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

**Co-location of Achievement First
University Prep High School in
Building K111**

January 14, 2015

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MR. JOHN BARBELLA: Good evening, parents,
3 students, teachers, administrators, guests,
4 local politicians, the superintendent, the
5 Department of Education, and the CEC. If
6 everybody would take their seats at this time so
7 we can begin. My name is Dr. Barbella. I'm the
8 principal of I.S. 347. I want to welcome
9 everyone. I thank you for coming out on such a
10 cold evening. We're here to voice our opinion
11 in the public hearing and this is your chance to
12 speak regarding the possible co-location. At
13 this time I'm going to give it over to the
14 Cadet's, which is a program in our building.
15 Please stand. Thank you. Please be seated.

16 MR. TIM COSTANZA: Good evening, everybody.
17 Thank you again for joining us for this hearing.
18 It's really great we have such a large community
19 turnout here. I know that there are several of
20 your community's elected officials here and
21 representatives from your elected official's
22 office. We're going to let them have their time
23 to speak as well. Just two reminders that we do
24 have translation services available in the front
25 and she's going to say what I'm saying after.

1 We also have a representative from the CEC here
2 and they're also going to speak tonight and
3 you'll hear from some members of the school
4 leadership teams of both I.S. 347 and I.S. 349.
5 And again, we do have a speaker sign-up, so I
6 did see that some of you have taken advantage of
7 signing up to speak tonight and we're really
8 glad to do that and we look forward to hearing
9 what you have to say. My name is Tim Costanza.
10 I'm from the Department of Education. This is a
11 joint public hearing that the superintendent,
12 Lillian Druck, Superintendent for District 32,
13 will be the Chancellor's designee for tonight's
14 hearing. I did before we start want to make one
15 announcement because again, like I said, it's
16 really good that we have so many community
17 stakeholders here, elected officials, and the
18 CEC. I did want to share an update that many of
19 you may be aware of and some of you may not be,
20 but just last year there was an approved
21 proposal to co-locate Achievement First's middle
22 school at P.S. 299. That was approved by the
23 PEP. Since then the new administration has come
24 on and pledged to review those proposals and
25 those proposals were under review. I am able to

1 share with you tonight, for those of you that
2 aren't aware, that that proposal will not be
3 going through. Thank you. Just to give you a
4 very small context, Achievement First has
5 decided that they are not going to be opening
6 that school in P.S. 299 and that is the reason
7 that the proposal was -- they shared that
8 information with the department and we spoke
9 with the Chancellor and she was able to share
10 that with Mayor de Blasio and the
11 administration. And so just wanted to give you
12 an update. This is a separate hearing for a
13 totally separate proposal, but I thought this
14 was a good opportunity for us to share that
15 update with you while we had so many members of
16 the community here. So I wanted to share that
17 with you. And I'm going to pass the microphone.
18 I'm going to let that be translated very
19 briefly. I totally forgot that that had to
20 happen, so excuse me one second.

21 MR. COSTANZA: I'm going to turn it over now
22 to Superintendent Druck, who is going to begin
23 the joint public hearing for this proposal.
24 Thank you again and thank you for your help.

25 MS. LILLIAN DRUCK: Good evening. Welcome.

1 This is a joint public hearing of the
2 Department of Education, Community Education
3 Council, and school leadership teams for the
4 proposed co-location of the high school grades
5 of Achievement First Bushwick and Achievement
6 First East New York in Building K111 with I.S.
7 347 School of Humanities and I.S. 349 Math
8 Science and Technology beginning in 2015-2016
9 school year. I am community school
10 superintendent from District 32, Lillian Druck.
11 We have asked the District 32 Community
12 Education Council and the school leadership
13 teams from I.S. 347 and I.S. 349 to participate
14 in this joint public hearing. I am joined
15 tonight by Principal John Barbella from I.S.
16 347, Principal Roy Parris from I.S. 349, and
17 President of the Community Education Council,
18 Victorina Lugo. We are also joined by Maureen
19 Murphy from SUNY Charter Schools Institute. The
20 hearing is being audio and video recorded. The
21 purpose of this hearing is for you to provide
22 comments about the proposal. Before I describe
23 the proposal I want to make sure you are all
24 aware of the opportunity to provide your input.
25 All those who wish to speak must sign up in the

1 speaker sign-up area located just outside the
2 auditorium, as announced earlier. The sign-up
3 list will close in 15 minutes. Speakers will be
4 given the floor in the order that they signed up
5 to speak. All speakers are limited to two
6 minutes. There may be elected officials or
7 actually there are elected officials in the
8 audience. Welcome. If there are any additional
9 elected officials we will give them the
10 opportunity to speak first and we will do our
11 best as we move on tonight to accommodate them
12 at the first opportune moment. Those who are
13 here at the start of the public comment segment
14 will be asked to speak first. All comments will
15 be mentioned in the analysis of public comment
16 to be published and provided to the panel for
17 educational policy the evening before the panel
18 votes and that vote is scheduled for Thursday,
19 January 29th. In addition, we welcome any
20 comments and feedback you may have prior to 24
21 hours before the panel votes on this proposal.
22 The email address and phone number where
23 comments may be made are
24 D32proposals@schools.nyc.gov. And the telephone
25 number, (212) 374-0208. I will continue with

1 the proposal summary. Achievement First
2 Bushwick Charter School and Achievement First
3 East New York Charter School are existing
4 charter schools serving grades K-12. The high
5 school grades of Achievement First Bushwick and
6 Achievement First East New York are collectively
7 known as Achievement First University Prep
8 Charter High School and are currently being
9 served in Building K434 located at 1485 Pacific
10 Street in Brooklyn in Community School District
11 17. In order for the high school grades to be
12 able to grow to their fully authorized
13 enrollment and fully authorized or planned grade
14 spans in one location and continue to function
15 as Achievement First University Prep, the school
16 must be located in a building with enough
17 available space to enable that growth.
18 Therefore the purpose of this proposal is to co-
19 locate Achievement First University Prep in
20 Building K111 to support the educational
21 continuity of students currently enrolled in the
22 high school grades of Achievement First Bushwick
23 and Achievement First East New York.
24 Achievement First University Prep will continue
25 to be comprised of the high school grades of

1 Achievement First Bushwick, whose middle school
2 grades are currently sited in Building K383
3 located at 1300 Green Avenue, here in District
4 32. And the high school grades of Achievement
5 First East New York, whose middle school grades
6 are currently sited in Building K65 located at
7 158 Richmond Street, Brooklyn, New York in
8 District 19. As you may be aware, there are
9 recent amendments to the New York State
10 Education Law, which provides certain new and
11 expanding charter schools with access to
12 facilities. In that context, Achievement First
13 Bushwick and Achievement First East New York
14 made a co-location request to the Department of
15 Education for space to accommodate Achievement
16 First University Prep's authorized and planned
17 enrollment and grade span. Achievement First
18 Bushwick is authorized by the State University
19 of New York, SUNY, to serve grades K-12.
20 Achievement First East New York is authorized by
21 the Department of Ed to serve grades K-12. As
22 part of its recent charter renewal application,
23 Achievement First East New York, has informed
24 the Department of Education that it intends to
25 continue its phase in to serve grades K-12 if

1 renewal is approved. Should the Department of
2 Education deny Achievement First East New York's
3 application for renewal the educational impact
4 statement and the building utilization plan,
5 copies of which are available tonight, will be
6 revised accordingly? For the purposes of the
7 posted EIS and BUP it is assumed that
8 Achievement First East New York's renewal
9 application will be approved by its authorizer,
10 the Department of Education, to serve K-12. If
11 this proposal is approved, beginning in
12 September 2015, students from I.S. 347 and I.S.
13 349 will begin sharing Building K111 with ninth
14 through eleventh grade students from Achievement
15 First University Prep. In the 2016-2017 school
16 year, Achievement First University Prep will
17 reach its full scale grade span serving grades
18 9-12 in K111 with students from I.S. 347 and
19 I.S. 349. The proposed co-location of
20 Achievement First University Prep is not
21 expected to impact the admissions, enrollment,
22 or educational options of students currently
23 attending I.S. 347 and I.S. 349. Additionally,
24 I.S. 349 is part of the school renewal program,
25 which will result in the school becoming a

1 community school. This proposal will not
2 impact the school's participation in the school
3 renewal program. If this proposal is approved
4 by the panel for educational policy the
5 Department of Education will continue to work
6 closely with I.S. 349 community to ensure all
7 students receive the individualized support they
8 need. We will now begin with the formal
9 presentations, and I will be calling our elected
10 officials. Assembly Woman Maritza Davilla.

