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

**Opening and Co-location of a New
Site of a D75 Program at K066**

April 8, 2013

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MS. BEVERLY A. WILKINS: Good evening. This
3 is a joint public hearing of the Department of
4 Education, Community Education Council, and
5 School Team Leadership for the proposed opening
6 and co-location of a new site of an existing
7 District 75 program, P771K, in Building K066,
8 with existing school P.S. 66, beginning in the
9 2013-2014 school year. I am Community School
10 District 18 Superintendent Beverly A. Wilkins.
11 We have asked the District 18 Community
12 Education Council and the School Leadership
13 Teams of P.S. 66 and P771K to participate in
14 this joint public hearing. I am joined tonight
15 by Mr. James Dandridge, CEC 18 President. This
16 hearing is being recorded. The purpose of this
17 hearing is for you to provide comments about the
18 proposal. Before I describe the proposal, I
19 want to make sure you all aware of the
20 opportunity to provide your input. All those
21 who wish to speak must sign up in the speaker
22 signup area located just outside the auditorium.
23 The signup list will close in 15 minutes.
24 Speakers will be given the floor in the order
25 that they signed up. All comments are limited

1 to three minutes. There may be elected
2 officials who arrive at different times
3 throughout the evening. If they wish to speak,
4 we will do our best to accommodate them at the
5 first opportune moment. Those who are here at
6 the start of the public comments segment will be
7 asked to speak first. All comments will be
8 mentioned in the analysis of public comment to
9 be published and provided to the Panel for
10 Educational Policy the evening before the Panel
11 votes. That vote is scheduled for April 17th,
12 2013, at 6:00 p.m., at the Prospect Heights
13 campus, 883 Classon Ave., Brooklyn, New York,
14 11225. In addition, we welcome any comments and
15 feedback you may have at any time before the
16 Panel votes on both proposals. The email
17 address and phone number where comments may be
18 made are D18proposals@schools.nyc.gov, and (212)
19 374-0208. Proposal summary: the DOE is
20 proposing to open and co-locate a new site of
21 P771K, an existing District 75 program, in
22 Building K066, beginning in the 2013-2014 school
23 year. Further references to P771K will be only
24 in reference to the site proposed at K066. A
25 co-location means that two or more school

1 organizations are located in the same building,
2 and may share common spaces like auditoriums,
3 gymnasiums, and cafeterias. The DOE is
4 proposing to open this new program in the K066
5 building to help meet the need of D75 self-
6 contained programming in District 18, where
7 there are currently no existing District 18
8 seats. P771K plans to serve a range of students
9 across kindergarten through eighth grade, who
10 have been classified as autistic or as
11 intellectually or emotionally disabled on their
12 individual education programs, IEPs. P771K is
13 projected to serve six sections of elementary
14 and middle school students in self-contained
15 settings. Students will be placed in class
16 sections based on their needs, not necessarily
17 according to traditional grade levels, and based
18 on recommended special education services, and
19 may be served in this program throughout the
20 course of their elementary and middle school
21 education. According to the 2011-2012
22 enrollment capacity utilization report, K066 has
23 the target capacity to serve a total of 888
24 students. In 2012-2013, P.S. 66 is serving 750
25 students in kindergarten through eighth grade,

1 and 18 pre-kindergarten students, yielding a
2 building utilization rate of 86%. DOE believes
3 that the use of excess capacity in K066, in
4 order to provide seats to D75 within District
5 18, is an appropriate and efficient use of space
6 at K066. The proposal is not expected to impact
7 the admissions process, the educational or
8 extracurricular offerings to community
9 partnerships at P.S. 66. The proposal is not
10 expected to impact the continued provisions of
11 required services to English language learner
12 students and students with IEPs at P.S. 66. The
13 next presenter will be Mr. James Dandridge of
14 the CEC. President Dandridge.

15 MR. JAMES DANDRIDGE: Thank you,
16 Superintendent. Thank you, Superintendent. For
17 those who don't me, my name is James Dandridge.
18 I'm the President of the Community Education
19 Council for District 18. I'm a parent
20 volunteer. My daughter attends P.S. 66. She's
21 currently in the fourth grade. But I'm here
22 representing not only my daughter, myself, and
23 my family, but also all the parents and children
24 throughout District 18. The concerns that - -
25 Education Council, we have discussed at this

1 length in our meetings, and the consensus of
2 the Education Councils is that this program
3 that's being presented by the Department of
4 Education would be better served in a different
5 setting. We currently have in the district
6 Public School 244 that has the space, has the
7 facility to accompany the special needs that
8 this program is looking for. For the life of
9 us, we don't understand why the Department of
10 Education is not beginning with the concerns of
11 the community. We feel that once again, this is
12 a situation where the Department of Education
13 has callously disregarded the feedback that's
14 been provided from the parents of the community
15 in regards to how we can best serve our
16 children. I implore you tonight because a lot
17 of us don't know all the details, but from your
18 heart and from your mind, speak freely about
19 your concerns with this program. We are here to
20 serve all of our children, no matter what
21 capacity that they have or what their abilities
22 are. But when it comes to having the best
23 setting for them, those of us that live in the
24 community feel that we know where the best
25 facilities are for our children. And in this

1 case, we feel the best facility for this
2 program would be at P.S. 244. If the Department
3 of Education is looking to provide this program,
4 they have other ways. They have - - school
5 programs that deal with children with
6 disabilities, and they would be welcome in that
7 school. - - already had conversations with the
8 educators there. They would love to have this
9 program in their school. So for the life of me,
10 we don't understand why - - that the wishes of
11 the community are not being adhered to by those
12 that make these decisions. And I'm sure as
13 you'll see tonight, you will find that those
14 decision makers, the people that are making
15 these decisions, are not here tonight. So once
16 again, it's a situation where those that are
17 sitting in an office somewhere are making a
18 decision that impacts - - those of us in the
19 community. Feel free to express yourself in a
20 professional manner. But by all means, let it
21 be known, and I'll let be known from the
22 Educational Council of - -, we are in
23 disagreement - - this program - - P.S. 66. P.S.
24 66 has been a viable program. I've been
25 involved with this school since it was created,

