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

**Grade Expansion of P.S. 305 from a
K-3 to a K-5 and Re-siting of a
Portion of P.S. 305 from Q245 to
Q320**

November 10, 2014

5:30 p.m.

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MS. LYNN BOTFELD: Hello, testing. Good
3 evening, everyone. Thank you for coming to the
4 joint public hearing. What an amazing turnout,
5 P.S. 305. Thank you. - - yourselves, great.
6 305 is amazing, so I'm not surprised.

7 MS. MADELINE CHAN: I'm going to officially
8 begin the joint public hearing. There are some
9 seats in the front. For people who are standing
10 in the back, if you'd like be more comfortable,
11 take a seat. Good evening. This is a joint
12 public hearing of the Department of Education,
13 Community Education Council, and School
14 Leadership Team for the proposed grade expansion
15 of P.S. 305 Learners and Leaders, 24Q305, from a
16 K through three to a K through five school, and
17 a partial re-siting of P.S. 305 Learners and
18 Leaders, to building Q320, beginning in the
19 2015-2016 school year. I am District 24
20 Superintendent Madeline Chan. We have asked the
21 District 24 Community Education Council and the
22 School Leadership Team from P.S. 305, Learners
23 and Leaders, to participate in this joint public
24 hearing. I am joined tonight by Principal Lynn
25 Botfeld, SLT members Marlene Feliciano

1 [phonetic], Deborah Sherlock, Giovanna Gerez
2 [phonetic], Joanne, Nicholas Bologna, Paul
3 Verasoto [phonetic], and Genera Rodriguez
4 [phonetic]. If the SLT members would like to
5 join us on the dais, you are welcome. We are
6 also joined by Mr. Carl Chiaramonte, from the
7 CEC, and Ms. Patricia Safina. Thank you one and
8 all for attending. We'll just wait 'til
9 everyone takes their place. And where are the
10 interpreters? Is my pace all right? The
11 purpose of this hearing is for you to provide
12 comments about the proposal. Before I describe
13 the proposal, I want to make sure you are all
14 aware of the opportunity to provide your input.
15 All those who wish to speak must sign up in the
16 speaker signup area located just outside the
17 auditorium. The signup list will close in 15
18 minutes. Speakers will be given the floor in
19 the order that they sign up. All comments are
20 limited to two minutes. There may be elected
21 officials who arrive at different times
22 throughout the evening. If they wish to speak,
23 we will do our best to accommodate them at the
24 first opportune moment. Those who are here at
25 the start of the public comment segment will be

1 asked to speak first. All comments will be
2 mentioned in the analysis of public comment to
3 be published and provided to the Panel for
4 Educational Policy the evening before the panel
5 votes. That vote is scheduled for November 25th.
6 In addition, we welcome any comments and
7 feedback you may have at any time before the
8 panel votes on this proposal. The email address
9 and phone number where comments may be made are
10 D24proposals@schools.nyc.gov, phone number (212)
11 374-7621. The email and the phone number are on
12 the website for the Department of Education. At
13 this time, I will describe the proposal summary.
14 The purpose of this proposal is to expand the
15 grades served by P.S. 305, Learners and Leaders.
16 P.S. 305 Learners and Leaders is an existing
17 elementary school that serves students in
18 kindergarten through third grade, and offers a
19 half day pre-kindergarten program. The New York
20 City Department of Education believes that P.S.
21 305 Learners and Leaders families will benefit
22 if students continue to be served at P.S. 305,
23 Learners and Leaders for fourth and fifth
24 grades. Currently, P.S. 305 Learners and
25 Leaders students must transition to new

1 elementary schools in fourth grade. These
2 students may face transitional challenges as
3 they remain in their new school for only two
4 years before moving onto middle school, leaving
5 them with very little time to adjust to a new
6 school environment and new academic expectations
7 before facing another transition and adjustment.
8 This community-initiated proposal is intended to
9 create a more stable environment for students
10 and reduce the number of transitions students
11 must make in their formative years. P.S. 305
12 Learners and Leaders is a zoned elementary
13 school that shares a zone with P.S. 81. P.S.
14 305 Learners and Leaders is located in building
15 Q205 at 378 Seneca Ave., Queens, New York,
16 11385, in Community School District 24. The
17 School Construction Authority is constructing
18 building Q320. Building Q320 is located at 360
19 Seneca Ave., Queens, New York, 11385,
20 approximately 150 feet from P.S. 305 Learners
21 and Leaders' current building. If this proposal
22 is approved, P.S. 305 Learners and Leaders plans
23 to serve students in buildings Q245 and Q320.
24 If this proposal is approved, students at P.S.
25 305 Learners and Leaders will have the

1 opportunity to continue in the school for
2 fourth grade beginning in the 2015-2016 school
3 year, and fifth grade beginning in the following
4 year. P.S. 305 Learners and Leaders will reach
5 its full grade span in the 2016-17 school year,
6 when it will serve students in kindergarten
7 through fifth grade. However, due to a rezoning
8 approved on October 22nd, 2013 by the District 24
9 CEC, P.S. 305 Learners and Leaders enrollment
10 will stabilize in 2020-2021 school year. As
11 mentioned earlier, P.S. 305 Learners and Leaders
12 currently offers a half day pre-K program. This
13 proposal will not impact P.S. 305 Learners and
14 Leaders' ability to continue to offer pre-
15 kindergarten. The DOE's pre-kindergarten
16 programs are maintained based on available
17 funding, student enrollment, and space
18 availability. And the DOE anticipates that pre-
19 K will continue to be offered at P.S. 305
20 Learners and Leaders in the 2015-2016 school
21 year and beyond, subject to continuing funding,
22 demand, and space availability. The proposal to
23 expand P.S. 305 Learners and Leaders was
24 initiated by the school community. In the fall
25 of 2013, the P.S. 305 Learners and Leaders

