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

**Phase out and new school replacement
for General Chappie James ES (K631)
- January 23, 2012**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 JENNY SOLEMAN: ... NY. My name's Jenny
3 Soleman, I am the IPS facilitator for this
4 evening's joint public hearing. This is a joint
5 public hearing of the Department of Education,
6 Community Education Council 23 and the School
7 Leadership Team to discuss the proposed phase
8 out and replacement of 26, I'm sorry, 23K361.
9 Please do note that this evening's proceedings
10 will be recorded and transcribed. So, before we
11 begin here, I want to run through the agenda
12 quickly. Anyone who wishes to speak during the
13 public comment portion of the evening - - at the
14 back of the room there is a table and we'll have
15 that sign up available for the next 15 minutes.
16 So, if you're interested in making a public
17 comment, please feel free to go out and put your
18 name on the list and get a number and we'll call
19 speakers up in the order in which you sign up.
20 Each speaker will have 2 minutes to speak and
21 we'll have timekeeper here towards the front.
22 We will have a sign that says you're getting
23 close to the end of time and to let you know
24 when you're 2 minutes is up. And we'll ask that
25 you be respectful of our - - use an interpreter

1 and listen to every public comment and try and
2 keep the comments to 2 minutes so that everyone
3 has an opportunity to speak. All of the panel
4 participants have confirmed that they will be
5 here with us and we are all here this evening.
6 If additional council members joining us over
7 the course of the evening, we will try and make,
8 um, make an opportunity for them to speak as
9 well. And if over the course of the evening,
10 any elected officials join us, we will also make
11 an opportunity for them to speak. So, as I
12 said, we're going to have, um, oh, we're going
13 to go back to the - - actually, so the format of
14 the evening will include a presentation of the
15 proposal as well as presentations from several
16 of our - - participants followed by a public
17 comment, I imagine, and then we'll also have an
18 opportunity for a question and answer session.
19 So, if you're interested in placing a question
20 into the record, please do that at the table in
21 the back where you signed up for public comment,
22 there's note cards and you can write your
23 question. If we are unable to answer the
24 question here, here this evening, I want to make
25 sure everyone knows all the questions will be

1 entered and included in the analysis of public
2 comment which is published online and made
3 available to the panel members prior to the
4 hearing, excuse me, the vote, which will take
5 place on February 9th at Brooklyn Technical High
6 School. And again, if more questions come up
7 after this evening's hearing, we would encourage
8 you to direct them to an email and phone number
9 which are mentioned in the fact sheet and I'll
10 read them for you now, just so it's in the
11 record. It's e23, the numbers 23,
12 proposals@schools.nyc.gov and the phone number
13 is (212) 374-0208. So, I would now like to
14 introduce the panel members who are joining us
15 this evening. Starting all the way to my left,
16 we have Milton Bolton Williams, representing CEC
17 23, our SLT chair Tracy Campbell. Lucy Antwan
18 from CCSE, Ellen McHugh also from Citywide
19 Council for Special Education, we also have the
20 principal, Margaret McAuley, Superintendant
21 Ainslie Cumberbatch and Deputy Chancellor Marc
22 Sternberg. So, I will now turn the program over
23 Deputy Chancellor Sternberg who will do a
24 presentation here.

25 MARC STERNBERG: Thank you, Jenny. Good

1 evening ladies and gentlemen, my name is Marc
2 Sternberg. I'm the deputy chancellor for
3 portfolio planning and here this evening as a
4 Chancellor Walcott asked me to present the
5 proposal for, or a brief summary of the proposal
6 for the principal, the superintendent and
7 members and the network, uh, and cluster staff
8 as well as, as well as community members and
9 faculty of - - . As Jenny made clear, this
10 whole public hearing was to convened to discuss
11 the reported phase out and replacement of
12 General D. Chappie James Elementary School
13 assignments.

14 [crosstalk]

15 MR. STERNBERG: Let me share briefly that
16 the purpose of this meeting, my purpose this
17 evening is not to, to come here and to convince
18 others that I am right, uh, that they are wrong.
19 I'm here tonight to hear your feedback on this
20 proposal, the public - - vote, I'm here tonight
21 to provide a core view of how the department
22 chancellor arrived at this decision, I'm here
23 tonight to answer questions as they arise, if
24 I'm able to. I'll also note that the decision
25 to phase a school out is the most difficult that

1 we make as a department and it's not we that we
2 arrive at easily or that we take lightly. We
3 examine many factors, uh, which I will describe
4 in the course of my proposal summary, uh, some
5 of those factors are student performance trends,
6 the data we see, uh, in the school's progress
7 report and otherwise. We also, uh, we also send
8 a group at a time in schools talking to the
9 members of the community and around schools
10 talking with those affiliated with the school to
11 test our analysis of the school's data and test
12 the school's capacity to produce dramatic
13 results for students. So, let me share a few
14 relevant details now. I'll share more about how
15 we arrived at this decision and, uh, with
16 Chappie James Elementary School of Science is
17 located here at 76 Riverdale Avenue and is in
18 District 23 in Brooklyn. It currently serves
19 students in kindergarten through 5th grade and
20 offers an independent pre-kindergarten program.
21 On December 11th, sorry December 12th, 2011, the
22 New York City Department of Education published
23 proposals to phase out and replace Chappie James
24 Elementary School of Science based on a number
25 of outstanding data trends, student performance

1 trends that we'll discuss. Let me, let me
2 briefly explain the investigation process that
3 the department goes through to arrive at, at
4 decision like this. Uh, in short, uh, the
5 department has published a set of criteria, uh,
6 criteria of student performance trends into
7 which a number of schools across the city fall
8 for further investigation. And these data
9 largely come from the school's progress report.
10 So, it's based on the performance over time as
11 represented in the school's progress report that
12 General Chappie fell on this, this school and
13 the department, excuse me, Chappie, Chappie--
14 [crosstalk]

15 MR. STERNBERG: --I apologize. So, as a
16 result of that data, the school fell onto this
17 watch list. And as a result, uh, it goes on a
18 list of roughly 50 schools that the department
19 announced for early engagement. And that
20 announcement was made in September, late
21 September of 2011. Since that time the
22 department has continued to analyze the student
23 performance trends of the school and has spent
24 time here at the school, meeting with the
25 principal, the SLT members, the faculty and

1 members of the community here in the school and
2 around the school to, again, test our theories
3 and understand better the capacity of the school
4 to, again, quickly produce dramatically better
5 results for students. We've also analyzed the
6 performance of the school against other schools
7 in the school's peer index, uh, to again, test
8 our theories and have better understanding of
9 how the school's capacity to turn around. Let
10 me share a brief summary of some of the data
11 points that we looked at. The school earned an
12 overall F grade in 2010-11 - - score including
13 an F grade for student progress and D grades for
14 student performance and school environment. In
15 2010-11, the majority of students remained below
16 grade level in English and math. In 2010 and
17 '11, only 26% of students were performing on
18 grade level English and 35% of students were
19 performing on grade level in math. The school,
20 sorry, the school is at the bottom 11% of
21 elementary schools citywide in terms of learning
22 growth in English and its progress as
23 represented on the progress report. And in the
24 bottom 14% of schools citywide in terms of
25 learning growth in math. So, it's the because