1 and I would like to see it continue to grow. I
2 know multiple children that are trying to get
3 into this school that have been turned away, so
4 how it could be underutilized is question mark
5 that we need to try to figure out and
6 understand, because - - children turned away
7 from coming to this school 'cause they said
8 there's no class space. Now all of a sudden
9 someone comes in from wherever and tells us,
10 "Oh, you have the room to house additional
11 students." What happened in September when
12 people were applying and told there was no room?
13 Where did this room magically come from? And
14 once again, I implore you to express yourself in
15 a professional manner tonight, and let it be
16 known how you feel about this decision. Thank
17 you very much.

18 MS. WILKINS: Thank you. Thank you,
19 President Dandridge. We have now concluded the
20 formal presentations. Audience, please know
21 that I am joined by my colleagues from the
22 Office of Portfolio Development, Steven Demeures
23 [phonetic] and Lily Haskins. And they're here
24 in the audience, and will be happy to answer any
25 and all questions regarding the proposal after

1 the hearing. We will now open the floor for
2 public comment. Speakers will be given the
3 floor in the order that they signed up. All
4 comments are limited to two minutes. Our first
5 speaker is Harold Hills. I said three minutes
6 before, two minutes. I'm going to give you back
7 that minute; it's three minutes. And if you
8 need four, take four.

9 MR. HAROLD HILLS: Good evening. My name is
10 Mr. Harold Hills, Jr., the Dean and Safety
11 Coordinator here at P.S./I.S. 66. What the
12 Department of Education proposes to do poses a
13 safety issue in terms of space. Where will the
14 children receive classroom instruction without
15 imposing on our students? Our school currently
16 enrolls nearly 800 students, and all areas of
17 our building are in use. It would be different
18 if there was an empty wing or an empty floor.
19 But our building currently is close to full
20 capacity. Our grades are located on wings.
21 With this proposal, that would not be the case.
22 This stands as another example of the Bloomberg
23 administration overcrowding students in
24 buildings. Did you notice the beautiful artwork
25 wonderfully displayed? This work was done in

1 our art classrooms. We have many programs of
2 art, music, science in this building. All
3 students deserve the excellent educational
4 background, and we aim to have these programs
5 continue in our building. P.S./I.S. 66 shines
6 as a beacon here in District 18. Over the past
7 ten years, a school family environment has been
8 established. When this school opened in
9 September of 2003, it was not designed to hold
10 two schools within one building. Parents on the
11 waiting list have been turned down due to this
12 unclear proposal. Once again, where are the
13 classrooms for the proposed incoming students?
14 Where will our students receive adequate
15 classroom instruction? Now I'm told that the
16 classrooms they're looking for are tiny areas in
17 the building. Our former principal, Mr. Joel
18 Rubenfeld effectively ran this building for
19 seven years. In the month of March, plans were
20 made for the upcoming school year. Our
21 principal, Miss Lucille Jackson, and Assistant
22 Principal Mr. Muhammad Khan continue to follow
23 this plan. We don't wait until June to make
24 plans for the upcoming year. Currently, no
25 concrete plans have been made. This is so

1 unfair to our school family. The total
2 climate of P.S. 66 will become undone. Mayor
3 Bloomberg, Department of Educational officials,
4 where are the new school facilities that have
5 been promised? Your current plan is a disaster
6 for our P.S. 66 students, and for the proposed
7 incoming students. Our children deserve better
8 than this.

9 MS. WILKINS: Thank you, Mr. Hills.

10 MR. DANDRIDGE: This mike, - - that
11 microphone?

12 MS. WILKINS: Yes, that's what about I'm to
13 do, President Dandridge. I would like to ask
14 that those of holding numbers two through six,
15 two, three, four, five, and six, please line up
16 at the microphone here to my left. Those of you
17 holding numbers two, three, four, five, and six.
18 Number two is at the mike. That's Miss Althea
19 Walker. And you may be seated while they are
20 presenting.

21 MS. ALTHEA WALKER: Hello. Hello, my name
22 is Althea Walker. I am one of the two music
23 teachers at this school. I've been teaching at
24 this school for five years, and as, if you can
25 see a show of hands of the parents of students

1 that I teach, I teach everyone, pre-K through
2 grade three. Most children are learning to play
3 the piano. And if you know by any of these
4 educational studies, children who have learned
5 to play an instrument or sing, or study art in
6 detail, do better in all of their other
7 subjects, because of the expansion on just the
8 creativity as well the technical aspects of
9 those things that they study. Currently, I
10 teach through the Music and the Brain program,
11 which involves two periods per week for every
12 student, and it's incorporated into the school
13 day. It cannot be used as an afterschool
14 program. It cannot be used as something where I
15 travel from classroom to classroom. My
16 classroom has 28 pianos in it right now. Every
17 child, grade K through three, learns to play the
18 piano. After five years at this school, my
19 sixth graders have grown to the point where they
20 can play in a variety of styles and even arrange
21 their own songs. And those people who have
22 again, been at our concerts can - - attest to
23 that. Okay. The other music teacher at our
24 school also teaches everyone in the upper
25 grades. Our school is pre-K through eight, as I