1 leadership team submitted an application for
2 grade expansion. The application included the
3 principal's rationale for expansion, which cited
4 evidence of P.S. 305 Learners and Leaders'
5 academic success and a letter of support from
6 the P.S. 305 Learners and Leaders network
7 leader. The application was further supported
8 by parents, the broader school community, the
9 Community Education Council, District 24, and
10 multiple elected officials. This suggests a
11 high level of satisfaction within the school,
12 its parent body, and the broader community, and
13 the expectation that an expanded P.S. 305
14 Learners and Leaders will meet the needs of
15 children. Based on the school's record of
16 academic success, the DOE approved P.S. 305
17 Learners and Leaders' grade expansion request
18 pending approval of this proposal by the Panel
19 for Educational Policy. The DOE strives to
20 increase quality options for students. As part
21 of the provisional approval process, the DOE
22 evaluates each school's instructional capacity
23 to serve the expanded school level by working in
24 close collaboration with the superintendent to
25 develop clear benchmarks focused on multiple

1 areas, including curriculum, instructional
2 leadership, and staff and family engagement to
3 demonstrate the school's capacity to expand.
4 The DOE is planning to increase the incoming
5 kindergarten enrollment at P.S. 305 Learners and
6 Leaders beginning in September 2015, as a result
7 of the rezoning and additional capacity secured
8 by the new Q320 building. Beginning in
9 September 2015, P.S. 305 Learners and Leaders
10 will enroll 120 to 130 kindergarten students as
11 opposed to the 95 to 105 kindergarten students
12 it has enrolled in recent years. According to
13 the 2013-14 enrollment capacity utilization
14 report, building Q245 has the capacity to serve
15 310 students. According to the program of
16 requirements, building Q320 will have the
17 capacity to serve 472 students. Buildings Q245
18 and Q320 will have a combined capacity to serve
19 782 students. If this proposal is approved in
20 the 2016-17 school year, the final year of P.S.
21 305 Learners and Leaders' grade expansion, P.S.
22 305 is projected to serve approximately 631 to
23 691 students in buildings Q245 and Q320,
24 yielding an estimated utilization rate of 81 to
25 88%. Although P.S. 305 Learners and Leaders

1 will reach full capacity scale in 2016-2017,
2 its enrollment and utilization rate will
3 increase in future years as the school enrolls
4 larger kindergarten cohorts as a result of the
5 rezoning and increased capacity. P.S. 305
6 Learners and Leaders' enrollment will not
7 stabilize until the 2020-2021 school year when
8 it will serve 756 to 816 students in
9 kindergarten through fifth grade, yielding an
10 estimated utilization rate of 97% to 104% of the
11 buildings Q245 and Q320. So that is the end of
12 the proposal. The piece that I would like to
13 just bring out is that this proposal is pending
14 the Panel for Educational Policy's approval.
15 However, the Department of Ed has already
16 approved the proposal, so that's very nice news
17 for this community. And I know it's something
18 that many, many people have been striving
19 towards. So at this time we have probably over
20 50 speakers who would like to come to the
21 microphone. We have some students who would
22 like to speak, which is always very refreshing.
23 So let me just ask the CEC if they would like to
24 comment. Okay. Anyone on the SLT who would
25 like to comment?

1 MS. JOANNE AGBANLOG: My name is Joanne
2 Agbanlog. I'm the president of the parents
3 association here at Learners and Leaders P.S.
4 305. I'm also a member of the School Leadership
5 Team. I have a seven-year-old son - - who has
6 an amazing, has had an amazing experience here
7 in Learners and Leaders. Since his first day of
8 kindergarten, the school has welcomed him and
9 the rest of our family with caring, open arms.
10 Because of the teachers' and staff's caring
11 personalities, the children in turn grow into
12 intelligent, caring people. I just hope that
13 with this expansion, we can make sure our
14 children will grow with us at least a little bit
15 longer.

16 MS. GIOVANNA GEREZ: Good evening. My name
17 is Giovanna Gerez. I work as a paraprofessional
18 here at P.S. 305. I am also a parent and a
19 member of this community. P.S. 305 enhances the
20 citywide curriculum using strategies for the
21 development of academic language and vocabulary.
22 We also offer enrichment in the areas of art,
23 music, physical education, library, clubs, and
24 additional programs including ballet and cook
25 shop. As a parent, I feel like my son has been

1 challenged to reach his full potential. I
2 couldn't be happier with his academic progress
3 as well as his emotional and social growth. As
4 a community school, it is open to the public and
5 offers many activities that bring the
6 neighborhood as well as families together, such
7 as movie night, family game night, Saturday
8 library, and - - clinic. I support the
9 expansion of P.S. 305. It will be beneficial
10 for the students and the community.

11 MS. DEBORAH SHERLOCK: Good evening. My
12 name is Deborah Sherlock, and I am a member of
13 the School Leadership Team, the chapter leader,
14 and a founding member of Learners and Leaders.
15 I stand here tonight in strong agreement with
16 the recommendation of the office of portfolio to
17 expand P.S. 305 Learners and Leaders to building
18 Q320 beginning in the 2015-16 school year.
19 Having our students stay with us 'til the fifth
20 grade is academically, socially, and emotionally
21 sound. Transitioning to another school is
22 stressful for our students and parents.
23 Therefore I strongly urge that P.S. 305 be
24 allowed to expand to fifth grade.

