Why
14 even bother having? The mayor has total control
15 over everything. I feel we need to attack this
16 from a state legislative point. Tomorrow
17 everyone should start sending emails to their
18 assemblyman and their state senators asking them
19 how they voted on mayoral governments over
20 school control. You'll be very surprised with
21 your answers. I don't think there was one
22 Staten Island rep who voted no so bottom line is
23 you need to go to the people who gave the mayor
24 the power to do this. It's almost like giving a
25 kid a brand new toy on Christmas morning. There

1 is no way he is not going to open that box and
2 play with that toy. So if you give the mayor
3 the power to close these schools this is the
4 first yet to come. Before you know it there
5 going to have charter schools in our public
6 schools and we're going to have a lot more co-
7 locations. Thank you.

8 MS. FLORENTINE DALE: Hello, hi can you hear
9 me? This is a little more humble. This is
10 coming from me as a parent directing it towards
11 the board of education. My name is Florentine
12 Dale and I'm here on behalf of my daughter
13 America Dale. I placed emphasis on my daughter
14 due to the fact that this is her school. She is
15 attending it. It is currently called PS14.
16 Since she's been here I would like to allow you
17 to see her point of view. As I speak I came in
18 knowing that this school had a low SAT score but
19 I still came anyway because I knew that in my
20 heart that the teachers would be more encouraged
21 to work harder so I felt kind of lucky saying
22 that when you have something that's not up to
23 standard you work harder to make it up to
24 standard, and that's exactly what's going on
25 here today. Like you're looking at the past are

1 not looking at the future. You're not looking
2 at what the kids have been achieving and I can
3 prove that because when my daughter came here
4 she could hardly even talk. I'm so scared, I'm
5 so sorry. And just as I assumed would happen as
6 my child is in kindergarten her teacher is Ms.
7 Fishman and she is a very well organized and
8 grounded teacher. Since June my daughter has
9 been given site words you, the, it, is amongst
10 the others. These words are read to her daily.
11 These words are used on our homework and these
12 words are used and sentences. These words are
13 now memorized in my daughter's thinking she can
14 pick the words out of a sentence and then figure
15 the rest of the sentence out. This is
16 comprehension and learning skills. It's also
17 the beginning of reading and I say these are
18 good learning tools. These is one of the area's
19 she is very proud of okay, and my daughter is in
20 a CTT class with general education. Her
21 physical, her speech, and her occupational
22 therapy are very important. She is doing very
23 well with her therapist who has been working
24 with PS14 for years. They are patient and
25 thorough. Her education is expanding. What she

1 learns in school I take home and confirm. My
2 daughter has asthma also she's on med and needs
3 busing. I've been working with Jackie who is
4 the family worker and she has been compassionate
5 and consistent. The nurse makes sure my
6 daughter gets her medication. I'm not done yet,
7 and she gets it as needed. Now this is the part
8 I need you to understand. I am a struggling
9 mother in the project and it is refreshing to
10 feel secure and know that my child is so well
11 grounded. Her physical, emotional, and
12 education is being taken care of in this one
13 school and she will come out in the fifth grade
14 with above average scores. I believe that PS14
15 should continue as it is with help from outside
16 organizations. Due to low budgets and a
17 sometimes lack of cooperation from outside
18 resources things cannot be accomplished as
19 quickly as they should. This school is in the
20 heart of the projects and it takes special
21 professional hardworking people to work with
22 some of the children that come through this
23 door. When we look at closing a school or
24 phasing it out we should also look to locking up
25 potential education. Teachers that have worked

1 so hard for so many years just to serve, just
2 to wonder where they're going to serve their
3 next child okay or their own for that matter
4 okay. Jobs would be lost, children would have
5 to relocate. Some children don't do well with
6 change. Therapist will stop and resume in other
7 places. Some kids don't do a good with change
8 alright and you don't know okay to resume
9 somewhere else with someone else and who knows
10 if they'll be as determined to help the children
11 as now okay. The drive and the energy is here
12 so let's not destroy or take away let's work
13 together and continue to build it up. Thank
14 you.

15 MS. RUTH THOMAS: My name is Ruth Thomas. I
16 am a member of the UAME church and the reason
17 why I'm here tonight is because my two
18 grandchildren that I'm raising came here in 2009
19 and they came to this school. Their intellect
20 was very low. Their math was low, everything
21 was low and within a half a year my grandson
22 started doing work so excellent the teachers
23 have worked with him so well he had a speech
24 problem because there was - - and his speech was
25 even well in 2010 he started doing in the third

1 grade he started doing fifth grade work okay
2 and granddaughter she couldn't hardly do any
3 math. She had problems with math, science,
4 social studies. Now she's at the top of her
5 class and if you change these kids from...if you
6 change these kids from where they are at right
7 now not just these kids, but will disturb of all
8 these children and these children will go
9 astray. They will never be the same if you
10 change this school. This school right here has
11 worked with the little budget that you give them
12 they have tutoring programs. They've got
13 programs where the teachers even though they
14 have a lot in the classroom they work with your
15 kids. They call your home concerned about your
16 kids, if your kids are absent, if there's
17 anything wrong. This is the first school that
18 I've ever been in to that they have security
19 where they shut down and make sure no intruders
20 is in here. Now how safe can that be because
21 people are walking out of schools stealing
22 children and children are being raped in school,
23 and this is the very same school I feel very
24 safe for my grandkids and one thing that I
25 really want to point out is that they are not

1 from here and they came here with learning
2 disabilities. These two children here should
3 Shaquan and Kayla Thomas are at the top of their
4 class and they have something to say about
5 closing their school. They say grandma would
6 you please do something. What can you do? I
7 went to my pastor which is Maggie Howard I said
8 what can you do so that's why I'm here because
9 of my grandchildren don't want you to close
10 their school please let them have their time.

11 CHILD ONE: Save PS14.

12 CHILD TWO: Save PS14 because it has
13 wonderful teachers that work very hard with
14 their students.

15 MS. THOMAS: Save PS14. Don't close it down
16 because we've got enough kids that's already
17 misinterpreted in the streets and they're
18 already confused and the next thing you know
19 when you change it these kids that you are
20 messing with they will turn out in the street
21 and lost and for the Mayor Bloomberg they
22 should've closed his school and he wouldn't be
23 the mayor today.