1 said. He has a classroom full of guitars. He
2 also teaches a program called Little Kids Rock.
3 He cannot be expected to travel, which is what
4 you're proposing. I assume you're proposing in
5 having some of our classrooms taken, and these
6 are the classrooms. The two art teachers do
7 sculpting and painting in their classrooms,
8 which would not be able to take place if they're
9 traveling from room to room. And these are the
10 things that enrich our students. These are the
11 things that help our students to grow beyond
12 what they think they can do. We currently have
13 concerts twice per year, so we need this
14 auditorium for rehearsal time as well as a
15 performance time. Our last concert, we did five
16 shows. That means that each of the children
17 performed five separate times in this room.
18 This cannot take place if our school building is
19 being shared, and we have to arrange with the
20 other school where we will rehearse, when we
21 will rehearse, all of those things. Now I've
22 also, let me continue that. I've also taught
23 before in a school that shares space. There
24 were constant struggles over common areas,
25 times, and places. Now I've heard you mention

1 the gym, the auditorium. Well maybe I didn't
2 hear you mention the auditorium, but the
3 lunchroom. What was not mentioned was the
4 schoolyards. We have a separate - -, in our
5 school because we work in wings. We have a
6 separate kindergarten/early childhood
7 schoolyard. And we have schoolyards on the
8 other side for the older children. We have been
9 very, very careful in our school about making
10 sure that the children are able to play
11 separately so that the bigger kids don't trample
12 over the little ones, and this will be a large
13 problem if you have other people in other groups
14 in the school trying to maneuver around those
15 spaces. Currently we have our schoolyards. We
16 have our gym. We have the dance room. We have
17 two music classrooms, which may, from what
18 you're saying, be cut down to one room. We have
19 two art classes. We have a library and we have
20 a - -. I believe that our children - -. I
21 believe that our children will be better served
22 by expanding on what we currently do, rather
23 than limiting ourselves by having two groups try
24 to exist in the same building. Thank you.

25 MR. ANTHONY BAKER: Good evening.

1 MS. WILKINS: Good evening.

2 MR. BAKER: My name is Anthony Baker. I'm
3 the parent coordinator for this school. I have
4 been the parent coordinator since its inception
5 in 2003. Our school has a stellar reputation.
6 It is a family school, and we're very proud of
7 what we do here. Parents call me on a daily
8 basis, and I do not mean parents from our
9 school, in the community, and they visit here
10 because they want their kids enrolled here
11 because of what we do here. They come because
12 of the variety of programs that we offer.
13 Unfortunately, if we have more people inside of
14 our building, it will be a problem, because
15 there are days when they call me and say, "Mr.
16 Baker, just one more seat. I will provide the
17 desk and chair." I said, "That is not
18 possible." Because one thing, we all know that
19 a small class size is important for individual
20 attention and for the child to grow. When we
21 condense the classes, we will have more students
22 inside of the classroom. And that is a problem.
23 On the news, we hear about we need to impact our
24 children. And we cannot impact them if they are
25 huddled in one classroom. There need to be

1 smaller classrooms. We talk from one end and
2 we do something entirely different. Parents,
3 look to me for guidance. I'm your advocate and
4 messenger. They have impressed on me that they
5 are very concerned about the co-location in this
6 building. They are afraid that the programs
7 that are being offered which draw them to this
8 school will be diminished. They have their kids
9 here because of what we offer. They're
10 concerned that the co-location will be impacted
11 in this building in a very negative way. And
12 they do not want that. Thank you.

13 MS. WILKINS: Number four, please.

14 MS. ARLENE JOBE: Good evening. My name is
15 Arlene Jobe, and I am the PA President, and I
16 represent all parents that - - their children
17 who attend this school as well. My concerns
18 are, or our concerns as parents are that the
19 general population of kids at I.S. 66 has not
20 been exposed to children with special needs.
21 Will there be counseling or informing teachers,
22 etc., or students, parents, and teachers set in
23 place? If so, when? Another question that I
24 have is the level, what levels are these
25 children of special needs? Their behavioral

1 problems. Are they good? Are they bad? We
2 would like to know - - our parents' concerns.
3 The third question would be parents in 66 are
4 concerned of our excellent teachers and staff
5 currently, - - sorry. Parents of 66 are
6 concerned that our excellent teachers and staff
7 currently will start looking elsewhere to teach.
8 We would like to know, you know. We like our
9 teachers here. They teach our kids very well.
10 They understand our children. And we don't want
11 them to leave, so having a co-location will
12 probably, you know, make them - - decision to
13 maybe move on to elsewhere to teach. I strongly
14 agree with President Dandridge - - 244, the
15 school which is currently located on Tilden
16 Avenue. They have the - - program, as he
17 mentioned before, that will - - their special
18 needs. So that is another concern. Why not
19 that school? And you know, that's one of our
20 questions. The last question that I'll leave
21 is, will this location be temporary or
22 permanent? If temporary, how long? If
23 permanently, then will this be a growing
24 population of special needs students? Will this
25 be 2014-2015, or 2015-2016? We'll start - - to

1 our kids, because there is a waiting list that
2 is currently established. And you know, a lot
3 of parents that have siblings would like to have
4 their children attend these schools as well.
5 And thank you.