25 MS. MARLENE FELICIANO: Good evening. My

1 name is Marlene Feliciano. I am a teacher
2 here at P.S. 305. I'm also on the SLT team and
3 have been a part of the reconfiguration team.
4 And I am in favor of going to the fifth grade.
5 I feel that it is best for the children to have
6 best transitions and put them in - -.

7 MR. NICHOLAS BOLOGNA: Hello, Nicholas
8 Bologna, Assistant Principal, Learners and
9 Leaders. I've been here for about four years,
10 and the one voice I constantly hear from the
11 parents is that we want to expand to fourth and
12 fifth grade. Why can't our children continue in
13 Learners and Leaders? We have created a
14 wonderful atmosphere for the students, and they
15 want that to continue as they mature and grow
16 older. So we ask, and we hope that the
17 officials listen to your voice. Tonight is your
18 chance for you to speak your voice. Speak it
19 clear, and make it loud so that they understand
20 that this is we want as a community, and we want
21 to move forward with the expansion to fourth and
22 fifth grade. Thank you.

23 FEMALE VOICE 1: - - good evening, ladies
24 and gentlemen. I'm here on behalf my husband,
25 Paul Verasoto [phonetic], who's part of the SLT

1 team. He couldn't be here with us today, but
2 I just want pretty much everyone to know that we
3 as a community and parents, one the school, it's
4 just wonderful to be part of the Learners and
5 Leaders family. I'm happy and thrilled with how
6 lovely everyone has been here and how they
7 welcome our students. My son's - - first grade.
8 And he is just, he loves it. He loves everyone
9 in here, his teachers, everyone around. It's
10 funny that tonight he actually asked me where I
11 was going, and I said to school. And he was
12 like why, Mom? And I said because you know we
13 have to go to support and make sure that we
14 have, that we get the building across the
15 street. He's like oh, I thought it was ours.
16 So he's happy to be part of it, and I'm sure
17 that he will be happy to know that we got it, so
18 please let us know.

19 MS. CHAN: And now we have several students
20 who would like to speak, always a treat. So I'm
21 going to call them up three at a time. We have
22 Valerie Dutan [phonetic]. If you hear your
23 name, come on up. Alexander Lubear [phonetic].
24 Lubek [phonetic]? Gabriela [phonetic] - -.
25 Caitlin Ciera [phonetic], and Mia Ruscalita

1 [phonetic]. Come on up. What is your name?

2 FEMALE VOICE 2: I want to expand to the
3 next school because P.S. 305 is the funnest
4 school I've ever been to. I love my teachers,
5 and I love Miss Lynn.

6 MALE VOICE 1: I want the other school with
7 this school 'cause then we can have a bigger
8 school.

9 MS. CHAN: Diamara Galarza [phonetic]?
10 Tatiana Serrano [phonetic], Lauren Jacob
11 [phonetic], and Olivia Roserro [phonetic].

12 FEMALE VOICE 3: I want to get this school
13 because I want my teachers to be with me, and I
14 want to say hi to them every day. And I want to
15 get this school 'cause we'll have bigger space.

16 FEMALE VOICE 4: I want this school because
17 I'm going to miss my teachers if I go to another
18 school, and also I think this is a really fun
19 school.

20 MALE VOICE 2: This school is awesome
21 because if you go fifth grade, you have a lot of
22 space.

23 MS. OLIVA ROSERRO: I'm Olivia. I want to
24 go to this school because fifth grade is cool to
25 be in.

1 MS. CHAN: Jacob Osario [phonetic], Jordan
2 [phonetic], Jay Velasquez [phonetic], Laura
3 Lawrence [phonetic], Ailyn Aldes [phonetic].

4 MALE VOICE 3: I think our school should
5 expand into fifth grade because schools are
6 crowded, like P.S. 81. That is one reason.
7 Also lots of kids live near this school, so this
8 is the second reason why our school should have
9 that school across the street. - - schools are
10 crowded to expand to fifth grade, 'cause I don't
11 like crowded schools. Also, crowded schools
12 won't have space for other kids or new kids.
13 Finally, crowded schools won't have no food for
14 other kids. Besides crowded schools is lots of
15 kids live near this school, so moms and dads
16 won't miss work and - -. Also, moms' and dads'
17 phones get phone calls asking moms and dads - -
18 food for their kids. These are two reasons why
19 I think our school should expand to get the
20 school across the street and expand to fifth
21 grade.

22 MALE VOICE 4: I think we should get the new
23 school next door because it is right across the
24 street, and we don't need to walk that far, and
25 it is going to be connected to our school. And

1 if we connected to a school, we won't need to
2 get new friends because we already have our old
3 friends, and we also can see our old teachers.
4 Also it is going to be very, very new. We won't
5 have to transfer to a new school two times in
6 two years. We will have more room and won't be
7 crowded. Also, our school will become a bigger
8 community. If our population grows, we will
9 have more space. If the school becomes a
10 different community, and if you go to a
11 different school, it might be very, very far.
12 This is a new school. It's going to be right
13 across the street from P.S. 305. Please come to
14 a new school. I promise I'll give you ten bucks
15 if we don't move to another school two times in
16 two years. Anyway, - - next door. It's going
17 to be very, very big. It's also might going to
18 have lockers. And people will be very happy.
19 If the school next door becomes a totally
20 different school, we will have to move to
21 another school two times in two years. We don't
22 want that. Then we will have to just go next
23 door. Please, please help.