11 MS. MARITZA DAVILLA: I would like to be
12 fair so I want to hear from the parents first.
13 I want to give the parents the respect of
14 speaking and letting us know what it is that
15 they want. I'm an elected official, yes, but
16 I'm a community resident first and I'm a mother
17 first. Okay. So I'm going to let our
18 Councilman Reynoso speak and I will have three
19 people from, if you don't mind, our regular
20 school, public school. I hear there is some
21 parents here from charter schools as well.
22 Okay. And then I will take everything into
23 account and I will speak, if you don't mind.
24 But I want to give you the respect first because
25 parents and children come first.

1 MS. DRUCK: So to continue with the
2 elected official's sign-in sheet, Jeff Lowell,
3 Brooklyn Borough President. And now we have
4 Councilman Reynoso.

5 MR. ANTONIO REYNOSO: Buenas noches, mi
6 gente. How's everybody doing? I just want to
7 say that if you ever want to see change ever in
8 your life you do it this way. You organize and
9 you show up. So I just want to thank everybody,
10 every parent, every child, everyone that's here
11 letting the DOE know that we care and that we
12 know and that we're going to do everything we
13 can to make sure that our children are getting
14 the best education possible. I want to thank
15 everybody for giving me the opportunity to
16 speak. And this is extremely important for me
17 so I want to make sure that it's said well in
18 Spanish, so I might translate myself. As a
19 former student of Public School Middle High
20 School 50, a young Latino resident of the
21 neighborhood of Williamsburg, we know for a long
22 time how the Department of Education has treated
23 communities of color. I understand the concern
24 of parents today. Education for me has been the
25 way to climb up the economic ladder. It has and

1 must be the great equalizer among all people,
2 independently of their nationality and economic
3 background or race. Today I'm deeply concerned
4 with the way the administration is allowing
5 gentrifying communities to go through the
6 struggle and lack of services and resources. If
7 we add complexity to an already challenging
8 environment we are making this mission
9 impossible. Parents are the cornerstone of our
10 communities by being the ones that will keep our
11 generations together, shaping the future of
12 younger generations, and assisting in the well-
13 being of our seniors and our children alike.
14 That's why today I'm a fierce advocate of
15 community schools and the school renewal program
16 in communities like Bushwick. Some of us might
17 not know what community renewal program is.
18 What it's doing is it's taking the school
19 building and it's adding social services,
20 immigration services, health services, dental
21 services. All these things are going to happen
22 in this building next year. The school building
23 is not going to be a site to only deal with
24 education and academic issues. It's going to
25 assist the entire family. The entire family is

1 going to get resources here and I'm really
2 excited about the community school that's coming
3 into this building. By introducing two other
4 schools to this building, we're adding an
5 unacceptable burden on the school leadership and
6 more specifically our principals, who on top of
7 making sure their own school is managed at the
8 highest level will have to design a program to
9 turn I.S. 349 into a community school, not
10 knowing how the coordination with an additional
11 school leadership is going to play out. So what
12 we're doing in a time when one of our principals
13 has to go through a school renewal program and
14 make this school a community school we're going
15 to add the burden of another school, having him
16 manage that instead of helping our children;
17 that's what we're doing today. My people, we
18 are systematically being displaced from this
19 community, systematically. What we're doing is
20 asking the principal to build a house, but the
21 DOE is going to make it rain every single day.
22 And then when the house doesn't get built
23 they're going to blame the principal. But we're
24 not blaming the principal; we're blaming the
25 system. But we're not even going to have to

1 blame the system because we're not going to
2 let it happen. We're not going to let them come
3 in here and disrupt the school building the way
4 they're saying they should. The only way
5 another school comes into this building is if we
6 are part of the planning process, is if we're
7 asked how and what do we want to see, and then
8 when we tell you what we want to see in this
9 building then you come and add it 'cause this is
10 our school. This is our school. No one in this
11 community is -- well I'm not anti-charter
12 school. I have nothing against charter schools.
13 We have great -- Masler [phonetic] Charter
14 School is a perfect example of a school in
15 Bushwick that has 90% of their students from the
16 community and 90% of their students are black
17 and brown. That's Masler Charter School. It's
18 a high school. I got love for Masler. I do.
19 I'm not anti-charter. What I am is a school
20 disrupting what we have going on here and when
21 we're finally doing something right and adding a
22 community school into this building we're going
23 to mess it up and blame the people and blame the
24 principal, so it's not going to happen. So
25 today I'm going to join my voice with the

1 parents that are going to pose this co-
2 location as well as asking for a moratorium.
3 Under current co-locations in our district, we
4 just heard that 299 -- I was going to speak on
5 299 that is also going through a co-location,
6 but we just heard that they pulled it back. The
7 DOE did something right by pulling that back,
8 but now they've got to continue doing the right
9 thing and pull this back as well. And until the
10 mayor sees the effort and gives us the resources
11 that we need to educate our children and allows
12 for the community schools to move forward the
13 way they're supposed to, we have to stop the co-
14 locations. After you see the success of the
15 work that they're putting in, that the
16 Department of Education is putting in, then you
17 consider a co-location. But don't over
18 complicate it by putting too much potatoes in a
19 soup, too many carrots in a soup. It's gonna be
20 good if you just let it stew the way we're
21 working on it right now. I also want to give
22 the parents an opportunity and I'm thankful to
23 Maritza Davilla that is a person that -- I grew
24 up in the south side of Williamsburg my whole
25 life, but Maritza Davilla grew up in Bushwick

1 and I'm grateful that she's speaking about
2 wanting to hear the parents. But trust me, I'm
3 going to say it in Spanish [speaking Spanish].

4 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. I will now call a
5 representative from Senator Martin Dilan's
6 office, Michael Ovieta [phonetic]. We have a
7 representative from Nydia Velazquez's office. I
8 don't have a name. My apologies. Yes, come
9 forward please.

10 MS. EVELYN CRUZ: Good evening, everyone.
11 My name is Evelyn Cruz. I'm here representing
12 Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez. [Speaking
13 Spanish]. We are here today. I'm here
14 representing Congresswoman Velazquez to once
15 again urge DOE, the Department of Education, to
16 stop the process of co-location of a high school
17 located in Community School District 17 to our
18 community here in District 32. What we're
19 saying is we believe, all of us, we believe that
20 our children have a right to a solid education.
21 We believe, Nydia Velazquez believes that if you
22 wish to send your child to a charter school that
23 is your right and that is good for your family.
24 But what we're saying is that public education
25 is a school that opens its door to all children.