6 MS. ANDREA ROBINSON: Hello. My name is
7 Angela Robinson. My daughter is in the sixth
8 grade, and she's been here since kindergarten.
9 I choose this school because it's a family-
10 oriented school. The teachers are great. I did
11 a lot of research before I put her in here. I
12 was going to put her in private school, but when
13 I researched this school, I decided that this is
14 where I want her to be, and it's going to be a
15 public school. Now it's not very big. It's not
16 overcrowded. And now with the additional
17 students, you know, they're concerned that
18 that's going to change. Some of my concerns
19 were already addressed, but I'll bring it up
20 again. I am concerned about the overcrowding
21 inside and outside the school, the parking
22 availability. The teachers and parents, when
23 you come out with other kids, it's so crowded
24 you can't get - -. So with additional students,
25 that would be additional parents, additional

1 teachers. Where would they park? And I'm
2 concerned about the teachers that I absolutely
3 love, that they're - -. I have a good
4 relationship with Mr. Baker. If I have a
5 concern and I can't make it here, I will email
6 him, and he would get back to me. Or I'd call.
7 I'm afraid I would lose that. The other thing
8 is if there is space in another building, I
9 don't know why, you know, the kids can't go
10 there. I'm concerned about the level of autism.
11 It is supposedly someone that's never - -? The
12 kids are very, I don't know what to say. Maybe
13 they lash out. - - the bathroom of - - and
14 supposedly, you know, I'm concerned about the
15 bathrooms being clean. I'm not saying the kids
16 are - -, but from what I've been hearing,
17 depends on the level of autism. And I'm very
18 concerned about that. I know the kids have to
19 learn, but I think there should be an
20 environment where they can learn better. And
21 I'm worried about the schoolyard. Very
22 concerned about the schoolyard. So that's my
23 concerns.

24 MS. WILKINS: Thank you, Miss Robinson.

25 MR. KENNETH STEVENS: Hello, my name is

1 Kenneth Stevens [phonetic], and my two
2 grandkids, my granddaughters attend P.S. 66. My
3 question is this. For the past three weeks,
4 I've been calling the elected officials in this
5 area. I was asking them why hasn't 244, P.S.
6 244, been part of - - this proposal, and no one
7 could give me an answer. And sort of
8 piggybacking off of what Mr. Baker said, why? I
9 mean, why hasn't 244 been given a part of this
10 proposal? That's my statement and my question.
11 Thank you.

12 MS. WILKINS: Thank you, Mr. Stevens. Those
13 of you holding numbers seven, eight, nine, and
14 ten, please step to the mike here to my left.
15 Number seven is at the mike.

16 MS. MARIA GALLO: Hi. I'm Miss Gallo. I'm
17 a teacher here. I've been here for three years.
18 I came here from a school that has two different
19 schools together. And in my experience, it was
20 very volatile. These were students who,
21 honestly they were all from the same community.
22 They went to some of the same elementary
23 schools. But once they were in the same
24 building, and they had two different uniforms
25 on, they just didn't like each other, just

1 because they had two different principals.
2 There was no other reason. So now you're
3 talking - - kids from a totally different
4 community. And using this community's space,
5 and this does create resentment. That is that -
6 -, you can't have - -. Or the gym - -. Or you
7 can't have recess outside. This - - actually
8 turned into - -, and sometimes violence. So
9 this is a really big safety problem. And it's
10 sad, because it doesn't - -. They just have
11 this, a resentment for coming - -. So I'm a
12 little bit worried about that. And of course,
13 there's the whole idea of taking the space from
14 this community that is, it's yours. And if we
15 have extra space for a few extra kids, let's
16 take kids from this community. And put them
17 into our school. But not mixing a whole another
18 school and - - kids - -. You know, it is tough.
19 I don't understand why they want to take a
20 school that is actually succeeding, and - - make
21 it overcrowded. And then they're going start
22 saying it's a failing school - -. No, it
23 sounds like a plan to destroy something that is
24 successful. When I came into this building, it
25 was like a breath of fresh air, coming from

1 where I came - -. And part of that is the
2 variety of programs in the school, the music and
3 the entertainment and the arts. And it's clean
4 and it just, because the kids have - -, because
5 - -. To take that - - make everybody angry and
6 upset, - - I implore the DOE to think about it.
7 Taking something that's working, and breaking
8 it. To me it makes no sense whatever. - -, but
9 that's not exactly what it is. And - - going to
10 classes and I - -, okay? If you want - - kids
11 from Canarsie, and we can open two classrooms,
12 I'm good with that, but I don't understand why
13 we need to try and squeeze, again, a whole bunch
14 of trouble into one building.

15 MS. WILKINS: Number eight? Number nine?
16 Number ten? Those of you who are holding
17 numbers 11, 12, 13, 14, will you please step to
18 the mike to my left? Number 11, number 12,
19 number 13, and number 14. Number 11 is at the
20 mike. Good evening.

21 MS. DAPHNE KEAN: Good evening, everyone.
22 My name is Daphne Kean [phonetic], and I have
23 three children in this school. I have one
24 that's about to graduate, who's in the eighth
25 grade. I have one that's in the fifth grade,

1 and one in the second grade. I'm well
2 dedicated to the school. I love this school.
3 I've been here way over six, seven years. What
4 drove me here is the programs that they offer,
5 and the education system, the specialness, the -
6 - of everything that they have. Now I am all
7 open to new people and education - - for
8 children who are in need. Now, when it comes to
9 my children and their education, and what they
10 already have in store into the system or
11 whatever they've sort of planned out for them,
12 my concern is how it's going to jeopardize
13 whatever - - for the next six or seven more
14 years. I have - - children that are looking
15 into the program. I have my youngest who's in a
16 music class, who's in Miss Walker's class. Now
17 I enjoy watching and coming to the shows that we
18 have, the spring shows, the fall shows, and all
19 the programs that we have for our children.
20 Now, but if we have another set of groups that
21 come in, my concern is where do you go from
22 here? Are my children - - from - - programs
23 that they have now, and what are they going to
24 have for the future that's already preset and
25 planned already?