24 MALE VOICE 2: Hello everybody. Good
25 afternoon everybody. Hello how are you doing?

1 My son he's a third grader and I think it's
2 better not to close a school because the student
3 needs education also I'm not speaking for myself
4 I'm speaking for every children that go to the
5 school. I am a parent and I help out a lot to
6 here. I'm always here helping out a kid. I
7 volunteer. Anything that has got to do with my
8 son and I am here because I want the best for
9 him also I know you want the best for your
10 children too. We can always find a solution to
11 keep the school open, to keep this school open
12 and education is important for our children.
13 There has been funding cuts in the past three
14 years where that money is going to all because
15 the children have not been given the material
16 and the support successfully for the school
17 Aidan will be in fourth grade next year and he
18 will finish his elementary school years at PS14.
19 What message the DOE is telling Aidan is he is
20 not good enough to become successful at PS14?
21 Fix PS14, do not close it. Thank you very much.

22 TIA: My name is Tia, I'm the parent
23 coordinator of PS14 and I am also a former
24 student of PS14. I have been in Stapleton and
25 Parco Ed for 47 years and when I found out that

1 the DOE wants to close my school, my school
2 you all don't even know about these children.
3 You don't know what they go through. You come
4 in here when there is something going wrong but
5 you don't come in when something is going right.
6 I took this job in 2003 for three reasons
7 because I want to come back to my community. My
8 mom worked here for over 28 years and I'm
9 telling you right now if you close the school
10 you are making the biggest mistake of your life
11 and you know what? The DOE you are lying. You
12 don't do anything to help PS14. God bless.

13 MS. ELLIS: Numbers 22, 23, 24, and 25

14 MINISTER YAVO: Good evening. I am Minister
15 Yavo from the Saint Phillips Baptist church
16 okay. I'm representing Reverend Dr. Tony Baker
17 from the Saint Phillip's Baptist church. To
18 whom it may concern, every educational
19 institution has value. There are often changes
20 that need to be made to enhance that value but
21 completely giving up and closing a school that
22 may be experiencing present problems I say you
23 should never be in opposition. Public School 14
24 has been a central and pivotal part of the
25 Stapleton section of Staten Island for decades.

1 Now it serves as a starting point of early
2 childhood education for a community that is
3 already struggling economically and socially
4 PS14 serves as a feeder school for Intermediate
5 School 49, which among the top intermediate
6 schools in New York City in the area of
7 technology. PS14 also serves as a location in
8 the community where people young and old can
9 come together for social and cultural events
10 that educate as well as entertain and it creates
11 a positive environment where young people can go
12 to avoid the trouble are carrying all around
13 them. There is so much value in this one school
14 that is and it's so obvious that closing it down
15 would bring nothing positive to this
16 neighborhood. What purpose would really be
17 served by closing PS14? Where would all those
18 students go to get the foundation that is needed
19 to feed their dreams and aspirations? What
20 would happen to the dedicated staff not just the
21 teachers but the aides, the kitchen staff, who
22 provides at least two meals per day to the some
23 children who depend on that for their existence,
24 the school secretaries, and the maintenance
25 staff? In closing let me state that I am a

1 product of public school education. A
2 valuable education has taught me and helps me to
3 become the man, the father, the pastor, the
4 community advocate that I am today. It is my
5 sincere hope and prayer that we find a solution
6 to save this highly important educational
7 institution which this community so really
8 deserves. God bless you all from the Reverend
9 Dr. Tony Baker senior.

10 MS. ELLIS: For those people standing in the
11 back there are some seats up front if you'd like
12 to sit down. Please come down and sit. There
13 is people standing in the back, there are seats
14 available in the front.

15 FEMALE VOICE 2: I'm giving up my numbers so
16 another parent from PS14 can speak.

17 KESHA: Hello, hello, hello, yes, yes, yes.
18 I am Kesha Bestpair [phonetic], I am a parent of
19 PS14. I have a child that goes here. I've only
20 been here for...I'm going on two years' being in
21 the development of Stapleton and New York City
22 housing. I am so deeply disappointed that my
23 daughter's school will be closing and that she
24 will not be able to graduate at PS14. Do you
25 understand? The reason why I feel that it is my

1 concern to let you all know that she is doing
2 extremely well here okay we came from Brooklyn
3 let me tell you something. We came from East
4 Brooklyn okay let me tell you all, it is
5 something over there. The services that I have
6 put in when we was in Brooklyn they never
7 followed through on them do you understand?
8 She didn't start getting the services until she
9 got here okay. Now I was in Brooklyn for seven
10 years do you understand me? They did not attend
11 to her needs or anything. Since she's been here
12 my baby is on the ball. Do you understand me?
13 She is on track and with that being said my
14 concern as a parent is why? How can you close
15 one school, the name of the school, to open up
16 another name to put the same funding in when
17 PS14 could use that money? I believe I don't
18 understand but let me get to my question because
19 I done went all over the place but my concern is
20 every year if you will pay attention every year
21 the cut of the budget every year because you
22 know that got me I'm ready to you know what I'm
23 saying? But listen if you all notice every year
24 they cut the budget, every year the letter
25 drops. Do you understand? When they cut the

1 budget the letter drops so what that does that
2 mean? Give us more money for them A's. We done
3 had an A so what's the problem question we get
4 one D and now it's like close D. Who does that?
5 Where do they do that at? Where did they do
6 that at? Not here no, they're not doing it
7 here. This is a D they are not doing it here,
8 they are not doing it, we are not allowing this
9 to go down. We are not allowing this to go
10 down. Oh no were not oh no we're not, Oh no we
11 not. Okay you're saying my time is up but what
12 I also want to say is that you all thought that
13 these parents wasn't going to come alright? You
14 all thought we wasn't going to come out right? I
15 know that's right.

16 MR. JOHN MORRISSEY: Good evening ladies and
17 gentlemen. My name is John Morrissey and I'm a
18 teacher here. Please I appreciate you please.
19 I've been a teacher here for close to 20 years
20 and I can honestly say that I consider Stapleton
21 and PS14 my home. This is my home okay. Now
22 recently the push in literacy has been towards
23 more nonfiction which is a good thing because
24 most of what we read today is nonfiction so then
25 why, why would the DOE adhere to a policy of

1 releasing the parents and media such fictional
2 propaganda about all the help they've given 14?
3 Now I've been here awhile as I've just said and
4 I can say with certainty that PS14 has never
5 been very high on the DOE's list. We were never
6 given help from the DOE except when they decided
7 to close us. Then and only then did some help
8 start a trickle in. Where I come from that's
9 called covering you're behind, and despite the
10 fact that we were pretty much on our own since
11 day one of this administration we have managed
12 to greatly decrease the level one's in our
13 testing grades. Despite little help from the
14 DOE we manage to get off the persistently
15 dangerous list thanks to the work of the staff
16 and the community. And finally concerning the
17 buzzword of this administration, accountability,
18 a great man once said about accountability that
19 the buck stops here. It seems like this has
20 been rewritten by the Bloomberg administration
21 and the Department of Education to read the buck
22 stops anywhere but here. Thank you.