1 You don't need a lottery ticket. You do not
2 need a lottery ticket. That's why we need to
3 urge the Department of Education to further
4 invest in this middle school so that Mr. Parris
5 and Mr. Barbella and all the school teachers
6 here can make this school greater than what it
7 is today. We need to know that I.S. 37 and I.S.
8 39 is a restructuring school. If it's a
9 restructuring school the purpose is to enrich,
10 find enrichment programs and improve the quality
11 of education because DOE last year said we need
12 to restructure. They were co-located here and
13 they need to do their job. They need to focus
14 on improvement math, science, English, and the
15 education that our young kids need. Now Mr.
16 Parris, if this is approved, will have to start
17 working about negotiating real estate in the
18 school building. That is ridiculous. It is
19 ridiculous and it is costly. We need to invest
20 education money in education. We cannot
21 continue to pay consultants to decide that I'm
22 going to use the library at this time and you
23 are not going to use the library at that time.
24 That is a waste of resources and energy. This
25 is a middle school that's designed for middle

1 school aged children. We need to keep our
2 middle schools growing in Bushwick. We have
3 combined. One school has 21% of children that
4 are special needs. The other school has about
5 18% kids that are special needs. Is student
6 first or Achievement First going to take our
7 children once they're at the high school grade
8 level? I don't think so. I don't think so. We
9 don't think so. So that's why it's important
10 for DOE to get the message and say -- and
11 understand that we may have space here, but is
12 our school space being properly used. Do we
13 have the school for a school nurse? Do we have
14 the space for a school therapist? Do we have a
15 computer lab? Do we have great science labs for
16 all kids? No. We all need to work together.
17 The assembly woman is working. Antonio Reynoso,
18 our councilman, is doing his share. Nydia is
19 doing her share with funding. We need to expand
20 school space, school use for our kids.
21 [Speaking Spanish]. So what we're telling DOE
22 is don't break what we're trying to fix. We are
23 trying to end the crisis in middle school
24 grades. And if by placing a high school here it
25 is disrupting what is happening now. It took a

1 long time for Mr. Parris and the existing
2 school to work together, to work out the kinks,
3 make it a harmonious school. Now they have to
4 do that again with high school students. I know
5 a lot of parents here do not want their child
6 who's in sixth grade to be in the same school
7 with a 21-year old in high school or with a 20-
8 year old in high school. What we're saying is
9 Congresswoman Velazquez again, Congresswoman
10 Velazquez does not oppose a parent's right to
11 choice and a parent's right to educate their
12 child in a charter school or in a public school.
13 We know that we are working to improve public
14 education, but we cannot take away resources
15 from public education. We need to work to
16 improve the quality of life for all. So we
17 thank you. So we commend all those students
18 that are attending a charter school. That is
19 your choice. That is your constitutional right
20 and we support that. All we're asking DOE is to
21 work with the community, stand with the parents,
22 let's expand our middle schools. Let's not have
23 high schoolers in school with smaller, young
24 children and let's really work out the footprint
25 of the school for learning lab and education for

1 our children. Thank you and have a great
2 evening.

3 MS. DRUCK: Thank you.

4 MS. CRUZ: Who's the MC?

5 MS. DRUCK: We will now continue with the --
6 thank you to our elected officials. We will now
7 continue with the formal presentations of the
8 principals, CEC, SLT, and SUNY representative.
9 I'm going to first call on Principal Parris.

10 MR. ROY PARRIS: Good evening. I am so
11 proud of the Bushwick community. Please give
12 yourself a big round of applause. I want to
13 thank the efforts of Antonio Reynoso. I want to
14 really thank also Maritza Davilla. I want to
15 thank all of our community that came together,
16 that came together for one sole purpose. We all
17 want to improve education and we all want to
18 improve our community. Our community is
19 strengthened right now. Dr. Barbella next to
20 me, we had over 1,000 students in this building.
21 We know how to run a co-location. We have been
22 co-located 14 years ago. This is not new. What
23 I'm asking you and I'm thankful for all the
24 representatives that spoke so eloquently because
25 they had all the wonderful things I was trying

1 to say, so I'm going to keep it short. All
2 I'm asking is to have an opportunity to serve
3 the children of Bushwick. I do not want to
4 spend my time negotiating who is going to use
5 the gym. When am I going to have lunch? Where
6 are our kids going to go? This is not the time.
7 We both have schools that had challenges. We
8 need to improve the education of our children.
9 We know that. We have that clear. What I'm
10 asking the community, if we have room, is to
11 think about bringing into this community, to
12 this building possibly a charter school if you
13 want to make it a charter school, dedicated to
14 the children of Bushwick. Okay. We are talking
15 about we want to serve our community. I welcome
16 a dual language school from K-8 that will serve
17 our community or transitional bilingual that
18 will serve our community. Once again, I know we
19 have many speakers. I want to thank you again
20 for your efforts. It's very cold outside and I
21 have not seen this auditorium for this type of
22 meeting. This is our third meeting. I do not
23 need to continue to do that. You know how to
24 play baseball. Three strikes and you are out.
25 Thank you very much.

1 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. Thank you,
2 Principal Parris. The next presenter will be
3 Principal Barbella.

4 MR. BARBELLA: Wow. I have to follow that.
5 Okay. I want to say I am very humble in the
6 auditorium and how many people are here tonight
7 because we all care about our kids. Everything
8 that we do is for our students and everybody in
9 this room is here for the kids and we care about
10 them. And all we want is to make sure that
11 there's equity in our school and that we're able
12 to reach the goals and the success and the
13 improvement that we want for our individual
14 schools. And we want to be autonomous. We will
15 do whatever the Department of Education asks of
16 us, we always do. We always come through no
17 matter what they ask, but we are here to support
18 our community and our schools. So we want to
19 make sure that we are getting all of the things
20 and items and resources equally that we deserve
21 as a school. So I echo everything that I've
22 heard tonight and I am very interested in
23 hearing from you and I want to thank everyone.
24 And I'm humbled by how many people are here
25 tonight supporting our kids. That is the

1 message. We care about our community and we
2 care about our children and we will do whatever
3 it takes in whatever form it is to make sure
4 that it works. And I want to thank all the
5 local politicians. I want to thank the
6 superintendent, the Department of Education, and
7 everyone that's come together to try to make
8 this work. And I promise you as the principal
9 of I.S. 347, no matter what happens I will make
10 sure that it works for our students. Thank you.

11 MS. DRUCK: Thank you, Principal Barbella.
12 The next presenter will be Victorina Lugo of the
13 CEC.

14 MS. VICTORINA LUGO: Good evening. How is
15 everyone this evening? This is the largest
16 turnout I have seen yet. Give yourself a round
17 hand of applause.

18 MS. DRUCK: I am going to be respectfully
19 asking for everybody -- this is an opportunity
20 for public comment and I am going to ask you to
21 please sit and give your attention and respect
22 to the speaker. I am calling on the next
23 speaker, Victorina Lugo, CEC president. Thank
24 you.

25 MS. LUGO: Okay. You have a nice evening.

1 I want to thank our elected officials for
2 having our back within our schools within our
3 districts. We do not have anything against
4 charter schools. We have an issue as far as co-
5 locating within our buildings. We have an issue
6 when our children are eating lunch at ten
7 o'clock in the morning. We have an issue
8 scheduling gyms and other subjects within our
9 building. We don't have anything against the
10 charter schools, but when the DOE comes in,
11 which with all due respect they do come in as
12 far as the utilization of the building and they
13 see these spaces. But if you're asking us to
14 improve education and the quality of education
15 for our children in our community, you want us
16 to expand yet you're taking away the very source
17 that is needed to either expand another grade,
18 another program, and we have a problem with
19 that. As you can see, this is an awesome
20 turnout. This is an awesome turnout. I don't
21 think I could say any more. Everything has been
22 spoken as to how we're feeling, as to co-
23 locating. Parents, you have the power, yes or
24 no, and as you can see you do not stand alone.
25 So with that said, we will continue empowering

1 and fighting for what we want within our
2 district, which is quality education for our
3 children, amp space for them to function, and
4 with that said, we want to thank you for
5 stepping out, taking time out of your busy
6 schedules to speak your peace. And I want to
7 thank you for this opportunity.

8 MS. DRUCK: Thank you, Ms. Lugo. The next
9 presenter will be Ms. Maureen Murphy from SUNY
10 Charter Schools Institute.