24 MR. JORDAN QUIONES: My name is Jordan
25 Quiones [phonetic]. I have been at 305 since

1 kindergarten. I am now in third grade. I
2 don't want to think about going to a new school
3 next year. Why do I have to leave my favorite
4 teachers, my best, my best buddies, and Miss
5 Lynn and Mr. - -? Please give me good news, and
6 tell me that I will not have to go to another
7 school next year.

8 MALE VOICE 5: Why we should expand to fifth
9 grade. I feel our school should expand to fifth
10 grade. We do not want to lose our friends. We
11 might never see them again. We might, we won't
12 get to play the same games. We will not go to
13 laugh with our friends. Another reason is that
14 we will not get to see our teachers. We will
15 not see our teachers in the hallways. We will
16 not, we will miss our teachers. We will not
17 know anybody at the new school. If we, if we go
18 to P.S. 81, I think that will happen. So I, so
19 that is why our school should expand to fifth
20 grade.

21 MS. LAURA LAWRENCE: Good evening. My name
22 is Laura, and I'm eight years old. The people
23 standing in front of me are my mom and dad. On
24 behalf of my family, on behalf of all my school
25 friends, and I mean all of my school friends and

1 their parents, I stand in support of our
2 school's campaign to annex the new building and
3 continue to offer my friends and me the solid
4 education we have grown used to here at P.S.
5 305. We the children are going to inherit the
6 world. What we do with it will depend on what
7 we have in our brains, in our minds, and in our
8 heads. The teachers you see here are Principal
9 Miss Lynn. The staff members you see here are
10 passionate about what they do. Even as
11 children, we can tell when people care. Even as
12 children, we know a quality education when we
13 see it. Even as children, we recognize patience
14 and commitment, and so do our parents. That is
15 why parents and children are here asking the
16 decision-makers to give us a chance to continue
17 to grow and to learn beyond the third grade here
18 at P.S. 305.

19 MS. CHAN: So there's a name that is very
20 difficult for me to read. It's from class 2-1.
21 It looks like Cabololles [phonetic] is the last
22 name.

23 [Background conversation]

24 MS. CHAN: And I can't read the first name.
25 Is that child here? Okay. And how about

1 Melissa Chacon [phonetic]? No? Okay, so
2 we're going to move to Kevin Worthington,
3 council person for Reynoso.

4 MR. KEVIN WORTHINGTON: Good evening,
5 everyone. [Foreign audio 00:28:27 - 00:28:29].
6 My name is Kevin Worthington. I'm the community
7 organizer for Council Member Antonio Reynoso.
8 He is the local elected official for
9 Williamsburg, Bushwick, and Ridgewood, Queens.
10 It's a pleasure to be here tonight. He's
11 sending his regards. He would love to be here
12 and see this amazing crowd. I think it tells a
13 lot about the quality of the leadership - - the
14 leaders of the CEC and Miss Chan as well. This
15 is a great collective effort; this proposal is
16 amazing. And I'm here to say that council
17 member is strongly supporting this initiative.
18 He is 100% with the expansion of the school
19 building to Q245 as well as the expansion from
20 kindergarten to the fifth grade. I wish you the
21 best. We will be here, whatever you need from
22 us, we will be there advocating for you. And
23 again, this is amazing, seeing you all here. It
24 says a lot about the quality of the leadership,
25 and we're happy to be here. Thank you.

1 MS. CHAN: So I know the children are a
2 very hard act to follow, but we have 70 people
3 who would like to speak. This is the way we're
4 going to handle it. I'm going to call you by
5 groups of five. And I'm going to ask you to
6 just line up and use the microphone in the
7 middle. So we'll start with, is it Lacy
8 Busellato [phonetic], Yamaris Cruz [phonetic],
9 Dawn Martinez [phonetic], Tova Eskovitz
10 [phonetic], and Evan Alboum, if we could please
11 speak in that order. Appreciate it. Where's
12 Miss Busellato?

13 MS. LACY BUSELLATO: Right here.

14 MS. CHAN: Hi. Thank you.

15 MS. BUSELLATO: I am Lacy Busalato, the art
16 teacher here at Learners and Leaders. The kids
17 said it all. This is such a child-centered,
18 nurturing community. And we offer such a
19 wonderful, well-rounded education for the
20 student body. They definitely deserve to go to
21 fifth grade.

22 MS. YAMARIS CRUZ: Good evening, hi. My
23 name is Yamaris Cruz. I'm the parent of Igenida
24 Boneja [phonetic]. She's been here since
25 kindergarten. She's now in third grade - -

1 class. And I just want to say that Learners
2 and Leaders, P.S. 305 is an amazing school. I
3 mean they have lots of support for the parents.
4 Learners and Leaders, really look at every child
5 individually and capitalize on their strengths.
6 Learners and Leaders is a community school that
7 looks at all the aspects of the communities,
8 provide translation for the parents, provide a
9 lot of extracurricular activities. They call us
10 all the time so if you're forgetful like me,
11 you'll get called all the time from Learners and
12 Leaders. And then you're not scared anymore
13 that your child will have fallen, because they
14 call you all the time. I am so happy that my
15 child is here, and I would like her to go all
16 the way to the fifth grade because the parents
17 here, the teachers, Miss Lynn and Mr. Nick
18 [phonetic] have done an amazing job at welcoming
19 everyone. Miss Lynn is always in the front,
20 welcoming parents, hugging them. If I see her
21 in the supermarket, she remembers who I am. She
22 remembers what my child looks like. We need to
23 continue this. In five years, my daughter will
24 be 13 years old. If you want leaders in the
25 Ridgewood community, you need to say yes to the

1 expansion of Learners and Leaders.