1 of these evaluations that the department
2 conducted a common set of community, community
3 outreach and review of the student performance
4 trends to determine which supports and
5 interventions would best fit the students and
6 the families served here. Again, in this
7 process the department consulted with network
8 and cluster staff. It consulted with the
9 superintendent and other experienced educators
10 who have worked closely with the school and how
11 the community - - , parents and school staff to
12 solicit feedback. So, it's based on our
13 comprehensive review of this data that we
14 arrived at the decision to approach phase out to
15 the Panel for Education Policy which brings us,
16 uh, here this evening. Again, General D.
17 Chappie James Elementary School of Science is
18 located in building K183, it's collocated with
19 General D. Chappie James Middle School of
20 Science and existing middle school. Our
21 collocation, as we know means that two or more
22 school organizations are located in the same
23 building may share a large common spaces like
24 auditorium, the - - and cafeteria. In a
25 separate EIS, also posted on December 12th, 2011,

1 the department has proposed to open and
2 collocate a new elementary school proposed, the
3 proposed - - with district borough number of the
4 new school would be 23K446 here in building K183
5 which would serve students in kindergarten
6 through 5th grade from and would reach full scale
7 in 2015-16. The new school is also expected to
8 offer a - - . The new elementary school would
9 serve students in the General D. Chappie James
10 Elementary School of Science zone. 23K446 will
11 provide a new elementary school option for
12 district 23 families and will replace the seats
13 lost by phase out of, uh, General D. Chappie
14 James Elementary School of Science. This new
15 school is planning - - if approved would be
16 collocated in K183 with General D. Chappie James
17 Elementary School of Science during its phase
18 out years and with General D. Chappie James
19 Middle School of Science, again as 23K446 phases
20 in. The DOE does not anticipate that the - -
21 phase out and replacement of General D. Chappie
22 James Elementary School of Science will impact
23 the collocation of, with its collocation with
24 the middle school any of the school year
25 activity to any degree. So, before we move to

1 public comments, I would like to briefly
2 discuss the impact of the proposal on current
3 students and families in the school if, if the
4 proposal is approved, uh, and again, um, we'll
5 share the - - details later, but the proposal to
6 be voted on February the 9th by the Panel for
7 Educational Policy at Brooklyn Tech High School.
8 So, if approved, students in the elementary
9 school would be phased, sorry, the school itself
10 will be phased out gradually over the next
11 several years and no longer admit new K, new
12 kindergarten students at the conclusion of this
13 school year. Current kindergarten and 1st grade
14 students will remain at the elementary school
15 until the end of this school year and then would
16 be assigned to 23K446, the new elementary school
17 that would open in if this proposal, uh, is
18 accepted in September. Current 2nd, 3rd and 4th
19 grade students would continue to be enrolled at
20 the General D. Chappie James Elementary School
21 of Science and would be supported as they
22 progressed towards completion of school and in
23 addition to - - . Current 5th grade students who
24 meet promotional requirements at the end of this
25 year will apply to middle school through the

1 district 23 middle school choice process.
2 The, the school would close at the conclusion of
3 the 2005, the 2014-15 school year, so in June,
4 2015. Uh, at the end of that school year, any
5 students who do not meet the promotional
6 standards will be supported in transitioning,
7 uh, in their transition to 23K446. Uh - -
8 looking forward to any conversation that you
9 may.

10 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you, Deputy Chancellor.
11 So, the next presentation will be by Community
12 Education 23, Mr. Milton Bolton Williams.

13 MILTON WILLIAMS: Good afternoon everyone.
14 [crosstalk]

15 MR. WILLIAMS: The thing is that they're
16 planning on closing something like 25 schools
17 throughout the city. The thing is if people
18 actually - - , it's enough people in the city to
19 change all that.

20 FEMALE VOICE 1: That's right.

21 MR. WILLIAMS: My opinion is that I've been
22 talking to different people because quote
23 unquote taking - - . You know, the majority of
24 people in public housing, I mean you've got, uh,
25 I mean, thousands and thousands of people, if

1 those people would vote, actually vote, you
2 can change everything. Another thing if you get
3 the people - - in public housing to - - the
4 Board of Education and actually take busloads of
5 people up to Albany or down to city hall--

6 FEMALE VOICE 1: [Interposing] That's right.

7 MR. WILLIAMS: --you could close the city
8 down and they would listen to you. If you - -
9 on this - - would not be happening to us - -
10 already and then - - going to come up. And you
11 can, and if you see that these never - - came
12 out, we going to be here for another thing - -
13 housing down in line. So, so the thing is you
14 know they of privatizing everything.

15 [crosstalk]

16 MR. WILLIAMS: And if you - - and you got to
17 help us to get rid - - help the neighborhood
18 and, you know, stop dealing with the
19 neighborhood and if everyone helped the school
20 with some - - , everything - - and, you know, -
21 - so you can change and another thing is that if
22 you going to do this, you going to have to be
23 very serious about it, because not only these
24 schools are going to close, special education,
25 they're going to take a lot of that and that,

1 and that right there, you know, is going to
2 send a message to all the kids that are in
3 special ed that then they - - unless they - -
4 you know. So, we got to get all the - - like
5 this school right here shouldn't have been cut.
6 Every time I go to a meeting--

7 [crosstalk]

8 MR. WILLIAMS: --I - - . Our community is
9 the same thing. If, if you don't, you know,
10 come out and, you know, in force and - - you
11 have to - - there's enough people--

12 FEMALE VOICE 1: [Interposing] That's right.

13 MR. WILLIAMS: --can do it. So, you know,
14 that's all I got to say because the only thing
15 is that's going to be over the routine over and
16 over--

17 FEMALE VOICE 1: [Interposing] Got to stop
18 it.

19 MR. WILLIAMS: --so, if you have - - get it
20 done, though, sign up for the PTA because - - .

21 [crosstalk]

22 MR. WILLIAMS: If you do this, if everyone
23 PTA - - have one PTA meeting, that's a lot of
24 people, just one, because you know that most of
25 the PTA meetings, you get about 20 to 25 people.

1 Now, you could, you pull all that - - , call
2 the news, call the - - to speak out about what
3 school you want. You can have the school and
4 you can have a good school. And just get the -
5 - and do it and get those quick. Just like,
6 just like tomorrow, you have to do it quick.
7 Thank you.

8 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you - - and that
9 presentation will be by Tracy Campbell from the
10 SLT.

11 [crosstalk]

12 TRACY CAMPBELL: Good evening everyone. Uh,
13 my name is Tracy Campbell, I'm a 5th grade
14 teacher here at PS 631. Uh, this is my 12th year
15 of teaching in this building. I was here when
16 PS23 moved in, now PS631. Um, when we were
17 PS183, uh, the school closed and they shut us
18 down, we all of a sudden, we became PS631. I
19 did not think that was a good idea for them to
20 close us then. I do not think it's a good idea-
21 - .

22 [crosstalk]

23 MS. CAMPBELL: And my question is why? Why
24 is it necessary? I believe that the school is
25 both an appropriate--

1 FEMALE VOICE 1: [Interposing] That's
2 right.

3 MS. CAMPBELL: --I believe it's unnecessary,
4 I believe it's just out of order. You know, we,
5 we, we work hard in this building, we have a lot
6 of, uh, staff members who give of themselves,
7 their give of their times, they make a lot of
8 sacrifices--

9 [crosstalk]

10 MS. CAMPBELL: --they stay after school.
11 Um, they voluntarily, they stay after school.
12 And it seems as though none of this matters. It
13 seems though none of this matter. And I believe
14 what I heard a little earlier, um, is that what
15 they're looking for is better results. And I
16 tend to disagree with that, I believe that
17 they're looking for better results and I say
18 that because if they were truly looking for
19 better results, they would have been here in
20 2009-2010 when we got - - .

21 [crosstalk]

22 MS. CAMPBELL: So, where were they then? -
23 - anything, so I really believe that we have the
24 student's - - , to count it out. I, I feel like
25 we are, like, uh, that past time - - and the one

1 with - - and we - - that captain who has a - -
2 .

