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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING
MS 142 John Philip Sousa - 4/19/12**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 [Crosstalk]

3 MR. ARIEL GUERRERO: Good evening, ladies and
4 gentlemen. I am Ariel Guerrero, and I will be
5 the moderating facilitator for - - while we're
6 here. This is an - - public hearing of the
7 Department of Education. - - education - -
8 every school - - of MS 142, John Philips Sousa.
9 Tonight's proceedings will be recorded and
10 transcribed. Anyone who wants to - - comments
11 made by the community - - this is not a meeting
12 or hearing to vote on the proposal, and this
13 proposal - - policy - - . Before we begin the
14 hearing I'm going to ask that anyone who wishes
15 to speak during the public comment portion of
16 the meeting sign on the table in the back. The
17 signup will close at 6:20. If you have any
18 questions, there are the comment cards as well
19 in the back. You can make comments or put
20 questions on those comment cards, and those will
21 be addressed during the Q and A portion of the
22 agenda. Please write a question on the comment
23 card - - at the table in the back or any of the
24 staff walking around during the course of the
25 evening. They will collect - - . Only people

1 who have signed up to speak will be able to
2 participate in the public comments section of
3 the evening. All panel participants are asked -
4 - at the end now that we have started. If a
5 panel participant arrives late, he or she will
6 be given the opportunity to speak at the first
7 opportune moment while respecting everyone's
8 time. There may be elected officials who arrive
9 at different times throughout the evening. If
10 they wish to speak, we will do our best to
11 accommodate them at the first opportune moment.
12 Those who were here at the start of public
13 comments - - will be asked to speak first. You
14 can look at the agendas out at the front that
15 are posted. - - a presentation of the proposal
16 and presentation by hearing participants,
17 followed by public comment. Speakers should
18 have already signed up at the sign-up table in
19 the front. We ask that public comments made
20 during the public comments section be no longer
21 than two minutes each. Speakers will be
22 informed when their designated time has ended by
23 our staff up front. There will be a Q and A
24 period. Again, if you have any questions, - -
25 write them on the comment cards that we have

1 supplied at that table out front. Even though
2 all individual questions may not be addressed in
3 this forum, - - the answers will be posted on
4 the website prior to the panel meeting. If at
5 the end of the hearing you have any--you still
6 have questions, we encourage you--or comments--
7 we encourage you to direct them to us by calling
8 the number - - that I'm about to give you. This
9 number is (212)374-5159. Again, that number is
10 (212)374-5159, and you can send comments and
11 questions to d11proposals@schools.nyc.gov. That
12 email again is d11proposals@schools.nyc.gov. I
13 want to take this opportunity to introduce the
14 panel, which is assembled for tonight's hearing.
15 We have Principal - - and we have Deputy
16 Chancellor Kathleen Grimm. Present with us also
17 is, are Principal White from - - and Principal
18 Renger [phonetic] of - - Middle School. And I'm
19 sorry, you're?

20 MS. PATRICIA WYNNE: I'm Ms. Wynne from - -
21 .

22 MR. GUERRERO: Ms. Wynne. Ms. Wynne, thank
23 you very much. And the panel has actually opted
24 to not make comments for this evening - - move
25 forward here in the agenda. We also--I would

1 like to take this opportunity to recognize
2 Kevin Wyland [phonetic] who is a representative
3 for Assembly Member - - . He will not be making
4 statements this evening - - . I will - - the
5 opportunity to turn the floor over to the deputy
6 chancellor, who will now present the proposal.

7 MS. KATHLEEN GRIMM: Good evening everyone.
8 I want to thank each and every one of you for -
9 - I know this is a long process, but I wanted to
10 - - . This joint - - hearing has been convened
11 to discuss - - of MS 142 John Philip Sousa. MS
12 142, as everyone knows, - - here at 3750
13 Baychester Avenue in Community School District
14 11 in the Bronx. It currently serves students
15 in grades six through eight. On March 5th,
16 2012, the New York City Department of Education
17 published a proposal to close MS 142 and to open
18 a new school, 11x 578. By closing M142, MS 142,
19 and replacing it with a new school, they are
20 seeking to - - a school - - students for success
21 in college, in career, and in their life in the
22 21st Century. At the new school, - - strongest
23 elements of MS 142 and to incorporate new
24 elements in order to create a rigorous culture
25 for teaching and learning. Students will have