11 MS. MAUREEN MURPHY: Good evening. My name
12 is Maureen Murphy and I'm the director of
13 Charter Accountability at the SUNY Charter
14 Schools Institute. I am here tonight to hold a
15 hearing on behalf of the board of trustees at
16 the State University of New York, or SUNY. The
17 education law requires SUNY to hold a public
18 hearing any time one of the schools it
19 authorizes might open in an existing public
20 school building. I am here tonight to listen to
21 your comments about the proposal to co-locate
22 the high school grades of Achievement First
23 Bushwick Charter School with two existing middle
24 schools beginning in the 2015-16 school year.
25 SUNY is holding its hearing now at the same time

1 that the DOE is holding its joint public
2 hearing so that we don't have to ask parents and
3 community members to attend two different
4 hearings on the same subject. I will be taking
5 notes on comments made tonight. In addition,
6 you may give me any written comments you may
7 have with you. You can email comments to
8 charters@SUNY.edu. You can mail comments to 41
9 State Street, Suite 700, Albany, New York,
10 12207. Or fax comments to (518) 427-6510.
11 Extra copies of our notices are posted at the
12 back of the auditorium with all of our contact
13 information and I have some copies here if you
14 need that contact information. SUNY will accept
15 comments through February 9th, 2015, which is
16 seven business days after the meeting of the
17 Panel for Education Policy where this co-
18 location will be considered. Thank you in
19 advance for your comments this evening.

20 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. I am now going to be
21 calling members of the school leadership team.
22 Tara Francis for 347.

23 MS. TARA FRANCIS: Good evening to all the
24 elected officials and all the hired officials of
25 each school and district. I can't remember

1 everybody. Okay. The legislators have
2 mandated that the city provides charter school
3 with facilities free of charge or pay rent for
4 them to be in private spaces. Let the facts
5 show that Achievement First have taken advantage
6 of this mandate. They now have space in about
7 10 different district schools all over Brooklyn.
8 This shows that the city has been more than
9 generous with providing them with the space they
10 need, yet they are not satisfied. And now they
11 seek another district's school space, I.S. 347
12 and 349. How many more schools will they
13 attempt to co-locate? Where would the line be
14 drawn? Well here at I.S. 347 and 349 we say no
15 to the co-location of their charter school in
16 our building. We believe that they have been
17 given more than enough district space for them
18 to expand. Two of their co-locations began as
19 K-4 schools and now have become K-8. For
20 example, 2021 Bergen Street and Brownsville was
21 co-located in 2008 as K-4. But four years later
22 in 2012 they expanded in that building and now
23 they have K-7. In 2010 they co-located in 302
24 out in East New York with K-4 and now in that
25 building four years later in the year of 2014

1 they expanded, and now they have K-8 in that
2 building. So their actions have shown that they
3 co-locate with one idea and then they expand and
4 take over the building in another. Since the
5 city has mandated to give them the space, it's
6 very likely that they may do the same thing in
7 our building. Their expansion will prevent our
8 ability to expand our two schools, which are
9 already located in this building. So we oppose
10 their co-location at 35 Star Street. Thank you.

11 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. Robert Aviles, I.S.
12 347 SLT member.

13 MR. ROBERT AVILES: Good evening. First of
14 all I want to welcome you all and tell you how
15 proud I feel to hear and feel the support that
16 I'm hearing in this room tonight. I'm a
17 resident from Bushwick all my life and I'm proud
18 to say that the public schools helped me become
19 the person that I am with the help of my parents
20 and the teachers that worked with me at P.S. 151
21 and 162. So much so that I pursued a career in
22 education and I'm proud to say that I've been in
23 this building 22 years. Now at the beginning,
24 22 years ago, we were one school, I.S. 111. And
25 in that time we had about 1,200 schools in this

1 building -- I'm sorry, 1,200 kids in this
2 building and the building was quite frankly
3 overcrowded. Our classrooms were all full and
4 we had classrooms with 30 to 35 students. I
5 don't know about you, but those of you who work
6 with kids know that that is an amazing
7 challenge. Furthermore, our school was always
8 recognized for having a thriving arts program,
9 among many things. As a result, over the years
10 as a member of the school leadership team,
11 principals' report has begun with the last few
12 years with the doom and gloom scenario of the
13 budget cuts, which have decimated our schools.
14 Nonetheless, with the support of our
15 administrators, the teachers in this building,
16 the parents in this community, and of course the
17 students of I.S. 347 had something to say about
18 that. Our kids have had their artwork displayed
19 at the Metropolitan Museum, the Queens Museum,
20 the Rotunda Gallery in downtown Brooklyn, the
21 Transit Museum, Bryant Park, Union Square.
22 We've been in the newspaper as well as
23 television to celebrate the artistic achievement
24 of our kids. And I want to thank them. Some of
25 our former students are sitting in this

1 auditorium tonight. I thank you for always
2 letting your community know what greatness you
3 can bring when you are afforded the opportunity.
4 I am proud to say that currently with the
5 challenges we have faced the work that our kids
6 have done over the years has caught the
7 attention of many. And this is why we have also
8 received some grants over the years and with
9 that we're trying to restore some of our
10 programs. Programs like music, dance, chorus,
11 new programs like martial arts. We have a
12 professional teaching artist collaborating with
13 subject area teachers in ELA and social studies
14 to bring back what we know has existed and has
15 worked here before. What we're asking for is
16 that opportunity to see those programs thrive
17 and make this an attractive place for kids in
18 this community to come here and learn. And I'll
19 tell you one last thing before I leave. When
20 you show up at that door, whether Dr. Barbella
21 is there to greet you or Mr. Parris, you have a
22 seat unconditionally. Thank you.

23 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. At this time I would
24 like to invite Assemblywoman Maritza Davilla.

25 MS. DAVILLA: I can't hear you Bushwick. No

1 co-locos. No co-locos. Good evening, everyone.
2 I want to thank Mr. Parris, Mr. Barbella for
3 making this happen in three days. And the
4 entire 32 district. It was amazing. In three
5 days we were able to pack this house. Thank you
6 very much because we're coming back. As the
7 state assembly member of the 53rd district,
8 which is this district, as a community organizer
9 with over 20 years experience in empowering the
10 families in this district, as the former
11 president of the school board of District 32.
12 And I am proud to say that we were the ones that
13 co-located the two schools that are currently
14 here; 347 and 349. I was part of that. I am
15 strongly in opposition of the co-location. Now
16 let's not get it wrong. I am not against
17 chartered schools. If all of my schools were
18 charter schools I'd be extremely happy and
19 elated. But you know what's going on? You walk
20 into buildings and you have chartered schools
21 and you have a public school downstairs. Then
22 you see they have iPads. They have smart
23 boards. They have extra teachers in each
24 classroom. The way I understood education by
25 the board of education was that we wanted

1 smaller classrooms, right? So how is that
2 going to equate bringing in a high school into
3 two middle schools? How is that going to equate
4 into smaller classroom for 347 and 349? How is
5 that going to happen? Let me say that in
6 Spanish. [Speaking Spanish]. That takes away
7 from the resources that are currently here. I
8 am not disrespectful to anyone, but I feel that
9 when you come into a community during a
10 Christmas holiday and you tell me three days
11 before that you're going to setup a high school
12 on top of two elementary schools, junior high
13 schools, it is completely disrespectful. And
14 this is why we're having this meeting, to give
15 you the parents the opportunity to speak up and
16 say that there should be no co-location. It's
17 not against charter schools. We are asking the
18 board of education to consider -- not to
19 consider. Forget about considering because
20 nobody considered us, right? Anybody here was
21 considered? We are asking the Board of
22 Education to bring in the resources to these
23 schools so that they can start operating in the
24 way that they should. There is no need for
25 segregation in 2015. No need for segregation.

