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

**Opening of New District
Middle School at K244**

**10/8/13
5:30 p.m.**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MODERATOR: Those who wish to speak, must
3 sign up in the speaker sign-up area located just
4 at the back of the auditorium. The sign-up list
5 will close in 15 minutes. Speakers will be
6 given the floor in the order that they signed
7 up. All comments are limited to two minutes.
8 There may be elected officials who are brought
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 are here at the start of the public
13 comment segment will be asked to speak first.
14 In addition, we welcome any comments and
15 feedback you may have at any time before the
16 panel votes on this proposal. All comments will
17 be included in the public comment analysis to be
18 published and provided to the Panel for
19 Educational Policy the evening before the panel
20 votes. That vote is scheduled for October 15th,
21 2013 at 6:00 p.m. at the Prospect Heights campus
22 located at 883 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn, NY
23 11225. The E-mail address and phone number
24 where comments may be made are D--as in David--
25 18proposals@schools.nyc.gov and [212]374-0208,

1 [212]374-0208.

2 Proposal Summary: The New York City
3 Department of Education is proposing to co-
4 locate a middle school in Building K244 between
5 the 2014-2015 school year. Building K244 is
6 located at 5404 Tilden Avenue, Brooklyn, NY
7 11203 in Community School District 18. If this
8 proposal is approved, the new district middle
9 school in the 2014-2015 school year, serving
10 sixth grade and will add one grade per year
11 until it reaches full-scale serving sixth
12 through eight grade in 2016-2017. The school
13 will be co-located with P.S.244 Richard R.
14 Green. The new district school be a limited
15 unscreened middle school that admits students
16 through the middle school application process.
17 Limited unscreened schools give admissions
18 priority to students who demonstrate interest in
19 the school by attending an information session,
20 attending an open house event or visiting the
21 school's exhibit at any one of the middle school
22 fairs. The Department of Education has
23 identified the K244 building as an underutilized
24 building. According to the 2011-2012 Enrollment
25 Capacity Utilization Report, or Bluebook,

1 building K244 has the capacity to serve 1,180
2 students. In the current 2013-2014 school year,
3 P.S.244 is currently serving approximately 756
4 students. This yields a utilization rate of
5 approximately 64% which indicates that the
6 building is under utilized and has space to
7 accommodate additional students. If this
8 proposal is approved, in 2016-2017 once the
9 middle school has fully phased in, the middle
10 school is projected to serve approximately 225
11 to 255 students in sixth through eighth grades.
12 At the same time, P.S.244 is expected to serve
13 approximately 751 through 811 students. In all,
14 the two schools are projected to serve a total
15 of 976 through 1066 students, yielding a
16 building utilization rate of approximately 83 to
17 90%. P.S.244 offers ASD Nest Program for
18 students in kindergarten through fourth grade,
19 where students with Autism Spectrum Disorders
20 are taught in a classroom alongside general
21 education students with all the pull-out
22 services offered to ASD students. P.S.244's ASD
23 Nest Program will reach full-scale and serve
24 students in kindergarten through fifth grade in
25 2014-2015. The Department of Education does not

1 anticipate that this proposal will impact
2 students in the ASD Nest Program at P.S.244.

3 At this time, we will have presentations by
4 our speakers. CEC was asked to join, but a
5 member has not arrived. At this time, I will
6 ask if the principal would like to comment. We
7 have Principal Dion Edwards [phonetic] with us
8 tonight. Thank you. The next presenter will be
9 a member of the SLT Leadership Team. Do we have
10 a member of the Leadership Team who would like
11 to speak at this time, make comment, give input?

12 FEMALE VOICE: We have [inaudible] signed up
13 to speak.

14 MODERATOR: Then you will be addressed
15 through the public speaking segment and that
16 follows. Since we do not have formal
17 presentations, we will now open the floor for
18 public comments. Speakers will be given the
19 floor in the order that they signed up. All
20 comments are limited to two minutes. Our first
21 speaker is Melanie Belzano [phonetic].

