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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF  
PORTFOLIO PLANNING  
AMEND: Success Academy Williamsburg  
@ K050 2/16/12**

1 [START 285067.MP3]

2 MR. GREGG BETHEIL: ...beginning in the 2012-  
3 2013 school year. Tonight's proceedings will be  
4 recorded and transcribed. Before we begin the  
5 hearing, we ask that anyone who wishes to speak  
6 during the public comment portion of the  
7 evening, please sign up at the table in the  
8 hallway, sign up will end in 15 minutes, at  
9 approximately 6:25. Only people who have signed  
10 up to speak will be able to participate in the  
11 public comment. So please, if you plan to speak  
12 tonight, please make sure you have signed up.

13 All panel participants were asked to be here  
14 no later than 5:30. Now that we have started,  
15 if a panel participant arrives late, I know we  
16 may be expecting a representative from CEC 14,  
17 she or he will be given the opportunity to speak  
18 at the first opportune moment. We do want to be  
19 respectful of everybody's time, including those  
20 of you that have come out with young children  
21 this evening.

22 There are a number of elected officials who  
23 have already arrived and may arrive at different  
24 times throughout the evening. If they wish to  
25 speak, we will do our best to accommodate them

1 at the first opportune moment. Those who are  
2 here at the start of the public comment will be  
3 asked to speak first.

4 Today's format will include a presentation  
5 of the proposal by the Chancellor's Designee, as  
6 well as presentations by the hearing  
7 participants, followed by the public comment.  
8 Speakers should have already signed up at the  
9 table in the lobby. Public comments can be no  
10 longer than two minutes each. The time will be  
11 strictly followed, and speakers will be informed  
12 when you have 30 seconds left, and when your  
13 time is expired. We have some 70 speakers that  
14 are already signed up, at two minutes each, that  
15 will take us a few hours to get through, so we  
16 do ask that you are respectful of the other  
17 speakers on the list behind you.

18 There will be a timekeeper who will let the  
19 speaker know when there are 30 seconds  
20 remaining, and when the time is up at two  
21 minutes.

22 I would now like to introduce the panel that  
23 has been assembled for this evening's joint  
24 public hearing. We are joined this evening by  
25 principal Denise Jamison, from Junior High

1 School 50, all the way on the left.

2 [cheers]

3 We are also joined by the District  
4 Superintendent, James Quail.

5 [cheers]

6 Chancellor's Designee, Paymon Rouhanifard  
7 will be reading the proposal this evening, as  
8 well as, I'm sorry, Ellen McHugh who is here for  
9 the Citywide Council on High School--on Special  
10 Education, excuse me.

11 The District 14 CEC was included in the  
12 scheduling of this joint public hearing, was  
13 notified of the confirmed date, was here earlier  
14 and had to leave and may join us later.

15 We are pleased to have the following elected  
16 officials with us this evening: Council Member  
17 Diana Reyna.

18 [cheers]

19 And her Chief of Staff, Antonio Reynoso.

20 [cheers]

21 Michael Olmeda is here, representing Senator  
22 Martin Dilan. And Evelyn Cruz is here  
23 representing Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez.

24 [cheers]

25 Before we provide a summary of the proposal,

1 I want to remind participants that this is the  
2 second Joint Public Hearing regarding this  
3 proposal. The DOE is holding this second  
4 hearing because of a logistical problem related  
5 to the distribution of the Educational Impact  
6 Statement originally released in December.

7 All comments made at this hearing and the  
8 Joint Public Hearing previously held on January  
9 17th will be mentioned in the analysis of public  
10 comment to be published and made available to  
11 the Panel on Educational Policy, the evening  
12 before the panel votes on March 1st.

13 I will now turn the program over to the  
14 Chancellor's Designee, Paymon Rouhanifard,  
15 Executive Director of the Office of Portfolio  
16 Management, who will present the proposal.

17 MR. PAYMON ROUHANIFARD: The New York City  
18 Department of Education is proposing a site,  
19 Brooklyn Success Academy Charter School 4,  
20 Success Academy Williamsburg, a new public  
21 charter school, that will serve students in  
22 Kindergarten through 4th Grade, in this  
23 building, K50, located at 183 South Third  
24 Street, in Community School District 14,  
25 beginning in the 2012-2013 school year. Success

1 Academy of Williamsburg would be co-located in  
2 K50, with existing middle school, J.H.S. 50,  
3 John D. Wells, which serves students in grades  
4 six through eight.

5 J.H.S. 50 admits students in 6th grade  
6 through the District 14 middle school choice  
7 application process. A co-location means that  
8 two or more school organizations are located in  
9 the same building and may share common spaces,  
10 like auditoriums, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.  
11 Currently, in addition to J.H.S. 50, K50 also  
12 houses a high school, the Academy for Young  
13 Writers (14K404), however, the Panel for  
14 Educational Policy has approved the DOEs  
15 proposal to re-site the Academy for Young  
16 Writers to Building K422, a new facility in  
17 District 19, beginning in the 2012-2013 school  
18 year. Therefore, this proposal is not expected  
19 to impact Academy for Young Writers.

20 Also, the Office of Adult and Continuing  
21 Education holds evening classes at K50 on Monday  
22 and Wednesday evenings, and K50 houses a  
23 community-based organization, El Puente, which  
24 offers school programs at J.H.S. 50.

25 According to the 2010-2011 Enrollment

1 Capacity Utilization Report, the Blue Book, K50  
2 has the capacity to serve 1,232 students. At  
3 scale, Success Academy Williamsburg will serve  
4 approximately 525-625 students in Kindergarten  
5 through 4th Grade by 2015-2016 school year. At  
6 that time, building K50 is projected to serve  
7 approximately 870 to 1000 students enrolled in  
8 both schools, yielding an estimated Building  
9 Utilization Rate of 71-81 percent. Thus, K50  
10 has sufficient space to accommodate the proposed  
11 co-location. The DOE believes in Success  
12 Charter Network's record of success, and  
13 supports the permanent placement of this charter  
14 school, operated by Success Charter Network in  
15 District 14, in order to continue providing  
16 educational opportunities for students and  
17 families.

18 I am now going to turn the microphone over  
19 to a couple of our guests, Ellen McHugh, who as  
20 you just heard, represents the Citywide Council  
21 for Special Education, will speak for a couple  
22 of minutes, and then you are going to hear from  
23 Denise Jamison, the Principal of J.H.S. 50, and  
24 then we are going to move forward with public  
25 commentary and Gregg is going to take over, but

1 Ellen is going to briefly speak.

2 MS. ELLEN MCHUGH: This may be an effort in  
3 futility, but I will say this: that the  
4 objection to the EIS is that there is no  
5 Educational Impact Statement in there. There is  
6 no discussion of educational programs, there is  
7 no discussion of curriculum and there is no  
8 discussion of shared information between and  
9 among the three or four or who knows how many  
10 schools currently will be in the building. The  
11 other part of this is that CEC 14 has chosen not  
12 to participate in protest, and I--

13 [cheers]

14 I would support their protest as the DOE  
15 Panel for Educational Policy has never taken a  
16 look at any program in depth. The discussion  
17 tonight means that all comments collected will  
18 be handed to the Panel for Educational Policy  
19 the night before they are supposed to decide.  
20 That is no way to make informed consent, nor is  
21 it any--

22 [cheers]

23 Nor is it any way to take consideration of  
24 the various comments from the people who are  
25 here in the audience. I am sorry to have to see

1 this again, I am sorry to see this anger and  
2 dismay expressed by people in this room, and I  
3 hope that there will be a civil conversation.  
4 Having said that, as an Irishman, there is  
5 nothing like a good brawl.

6 [cheers]

7 MS. DENISE JAMISON: Good evening. My name  
8 is Denise Jamison, and I am the very proud  
9 principal of MS50.

10 [cheers]

11 MS 50, first of all, I want to say I have  
12 the best, the hardest working, and most devoted,  
13 dedicated teachers in New York City working for  
14 the children of Williamsburg, and in spite of  
15 the many challenges that our school community  
16 has faced, like family, sometimes we disagree,  
17 but we always come back together on the common  
18 ground of the good of the children of this  
19 school community.

20 [cheers]

21 And I am overwhelmed and greatly  
22 appreciative of the community support that is  
23 for our school. In two years we will celebrate  
24 our 100th Anniversary, and I expect for MS 50 to  
25 be here another 100 years to service this

1 community.

2 [cheers]

3 And to Southside, I say thank you to all the  
4 elected officials, I say thank you, and we thank  
5 you so much for your support.

6 [cheers and chants]

7 MR. BETHEIL: This concludes the formal  
8 presentations. I will ask the following people  
9 to begin to line up for The Public Speaks, and  
10 so that everybody that is signed up has an  
11 opportunity to speak, I want to make sure I  
12 explain the process clearly. At this point we  
13 have 92 speakers that are signed up. I am going  
14 to call names out five at a time, and ask that  
15 we line up five at this microphone and the other  
16 five on this side. As those folks line up, we  
17 will make sure that the elected officials that  
18 are here with us this evening have an  
19 opportunity to speak.

20 We do have a number of people that are in an  
21 overflow room right now, some of them have  
22 signed up to speak, and we are making  
23 arrangements for them to be here when their time  
24 is called. You are reminded that the public  
25 comment is limited to two minutes. Time will be

1 kept and you will be signaled when there are  
2 30 seconds left, we will allow you to finish  
3 your thought, but do ask that people be  
4 respectful of the two minutes, as of right now  
5 we have about three hours of public comment  
6 ahead of us, and with the young kids here, we do  
7 want to make sure some folks can get home,  
8 because we know you have school tomorrow.

9         So, with that, I would ask our elected  
10 officials to please join us up here and I will  
11 turn the microphone over in just a second. I  
12 would ask Patricia Sorano [phonetic], number  
13 one, Heather Langshen [phonetic], to please line  
14 up on this side, Heather Langshen, Brooke Parker  
15 [phonetic], Courtney Smile [phonetic], and  
16 Adriana--it looks like Golding [phonetic]. At  
17 this microphone, I would ask Juan Martinez  
18 [phonetic], Beviano Orazzo [phonetic], sorry, I  
19 am having a hard time with the handwriting, it  
20 looks like Rueben Hernozen [phonetic], number  
21 three, David Drobez [phonetic] and Alize Lopez  
22 [phonetic], if you'd please line up at this  
23 microphone.

24         And with that, if Councilmember Diana Reyna  
25 is here?

1 [cheers]

2 MS. DIANA REYNA: Good evening. I'd like to  
3 indulge everyone in asking for two minutes of  
4 housekeeping issues. [in Spanish] Is there  
5 anyone in this room who needs a translation  
6 device? Please raise your hand. [in Spanish]

7 I'd like you to keep your hands up. Before  
8 I begin, I need assurances that everyone in this  
9 room who needs translation receives translation  
10 services.

11 [cheers]

12 And I'd like to make note that there are two  
13 services being provided. We have Spanish as  
14 well as Arabic translation. If you can please  
15 stand up, and follow this gentleman. [in  
16 Spanish]

17 Ladies and Gentlemen, if anyone is in need  
18 of a seat, raise your hand if there is a seat  
19 empty next to you.

20 Ladies and Gentlemen, my name is Diana  
21 Reyna. I am the City Councilmember representing  
22 the Williamsburg/Greenpoint Community.

23 [cheers]

24 My message, my message today--

25 [cheers and chants]

1           My message, if I can get everyone's  
2 attention, to our community, we need the record  
3 to be straight. We need the record to reflect  
4 [in Spanish], we need the record to reflect,  
5 when the information is being reviewed, that  
6 this co-location proposal is not supported by  
7 this Councilmember.

8           [cheers]

9           I'd also like to repeat, this record, we  
10 need the record to be clear. We need the record  
11 to reflect that this Community Education Council  
12 is not present here today and that the minutes  
13 shall say clearly that the Community Education  
14 Council Members are not here in protest of this  
15 co-location. The Community Education Council is  
16 not in support of this co-location.

17          [cheers]

18          Now the next message, the next message is  
19 much more important. Much more important.  
20 Ladies and Gentlemen, I want you to pay close  
21 attention. This is District 14.

22          [cheers]

23          District 14 has fought the battle. I'd  
24 like--I would like everyone to understand, there  
25 is a history in this community, and it dates

1 back to September 1986, the longest boycott in  
2 the history of the City of New York. When 776  
3 kids refused to send--when 776 kids were not  
4 allowed, by their parents, to attend a school  
5 that was segregated, a school--

6 [cheers]

7 Parents, parents, parents took full control  
8 in this District, and did not allow the  
9 Department of Education to take over PS 16, and  
10 divide our community.

11 [cheers]

12 [in Spanish]

13 [cheers]

14 I want--I want this audience here today not  
15 to forget history. We fought for quality  
16 education. This community has been at the  
17 forefront of quality education, trying to do it  
18 on its own, for itself, while the Department of  
19 Education has not listened to our petitions. We  
20 have been asking for reform in our schools.

21 [cheers]

22 And today, it is trying to split our  
23 community. All this time we have been hearing,  
24 "Well, there are parents who want this Success  
25 Charter School," and yet, all we have been

1 hearing is--

2 [cheers]

3 I want everyone to understand, the Charter  
4 School Institute was not created to force  
5 Charter Schools into communities.

6 [cheers]

7 The message is clear--the message--

8 [cheers and chants]

9 The community, District 14--District 14,  
10 look over here. Look over here, District 14.  
11 District 14, this message is for you. For you.  
12 Not for anybody else. Our community is standing  
13 together today, united, sending one message: We  
14 do not support this Charter School. We will  
15 not--

16 [cheers]

17 The failure. The failure. Let's talk about  
18 failure. Let's talk about failure. Failure.  
19 District 14, look at me. District 14. The  
20 message--the message we are talking about, we  
21 are talking about a District that is in need of--  
22 -

23 [chants]

24 MR. BETHEIL: Excuse me. Ladies and  
25 Gentlemen. Ladies and Gentlemen. I want to try

1 this once. If I could have everybody's  
2 attention. I am asking for everybody's  
3 attention. Of the people that are here this  
4 evening, 97 of you have signed up to speak. We  
5 have closed after the 15-minute period, the sign  
6 up. My only job tonight is to make sure that  
7 everybody is heard. If we continue the shouting  
8 back and forth over the speakers, nobody is  
9 going to end up being heard, and it will have  
10 been a waste and an embarrassment for every  
11 adult in this auditorium to have done this in  
12 front of our children.