23 MS. JOSENY VASQUEZ: Good evening. My name
24 is a Joseny Vasquez and I have two children that
25 are in PS14. I feel like I have no respect for

1 the DOE because instead of making our schools
2 better all they want to do is close down. They
3 claim that the schools are failing but yet it is
4 them that is failing because how can all these
5 schools in New York City fail when they're not
6 funding the schools? I feel like they promote
7 all these anti bullying and all these campaigns
8 about no child left behind but yet our kids are
9 being left behind, our kids are being bullied by
10 the DOE. So I feel like if they want us to
11 support what they are doing they better help us
12 with our schools, face our schools, and don't
13 close it. We teach our kids all the time not to
14 get bullied but yet they are bullying our
15 children financially. They are bullying our
16 children by not giving our children a better
17 education so how do you expect our kids to get
18 better when they are cutting our funds out.
19 How do you expect our kids to get better when we
20 can provide them with extra substitute teachers,
21 extra books, all these programs that we need. I
22 think that is not fair to our school. They
23 claim 14 has low scores. There are four other
24 schools on Staten Island that have had low
25 scores and you're not even touching those

1 schools. You are coming to our schools.
2 Where is our money? Oh and yet two schools had
3 F grades. Why our schools didn't close down?
4 Where's our money? Where's our help? What
5 about our children? You claimed that our
6 children don't achieve. My child has been
7 achieving in this school where are your scores
8 coming from? You know what I mean. Where's
9 there scores coming from? Where is your score
10 is coming from? If you guys will come to the
11 school and visit and see what the kids are doing
12 then I can talk after that but you are not even
13 coming to our school and seeing what are kids
14 are achieving or not achieving. That's unfair
15 to our schools. What is it because our school
16 committee is all blacks and Hispanics you all
17 don't want to touch our school but yet the other
18 schools on the island got the help. That is not
19 fair to our school. Or is it because our
20 community is poor you don't want to help us out?
21 That's not fair. We should get the same help as
22 everybody else and the other schools are
23 getting.

24 MS. SHANIE DANIELS: You all are ready
25 right? Stand at teachers. Let me see my

1 teachers stand up. Because you all have got a
2 lot of good teachers in this school let me see
3 you all. That's right the teachers, the staff
4 stand up. That's right you all wanted it, you
5 are going to get it my name is Shanie Daniels.
6 I have five kids and look at me. I am very
7 young with no education. I came from Brooklyn
8 low grade projects and it was shit. My kids
9 came to this school we left there ten years ago,
10 and I have been doing good and my kids have been
11 doing good and their education has been doing
12 good. Staten Island helps our kids very well
13 let me let you know. Not just 14, Staten Island
14 helped my kids very well. I have my daughter
15 right here and I have a daughter over there in
16 the audience who graduated from the school and
17 she got a lot out of it do you know why? She
18 goes to Curtis; she's in the eleventh grade
19 stand up Nadine Daniels. She does not--I am
20 going to say this--she does not, she does not,
21 run the streets at all. She does not skip her
22 curfew at all yes my daughter Tirina Harris came
23 to this school and graduated out of this school
24 and she goes to IS49 right across the street
25 alright, let me say that. Do you want to hear

1 me? I am going to say what I have got to say
2 and I really don't...two minutes or any of that
3 shit. Time is not it, time is for the education
4 for these kids to get farther in life. My son,
5 my eight year old son Justin, he goes to Ms.
6 Foster alright. He's in this school they go in
7 and he knows more than a little bit. He is very
8 intelligent and he makes me proud every day.
9 You know what wakes me up in the morning? My
10 damn kids you hear me? My children wake me up
11 every morning at 6:00 between six and five to
12 get them ready to go to school. Now what school
13 is he going to go to if he has no school to go
14 to? That means you're telling me I've got to
15 put my son in 6E. You're telling me I've got to
16 leave from here to take a bus to put my son in
17 6E where am I going to put him at, 31? You all
18 closing that school down to right? Where am I
19 going to put him at? Where the hell am I going
20 to put my son at? All the way to 6E I got to
21 take a bus over there do you know that, and walk
22 up the block. My son comes to school every
23 morning by himself. You know why? Because he
24 wants to be very independent, very independent,
25 and he is very independent. That little boy

1 with his young shirt and his blue pants on he
2 stands loud and he is very smart stand up. That
3 one right there, very intelligent, that boy can
4 read a book to you. You know why? Because
5 he's been going to the school and his teacher
6 Ms. Foster helps him. Stand up Ms. Foster.
7 Stand up Ms. Foster. That's right so when I
8 talk I talk for the teachers and my children
9 because I am very young with five kids in this
10 school and this is the only thing that can help
11 my kids. My son right now is 13. He was in
12 this school and he had very difficult problems.
13 Let me tell you 14 helped him to where he could
14 go to a school that could help him get a better
15 education. If we wasn't on Staten Island I
16 believe we would be in shit. I would be running
17 around every day getting my son out of fights.
18 He is not here today but...but he is not in the
19 street either you know where he's at? He had
20 better be in that house reading that book okay
21 because my name ain't Shanie Daniels for
22 nothing. He better be doing his sign tables so
23 he can get an A but you know what? It takes a
24 mother to be a mother and help these kids and
25 make sure they're sitting at their table doing

1 their homework every night. To make sure that
2 they learn their times tables every night but
3 without a for one I'm young remember and
4 remember that right. I'm not dumb dumb alright
5 yeah I've got five kids and I would like my kids
6 to be raised up with the utmost respect alright
7 and I would like them to get an education and I
8 want them to have that education but you know
9 what I have no education and I'm ready to go
10 back to school. Do you know why? Because I see
11 my kids every day struggling to go to school
12 every morning getting up out of their beds they
13 do something that I couldn't do and focus in
14 school alright? They do it because they have
15 people that help them like the teachers, these
16 parents, these respectful staff that comes out
17 knocks on your door. The nurse calls me my baby
18 is sick you ain't...that little boy is sick
19 alright. He has asthma real bad okay? I make
20 sure his medicine is in the school, they make
21 sure he has a nurse to go with him on that trip
22 and that's what counts. I don't have to tag
23 along with him do you understand? Because I
24 have other things I have to do besides sitting
25 in this school making sure you all don't close

1 it.