22 MS. MELANIE BELZANO: Good evening everyone.

23 FEMALE VOICE: Turn it on.

24 MS. BELZANO: Turn it on... do I know how to
25 do that, yes. Okay. I'm on the SLT, I'm also

1 the UFT representative and my District Rep,
2 Ritchie Mantel [phonetic], could not be here so
3 he asked me basically to read this statement on
4 behalf of Bill De Blasio and it's a good
5 statement. "I am calling for an immediate halt
6 to co-location enclosure plans for the remainder
7 of Bloomberg's term and until a new process can
8 be put in place. The next administration
9 deserves the opportunity to work with parents
10 and communities to shape the future of the
11 educational system in New York City. These
12 schools, half of which will be left unacceptably
13 overcrowded by those actions, deserve better.
14 If Mayor Bloomberg has his way, nearly half of
15 the proposed co-locations will put schools over
16 100% capacity. This means larger class sizes
17 for our students. Bloomberg's proposals are a
18 cynical effort to lock communities into
19 permanent changes while ignoring community
20 voices." Thank you.

21 MODERATOR: Thank you Ms. Belzano. Next
22 speaker, Jeanine Santopietro [phonetic].

23 MS. JEANINE SANTOPIETRO: Very good. You
24 did a good job. [Laughter] Okay, I'm Jeanine
25 Santopietro. I am a teacher here at P.S.244. I

1 teach in the ICT classrooms and I'm trying to
2 speak on behalf of the general ed and special ed
3 population of our school. We are about 20%,
4 maybe a little bit more, special ed in our
5 school and that requires room. We need room in
6 our school for that. You have testing
7 modifications where students are required by
8 their Individual Evaluation Plan, the
9 educational plan, the IEP, that they need to be
10 taken out of rooms for testing into smaller
11 rooms of 12 kids, sometimes eight kids and for a
12 duration of time to take tests. And tests are
13 not just taken in April. There are tests
14 throughout the entire year where these kids are
15 pulled out in separate locations. If you put a
16 floor out of use in our building and then you
17 ask us to work in three floors and you're using
18 every room, there's no room to put those other
19 students where they need to be testing--and
20 we're talking about 20% of the 756 kids that you
21 say we have in our building. According to our
22 school space layout right now, we only have six
23 vacant rooms. So where you're saying that we're
24 only 67% utilized, we're not really sure about
25 that. I don't know what you consider not

1 vacant, but literally there only six vacant--
2 not being used by our school, in our school
3 right now, being used. So that I just wanted to
4 put on the record. And I think--yeah, special
5 ed. We also have the ASD Nest Program they're
6 saying only goes up to fourth grade, it goes up
7 to fifth grade here and they also have to be
8 pulled out in the [inaudible] room, so that's
9 another room needed for them. So they are going
10 to be impacted. And OT/PT is also done in our
11 building. They're utilizing huge room, they're
12 always using hallways, they're using--they're
13 always all over the place. So, I have no time
14 left, sorry. Thank you.

15 MODERATOR: Thank you Ms. Santopietro.

16 MS. SANTOPIETRO: Thank you.

17 MODERATOR: Our next speaker, Samoya
18 Yarofelani [phonetic]. And if I mispronounce
19 your name, please, as you step to the
20 microphone, please correct me.

21 MS. SMOYA YAROFELANI: You're good.

22 [Laughter]

23 MS. SANTOPIETRO: She is good.

24 MS. YAROFELANI: Hi, my name is Samoya
25 Yarofelani. I'm also a parent on the SLT. I'm

1 the third [inaudible] of the PA. I didn't know
2 that we were going to ask any questions, but I'm
3 going to voice them anyway. Our children, as
4 young as four-years-old, uses all our school
5 exits. And with this co-location, what I wanted
6 to ask is what are the start and finishing
7 times, as well as entrances and exits for all
8 our children to not conflict with our elementary
9 and any contact with the new co-locating school?
10 Thank you.

11 MODERATOR: Just very briefly, Ms.
12 Yarofelani, if the proposal is passed, there
13 will be a building counsel and the school
14 leaders will map out exactly how the building
15 will be utilized. They'll map out a schedule
16 for each of the schools. And all of the egress
17 and arrivals into the building will be
18 considered among the building counsel and school
19 leaders. Thank you Ms. Yarofelani. Ms. Natalie
20 Mason-Kinsey [phonetic].