1 access to a higher quality educational option
2 while they continue to attend school in this - -
3 building. We believe that this process will
4 ensure that all students are set upon a path for
5 accomplishments. In conjunction with this
6 proposal, as a way to support additional school
7 improvements, the department submitted what is
8 called a school improvement grant, a SIG grant -
9 - to the New York State Department of Education.
10 We did that proposal to - - as an application to
11 implement what is called a turnaround - - at the
12 new school. This effectively created - - . If
13 approved, this would make the new school
14 eligible for up to \$2 million in supplemental -
15 - . I want to acknowledge the students and the
16 families who feel that their son or their
17 daughter is at--is being well served here at MS
18 142, and tonight I expect we may hear about
19 success stories happening now at MS 142. These
20 are success stories, and we honor them. But we
21 also need to consider the many students who
22 started - - and have not experienced the same
23 successes, and they deserve better. And despite
24 a number of challenges the school has faced,
25 some data indicate that elements of MS 142 are

1 worth preserving in the new school. For
2 example, learning growth in English at MS 142
3 has increased in the past year, rising from the
4 16th percentile of city schools in 2009/10 to
5 the 56th percentile in 2010/11. Now the
6 department believes - - improve to - - the new
7 school can expand the recent - - in student - -
8 . However, MS 142's performance data overall,
9 as far as feedback from members of the New York
10 State Board of Regents, indicated that the pace
11 of change in New York City's persistently worst-
12 achieving schools is not quick enough to meet
13 student needs suggests that MS 142 should be
14 closed and replaced. Low student performance at
15 MS 142 has been a persistent - - . At 2010/11,
16 in 2010/11, a majority of MS 142 students
17 remained below grade level in both English and
18 math. In 2010/11, only 17% of students were
19 performing at grade level in English. - -
20 school - - 23% of city middle schools in terms
21 of English proficiency. Only 25% of students
22 were performing on grade level in math, putting
23 the school in the bottom 11% of city middle
24 schools in terms of math. MS 142 earned an
25 overall C grade on the 2010/11 annual progress

1 report with a D grade on student performance, -
2 - in progress, and a D grade on student
3 environment. MS 142 was rated developing on the
4 - - quality review in 2010/11. - - efficiencies
5 - - if the school is organized to support
6 student learning. MS 142 - - indicated that the
7 school has failed to differentiate its
8 instruction to support individual student needs.
9 The review also indicated that the school needed
10 to improve on designing tasks that stress higher
11 order thinking and engage a variety of learners.
12 Now before we hear - - we'll go, move right to
13 the public comment, but before we do that, I'd
14 really like--I would like to just briefly
15 discuss the impact of this proposal on the
16 current MS 142 students and families if this
17 proposal is approved. All current MS 142
18 students will have a guaranteed seat in the new
19 school. This includes all current sixth and
20 seventh grade students, as well as any eighth
21 grade students who do not graduate by the
22 beginning of the 2012/13 school year in
23 September. All incoming sixth graders who have
24 applied to MS 142 and are - - in the middle
25 school admissions process will automatically be

1 enrolled in the new school. In addition, the
2 department does not anticipate that the proposed
3 closure and replacement of 142 will impact the
4 coefficient of the schools currently collocated
5 on the campus with one - - school - - enrolled
6 at Baychester Middle School. And finally, I
7 want to clarify the process the new school will
8 go through to hire the best possible staff if
9 this proposal is approved. There is no - - that
10 must be refocused as a result of this process.
11 This proposal does not require the turnover of
12 any set percentage of staff. Pursuant to the
13 city's teachers' contract, if this proposal is
14 approved - - who apply to work at the new school
15 will be reviewed by a five-person school-based
16 personnel committee. That committee is made up
17 of the principal, two designees of the
18 chancellor, and two designees of the UFT
19 president. The proposed new leader will deliver
20 qualifications for positions at the new school,
21 and the personnel committee will consider each
22 candidate who applies. All teachers from the
23 current school are eligible to apply to work at
24 the new school. If sufficient numbers of staff
25 from the closing school - - at least 50% of the

1 new school's pedagogical positions must be
2 selected from among the appropriate list of - -
3 licensed, most senior qualified applicants.
4 Again, there is no set percentage or limit on
5 the number of staff from the closing school who
6 can be hired to work at the new school, and all
7 these decisions will be made by the personnel
8 committee of the new school. I want to thank
9 you all very much for your respectful attention,
10 and I look forward to your comments and issues
11 that you may raise - - this evening. Thank you
12 very much.