2 MS. DAWN MARTINEZ: Hi. I'm Dawn Martinez,
3 and I am a third grade teacher here at Learners
4 and Leaders. And I fully support the expansion
5 of our school to fifth grade. I have seen over
6 the years firsthand how difficult the transition
7 for my third graders has been as they come back
8 and visit me many times from other schools that
9 they're now in and talk about how they miss the
10 close-knit family feel that we have here, and so
11 I feel it's in the best interest socially and
12 emotionally for our students to remain with us
13 through fifth grade. Thank you.

14 MS. TOVA ESKOVITZ: Hi, my name is Tova
15 Eskovitz. I am the speech language pathologist
16 here at Learners and Leaders, and I also
17 strongly support us moving onto fifth grade.
18 Especially working with the special ed
19 population, as most children have a difficult
20 time transitioning, if we have them transition
21 two times within two years, it puts them at a
22 strong disadvantage socially and academically.
23 I also feel for myself and other providers, we
24 that are able to follow through with the
25 children from kindergarten to fifth grade. I

1 know my children, I know their strengths, I
2 know their weaknesses, and I know their
3 families. So even if I am not the provider, I
4 can speak personally to another provider. I
5 don't have to make a phone call to random person
6 that I don't know. I strongly, strongly,
7 strongly support us moving to fifth grade.

8 MR. EVAN ALBOUM: I'm Evan Alboum. I'm the
9 music teacher at the school, - - and I'm really
10 excited about the commitment that this school
11 has to the arts. It keeps expanding every year.
12 There's music; there's art. There's dance;
13 there's drama. There's a lot of things going
14 on, and we get the kids. We educate them.
15 They're all interested. They learn a lot of
16 great skills, and then suddenly they are gone.
17 And so it would be much better for us I think if
18 we can have them from K to five, develop a - -
19 consistent basis - - students. Thanks.

20 MS. CHAN: Our next group of speakers will
21 be Maria Altarano [phonetic], Catalina Tula
22 [phonetic], Janet Bruto [phonetic], Melissa Pang
23 [phonetic], Luz Rosado [phonetic].

24 MS. MARIA ALTARANO: [Foreign audio 00:34:36
25 - 00:35:41].

1 FEMALE VOICE 5: Good evening. The lady
2 right here just said that her child is enrolled
3 in this school, and that it's really hard in the
4 winter to travel just being that one block away,
5 and there's snow. What if she had to travel
6 more blocks away, just to bring her child to the
7 school? So she would really want this school to
8 have an expansion so that her education for her
9 child will be better. Thank you.

10 MS. CATALINA TULA: [Foreign audio 00:36:28
11 - 00:36:49].

12 FEMALE VOICE 5: She said good evening, her
13 name is Ms. Catalina, and that she has a child
14 here that, to support all the children, to keep
15 her enrolled and they'll remain in the
16 community.

17 MS. JANET BRUTO: [Foreign audio 00:37:16 -
18 00:38:04].

19 FEMALE VOICE 5: Good evening. She wants to
20 give her support over the expansion to another
21 school, to the school across the street. She
22 has a kindergarten child, and she has also
23 grandchildren that go also, be - - the school.
24 She loves personally this school and the
25 community and also the staff, and that's all.

1 That was the summary.

2 MS. MARTHA PANG: Hi, my name is Martha
3 [phonetic] Pang. I am a special education
4 teacher here at Learners and Leaders. I
5 currently teach kindergarten, and I've been here
6 for three years. I fully support the expansion
7 to grade five because I believe we're such a
8 warm and caring environment, and with the kids,
9 that speaks volumes that they love it here, and
10 all the staff - -. I think it would be great if
11 we could expand to grade five.

12 MS. JUZ ROSADO: Hello, good evening. My
13 name is Juz Rosado. I'm a paraprofessional here
14 and also part of the community. I am strongly
15 excited and I hope that we get the building next
16 door - - all these beautiful families can join
17 us - - fifth grade - -.

18 MS. CHAN: Our next set of speakers will be
19 Kristen Peligra [phonetic], Lillian Guella,
20 Jillian Guella, Frank Guella, Lauren Fahey,
21 Ellie Davis [phonetic], and Natalie Giambra.
22 I'm sorry. Ellie Dawes [phonetic], and Natalie
23 Giambra.

24 MS. KRISTEN PELIGRA: Hi, I'm Kristen
25 Peligra. I'm a kindergarten teacher here. I've

1 been - - three years. I love this school, the
2 kids love this school, and I know that they be
3 very happy to stay here for fifth grade.

4 MS. LILLIAN GUELLA: Hi, my name is Lillian
5 Guella. I'm a paraprofessional here at Learners
6 and Leaders. I have been here from day one.
7 And one thing I do know, for a very long time
8 now many parents, as well as staff, have been
9 hoping for the opportunity to expand to fifth
10 grade. And now that the opportunity has arisen
11 for us, that is what we want more than anything,
12 and what's most important is you've heard what
13 the children wanted, but also the parents. This
14 community has embraced us. We embrace the
15 community. We are here for our children. I
16 wrote a whole speech, but that just, that went
17 out the window because the children said most of
18 the things I wanted to say, and the one thing
19 that I really heard was when one child said he
20 didn't want to make new friends, have to make
21 new friends. And I understand that, having
22 raised three adults now. To have to worry about
23 that when they have to worry about so many other
24 things, now with the Common Core and the
25 challenges that face them academically, have to

1 be faced with leaving us and going to a new
2 school where there are children that already
3 have their friendships established is a very
4 frightening thing for someone only at their age.
5 It's different when they've already passed the
6 fifth grade level. They're a little more
7 mature. So it's very, very important that they
8 don't have to do that until fifth grade. Most
9 schools go up to fifth grade. We're a school
10 that doesn't do that. So now that we get the
11 chance to do that, it would be wonderful. So I
12 am in great support of this. Thank you.