21 MS. NATALIE MASON-KINSEY: Yes.

22 MODERATOR: Okay. Good evening.

23 MS. MASON-KINSEY: Good evening. I'm also a
24 parent here at P.S.244. I'm also a member of
25 the SLT and I'm secretary for the PA Board for

1 this year. My concern with the statement in
2 the Impact Statement, it says that our students
3 will not really be affected by bringing an
4 additional 300 students. I'm very concerned and
5 I would implore the board to do a walk-through
6 because we have a lot of programs that go on in
7 this building. I, obviously, am not a teacher
8 so I'm not here. But during the days, we have
9 students everywhere. We have students in our
10 cafeteria, in the old cafeteria, in the new
11 cafeteria doing physical therapy. They're
12 sometimes doing their PE class it looks like.
13 We have students everywhere in this building,
14 and I think, I would implore the committee to
15 please come and do a walk-through with Ms.
16 Edwards to see what our building usage is like
17 on a regular day. Surprise us if you want to.
18 But I think that just looking at the numbers on
19 a printout... I understand the enrollments are
20 down, but the services that are provided to our
21 students are superior and I think that those
22 programs will indeed suffer if there's no walk-
23 through to see what really is utilized on the
24 ground everyday. Thank you.

25 MODERATOR: Thank you Ms. Mason-Kinsey.

1 [Applause]

2 MODERATOR: Ms. Sari Alder [phonetic]. Did
3 I pronounce your first name correctly?

4 MS. SARI ALDER: Hi, I'm Sari Adler. I'm
5 the special education coordinator for P.S.244.
6 I've been working in this school for 23 years.
7 Besides the ASD Nest Program, there
8 approximately 200 other students in our building
9 with special needs, including many who have
10 significant medical and physical handicaps.
11 These children are in wheelchairs, they use
12 walkers and they tend to take up a little more
13 space than the typical child. We need to have
14 room for a wheelchair so the child can get all
15 over his/her classroom. We also have several
16 rooms that are used now as changing rooms for
17 our children who need changing, for our children
18 who need occupational and physical therapy. We
19 also bus over 100 children every single day.
20 One of my big concerns is our elevator. The
21 elevator does break down quite often, especially
22 when it's used too often. And I'm concerned
23 that another school here will cause overcrowding
24 and more breakdowns for our elevator, which
25 means our children are not able to get to their

1 classrooms and they are not able to attend the
2 lessons their teachers are teaching. As
3 mentioned were the testing accommodations, there
4 are approximately 200 children getting testing
5 accommodations, including scribing, reading
6 aloud, CCTV, auditory [inaudible] and children
7 who need to be tested alone in rooms due to
8 behavioral and/or medical/physical issues.
9 Thank you very much for your time.

10 [Applause]

11 MODERATOR: Thank you Ms. Alder. Aquilla
12 Catoy-Spencer [phonetic].

13 MS. AQUILLA CATOY-SPENCER: That's me.
14 Okay, hello, my name is Aquilla Spencer. I'm
15 currently the Parent Association President for
16 P.S.244. I also sit on the President's Counsel
17 as the secretary. My concern is we have so many
18 schools in District 18 that have already been
19 co-located due to under-utilization. What are
20 the facts as to putting this school in here that
21 it will not also be considered under-utilized?
22 And if it's under-utilized, then what will be
23 the purpose of putting it in? Because I feel we
24 have a lot of schools--we have two schools now,
25 we have Meyer Levin right off Ralph Avenue, we

1 have Winthrop Junior High School, all these
2 schools are in the close proximity of one
3 another and they have been under-utilized and
4 been co-located. So what's to say that this
5 school will not be under-utilized? We have
6 Meyer Levin over there who had to make different
7 types of adjustments. We have--what's the
8 school on East 100... no, by Lennox Academy.

9 FEMALE VOICE: 211.

10 MS. CATOY-SPENCER: 211 was co-located with
11 two additional schools if I'm not mistaken. So
12 everywhere is under-utilized. Why would we be
13 bringing in another one to be under-utilized
14 within the same community? That's my comment.