1 MS. MADELEINE FOSTER: Hello, everyone.
2 My name is Madeleine Foster [phonetic]. My son
3 is in the fifth grade, and my question to - -
4 when I woke up this morning, I was - -.
5 Therefore, I do not understand how something is
6 proposed to us that we have rejected. It is our
7 rejection; it's categorically tossed aside, and
8 the movers and shakers are moving ahead with
9 their plans. One, I would - - someone to tell
10 me what portion of this school is considered
11 unutilized. My second question is how does my
12 child, who has never had an interaction with an
13 autistic child, how is he supposed, and when I
14 say "he," I'm speaking of the complete student
15 population of this school, how are the children
16 supposed to deal with this? Who is going to
17 tell them what to do? How are they going to get
18 along day by day? I don't - - me, because that
19 would be a problem, because if my child is being
20 thrust into a situation that he does not know
21 how to deal with, whoever thrust him there needs
22 to deal with the situation - -.

23 MS. WILKINS: Thank you. This is a joint
24 public hearing. Number 13?

25 MR. ROBERT WHITE: Good afternoon. My name

1 is Robert White [phonetic], and I have two
2 kids attending P.S./I.S. 66. - - what Miss
3 Gallo had said, my main concern about additional
4 students coming in with special needs is that
5 there can be a grave security risk.

6 MS. WILKINS: Can you lift the mike? The
7 audience would like to hear you.

8 MR. WHITE: I'm sorry.

9 MS. WILKINS: Thank you.

10 MR. WHITE: - -, there could be a grave
11 security risk with new students coming in with
12 special needs, into this atmosphere. And I'm
13 fearful that what we have established here, what
14 we have established here already will be
15 jeopardized by new students coming in, who
16 haven't interacted, or I don't know if they
17 have. I'm assuming they haven't interacted with
18 students who don't have special needs. So
19 that's my main concern. - -, I really
20 appreciate it. Thank you.

21 MS. WILKINS: Thank you. Thank you. - -.

22 MR. MUHAMMED: - -. My name is - - Muhammed
23 [phonetic]. - - two children here, one in the
24 fifth grade and the other in first. And the
25 other in first. We applied to the school

1 actually many times. We met - - here back in
2 2005. And we applied to this school for my
3 older son. That application was denied, the
4 reason being there was no space in the school.
5 We applied again in 2006 and 2007. I believe
6 the answer was that there was no space in the
7 school. In 2009, we applied. There was no
8 space in the school. 2010, it was the same
9 thing. 2011, we also applied. We were, at
10 those times, we were learning about the school
11 and all the great things they were doing here.
12 The teachers, what they were doing here. Even
13 the teachers from the - - school where we at,
14 were - - here. And okay, we want to come here.
15 But there was no space in the school, and the -
16 - educational impact statement saying that
17 there's enough room for 60 students, I can only
18 think that what happened in the last five or six
19 years? What happened - -?

20 MALE VOICE 1: - -, I guess.

21 MR. MUHAMMED: Yeah, and as far - - like to
22 know about 244. I actually have a, I have a
23 cousin, and I have a, I'll call her my niece,
24 has autism. And my kids - - play together, and
25 of course we have to be, we always have to like

1 say to them, say, okay, what's good and what's
2 not good. Even with my kids playing with them.
3 But I don't believe it's really an issue whether
4 they have autism or whether or not they're - -
5 students. They are students. And from my
6 cousin, I have to say I would want to make sure
7 that they have the appropriate space for them to
8 learn and to grow. - - is better able to serve
9 them, I would want that for them, and not this.
10 And it doesn't have anything to do with okay,
11 this is here. 244 is better able to do that,
12 then why aren't they doing it there? Why does
13 the management of the DOE decide, how do they
14 make that decision? My question to the - - is
15 how do they make a decision on what the best, -
16 - appropriate for other students whether they
17 have autism or whatever needs that they have.
18 It doesn't appear that they're asking the
19 parents. It doesn't appear that they're really
20 concerned about that. That's the - -. I forgot
21 - -.

22 MS. WILKINS: - - Muhammed. Community
23 members holding number 15 and 16, - -. You can
24 hold onto it, sir. 15 and 16. Mr. Smith
25 [phonetic]? - -.

1 MR. JEROME SMITH: Good night, ladies and
2 gentlemen, Panel. My name is Jerome [phonetic]
3 Smith, and my wife is Jackie Martin-Smith
4 [phonetic]. And we, I have, I actually, my
5 older son - - attending here from kindergarten
6 all the way up - - 2003 when the building was -
7 -. Now we have Joshua [phonetic] Smith, who is
8 in pre-K, and we - -. I just have to, I want to
9 piggyback on - - in terms of if there's space,
10 how come, you know, in terms of they're not
11 being, the autistic kids are not being placed in
12 a setting where they can grow and become
13 educated? I'm an advocate for education, and I
14 think - -. In terms of placing autism kids in a
15 setting where you have kids who are, who's not
16 open to that, and who does not - -, as the young
17 lady had mentioned, said well, you know, in
18 terms of exposing our kids to this, it's quite
19 concerning to me when we as parents are - - into
20 a situation that we have to have this kind of a
21 dialogue. - - really in terms of how parents
22 and teachers and the education system go hand-
23 in-hand. I was expecting to speak to a panel.
24 I'm not saying that you guys are not - -
25 tonight, to just try to get a feel for like

1 where do you live? Or where do I live? And
2 when does this become a dialogue that you're
3 listening to my needs, as opposed to just
4 throwing stuff out there saying this is this and
5 this is that? And I also want to know what, if
6 it's a proposal or this is a done deal, then
7 that's not a proposal. How can that be a
8 proposal if it's a done deal and a decision will
9 be said at a certain date, and you're not here
10 to listen to what we have to say? When are you
11 going to actually start listening to what we
12 have to say? And it bothers me when you say one
13 thing, and you want the kids to become leaders,
14 and where do you want the kids to become
15 leaders? In our community or the other
16 community? Where's that? - -. Because - -
17 you know, it's real hard for parents to even
18 deal with, you know, like the test scores, all
19 these other stuff. We have to work. And we, as
20 a community, expect the Board of Education to be
21 advocates for us when we send our kids to school
22 to become strong leaders, to make - - decisions.
23 To maybe someday, one day, become - - and put
24 the autism kids and become - - diagnose these
25 problems? You know, you understand what I'm