1 Okay. There's no need to have a floor here
2 and a floor there. I can't go up there. You
3 can't come down. We have to eat lunch at ten
4 o'clock. No. I grew up in this community. I
5 went to schools in this community. I'm a
6 product of this community. I have my card data
7 from my office that graduated from 111. Okay.
8 We are leader builders in Bushwick. We build
9 leaders. We do not break down our people. We
10 do not break them down. And let me explain
11 something. Our gym is well-utilized. We have
12 after-school programs. We have the Cadet
13 programs. We have soccer programs. Okay. We
14 lost ESL. We have lost so many resources. To
15 accommodate some co-location you want to take
16 away our resources? That is disrespectful.
17 It's unconstitutional. And guess what? You got
18 a fight ahead of you. You have a fight ahead of
19 you because I will not allow this to happen. I
20 will not allow it, will not. So I am extremely
21 proud that all of our parents in District 32,
22 not just the schools, the entire district, came
23 together as we used to. Remember when we used
24 to pack up the room, Victorina Lugo? We used to
25 pack it. Mr. Parris? We're back. We're back.

1 We are back. And that should not -- and I
2 have to say this is nothing. This is only three
3 days worth of work. Give me the incentive to
4 move forward and I'll show you what the Bushwick
5 community is about. Okay. Alright. Enough
6 with the disrespect. We have respected. We
7 said no. This is the third time we're saying
8 no. We're going to say no, no, no, no, no co-
9 location. No, no, no, no, no. We will not have
10 it. [Speaking Spanish]. People think that
11 there are actually no leaders in Bushwick
12 anymore. I've been a leader for 25 years here.
13 And I'm here because I've never given up on a
14 fight. I've never given up on a fight. I'm a
15 strong Puerto Rican woman that was raised in
16 Bushwick. And this is not to say that there's
17 no other. We are here as a community. Alright.
18 I know that there's a lot of single parents. We
19 all want the best for our children. [Speaking
20 Spanish]. Another point I want to bring out.
21 Would these schools go to Manhattan? Would you
22 co-locate a school in the city somewhere where
23 they don't want you? It would not happen.
24 Would you do that? No, it would not happen. So
25 what's good for the gander is good for Mother

1 Goose. Okay. Do not disrespect my community.
2 We stand together in everything that we do.
3 We're already losing housing. We are losing our
4 housing. We are losing -- it's just amazing the
5 things that are happening. But we have a school
6 where people are coming together in three days.
7 Listen. I just understood that there's a
8 hearing going on in the Bronx while this is
9 going on because they're deciding in the Bronx.
10 Are we supposed to go to the Bronx when the
11 school is supposed to be here? You want to make
12 a decision you come here. You have respect for
13 our people because we are a force to be reckoned
14 with. I will not allow a co-location. N-O. I
15 will not be shut up. That's not the way I made
16 it here. You will not shut me up. No. We have
17 to hold every elected official in our district
18 accountable if there is a co-location here.
19 Okay. So I'm here standing on your side. Thank
20 you for coming out and let's continue to fight
21 because I believe there's going to be more
22 coming. Thank you very much.

23 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. Thank you,
24 Assemblywoman Davilla. Thank you, Assemblywoman
25 Davilla. We have now concluded the formal

1 presentations. We will now open the floor for
2 public comments. 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 Cynthia Balzaretti. I'm going to be
6 calling Numbers 1-5. If you could please line
7 up in front of Mr. Costanza. Mr. Costanza,
8 raise your hand. The next presenters will be
9 Numbers 1-5. If you have 1-5 please stand in
10 line for the microphone. Thank you. Speaker
11 Number 1, Cynthia Balzaretti. Ms. Balzaretti,
12 Speaker Number 1.

13 MS. CYNTHIA BALZARETTI: Hi. My name is Ms.
14 Balzaretti. I'm an English teacher at I.S. 349.
15 And I've been working at this school in Bushwick
16 for over eight years. I've seen the
17 neighborhood change. Now that the neighborhood
18 is gentrifying and becoming more desirable I
19 believe that it's no coincidence that all of the
20 sudden now a charter school wants our space.
21 They weren't knocking on our doors years ago
22 when the community was going through a rough
23 patch. They now want to be a fabric and part of
24 our community without putting in the effort to
25 make it better, which is what I.S. 349 and I.S.

1 347 has done. This charter school would be
2 reaping the benefits from the hard work of our
3 parents, our students, teachers, and
4 administrators. Now on one hand we have people
5 gentrifying our neighborhood from all over the
6 U.S. who are settling here calling Bushwick
7 their new home. But who makes up the other part
8 of the population? That population is our
9 student body and their families. Everyone knows
10 who our school community is. We have
11 hardworking parents who work two to three jobs,
12 many of which who could not be here tonight.
13 They cannot just take off of work from leisure.
14 Many of our parents, Barak Obama, our president,
15 would be saying that are living in the shadows
16 do not feel like they have the right to speak up
17 about this co-location. It does not mean that
18 they are in favor of it; they just do not want
19 to cause trouble. People pushing in to make a
20 charter school in our building know this. They
21 are taking advantage of good people who can't
22 fight back or who are afraid to speak up. So I
23 am here to speak for them. We do not want you
24 here. On a last note, we have to remember that
25 students see this gentrification before their

1 eyes. Even in whatever neighborhood you live
2 in, wherever you come from, growing up it's
3 clear who has money, who does not, who has a
4 nice house, whose house needs some fixing up,
5 who has a nice car, who needs a new car. But
6 school was a place where everyone was equal. If
7 we go into this co-location direction school
8 will not be a safe haven and it will not be
9 equal for everyone. In fact, it will be
10 segregated. How will a child feel if the fourth
11 floor is being renovated and the third floor
12 does not deserve it? That leaves the child
13 without a sense of worth. Co-location with
14 charter is going back to the days of
15 segregation. Separate but not equal. That is
16 the complete opposite school environment that we
17 are supposed to establish for our students.
18 It's not fair. It's not moral and it shouldn't
19 even be legal.

20 MS. DRUCK: Thank you.

21 MS. BALZARETTI: On a last note, I would
22 really appreciate it, Ms. Murphy, if you would
23 like to be part of our school community I would
24 appreciate if you listened to us instead of
25 standing behind your computer. We're here and

1 if you want to be part of our community be
2 part of our community and listen to what we're
3 saying because we're not going away. And if you
4 want to be part of our community you cannot
5 ignore us.

6 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. I just want to
7 remind our speakers who signed up that there is
8 a two minute time period. Our timer here, can
9 you raise our hand, can you please do eye
10 contact while you're speaking so as to respect
11 everybody's time as we do have a list that would
12 go forever if we don't adhere to the two minute
13 timeframe. Thank you. Our next speaker is Jose
14 Guillen. And I'm asking Numbers 2-5 to please
15 get ready to speak.

16 MR. JOSE GUILLEN: Okay. Good evening,
17 members of the board. Good evening, ladies and
18 gentlemen. First of all, I will make the effort
19 to address in English, but with some
20 difficulties, so please forgive my poor English.
21 The first point that I want to raise in this
22 extraordinary assembly, which is a kind of
23 democratic activity, the possibility for the
24 stakeholders to pronounce about the situation
25 that we are very concerned that is something

1 very important. Anyway, the first point that
2 I want to raise is concerning the renewal
3 program. You see, I am taking part of the
4 school leadership team and we are in charge of
5 making a proposal in the frame of the renewal
6 program that, as you know, it was launched by
7 the mayor in early November of last year. And
8 the renewal program is to renew our school.
9 It's to say to our new services to increase the
10 academic activities to make more time of study
11 and for doing that we do not just need phones,
12 but we need space. If we have now free space if
13 we want to renew the school we will need that
14 space. Secondly I want to raise the point of
15 race. Our school, the composition of the
16 inscription of this school, about 98% comes from
17 minorities that in this case are majorities.
18 Hispanic and--

19 MS. DRUCK: [interposing] Mr. Guillen, thank
20 you.

21 MR. GUILLEN: [Speaking Spanish]. I want to
22 say as a father of a 12-year-old girl that I am
23 very concerned for the fact that she has, if
24 eventually the co-location goes, to share
25 bathroom corridors, gymnasium, and other

1 facilities and other premises of this
2 building. And that because of the arrival of
3 the co-located school she will have to take
4 lunch at 10:45 in the morning. That for
5 finishing I want to say no to co-location. I am
6 not talking in terms of personally, but also on
7 behalf of the majority of the PTA members of the
8 I.S. 349 with whom we have shared this proposal.
9 Thank you very much.