3 [crosstalk]

4 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you.

5 [crosstalk]

6 MS. SOLEMAN: We've got one more
7 presentation and - - , so the next presentation
8 will be from Ellen McHugh, sitting on behalf of
9 the Citywide Council of Special Education.

10 ELLEN MCHUGH: I'm not from this
11 neighborhood, but I am from a small neighborhood
12 that - - children with special needs. In your
13 information, you'll see you have a large - -
14 special needs with varying programs. I don't
15 know where those children will go once this is
16 part, this - - it is. The other part of this is
17 the issue for all of us is that this EIS is
18 supposed to be an educational impact paper, it's
19 not being - - 900 pages on the - - use. That's
20 nothing in here about special, um, reading
21 programs, there's nothing in here about
22 supportive staff, nothing in here about - - .

23 [crosstalk]

24 MS. MCHUGH: There's nothing in here - - .

25 [crosstalk]

1 MS. MCHUGH: There's nothing in here about
2 supporting the individual students with the
3 specific programs that they need. It's great to
4 have bed and it's great to have the air we
5 breathe and it's great to have all those other
6 things, but everybody wants that - - one to one
7 time together with an adult to be educated and
8 it's not that we have - - chose to read and then
9 we don't read as planned. So, that one to one
10 time we - - right program, the right day and the
11 right practice. But - - it's to do what people
12 wanted them and to succeed beyond what we had to
13 - - that. I don't know, as I said, the, the
14 history here, I do know that your principal has
15 only been here a very short time. It has been a
16 very shocking thing to me to know that a year,
17 he came in for a school that had been tossed and
18 turned and then reshaped and reorganized; was
19 given two years - - .

20 [crosstalk]

21 MS. MCHUGH: - - person, but he's been, he
22 didn't - - within 30 years to build this - - .

23 [crosstalk]

24 MS. MCHUGH: And - - so that he could in
25 three short years change the world.

1 FEMALE VOICE 1: That's right.

2 MS. MCHUGH: I can't see a - - sure it's - -

3 . MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you so much. So, that
4 concludes our presentation for the panel and I
5 now like to recognize that we've been joined by
6 council member Charles Barron and - - .

7 [crosstalk]

8 CHARLES BARRON: Uh, thank you very much.
9 We have to deliver a very, very strong message
10 because usually these meetings are exercises in
11 futility.

12 MS. MCHUGH: Yes.

13 MR. BARRON: That they have them and so they
14 have them. And then even as we sit - - ,
15 they're going to do what they want to do.

16 FEMALE VOICE 1: That's right.

17 MR. BARRON: And they probably already
18 planned on doing it.

19 FEMALE VOICE 1: That's right.

20 MR. BARRON: However, we do want to lead
21 with a deputy chancellor that I believe will
22 meet with us to really sit down and show, you
23 know, that we've been meeting, we've been
24 meeting with the panels and teachers and we have
25 to have a plan to save our school. And so we're

1 saying we want to show them the plan. We've
2 done it at other schools and it works. We want
3 to show them the plan that we have to save our
4 schools, because they know a larger picture, the
5 larger picture is that there's a real battle
6 between charter schools and public schools.

7 [crosstalk]

8 MR. BARRON: There's a real battle between
9 the mayor and teacher evaluation. So, while
10 they're battling over these ego, control, power
11 issues, the people that suffer are our children.

12 FEMALE VOICE 1: That's right.

13 [crosstalk]

14 MR. BARRON: So, step one, we want to least
15 be heard. - - public in anyway, just yelling,
16 screaming at you and you sit, you take it and
17 then do what you want to do. But at the real
18 meeting we want to set up with myself and some
19 of the parents and the teachers that we've been
20 meeting with who spent time to - - I think what,
21 what our plan that you, you'll be pleased to see
22 and give us a chance, right?

23 [crosstalk]

24 MR. BARRON: Give us a chance to show that
25 we do have a plan that you just might like and

1 get us off the list. Secondly, in addition to
2 phasing out schools where they just to plan to
3 not let any new children in until you get all
4 the grades out, they also shut down schools that
5 we - - like in May or June, they'll shut down
6 the school on June 30th and then reopen it on
7 July 1st with a new name. That way they can get
8 rid off 50% of the teachers and change the
9 administration. So, that's a battle with the
10 UFT so you going to see a lot of that. UFP will
11 probably take them to court and will sit in the
12 middle of their battles over teacher evaluations
13 but they want to connect teachers with
14 evaluations of student performance. Now on the
15 face of it, it seems reasonable. But when you
16 look at how much or lack of support that
17 teachers get--

18 FEMALE VOICE 1: [Interposing] That's right.

19 [crosstalk]

20 MR. BARRON: --they can't get the student to
21 perform on - - , then you know it was all a
22 setup. So, if you say all right, we'll take 20%
23 of the evaluation will be for student
24 performance. The student performs, the teacher
25 stays, if they don't teachers go. That's sounds

1 like a - - really have schools that don't have
2 libraries, schools that don't have an
3 afterschool program, schools that don't have
4 computer labs or science labs or arts or music
5 programs or have - - programs, schools who built
6 this lab but they - - the auditoriums and
7 schools that have three or four schools in it,
8 children leave for lunch at 10:00 in the morning
9 because - - .

10 [crosstalk]

11 MR. BARRON: So, when you have all of that
12 and then say that the teacher in the classroom
13 is responsible for getting these students to
14 learn in spite of that, how can you know there's
15 no bad teachers, the bad teachers need the help.
16 Nobody's trying to defend bad teachers. It's
17 not teachers, not children, they don't care
18 about them, they're absent all the time, they,
19 you don't have the right cultural understanding
20 about children, well then you need to get out of
21 here and go somewhere else and teach.

22 [crosstalk]

23 MR. BARRON: So, we're not trying to save
24 bad teachers. But we know we're not going to be
25 in the middle, in the middle of this evaluation

1 with the powers that be play these political
2 games. I never heard of anything more anti-
3 pedagogical stupid than closing down schools and
4 - - .

5 [crosstalk]

6 MR. BARRON: That just doesn't make any
7 sense. You know, if you have a
8 \$23,000,000,000.00 budget, a \$2,400,000,000.00
9 billion capital budget, you don't close schools
10 down to make them better. That just doesn't
11 make any sense. If a school has a problem and
12 you're supposed to make be so good with your
13 Masters in education, Ph.D.s - - then you make
14 sure that you develop a program to improve the
15 schools. Don't say that our schools can't be
16 improved. So, there's a lot of politics
17 involved in this and there's a whole lot of
18 money and contracts involved in this. How much,
19 how much more money are we going to be pay
20 consultants to make our schools better?
21 Consultants who really don't know how to make
22 the schools better. So, education is in the
23 crisis. And we're not going to be the pawns,
24 we're not going to let anybody manipulate us
25 because of some politics or power play or money

1 that you want to give to some other people and
2 some other schools and it's not going to happen.
3 So, we're going to have to do all the - - .
4 First step, we want to sit with you and show you
5 our plan. And after that, we got to do whatever
6 we have to do. And it can't be just going down
7 to the - - and meeting and screaming at them.
8 But, you know this is happening, they let us
9 ventilate and scream and shut the school down.
10 They do what they want to do. So, we have to go
11 back to the drawing board to see if we can do
12 something then say no, we just can't just do
13 that. There's going to be consequences. You
14 can't just come in here and listen to us
15 ventilate, hold up our signs and, and look
16 interested and then when everything is said and
17 done, you go back downtown and say hey, this is
18 the deal. So, parents, are y'all ready?