13 [cheers]

14 So I will ask the Councilwoman to please  
15 continue, but try and finish up her remarks so  
16 that our other elected officials can speak, so  
17 that we can move on to the 97 folks who have  
18 signed up, which really represents all of you.  
19 I understand this is a challenging night. The  
20 only reason we are here tonight is to hear from  
21 people. If nobody can hear anybody, then we all  
22 have a problem.

23 Councilwoman?

24 MS. REYNA: I want to finish my statement,  
25 and I need you to understand that I stand with

1 you, my community.

2 [cheers]

3 Any failure--any failure assumed by our  
4 students is a failure of the Department of  
5 Education. They have to be held accountable for  
6 the neglect and abandonment it has had towards  
7 our community. It has pitted community against  
8 community. The children of this District have a  
9 basic human right to quality education. The  
10 Department has shown, has demonstrated it has  
11 not been capable of providing the quality  
12 education we have been calling for, for decades.  
13 Decades. Our school buildings are hemorrhaging  
14 families because either they are getting  
15 displaced, our community has lost churches, it  
16 has lost its homes, it has lost our schools.  
17 Just last week, we will no longer have, in  
18 September, what would be PS 90, an elementary  
19 school. Today, this proposal of a co-location  
20 of a charter school will mean further neglect of  
21 our children, because the performing public  
22 schools will now be competing to take away those  
23 kids from our public schools, continuing to  
24 under-enroll our public schools. This is  
25 designed for failure of our public school

1 system.

2 [cheers]

3 Mayoral control. Mayoral control. I  
4 believe that we need more control in the city  
5 legislature. City legislature. That means  
6 there is a balance. We need a balance, a reform  
7 to mayoral control. This is not control over  
8 communities, forcing us to take what is decided  
9 upon by one agency. There has to be a  
10 partnership. There has to be a willingness to  
11 cooperate with community, to have a voice at the  
12 table that is meaningful. Our voices have time  
13 and time again petitioned the Department of  
14 Education, to look--to completely assess all of  
15 our school buildings. This is not the only  
16 issue. We have other issues in the District,  
17 and they are separating each school, every time  
18 we entertain one school at a time, they are  
19 eliminating us as a community.

20 I am supportive of anything but a co-  
21 location in this school, because what we need is  
22 to reform and have a continuation of what we  
23 started in PS 84, a dual language program, a  
24 mixed program for our kids, so that our kids  
25 have a middle school they can count on, in this

1 community.

2 I am not supportive of any school that would  
3 come in and advertise six months in advance, six  
4 months in advance, in one block, but not  
5 another. A school that has left out--a school  
6 that has yet to prove a track record of  
7 graduation rates, of success rates, of  
8 performance rates. A school that is not serving  
9 anything more than 14 percent English language  
10 learners. We deserve an Environmental Impact  
11 Study. It was the right of this community to  
12 receive an Environmental Impact Study.

13 We have 50 percent ELL students and Special  
14 Needs in every public school in this District.  
15 I implore upon the Department of Education to  
16 reconsider what they have proposed here, and for  
17 the PEP to read carefully between the lines. If  
18 you believe that you were sold a bill of goods  
19 that said community must be supportive of any  
20 charter school coming into a District, I can  
21 tell you otherwise. This is not about choice.  
22 This is about money, control, and power.

23 [cheers]

24 Thank you very much.

25 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you Councilwoman. I

1 will now turn it over to our second speaker,  
2 Michael Olmeda. Is Michael Olmeda here?  
3 Evelyn?

4 MR. MICHAEL OLMEDA: I just want to first  
5 thank the Councilwoman for the words that she  
6 said, but I think more importantly, the emotion  
7 of this issue that she carried across. I just  
8 want to make, as we have submitted in writing,  
9 Senator Dilan is 100 percent against co-existing  
10 schools. No charter schools in public schools.  
11 The only way to fix our schools are to work with  
12 those who are in the schools, not replace it  
13 with someone who is making a lot of money. That  
14 is not choice. At least not in our community.  
15 That is their choice in their pocket. So  
16 whatever we can do to continue this effort, we  
17 will work with our legislative leaders in the  
18 community to continue to fight against schools  
19 like Success. Thank you.

20 [applause]

21 MR. BETHEIL: Evelyn Cruz from Congresswoman  
22 Velazquez's office.

23 MS. EVELYN CRUZ: Good evening, everyone.  
24 Good evening, - -, the DOE. On behalf of  
25 Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, she is in

1 Washington, but my message is on her behalf.

2 I want to first say we want to thank the DOE. I  
3 want to thank the DOE for once again succeeding  
4 in dividing parents and dividing children and  
5 dividing neighborhoods, with the chaotic crisis  
6 that they have initiated on co-location and even  
7 closing down schools. It simply is divisive and  
8 disenfranchising for all neighborhoods in New  
9 York City.

10 To our friends from Harlem Success, welcome  
11 to our community, welcome to Williamsburg. I  
12 look across the room, and in reality, we are not  
13 enemies. We are all friends. We are all  
14 fighting for the same causes. Harlem, you want  
15 your children educated. You want the schools to  
16 be culturally sensitive. Here in Williamsburg,  
17 we want our children to be educated and we want  
18 them to have cultural sensitivity, too.

19 [cheers]

20 My friends from Harlem Success. My friends  
21 from Harlem Success, you all look beautiful in  
22 your paid-for bright orange T-shirts.

23 [cheers]

24 Please. Please, please. Please listen up.  
25 Listen up. Again with--hello? We are here, my

1 friends, to all of you, my friends--we are all  
2 here for the same reasons, as I stated. The  
3 reason, we want to make the record clear to all  
4 our friends from Success in Harlem. We want to  
5 say to you, we are not against your children.  
6 We are not against what you believe. What we  
7 are asking you, is to respect the emotion and  
8 the community of Williamsburg. We are being--we  
9 are being forced to accept a co-location that  
10 had no community input. That had no outreach.  
11 My brothers and sisters, let's listen up,  
12 please. We had no input. Nobody came to this  
13 community with information about Success. No  
14 one, my friends, let's be respectful to the  
15 Southside Coalition, let's be respectful. I am  
16 sure, I am sure--I am sure there was a lot of  
17 outreach done in other areas, but what we are  
18 saying is here in Williamsburg, we need a school  
19 that is dual language, that meets the needs of  
20 the majority community here. What we are saying  
21 is that, like back in 1952 there was a ruling:  
22 separate but equal. We don't want to be  
23 separate, we just want to be equal, we want to  
24 have the right to learn and pick the schools  
25 that are worthy of being in our community, that

1 are public education, and that serve the  
2 interests of our community. We need middle  
3 language, dual language schools in our  
4 community.

5 We do not need another elementary school in  
6 our community. We have four elementary schools.  
7 Four. Within three walking blocks from here.  
8 Four. Any way you walk from this building,  
9 there are four elementary schools. DOE, we do  
10 not need to invest or waste more money in  
11 another school building when we need to invest  
12 in middle school 50 and work with the community  
13 here.

14 [cheers]

15 That is what we are saying. We need our  
16 schools to work with children, not just the  
17 cream of the crop, and not children to get a  
18 lottery, that win a lottery ticket and feel like  
19 big winners. We need our schools to work with  
20 children that have learning disabilities but are  
21 teachable. We need our children, all of them,  
22 with their God-given potential, to be developed,  
23 to become future citizens in our community.

24 So, on behalf of the Congresswoman, of  
25 Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, today--and we all

1 know our history, I know you know your  
2 history, today is the 49th anniversary of the  
3 march with Martin Luther King in Selma and  
4 Montgomery. And what did we march for? For  
5 equal justice and for education, and that is  
6 what we are asking here today. We are not  
7 asking for a handout, we are asking for a fair  
8 share, what we are asking DOE is to one, conduct  
9 an educational study, an EIS. Number two, to  
10 work with the Southside Coalition on really  
11 creating a comprehensive holistic culturally  
12 sensitive dual-language middle school here in  
13 M.S. 50.

14 And to our friends from Success Academy, we  
15 wish you nothing but success. We wish you all  
16 the best, but we don't want to wish it here at  
17 PS 50.

18 [cheers]

19 So I am going to wrap up. To DOE, to DOE,  
20 once again, you have succeeded in dividing  
21 neighbors and parents. I have seen it  
22 throughout the entire district, it is awful,  
23 what we are urging DOE, is let's have a meeting  
24 with the Southside Coalition, let's discuss what  
25 is on the table, we need to have a system that

1 is inclusive, not divisive, can we--we are  
2 asking for this meeting here, and we need to  
3 make it happen soon, and we need an EIS. We  
4 need to assess how successful is Success before  
5 we co-locate a school in this building. Thank  
6 you.

7 [cheers]

8 MR. BETHEIL: Alright, we have three more  
9 representatives here, and I will ask them to  
10 come forward and I would ask that they please  
11 keep their comments brief so that we can get to  
12 the 97 speakers that have been waiting patiently  
13 at the microphones. Thank you.

14 First is Lincoln Restler, he is the District  
15 Leader with the 50th Assembly.

16 [cheers]

17 MR. LINCOLN RESTLER: I have a request for  
18 everybody here. During my remarks, and I hope  
19 during the future speakers, we can stop  
20 shouting, clapping, hooting, hollering. This is  
21 the most emotional of issues, but what we all  
22 have in common--teachers, who work so hard,  
23 principals who kill themselves for our schools,  
24 parents who are just looking out for the best  
25 interests of their children, and of course our

1 kids--what we all have in common, is the best  
2 interest of our youth, and I think we need to  
3 bring a little bit more civility to this  
4 discussion.

5 [applause]

6 And after that, I hope that we can--I want  
7 to firstly thank and recognize Councilwoman  
8 Diana Reyna and Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez,  
9 and the Southside Community Schools Coalition  
10 for their bold and courageous leadership on this  
11 issue.

12 With over 1,000 signatures, Greenpoint, the  
13 Northside, and the Southside, all stand united  
14 in opposition to this school co-locating here.

15 [cheers]

16 No, no, no, no, what did we say? What did  
17 we say? We are not going to clap, we are not  
18 going to get loud, we are just going to speak,  
19 supportive or not. Right? Let's let everybody  
20 speak and get their message out, and make the  
21 public hearing have a purpose.

22 Now, I live in Greenpoint. And when I walk  
23 into every coffee shop on my corner, when I go  
24 into the restaurants down the block, when I talk  
25 to my neighbors who have children, I see fliers

1 for Success everywhere I look. Neighbors have  
2 received dozens, literally countless pieces of  
3 mail from Success Academy. When I go into the  
4 Bedford L Train Station, I am bombarded. Every  
5 column, every poster, filled with Success. But  
6 when I talk to my friends, to my brothers and my  
7 sisters here on the Southside, here in Los  
8 Sures, they haven't heard from this school. Why  
9 is that? Success Academy - - plain and simple.  
10 When you look at Success Academy schools, they  
11 have just five percent English language learners  
12 here, four percent English language learners  
13 there, they are not serving the whole community.  
14 They are not serving special needs students.  
15 This is profoundly problematic. We cannot  
16 accept it here in Williamsburg. What we need  
17 here in the Southside, what we need in Los  
18 Sures, which has been the gateway for Latinos  
19 into Brooklyn for the better part of 75 years,  
20 what we need here is a middle school. We have  
21 got four elementary schools in walking distance,  
22 we need more quality middle school slots in  
23 District 14.

24 So let me be clear. As my dear friend, and  
25 one of my mentors, Luis Garden Acosta said the

1 last time we were here, we will lie down in  
2 the streets, we will rally on the steps of Tweed  
3 Courthouse, we are not going to stop until  
4 Success Academy is stopped. We don't want this  
5 school here. Thank you.

6 [cheers]

7 MR. BETHEIL: Mr. - - from the Community  
8 Board.

9 MALE VOICE: Good evening, everyone. How is  
10 everyone feeling tonight? I want to say that at  
11 the last meeting that was here, I mentioned that  
12 I was a victim of the first original charter  
13 school, I couldn't make the cut. I went to St.  
14 Peter-Paul school, and they let me go in fourth  
15 grade and said, "You can't make it here, kid.  
16 We've got to let you go." And when I couldn't  
17 go anywhere else, the public school system took  
18 me in, and they said, "You have the heart. You  
19 have the skill. We are going to work with you,  
20 and we are going to give you what you need."

21 And then I went to MS 50, in this  
22 auditorium, where Kathryn broke up with me right  
23 in that seat right there, all those many years  
24 ago, this is where I learned how to be a boy, to  
25 be a man, and MS 50--and I think the principal,

1 and the teachers, for showing me what it was  
2 to be part of life. When the English teacher  
3 fell in love with the Science teacher, and they  
4 got married and had kids. When we had to sing  
5 the first Hanukkah song in school history,  
6 everyone said, "Hanukkah what?" And we sang  
7 that song here. When we learned about Broadway  
8 shows, we learned it here at 50.

9 This was a school where it taught you about  
10 life, and you didn't have to leave your block.  
11 You could be here, and learn about the world.  
12 We had the broken DVD player that never worked,  
13 or VHS player that never worked, the TV player  
14 that you had to mess with a little bit to watch  
15 a movie. Somehow the teachers, the principals,  
16 the parents, everybody came together and said,  
17 "We can make it happen."

18 And yes, money is great, but what makes this  
19 school great is the heart. And we have the  
20 heart, the skill, the talent, to be the best.  
21 And I am going to say one thing to all of you  
22 today: every leader you see right here, Luis  
23 Garden Acosta, Evelyn Cruz, Diana Reyna, so on  
24 and so on, these are people that are from here.  
25 These are the leaders as they are from here, and

1 we know what we want for our community. We  
2 are successful, we are not egotistical that we  
3 have to call ourselves Success. We know that we  
4 are successful. We know what we can do.

5 And I will end with this: As I learned in  
6 church, if you want something to live, you have  
7 to say, "Viva." So want everyone to say to me--  
8 can we say this one time? [in Spanish]

9 MR. BETHEIL: Alright, our last  
10 representative is also from Community Board,  
11 Esteban Duran. Mr. Duran? Okay, if he gets  
12 here, we will give him an opportunity.

13 So folks, I am going to ask your cooperation  
14 now. You have been great so far. Believe me,  
15 this is not fun for me. Whatever just got  
16 invented out in the audience about showing your  
17 support for something, keep doing it, it works  
18 real nicely, we have a sense of where you're at,  
19 and we can move through the speakers. So thank  
20 you for improving our process. If everybody  
21 wants to use that, we will be in great shape.

22 I've got give speakers on the right side,  
23 I've got five speakers on the left side. I am  
24 going to start on this side, we will go through  
25 these five speakers, I will announce the next

1 five people to line up over here, as we go on  
2 that side.