10 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. Can I please remind
11 again with all due respect, because we do have
12 about 25 people signed up to speak, that we
13 adhere to the protocol and the time limit of two
14 minutes. Our timekeeper will be letting you
15 know when you have one minute and 30 seconds, 30
16 seconds I believe, and then when time is up. I
17 also want to remind everybody that there is
18 translation taking place, therefore there is no
19 need for you to translate. Thank you. Our next
20 Speaker Number Three, actually I'll call Michael
21 Scott, Number Four. Maria Gonzalez, you will
22 come up after Michael Scott.

23 MR. MICHAEL SCOTT: Good evening, parents,
24 teachers, administrators, elected officials.
25 I'm proud to be here. My name is Michael Scott.

1 I dedicated most of my career as a teacher in
2 this community. Again like Assemblywoman
3 Davilla said, she said it all. I'm not against
4 charter schools. I'm not against kids getting
5 their education, but at the expense of others is
6 a bit much. We already are a co-located school,
7 as you've heard. They want to put two high
8 schools on the fourth floor, which would mean
9 that my colleagues would lose half their space.
10 Then they say that it's not going to affect our
11 programming and affect the kids' education. I'm
12 proud that you guys are here. I work for the
13 DOE, but some things are political, as you know.
14 They have to provide these spaces for charter
15 schools, but I think it's wrong to at the
16 expense of some kids to have other kids learn.
17 Like I said, I'm happy that this woman here is
18 an advocate for us. She spoke eloquently. Also
19 shoutouts to Councilman Reynoso. He spoke
20 eloquently. So I just want to applaud you for
21 being here. I feel like I'm a member of this
22 community. I dedicate my life to these kids and
23 I work hard every day, as do my colleagues, so I
24 wanted to give you the perspective of the
25 teachers. We're really against this. It's not

1 going to help us at all. We've been selected
2 as a school for the renewal program by Mayor de
3 Blasio. We're taking from one hand and giving
4 from the other. How are we going to improve our
5 school if you're taking half our space? It's
6 ridiculous. I have all these papers, these
7 documents, EIS document, share space plan.
8 We're eating at 10:45 in the morning. We're
9 already doing this. So I think they should be
10 able to find some other place to have their
11 school, which I'm not against, but not in our
12 school. So I want to thank you for your time
13 and thank you for being here. Appreciate it.

14 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. Our next presenter,
15 Maria Gonzalez. I'm going to ask presenters
16 with Numbers 6-10 to also line up. Maria
17 Gonzalez, Number 3. Thomas Napoli. So those of
18 you who have Numbers 6-10 please, if you could
19 form a line in the aisle. Ashley Moreta
20 [phonetic], Number 6. Number 7, Ismenia
21 Martinez. Number 7, Ismenia Martinez. Ms.
22 Martinez? Number 9, Manuel Sumba [phonetic].
23 Number 10, Pedro Rosario. Number 11, Maria
24 Medina [phonetic]. Pedro Rosario?

25 MS. ASHLEY MORETA: I am a former student of

1 this school and I have been following the
2 positive changes that have happened here for
3 almost a decade now, which is why I highly
4 oppose this co-location. They want to take away
5 resources from two schools that are striving for
6 a better educational experience for this
7 community. All of my achievements started in
8 this building, so why can't the achievements of
9 all of the kids in this community happen here as
10 well? You cannot take away from an existing
11 establishment to better another. That is not
12 fair. It is not logical. It is a formula that
13 they are creating to diminish not only our
14 students but our community as well.

15 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. Our next speaker.

16 MR. MANUEL SUMBA: [Speaking Spanish].

17 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. Jaritza Soler.

18 Numbers 12-16 can line up to speak. Jaritza
19 Soler.

20 MS. JARITZA SOLER: Good evening, everyone.

21 My name is Jaritza Soler. I am class of 2007

22 from I.S. 347. I am currently -- I first

23 started, I went to Pace University. I

24 transferred to Buffalo. I am an economics

25 major. I will be graduating soon. I am

1 starting an internship with Merrill Lynch in
2 February. And I have to say that I came into
3 this school as a shy little girl who didn't
4 speak and then after having Ms. Rodriguez, after
5 having Ms. Finley, having Ms. Jones there was
6 just no -- they turned me into a leader in this
7 school, they really did. And if it wasn't for
8 all the leadership qualities that I was taught
9 here I wouldn't be the person that I am now. I
10 don't know where I would be. And this school
11 already has enough difficulties and challenges
12 as is. It's so difficult for these professors
13 to even give time to their students, so how are
14 we going to add more people to the school and
15 just make that even more difficult on them? I
16 just feel that -- I don't even know what else to
17 say. It's just, you know, they're really good
18 teachers and there's no reason to put more of a
19 burden on them. That's it. Thank you,
20 everyone.

21 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. Thank you. Our next
22 speaker is Pedro Rosario. Pedro Rosario, our
23 next speaker.

24 MR. PEDRO ROSARIO: Hi. How are you doing?
25 Good evening. My name is Pedro J. Rosario. I'm

1 a second lieutenant here in the military
2 program, New York - - course. Now, this is my
3 opinion. It's more like a statement also with a
4 question. I'm a product of public school here
5 in Bushwick. I came from Puerto Rico, born in
6 Puerto Rico. Came here in '92. Didn't know
7 nothing of English. But the public school
8 system bilingually taught me how to speak
9 English, how to interact, how to move around,
10 how to not be nervous in front of a group of
11 people like yourselves. Now with that being
12 said, I have a question as far as the charters
13 and I have nothing against charters and this is
14 why. My two little daughters go to a charter
15 school. They go to Achievement First; second
16 and third grade. This is the issue that I have.
17 There was a situation that happened in that
18 school. I'm not going to name the school that
19 they're in. That there was -- this is an
20 elementary school that went to a junior high
21 school. The charter went to a junior high
22 school with older kids. There was a situation
23 that happened over there about a year or two.
24 They were in the bathroom. Something happened.
25 Who's to say what happened, whether it was a

1 fight. God forbid it was anything sexual.
2 Now it didn't happen with my kids but this is
3 anybody's kids. It could have been mine. It
4 could have been yours, whoever. The problem is
5 not that it happened it was that it could have
6 been prevented. That's the issue with me. Now
7 I'm a father from Bushwick. Now I'm not going
8 to say I have some type of attitude problem. I
9 do. I'm very professional when it comes to
10 being professional, but I'm also a father and
11 everybody has more or less the same mentality as
12 I do. If something was to happen to your child
13 the last thing you guys are going to do is come
14 over here with a suit on trying to have a
15 conversation. You want to go in guns blazing.
16 What's going on? I heard something happened.
17 Something better be done or the school board is
18 going to hear me or the DOE is going to hear me,
19 the Department, anybody. Somebody is going to
20 hear me. And that's the issue. Who's to say
21 that a situation wouldn't occur over here? You
22 have high school students. I was 17 once. I
23 was 16 once. I was rebellious. So were you.
24 I'm not going to listen to the system while I'm
25 out the school. I'm going to try not to listen