13 [Applause]

14 MR. GUERRERO: And Katherine, - - that the
15 members of the dais have chosen not to present,
16 so we have not made any formal presentations
17 that will be made by the dais. As a reminder,
18 public comment is limited to two minutes. Time
19 will be kept, and we'll signal you when you have
20 30 seconds remaining and when your time is up.
21 I want to apologize in advance for any name
22 mispronunciations. - - to correct me if I
23 mispronounce your name. I will call you up by
24 your number name, and just head over here to
25 this microphone - - to your right and make your

1 comments there. Right now I have one speaker
2 on the list, Mr. Stephen, Stephen Bennett?

3 MR. STEPHEN BENNETT: Good evening, deputy
4 chancellor. Good evening, superintendant, Ms.
5 White, and those in the audience. - - so I'm
6 going to read a prepared statement. My name's
7 Steve Bennett. I am the Bronx Field Director
8 for the Council of School Supervisors and
9 Administrators. That's the union that
10 represents principals and assistant principals
11 in New York City, and I am the Bronx Field
12 Director representing our principals and
13 assistant principals in schools grade eight and
14 below. The New York City Department of
15 Education's latest attempt to close down 26
16 schools which were already in the process of the
17 - - reform program is a political maneuver. It
18 is not rooted in sound educational practice.
19 Rather it began as a ploy designed to avoid
20 negotiations with the CSA and UFT over new
21 principal and teacher evaluation systems. The
22 motivation behind that ploy includes the - -
23 turnaround model, a model that does not require
24 principal and teacher evaluations, and allows
25 the city to close and immediately reopen schools

1 under new names. What else will be new about
2 it? 50% of the teachers would be new, while 50%
3 of the former teachers would be put into excess.
4 There is nothing educationally sound about this
5 intervention plan. It's being introduced for
6 cynical reasons and not to help children. It
7 will not contribute to the development of sound
8 principal and teacher evaluation systems.
9 Furthermore, in removing half the staffs-- - -
10 I'll finish in time, don't worry, okay - - .

11 MALE VOICE: - -

12 FEMALE VOICE: Oh I see.

13 MR. BENNETT: First of all, by removing half
14 the staffs of these schools and recruiting
15 replacements from other schools, the Department
16 of Education will destabilize schools throughout
17 the system, one after another, like dominos.
18 While these human costs are the most important
19 ones, there are fiscal costs too. Removing
20 1,800 teachers and tossing them into the ATR,
21 where they will work as substitutes at full
22 salary will cost the city approximately \$180
23 million annually. Thank you.

24 [Applause]

25 MR. GUERRERO: Thank you Mr. Bennett. So I

1 want to reiterate, before we move over to the
2 Q and A period, if you have any questions or
3 comments, you can go ahead and grab a comment
4 card in the back, write your question down or
5 your comment on that card, and submit it for our
6 staff, and we will actually be able to go ahead
7 and address that in the next section of the
8 agenda, the Q and A section. We have actually
9 exhausted the speaker list, so I want to thank
10 everybody for making their comments. We are now
11 going to go ahead and move over to the Q and A
12 period. Any question that is not answered here
13 tonight will be answered on the Department of
14 Education website. If you have any additional
15 questions at the conclusion, at the end of
16 tonight's proceedings, we ask that you direct
17 them to us via the phone number or email address
18 on the - - email now again. The number you can
19 call to comment or question is (212)374-5159,
20 again, (212)374-5159, and you can email a
21 question or comment to
22 d11proposals@schools.nyc.gov. Again that is
23 d11proposals@schools.nyc.gov. I will now direct
24 the Q and A portion over to the deputy
25 chancellor.

1 MS. GRIMM: We have just one question - -
2 I'm going to take this question - - . The
3 question is, why immediately close and replace
4 MS 142 instead of phasing out - - so that the
5 current sixth grade and seventh grade students
6 at MS 142 can graduate from the school? It's a
7 good question. The reason that--the primary
8 reason is because the goal of this proposal is
9 to actually increase the pace of change, and the
10 pace of improvement for our current students and
11 for our future students. What happens in a
12 phase-out school is that as - - graduate, a
13 replacement school comes in that enrolls
14 children or students for the first grade in the
15 school. Under this proposal, we are assuming a
16 need to make change swiftly enough to improve
17 the school for all of the students, for the
18 current students who will go next year to
19 seventh and eighth graders and for the new class
20 that will come to school - - at a school that
21 has a different name.