1 saying? I mean, tonight, I really appreciate,
2 you know, for the parents to be advocates and
3 put a foot down and say, "Well you know what?
4 The buck stops here." P.S. 66's parent
5 community is really strong, and we're going to
6 stand by what the people - - kids, and people
7 have to say, and we cannot allow this to happen.
8 But on the flipside, finding adequate space with
9 proper settings for the autism kids as well,
10 because they're entitled to a free education
11 like the young lady said. When I woke up this
12 morning, - - in America, so you're supposed to
13 listen to the people and for the people.

14 MS. JACQUELINE SMITH: Good evening. I'm
15 Jacqueline Smith [phonetic]. Okay. As my
16 husband said, - - actions of the Panel, it seems
17 like this is a decision that has already been
18 made. And it is unfair to us because we are
19 concerned about our kids. First of all it's not
20 fair - - kids 25 in a class. They're not
21 getting individual attention that they should
22 get. So to bring in 60 more kids and oversize
23 the classroom, they're definitely not going to
24 get what they're supposed to have. So that's
25 one concern. The next one is security. Right

1 now we have - - security. They are not going
2 to be able to handle these autism kids. I have
3 actually a relative that works at 244, and the -
4 - stories that we hear, it's overwhelming. So
5 we know for a fact that it's much more of a
6 bigger deal than what's being said here. So we
7 deserve a fair chance. You told us in March
8 that this is what was going to happen. March is
9 not a long enough - - period for a decision to
10 be made. It sounds once again like it has been
11 made. So if anything, definitely not September
12 - - decision should be made. A - - up. We
13 should be able to discuss this once again, and
14 then see what can be done from there. Just like
15 my husband said, we did have an older son that
16 attended the school here, from the day that the
17 school opened. He was here from pre-K all the
18 way to eighth grade when he graduated in June.
19 We were here probably two to three times - - a
20 copy of that may have taken place. It was - -,
21 but it was resolved in a timely manner, and
22 having an individual principal, an assistant
23 principal, everybody's going to fight for - -.
24 There's going to be major issues. That is a
25 huge concern of mine, and I would like to know.

1 We were told that - - our principal will not
2 be here on a daily basis. What's going to
3 happen when the principal is not here when there
4 is an issue? And I think those are all my
5 concerns.

6 MS. WILKINS: Assembly Member Nick Perry,
7 would you like to make comment at this time? I
8 have one other speaker.

9 ASSEMBLYMAN NICK PERRY: Good evening.

10 MS. WILKINS: Good evening, Assembly Member
11 - -.

12 ASSEMBLYMAN PERRY: - - parents and
13 students, and - - Panel. I don't see any Panel
14 members here. - - required to make a decision,
15 the people who have been appointed to - - to
16 come to the community and participate in these
17 hearings, who continue to address the - -
18 responsibilities to appear, and to be a part of
19 the discussion to really be in a position where
20 they make an informed decision. I'm sure that
21 you - - representatives - - education system - -
22 position to - - the Board of Education and have
23 the responsibility to make decisions - - seem to
24 operate like puppeteers. Someone pulls the
25 string and they act. So with that arrangement

1 in place, there's really no need for them to
2 come to the - - community or even appear at
3 these hearings that they schedule - -.
4 Certainly this is not a clear-cut type of co-
5 location proposal. This involves - - children
6 who are special need kids, and we have to have
7 some sensitivity to their needs and to their
8 families where they come from - - families also
9 from our community. I'm not sure what the
10 population, where the population - - kids for
11 this proposed program will come from. It would
12 be good if we had some information regarding
13 that. We certainly want to consider all of the
14 circumstances and make sure that - - sensitivity
15 and importance - - to the concerns of the
16 parents of the kids who currently are educated
17 in this school. And to make sure that the goal
18 of - - is done by the department is to make - -
19 to create and to make - - optimum educational
20 environment for those who come here for their
21 education. And these proposals that keep being
22 spun out of the department, I heard on the radio
23 a couple of days ago, the mayor - - new schools
24 that have been created. Also - - of the
25 hundreds of schools that have been - - closed.

1 And it seems that - - open a new school or
2 more. Every week they propose a new school or
3 more, and this is supposed to be educational
4 reform. And parents are tired of being ignored,
5 and not listened to. And even the teachers in
6 the system were not allowed to add input to
7 these decision, because - - school - - community
8 doing well. There is a little extra space, so -
9 - let's put a new school in there. I understand
10 that there are kids who would like to come to
11 this school from the neighborhood who can't get
12 enrolled because they're told there's no space.
13 When the neighborhood folks were told that, - -
14 come back and say, "Well, we have some space
15 inside - - school." I think it's important that
16 the - - information - - take some time to visit
17 the neighborhood and really look at what they're
18 doing, and really - - help the kids who need
19 special - - attention. But the long-term
20 picture is that we're really not doing our
21 children any justice. And as - -, I believe - -
22 can't wait, I'm sure, until the end of this
23 year. - - administration that will hopefully -
24 -. - - which means that - - all these new
25 schools, instead of wasting money to create new

1 schools with a whole set of new principals and
2 deans and will put the money into the children,
3 into their education. We will try to work - -
4 special needs students - -, and create the type
5 of environment where kids who need special needs
6 will have their school, in a setting that's good
7 for them, and the kids who, in the neighborhood,
8 can find space in their local schools where they
9 can grow and get a good education. That's all I
10 have to say tonight. I am quite frustrated, and
11 I know that it's like talking to the turkeys - -
12 . - - write this down, and I don't know who's
13 going to read it, because we know that this is
14 not really a proposal, as they put it. This is
15 actually a directive that's come down from - -,
16 and - - that it's approved.