13 MS. JILLIAN GUELLA: Hi, my name is Jillian
14 Guella. I'm a member of this community, and I
15 plan on raising my family in this community, and
16 to see this support. I would love to be part of
17 this, and I strongly support expanding to the
18 fifth grade.

19 MR. FRANK GUELLA: Hello, I'm Frank Guella.
20 My mom is Lillian Guella. Speaking as someone
21 who's observed and assisted the students in P.S.
22 305 on several occasions, I can definitely say
23 that these students would benefit immensely both
24 educationally and communally if given the
25 opportunity to utilize the new and improved

1 building that will allow them to stay and grow
2 at Learners and Leaders together through the
3 fifth grade.

4 MS. LAUREN FAHEY: Hi, my name is Lauren
5 Fahey. I'm a third grade teacher here, and I
6 love it here. I know we talked a lot about how
7 hard the transition is for the kids, but the
8 transition is hard for the teachers too. It's
9 really hard for us to say goodbye to the kids
10 after third grade. And I don't want to do it
11 anymore, so I think we should keep them until
12 fifth grade. Thank you.

13 MS. ELLIE DAWES: Hi, everyone. I'm a
14 second grade teacher here at Learners and
15 Leaders. Learners and Leaders is a very, very
16 special place. I think everyone made it very
17 clear tonight. It's a place where students
18 really thrive, and we're a - - community that
19 nurtures students both emotionally and
20 academically. And we're ready to grow. And we
21 want our kids to grow with us, and we want to go
22 onto fifth grade. So I fully support it.

23 MS. NATALIE GIAMBRA: Hi, my name is Natalie
24 Giambra. This is my fifth year teaching at
25 Learners and Leaders. I currently serve as the

1 SETTS, AIS, and IEP teacher. I am strongly in
2 favor of us expanding to the fifth grade. We've
3 been blessed with two wonderful administrators
4 who have guided our staff towards increasing
5 success with all students, including English
6 language learner and special needs students.
7 Beyond that, we offer enrichment in the form of
8 art, dance, music, and drama clubs. And we also
9 partner with organizations such as the New
10 Victory Theater and the New York City Ballet.
11 Our building is truly a caring, tight-knit,
12 close community. I would encourage you to
13 expand us to fifth grade so that our students
14 will not have to make the transition in fourth
15 grade, and another transition in sixth grade.
16 This transition is especially hard on our
17 students with special physical needs because
18 P.S. 81 is not an accessible building. And if a
19 student needs an elevator, often I end up having
20 to find them a placement at a school out of
21 their zone where they do not know anyone at the
22 school in fourth grade. We are truly an
23 inclusive community. The students who spoke
24 tonight, some of them have IEP. This is a
25 building where we include everyone and we ensure

1 success for everyone. My daughter Kelly
2 [phonetic] attended school here, and my son
3 Brian [phonetic] is currently in first grade.
4 As a staff member and a parent, I strongly
5 encourage you to approve our expansion.

6 MS. CHAN: Our next set of speakers will be
7 Kelly Giambra, Sonia Ferrera [phonetic], Laura
8 Lawrence, Julie Lawrence [phonetic], Amir
9 Lawrence [phonetic], Yasmina Keller [phonetic],
10 and Maggie Padua [phonetic].

11 MS. KELLY GIAMBRA: Hi, my name is Kelly
12 Giambra. I attended this school until third
13 grade. I loved this school because there were
14 so many caring, amazing teachers. I'm in favor
15 of this school expanding to fifth grade because
16 it was difficult for me to adjust to P.S. 81 in
17 fourth grade, and then I had to change schools
18 again just two years later. Now my little
19 brother Brian is a student here in first grade.
20 I hope you consider expanding the school so he
21 does not have to go through the same trouble
22 that I did. Thank you.

23 MS. YASMINA KELLER: Hi, everyone. My name
24 is Yasmina Keller, and I am the ELL coordinator
25 and ELL teacher at Learners and Leaders.

1 English language learners, as we know, are
2 diverse. They come from all walks of life, some
3 with interrupted formal education, learning
4 disabilities, emotional struggles, and some that
5 are very strong in literacy and just simply need
6 to learn the mechanics of the English language.
7 When ELLs must transfer to the new school in the
8 fourth grade, much of that nuanced information
9 that we've captured about them is lost. It
10 cannot be transferred in a record card to a new
11 school. We have information that is stored on a
12 personal level between the teachers that are
13 vested in their growth. Learners and Leaders
14 must expand to the fifth grade so that we can
15 provide sustained and long-term support not only
16 for the current ELLs, but also those who have
17 tested out of the ELL program. Please help us
18 to lead our children to their prosperity by
19 allowing us to keep them for two more years.

20 MS. SONIA FERRERA: Hi, good evening
21 everyone. My name is Sonia. I am a second
22 grade teacher at Learners and Leaders, and I've
23 actually been here since the school first
24 opened. And I've met many families that have
25 shared how much they wish that the school could

1 expand to the fifth grade. So it makes sense
2 obviously that we expand our school because it
3 services our community and our families. Thank
4 you.