19 [crosstalk]

20 MR. BARRON: You'll have to take this to a
21 higher level. And we'll discuss other
22 strategies. Some people be taking them to court
23 and some to the streets. We got to discuss all
24 kinds of strategies to save our schools and not
25 just shut them down and phase them out because

1 of politics.

2 FEMALE VOICE 1: That's right.

3 MR. BARRON: So, we'll keep you informed,
4 this is just step one. We have a - - and I want
5 to say to those who have been meeting, the
6 parents, the teachers, all of those concerned
7 persons, give yourself a big handclap for really
8 putting in some long hours.

9 [applause]

10 MR. BARRON: And we have said the least they
11 should do is listen to the plan and then let us
12 have some objective, some serious, intelligent
13 educational discussion on that plan. So, we'll
14 be hooking up that meeting so we can do at least
15 that. Y'all, save our schools.

16 [crosstalk]

17 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you so much - - . So, I
18 forgot to mention that this speaker sign up list
19 is closed, but we do have the list here and if
20 you still have questions or comments, they still
21 have note cards and continue to take them - -
22 there's someone in the back holding some, so
23 they bring them right to me - - . And so, I - -
24 the first five speakers, we've got a microphone
25 right here and I do apologize in advance if I

1 mispronounce names. So, if it sounds like
2 your name and you've got numbers one through
3 five, number one is Kay Leonard. Number two is
4 Shanicia Plummer, number three Malin B. Smith,
5 number four Tyler Atkinson and number five, Myra
6 Fisher.

7 [crosstalk]

8 MS. SOLEMAN: So, the first - - as I said,
9 we - - listen to every public comment, you've
10 got 2 minutes and you've got a young lady right
11 here who's going to know when to wrap up and if
12 you can just focus and keep it as close to 2
13 minutes as possible so everyone has an
14 opportunity to speak. So, please if you could
15 just introduce yourself before you get started.

16 KATE LEONARD: Kate Leonard, representing -
17 - CSA. The DOE has scheduled 25 more schools
18 for phase out and closure and said new schools
19 open under Mayor Bloomberg are better than those
20 they replaced. Yet, in the latest round of
21 closings, 11 schools opened during the mayor's
22 elimination, ironically some of the mayor's new
23 schools are usually among those that are closed
24 and because part of their - - . New York City
25 public school system is not a place for

1 experimentation where we open - - schools to
2 students who have already been trapped and
3 traumatized by previous school changes. Then
4 there is the tragedy of all the other people who
5 have not been saved even briefly by the city's
6 new school safety net, but have been turned away
7 by new schools for reasons of poor academic
8 achievement or other reasons and sent to be
9 warehoused in other low performing schools that
10 probably will be closed also. This is a losing
11 strategy to turning around low performing
12 schools which are rarely attended by children of
13 color or economically disadvantaged communities.
14 The end game of the strategy is to eliminate
15 schools that the administration has had at least
16 a decade to fix and to improve the standard by
17 creating new schools that won't have old data
18 for as long as 40 years. The fact is that
19 closure is the admission of failure by city
20 hall. The Bloomberg administration needs to
21 take more responsibility not less for schools
22 that are not doing well rather than turning them
23 around to - - like - - for closing them and
24 washing their hands of the people and the
25 problem and as an unsuccessful remedy. Thank

1 you.

2 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you so much and if you
3 would like to submit that as a public record?

4 MS. LEONARD: - - testimony - - .

5 MS. SOLEMAN: Speaker number two if you
6 would just introduce yourself.

7 SHANICIA PLUMMER: My name is Shanicia
8 Plummer and I'm from ES631.

9 [crosstalk]

10 MS. PLUMMER: They're trying to shut, shut,
11 um, my name is Shanicia Plummer and I'm from
12 ES631, the General D. Chappie James School and I
13 am writing to you about Mayor Bloomberg's money
14 - - . Mayor Bloomberg is using his money to
15 make charter schools and close down - - .

16 [crosstalk]

17 MS. PLUMMER: And he required - - . When
18 Mayor Bloomberg does these things, he's putting
19 himself - - . It's not fair what he's doing. I
20 - - to public school and every dollar that even
21 - - charter school and get your facts right.
22 Mayor Bloomberg needs to stop making charter
23 schools because there is no difference in public
24 school. He needs to stop firing the teachers,
25 it's so heartbreaking when teachers have to work

1 for many years and are being fired. The way
2 Mayor Bloomberg can improve in this by hiring
3 more teachers and stop closing down schools.
4 That's the way we can improve - - . Thank you
5 very much for, for listening to my letter to
6 help me improve my - - because the game is over,
7 we - - . I hope you have a nice day.

8 [crosstalk]

9 MS. SOLEMAN: Now, who's next?

10 FEMALE VOICE 2: - - .

11 MS. SOLEMAN: Start from the start.

12 TYLER ATKINSON: My name is Tyler Atkinson
13 and I have a question - - . My name is Tyler
14 Atkinson and I have a question to people why are
15 you closing down my school? This is - - close
16 schools that that I - - have the right to close
17 down and I - - you know - - that you guys are
18 closing down. - - public schools.

19 FEMALE VOICE 1: That's right.

20 MR. ATKINSON: You close public schools
21 because more parents will pay for charter
22 schools and I - - school because you have - - on
23 your face.

24 [laughter]

25 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you, sir.

1 FEMALE VOICE 3: Well this is - - was
2 going to be a public comment on - - so I
3 apologize. Know what I - - ?

4 MALIN SMITH: Uh, - - we came. My name is
5 Malin Smith, - - city district rep. DOE's
6 policy of closing schools is a failure. I know
7 about this policy very well. The high school I
8 graduated from, um, Lincoln - - which was high
9 school redirection was closed down. The first
10 school I worked in IS275, we closed it down.
11 And here we are today, previous to 631, we had
12 183, closed 4 years ago. Here we are four years
13 later, I ask that Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor
14 reconsider their policy on closing schools.
15 It's a fail policy, this example of that fail
16 policy and my question is at the end of the
17 second year of 631, they submitted - - , where
18 were you?

19 [crosstalk]

20 MS. SMITH: It's obvious that the school was
21 in need of intensive support. That is evident
22 and yet you waited until after the third year
23 when they received an F to come and say no,
24 we're not going to help you, we're going to
25 phase you out and close you. So, my request is

1 that you take a look at the school and give it
2 the support it needs. Because when we close
3 schools, you destroy communities. Thank you.

4 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you so much. I think we
5 before we have Myra Fisher, I'm just going to
6 call up the next set of speakers, numbers six
7 through ten. Mavis Young, Molly Tutor, Siobhan
8 Scott and then, uh, two names, Owen Field and
9 Kareem Goubran and the Yehudith Holder. Ms.
10 Fisher, who - - .

11 MYRA FISHER: My name's Myra Fisher and I'm
12 a 4th grade teacher here and at 631. As a
13 teacher at 631, I think that closing our school
14 is wrong. The school day normally starts at
15 8:00 for our children but many of us at here
16 before that time and stay well after the school
17 day ends at 3:00. We are dedicated for our
18 students, their families and many of their
19 problems. I have been here in this building
20 since 1999. Many of the families of my students
21 have sent additional students here and we've
22 become part of their family circle. This
23 building has had many different teachers,
24 students and administration. We continue to
25 teach and focus on the learning of all of our

1 students during all of these changes. When we
2 changed from 183 to 631, you promised to support
3 our school with any and all resources. Where
4 are they? What have you done to effectively
5 help me to help my children?