1 to the system while I'm in the school because
2 I'm too cool for that. You have kids with that
3 type of mentality, whether from a charter school
4 or not. You're still a child. You're still
5 from Brooklyn or you're still from Manhattan.
6 You're still from New York. You have this
7 demeanor that you have to maintain and who's to
8 say that I have a 12-year-old kid. I'm 16. Get
9 out my way. Who's going to prevent that?
10 There's not going to be enough agents in the
11 school to prevent anything. There's not going
12 to be a lot of officials in the school to
13 prevent that. This school has x amount of
14 agents, x amount. Let's not even throw a
15 number. When the second school came there was
16 not a double number of those agents. Those
17 agents still stood here. So when a third school
18 comes, guess what? Those same numbers of agents
19 are going to be here. You're going to control
20 1,000 kids plus? 1,500 kids plus? Just about.
21 They probably brought like two extra agents, but
22 at the end of the day it's not controllable.
23 You can't control the inevitable. Situations
24 are going to occur. Problems are going to
25 occur. At the end of the day like a father,

1 like I said before, I'm going to come guns
2 blazing. Like programs like us, the military
3 programs, we offer kids and adults how to become
4 -- not to join the military but to become better
5 citizens. Non-funded program in this school.
6 If this charter school comes over here our
7 program is vanished. It doesn't exist. We're a
8 figment of everybody's imagination, a has been.
9 Thank you.

10 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. Next speakers is
11 Speakers 13-16 can line up. We're calling on
12 Evette Velapia.

13 MS. EVETTE VELAPIA: [Speaking Spanish].

14 MS. DRUCK: Okay. So I know that I may have
15 missed some of the speakers, so any numbers up
16 to Number 16, if you haven't had an opportunity
17 to speak, please line up in the aisle to take
18 the microphone. Our next speaker all the way
19 through 16, 1-16, because I missed some people
20 in between, so anything up to 16 if you could
21 please line up. Our next speaker, please go
22 ahead.

23 FEMALE VOICE 1: My goodness. I have so
24 much that I can say. I've been a community
25 member here for 22 years and I remember with

1 Maritza when this was I.S. 111. I had two
2 children graduate from I.S. 111. One of my
3 daughters was in the last graduating class. One
4 of my daughters is a commissioner of deeds at
5 the city clerk office. My other daughter is an
6 assistant teacher. My niece who spoke before,
7 Ashley Moreta, she put it mildly. She just
8 graduated from Stony Brook University. That
9 happened here. My son is currently in his first
10 year of your college. Mr. Barbella knows him.
11 He butted heads with me many times as a parent.
12 And I have to tell you I have seen so many
13 changes, so many changes in this building. As a
14 community member I live a block and a half away.
15 I can tell you that I have seen fights in every
16 corner ten years ago. I had to call the police
17 a couple of times. To now I come out of my
18 house at dismissal; I don't see that. And
19 you're going to bring high school students, who
20 are not from this community, who let's face it,
21 they're kids. I worked in a local school. I
22 worked at 145. My school was a feeder school to
23 this school. Kids are kids. They're going to
24 have an attitude. They're going to see what's
25 going on. You are creating a disaster. Co-

1 locating a school of high school students at
2 this moment, at this time, in this community is
3 a disaster waiting to happen. And as a
4 community member, former Department of Education
5 employee, as a mother, as a mother I beg you.
6 Please don't co-locate another school here. Mr.
7 Barbella, Mr. Parris have worked so hard in the
8 last 10 years. Is it perfect? No. But do we
9 have extra rooms then maybe the Department of
10 Education can use those rooms to give more
11 resources for our kids. Maybe afterschool
12 programs. Maybe community programs. Maybe they
13 can have a group of parent volunteers to come
14 in. And if there are any suggestions needed I
15 live a block away, just let me know.

16 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. Just to give me a
17 sense, I just don't want to miss anybody. What
18 number is the next speaker? I just want to call
19 before Number 12, Jaritza Soler. Number 13,
20 Evette Velapia. Number 14, Juliette Smith. 15,
21 Jackson Farrell. 16, Adrienne Lopez. Thank
22 you.

23 MR. JACKSON FARRELL: Jackson Farrell is
24 here and Jackson Farrell is asking very nicely,
25 as a member of the SLT -- I signed up as a

1 member of the SLT. I know that - - but I hope
2 I'm not cut off because I signed up as SLT and I
3 signed up on the other list because that's what
4 I was instructed to do. But I just want to have
5 my piece. First of all, thank you Madam Chair
6 and the members at the desk. And I'd like to
7 say an especially thanks to the parents of
8 Bushwick for being here tonight and our
9 political representatives who are standing tall
10 with us tonight. I've been in this building
11 because it's no longer 111, although legally
12 still 111. I've been in this building for 29
13 and a half years. I've seen it all, guys. And
14 it's ironic that next Monday we are celebrating
15 the legal birthday of Dr. King. It's even more
16 ironic that his birthday is tomorrow. And what
17 we want to do in this building is have a tale of
18 two cities because this is what happened in
19 charter schools coming to public schools. On
20 one floor it's Park 5th Avenue and the other
21 floors it's like some ghetto. I'm sorry the
22 terminology. But we're dealing with kids. We
23 know there is maybe space in the building, but
24 this is the reality. We're asking I.S. 349 to
25 expand its services, but we are bringing in two

1 other schools that are going to cause their
2 space usage to shrink drastically. Does not
3 make sense. So maybe the message is the charter
4 comes in and as Ms. Jones says, they expand. So
5 that probably means that I.S. 347 is on its way
6 out, without saying that. But we're not going
7 to stand and be doormats. We're going to stand
8 and fight back because I.S. 347 at one time was
9 a junior high school with the only sharp program
10 probably in this district or probably in
11 Brooklyn. The kids in our building need those
12 kinds of programs because equipped with that you
13 are equipping them for a world of work. It's
14 not just doing a test at the end of the day. We
15 had a home economics program. All kids need
16 that. And that should be reinstated. Plus
17 there were other programs that happened. We had
18 accelerated Spanish. The kids do that. And we
19 had accelerated math. And I respectfully want
20 to ignore--

21 MS. DRUCK: Mr. Farrell, with all due
22 respect, time is up. And if you could just wrap
23 it up, appreciate it.

24 MR. FARRELL: This is being recorded. I
25 just wanted for the record this is the second

1 time as a member of the school leadership team
2 that I've been short circuited and that's not
3 right. And that for me convinced me there is a
4 tale of two cities. Thank you.

5 MS. DRUCK: Our next speaker, Number 16.
6 Thank you. Our next speaker, Adrienne Lopez.

7 MS. ADRIENNE LOPEZ: Okay. Thank you, Mr.
8 Ferrell. That's our UFT representative at 347.
9 A very heroic person, historical figure, Benito
10 Juarez said that, "Respect for the rights of
11 others is peace." [Speaking Spanish]. We can't
12 feel peaceful when we feel that our rights are
13 being stepped on with the heel of the foot. If
14 we're feeling like that it cannot be peaceful.
15 [Speaking Spanish]. Unfortunately we're being
16 put in this situation and to continue, to
17 paraphrase Malcolm X, he said that when you --
18 and this is a paraphrase so I'm going to put in
19 today's context into it and I know I'm being
20 timed. When we feel -- when a class of schools
21 feels -- is made to feel that society is
22 organized conspiracy to oppress, even if it's
23 not but we feel that way, neither group is going
24 to feel safe and this is where we are right now.
25 Why are we being put to feel this way? Why are

1 you pitting charter school against public
2 school? We feel pitted against each other and I
3 am not particularly pro charter school nor
4 against charter school. I am neutral but I am
5 for public schools. I am for every children
6 receiving an equal education because, "It is
7 easier to make strong children than to repair
8 broken men and women." Frederick Douglas.
9 Therefore, thank you very much for coming and
10 supporting our fight to educate our children and
11 instead of bringing in another school bring us
12 resources to start bilingual programs, to
13 continue and expand 349's renewal school, to add
14 perhaps gifted fifth grade, more bilingual
15 programs. [Speaking Spanish]. What's wrong
16 with I.S. 347 and I.S. 349 having 1,200 children
17 once again? Help us do that, please.