5 MS. JULIE LAWRENCE: Good evening. My name
6 is Julie Lawrence. I'm a mother of a third
7 grader here who's been here since kindergarten.
8 And I just want to second kind of everything
9 that I've heard tonight about how important this
10 school community is, how much community and
11 activities and healthy kind of living there is,
12 and the afterschool program, and it's really
13 important. It just makes common sense for the
14 school to move into the fifth grade. So I
15 really support it, and I hope everybody else
16 does as well.

17 MS. MAGGIE PADUA: My name is Maggie Padua,
18 and I am strongly in support of us expanding to
19 the fifth grade. This is my fifth year here,
20 but my 21st year in - - education, and I have
21 never worked with such a collaborative group of
22 teachers and such an inclusive staff, students,
23 the administration. All students really do get
24 to thrive here, and they should be allowed to do
25 that through fifth grade.

1 MS. CHAN: Our next group of speakers,
2 Hasan Risek [phonetic], Kristen Lafid
3 [phonetic], Anna Rahn [phonetic], Rosa Ferrer
4 [phonetic], Yasmin Altanado [phonetic], Marcy
5 Feliciano [phonetic], and Samara Tejada
6 [phonetic]. If you could please just say your
7 name when you get to the microphone so I can
8 cross you off the list. The first person can
9 begin.

10 MS. MARCY FELICIANO: Hi, good evening. My
11 name is Marcy Feliciano. I've lived in this
12 neighborhood for 35 years, same block, same
13 home. My children have been born and raised
14 here. On 9/11, I was one of those parents who
15 went crazy - - one in fifth grade, one in
16 kindergarten. Thank God they went to the same
17 one. But the - -. Just the thought that one
18 child will be in one school and another in
19 another school, I cannot imagine what a mother
20 can think - -. Another point I want to - - is
21 that these kids should stay together. They're
22 little; they're small. They don't know much
23 about anything out there. It's bad as it is
24 when they leave in fifth grade they have to
25 encounter - -. They should stay together. I

1 don't want to see any parent, any mother go
2 through a crisis. We never know what's going to
3 happen in the city. Our children should be
4 safe, guarded in one single space. So I endorse
5 the fact that this school should go up to fifth
6 grade until they know how to go out in the real
7 world. So - -.

8 MS. SAMARA TEJADA: Yeah, I'm her daughter.
9 My name is Samara Tejada. I'm - -. I'm also
10 part of the board of ed. I'm a sub teacher down
11 at P.S. 86, which is right by - -. I strongly
12 endorse the school going further into, for
13 fourth and fifth grade, only because well, a
14 number of reasons, but as kids, it's very hard
15 academically, socially, and emotionally to,
16 you're ripping them apart and putting them in
17 this whole new environment, whole new - -
18 program, - - people, different students, and - -
19 . Also as an educator, I've actually seen many
20 students come in from different schools, and
21 it's very hard for them to transition with new
22 adults and different students all around them, a
23 lot of them. They get disrupted; they don't
24 know what they're doing. It's very hard for
25 them to kind of further - - their academic

1 progress. So to rip these kids apart is
2 actually not a very, very smart thing to do, so
3 yeah, - -.

4 MS. KRISTEN LAFID: My name is Kristen
5 Lafid, - - time, I can speak maybe, my daughter
6 didn't speak English, so no friends, no family.
7 We didn't have nothing here. But when she came
8 here and the teacher and everybody here smile
9 and help us and support us, now she teach me and
10 I think it's amazing if you have somebody who
11 teach you something. My daughter now teach me
12 because this school, I like this school, and my
13 daughter like this school because she have a lot
14 of fun. She always says - - first time - - good
15 program for the kids so I hope that they go on
16 in the same school. Thank you.

17 FEMALE VOICE 5: Do we have another in
18 Español?

19 FEMALE VOICE 6: [Foreign audio 00:54:14 -
20 00:54:38].

21 FEMALE VOICE 5: She said that to invest in
22 education is to better the community, the
23 students, the family, and the whole world. And
24 that she's here to support expansion of the next
25 building. She said that they even need a bridge

1 to cross the children over.

2 MS. CHAN: So I'd like to thank Ms. Katie
3 Jacinek [phonetic] from Councilwoman Nolan's
4 office for coming this evening.

5 MS. KATIE JACINEK: Hi, everyone. My name
6 is Katie. I'm from Assemblywoman Cathy Nolan's
7 office. A lot of people here, so I'm not going
8 to talk real long. Just want to say that based
9 on - - support - - the community wants, - - the
10 school wants, and we'll do whatever we can to
11 make sure it happens. Thank you.

12 MS. CHAN: So last call for Hasan Risek,
13 Anna Rahn, Rosa Ferrer. Also have Yadita Soto
14 [phonetic], Kayla Cortes [phonetic], Iliana
15 [phonetic] - -, Pedro Ciera [phonetic], Anthony
16 Rubine [phonetic], and Gina, I believe it's
17 Serrano [phonetic].

18 MS. ALVAREZ: [Foreign audio 00:56:21 -
19 00:57:37].

20 FEMALE VOICE 5: Ms. Alvarez [phonetic] is
21 very passionate about having the next building -
22 - added to this school. She said that we're
23 obviously here to support and - - the building.
24 She said that she referred to the other parent
25 who mentioned that she lived a block away and

1 said it doesn't matter where a child lives or
2 where we live, as long as they're comfortable
3 coming to the school, and that she said that
4 there's a school right across the street from
5 her building, and she didn't have her child go,
6 she didn't take her child to that school anymore
7 because the child was uncomfortable. And she -
8 - discrimination over here in this school, 305.
9 She felt the love and comfort, and the open
10 hands that they offered them.