6 FEMALE VOICE 4: Nothing.

7 MS. FISHER: As a teacher, I've been 100%,
8 many times we asked, we need something, we
9 aren't able to get it. The resources that we
10 need to help us - - hasn't been forthcoming.
11 Now we're back again to possibly closing our
12 school. We needed the support that was promised
13 from you, yet we, myself and my coworkers, we
14 continue to do what we have to do and what we're
15 continuing to do. The school needs us, we need
16 your help. The resources that children are
17 given in the new school, why don't you give them
18 to us?

19 FEMALE VOICE 1: That's right.

20 MS. FISHER: We, we ask you. Help us to
21 help our children. We want our children to be
22 productive leaders of tomorrow. And I've given
23 what I can and we've given what we can, we work
24 together to change and grow because you haven't
25 done what you had to do.

1 [crosstalk]

2 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you so much. Next
3 speaker is Mavis Young. Mavis Young.

4 MAVIS YOUNG: Yes. Hi, I'm Ms. Young and
5 I'm a 6th grade teacher and I'm a youth team
6 leader and I just want to say, you know, it's,
7 it's interesting to see all these people from
8 the Department of Education but as my colleagues
9 have been saying; where have you been? What - -
10 do? Now, you come in and you're trying to say
11 that we are a failure. I'm here to let you know
12 that I - - was here, I would let the teachers
13 that here, every coward that's here,
14 administrator, uh, aides, we have a, uh,
15 program, you're not the failure, they are the
16 failure.

17 [crosstalk]

18 MS. FISHER: It doesn't take much - - to
19 come in and, you know, to, see they think we're
20 a business. See, these are business people who
21 are running the Department of Education and what
22 business people do, you know, - - they got so
23 much money and, and they come in and when they -
24 - nobody, they file for bankruptcy, they - -
25 down and they start it back up, but these are

1 children. These are souls and these are lives
2 that you are dealing with, okay? We - - like I
3 was saying, we work very, very work hard and we
4 have made progress and we're, if you give us the
5 time and the resources, we can then show you
6 that. But see there's a bigger plan and the
7 bigger plan is they don't care anything about
8 our kids. They always, they don't want to
9 eventually, they want to put a charter in here
10 because each one is money. See, that's all
11 about money and big business what they want to
12 do and they are called your children. So, right
13 now, they're going to put in another school.
14 But here, I've had enough. What are you going
15 to do that's different, that what we're not
16 doing? See, they going to come over here and
17 tell you about the school, but they don't tell
18 you what they're going to do. These parents
19 need to know, because we started off as 183, you
20 shut us down. Then you started us as 631, then
21 you're not supportive. So, these parents are -
22 - . So, know what the plan is. They need to
23 know what - - , what teachers, what homework - -
24 , what's going to be done differently. I see
25 the problem, I say what I have to say, okay?

1 Because I'm telling you this, I've been
2 working here for 13 years, do you know about
3 communities this is? - - what your Rules said,
4 you're going to say that there were 20, 30
5 little kids schools that someone - - but do you
6 know what those - - are? Do you know of 20 - -
7 daily that - - school, 25. Did you not know
8 that a - - is a number one leader in - - public
9 system in today. That means that there are more
10 kids going to jail - - than getting a diploma
11 from the age of 12 to 21 are committing crimes.

12 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you - - .

13 MS. FISHER: I know I'm - - I'm here to let
14 you know that what you're doing is not right. I
15 don't send no children no - - and they do
16 whatever they want, but you know what, you shall
17 reap what you sow, understand that. You shall
18 reap what you sow, because I can't see how you
19 can are supposed to, most of you are educators,
20 can call yourself educators and think that this
21 the best policy? How - - teachers, a list of -
22 - - ones and two and I say oh, you're not a
23 great - - and I - - . We don't do that, but
24 that's okay because this is - - .

25 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you - - .

1 [crosstalk]

2 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you very much. I'm just
3 going to - - to 2 minutes so we can make sure
4 that everyone has an opportunity to speak. Our
5 next speaker is Holly Tutor and if you could,
6 please just introduce yourself and - - started.

7 HOLLY TUTOR: Hello, my name is Holly Tutor
8 and I've been working with - - since 1996. - -
9 school, he told you - - all the things that - -
10 . Well, I'm here to tell you - - that we - - .
11 When we were 183, yes, we had problems and yes,
12 they closed us down. Again, - - problems and I
13 realize that if you - - we had a music club. We
14 had a drama club. We had a lot that silent. We
15 had afterschool and that year we were on task.
16 - - view. The following year, we started to - -
17 work for being - - because I - - 634, 634 I
18 taught in the drama club, we had the - - and we
19 did a - - . It was a - - production, the
20 children enjoyed it and guess what? Their
21 scores reflected it.

22 [crosstalk]

23 MS. TUTOR: Their problem - - and therefore
24 the scores will go down. Everybody knows if you
25 don't have services, scores going to go - - . -

1 - not a - - science. Only - - is when you
2 open a new school, - - .

3 FEMALE VOICE 1: That's right.

4 MS. TUTOR: So why are you going - -
5 different? Good night, good evening.

6 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you so much. Our next
7 speaker is Siobhan Scott. If you would just
8 introduce yourself.

9 SIOBHAN SCOTT: Good evening, my name is
10 Siobhan Scott. I'm a proud 5th grade teachers of
11 your - - .

12 [crosstalk]

13 MS. SCOTT: I want to say first of all thank
14 you for listening to us. I presume it's with
15 honesty and integrity and I am going to back to
16 what you said where you watched the data, the
17 trends and the data and that's what you based
18 your decision on. There were four patterns in
19 2009 and '10. You were only choosing to look at
20 two. We told you clearly, it was obvious from
21 the parents and the teachers, we stayed - - .
22 Now, you were nowhere to be seen. And I want to
23 get back to what your intention is in the new
24 school. You intend to provide support - - .
25 And intense support means that you meet needs of

1 the school and the students. School hasn't
2 changed, where were you in 2009? We haven't
3 seen - - .

4 [crosstalk]

5 MS. SCOTT: And I would like to give a
6 little bit of history. I started my career with
7 the DOE and - - school ten years ago. We were
8 working an action plan, two years we turned that
9 school around and in the last, last eight years
10 it has remained a - - and that's - - . Thanks.

11 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you, so - - two things.
12 Owen Field and Kareem Goubran.

13 OWEN FIELD: Hi, my name is Owen Field, I'm
14 the graffiti - - streets here in the
15 neighborhood, I'm here to show support for the
16 school, uh, it's been my pleasure to work with,
17 uh, some of the, the, the principal, parent - -
18 , parents, SAC and my experience, experience
19 has only been that the above has impressed me
20 with their community engagement, uh, passion and
21 hard work. I've seen them many - - work
22 together start, to start the graffiti program
23 and I want to see that continue. They're
24 clearly going to take advantage of any
25 opportunity to help these kids and I think the

1 school's in the process of great things given
2 the appropriate time and appropriate resources
3 and it's a shame it's going to be closed because
4 of the short term and one dimensional data
5 points.

6 KAREEM GOUBRAN: My name is Kareem Goubran,
7 I'm also from the graffiti - - streets. Um, in
8 hindsight, we've said all we - - try to support
9 this community and support this school and I'll
10 just briefly say, uh, the commitment that I've
11 seen and - - quality of the teachers, the
12 administration here at has been unparalleled.
13 We partnered with several schools in Manhattan
14 and there's nothing that I have seen, principal
15 or - - or staff unwilling to do for the sake of
16 these students. So, whatever change that needs
17 to be made, I would say one things - - the
18 administration, they would - - . I've seen
19 above and beyond, above and beyond from this
20 staff and this administration, so I would
21 encourage the powers that be to work with this
22 committed core to help these children. Thank
23 you so much.

24 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you so much. Our next
25 speaker is Yehudith Holder.