3 I am going to ask that we trust everybody.  
4 I have got a wireless microphone, we do not have  
5 a microphone on this side. I am going to try to  
6 simply hand over my microphone so that folks can  
7 be heard. If anybody abuses it, we will turn  
8 off the microphone and just use the one over  
9 there.

10 FEMALE VOICE: We don't have a mic.

11 MR. BETHEIL: I know, that is my point. It  
12 is all this microphone. Everybody with me?  
13 Ninety-seven speakers, two minutes, right now we  
14 are here until 10:18 tonight. How many kids are  
15 in the audience? You all have school tomorrow  
16 and being here is not an excuse not to be there.  
17 So, with that, I will turn it over to our first  
18 speaker, Mr. Juan Martinez, number one.

19 MR. JUAN MARTINEZ: Thank you, and good  
20 evening. Buenos noches. [in Spanish] We are  
21 here tonight to make sure this community is  
22 heard. My name is Juan Martinez, I am a former  
23 student of District 14, a former teacher of  
24 District 14, and former school board president  
25 in this District. So I am what you call a 14-

1 lifer, and as one who is proud of his history  
2 in this District, and the fact that this  
3 District gave me my start and an opportunity to  
4 come back, I have come back to give to this  
5 community. Today, I am the proud founder of  
6 Progress High School, which stands at 850 Grand  
7 Street Campus. That was another school born out  
8 of a community struggle. This same community of  
9 Williamsburg, came together and told the DOE  
10 that our students and our community must be  
11 respected. They did respect us then, they have  
12 to respect us now, because we are saying that  
13 no, we don't want Success, we want excellence.  
14 Excellence in education, quality education, but  
15 this community has quality, this community has  
16 excellence, and as you can see, we definitely  
17 have passion. This coalition has brought  
18 together the Northside and the Southside. Those  
19 that have been here and those that are new. We  
20 are all here together for one thing: making sure  
21 that we provide a quality education in public  
22 schools for our students, and we want it done  
23 the way this community knows how to do it. Not  
24 picking lotteries, where you feel like a winner.  
25 We want every child of our community to know

1 that they are winners, because they are. They  
2 are winners today, they will be winners  
3 tomorrow, but what you have to do is give them  
4 the opportunity to succeed. You have to give  
5 them the resources to be successful.

6 So let's stop investing in charter schools,  
7 let's continue our investment in public schools,  
8 so we can make the winners in this community  
9 happy. God bless you. [in Spanish]

10 MR. BEVIANO ORAZZO: Good evening, my name  
11 is Beviano Orazzo, and I am a resident of  
12 Williamsburg since December 14, 1956. Alright?  
13 And I've got to say that I came to this school.  
14 I did not graduate. My education is from the  
15 streets. I did a lot of drugs, from not  
16 listening to my mother. I just celebrated 20  
17 years clean. I moved out to Red Oak, Brooklyn,  
18 I lived out there for 13 years, but I came out  
19 here to my community to serve everybody again,  
20 with Musica Against Drugs. Right? Luis,  
21 Evelyn, Diane, a lot of people here know me.  
22 And I am here to support MS 50, and I want to  
23 share--please, to Eva, whoever she is, to take  
24 her school to her freakin' backyard. Right?  
25 Let's respect one another over here. Don't

1 invade our space. Don't invade our kids'  
2 space over here, because our kids are the future  
3 and I give my testimony wherever I go. I am not  
4 scared to say I am a recovering addict.  
5 Everything I wear is from Narcotics Anonymous.  
6 So please, take your school elsewhere. Thank  
7 you.

8 MR. BETHEIL: Speaker number three is Dawna  
9 [phonetic].

10 DAWNA: Thank you. I will try to keep this  
11 brief. A year ago I didn't know anything about  
12 charter schools, I especially didn't know  
13 anything about Success Academy. The reason I  
14 didn't know anything about them is because they  
15 had done zero community outreach. I didn't  
16 really hear much about them until they  
17 infiltrated a private listserv within the  
18 community of parents. This was Eva Moskowitz'  
19 husband, posing as a local parent.

20 What I have realized since then, through my  
21 research, is that their tactics are always  
22 pretty underhanded and sneaky, and unethical,  
23 and I don't want to send my kid to a school that  
24 would do something like that, because as it is,  
25 I have two children that attend P.S. 132, and

1 they are thriving. They are getting an  
2 excellent education. The people at Success say  
3 they want choices--guess what? In District 14,  
4 I know in Williamsburg, we have some amazing  
5 choices. I would invite you to visit all of the  
6 schools and take a look.

7 I want this to go on record, before my two  
8 minutes run out. This is why I object to  
9 Success Academy: Zero community outreach, we  
10 already have amazing schools, the good schools  
11 in our community reflect our community, our  
12 community, not a cookie cutter approach. They  
13 spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on  
14 marketing and advertising, that is money that  
15 should be spent on my kids at their school, so  
16 that we don't have to have fundraisers to have  
17 an arts program. They are founded by a hedge  
18 fund, run by a group of hedge funders, if you  
19 think this is not about money, you are kidding  
20 yourselves.

21 I am also objecting because the DOE violated  
22 my privacy rights by giving my children's names  
23 to Success Academy so they could send material  
24 to my house to recruit my kids. This is  
25 outrageous. It is breaking the law.

1 I also--okay, thank you. Go Williamsburg,  
2 I love you!

3 MS. KAREN SPROUL: Good evening, everyone.  
4 My name is Karen Sproul and I am a former Harlem  
5 Success Academy Parent. This is my son,  
6 Matthew. I want to keep this on a positive note  
7 and just reiterate what was said earlier. You  
8 have your signs saying, "Success for our kids,"  
9 that is why all of these parents are here. That  
10 is why I am here. We all want success for our  
11 children, but do you take one child--a mother  
12 with two parents--do you take one child and feed  
13 one and don't feed the other? No, we don't do  
14 that. This child here, within 12 days of  
15 starting Harlem Success Academy, he was told  
16 that he was defective. He was told that he was  
17 defective, and we were forced out. We were  
18 forced out. And, and this is not hearsay, it  
19 was so well-documented, the New York Times  
20 published it, okay? So it is true. It is true.  
21 They do cherry pick, they do.

22 The DOC has set up these dynamics to where  
23 charter schools have to do these kinds of  
24 things, force themselves in communities where  
25 they are not wanted, get rid of kids that are

1 not going to give them the scores that they  
2 want. What happened to my child shouldn't  
3 happen to any child. If it can happen to my  
4 child, it can happen to your child. I am a  
5 mother of all parents, no child should be  
6 treated that way. Okay?

7 This same child that was deemed "defective,"  
8 within 12 days and counseled out of Harlem  
9 Success Academy, is now thriving in a gifted  
10 program in - - school. Okay? You don't throw  
11 away our kids. All of our kids deserve to have  
12 a quality education. Okay? We are not against  
13 you. No outreach was done to no one in this  
14 community. That is not okay. It is not wanted.  
15 Thank you.

16 And parents, I just want to say this, we are  
17 not asking the DOE to listen to anything, us  
18 parents who are the stakeholders say no to  
19 Harlem Success Academy. Not here, not anywhere.

20 MR. BETHEIL: Speaker number five is Alize  
21 Lopez.

22 MS. ALIZE LOPEZ: Good evening, everyone.  
23 My name is Alize, and I have been at M.S. 50 for  
24 three amazing years. And today, I am here to  
25 say that our education is not a toy. Everybody

1 is making a decision for us children, but have  
2 you asked us what we wanted? You think I am a  
3 little girl here standing, but I know exactly  
4 what I am talking about. We do not want Success  
5 Academy here. Instead of putting new schools  
6 why don't you improve them? Did you write that  
7 down? Improve our schools, stop making new  
8 schools. I was here during the last public  
9 hearing. Where were you, Success Academy,  
10 during the first hearing?

11 [cheering]

12 Listen, why should a Success school take  
13 over a school who offers bilingual and special  
14 ed classes? Where do you plan to send me? Have  
15 you thought about that? With you closing down  
16 so many schools, have you thought about where  
17 you are sending us children? Don't disrespect  
18 me and give--and send me to an elementary  
19 school, because I am a middle school student.  
20 We have plenty of elementary schools. Do you  
21 hear me now? Do you understand? We do not want  
22 Success Academy here. I have plenty of  
23 bilingual friends who know more Spanish than  
24 half of--they know more English than Success  
25 Academy. Their English is perfect. Have you

1 thought about that? And you over here, you  
2 guys are saying that this is a peaceful protest,  
3 right? Well, why are you over here telling us  
4 to shut up and that we don't know what we are  
5 doing?

6 MR. BETHEIL: We have two elected officials  
7 that have joined us and before we move to the  
8 other side, I will just give them a quick  
9 chance. The first is Esteban Duran, and that  
10 will be followed by Kim Irving [phonetic]. Ms.  
11 Irving, can you come to the front?

12 MR. ESTEBAN DURAN: Good evening,  
13 Williamsburg, good evening Los Sures. I want to  
14 read a little bit of the resolution that we  
15 passed unanimously at the Community Board where  
16 I chair the Education and Youth Committee, we  
17 passed this resolution there, and it went above  
18 to the full board and we voted on this and it  
19 basically says the following:

20 Whereas four elementary schools currently  
21 exist within a few blocks from Junior High  
22 School 50, PS 16, PS 17, PS 19, and PS 84.  
23 Whereas Junior High School 50 has been  
24 overburdened with a higher ELL population than  
25 the citywide average, a higher IEP population

1 than the citywide average, and could use  
2 additional resources to improve. Whereas the  
3 Community Board on Education and Youth Committee  
4 and District and community leaders have  
5 repeatedly told the Department of Ed, the need  
6 for more quality middle schools and Junior High  
7 School options in the community. Whereas prior  
8 to proposing to co-locate a school within Junior  
9 High School 50 the DOE did not consult with the  
10 myriad of groups here in the community,  
11 therefore be it resolved that both the Education  
12 and Youth Committee of Community Board 1, and  
13 the entire body as a whole, and everybody here,  
14 holler if you're with me, we call for the  
15 Department of Ed to not move forward with this  
16 proposal to co-locate Success Academy within  
17 Junior High School 50, and put together a plan,  
18 along with community partners, to improve this  
19 school, Junior High School 50.

20 I want to thank you for coming out,  
21 everybody here. Everybody. Because if you are  
22 a parent, and you want the best for your child,  
23 that is great that you are here, but we also  
24 have to be mindful that there are people who  
25 need help and that they need to be listened to

1 and they also deserve an option, a good  
2 option, that exists outside of this lottery  
3 process that they are trying to blind us with.

4 And remember, remember that injustice  
5 anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.  
6 What has happened right now, with this proposal,  
7 an injustice to this community. I have here a  
8 few of those advertisements that were sent  
9 through the mail, none of these were sent in  
10 Spanish until after we had the first hearing  
11 here. Why was that? Why were we systematically  
12 denied opportunity? This is something that we  
13 will not accept, and we will not allow for our  
14 community to be taken over by these private,  
15 managed, corporate charters.

16 Thank you very much for your time.

17 MR. BETHEIL: Ms. Irving?

18 MS. KIM IRVING: Good evening, my name is  
19 Kim Irving and I am here to represent District  
20 13 in unity with District 14. From CEC 13, we  
21 are here to tell Success that we don't want you  
22 in District 13 either. If you want Harlem  
23 Success, Harlem parents, stay in Harlem with  
24 your Success Academy. Brooklyn does not need  
25 Success Academy, anywhere in Brooklyn, and we

1 just want to make that clear. We understand  
2 that charter schools are only here for one  
3 purpose, and it is only about the money. It is  
4 not about educating children. I am a former  
5 charter school parent, so I understand what goes  
6 on in charter schools, I understand the abuse  
7 that happens to children in charter schools, and  
8 we are not interested in continuing that form of  
9 education in any of our - - Community,  
10 Williamsburg Community, Fort Greene Community,  
11 Clinton Hill Community, none of those  
12 communities. So next year, Success will be  
13 trying to get in District 13, but we are giving  
14 Eva a heads up, that we are united, we are a  
15 united front between 13, 14, and 15, that you  
16 can't come in. We are ready for you and we need  
17 you to find your own space for a dollar.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you Ms. Irving. As I  
20 move over to the other side, I am going to ask  
21 speakers six through 10, which is Eric Ausudado  
22 [phonetic], Natalie--it looks like Rofilme  
23 [phonetic], Reuben Flores [phonetic], Dorrie  
24 Tinaeo [phonetic], and Genevieve Foster  
25 [phonetic] to please line up on this side, and

1 we will come over to this side. Thank you for  
2 your patience. Our first speaker will be  
3 Patricia Sorano.

4 MS. PATRICIA SORANO: [in Spanish] Gracias.  
5 [applause]

6 MR. BETHEIL: Next speaker, just to make  
7 sure, Heather Langshen has given up her number  
8 to speaker three, which is Brooke Parker. Ms.  
9 Parker?

10 MS. BROOKE PARKER: Hi. Before I talk, I  
11 just want to thank Success Academy for bringing  
12 the Williamsburg/Greenpoint community together  
13 in a way that they have never been before, and I  
14 am proud to be a part of this community. The  
15 only other place I have seen this much diversity  
16 in our neighborhood is in the public schools.

17 So, on that note, I am one of the members of  
18 WAGPOPS, the Williamsburg and Greenpoint Parents  
19 for Our Public Schools. We are parents of kids  
20 in PS 132, PS 84, PS 31, PS 34, PS 110, and even  
21 some people from PS 17.

22 I would like you also to know that I was in  
23 the CEC for two years, so I also know a lot  
24 about all the different schools in our district.  
25 I have watched our neighborhood turn into a real

1       exemplary place for diversity. Our schools,  
2       our neighborhood schools, finally are the  
3       realization of the winning combination of strong  
4       leadership, meaningful curriculum, diversity in  
5       the classrooms, parent engagement, and committed  
6       teachers. We, in our schools, are the  
7       Northsiders, the Southsiders, the Latinos, East  
8       Williamsburg, and Greenpoint, all together. It  
9       is important, and I would like this down for the  
10      record, that we discuss the concept of choice.  
11      Because I, too, believe in choice. I believe  
12      people should have a little bit of say in their  
13      schools. There already is a Success Academy in  
14      District 14, so for all the people who want to  
15      go to Success Academy, there is room in Success  
16      Academy in District 14. We do not need another  
17      one. We do not want another one. And that  
18      should be on the record.