2 FEMALE VOICE 3: My little Cousin Kelly has
3 been going to school for three years. Why close
4 down one school to create problems for another
5 school? Otherwise one school will be crowded
6 where are these children going to go to get
7 their education? We are on the school two years
8 ago and they took \$400,000 out of our budget.
9 Where did it go?

10 MS. ELLIS: Thank you

11 MS. DARLEEN CIERRA: Good evening everybody.
12 I'm the school social worker. My name is
13 Darlene Cierra. Thank you everybody for all
14 your support and especially other teachers from
15 other schools coming out to support us. I just
16 want to say it does really mean a lot because
17 not for nothing you might be next. I just want
18 to take up my little two minutes and I'm going
19 to say whether it's a new school whether it's an
20 old school should there be a difference in any
21 Department of Education school from the south
22 shore to the north shore. We're supposed to be
23 educating our children in the same way, in the
24 same fashion, with the same resources. Students
25 in each school deserve the resources to make a

1 difference. I don't understand how those
2 government officials forget who the people who
3 taught them what they know are. What teacher is
4 in this profession for the money? Who? Not us,
5 that's right. Who are the people sacrificing day
6 in and day out with our parents? The kids
7 develop a relationship not just with the
8 teachers but with the staff. Each day they look
9 for their favorite person within this school to
10 give them a hug or to say to them it will be
11 okay, don't worry about it, you are going to do
12 well on your test every single day. Do we need
13 new teachers for that? Yes I believe reading
14 and math are important but as a social worker I
15 also believe that love and guidance is very
16 important too and that we had here every day in
17 PS14. Thank you.

18 MR. SHAWN ROCKWOODS: Good evening. My name
19 is Shawn Rockwoods. I'm the UFT district
20 representative on Staten Island. I've been
21 looking at this educational impact statement
22 that the Board of Ed provided to everybody
23 tonight and on page six I'm going to read this.
24 It says the DOE does not anticipate that there
25 will be any immediate proposed changes to

1 available academic or extracurricular programs
2 currently offered at PS14 as a result of the co-
3 location of PS78, that said the availability of
4 certain offerings at this school would
5 inevitably be impacted as the school phases out,
6 serves an increasingly smaller student
7 population, and eventually closes. What this
8 means is that the second, third, and fourth
9 graders in this school will be choked out with
10 fewer and fewer services to serve what they
11 need. That is not acceptable alright and if you
12 go and look at this a little bit more this
13 statement it's not written by the people up
14 here. I have the utmost respect and I have
15 working relationships with everybody up here.
16 This is written by Tweed [phonetic]. This is
17 written by the chancellor's people. They name
18 this new propose school PS78 and on page four
19 they get it wrong. It's a minor point but it's
20 indicative of the total application of
21 responsibility to then educate our kids they
22 can't even get the new proposed school right.
23 They are calling at PS76 in here, and just if
24 anybody cares to look second paragraph on the
25 bottom on page four there it is. Now we have

1 educators from across Staten Island here.
2 What they did is they signed a resolution I have
3 them in my hand. I'm not going to give it to
4 the panel up here I'm going to give it to Mr.
5 Tatom's representative and Debbie Rose's
6 representative, signatures from every school of
7 Staten Island saying you support and fix PS14.
8 You don't close it. We are not done tonight.
9 All of you, every person in the Staten Island
10 community on February 9th this panel is going to
11 report back to the Board of Ed. They are going
12 to tell the Board of Education at the pep panel
13 what they heard tonight. On February 9th that
14 panel is going to vote about PS14's proposed
15 closure. Brooklyn Tech, we will get everybody
16 there. We will take you so that you have your
17 voices heard are to that pep panel on February
18 9th. Thank you very much.

19 MS. DONNA CAPPOLA: Good evening. My name
20 is Donna Cappola and I'm a former staff member
21 of PS14. For the past ten years that I was here
22 whether it was during working hours or not in
23 working hours I have witnessed and been a part
24 of the discussions with all my staff members
25 about our best practices to improve student

1 progress. With the proper tools I know, I
2 have no doubt; I know that if we had the support
3 we would be able to succeed. Unfortunately over
4 the past several years we have lost \$400,000 to
5 budget cuts. Due to those budget cuts we lost
6 educational programs. We lost support staff.
7 We lost professional development opportunities;
8 however the one thing that we did not lose was
9 we did not lose the drive, the passion, the
10 determination this staff and when I say staff I
11 am not talking about only the teachers. I am
12 talking about parents I am talking about school
13 aides I'm talking about secretarial staff,
14 custodial staff, the kitchen staff okay
15 everyone, the administration, the PTA, everyone
16 came out to work together to improve the
17 students' performance and we have a commitment
18 in here. We always did. There is so much going
19 on here that is working. It is working well and
20 it only makes sense educationally to keep these
21 things going on. Now what we should be doing is
22 focusing and concentrating on the ways to make
23 improvements in the areas that are believed to
24 be lacking. What absolutely makes no sense at
25 all is to throw it all away because there's a

1 lot of good things going here. Don't throw
2 this away, don't throw that good stuff away, and
3 don't close PS14.

4 MR. ANTHONY WADE: Hello. My name is
5 Anthony Wade. I remember the panel here awhile
6 back and they were talking about closing out the
7 school. They gave some suggestions on parents
8 participating, pushing forward, and we have done
9 that. We have pushed forward and we have tried
10 our best. Hearing comments tonight about the
11 decision that was made in November already sort
12 of kicked us back because I thought we had a
13 fighting chance and I think we still have a
14 fighting chance. My child is Isaiah Wade. I
15 have pushed forward and worked hard with him. I
16 have four boys. Four young men and I am a
17 single parent. I come here and do the best that
18 I can to bring them to school at 5:30 AM. I go
19 to work full time. I come here and I pick them
20 up after school and I pick them up at the day
21 program. I do my best but when I hear the same
22 people sitting here and they are telling me that
23 my son's school is closing so what is all that
24 time we spent months ago at PTA meetings coming
25 here and telling us we can do this and we can do

1 this and all of a sudden we get an F. All of
2 a sudden the school is closing. That tells me
3 someone's lying. There is a liar in the house
4 and by liar I mean Bloomberg. I liked this
5 administration's staff up here but you know
6 what? You were sent here to take this.
7 Bloomberg should be standing here. He's sent
8 you out to do the dirty work but as a parent of
9 my young son over there I am going to show him
10 speak your mind. Stand up for what you believe
11 in. This is your school. No one takes this
12 from you. Stand up for your rights and every
13 child. This is the children, not the teachers,
14 this is the children's school. I see children
15 walk every day in and out of the school from the
16 after school programs from the school crossing
17 the school showing independency. I like that.
18 I like that. Let's not go backwards let's go
19 forward and then my time is up.