1 YEHUDITH HOLDER: Good afternoon, I'm Mrs.
2 Holder and I'm proud to be a - - here at PS631 -
3 - . And I have - - since 1999 and I've seen
4 this school at its peak and so sad to say now at
5 its low. And I'm very, very confused and that's
6 why I'm standing here now because we said, we
7 fixed this and they're broken. I've been here
8 when we were, in 1999 and we were - - . So, I -
9 - . There was nothing wrong at that time. But
10 what happened? It changed, people went with
11 nothing from here. And when they told me now
12 it's time to fix something that's not broken.
13 So, I - - I'm really so very, very, very
14 confused. When we were at, like I said, 1999
15 when I started here, 183, we had all the
16 programs, all these supports to help our
17 students.

18 FEMALE VOICE 1: That's right.

19 MS. HOLDER: That is not the case right now.
20 Do you know - - ? They would say the same
21 thing. Why do we have equity in these schools?
22 Again, talk about scores are you compare to
23 other schools, do they have the same resources
24 that we have, do we have the same people that
25 they have? All that is a very, very big part in

1 how our students can, um, perform. And I
2 think that's the basic piece when people start
3 saying about - - and how the students perform,
4 all this - - do they have the same playing
5 field? And like I said, we have - - scores - -
6 more - - and that's not fair to our students.
7 And that's my biggest concern right now. What
8 we're going to do differently besides having a -
9 - ? We've seen this happen over and over again.
10 Change the administration, but we do see equity
11 in resources and that is the key. And that's my
12 - - one question. How are we going to do things
13 differently other than change administration in
14 terms of the - - you put a level playing field
15 and resources for our students?

16 [crosstalk]

17 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you - - next, our next
18 speakers. Roshanna Ross, Gloria McRae Knight,
19 Niani McMoore, Lona Bradenton, Rhonda Arnold,
20 Ms. Jarvis and Karen Alford. That's 11 through
21 17, so Roshanna Ross. Roshanna Ross?

22 ROSHANNA ROSS: Yes.

23 MS. SOLEMAN: Microphone is right there, if
24 you would just introduce yourself, feel free to
25 get started.

1 MS. ROSS: Um, well, good afternoon
2 everyone. Um, I'm Roshanna Ross, um, I'm pretty
3 much a parent at 631. Um, I'm a product of 183.
4 I was under the, um, leadership of Ryan Epps,
5 like I said before, um, - - believe that she can
6 succeed. When I believe, I achieved and
7 succeeded, I ended up going to an Ivy League
8 school which was NYU. Ms. McCoy tells kids to
9 shine and these kids are shining. So, to tell
10 me that - - that time will come when there are
11 three schools in this building, how are these
12 kids going to shine? That's what I want to
13 know. These principals are doing the best, um,
14 students, teachers are doing what they can to
15 make these kids shine. These kids are doing so
16 wonderful right now. The first year we didn't
17 get a, uh, a policy review. Second year, we got
18 the D, third year we got an F. I'm sorry, the
19 second they do this is not true. I'm pretty
20 much for the kids, behind - - who are telling
21 you they didn't notice - - receive nothing on
22 page two. Nothing on page two. - - page two,
23 so how can the school get up off their feet when
24 nothing on page two is true.

25 FEMALE VOICE 1: That's right.

1 MS. ROSS: There was no support to help
2 this school get up off their feet, plain and
3 simple. Um, all I'm going to say is that we
4 really need the support of - - give it to you,
5 all we need is the support. All we need was the
6 support. No D, no F if we got the support. I
7 guarantee you, she had to clean up.

8 FEMALE VOICE 1: That's right.

9 MS. ROSS: She had to clean up, you cannot
10 expect today - - four in one year when she has
11 to clean up mess that was left behind; it's
12 plain and simple. You can't give a three or
13 four when the child is constantly getting ones
14 and twos, plain and simple. But all I'm trying
15 to say is that it's going to work out, don't
16 worry, all is well, we'll be back in September,
17 631.

18 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you so much. - - Gloria
19 McKnight.

20 GLORIA MCKNIGHT. That's me. I am a three
21 term - - school. This school right here. I
22 went to this school in the 3rd grade. My
23 children went to this school. My grandkids go
24 to this school. So, if there was a problem with
25 this school, my grandkids would - - . The

1 problem that I have is with administration,
2 not this school, I'm talking about the DOE. If
3 that's the problem with the school, sir, I can
4 remember when the state controlled the school.
5 Sirs, when you came to - - they came in with
6 resources, hands on, not chitty chat. They
7 worked with you. I say - - move that up. I
8 don't say, I don't, I do volunteer, I am a
9 certified teacher. I do volunteer in
10 classrooms, I don't see anybody coming in here,
11 I didn't see anybody giving anybody anything.
12 You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.
13 It's not going to happen. We don't prove
14 miracles. And that's what y'all expect the
15 principal to do miracles with her staff on a
16 shoestring budget. If you focus - - I guarantee
17 they have given a - - . Now, on top of that,
18 the children that we - - have so many issues.
19 How do you expect the children to be helped by
20 some of their parents when their parents don't
21 even have a high school diploma? But you want
22 us to do a miracle. I'm sorry, but that's not
23 going to happen. You got to, yeah, I see you -
24 - . What you need to do, you need to come give
25 them the resources, we think that's going to

1 help our children. Only person that are
2 failing right now is our children.

3 FEMALE VOICE 1: That's right.

4 MS. ROSS: And my granddaughter is 7 years
5 old and to top it off, and you know what she
6 said, why they closing our schools? Why? And
7 you know we got nothing - - . I told her the
8 same building, the same mess, but a different
9 name.

10 [crosstalk]

11 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you very much. Our next
12 speaker is Niani McMoore. She's only 13, Niani
13 McMoore.

14 NIANI MCMOORE: My name is Niani McMoore and
15 I've been a student in PS631. I come today to
16 tell you how great this school is. We, we learn
17 at almost everything. My dad and my uncle came
18 to this school when, when they were kids. I
19 came to this school because of them. I came to
20 this school because of how much I knew about it,
21 how good it is. We, we have textbooks that have
22 ripped pages and y'all can't give us nothing.

23 [crosstalk]

24 MS. MCMOORE: It has scribbled scabbled
25 things inside and y'all can't bring us new

1 textbooks. And I see young people smiling and
2 stop smiling, but I'm serious.

3 [crosstalk]

4 Ms. MCMOORE: And I'm going to save my
5 school.

6 [crosstalk]

7 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you - - . - - 14 - - .

8 [crosstalk]

9 RHONDA ARNOLD: Thank you for coming out and
10 listening to students from PS631. Hello, my
11 name is Rhonda Arnold - - .

12 [crosstalk]

13 MS. ARNOLD: I have heard that Mr. Bloomberg
14 wants to make student's education better by
15 closing public schools. Then he will turn them
16 into charter schools. Mr. Bloomberg has picked
17 PS631 as a school that's chosen for student
18 improvement. He thinks that this school should
19 stay - - . I think that our school is doing
20 well with most students. The principal has been
21 making sure the students have a safe learning
22 environment. Teachers try to rescue their
23 school to the next, to the next grade. Students
24 can participate in clubs like Scrabble or
25 basketball. We have special Sunday breakfast

1 shining ceremony. Students have good, uh,
2 attendance and great work. I am sure kid's
3 scores on tests have risen since they have been
4 working at PS631. Children can go - - that
5 teaches them about the US or teaches them about
6 history. Children try their best to achieve
7 their goal to pass their grade. So, you can see
8 that our school is wonderful. We have to stand
9 against the mayor's mismanagement of our public
10 schools.