19             There is also PS 31, PS 84, a magnet school,  
20      both unzoned. The Gifted and Talented Program,  
21      local at PS 32, and citywide, and three other  
22      charter schools, for all those parents who want  
23      them. We don't want another.

24             MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. Speaker number  
25      four, Ms. Smile?

1 MS. COURTNEY SMILE: I am also a local  
2 parent. I want to remind everyone here tonight  
3 that Williamsburg Success Academy doesn't exist  
4 yet. It is still fiction. It may not exist,  
5 and if it does exist, it will be the Failure  
6 Academy. It is destined to fail, it will  
7 shrivel on the vine, because it is not natural  
8 to our community. It doesn't make sense to take  
9 a model that worked in one place, at one time,  
10 and try to impose it on other communities.  
11 There is no natural relationship between what  
12 started in Harlem and the way they are trying to  
13 spread it like a parasite throughout the entire  
14 educational system. It is an artificial concept  
15 that is being imposed upon our system. For the  
16 worst reasons, and it is a falsity to believe  
17 that it is in our children's best interest,  
18 because it absolutely isn't, and I want--I know  
19 that a lot of the parents that aren't sure about  
20 this, that think that this might be a viable,  
21 interesting option, or that claim that they are  
22 signing their kids up for the Williamsburg  
23 Success Academy, they are mostly completely  
24 uninformed and we will continue to inform them  
25 about the real truth behind the glossy ads in

1 the subway that are just lies. We don't need  
2 that, we don't want that, we love our public  
3 schools.

4 My daughter is at PS 84, it is a fabulous  
5 school, and I want her--I want her to be able to  
6 come to MS 50 in five years to a fabulous middle  
7 school that has all the same qualities that PS  
8 84 has now. The dual language program, the  
9 diversity, the creativity, the unbelievably  
10 unified parent body. We will bring that to this  
11 school. Harlem Success Academy will not survive  
12 in Williamsburg, I think we all know this, we  
13 can tell.

14 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. Speaker number  
15 five, Adriana Golding? Speaker number five,  
16 Adriana Golding? Okay, we will hold that.

17 I would ask speakers six through 10 to line  
18 up on this side, it is Ivan Navarro [phonetic],  
19 speaker number seven, Diana Zelden [phonetic],  
20 speaker number eight, looks like Manuel  
21 Caraballo [phonetic], speaker number nine, Wanda  
22 Vasquez [phonetic], and speaker 11, Frances  
23 Lucerna.

24 What I am trying to do to make this go  
25 quickly, if I call your name, come to the

1 microphone I call you at. So the names I just  
2 called are on this side. About 10 minutes ago I  
3 called some folks over here, I am going to go  
4 back over there and let them speak now. If Mr.  
5 Cole [phonetic] is messing it up, I will talk to  
6 him later.

7 MALE VOICE: - -

8 MR. BETHEIL: I know, we have two groups of  
9 numbers. Eric Ausudado? I've got it under  
10 control. We only need one facilitator. Mr.  
11 Ausudado, I think you're--

12 MS. VANESSA DELACRUZ: Hello. My name is  
13 Vanessa Delacruz [phonetic]. I am 16-years-old  
14 and I am from this neighborhood. I am from - -  
15 Williamsburg. This is our community. Do not  
16 ask us what we need--do not tell us what we  
17 need, but ask us. I live here, so I know what  
18 we need, and I need you to listen to what I  
19 know. We don't need another elementary school.  
20 We need you to pay attention to those who live  
21 here. The way to make 50 work is to help us.  
22 Do not remove us. We welcome other communities  
23 that are here today, but you do not live here.  
24 You do not know what works for us. You do not  
25 know what we need. We respect what works for

1 you, but please respect what works for us. So  
2 I ask you to really listen to us. We don't need  
3 this charter school, but what you need is us for  
4 this to be a success.

5 Children's education should not rely on  
6 luck. Thank you.

7 MR. BETHEIL: Alright, speaker number seven  
8 should be Natalie Ruffelme? Nate? My apologies.

9 MR. NATE RUFFELME: Hey, how you guys doing?  
10 I am Nate. I am from the community, I live  
11 right here in Williamsburg. I live with the  
12 Jewish population on the other side. I just  
13 want you guys to know that I went to El Puente  
14 Academy and it is a great school and it is right  
15 here in this community, so it shows that we can  
16 actually have success without the Success  
17 Academy here.

18 We support diversity, of course, because  
19 everyone is a human being, no matter the color  
20 of their skin, no matter what language you  
21 speak, everyone is given an equal opportunity to  
22 education. Education should not revolve around  
23 money, nor should it matter about your skin  
24 color nor should it matter what language or  
25 anything. I just want to say, this community is

1 great. Every time you guys try to come in  
2 here and do something like this, you guys know  
3 we are not going to let it happen, and so I just  
4 don't understand why you just keep coming over  
5 here, trying to do these things. Time and time  
6 again you try, but I don't know when you are  
7 going to get the message through that we are for  
8 diversity, we are for justice, we are about  
9 equal opportunity, and these are the things that  
10 we stand for. When you come into our community  
11 with the opposite, we are not going to let it  
12 ride. It is not going to happen.

13 [cheers]

14 That's it. That's pretty much what I want  
15 to say.

16 MR. BETHEIL: Looking on this side for  
17 speaker number nine, Dorrie Tineao, if you could  
18 join the line, and I will give it over to  
19 speaker number eight, Rueben Flores.

20 MR. RUEBEN FLORES: Los Sures. Los Sures.  
21 That was better. My name is Rueben Flores, I am  
22 proud to be here today, because this means so  
23 much, me being a graduate from Junior High  
24 School 50, and it is just amazing seeing the  
25 community together. Again, to Success Academy,

1 thank you for bringing us together here.

2 To me, personally, Junior High School 50 has  
3 been a blessing. When I was younger, before  
4 going to middle school, I really wanted to go to  
5 private school. But my mother said, "Why?  
6 There is 50 right here." I said, "Okay, mom.  
7 I'll do it."

8 Then, during my three years at MS 50, were  
9 the best. I met great people, a great  
10 principal, Ms. Irving [phonetic] was also  
11 fantastic, the parents, the staff, and the best  
12 of all was the connection what I made, these  
13 motivators, these icons, these figures that I  
14 admired, - - there are so many more.

15 Really quick, I was raised at a church,  
16 called St. Peter-Paul, which is two blocks away.  
17 Pretty much one of my best friends was - -  
18 pretty much all their life, and their final  
19 message before passing away, was - - and I tell  
20 you now, [in Spanish] no Success Academy.

21 And one more message before I end, to  
22 Success Academy is, you claim that you are  
23 success, but believe it or not, success is  
24 already here.

25 [cheers]

1 MR. BETHEIL: I just want to thank him  
2 because any guy who would wear a blue suit and a  
3 red tie to a hearing looks pretty good.

4 Still looking for number nine, Dorrie  
5 Tinaeo. Okay, we will go on to number 10,  
6 Genevieve Foster.

7 MS. GENEVIEVE FOSTER: Good evening,  
8 everybody. My name is Genevieve Foster. I want  
9 to thank all you residents here this evening.

10 [cheers]

11 Thank you. First and foremost, I just want  
12 to start briefly by saying, yes, I went to high  
13 school in a public school, and that was my first  
14 interaction with co-location. In '95, they co-  
15 located a school by the name of Humanities Prep,  
16 with Humanities High School which is on 18th  
17 between 8th and 9th. And you know what resulted  
18 in that? Children were able to use  
19 underutilized space and they had the opportunity  
20 to go to college, and they didn't fail, like  
21 they would have in their zoned school.

22 That brings me to present day discussions  
23 about the fact that Williamsburg has four  
24 elementary schools. I keep hearing that as a  
25 platform for discussion. But the last time I

1 checked, you couldn't have enough good quality  
2 schools available for our children. So I am  
3 here today and I am fighting for parental  
4 choice. Yes, I traveled here from Harlem. That  
5 is how serious I am about this, and speaking of  
6 which, this gentleman standing up in the back  
7 with the white shirt, one of the things he said  
8 to me when I came in here was, "What are you  
9 guys doing in here?" And you guys talk about  
10 segregation. But that is a form of segregation-

11 -

12 [cheers]

13 It's true. Because you live here, and I  
14 live in Harlem. That is neither here nor there  
15 to do with it. When something works, you fight  
16 for it. You stand up tall. Yes, I traveled out  
17 here, and I am proud to say that I did so.

18 [audience yelling]

19 The other point I wanted to make is you tell  
20 us to go back to Harlem, but the last time I  
21 checked, there is a whole lot of parents bussing  
22 and taking MTA, hour and an hour and a half to  
23 travel to Harlem to go to a Success Academy  
24 School. They would rather to not have to travel  
25 so far, and to go to a quality school, and to

1 have the choice to pick what works best for  
2 their child. Thank you.

3 [cheers]

4 MR. BETHEIL: I'd ask the next five speakers  
5 to line up at this microphone. I want to make  
6 sure we don't miss the speakers. Speaker number  
7 11, Tom Pena [phonetic], speaker number 12,  
8 Paula Natore [phonetic], speaker number 13,  
9 Christine Powell [phonetic], speaker 14, Alicia  
10 Prince, and speaker number 15, is a name I can't  
11 read, but if you are holding number 15, please  
12 come to this side and we will check your phone  
13 number and have you come to the other side.

14 Speaker number six is Ivan Navarro. Speaker  
15 number six? Do I have Ivan Navarro? Going  
16 once... okay, we will come back. Diana Zelden?

17 MS. DIANA ZELDEN: Hi, my name is Diana, and  
18 I am a parent. My son goes to PS 84, which is -  
19 -

20 [cheers]

21 We have an amazing Principal that turned our  
22 school around in two years, and people are  
23 fighting to get in. We welcome the Success  
24 People, if they want to go, you don't have to  
25 have a lottery, it is a magnet school, so is PS

1 31 in Greenpoint, where I live, and I, like -  
2 - am appalled, two miles from here, are  
3 marketing materials. My 4-year-old son got, in  
4 the mailbox, 20 of these four colored glossies,  
5 my street was littered with door hangers, two  
6 miles from here. Did the Latino community get  
7 advertisement marketing here?

8 AUDIENCE: No.

9 MS. ZELDEN: I just want to speak to the  
10 Success parents and make sure that they know the  
11 tactics of your school that you want to go to  
12 and that you want to be part of that system.  
13 They held private meetings in the high-rise  
14 communities in Williamsburg and they put their  
15 1.6 million dollar campaign in the pricey  
16 neighborhoods in Williamsburg, and they held  
17 secret meetings that only the white people in  
18 Williamsburg, - - newcomers could go to - -  
19 weren't allowed to go to the meetings. This is  
20 the kind of marketing you are doing in the  
21 neighborhood.

22 We all know Eva Markowitz bussed all of them  
23 in. I spoke to a few people here, Upper East  
24 Side, Lower East Side, Cobble Hill, this is our  
25 community, you cannot represent our community.

1 And why does she need to bus you in to  
2 represent our community? We have five different  
3 amazing schools in this neighborhood that you  
4 can all go to. And that's all I want to say.  
5 Okay, bye.

6 MR. BETHEIL: Next is speaker number eight,  
7 Manuel Caraballo. Speaker number eight, Manuel  
8 Caraballo? Speaker number nine, Wanda Vasquez?  
9 Did Wanda leave? Then we will try speaker 11,  
10 Frances Lucerna. Frances?

11 MS. FRANCES LUCERNA: Good evening, buenos  
12 noches. I just want to say this--we are  
13 standing in a moment of history making in this  
14 community. A long, long, history of making  
15 things happen that people say are impossible.  
16 And one of those things is a long and recognized  
17 accomplishment in school reform in this  
18 community. I am a lifelong resident, I was born  
19 and raised in this community. I am a cofounder  
20 of El Puente.

21 [cheers]

22 And also I am so proud, I am the founding  
23 Principal of the first public high school for  
24 Human Rights in this country, the El Puente  
25 Academy for Peace and Justice. That school was

1 a community school founded in this community  
2 and it has been a national acclaimed model for  
3 what excellent community education can be, and  
4 even the Department of Education has used and  
5 has replicated the practices of the El Puente  
6 Academy for Peace and Justice in - - so I say,  
7 and I say most emphatically: We know what  
8 success is, we know what good education is, and  
9 I daresay Senora Rodriguez, the Principal of 84,  
10 Wanda Vasquez, the Principal of the El Puente  
11 Academy, and many other educators here, we can  
12 make, we can build, and we can sustain quality  
13 schools, public schools in this community.

14 [cheers]

15 Community support, - - and that is why we  
16 stand here today, making history and saying, no,  
17 no to co-location, no to phase out, no to - - to  
18 our schools. We have the right to self-  
19 determination.

20 [cheers]

21 MR. BETHEIL: Our next five speakers to line  
22 up on this side will be speakers 12 through 16,  
23 it looks like Jose Castro [phonetic], Roberto  
24 Torres, number 13, number 14, Jeanine Staub  
25 [phonetic], number 15, Stephanie Anderson

1 [phonetic], and number 16, Julie Rivera  
2 [phonetic], please line up at this microphone.

3 Tom Pena, number 11? Mr. Pena? Okay,  
4 number 12, Paula Natore?

5 MS. PAULA NATORE: Hello. My name is  
6 Paula Natore. I was born and raised in  
7 Brooklyn, and I live on the Southside of  
8 Williamsburg, and I support the Success Academy.  
9 There is a state of emergency - - in  
10 Williamsburg. The head of El Puente, Luis  
11 Acosta, who is an amazing man, a man I respect,  
12 he went on record and said there is only one  
13 school on the Southside of Williamsburg that he  
14 would send his child to. Mr. Acosta, I applaud  
15 you for that statement. We all deserve to send  
16 our children to not a good school, a great  
17 school. We need more options. We cannot wait.  
18 We cannot wait even one more day for more  
19 options. Our schools here are failing. We have  
20 no options. I am not only a parent, I am a  
21 public defender. For the last 18 years of my  
22 life, I have been a public defender. You know  
23 what a public defender does and sees? Children  
24 who failed, children who have been failing in  
25 failing schools. That is what happens. That is

1 what happens to children. I am a taxpayer.

2 [audience becomes overwhelmingly loud]

3 MR. BETHEIL: Folks, we were doing well up  
4 until this point, so I will ask if you continue  
5 with it, and be respectful. I will point out  
6 that the microphone works, we don't have to yell  
7 into it. Our next speaker is Christine Powell.