20 CHILD VOICE 3: I think the...I'm sorry it is
21 not fair that the they going to close PS14 down
22 because we as a school need more materials but
23 we are grateful for what we got but we need...we
24 need more money to support the school so please
25 do not close PS14 down.

1 CHILD VOICE 4: I think it is unfair
2 closing down PS14. Us children are getting
3 smarter as we go by learning. We are getting
4 good education at PS14. I am in fourth grade
5 and my teacher is Ms. C. Palumbo. She helps me
6 understand all topics. The teachers, the
7 principles, and especially Ms. Hargett and Ms.
8 Geraldine, and Mr. Dorta [phonetic], those
9 principles and assistants, they try to help us
10 in every way to do our best so please do not
11 close this school.

12 BARBARA: Hi my name is Barbara. As a new
13 student here I have tried to do the best as I
14 can and I think it's not fair that they are
15 going to close PS14 down because we get a good
16 education and we need more support by the
17 parents.

18 MR. JEREMY PEREZ: My name is Jeremy Perez
19 and I think it is not fair that you are closing
20 down the school because I have been here for a
21 long time and I know how it works and I like
22 this school and I always get an education. We
23 need more support above for our school. Fix it,
24 don't close it. You should not close PS14
25 because everybody should get an education and

1 learn more better and people know that they
2 love their teachers and they should stay in
3 PS14.

4 CHILD VOICE 5: It is not fair that they're
5 going to close down PS14. Mr. Dorta, Ms.
6 Geraldine, Ms. Hargett, was working hard for us
7 to try to get an education so why close 14 down?

8 MS. ELLIS: Numbers 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 and
9 35. We are just a little over half way through
10 with the speakers, just a little over halfway so
11 please let's keep it to two minutes. Thank you.

12 MR. ED JOSEY: Good evening. First of all I
13 would like to say my name is Ed Josey. I am
14 NAACP. In 1954 the NAACP had a case in the
15 Supreme Court called Brown versus the Board of
16 Education. That document said that in this
17 country public education in all places was not
18 separate but equal. Now at one time the NAACP
19 would every year celebrate that document. Today
20 they do not celebrate it. They recognize it
21 because they say that has been a failure. No
22 longer is education what they were hoping it to
23 become. Now the past few years we've had this
24 no child left behind. Recently there has been a
25 lot of talk about no child left behind has been

1 a failure so basically speaking what we're
2 trying to judge the children by a bunch of
3 corrupt guidelines and that's not fair and that
4 leads to the closure of the school. Now
5 according to guidelines when schools are failing
6 like they say 14 is they're supposed to supply
7 resources to bring the school up to par. Now I
8 understand those resources have not come to 14
9 so once again there's another corruption being
10 done to 14. The resources have not come to 14
11 like they were supposed to. Now with the
12 closing of 14, 78 will be in this building right
13 now where we stand. Now the neighborhood would
14 not change that much so I cannot understand at
15 this point why we should expect to see much more
16 improvement in 78 as opposed to 14. That same
17 money that is going to make 78 better quote
18 unquote better could be put into making 14
19 better and let 14 stay where it is right now so
20 I don't think...I hate to be negative about it but
21 I don't see a lot of progress being made in 78
22 with the existing parameters right now that we
23 have. Thank you.

24 MS. BRENDA COFIELD: Good evening
25 distinguished guests. Thank you for being here

1 and listening to everything that we have to
2 say. We know it's your job what you are doing
3 and it's not coming from your hearts, but I have
4 to say I just want to start off by saying my
5 name is Brenda Cofield. I am one of the senior
6 teachers with experience in this building. I
7 have been a teacher for three decades, 32 years,
8 27 with the Department of Education. I've seen
9 a lot in my time. I've had experiences across
10 the board. I feel very privileged as that but
11 also I must say that I have had one experience
12 that was very bad and that was being part of a
13 school that was being redesigned and changing,
14 and that is why when the news came as to what we
15 were going to do I was very, very sad because I
16 know what it does to the school community. I
17 know that when you have two schools in one
18 building somebody gets shortchanged and most of
19 the time it is the children. When one school
20 takes over another school it is very, very bad.
21 I came to PS14 six years...this is my six year. I
22 have the pleasure of working with an
23 administration that I love and I don't care who
24 hears me say it, that I love. Colleagues that I
25 respect to the utmost especially the ones who

1 have been here for many years because it's not
2 easy to work here all the time. Our children
3 need support, they need love, they need
4 guidance, they need discipline, and we give it
5 to them. It is my job as well to make sure that
6 the instructional part is being carried out as
7 well and I work with teachers who have a lack of
8 books, a lack of materials, and other things
9 that go along with it, but they don't give up.
10 They share the materials making sure that we do
11 all of the things that is needed but we need
12 time to improve. We need time to make sure that
13 we go further. That's right, that's right, we
14 need money to improve. I also want to say from
15 the aspect of a proud child having been raised
16 in a New York City housing project that many of
17 the people that I grew up with didn't make it,
18 but there was a lot of us who did because we had
19 teachers, we had parents, we had educators, and
20 community members who stuck with us. They
21 didn't give up on us. They didn't close our
22 schools back then. They made sure that the
23 village raised the child. New people coming
24 into this building cannot come in with that same
25 mentality. I don't care who they are they will

1 not come in here. It takes time to develop
2 that so I say to all of you tonight think of the
3 future for our children. Think of everything
4 that we have to do. We're still unified staff.
5 We still have to go on this year as Ms. Hargett
6 said to make sure that our children succeed this
7 year and we can do it. My hat goes off to all
8 of you the staff of PS14 please stand and give
9 yourselves a clap and thank you for your
10 cooperation parents. I work along with Ms. Iris
11 and the PTA. Every meeting you see me there
12 because I support you as well. We are a family
13 together and we're going to finish out what we
14 have to do, we're not finished yet. Let's keep
15 it real, continue on, I love all of you. Thank
16 you.