17 MS. WILKINS: At this time, if the District
18 Director from Senator John Sampson's office
19 would like to make comment, I bring to the mike
20 Mr. Brandon Bloomfield.

21 MR. BRANDON BLOOMFIELD: - - we really don't
22 too much time to really fight this. I'm really
23 very, I'm so proud of this school. This is one
24 of the best schools in the district.
25 Unfortunately, - - that the building itself is

1 only - - this district for whatever children
2 are - -. But the students and the parents that
3 attend this school live in this district, so we
4 have a vested interest, right? Assemblyman
5 Perry, Councilman Barron, and other - - have - -
6 many - -. And unfortunately, you know, the
7 power - - the parents. And - - I think a parent
8 came the senator's office, and we kind of
9 revamped some of the arguments. And I'm glad to
10 hear that we have good hard evidence of why a
11 school should not be here or should be here.
12 Now District 75 schools, do we have any of them
13 in our district, in 18?

14 FEMALE VOICE 1: We do not.

15 MR. BLOOMFIELD: We do not. - - those
16 students deserve a proper place to learn as
17 well. Unfortunately, space is limited in this
18 building, so we have a list from students, from
19 Canarsie to Timbuktu on the waiting list to get
20 into this building, but we have space for
21 another school, okay. So what I'm - -, on
22 behalf of the Senator, is so that more parents
23 get involved. The fight is not over. We do
24 have a sense of disenheartment, along with
25 Assemblyman Perry, 'cause it does really seem

1 like a rubber stamp - -. - - any of you
2 parents have experienced that at Brooklyn Tech.
3 But it's really like a, like almost a - -. But
4 there is a fight, as long as we come together,
5 and we - - a proper stance, unite as much
6 parents as possible, and much - - as possible to
7 get this done. Now I'm not sure where the Panel
8 is. I can't talk to them. I'm talking with you
9 guys, 'cause they're not here. But Senator
10 Sampson really is, he's aware of the situation.
11 He's going to work with the other - -, and he's
12 going to work with - -. So don't give up. Try
13 to get as much people as possible involved, and
14 if there's any proposal that we want to go line
15 by line and argue, we can do that, - -. We've
16 saved schools in the past. This one is very,
17 it's a very good school. It's in good standing.
18 And we don't want to, you know, harm that in any
19 way, and distract - - other students. But you
20 know, we really got to - -. Let's try to get
21 them to come back to the table - - school, and
22 make sure that no program that the school
23 already has in place now is affected by this.
24 That's - - that I heard - - that they are
25 worried that whatever in place that is

1 successful will be harmed by the lack of
2 space, and they can't have it here. And we
3 don't want to do that. This was an A school. I
4 think it's a B school now; is that right?

5 MS. WILKINS: It's a B school now.

6 MR. BLOOMFIELD: It's a what?

7 MS. WILKINS: B.

8 MR. BLOOMFIELD: Oh, because there were
9 threes and fours? And so, because they didn't -
10 -.

11 [crosstalk]

12 MS. WILKINS: - - comment piece of it.

13 MR. BLOOMFIELD: Yeah--

14 MS. WILKINS: [Interposing] But - - can
15 talk.

16 MR. BLOOMFIELD: Even that we have an issue
17 with - -. - - threes and fours, - - top ten, -
18 - are being punished for that.

19 MS. WILKINS: I am going to start - - the
20 data, okay? - -.

21 MR. BLOOMFIELD: - - successful school.
22 Let's keep it successful - -. - - remind you
23 that District 75 students need to be supported
24 in our community as well. In Canarsie alone we
25 have many parents - - that are just around

1 children with autism and special needs. But
2 we need that here. Let's not forget that they
3 have a right to an education too. But if we
4 work as a community we can probably find a
5 proper space for them. Right? Thank you so
6 much. Parents, thank you - -.

7 MS. WILKINS: At this time Lily Haskins,
8 Office of Portfolio.

9 MS. LILY HASKINS: Hi, everyone. My name is
10 Lily Haskins. I work in the Office of
11 Portfolio. I want to thank you all for coming
12 tonight. As Steven said, he and I are happy to
13 stay back to answer any questions that you have
14 because there's no formal question and answer
15 period that's part of this hearing. I do want
16 to make very clear though that the District 75
17 students who are going to be served in this
18 building if the Panel approves this proposal,
19 they are all District 18 students. They live
20 here. Their communities are - -, they're part
21 of Community School District 18. There are 192
22 students who currently live in the Community
23 School District 18. When Hurricane Sandy hit,
24 it became evident they were traveling all over
25 the city to get to their school, and many of

1 them couldn't get there for two to three
2 weeks. So it became obvious to us that there
3 was a need to serve these students closer to
4 their home district. So that's where this
5 initial need came from, and our plan to use this
6 space to serve kids like all the other kids that
7 live here. So I wanted to make that clear.
8 Also, Stacey Minondo is here. She's the
9 director of District 75 placement, so she can
10 answer all the questions that you raised about
11 the types of students that will be served here,
12 the site coordinator and how it will be
13 administered and everything like that. And
14 again, we're here - - to answer any of your
15 additional questions. Thank you again for your
16 comments tonight.