8 MS. CHRISTINE POWELL: Good evening. Our  
9 children--

10 [audience cheering and booing]

11 I am from Brooklyn, born and raised. My  
12 child started at Success Academy in August of  
13 2011. My child in Kindergarten can read now,  
14 six months later, second grade level.

15 [audience cheers]

16 Don't be bamboozled by these people's  
17 parents, I urge you, Williamsburg. None of  
18 them--most of them take their kids to - -  
19 school. Don't let them encourage you to be  
20 bamboozled. Success Academy is the way to go.  
21 - - I am an African-American woman, my husband  
22 is Spanish, and my child is getting the best  
23 education, a great education. She is succeeding  
24 like an Upper West Side or Upper East Side kid.  
25 Do your research. Look online. Look at the

1 statistics. The statistics prove, the proof  
2 is in the pudding. Do your research. Look into  
3 it. Don't be bamboozled by all these people  
4 here, they are trying to keep your kids down,  
5 uneducated, and inferior. Do your homework,  
6 people. Do your homework.

7 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. Our next speaker,  
8 speaker 14, Alicia Prince.

9 MS. ALICIA PRINCE: Good evening, all. I am  
10 very happy to be here and I understand the  
11 emotion and the passion that comes from the  
12 Williamsburg residents, I honestly do. I  
13 honestly was opposed to the opening of the  
14 school at first. It is not about territory. It  
15 is not the Success Academy against the  
16 Williamsburg District. Success Academy is  
17 working hard to provide education.

18 [audience cheering and booing]

19 We have ambition for our children. We have  
20 to look towards the future. The future  
21 Williamsburg residents would love this school.  
22 This very school that we are standing in now is  
23 a failing school. Look at the New York Times.  
24 Look up the New York Times, Google, the  
25 statistics say, this is a failing school. Our

1 children--

2 [audience booing]

3 We are parents - - education. That is what  
4 they get at Success Academy. Quality education.  
5 We are not your enemies. We would like to share  
6 the success. Thank you.

7 MR. BETHEIL: Folks, we were doing so well  
8 for a while. I've got to tell you--I've got to  
9 say, we have a number of people, we have been  
10 doing so well, please? We still have about 60  
11 speakers to go, we have a number of people that  
12 are still outside that are trying to come in, I  
13 would ask folks to please grab a seat and clear  
14 the aisles. I want to thank--I want to thank  
15 those folks at the beginning that figured out  
16 how to use their hands and I would suggest that  
17 that goes both ways. Speaker number 15.

18 MR. HENRY MISOUREK: Good evening, everyone.  
19 How about if we all take a deep breath. Let's  
20 all take a deep breath. Everyone in this room,  
21 we are here for one reason, and that is our  
22 children. My name is Henry Misourek [phonetic],  
23 I live on the Southside of Williamsburg, and I  
24 may be a newcomer, but I chose this neighborhood  
25 in which to live. I want to raise my children

1 here. I want to be your neighbor. I want to  
2 live in an integrated, diverse community. Take  
3 a breath. Because we are here for our children.  
4 How would our children feel if they all turned  
5 and looked at everyone in this room right now,  
6 and what would they say? Would they say that  
7 screaming and hatred and bad words being said is  
8 not what we want for our children? All I'm  
9 asking for is to have the opportunity to have a  
10 choice for where I send my child to school. A  
11 public school. I want my child to have a public  
12 school education. And one of those choices, if  
13 that is a school that has high achievement like  
14 Success, why should I not have that option? Why  
15 should other parents not have that option?

16 Everyone says there our four schools in this  
17 district, four elementary schools, 16, 17, 19,  
18 and 84. Eighty-four is doing very well.  
19 Principal Rodriguez has been an outstanding  
20 success. But you know what? She can only--  
21 their classes only have 60 people, two  
22 kindergarten classes, only 60 kids. There are a  
23 lot of kids coming through this neighborhood,  
24 who live in this neighborhood, who need choice.  
25 Sixteen and 17 are not here. We need more

1 schools, not less schools. I don't want to  
2 close schools, I want more schools to open, and  
3 give the parents a choice of where they went to  
4 send to school and Success is an option. It is  
5 an option for parents if they want. - -

6 [audience disrupts]

7 Okay, thank you very much, and please vote  
8 for choice in our schools. Thanks.

9 [booing]

10 MR. BETHEIL: I would like to call speakers  
11 16 through 20 up to this microphone, that's  
12 Danielle--it looks like Phillips [phonetic],  
13 Ariellas [phonetic] - -, Daphne Yeary  
14 [phonetic], Diana Rodriguez [phonetic], and  
15 speaker 20, Shelly Hickey. The names I just  
16 called on this side.

17 Okay, we will try speaker 12, Jose Castro?  
18 Going once, going twice. If he gets here, let  
19 me know. Number--speaker 13, Roberto Torres?

20 MR. ROBERTO TORRES: [in Spanish] Muchas  
21 gracias.

22 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. Speaker 14,  
23 Jeanine Staub?

24 MS. JEANINE STAUB: I am a former District  
25 14 parent. I have been invited to work for the

1 Southside Community Schools Coalition, and I  
2 am very proud of that. If anybody knows the  
3 coalition, you will know that they are a  
4 respectable, respectful group of people, that  
5 have a very proud standing in the community.

6 The behavior tonight is despicable and I am  
7 ashamed to be in a room full of people that are  
8 harassing and haranguing. My child is not here  
9 tonight and I am very glad that she is not.

10 We did not see this behavior when some  
11 speakers spoke. We do not bring this energy  
12 into the school. The outsiders who do not know  
13 this community, who have not lived in this  
14 community, and who have no say in this  
15 community, have brought an energy in here, and I  
16 think that we all ought to recognize that this  
17 is not us, and we ought to stay clear and in  
18 tune to who we are, and what we believe in.

19 The Department of Ed is going to do what the  
20 Department of Ed has been doing for years, they  
21 come in, they divide, and they conquer. They  
22 don't care who our names are. They don't care  
23 what our words are. They don't care about our  
24 children, they don't care about the successes  
25 that we have, they have systematically defended

1 the charter schools while systemically  
2 draining funds out of our public schools, and  
3 then they wonder why they are failing.

4 Our children are not based on test scores,  
5 our teachers should not be evaluated by test  
6 scores, it is a sham, the Department is a sham,  
7 and the Mayoral control in this city has got to  
8 end, and until that happens, I do not know how  
9 these communities are going to survive, but what  
10 I do know is that this community has pulled  
11 Latino and white people together in a way that  
12 has never happened before - - and thank you,  
13 Eva, for doing that.

14 The speaker up next is speaker 15, Stephanie  
15 Anderson.

16 MS. STEPHANIE ANDERSON: I am a proud parent  
17 of a first grader at PS 84.

18 [cheers]

19 We are working together to supply education  
20 to all children. English language learners,  
21 special needs students, and we want to see MS 50  
22 remain available to our family and have the same  
23 kind of programs that my daughter gets in middle  
24 school. I agree with Jeanine, this is a good  
25 thing, this is probably a good thing, because it

1 has brought us together, and I got to meet the  
2 fabulous Luis Garden Acosta, who was misquoted,  
3 because what he was saying is that the  
4 Department of Ed has failed these schools. Not  
5 the students, not the teachers, failed policy.  
6 The Success Academy and charter chain is just  
7 one more of those failed policies.

8 This is the educational equivalent of fast  
9 food. Uninspired, and bad for you. We need to  
10 say no to the Success Academy charter chain, we  
11 need to tell the DOE to listen to this  
12 neighborhood. Our Mayor and the Chancellor need  
13 to be fighting on our behalf and not on behalf  
14 of these monied interests. This is only about  
15 them making money, and it is only about them  
16 putting it in their pockets, and not even a  
17 little bit about the education of our children.  
18 This community knows how to educate our  
19 children, let us have a say, let us come  
20 together and work with El Puente, let us come  
21 together as a community and enter our public  
22 schools and stand together. We are unified and  
23 we will succeed and not with Success Academy  
24 charter chain. Thank you.

25 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you.

1 CHRISTINA: Hi, my name is Christina  
2 [phonetic], I am a local PS 84 parent.

3 [cheers]

4 I am going to make it brief, I am going to  
5 make it really brief. I keep hearing in the  
6 periphery that there are parents, Williamsburg  
7 parents, that support Success Academy, and we  
8 heard from Paula Natore and - -, and I just  
9 wanted to see if any other Williamsburg parents  
10 are here to support Success Academy. If you  
11 are, raise your hands. Oh, my God. Nobody is  
12 raising their hands.

13 MR. BETHEIL: Next is Julie Rivera.

14 MS. JULIE RIVERA: My name is Julie Rivera  
15 [phonetic], I am 15, and I am a student at MS  
16 50. I spoke at 84, I spoke at 71, and I am here  
17 to speak now. No, we don't want Success, sorry.  
18 We have a good education. Are you guys going to  
19 teach people that are not willing to - -, are  
20 you going to sit down and take the time? No, I  
21 don't think so. We have a good education here,  
22 and we have it here. We have good teachers that  
23 are going to provide us an education. Yes, I'm  
24 here speaking, yes I'm 15, and I do know what I  
25 going on, and I do what is right for our

1 community. I live in the Southside. It is  
2 not hard to see what is going on. I'm sorry.  
3 And, my sister goes to 84. My sister is going  
4 to come to 50. We don't want you. She is going  
5 to continue, and she is going to come to 50, and  
6 we are going to continue being a community and a  
7 school. Thank you.

8 [cheers]

9 MR. BETHEIL: Number 17, - - Vargas? Number  
10 18?

11 MALE VOICE: Power to the people. We the  
12 people, for the people, by the people. This is  
13 deeper than education. We all want a good  
14 education for our children. Success - -  
15 beautiful, but you know, we here are struggling.  
16 You have your struggle in Harlem, we have our  
17 struggle here. We don't know what you are about  
18 to come here, and we wish you well, but you are  
19 not our enemy. Our enemy is not our race,  
20 color, or creed, the enemy is a thing named  
21 greed and it comes in all colors. Alright? So,  
22 we see what is happening in this neighborhood.  
23 I was born and raised in this neighborhood for  
24 over 50 years. I worked with the priests up in  
25 Transfiguration, when there were gangs, this was

1 gang and drug infested. I worked as a youth  
2 counselor, we got all the drugs, all the gang  
3 members to hold a truce and have peace in the  
4 neighborhood.

5 Now the neighborhood--my daughter graduated  
6 from 132, that is a model school for all the  
7 EIS's and the school. They were like second  
8 champs in Chess in the city. Why didn't she  
9 come here? Because I tutored her. I graduated  
10 from this school and they have quality education  
11 here. They have systematically taken away  
12 money, funds from the city, from all these  
13 schools, so now the money interest people could  
14 take over, displacing people. I have been  
15 slowly seeing people being pushed out of the  
16 neighborhood, they are being--this is not just  
17 blacks or Latinos, this is all people--black,  
18 white, Latino, everybody. There is a video  
19 documentary called Vanishing City. I would  
20 recommend anybody to Google and see that video.  
21 It is about displacing everybody. They are  
22 building high rises, luxury condominiums, we  
23 can't afford it, and we are saying no to--it is  
24 not just - - we are saying no to the charter  
25 schools here, because we have got people in

1 positions to take over, to bring the school to  
2 where it should be, if they allocate the monies  
3 for us to do it.

4 Thank you, God bless everybody. We are  
5 David against Goliath, but we shall win. Power  
6 to the people.

7 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. I would ask our  
8 next five speakers on this side to line up.  
9 That is Sophia Chitick [phonetic], Genesis  
10 Enriquez [phonetic], it looks like Lorna Feeney  
11 [phonetic], Kate Yurick [phonetic] and Eliana  
12 Santos Moya [phonetic], could you line up on  
13 this side? We will be right back.

14 Danielle, number 16, thanks for waiting  
15 patiently. You want the microphone, not my  
16 list.

17 MS. DANIELLE PHILLIPS: Good evening,  
18 everyone. I am going to try to be very brief.  
19 I have been hearing two arguments: one, co-  
20 location. Success Academy did not invent co-  
21 location, co-location has been going on for  
22 many, many years. It seems to only be a problem  
23 when a Success Academy school wants to co-locate  
24 within an existing school.

25 And then I heard, another lady just said,

1 are we going to take children who are--what is  
2 it, bad in the head? I have a bad in the head  
3 child, thank you, who the DOE couldn't find a  
4 school for, so he went to the - - program for a  
5 year called - - program. It is about having  
6 parent choice. I chose after a year there to  
7 put my child into a Success charter school. You  
8 also have a choice. If you don't want it, guess  
9 what, don't take it. You clearly have other  
10 choices.

11 [cheers]

12 FEMALE VOICE: I just wanted to say a couple  
13 of things. I am a Success Academy parent.

14 [cheers]

15 My grandmother's lived in Brooklyn for over  
16 80 years, my parents were born and raised in  
17 Brooklyn. I have no problem with Brooklyn  
18 schools. I am for Brooklyn schools, but it just  
19 so happened that my family moved me to a school  
20 in the Bronx. Now that I have a child, I have  
21 my own choice, where my child will go to school.  
22 I could have either chose to pay for private  
23 school, because the schools in my District where  
24 I grew up were failing, we all have Facebook, we  
25 know how to use the internet, okay, so why can't

1 we all just go on here and see why these  
2 schools are failing? It is not the parents'  
3 fault. It is the DOE's fault. So let's not  
4 have a riff-raff back and forth with each other,  
5 because we are all parents, we are there for  
6 each other. Why is there always this fighting  
7 and commotion for nothing?

8 You all want more help for your schools,  
9 then you all need to fight them, not us.

10 [cheers]

11 MR. BETHEIL: Next is number 18, Daphne  
12 Yeary. After that, Jerome Renners [phonetic].

13 MR. JEROME RENNERS: Good evening, everyone.  
14 My name is J.C. Renners, and I 100 percent  
15 support the Success Charter network. My  
16 daughter--my daughter, we are all for quality  
17 choices, and that is what makes Success such a  
18 great option, there are lots of great public  
19 schools, there are lots of great private  
20 schools, but what we are all looking to do is  
21 send our kids to the best school for them. So  
22 one more choice is good for everyone, and what  
23 makes Success so fantastic is the wonderful  
24 people there, they care about the students, and  
25 every child--special ed, English language

1 learners, everything. They are the most  
2 amazing, extraordinary teachers, administrators,  
3 and parents.