18 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. Number 18, Martha
19 Martinez.

20 MS. MARTHA MARTINEZ: Hi, everyone. I want
21 to speak specifically about the role that this
22 school has played for me as a mother and as a
23 person who also fights against gentrification
24 displacement. So basically about two years ago
25 I started a youth program because of the changes

1 in the community and because of the
2 gentrification. I'm going to say this. I can't
3 control gentrification because I'm not rich and
4 I have no money, so it's not really much I'm
5 against the gentrification. I'm against the
6 character that comes with it, which is a very
7 invasive, colonialism character like I came
8 here; I plant my flag; this is where I am. So
9 I'm really nervous but I became an advocate for
10 the youth off the simple fact that when my son
11 started in this school in the sixth grade I
12 noticed that we started feeling like tourists in
13 our own community. And it's not fair because at
14 the end of the day there's a lot of culture
15 here. And what's happening with this new wave
16 and everything that's coming in is it's erasing
17 our culture and it's also erasing our voices.
18 If we don't teach our kids to stand up and speak
19 for themselves, they are the next generation,
20 then who's going to do it for us? So basically
21 when gentrification happens what it does is --
22 charter school systems, as everyone said, I'm
23 not against them, but I am against the
24 segregation that they do cause in the systems.
25 Like Maritza Davilla said, how do you come into

1 a school that needs so many resources? Mr.
2 Barbella has been someone who's played a really
3 special position in my life. Mr. Baez, Ms.
4 Lopez. I'm very familiar with the Beacon.
5 Right now you have all these businesses that are
6 opening in Bushwick and don't even care about
7 the community. I could tell you, I have 14 kids
8 in my program. We have a full performing visual
9 arts program. We have a dance company, a hip-
10 hop poetry class. We also do art classes
11 because none of these artists give the kids an
12 opportunity to get on these walls. So why do
13 the kids have to look around and not feel
14 connected to their community when they were born
15 and raised here? It's not a part -- my thing is
16 like when you make someone feel out of place you
17 displace them and when you displace them they
18 fight back. We are a community of ethnicity and
19 we're a community of color, so all we've ever
20 done was fight. We have blood war in our veins,
21 so that's why the outcome that we had today, it
22 came from a place where we were tired of being
23 pushed away. I just want to say a special shout
24 out to Mr. Barbella, Mr. Baez, because like I
25 said, they currently to this day, it's been one

1 year that my dance company has flourished and
2 we've been able to do things in the community
3 because of I.S. 347. None of these businesses
4 in Bushwick, I've gone to them and they come in
5 saying they're community spaces and when we go
6 and ask for community help, which is to help
7 these kids, they tell us to go to a park. So
8 it's not about that. It's about being here and
9 understanding that this is our hood. We've been
10 here. Don't come and try to replace something;
11 come and make it better. So I just want to
12 thank I.S. 347 for always being there for our
13 program. And Mr. Baez.

14 MS. DRUCK: Thank you for your comments.
15 Speaker 19, Tara Jones already spoke. I'm
16 calling on Number 20, Evette Colon [phonetic].
17 21 -- excuse me?

18 MALE VOICE 1: [Speaking Spanish].

19 MR. TREY: So my name is Trey [phonetic].
20 I'm not a parent. I'm not even a Bushwick
21 native, but I noticed two very important things
22 here that made me want to speak. The first
23 thing that I noticed was a huge community uproar
24 to self-determine how the community is run. So
25 that's a really beautiful thing that came

1 together here tonight. What I also noticed
2 was a major tension between the parents of the
3 charter school kids and the parents who were
4 here, people of the community, and that's
5 expected. I'm not from any political
6 organization. I'm here on my own time just as a
7 member of the community. And with that being
8 said, I can say that I am against charter
9 schools because what they do is they take a
10 community and they decide that the community is
11 not fit to educate their children so they have
12 to take their children out of it. Okay. What
13 you guys have done have decided that this
14 community is fit to educate the children of this
15 community, which is very important in the time
16 that we're in. We are in a time where we need
17 to self-determine. Alright. We need to self-
18 educate. Alright. And we need to be able to
19 defend our communities. Okay. So what you guys
20 have done here today is very important. I hope
21 you continue to move in this motion and defend
22 the communities that you guys have built, that
23 you have built. Thank you.

24 MS. BRUCK: Thank you. Number 20, 21, and
25 22. Evette Colon, Jacquelyn Ramos, Milagros

1 Bonilla.

2 MS. JACQUELYN RAMOS: Hello. My name is
3 Jacquelyn Ramos. I work with the Beacon
4 Afterschool Program for both M.S. 347 and 349.
5 I am also a parent. My daughter graduated about
6 four years ago from M.S. 347 and my son is in
7 the eighth grade now. As both a parent and a
8 staff of the school my main concern is safety.
9 I don't think that it's safe for our students
10 that are here in the school now to have this new
11 high school come in. You have kids that are 14,
12 15, 16, 17, 18, up to 21 in the same school
13 where you have 10 to 14-year olds. They have to
14 use the same bathrooms. They're going to be
15 using the same lunchrooms. They're going to be
16 using the same gym. It's all the same space.
17 It's not like they're going to be using
18 different gymnasiums, different lunchrooms.
19 It's all the same space. They're willing to
20 bring in this new school, but they're not going
21 to give us enough security guards. We're going
22 to stay with the same amount of security guards
23 that we have now. That's the same amount of
24 security guards that we're going to have when
25 this new school comes in. So I feel that for

1 our students the first priority should be
2 their safety, and I really don't feel that the
3 students nor staff -- because anything can
4 happen. You have bigger kids with smaller kids
5 in here and it's a really serious, serious
6 safety issue. So I think that you need to look
7 at the big concern of safety. Thank you.

8 MS. DRUCK: Thank you.

9 MS. MILAGROS BONILLA: Good evening. My
10 name is Milagros Bonilla and I am your elected
11 PTA president. And today we're not saying that
12 we are against charter schools, but this is our
13 school and I think that you guys need to find
14 another location. If the government can make
15 money for other things they could make a school
16 for them. We have a school. We're trying to
17 better our school. Our programs, which our
18 principals are doing that for us and our
19 students, our children. I didn't get a good
20 education. My daughter came here and she made
21 the best out of herself because of the teachers,
22 the staff. We do that. Our community.
23 Bushwick. We're doing that. Give us the
24 opportunity to keep doing that. You bring other
25 schools, a high school. My 10-year old is

1 coming here next year. Would I want her with
2 high school children? No. I'm asking you as a
3 parent, not just your PTA president, but as a
4 parent don't co-locate. Don't do it. Find them
5 another place to go. There are programs we
6 want. We want other programs. We want stuff
7 for our children. We want to do the things that
8 we've got to do for our kids. Why they got to
9 take that? Our kids. You are residents of
10 Bushwick. You were born and raised here. Keep
11 your community yours.

12 MS. DRUCK: Thank you. The speaker list is
13 now exhausted. Again, we welcome any comments
14 and feedback prior to 24 hours before the Panel
15 for Education Policy votes on this proposal at
16 its next meeting next Thursday, on Thursday,
17 January 29th. The email address and phone
18 number where comments may be made again are
19 D32proposals@schools.nyc.gov. And telephone
20 number (212) 374-0208. Thank you for your
21 participation. This joint public hearing is now
22 closed.

23 [END RECORDING]

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Payne", is written over a light green rectangular background. A horizontal line is drawn below the signature.

Date January 20, 2015

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