11 [crosstalk]

12 MS. ARNOLD: At other schools, at other
13 schools they have risen up to save their public
14 school, but not us. The whole school of PS631
15 will stand on their two feet and fight for our
16 school. Save our schools, save, save our - -
17 and save our school. Thank you.

18 [crosstalk]

19 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you Ms. Arnold. Our
20 next speaker is Gloria Brendman - - .

21 [crosstalk]

22 GLORIA BRENDMAN: Okay. Hi, thank you, I'm
23 honored to be, um, visiting PS631, your school
24 and I'm a visitor here but I'm honored and I'm,
25 I'm come from district 13 where I have been a

1 public school teacher for over 30 years. I am
2 a product of the New York City public school
3 system, its elementary schools, high school and,
4 um, I think I got an excellent education. Um,
5 and I have a few questions and I also wanted to
6 ask since they are really encouraging us to ask
7 questions; um, I'll take this opportunity. Um,
8 I'd like to who benefits from the school
9 closings? Well, any of you can answer that
10 because maybe I can be - - people, some of the
11 people up front. We know who benefits. The
12 charter schools benefit, they get - - state, the
13 benefit. Closing school down and then reopening
14 it, it doesn't make any sense, it doesn't work,
15 it didn't work last year, it didn't work the
16 year before that. And it's not going to work
17 this year. The education mayor really needs to
18 know what that means because he doesn't. Um,
19 how do children feel who are in a closing
20 school? Um, the two young ladies that spoke
21 before me, I think that, um, it doesn't make
22 anyone feel really good to know that you're in a
23 school that the Department of Education wants to
24 close. It's not the way you provide decent
25 education to children, doing that to them. How

1 do you, what, how does the, the Department of
2 Education make the decisions to close these
3 schools? They use these, um, data trends. Now,
4 what are these data trends? This school's been
5 open for two years. If this school had been
6 open for four years, I'm, I'm going to be guess
7 that your scores probably would have been
8 higher. This is every schools score were higher
9 four years ago and five years ago and then they
10 recalibrated the scores and suddenly all the
11 scores went down.

12 [crosstalk]

13 MS. BRENDMAN: You can - - . And also, how
14 much, how much money is wasted, a lot. So, you
15 know what, how many schools did they close this
16 year? 25, closing schools, 30 closed schools
17 that were going to turned into, um, closing
18 schools, there were transformation out of the
19 turnaround schools. That's, let's see, 53. So,
20 what can we do about it? You have to, all of us
21 have to, organize together. Now, I'd like to
22 invite everybody to come to join other people
23 who are in closing schools Sunday at 60 Wolf
24 Street and join the Occupy Department of
25 Education, so but you have to get together with

1 the other schools. Alone, you're vulnerable.
2 Together we are very, very strong and thank you.

3 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you - - .

4 [crosstalk]

5 MS. SOLEMAN: And next we'll go to Ms.
6 Jarvis, speaker number 16, Ms. Jarvis.

7 MALE VOICE 1: She's not here, she's - - .

8 MS. SOLEMAN: Speaker number 17, Karen
9 Alford.

10 [crosstalk]

11 KAREN ALFORD: Good evening all, I'm Karen
12 Alford, UFT vice president.

13 [crosstalk]

14 MS. ALFORD: I'm, I apologize to all the
15 teachers and the parents and the community folk
16 in the audience because I'm just tired. I'm
17 tired and I'm frustrated and I know this is - -
18 you can't do management. Having taught here for
19 a long time in the district and I remember when
20 183 was the gem of the district and the other
21 schools can't - - and I remember when 180, when
22 183 was shut down. And 683 became that was
23 reopened, was opened. And I sat on the 18D and
24 you know what? It took most of the teachers
25 from 183 because they were damn good.

1 FEMALE VOICE 1: That's right.

2 MS. ALFORD: And I apologize to the children
3 in the audience. And then you started this new
4 school with the majority of the teachers that
5 were here and you did not support the school.
6 And so you know what we've seen? We've seen a
7 day of disaster under Mayor Bloomberg - - .

8 [crosstalk]

9 MS. ALFORD: That's what we've seen. We've
10 seen fail policies, we've seen them teach
11 children that they are invisible. We've seen
12 teachers - - invisible. It is not invisible.
13 And instead of thinking about teaching teachers
14 again and changing the administration, maybe we
15 need to think about changing the people - - .
16 That could - - .

17 [crosstalk]

18 MS. ALFORD: - - support the schools and - -
19 we've seen. Thank you.

20 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you so much. Our, our
21 time - - Ms. Jarvis. Ms. Jarvis. No, okay, so
22 that is the end of our speaker sign up list and
23 we're going to try and - - to the question and
24 answers, so we have three questions that were
25 submitted. I'm going to read them and if I,

1 sorry, - - additional questions, - - as we
2 speak. So, I'll read them and then I'm going to
3 invite the deputy chancellor to respond. And I
4 just want to say I very much appreciate how
5 respectful you've been thus far and I'm hoping
6 that you continue and give the deputy chancellor
7 an, an opportunity to respond to the questions
8 that have been submitted. If there are
9 additional questions that have been submitted
10 and we are unable to respond to them tonight, as
11 I said, they'll be included in the analysis of
12 public comment which is posted on, published and
13 also provided to panel members. So, the first
14 question submitted why do you want to close this
15 school? So, - - why you want to close this
16 school and now I will invite deputy chancellor
17 to respond.

18 MR. STERNBERG: So, thank you Jenny. I
19 don't want, after your thanks to everyone for
20 respectful tone this evening, I want to repeat a
21 few things that I said at the beginning which is
22 very, very - - it is not my intention this
23 evening given the passion that I've seen from
24 folks in this room, uh, and from councilman, uh,
25 I understand how the committed you are, you all

1 are to the policies. It's not my, uh,
2 intention to convince you that you are wrong or
3 I am right. And I, I want to share with - - .
4 Uh, my purpose here this evening is to hear your
5 feedback. I've heard. My purpose here is to
6 offer, uh, some clarification as to why the
7 chancellor arrived at this decision. I've begun
8 to do that. Your councilman asked for a meeting
9 with me and my team to discuss, uh, the proposal
10 and in more detail from the action - - , uh, as
11 I said to him before he departed, we'd be happy
12 to take that meeting and look forward to ongoing
13 conversation about this proposal.

14 [crosstalk]

15 MR. STERNBERG: So, there were, there were a
16 number of questions and, uh, Jenny has offered
17 the first. Why are we, why have we arrived at
18 this decision to close this school? I shared an
19 overview of the performance trends, the data
20 trends that we, we see at this school. So, I'm
21 not sharing those again, uh, I was simply tell
22 you by saying it is not one thing. It is a
23 number of trends across several dimensions and
24 we arrive at this decision not just by looking
25 at numbers or - - but by speaking with folks who

1 are in, in schools, both this individual
2 school and ones like it who understand what it
3 takes to produce dramatically better results
4 quickly--

5 FEMALE VOICE 5: [Interposing] This school
6 hasn't--

7 MR. STERNBERG: --we also, we also compared
8 results to 39 other schools in a peer index. We
9 look at schools in that peer index that serve
10 virtually the same student makeup. The same
11 percentage of special education students, the
12 same, the same - - .

13 [crosstalk]

14 MR. STERNBERG: The question, the question
15 was asked and I'm simply giving our answer.

16 FEMALE VOICE 1: That's a lie.

17 MR. STERNBERG: And --

18 [crosstalk]

19 MR. STERNBERG: Could we not improve the - -
20 because this is on the record. So, all I do--

21 [crosstalk]

22 MR. STERNBERG: --all I'm doing is stating
23 how we arrived at this - - . The data for the
24 school that is 26% of, of student population is
25 deficient in English, that is the bottom 10%

1 statewide. 31% is in the bottom, sorry 31% of
2 the school is deficient in math, that's the
3 bottom 8% statewide. We had other schools
4 similar, similarly situated, we see the same
5 resources, we see the same supports that have
6 done far better - - .