17 MALE VOICE 3: I want to apologize to the
18 moderator because I broke the rules. I am not
19 on the list to speak but I've been sitting back
20 here listening and I have been in Staten Island
21 for 70, no 60 years. I have a birthday Friday.
22 I will be 81 years old and I've been on Staten
23 Island...I came here in the army as a first second
24 lieutenant, and I have experienced all the
25 things that you are going through right now and

1 I've had two children who graduated from the
2 school and unfortunately they didn't teach me
3 how to read so I don't know what two minutes
4 mean, but I can't read because I'm a product of
5 students who went to PS14 so they're F, they're
6 rated F, but my children are rated A and I'm
7 rated A plus so I'm saying to you is that a
8 there are three things. I'm not going to take
9 long because there are three things and we're
10 missing the point here. We know I mean we can
11 be as submissive as we possibly can and we can
12 go home and talk about all the things we want to
13 talk about but the root of the problem is three
14 acronyms, PRB, politics, racism and Bloomberg.
15 If it crawls like a snake if it hisses like a
16 snake, it's a snake; you cannot cut it out any
17 other way. I came from a small town in West
18 Virginia, my high school class there was 12
19 graduates in my high school class, and four of
20 them not including me came out of that class
21 with doctorates in education or they whatever
22 they wanted to go into. What I'm saying to you
23 is that what we need to do is to go out and
24 register and vote. That's the key. The parents
25 I see these parents with their little kids and I

1 think they didn't want their little kids to
2 come up here but this is why we're here for the
3 kids and the school, but for the kids you know
4 we would need to be here so come on parents
5 let's get it together and we won't have to have
6 these town meetings every year and they have no
7 business changing our school name or doing
8 anything to the school except supporting it and
9 trying to help us to get better. If we don't
10 get better we're going to be here again next
11 year and the you're after and the year after and
12 the year after but I would like to be here to
13 see it and as I said I don't have a lot of time
14 ahead of me but I have a lot of time behind me.
15 I went to a birthday party of my 97 year old
16 sister last week and she said to me is that she
17 said Warren the old gray mare is not what she
18 used to be and I told her that the old gray mare
19 is not what she's going to be.

20 MS. ELLIS: 36, 37, 38, 39.

21 MS. LISA DILE: Hi my name is Lisa Dile and
22 I want to all the teachers to stand up one more
23 time for me, one more time, all the teachers,
24 principals, everyone, everybody stand up I just
25 want to say one thing. I came from Manhattan.

1 I've got two little ones right here. One
2 graduated, one is still here, she graduates this
3 year and I just want to say one thing. Where I
4 came from and in Manhattan them teachers I think
5 they was just there for a check. I can say one
6 thing about 14 they're not here for a check.
7 They are here to make sure their kids get their
8 education. Before these kids walk out this door
9 they make sure they know what they know. Thank
10 you very much. Have a nice night.

11 MR. CHARLES GRISHNOWSKIE: My name is
12 Charles Grishnowskie. I am an assistant
13 director for CESA. That's the principle and the
14 assistant principals union and the council of
15 supervisors and administrators. I am speaking
16 on behalf of the Ernest Logan the president of
17 CSA. The Department of Education has scheduled
18 25 more schools for phase out and closure and
19 said that the new schools opened under Mayor
20 Bloomberg are better than those they replaced.
21 Yet in their latest round of closings 11 of
22 those schools were open during this mayor's
23 administration. Ironically some of the mayor's
24 new schools are among those that are being
25 closed and have become part of the vicious cycle

1 of failure. The New York City public school
2 system is not a place for experimentation where
3 we open and close schools for students who have
4 already been traumatized by previous school
5 closings. Then there is the tragedy of all the
6 young people who have not been saved but have
7 been turned away from new schools for reasons of
8 poor academic achievement or for other reasons
9 and sent to be warehoused. This is a losing
10 strategy for turning around local form in
11 schools. Invariably these schools are attended
12 by children of color and from economically
13 disadvantaged communities. The strategy is to
14 eliminate schools that the administration has
15 had at least a decade to fix. The fact is that
16 closure is an admission of failure by City Hall.
17 The Bloomberg administration needs to take more
18 responsibility not less for schools that are not
19 doing well rather than turning them over to
20 private entities or closing them or truncating
21 them and washing their hands of deep rooted
22 problems that the city administration has been
23 unsuccessful in fixing or finding remedies. We
24 support the schools. We support our principle.
25 Thank you.

1 MS. JOANNE ROCHICH: Good evening. My
2 name is Joanne Rochich. I am a former parent
3 leader out here on Staten Island and I am
4 currently a parent coordinator out here on
5 Staten Island. When Ms. Tia called me and said
6 that you have to come out and support I
7 definitely had to come. For years I have been
8 voicing my opinion on the DOE and the testing
9 and how they judge children on their scores. It
10 is not fair to the children, it is not fair to
11 the teachers. It is time to let teachers do
12 what they went to school to do and that is to
13 educate our children. As a parent of three
14 children that have gone through the public
15 school system and two that are currently here at
16 Staten Island as I sat two months ago filling
17 out my son's college application with him I
18 could not find a line is said what did he get on
19 his fourth grade and seventh grade ELA and math
20 test. These tests are to judge a school is
21 doing not how my student is doing and now when I
22 look out here and all these faces on these
23 children what they're hearing the Board of Ed
24 and all you on the panel for the Department of
25 Education is saying you're calling them

1 failures. These children have not failed.
2 The Department of Education has failed them.
3 Thank you

4 MS. CHRISTINE SIROLI: I couldn't agree
5 more. My name is Christine Siroli. I am a
6 former Stapleton resident born and raised here.
7 I am happy to say it. I hope you all are too
8 right? I've got to say it's so unfair the
9 emotional...no one's looking and the emotional
10 aspects of these children. The changes they're
11 going to have to endure okay. They're going to
12 have to see new teachers and new situations and
13 it's not right. They can handle it. I grew up
14 here. I lived in Stapleton my whole life and
15 these kids need support. They need people to
16 come in here, we don't need 26 students in one
17 kindergarten class. We need parents and
18 advocates. People to come in and lend support
19 alright. Right away Bloomberg wants to close
20 everything. Where is he tonight? Petting the
21 chuck? Where's our borough president? Where is
22 our community activist? Where is he, watching
23 the news? Watching me? They all should be here
24 you people don't belong here they belong here.
25 You are doing their dirty work. I hate to say