4 [cheering and booing]

5 I was a teacher at public and private school  
6 for a long time, and what makes great schools is  
7 parent involvement. Parents getting involved in  
8 the program, and what I see with all the charter  
9 schools is the joyfully and gladly coming early  
10 with the kids, stay late, and they get involved  
11 in all the programs: chaperoning, joining after-  
12 school curricular activities, and making the  
13 school as great as possible. It is the most  
14 amazing place I have ever been a part of, and I  
15 have been to some of the best public schools and  
16 some of the best private schools in New York  
17 City. I have to say the charter schools are the  
18 best school of any one I have ever seen. I  
19 highly recommend--I highly recommend any parent  
20 look at it honestly, and fully make the best  
21 choice for your child. Don't go into it with  
22 closed eyes, look at it from every aspect, and  
23 give your child the best chance for success.  
24 Give them a chance to really succeed in life and  
25 equip themselves with the tools and skill to

1 lead a useful, meaningful, and fulfilling  
2 life. That is what we want for every student  
3 and every person. Thank you.

4 [cheers]

5 MR. BETHEIL: Next is speaker 20, Shelly  
6 Hickey.

7 MS. SHELLEY HICKEY: Hello. First, let me  
8 say that God is good all the time, and thank God  
9 that all of us are here today. I must say that  
10 first, put Him first. I am here today because I  
11 believe in parent choice. Parent choice is very  
12 important. You can choose this for your child,  
13 you can choose that for your child, it is your  
14 choice, where you want to put your children.  
15 For six years my child has had great academic  
16 success in Success Academy, just like all these  
17 other scholars here, and I love you all, parent  
18 choice, that is what we believe. I know every  
19 parent in this room wants a great education for  
20 their child, but believe in parent choice, and  
21 you will get that. Choose what you want to  
22 choose.

23 I want to say thank you and God bless you.  
24 Parent choice is the way to go.

25 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you, the next five

1 speakers to line up on this side will be  
2 speaker 21, Abby Johnson [phonetic], speaker 22,  
3 Charles Fenner [phonetic], speaker 23, Sarah  
4 Catalano [phonetic], speaker 24, Esmil Ortega  
5 [phonetic], and speaker 25, Asa Porta-Burnstein  
6 [phonetic]. You can line up at this microphone.

7 We will start with speaker 19, Sophia.

8 MS. SOPHIA CHITICK: Buenos noches, good  
9 evening, everybody. I am a New Yorker by  
10 choice. [in Spanish] I have two daughters born  
11 in New York. [in Spanish] They are scholars at  
12 Harlem Success number two. I have to tell you  
13 that if I believed what you believe, I would be  
14 scared too. [in Spanish] Don't believe that  
15 they are vampires. [in Spanish] What you have  
16 heard here has nothing to do with reality. My  
17 children are now in second and fourth grade.  
18 [in Spanish] I cannot tell you how many  
19 hearings like this I have been to. [in Spanish]  
20 I don't do this because I enjoy this, I do this  
21 by choice. Co-location wasn't invented by  
22 Harlem Success or by Success Academy. [in  
23 Spanish] They thing about co-location is we  
24 brought it in, and the reason we brought it in,  
25 is because we are all for the best education for

1 our children, and these people are going to do  
2 absolutely the best. They are going to do-- [in  
3 Spanish]. The Latinos and everybody are going  
4 to root for this, and I tell you one more thing,  
5 we are used to not having the red carpet thrown  
6 at us. [in Spanish] But trust me, next year,  
7 some of you are going to be applying to the  
8 school. [in Spanish]

9 MR. BETHEIL: Next is speaker 20, Genesis  
10 Enriquez.

11 MS. GENESIS ENRIQUEZ: Hello. My name is  
12 Genesis Enriquez. I was a student at MS 50, I  
13 graduated in 2006. When I came to MS 50 there  
14 was a system in place to have students succeed  
15 while at MS 50. And that system fell apart, not  
16 because of MS 50, but because there was no  
17 support from the Mayor's office or from anywhere  
18 higher up.

19 When I graduated from MS 50, I got accepted  
20 into one of the nine specialized high schools in  
21 the city. I went to Brooklyn Alliance School,  
22 and after I graduated from there, I got accepted  
23 to every single college and university I applied  
24 to.

25 I understand that the Success parents think

1 that what they are bringing to this school we  
2 need, but they are not giving us the choice that  
3 they say that they are providing.

4 I came into the New York City public school  
5 system without knowing any English. I came into  
6 the public school system that my family has been  
7 in since like the 1950s. The New York City  
8 public school system works, they don't need  
9 charter schools. I understand that many people  
10 want charter schools, but that should be up to  
11 the communities that they are in. I chose,  
12 after graduating from high school, to volunteer  
13 for a year at a New York City public high  
14 school, because I believe that New York City  
15 public high schools work, all they need is  
16 support, and in not giving them support and just  
17 choosing to close them down, in place for a  
18 system that they are not even sure is going to  
19 work, for that community, is wrong. Because  
20 they have not given MS 50 any choice. They have  
21 not given MS 50 any support, and they didn't  
22 give it to PS 19, which was the school that I  
23 went to.

24 [cheers]

25 MR. BETHEIL: Next is speaker 21, Lorna

1 Feeney. Ms. Feeney? On to speaker 22, Kate  
2 Yurick.

3 MS. KATE YURICK: Hello, everybody. I am  
4 looking out at this beautiful community that I  
5 am super proud of. We have fought many, many  
6 battles. We have fought environmental injustice  
7 that you would not believe in this community, we  
8 are very used to the kind of toxic policies that  
9 the Department, that the city in general has  
10 given to our community, and the Department of  
11 Education has given us nothing to be proud of.  
12 We have done everything by the sweat of our own  
13 brow, by working together as a community. The  
14 kind of decision to put Success Academy into  
15 this school, it will not be tolerated, it will  
16 not stand, it will not happen here. I  
17 appreciate all your enthusiasm, you people who  
18 are here from other Success Academy schools, I  
19 think it is wonderful that you have found a  
20 school that you love, I don't understand where  
21 you get the idea that you should come here and  
22 tell us how we should think and what we should  
23 do in our community, it will not be accepted,  
24 you will not be opening a school in MS 50, it  
25 will not happen here. Thank you.

1 [cheers]

2 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. Our next is  
3 speaker 23, Eliana?

4 MS. ELIANA SANTOS-MOYA: Good evening,  
5 everyone. My name is Eliana Santos-Moya, I have  
6 two children in the schools in this community,  
7 at PS 84. I am a person who grew up in this  
8 community, I went to PS 110, I graduated from  
9 Junior High School 126, so I grew up in this  
10 community. Success Academy, power to you guys,  
11 you want to do--you think you have a real  
12 choice, let's see, the choice was, take kids to  
13 failing schools, or Success Academy, that you  
14 had no data on its success. You just are  
15 assuming that because they have beautiful  
16 orange, which I love, and they have all this  
17 information that they are giving you about their  
18 success, you think they are succeeding, but wait  
19 a couple of years. You are going to see that  
20 they are going to be the same way DOE schools  
21 are.

22 You know how we choose success? We the  
23 parents take over. We, the parents, work with  
24 our principals, we the parents, whether you are  
25 black, white, Puerto Rican, work together. We

1 have talent at PS 84, and we are using that  
2 talent to make our school better. Real choices  
3 in District 14. Thank you.

4 [cheers]

5 MR. BETHEIL: Our next speaker is number 24,  
6 David Ransom [phonetic].

7 MR. DAVID RANSOM: Good evening. First, I  
8 wanted to direct my first question to the board.  
9 I just want it to be noted that just as you are  
10 sitting there, I want you to look at the  
11 parents, in terms of what is accepted and what  
12 is not accepted, what is wanted, and what is not  
13 wanted. I am a parent who has three girls, so I  
14 am heavily invested in the future of my  
15 daughters, and a son. But at the same time, it  
16 doesn't seem like you are very interested in  
17 really hearing what people who live here have to  
18 say. It is easy to come from someplace else,  
19 and I mean no disrespect to any other parent,  
20 because what we have in common is that we all  
21 want the best for our children. But at the same  
22 time, you have to understand that you do what is  
23 best for your child, and I will do what is best  
24 for mine. And from my perspective, PS 84 is  
25 what is best for my children. PS 50, if I want

1       them to, after they graduate from 84, is what  
2       is best for my children, but that is my  
3       decision. That is my decision. Everybody who  
4       is in this room, or the majority of people who  
5       are in this room are from this community.  
6       Meaning, they have a stake. They have a claim  
7       in what goes on in their community. It is  
8       difficult to come from someplace else and try to  
9       tell me about what is going on here. The way  
10      you came in, I mean, no disrespect, everybody  
11      came in blending in their regular clothes, but  
12      then when you got inside the auditorium, you put  
13      on your orange T-shirts. That is deceptive.  
14      You can't blend like that. You have to come in  
15      with who you are, be who you are, stake your  
16      claim, but at the end of the day, we have to  
17      stay. We stay here. This is where we live. We  
18      don't go out someplace else.

19             I know, I have friends who have children in  
20      Success Academy, I ran into a girlfriend of  
21      mine, we had a long dialogue, but at the end of  
22      the day, her decision is her decision and my  
23      decision is my decision. And at the end of the  
24      day, I choose to invest in public schools for my  
25      children. If you choose to invest in Success

1 Academy, God bless you, may you be successful.

2 [cheers]

3 MR. BETHEIL: I will call the next five  
4 speakers to the microphone on this side. It is  
5 number 25, Hilda Vargus [phonetic], number 26,  
6 Harvey Lichtman [phonetic], number 27, Karen  
7 Sproul [phonetic], number 28, L. Hansen  
8 [phonetic], number 29, V. Leyas [phonetic], and  
9 why not, number 30, Jay Sawyer [phonetic].

10 Folks, just in case. We are making sure we  
11 cover all the numbers. If anybody feels that  
12 your number got skipped, just come up to the  
13 side over here and we will make sure that  
14 everybody who signed up got heard. We should be  
15 at number 26, Sarah Porter [phonetic]. Oh, hold  
16 on. I messed it up. I am starting with - -, is  
17 - - here? She is going to be right before you.  
18 You are next. Everybody is being nice, okay.

19 FEMALE VOICE: Hi, I am a Success Academy  
20 parent, and I choose Success Academy for my  
21 daughter, because when I moved to Harlem, she  
22 was told to go to a zone school. And her zone  
23 school did not treat her the way I expected them  
24 to. She was bulled every day. She was attacked  
25 every day. I went to the principal, I went to

1 teachers, I went to people that help the  
2 students, nobody helped my daughter. It was, "I  
3 didn't see it, I don't know what happened, I  
4 can't do anything." At Success Academy, my  
5 daughter is never bullied. There is a no hands  
6 policy. You do not touch a child. She is not  
7 told, "You can't come here because you are not  
8 black, white, Spanish or anything." She is at  
9 Success Academy, she is on a second grade level  
10 of reading, she is doing amazing, I love her  
11 teachers, I love the way they treat me, they  
12 don't treat me different from any other zone  
13 school. My problem with zone schools are I have  
14 a choice and I didn't send her there. Most of  
15 the schools are failing. I don't want her to  
16 fail in school. I want her in a school where  
17 she is going to succeed. My daughter every day  
18 tells everybody that comes across her, "What do  
19 you want to be when you grow up," "I want to go  
20 to college." Not too many zone school children  
21 tell that. My daughter wants to be a teacher,  
22 just like--

23 [cheers]

24 My daughter wants to be a teacher. She  
25 wants to be so many things, but in a zone

1 school, she never said that. And I love  
2 Success Academy, and I will always be behind  
3 them.

4 [cheers]

5 MS. ADRIANA MORALES: Hi. My name is  
6 Adriana Morales [phonetic], and I am born and  
7 raised in Brooklyn. I attended 84, I attended  
8 50, and Grand Street Campus. A lot of these  
9 schools, since when I attended here, was known  
10 as bad schools, unsuccessful schools, but you  
11 know what? The job of my mom, the job of every  
12 parent here, and I am not a parent yet, but I  
13 hope to be, because my mom raised me this way,  
14 is that it is your job to make us successful.  
15 It is your job to raise us to believe to make  
16 the best of our schools, and I made the best of  
17 my school. I have graduated every level of my  
18 school and I came back to my community, which a  
19 lot of people can't say, and I have helped out.  
20 I am currently working for El Puente as an  
21 after-school teacher.

22 I push the students that believe, like she  
23 said, that they don't say, "Oh, I believe I'll  
24 go to college," I tell them, "You know what?  
25 You can go to college, because Grand Street said

1 I could go to college, Luis said I could go to  
2 college, all my teachers said I could go to  
3 college, and I am that success." I don't have  
4 no problem with Success Academy. Me and him  
5 were talking, just cool, I don't agree with how  
6 everybody is going and all this stuff, I think  
7 we need to work together. We honestly need to  
8 work together and what my problem is that  
9 Success Academy did was come in here secretly  
10 and try to ambush us, that is how I feel. If  
11 you have so much money, then go build a school,  
12 there is plenty of parking lots, there is plenty  
13 of empty spaces, use that.

14 I am not opposing Success Academy, I am  
15 opposing the fact that you are ambushing us, and  
16 the biggest problem, other than that, is the  
17 Department of Education, is that the same way  
18 that they are going to treat you is how they  
19 treated us. If our schools are failing, it is  
20 because of them, it is not because of us, it is  
21 not because of the--because I feel like we are  
22 all doing our job, and everybody came here, I am  
23 so proud of every parent, because you came here  
24 to support your child's education, but we  
25 shouldn't be fighting amongst each other,

1 because like we said, we want the best for our  
2 students, we have got to be fighting the  
3 Department of Education, because the same way  
4 they fund you, they fund us, and we need to have  
5 everybody supporting one another, so please, we  
6 need to work together, not fight each other.  
7 Please, please.

8 [cheers]

9 MR. BETHEIL: Next is number 22, Charles  
10 Fenner.

11 MR. CHARLES FENNER: My name is Charles  
12 Fenner, I am just glad to be here. I want to  
13 say a couple of things before my two minutes has  
14 expired. I am a parent choice. I happen to be  
15 a member of the parents of Success Academy.  
16 Okay, I like the way you all wave your hands  
17 like this, but waving your hands like this in  
18 the air is not going to help your children to  
19 pass that SAT, to be admitted to college. Okay?  
20 - - I commend you all for coming out and being a  
21 part of your children, but every single class  
22 that is a part of Success Academy has a college  
23 named for their student. So when that child is  
24 included, he comes into kindergarten, he is  
25 being aware that college is not an option. It

1 is definitely.