22 MR. GUERRERO: Thank you, deputy chancellor.
23 Again, I want to - - the ability to submit
24 comments and questions outside of this venue and
25 this forum. We will continue to take comment

1 and question via the phone number and the
2 email between now and the proposal to the vote
3 on April 26, and again you can make those
4 comments via phone at (212)374-5159 and that
5 email is dllproposals@schools.nyc.gov. Okay, so
6 we have two individuals that - - of the SLT that
7 came a little later, and so we want to make sure
8 we give them the opportunity to talk as well.
9 The SLT trade group is here? You'd like to make
10 a comment? - - over here, sir.

11 MR. ROY GRANT: Hi everyone. My name is Roy
12 Grant. I came in a little late, but - - and I'm
13 in a bad mood. - - speak tonight about the fact
14 that no one else stood up for - - something, and
15 it's again - - the fact there's probably - -
16 parents, that's bad. I still am not quite sure
17 - - what's the benefit of actually closing the
18 school to open up another school - - I don't see
19 the benefit. What's the benefit?

20 MR. GUERRERO: So - - question - - question
21 that you want to have answered, the comment
22 cards. - - time portion is not.

23 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

24 MR. GUERRERO: Yeah, if you can just fill
25 out the card, we can have that, because that

1 would be interesting - - department of the
2 proposed program. The public comments section
3 is not the appropriate time to ask questions.
4 We have that separated within the agenda - -
5 portion.

6 MALE VOICE: - - .

7 MR. GUERRERO: The agenda is - - thank you,
8 sir. We also have Jessie Williams-Collins, the
9 section president for the North Bronx Section of
10 National Council of - - .

11 MS. JESSIE WILLIAMS-COLLINS: Thank you so
12 very much, and I apologize for being late. I've
13 already been introduced, but I do want to be
14 pretty open. I at one time taught at this
15 school, up until last year. But today I'm
16 speaking on behalf of the National Council of
17 Negro Women, North Bronx Section, that was
18 founded by Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, and part of
19 her legacy is that our children must have a
20 thirst for education. I am more concerned as to
21 how changing the number of the school from 142
22 to some other number, how is going to really
23 improve the educations of our children? I think
24 that the board of DoE is hardly transparent when
25 it thinks that changing the number and parents

1 in the community will say that's a new school,
2 that curriculum is going to improve, that the
3 resources that are going to be provided to the
4 school is somehow going to come through and do
5 that. I think that they're playing a game on
6 our community, so it's no longer Middle School
7 142, but it's the - - Middle School 142 John
8 Philip Sousa. I don't know that the DoE would
9 continue to explore, investigate how is it that
10 we can provide a quality education to our
11 children, and I don't really think it's that
12 difficult. I was educated in the State of
13 Alabama during the time where they had a
14 segregated school system, with little or no
15 really resources in my school, but the
16 dedication of the teachers, the dedication of
17 the Department of Ed - - and I was able to - -
18 and I believe that not enough dedication, focus
19 in this school, trying to develop the resources
20 we have here, working with the parents - - that
21 I would make a prediction that five years from
22 now, whatever we think that this name change is
23 going to provide, it isn't going to be here
24 until we all come together and say that the
25 children here in the White Hill, Baychester, - -

1 area, we want them to be educated. We want
2 them to be positive - - people that can go out
3 in the world and make a difference. So I'm
4 really concerned that we're just putting a
5 coating on the cake, and we're not looking
6 underneath what the icing is going on. Thank
7 you for allowing me to speak.

8 [Applause]

9 MR. GUERRERO: Thank you - - . So that has
10 concluded both the public comment portion and
11 the Q and A portion. We have heard significant
12 comments this evening, and we appreciate your
13 feedback and contributions to this hearing. The
14 information will be shared with the Panel on
15 Educational Policy which will have its hearing
16 on Thursday, April 26th to vote on this
17 proposal. I want to stress again if there are
18 individuals that you know that were not able to
19 make it tonight, or you still have any questions
20 or comments between now and April 26th, please
21 you can make those comments via phone at
22 (212)374-5159. Again (212)374-5159, or you can
23 submit those questions or comments via email to
24 d11proposals@schools.nyc.gov. Again,
25 d11proposals@schools.nyc.gov. I want to thank

1 you all for coming tonight. This - - public
2 hearing is officially adjourned.

3 [END RECORDING]

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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 *Reed K. Bevilacqua*

Date April 23, 2012