1 it to you but you are and if you don't quit
2 your job tonight I'd be surprised. Anyway
3 enough with that I just want to say that I feel
4 terrible for the teachers. They have to feel
5 demeaned, demoted; they put their sweat equity
6 here. They have a level of understanding with
7 this these children that other people don't
8 because they've been around them a long time.
9 What about these kids? They have to go through
10 all these changes and it's just not right.
11 Leave everything the way it is. Leave them
12 alone. If it's not broke leave it alone. They
13 could turn it around. Send them supplies. The
14 DOE needs to send them supplies, am I right?
15 Let me hear it. The teachers have to feel
16 demoted and demeaned like they did something
17 wrong. They did nothing wrong, they did
18 everything right for PS14, and the
19 administration as well. I'm very angry. I'm
20 sorry I'm distraught and angry because this
21 should not be happening right now. You people
22 should be tucked away in front of your TV's
23 watching lifetime whatever your thing is,
24 relaxing. You shouldn't be here putting up with
25 this nonsense Bloomberg, Bloomboard or whatever

1 his name is he must be very, very bored
2 because he has nothing better to do but try to
3 be a Hitler. Okay, a reincarnated Hitler and I
4 feel sorry for you people they represent him
5 because there's only one judge and jury and
6 that's it and that's God and his angels. I'm
7 sorry I really let go of myself tonight. I came
8 to the school. I grew in this community. I
9 went through, I had the best people on earth
10 come from Stapleton. They have character,
11 dignity, and they had nothing, I grew up with
12 nothing but I'm a better person for it. That's
13 all I have to say. Thank you all

14 MS. ELLIS: 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45. 46, 47,
15 50. 48, 49, 50.

16 MS. JULIE SERUSE: Good evening. I wasn't
17 supposed to speak tonight but somebody left
18 early and gave me their number. My name is
19 Julie Seruse. I've been a substitute teacher
20 for about four years now. I have the
21 opportunity to go to any school pretty much in
22 the Tristate area wherever I want to go so I
23 choose to come to PS14. When I come here
24 everybody treats me as if I'm a teacher and not
25 a sub. When the kids come to me they hug me and

1 they show me that they love me. I have never
2 had support like that in a school ever. I've
3 gone to other schools before. This isn't the
4 only school I've ever worked in and I can't
5 imagine as an adult to feel loved and welcomed
6 how a child must feel. If a child can walk in
7 that door in and see smiling faces people who
8 actually care about them they must feel that
9 same love that I feel times 100. I think this
10 school is a great place. Every teacher here
11 stays late the parent coordinators, the
12 principles, if you come here at 5:30, 6:00 at
13 night they are probably still here making
14 lessons, planning things for their children to
15 make sure that they're having a great learning
16 experience. Thank you.

17 MACY: My name is Macy mother of - -. I
18 wrote down my observations about PS14 I'd like
19 to hand this paper to responsible people who
20 makes decisions. I am expecting the truth to be
21 revealed. I am expecting the truth to be
22 revealed otherwise I'm going to prove it by
23 myself through court system. Before I leave I'd
24 like to say everyone here is repeating the same
25 wrong word, closing PS14, which is not correct.

1 I attend the meeting for the Department of
2 Education the biggest one. They insisted that
3 PS14 is not closing the doors will remain open
4 for all the students and they will keep coming
5 but the school and the schools keep implanting
6 this idea in their minds. There is someone who
7 has the right to be stimulated the management
8 besides the teacher because their fate is
9 related to the management at the same time.
10 Please I want this idea to be corrected in the
11 students' mind because my son and my children
12 keep saying the same thing and the school is not
13 closing. The Department of Education is fixing
14 the situation by changing not closing. It is
15 misleading for our children. Thank you very
16 much. I wish you to write down the name of the
17 person who spoke instead of this lady because
18 this is the rules. Everyone should write down
19 his name before to sign up to speak you should
20 verify from the ID. This is the rules. Thank
21 you very much.

22 MS. ROSY HERON: Good evening everyone. I
23 know everyone is tired. I will keep it brief.
24 My name is Rosa Heron. I graduated from PS14 16
25 years ago. I am still a Stapleton resident and

1 I am also a mother to a young daughter. I
2 think everybody has spoken beautifully tonight
3 but what I want to speak about is democracy
4 because this is true democracy in action. Every
5 speaker that has got up here every speaker that
6 has spoken tonight has advocated to keep 14
7 open. What's undemocratic is the policy of the
8 panel in the education policy that rubber stamps
9 every decision that Bloomberg makes. That's
10 undemocratic and you have the nerve to hand out
11 a leaflet that says in bold that's says this is
12 the right decision for our community. You met
13 our community tonight I urge you to take that
14 back to the panel and we need to take it back to
15 the panel on February 9th. The fight isn't
16 over. We showed our strength tonight we need to
17 show our strength then. Thank you.

18 MALE VOICE 3: Back in the day when I grew
19 up in Stapleton my father was a teacher. He was
20 respected. Now I'm a teacher and you know what?
21 I get no respect. Why don't I get any respect?
22 Well I'm going to tell you why. The powers that
23 be have said that we need to compete with the
24 rest of the free world. Sweden, England,
25 Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Korea and all

1 the other well developed countries are
2 outsourcing us and out beating us economically.
3 Why? Because they have great education systems
4 but you know what? They don't close their
5 schools. They don't fire their teachers. They
6 support them. They respect them. They fund
7 them. They don't close schools. They know how
8 to do it. They stay in there day after day
9 after day and they support their teachers and
10 their parents support their teachers and
11 everyone supports the teachers and the teachers
12 support the community and that is how it's
13 supposed to be respect, mutual respect, parent
14 to teacher, teacher to parent, administrator to
15 student. That's how it's supposed to be. I
16 teach at Borosmen [phonetic] high school, for 11
17 years I've taught there. ESL not an easy
18 discipline to teach. I want to give back to my
19 community after 20 years of private industry
20 like my father did before me. I want to
21 continue teaching. I want PS14 to continue
22 going. I graduated from IS49, I graduated from
23 Curtis high school, I graduated and went to
24 college at NYU several times to get all the
25 master's degrees I needed to keep teaching. I

1 now some stuff and I want to help the kids.
2 Let me do it. Let these people do it. We know
3 what we're doing stop messing with us. Bring
4 democracy back to America. Free America.