2 To say, "Well, my family is failures," is  
3 not an option. I went to 12 years of school, I  
4 went to five years of college, my wife has two  
5 Master's. I have a son in college and my son is  
6 about to go to college. What I want for  
7 everybody is for your child to go to college.  
8 That has got to be the focus, that has got to be  
9 the forefront, and if you don't have a  
10 preparation and a plan for your child to be able  
11 to pass that SAT, your child will wind up either  
12 in prison, in the cemetery, or living with you  
13 for the rest of your life. We've got to have an  
14 option. We've got to plan for success. We've  
15 got the signs up for No School, what sign are  
16 you sending to the kids? The sign that says,  
17 "No School?" Any school is better than no  
18 school. We have to understand that we are all  
19 parents--have 30 seconds remaining--we are all  
20 parents and we have got to instill into our  
21 children to try to succeed. Failure is not an  
22 option. Failure is not an option. Failure is  
23 not an option. Failure is not an option.

24 [cheers]

25 FEMALE VOICE: Okay, good evening, buenos

1 tardes, I am a teacher in this District, I am  
2 a parent in two other Districts. There are a  
3 few things that I haven't heard, so I will go  
4 over those instead of repeating what I have  
5 heard. We are a 6-12 school. Our sixth grade  
6 will be overwhelmed if MS 50 is choked off. You  
7 have got to understand, Success is not being put  
8 here to help, it is being used against what  
9 already exists.

10 Secondly, my 10th graders just had a unit  
11 about colonialism. This is when somebody comes  
12 in, grabs the best land, and says to the people,  
13 "You are not fit to govern yourselves, we must  
14 govern you," and tells them what languages and  
15 cultures will be honored in the school. This is  
16 colonialism 2012, and these educators and  
17 leaders in here, they are from the tradition of  
18 resisting colonialism, alright? So Success, you  
19 picked the wrong place.

20 Second thing--and that is not directed to  
21 the parents, it is the people above. I want to  
22 talk as a parent of a child with special needs,  
23 the - - program is coming to PS 84, these  
24 parents will go to the wall for that program.  
25 The place where that program started, it really

1 benefits the non-IEP students who are the  
2 majority in those classes, that building is one  
3 of the only places in East Harlem that Eva  
4 Moskowitz tried to go and couldn't. PS 32,  
5 which is suing to keep the charter out, is also  
6 an - - school. We have a network, we have our  
7 eyes on this. Keep MS 50 alive, keep it  
8 successful, get your own school, it will all be  
9 good, power to the kids.

10 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. Folks, before we  
11 move to our next speaker, I just want to clarify  
12 something and I would just ask for your  
13 attention for one second. It has actually been  
14 very helpful this evening, the folks who have  
15 been using their hands to signal approval. What  
16 I wanted to make clear, and I want to thank  
17 Ellen McHugh for pointing it out to me, it is  
18 not a random signal that folks are using, it is  
19 actually a standard sign language signal to  
20 designate approval.

21 So if we have a teachable moment, if we  
22 could encourage everybody around the city to use  
23 it in the hearings, I think they would go really  
24 well, but I want to make sure everybody  
25 understands it wasn't just a random gesture

1        tonight, it is actually something used  
2        regularly, so thank you.

3                Esmil, you have your two minutes.

4                MR. ESMIL ORTEGA: My name is Esmil Ortega.  
5        I am a graduate from PS 84, I am also a graduate  
6        from MS 50. I attended El Puente Beacon, and I  
7        am attending El Puente--

8                [cheers]

9                And what I learned is that while my time of  
10       being in middle school, yes I did have struggles  
11       in 8th grade because of the fact that I had to  
12       go to summer school, but also what they told me  
13       was that they were willing to fight for me so  
14       that I could succeed and graduate and go to the  
15       high school I wanted to, they wanted me to  
16       succeed and make my community good, whenever I  
17       went anywhere, whatever college I applied to, I  
18       know that with them teaching me this, and them  
19       helping me graduate, I was able and I am still--  
20       hopefully I will be able to get into any college  
21       I want.

22                [cheers]

23                The only thing that I have to say now is to  
24       the Board of Ed, that from what I see, that  
25       Success, all their posters are saying New York

1 City parents want success for their kids.

2 Yes, that is true, but what success do you get  
3 out of bringing down a public school that brings  
4 education to the kids from the Southside? Thank  
5 you.

6 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. Our next speaker  
7 is Asa Porta-Burnstein, and his mom, Sarah.

8 MR. ASA PORTA-BURNSTEIN: Bloom's rules doom  
9 schools. Thank you.

10 SARAH (MOTHER): Thank you, Asa. What he  
11 was saying, Bloom's rules doom schools. And I  
12 just wanted to also say that Asa also was  
13 thinking that we are many, but Bloomberg is one.  
14 And that is one of the things I would like to  
15 talk about here tonight, because yet again, here  
16 we are at this hearing, right? Weren't we here  
17 a couple of weeks ago, sir, right? January  
18 17th. I was here, many of you were here. And  
19 many of you were here, an we had an audience and  
20 one person spoke in favor of Success Academy who  
21 actually lived in the neighborhood, that is  
22 great. Okay? But, a whole bunch--the rest of  
23 the community, who lives in the neighborhood,  
24 said, "No." Okay, what did they say?

25 AUDIENCE: No.

1           SARAH: Okay, so the other thing that I  
2 wanted to know is, who is here from the Panel  
3 for Educational Policy? Who is?

4           AUDIENCE: Nobody.

5           SARAH: There is not a representative from  
6 the Panel of Educational Policy. Who is making  
7 the decision on the co-location of this school?  
8 Where are they? Why aren't they here? That is  
9 ridiculous. So, I have to also just say, where  
10 are the people - - and his wife, who support  
11 this Success Charter Academy? Where are they?  
12 From Williamsburg. From Williamsburg. Okay,  
13 thank you sir. Now, I have three people that  
14 have been in the room. That's great.

15           Okay, now the main thing I want to say here  
16 is what we do in public school, as I understand-  
17 -I have two children in PS 132 and I am very  
18 proud of them and that school, it is an awesome  
19 school. We do have choice, and what MS 50 is  
20 saying here, our choice is we don't want Success  
21 Academy here. That is our choice. The other  
22 thing I would like to say is, since you have not  
23 been listening, so Mr. Mayor Bloomberg and the  
24 representatives of the DOE right here, I am  
25 going to ask you to put on your listening ears,

1 please.

2 [cheers]

3 MR. BETHEIL: Our next five speakers to this  
4 microphone will be number 26, Sarah Porter  
5 [phonetic], number 27, Luis Acosta, number 28,  
6 looks like Rennian Antaza [phonetic], number 29,  
7 I am having a real hard time with the  
8 handwriting. If you are number 29, please come  
9 to this side, and number 30, Vincenza Hester  
10 [phonetic].

11 On this side, I am looking for--did we do  
12 Hilda Vargus already? Okay, number 25, Hilda  
13 Vargus. Number 26, Harvey Lichtman.

14 MR. HARVEY LICHTMAN: My name is Harvey  
15 Lichtman. I teach at Brandeis High School on  
16 the Upper West Side. I am not an outsider,  
17 because education is the responsibility of all  
18 of us. They are closing down schools and then  
19 say there was choice, 117 schools were closed  
20 down, and then this year, another 62. They are--  
21 they have co-located hundreds of schools, they  
22 don't care whether they close good schools or  
23 bad schools. They closed a school with an A.  
24 They want to increase the amount of space that  
25 money-making, profit-making, corporations have.

1 It isn't the parents here that are the  
2 problem, it is the purpose that the hedge fund  
3 managers, the billionaires are having. The  
4 speaker before made a mistake when she said that  
5 Bloomberg is one person. He represents a class  
6 of people, a relatively small class, that has  
7 the money and the power, therefore, the fight  
8 becomes not just over this school. You may win  
9 something here. They have, for the purposes of  
10 show, gone back on a few things, but that will  
11 not save education. They will still cut your  
12 budgets. They will still lay off your school  
13 aides. They will not increase the number of  
14 schools, okay?

15 What is necessary is to turn to the  
16 political questions to continue to the fight.  
17 What is needed are community action groups that  
18 build up the unity of the working class, the  
19 unity with the teachers, the nurses, the transit  
20 workers, the unemployed. But where are those  
21 unions? Why haven't they come to defend? Where  
22 is the teacher's union? Okay, my union? Why  
23 haven't they come to the defense of this? The  
24 Socialist Equality Party is running a  
25 presidential campaign to put forth precisely the

1 kind of unity and the struggle for power that  
2 is necessary. Please, go on to the website, we  
3 have handed out leaflets, World Socialist  
4 website, we want to continue the struggle to  
5 defend your school and every school and all our  
6 basic social rights.

7 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. On this side, I am  
8 looking for speakers 27 through 30. Karen  
9 Sproul? She may have spoken already. What  
10 number are you?

11 MR. DAVID BOSE: I'm David Bose [phonetic]  
12 and I have lived in this community since 1963,  
13 so have seen it all. But I wanted to remind you  
14 that Eva Moskowitz was out in the lobby tonight.  
15 Did she have the respect to come in here and  
16 greet Diana Reyna? Did she have the respect to  
17 come in here and greet Luis Garden Acosta?

18 AUDIENCE: No.

19 MR. BOSE: Did she have the respect to come  
20 in here and greet Frances Lucerna? No. So, in  
21 her absence, let me ask this, because there are  
22 so many fine folks of color at Harlem Success.  
23 Can one of them come up here and explain to our  
24 community, Los Sures, why she did not invite by  
25 mailer, anyone from the Southside community? I

1 want to know why. She put herself out to  
2 circulate the whole ring around Los Sures, but  
3 not one person of color here, not in this  
4 community. She went all the way over to Myrtle  
5 Avenue, over by 157, to circulate in  
6 neighborhoods of color, but did she come to Los  
7 Sures and invite anybody in? Explain that to  
8 me. What in the world is going on? How can  
9 this be community partnership? Are we going to  
10 accept displacement? Are we going to accept  
11 marginalization?

12 AUDIENCE: No.

13 MR. BOSE: We have a long, hot summer, baby,  
14 ahead of us--

15 [cheers]

16 MR. BOSE: We are going to bring it up.

17 [cheers]

18 MR. BETHEIL: Next from the left line, we  
19 will do it over here, speaker 28, Lanie Hameson  
20 [phonetic], and then we'll circle back to the  
21 right line.

22 MS. LANIE HAMESON: Hello, my name is Lanie  
23 Hameson, I am the head of Class Size Matters. I  
24 want to say something tonight to the Department  
25 of Education. To Mr. Bethel, to Paymon, I am

1 not going to talk to the District  
2 Superintendent, because I am sure he has nothing  
3 to do with this. This is a disgrace. I don't  
4 know whether you went into education in order to  
5 divide communities, to pit parents against  
6 parents, to have kids watch the kind of bitter  
7 resentment and hostility that has been here  
8 tonight. I assumed you did not go into  
9 education for that purpose, but I am asking you,  
10 this is not the way you want to run a school  
11 system, this is not what you want for the future  
12 of this city. So I beg you to go back to  
13 whoever is making these terrible decisions, at  
14 the behest of Eva Moskowitz, and tell her no.  
15 There has got to be someone in this city with  
16 the balls and the guts to say no to Eva  
17 Moskowitz.

18 Secondly, if there is one good thing that  
19 has come out of tonight, and I hope you guys  
20 realize it, it is that parents love their public  
21 schools. No matter what the DOE has done to  
22 destroy them, repeated budget cuts, test prep,  
23 replacing curriculum, class sizes going up every  
24 single year, we love our public schools. We  
25 want you to support them. We don't want you to

1 destroy them.

2           Finally, I was at a City Council hearing  
3 about college readiness, and everybody in the  
4 world except for DOE and Mayor Bloomberg knows  
5 that their policies have utterly failed, and  
6 that more and more kids, when they graduate,  
7 have to go into remediation, but there was one  
8 consensus view that the DOE agreed upon, with  
9 the City Council, and I think your boss was  
10 there, and they said El Puente is the one school  
11 in this entire city that is succeeding and  
12 should be replicated.

13           [cheers]

14           And the DOE kept on repeating that over and  
15 over and over, "We need to replicate El Puente,"  
16 and the chairs of the committee, - - Rodriguez  
17 said, "So why don't you replicate El Puente?"  
18 And they had no answer. So this is what I say  
19 to you tonight. Replicate something that is  
20 successful for a change. It is not so hard.  
21 You guys have an education background. Let them  
22 do it. Let them go and make this a 6-12 school,  
23 do not bring in a charter that nobody wants.

24           [cheers]

25           MR. BETHEIL: I just want to make sure,

1 before I turn it over to Mr. Acosta, number  
2 29, V. Leyas, and number 30, Jay Sawyer? Mr.  
3 Acosta?

4 MR. LUIS GARDEN ACOSTA: Thank you. My name  
5 is Luis Garden Acosta.

6 [cheers]

7 I am the proud founder and President of El  
8 Puente. I want to thank Ms. McHugh for taking a  
9 strong stand, and inspiring stand, and actually  
10 supporting the people of this community. Thank  
11 you so much.

12 I want to thank Jim Quail who has served  
13 faithfully this community for so many years.  
14 This today is the first day in his last 10 days  
15 with us, and we celebrate his tenure with us,  
16 and we wish him well.

17 And I want to thank Paymon, a man I have  
18 gotten to know, who I believe is honest, and I  
19 hope he has heard our community. Paymon, this  
20 is to you: You have heard tonight white  
21 parents, black parents, Latino parents. You  
22 have heard our Congresswoman, our Councilwoman,  
23 our State Senator, you have heard our  
24 grandparents, you have heard our young people,  
25 you have heard our leaders. You have heard the

1 Southside community. What does it take? What  
2 does it take?

3 And I want to thank all of you. This is  
4 what we are going to do. They brought in 12  
5 busses from Harlem, they should have their  
6 chance to speak, so we will call this a night.  
7 Respectfully, we will thank them for being here,  
8 and we are going to ask everybody to stand up  
9 now, and we are going to say our famous call,  
10 "The people united will never be defeated," and  
11 we will do it in Spanish, and then we are going  
12 to walk out and thank them and say goodnight.

13 So, in English first, and then we go into  
14 Spanish.

15 MR. ACOSTA AND AUDIENCE: [chanting] The  
16 people united will never be defeated. The  
17 people united will never be defeated. The people  
18 united will never be defeated. The people united  
19 will never be defeated. [in Spanish] Let's go.