15 [Applause]

16 MODERATOR: Thank you Ms. Spencer. Ms.
17 Pamela Garcia [phonetic].

18 MR. PINNACLE GARCIA: Good evening everyone.
19 My name is Pinnacle Garcia [phonetic]. I am a
20 student here. I think money should be given to
21 my school for an afterschool program. I am a
22 good boy in a good school, but my school failed
23 before. I hope they don't fail me again by
24 bringing in this new school.

25 [Applause]

1 MODERATOR: Thank you. And what's your
2 name young man?

3 MR. GARCIA: Pinnacle Garcia.

4 MODERATOR: Thank you Pinnacle Garcia. Ms.
5 Gayle Wright [phonetic].

6 MS. GAYLE WRIGHT: Good evening. My name is
7 Gayle Wright. I'm the Parent Coordinator at
8 P.S.244. I've been here for the last six years.
9 I've seen the children grow. They need, just
10 like flowers and plants, you need space to grow
11 and if you bring in a middle school, I feel that
12 the children will be crushed as Ms. Alder
13 stated. We have a huge special needs population
14 and to bring in other children, I don't think
15 it's going to work. They have other--why didn't
16 they choose another elementary school to put
17 this middle school at? Why 244? I mean, is
18 this the last clean school--physically clean
19 school?

20 CROWD: [Laughter] Yeah.

21 MS. WRIGHT: Everybody wants to come here?
22 Okay, I had to turn away parents because this
23 was not their child's zone school but they
24 insisted that they come here. Last year, a man
25 moved his family to this area so his child could

1 come to P.S.244. What's going to happen if
2 the population gets larger in this area, what
3 are we supposed to do, turn away our zone
4 children for middle school? I don't think so.

5 [Applause]

6 MODERATOR: Thank you Ms. Wright. Ms.
7 Covanda Ward [phonetic].

8 MS. COVANDA WARD: Good evening everyone.
9 My name is Covanda Ward. I have a fifth-grader
10 in the school. I also have a 18-year-old
11 [inaudible] the school. And I was concerned and
12 I wanted a second opinion. I asked do you think
13 P.S.244 needs a middle school in the school? He
14 said no mom, that's going to be a very, very bad
15 idea because [inaudible], you know, are going to
16 come. And I'm thinking bully, I mean all the
17 kids are small. And to bring other kids into
18 this school is going to be a totally--it's going
19 to be a bad idea. I think if there's extra
20 room, implement more programs: dancing, singing,
21 art, do something to occupy the space for our
22 kids. Thank you.

23 [Applause]

24 MODERATOR: Thank you Ms. Ward. Ms. Regina
25 Shankel [phonetic].

1 MS. REGINA SHANKEL: Hello. My name is
2 Regina Shankel and I'm a parent. I have a child
3 who attends here. I have concerns. My concerns
4 was that I know 244 for being in the
5 neighborhood and they expanded the school so we
6 could provide for more students. I know
7 currently the enrollment is down, but I think it
8 would be a disservice to have a middle school in
9 here. I just want to know is there any other
10 possibility? I know other schools in District
11 18 have decided to do all their pre-K program.
12 I know that there are other resources or other
13 ways to utilize this building. And I would be
14 very concerned with an older child in here with
15 my child that's currently in second grade. So
16 those are my concerns.

17 [Applause]

18 MODERATOR: Thank you Ms. Shankel. The
19 speaker list... do we have another speaker signing
20 up in the back? Thank you. The speaker list is
21 now exhausted. Again, we welcome any comments
22 and feedback you may have at any time before the
23 Panel for Educational Policy votes on this
24 proposal at it's October 15th, 2013 meeting.
25 The E-mail address and phone number where

1 comments may be made are
2 D18proposals@schools.nyc.gov and [212]374-0208,
3 [212]374-0208. Thank you for your
4 participation. This joint public hearing is now
5 closed.

6 [Background Conversation]

7 MODERATOR: Please, please wait a moment.
8 Thank you.

9 FEMALE VOICE: I just wanted to quickly
10 mention that I'll stick around, as well as my
11 colleagues, in case anyone has quick questions
12 regarding the proposal. Thank you.

13 [Background Conversation]

14 [END RECORDING]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

6
7 Signature  Mitchell Janting

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9 Date: October 10, 2013

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