5 MS. ELLIS: We will now begin our question
6 and answer period. Remember there will be some
7 individual questions and others that have been
8 populated into categories where we will have
9 representative questions asked. Any question
10 that is not answered here tonight will be
11 answered on the website. If you have additional
12 questions at the conclusion of tonight's
13 proceedings we ask that you direct them to us
14 via the phone number or e-mail address on the
15 fact sheet. I would like to introduce again
16 Deputy Chancellor Dorita Gibson.

17 MS. GIBSON: Thank you Ms. Ellis. I've
18 heard the comments and the concerns of this
19 school community here and I can tell that this
20 school is very dear to their hearts and I have
21 to thank them for coming out. There were some
22 people that did not sign up to speak but they
23 ask questions so I will answer the questions for
24 you this evening. The first question is if the
25 vote to close the school is on February 9th why

1 has the new school already been named PS78?
2 So the proposed school has to be given a DBN and
3 the DBN is 31R78 so when proposals are written
4 they have to make a decision for the name and
5 the number, not a name but a number and also has
6 to go to the panel for a vote so this school has
7 numbered 31R78 needs to be approved by the panel
8 for education policy also on February 9th.
9 That's why it has a number. The next question
10 if PS78 will continue to enroll the students of
11 Stapleton what changes will be implemented to
12 ensure they will succeed? Why won't the school
13 changes provided to PS14 to help the students
14 excel? Okay thank you. Now it is very
15 important for us to raise the bar and that it is
16 our expectation as a department in a school
17 system is that we give all children the
18 opportunity to learn and to have a high vigorous
19 level of education. I will say that Staten
20 Island is a very, very good school district and
21 has some fine schools at Staten Island. I know
22 that is a fact and I have to say that when we
23 feel that we're not given all to justice and all
24 of our students all not succeeding we have to
25 intervene and something needs to happen. What

1 I'd like to say is that there are so many
2 schools in Staten Island that are functioning at
3 a very, very high level and I think all children
4 need to have that same opportunity to function
5 at a high level.

6 FEMALE VOICE 4: So I sat here and I
7 listened to some of your comments, all of your
8 comments and I came here earlier in the year
9 this decision comes from that. I wish the dad
10 who said he has four children and that he came
11 here and he thought that the decision was made,
12 I couldn't stand here anymore and look at you
13 because I to grew up in this community, not
14 Stapleton but in the west Brighton projects and
15 I am a product of public schools and I am your
16 superintendent. I care deeply about this
17 community. I care deeply about your children
18 and as this has been a difficult process for you
19 this has also been a challenging process for me
20 too because I want what's best for children and
21 I do believe that the PS14 children deserve the
22 best and I listen to parents tonight that were
23 fighting I as your community superintendent will
24 not stand by and let a K-12 school have all the
25 fun and all the joy and watch our third, fourth,

1 and fifth graders not have the same advantages
2 and I will answer the question. We have nothing
3 as today stands we have nothing set up. This is
4 the joint public hearing to hear your comments
5 and to take it back but if this were - -. If
6 you would let me finish I would like to. If
7 this works, I don't have a crystal ball and I
8 said this several times I know most people who
9 are here tonight and our teachers and I
10 understand, I understand what you're feeling and
11 I know that a lot of our parents - - but I can
12 promise the parents that are here if this
13 does...if whatever happens that I won't stand by
14 knowing the CEC or any members here or even Dr.
15 Gibson who has a history with our district,
16 stand by and let the third, fourth, and fifth
17 graders not have the same opportunities. Now we
18 don't have a crystal ball and you're right many
19 people who are here tonight that mention their
20 messages in a very graceful way said it and I
21 appreciate that people recognize it but I can't
22 sit here and tell you that I came to you on the
23 day that I came to you as your superintendent
24 and I was deceiving you because I knew that
25 there was going to be a new school or there was

1 going to be a new principle so I want to make
2 that clear tonight because my word is my word.
3 Now what would be different? As a teacher - -.
4 What I believe is that the children of PS14 and
5 I want what's best for them and I'm not saying
6 listening the DOE is saying that all of us
7 didn't do a good job. They're not blaming it on
8 the teachers and the parents. We're saying we
9 all need to do a better job at PS14.

10 MS. GIBSON: The next question is will the
11 students of PS14 have the same services as the
12 children attending the new school and the answer
13 to this question is yes. It is our expectation
14 that the funding that comes into PS14 continues
15 in terms of all of the related services that the
16 children receive, all of the mandated services
17 that the children receive, all of the school
18 services, if you have an after school program.
19 The expectation is that the children that are at
20 PS14 will continue to get the high level service
21 that they're having. There is still student
22 funding. The funding follows the students and
23 that funding will be in the schools. The next
24 question is why doesn't the mayor take
25 responsibility for the failure of so many

1 schools? The decision for the children was
2 first made - - to create a system of great
3 schools for every child in New York City and
4 every child deserves the best program to ensure
5 that as many students as possible I have access
6 to the best possible education under this
7 administration for would replace 117 schools of
8 our lowest performing schools in this city.
9 Given that option we have opened up 335 new
10 schools as a result we created more higher
11 quality choices for parents. We count one each
12 of our schools to provide a high quality
13 education and we hold all the schools to the
14 same high standards. If the school is not
15 getting the job done and the students are not
16 succeeding we are compelled to take a serious
17 action. The next question is will PS48 continue
18 to enroll the students of Stapleton? What
19 school - - would be implemented to ensure they
20 will succeed? Why weren't school changes
21 provided to PS14 to help the students succeed?
22 The new schools - - culture and structures to
23 the school people - - and we continue to commit
24 to be sure the Stapleton students are served by
25 the community school district. Schools will

1 continue to receive the high quality services
2 that they should be receiving. This concludes
3 our questions, if you have more - - Thank you
4 for coming this evening.

5 MS. ELLIS: We have heard many significant
6 comments this evening we appreciate your
7 feedback and your contributions to this hearing.
8 The information will be shared with the panel on
9 educational policy - - on February 9th to vote
10 on these proposals. Thank you all for coming
11 out. This joint public hearing is now adjourned.
12 Thank you.

13 [END 264-569.MP3]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Karl H. [unclear]", written over the word "Signature".

Date 1-30-12