20 MR. BETHEIL: As folks file out, I will need  
21 to continue through the list to make sure that  
22 anybody that wanted to speak tonight had a  
23 chance. I will wait just one second to make  
24 sure folks can be heard. Our next speakers at  
25 this microphone will be Vincenza Hester, Patrick

1 Hester [phonetic], Benjamin McCowan  
2 [phonetic], Antonio Reynoso [phonetic], and  
3 Kaduja Bickle [phonetic].

4 For those that are remaining, there are some  
5 seats there in front right now. Okay, I will  
6 ask folks to please clear the aisles so that we  
7 can continue with the hearing for those that are  
8 still signed up to speak. You have been  
9 respectful so far, and I want to thank everybody  
10 for that.

11 Number 30, Vincenza Hester? Next is Patrick  
12 Hester.

13 MR. PATRICK HESTER: Good evening, it is a  
14 privilege to be here and represent Harlem  
15 Success Academy, of which I am a proud parent of  
16 a young daughter, 7-years-old, third year going  
17 strong, and her motto is she has got to get the  
18 knowledge to go to college.

19 When we came in here, people were under the  
20 impression that we were coming against the  
21 Southside community, but that wasn't the case.  
22 We came in here because we have a desire for our  
23 children to have a better education than many  
24 are having around us. I am born and raised in  
25 the South Bronx, and every day I come out of my

1 house and I see the failure of the public  
2 school system by looking at the kids on the  
3 corners with no hope, no drugs, and we heard a  
4 lot of successful stories tonight, but I am here  
5 to tell you about the ones that have not made  
6 it, that have slipped through the cracks,  
7 because in that window of opportunity, no one  
8 was there to push them through.

9 Well, I know I have a season to take  
10 advantage of this movement of change, so that my  
11 daughter can be affected for the rest of her  
12 life. I am not here to put on a show, I am a  
13 public servant, a civil service worker, and I am  
14 not an eloquent speaker, but I want to tell you  
15 tonight that I am very proud of the  
16 accomplishments that Success has brought to my  
17 daughter's self-esteem, her desire to go to  
18 college, and to continue to read and just absorb  
19 knowledge. I am very proud of the  
20 accomplishments of Harlem Success and so tonight  
21 I just want to say, we are not here against the  
22 Southside community, we are not here against  
23 those schools that have failed, they are  
24 slipping through the cracks. I am here to say,  
25 by my choice, and by the grace of God, I am not

1 going to let this little one slip through the  
2 cracks.

3 And so, I am going to take the initiative,  
4 and I am going to do what I feel is right, and  
5 so I appeal to the Councilmen and I appeal to  
6 anyone who has a saying over the decision-making  
7 process, if there is space available, we are the  
8 public. I work for the New York City  
9 Sanitation, I am a United States Citizen of  
10 America, I live in New York City, I am a public  
11 citizen, and so I just want to say: don't divide  
12 us, unite us, all of us want the same thing for  
13 our families, don't let your children slip  
14 through the cracks. Thank you.

15 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. Something tells me  
16 this list is going to speed up, but number 32,  
17 Benjamin McCowan? Number 33, Antonio Reynoso?  
18 Number 34, Kaduja Bickle? Number 35, Debbie  
19 Evans? [phonetic] Number 36, Malika Fagen  
20 [phonetic]?

21 MS. MALIKA FAGEN: Hello? My name is Malika  
22 Fagen and I am a proud Success mother. His name  
23 is Lonnie King and Justin King [phonetic], I  
24 have two children, first and kindergarten, and  
25 most of the people that I was coming up here to

1 talk to has left, so I don't really know what  
2 to say. I was here to educate you guys on what  
3 our school was all about, because they came in  
4 and they was saying a whole lot of judgments and  
5 false accusations about the school and what it  
6 does, and what it does not have, but we have a  
7 lot and we are offering success, and we are here  
8 to offer choice. We are here for choice. It  
9 might be three people over there, four people,  
10 they say, that was here from Williamsburg that  
11 wanted Success, but they wanted Success, and  
12 they should have their choice to pick Success.  
13 This school, we are not here to judge this  
14 school or say that they are failing, but we are  
15 here to let the people that do want a successful  
16 school that is working, successful, is being  
17 successful at other neighborhoods, we want to  
18 give them the opportunity to have Success. That  
19 was basically it.

20 [applause]

21 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. Number 37, Alex  
22 Cuff [phonetic]? I am going to go to the other  
23 side. Number 31, Arkedezio Rezniak [phonetic]?  
24 Number 32, Cecil Clue [phonetic]? Number 33,  
25 Maria--it looks like Bupta [phonetic]. Number

1 34, Andrea Taylor [phonetic]?

2 MS. ANDREA TAYLOR: Good evening, my name is  
3 Andrea. I am here in support of parent choice.  
4 Last year, 9,000 parents who are not happy with  
5 their children's education, made a choice to  
6 pursue a public, holistic, and quality education  
7 for their children. This is not those still on  
8 waiting lists. The demand is high, and the  
9 supply of only 10 percent of seats for these  
10 children is low. Our children need space to  
11 learn and to be successful. Thank you.

12 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. Number 35, Kelly  
13 Alde [phonetic]? Number 36, Carmen Melendez  
14 [phonetic]? Number 37, Lela Pudi [phonetic]?  
15 Are you signed up to speak? Hang on for a  
16 second, just give me one minute, okay? Number  
17 38, Sequana Glenn [phonetic]? Sequana?

18 MS. SEQUANA GLENN: I just want to say I am  
19 a proud Success Academy parent. I wish that - -  
20 we could have come together - -

21 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. B.C. Renner?  
22 [phonetic] - - Jahina Rodriguez [phonetic]?  
23 Iris Soto [phonetic]? Louisa Frederickson  
24 [phonetic]? Louisa? Soto?

25 MS. IRIS SOTO: Hi, I am Iris Soto. I want

1 to say to Mr. Quail, good luck and we are  
2 going to miss you, love you. It was fun working  
3 with you.

4 I am a parent before anything. I grew up  
5 here. I lived 47 years, all my life, two blocks  
6 up from here. I am a PS 84 graduate, I  
7 graduated from John Louis [phonetic]--Junior  
8 High School 50, high school was John Louis at  
9 Coney Island. I also participated in Puente, I  
10 used to take dance classes and everything there.  
11 I know everybody wants the best for your kids.  
12 As a parent, I understand that. But the DOE has  
13 to understand, they say, "No child left behind,"  
14 but if you are saying, no child left behind,  
15 then closing schools, it is making every parent-  
16 -a problem like there is now. Everybody feels  
17 that they are attacking one another. We are not  
18 here to attack one another. We are here because  
19 we all want our children to succeed. But the  
20 thing is, instead of closing the schools, change  
21 the system, better the system, so you don't have  
22 to close the schools or charter schools don't  
23 have to feel the way they feel and Junior High  
24 School 50 and PS 84 don't have to feel the way  
25 we feel right now. Because if other schools

1       come, everything that we worked very hard  
2       for, the programs, you are going to take up the  
3       space, you are going to take up the rooms, there  
4       goes the program that we fought so hard to have.

5               That means you are putting our kids behind.  
6       So you have got to think about that. And with  
7       that, goodnight to everybody, God bless  
8       everybody.

9               MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. Somebody left a  
10       cell phone down here in the front row. I have  
11       got it right here, so if somebody is missing  
12       their cell phone, check your pockets. And we  
13       found the owner. That was easy.

14              Louisa Fredrickson? Ingrid Geraldo  
15       [phonetic]? If we could have one of the  
16       translators, please? They are in the hall, they  
17       will be right in. Is Gloria Brandon [phonetic]  
18       here, while we are waiting for the translator?  
19       Tina Santiago [phonetic]? Sabrina Williams  
20       [phonetic]? Patricia Tambeau [phonetic]? Gina  
21       Maldonado [phonetic]? Henry Mazorek [phonetic]?  
22       Mario Cuomo [phonetic]? Maria Kellen  
23       [phonetic]? Miguel Jimenez [phonetic]? Candido  
24       Brown [phonetic]? Speaker 45, looks like  
25       Camillo Bartilda [phonetic]?

1           We have a translator for Ingrid Geraldo.

2           MS. INGRID GERALDO (THROUGH TRANSLATOR):

3           Good evening. I have a child who goes to the  
4           school number 50 over here, I live in this  
5           community. I am also a PTA secretary. And I  
6           speak on behalf of the parents and children who  
7           live here and go here. We want a success  
8           school, but we want our success school. We need  
9           a school that has success, we need a school that  
10          has resources and support, so that it can be a  
11          success just like Success Academy. We don't  
12          want another additional school, we have enough  
13          students here. Children who are interested in  
14          going to an elementary school may already have a  
15          place to go, that is why we so no to Success  
16          Academy, and we want more resources, I repeat,  
17          more out of school. The people who were  
18          speaking today of the charter school don't see  
19          and they don't live in Williamsburg. We would  
20          like them to take that into account, our  
21          community says no. Thank you.

22          MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. One of our  
23          students who has to leave just has one quick  
24          comment.

25          MALE VOICE: I am here speaking on behalf of

1 Harlem Success Academy. I'm not really from  
2 there, but I am kind of--I actually support my  
3 sister school. When I was in public school, I  
4 honestly didn't have a dream of going to college  
5 someday. Well, my sister actually has a dream  
6 of going to college one day. My 5-year-old  
7 sister already is trying to learn how to read.  
8 But in 4th grade, I was on a 2nd grade reading  
9 level. I would like to ask you guys a question.  
10 Do you guys believe in saving our children's  
11 future? We need you guys. In order for us to  
12 go to college. I want to be in college, able to  
13 graduate. I want to be a neurologist. The  
14 first graduate in my family. But in order for  
15 us to have that, we need Harlem Success Academy.  
16 In my public school, I never had that privilege.  
17 This is a dream. We need it. We need to make  
18 this dream a reality.

19 [cheers]

20 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. Steve? You'll be  
21 next.

22 MR. STEVEN HUFFY: Hi, my name is Steven  
23 Huffy [phonetic], and I am a resident of  
24 Williamsburg and I think that the one thing we  
25 are all united on is that we want the best

1 possible education for our kids. I'd like to  
2 thank everybody from Success for coming out  
3 tonight, it is a Thursday night, a school night,  
4 and you are here to talk about how much you like  
5 Success Academy and how you think it is the best  
6 possible option for your kids. Nobody forces  
7 you to go to Success and nobody would force kids  
8 in our community to go to Success, but once it  
9 gets here, it will be an option for anybody who  
10 wants to use it and won't draw away from any  
11 other classes that are in the neighborhood. So  
12 again, I would like to thank everybody from  
13 Success for coming out tonight, goodnight.

14 [cheers]

15 MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. We have one last  
16 comment from one of our elected officials, and  
17 then we will wrap up.

18 MR. STEVEN LEVIN: Thank you very much. My  
19 name is Steve Levin, Councilmember with the 33rd  
20 District. I apologize for coming kind of  
21 towards the end, I think I missed most of the  
22 fireworks, but I do want to come here and I do  
23 want to come down tonight and speak a little  
24 bit. I don't have prepared remarks, and I do  
25 not represent this particular site, but my

1 District comes within several blocks of the  
2 school building here, and I wanted to come down  
3 and express my concerns with Williamsburg  
4 Success Charter School, and them coming into  
5 this neighborhood and this school district.

6 My concerns have been similar to my concerns  
7 that I expressed several months ago in District  
8 15, in Cobble Hill, and the issue that I see is-  
9 -I am not across the board against every charter  
10 school and I am not across the board against  
11 every co-location, but what I have seen as a  
12 trend now is that the Success Network has come  
13 in despite staunch community opposition and that  
14 community opposition is well-rooted in the  
15 school district and in the culture of the school  
16 district, and particularly in light of school  
17 closures in this community, that have really  
18 outraged, angered, and hurt many, it has a real-  
19 -to be frank, a real tone deafness with which  
20 the Success Charter Network has approached the  
21 community outreach, and a lot of education is  
22 about how it fits into the broader community  
23 educational philosophy. At 14, as Mr. Quail  
24 could attest to, has had a strong community  
25 school district that goes back many years and

1 that has a lot of individuals that have  
2 invested years and years of their lives and  
3 their efforts into building up the public  
4 schools in the school district, and what  
5 sometimes happens with this particular network  
6 and its conduct as I have seen it over the last  
7 several months, has been that they bombard the  
8 community with paid-for advertisement, but is  
9 not doing the real hard legwork of establishing  
10 a relationship with the community institutions,  
11 with individuals, with parents, that is really  
12 necessary to establish a fine educational  
13 institution.

14 I am not saying that kids at Success Charter  
15 get a bad education. To be honest with you, I  
16 have yet to get up to Harlem, but I would like  
17 to, because I would like to know how the schools  
18 operate, but it has really been an issue, as I  
19 have seen it here, as I saw it in - - where  
20 there was--it has gone so far in the face of the  
21 community's expressed wishes, and particularly  
22 in light of school closures in this  
23 neighborhood, and to be honest, the concern that  
24 a nearby public school, PS 84, has made major  
25 strides in the last several years, and I have

1       been down there just as recently as a couple  
2       of weeks ago and their success has a lot of  
3       community members, and is dependent upon a  
4       community team doing this. And so, I am fearful  
5       that this particular action will compromise that  
6       school's ability to succeed.

7               So, with that, respectfully, I thank you. I  
8       thank you for coming down but I do want to  
9       register on the record my opposition to this.  
10       Thank you very much.

11              MR. BETHEIL: Thank you. So at this late  
12       hour, let me ask, is there anybody still holding  
13       a number, who was scheduled and did not have a  
14       chance to speak?

15              Okay, that means we have exhausted our list.  
16       We have heard many significant comments this  
17       evening. We do appreciate your feedback and the  
18       contributions to the hearing. For those that  
19       have stayed till this late hour, I really do  
20       want to thank you. This could have been a  
21       conversation that got out of control very  
22       quickly and folks were respectful and did try  
23       and listen to each other. That is appreciated.

24              The information from this hearing will be  
25       shared with the Panel on Educational Policy,

1 which will have its hearing on March 1, 2012  
2 at Brooklyn Technical High School at 6:00 p.m.,  
3 to vote on this proposal. Please use the phone  
4 number or the email at the bottom of the facts  
5 sheet if you have any other questions or  
6 concerns. The phone number is 212-374-0208.  
7 Again, 212-374-0208. And the email is  
8 [D14proposals@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:D14proposals@schools.nyc.gov).

9 Thank you all for coming this evening. This  
10 Joint Public Hearing is officially adjourned.

11 [END 285067.MP3]

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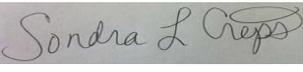
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature: 

Date: February 19, 2012