17 MS. WILKINS: Yes. - - the mike.

18 MS. STACEY MINONDO: Good evening, - -.

19 MS. WILKINS: - - the mike, Stacey. Take
20 the mike.

21 MS. MINONDO: Can you hear me?

22 MS. WILKINS: Yes.

23 MS. MINONDO: I am Stacey Minondo; I'm the
24 Director of Placement for District 75. I've
25 worked with District 75 for 28 years, and I

1 understand the impact when we move students in
2 and out of different schools - -. As it was
3 said, there are currently 192 students who
4 reside in this district, District 18, that are
5 being bused to schools in every other district
6 in Brooklyn. When we saw that we had no
7 programs at all, the kids who live in District
8 18, we said we have to be - - to those students
9 and those families. Children shouldn't be on
10 buses a long time. We tried to place them as
11 close to where to they live as possible.
12 Unfortunately, we're not in every school. And
13 that - -, because currently District 75 supports
14 24,000 students. And these are students with -
15 - disabilities: autism, intellectually disabled,
16 emotionally disturbed, and other - - can be any
17 of the 13 disability classifications. In this
18 building, for the following year if the proposal
19 is voted on, there will be six, to five to six
20 classes of students with autism. No other
21 disabilities. Students with autism. That's the
22 guarantee. I can tell you it's guaranteed. I
23 will give out my number and you can call me. I
24 talk to parents all the time. I have no
25 problem. Now, what I want to say is this. I am

1 so happy that you are all here, and that you
2 are dedicated, and that this is a fantastic
3 school. Because most of the time, we are in the
4 basement or the fifth floor of a walkup. I've
5 been in basements in schools. I've been
6 excluded; our kids have been excluded. What we
7 are saying is that we're trying to include the
8 kids in this district that live here to go to
9 school in this district.

10 [crosstalk]

11 MS. MINONDO: I'm not here to talk about the
12 space. I'm not here to talk about the space.
13 I'm not here to talk about the space. That is
14 not my decision. My decision is trying to meet
15 the needs of students in District 75 to be as
16 close to where they live to go to school. So
17 that means - - District 75 - -. Regarding the
18 issue of accountability, the students in
19 District 75 - - accountability for the schools
20 that - -. So it does not impact anything at all
21 regarding this school's accountability.
22 Regarding principal, District 75 principals - -
23 anywhere between five and eight different sites.
24 So what happens is they have assistant
25 principals. So what happens is in this school,

1 there will be a unit teacher. They will be
2 the supervisor when the principal or assistant
3 principal is not here. As far as the programs
4 that are going to be affected, I will say I am
5 not in favor. - - because we saw that there was
6 a need for the people who live in District 18 to
7 be in school in District 18. So the proposal if
8 voted on will be that at the point - -
9 September, there will be six - - classes. So
10 the maximum number of students - - at that point
11 will be 36 students. They will be coming with
12 teachers and paraprofessionals who understand
13 and support kids in that disability
14 classification. What I also would like to say
15 is the idea of having kids with different
16 abilities, whether they be kids with
17 disabilities or varied abilities, to be around
18 other, I believe is good. Because not only - -
19 said here that they're going to be the doctors,
20 and they're going to be, they're going to be the
21 parents someday. The rate that autism is
22 growing, there are going to be many, many more
23 students - - autism - - and in the future,
24 hopefully, there will be less. But there will
25 be a point where kids who do not have a

1 disability at this point and get older may
2 have a child with a disability. And it's only
3 fair to have every child have that opportunity
4 to see what our community is made of: kids with
5 disabilities and kids without disabilities. So
6 as I said, I'll answer any questions. I will
7 give you my number, and we can discuss this.
8 But if it's voted on, and I don't vote, but if
9 it's voted on, we will definitely work with the
10 administration in this building to understand
11 how it's going to impact the school. Because
12 I'm not to lie - - and say it's not going to
13 impact. It - -, more kids in the building. So
14 that's an impact right there. We will have to
15 share - -, and that's what happens when you have
16 two schools together. They have to work
17 together to understand how - - every child in
18 that building. Ideally, I would love to say - -
19 . What we should do is take the kids who live
20 in this district and put them in the school.
21 Why do we even have to have them in District 75?
22 Why can't they just go to school in a community
23 building? Because a lot of times, the community
24 school cannot meet that need. So then we have
25 to find someplace else. But I - - bring the

1 students back - - school so they're not - -
2 school buses. And if anyone - - school bus, you
3 know what happens when a bus strike hits. We've
4 had many kids that could not make it school.
5 Their parents didn't have a way of transporting
6 them there. The bus strike was definitely
7 something that opened our eyes to say, "You know
8 what? We have to try to help these kids and
9 parents out. We have to try to get them
10 closer." Again, I'm here for any questions.

11 MS. WILKINS: Thank you. At this time, the
12 speaker list is now exhausted.

13 [background noise]

14 MS. WILKINS: The speakers list is now
15 exhausted. All speakers who signed up have
16 spoken. Steven, Lily, and Stacey have said to
17 you that they will remain behind after this
18 joint public hearing is adjourned to address
19 your questions and to hear your comments.
20 Again, we welcome any comments and feedback you
21 may have at any time before the Panel for
22 Educational Policy votes on this proposal at its
23 April 17th, 2013 meeting. The email address and
24 phone number where comments may be made are
25 D18proposals@schools.nyc.gov. Again,

1 D18proposals--excuse me, sir. At
2 schools.nyc.gov, and (212) 374-0208. (212) 374-
3 0208. The information will be shared with the
4 Panel on Educational Policy, which will have its
5 hearing on April 17th, 2013, at 6:00 p.m., at the
6 Prospect Heights campus, 883 Classon Ave.,
7 Brooklyn, New York, 11225. Thank you for your
8 participation. The joint hearing is now closed.

9 [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 *Anne Edelman*

Date April 9, 2013