7 [crosstalk]

8 MS. SOLEMAN: - - so we move on to the next
9 question. We'll move on to the next question.
10 Thank you for your patience. Our next question
11 is what do want to be different that wasn't done
12 in 2009, so we have again, what do you want to
13 be different that wasn't done in 2009 - - deputy
14 chancellor's response.

15 MR. STERNBERG: So, Karen talked about the
16 18D process. And so as a technical matter, the
17 school, the - - coming in, the proposed school
18 if it is approved, will pursue an 18D committee
19 approach. Right, so just as happened in the
20 transition from 183 to 631, a - - , a new school
21 leader will propose that to be approved in - -
22 if, if the - - approves the proposal would come
23 forward, form an 18D committee and would
24 interview anyone from 631 that the school who is
25 teaching now, who is interested in a position in

1 the new school; exactly what happened from 183
2 to 631.

3 [crosstalk]

4 MR. STERNBERG: We were - - . So, a number
5 of comments have been made speaking about the
6 fact that this is a new school, a school started
7 in the last four years. And we acknowledge that
8 while not every one of our new schools started
9 under this mayor and under this chancellor, I've
10 had a dramatic, dramatically better results than
11 we've hoped for. The overwhelming - - of
12 schools starting in the last decade, you have
13 seen graduation rates go from 49% when this
14 mayor started office to 65% today. And there is
15 so much work to be done. It has been noted that
16 we - - proposing to phase out a number of
17 schools that have opened in the last decade and
18 we, we do that as obligation. An obligation
19 that we know we can do better and we may propose
20 to - - . The seven schools that have been
21 started in this administration that were
22 proposed for phase out this year represent less
23 than 3% of the over 500 new schools that have
24 been started in the last ten years and the vast,
25 vast, vast majority of those 500 schools, over

1 130 of which are charter, have performed
2 incredibly.

3 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you, so the next
4 question is actually, I think, a group of
5 questions. We had questions related to how
6 parents can have their voices heard. Uh, so
7 I'll read that and the question is how can a
8 parent have their voices heard?

9 MR. STERNBERG: So, uh, the, there are a
10 number of, of ways for parents to be involved
11 here. I want to note that when the school went
12 on the list of 50 schools for consideration for
13 this intervention, the department,
14 superintendent, members of the - - staff came to
15 the school and met with the parents and with the
16 faculty that were, uh, the principal and the SRT
17 to discuss the proposal and begin the process of
18 collecting feedback. Jenny offered, I think at
19 the beginning of the interview and she'll do it
20 again, but let me just for the record, uh, share
21 with you that, uh, we have a phone number, we
22 have an email address to which parents can send
23 their feedback. I also, again, want to
24 reiterate that the council member has requested
25 time, uh, for me and my team, uh, and, and

1 communicated that a number of parents will be
2 involved in that conversation. So, we encourage
3 you to participate in that - - .

4 FEMALE VOICE 6: [Interposing] He said the
5 parents and teachers.

6 MR. STERNBERG: --he did say that--

7 FEMALE VOICE 6: [Interposing] Yes.

8 MR. STERNBERG: --we recorded that - - as
9 well. So, the email address is
10 e23proposals@schools.nyc.gov. The phone number,
11 uh, is (212) 374-0205. Um, uh, and I want to
12 also emphasize, right, Jenny will share those
13 again as we conclude. Um, I also want to, uh,
14 be sure that - - understand that every comment
15 that is put forward this evening, every comment
16 is, uh, that's sent by email or voice mail is
17 put into the public record and - - members, uh,
18 we - - through the department and, and, um, the,
19 uh, the February 9th - - .

20 MS. SOLEMAN: So, we've got one final
21 question here. Um, and this is could you
22 elaborate on your overview of past strategic
23 improvement efforts, I'll read that again, could
24 you elaborate on your overview of past strategic
25 improvement efforts and again, I'll - - deputy

1 chancellor's response.

2 MR. STERNBERG: So, uh, what I'll say here
3 is there's, the materials that are in the
4 initial impact statement are not pro forma, they
5 are not generic bullet points that we put in
6 every - - . So, those bullet points are
7 supplied from the superintendent, from the
8 network of cluster teams, from CFN that
9 characterize the kinds of support that the
10 school had been provided over time. Uh, those
11 fall into four categories. Uh, supports for
12 leaders, instructional support, occupational
13 support, student support. Uh, and, uh, again
14 those are specific activities that they have
15 been - - in by the network and the
16 superintendent and - - to support the school.
17 They involve summer institutes which were paid
18 for session opportunities for administration in
19 the school and teachers in the school to
20 participate in workshops for - - , on curriculum
21 mapping, including understanding by design, from
22 - - framework and, uh, other teaching and
23 learning opportunities.

24 [crosstalk]

25 MR. STERNBERG: There were workshop,

1 workshops for principals and educators from
2 the school providing support in developing
3 summaries for short term cycles of observation,
4 uh, and other supports that are characterized,
5 uh, in the - - .

6 [crosstalk]

7 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you and we have a member
8 of the panel would like to pose questions, so
9 I'll hand the mike.

10 MS. MCHUGH: I just have a short question.
11 The school is closing and yet the state, in
12 their accountability status, calls the school's
13 in good standing. The school needed improvement
14 by the state - - under registration with you?

15 [crosstalk]

16 MR. STERNBERG: So, yeah, I can answer that
17 question here. And you asked the question - -
18 how, how special needs students are being
19 served. So, um, to your first question the
20 state and the city are in constant conversation
21 about this, right. Because in our progress
22 reports, we look at student growth, uh, and we
23 value student growth. We also evaluate
24 proficiency and that is what is primary to see
25 success to know whether a school's going to be

1 staying around. They look at straight
2 proficiency and how it compares to other schools
3 across the state. What we look at is
4 combination of both proficiency and growth. And
5 it is in these categories that this school has
6 struggled the most, right. I mentioned that
7 growth as a - - great against other schools,
8 citywide and in the peer index, the growth here
9 is very low. Proficiency is also very low. 8%
10 on - - math and the bottom 8% on the - - , 10%
11 on math. But it is a different, uh, inputs and
12 the data that we watch, especially on the
13 growth, that this school has risen to such a
14 level of concern. On the students with special
15 needs, I want to be clear that like every, uh,
16 every zone school, the new school that we're
17 proposing is a zone school, it will be open to
18 all comers, that, that students in upper grades
19 will continued to be served by uh, uh, the
20 school at the - - 631 until it phases out. And
21 the new school will take students who are - - to
22 the school regardless of their IEP and we'll
23 seek and serve them in - - .

24 MS. SOLEMAN: Thank you so much. So, that's
25 the end of the question and answer portion. And

1 as I said, if there are additional questions
2 that come up, please do contact us. I'll give
3 the email and phone number again, I want to
4 reconfirm that the email is e23, that's e number
5 2, number 3, proposals at schools.nyc.gov and
6 the telephone number is (212) 374-0208 and I'm
7 just saying that I appreciate how respectful
8 everyone has been, um, and the, all information
9 will be included in the analysis of public
10 comment which is published online and shared
11 with panel for educational policy. They will
12 have their vote on February 9th at Brooklyn
13 Technical High School, um, so thank you so much
14 for coming and this joint public hearing is
15 officially closed.

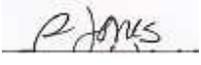
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature 

Date_____1/25/12_____