11 MS. YADITA SOTO: Good evening. My name is
12 Yadita Soto, and I have my grandson at this
13 school. And the kids before, they said it all.
14 And sometime my grandson tells me Mama, I still
15 want to be here for fourth and fifth grade. And
16 - - kids, which they're now men, and P.S. 81, it
17 was overcrowded. So coming here to this school
18 like other - - I felt comfortable. I had no
19 complaint whatsoever. It feels like a family.
20 We all know each other. We all know each other,
21 and like I said, the kids at the beginning, they
22 said it all. I support strongly to go up to
23 fourth and fifth grade. And the staff here,
24 Miss Lynn, everybody is wonderful. If I will be
25 a kid again, this is where I want to be. Thank

1 you.

2 MS. KAYLA CORTES: Good evening, everybody.
3 My name is Kayla Cortes. I work as a
4 paraprofessional here at P.S. 305. The mission
5 of our school is to promote lifelong learning in
6 a safe, nurturing, supporting environment. In
7 order to continue achieving our mission in this
8 school community, I strongly support the
9 expansion of this school because it will be
10 beneficial for the success of our students and
11 the community. Thank you.

12 MS. GINA SERRIANO: Good evening. My name
13 is Gina Serriano [phonetic]. I strongly support
14 the expansion of fifth grade as a parent; I love
15 this school. I had a daughter who was admitted
16 here in this school, and this is her - -
17 foundation. She really learned a lot, and she's
18 maintaining a good grade - -. She's with other
19 student in I.S. 23, and all the teachers here
20 are very good teacher. My daughter learns a
21 lot, and I also have a second grade daughter
22 right now. And I live across the street, so
23 it's not only that I live across the street, but
24 I love this school and my daughter loves it, and
25 we're really happy that hopefully we're going to

1 get the expansion of the P.S. 305. Thank you.

2 MR. PEDRO CIERA: Good evening, my name is
3 Pedro Ciera. I've been a high school teacher 18
4 years, so when I come into the building, I come
5 in here wearing a different pair of glasses.
6 I'm not just a parent. I come in here looking
7 at, you know, from a different point of view
8 that I'm a teacher myself. From top to bottom,
9 it's amazing here. My daughter's extremely safe
10 here. I also have a nephew here. Both of them,
11 watching them growing up, very shy kids have
12 come over here and opened up and they're
13 blossoming. Last year my daughter was in Ms.
14 Jasson's [phonetic] class. They had an amazing
15 play. It wasn't just a play. It was a musical.
16 Anybody that was here, you see here there's
17 times I just teared up just watching them
18 singing and dancing. The art, everything that
19 was involved. This year, my daughter's in Ms.
20 Norman's [phonetic] class and I was in the
21 classroom. They was doing reading. All the
22 different students were doing readings, and they
23 were talking about things that some of my high
24 school students don't even know. And that is
25 something that's from the top bottom, from the

1 top to the bottom over here in the building.
2 It's definitely a community. Please, fourth and
3 fifth. If you can go up to eighth, please go up
4 to eighth, 'cause we - -. Thank you.

5 ILIANA: My name is Iliana - -, and I have
6 two kids in here, one in kindergarten and one in
7 second grade. And I can't imagine - - in
8 another school. It's going to be hard for them
9 to - - talk to is Miss Lynn. Oh my God, she's
10 very nice lady. You know she has - - and you
11 know she - - and the school, and they know
12 everybody that love Miss Lynn.

13 MS. CHAN: Our next set of speakers will be
14 Anthony, oh I'm sorry...

15 MALE VOICE 5: Why we should expand to fifth
16 grade. I feel our school should expand to fifth
17 grade. Besides, - - we not leave our friends.
18 Secondly though, we would not know our new
19 friends. We would be alone and don't know
20 anyone. - - it will take a long time to have
21 new friends. Another reason, we will lose out
22 on new memories with our friends and teachers.
23 In fact, we won't know any friends or teachers.
24 Second - - we will not know what the teacher's
25 name is. Besides, we see a teacher - - last

1 year teacher. We will not - - to know her or
2 him. These are the reasons why I think we
3 should get this school and expand to fifth
4 grade.

5 MS. CHAN: Anthony Rubine, Jena Serriano
6 [phonetic], Katie Rabisi [phonetic], Maria
7 McGill [phonetic], Cathy Ferazola [phonetic],
8 Melissa Marino [phonetic], Diana Saldana
9 [phonetic], Blanca Chalula [phonetic], Courtney
10 McGinnis, and Yamuka Garcia [phonetic].

11 MS. KATIE RABISI: Hi, name is Katie Rabisi,
12 and I'm a third grade teacher here. I support
13 the expansion of our school to fifth grade. It
14 directly affects my students that they would
15 have to transition twice in the next two years.
16 It can be very difficult for some children. We
17 have created a very safe and nurturing community
18 for them here at 305, and it only makes sense to
19 let them continue to be a part of our community
20 until the fifth grade.

21 MS. MARIA MCGILL: Hi, I'm Maria McGill
22 Alexander [phonetic], and I am a first grade
23 special educator here at P.S. 305. I'm also a
24 strong proponent of our expansion to fifth
25 grade. I have been an educator long enough to

1 really come to the belief that students thrive
2 on consistency. And if we do expand to fifth
3 grade, we're offering so many consistencies that
4 I believe will give them a wonderful foundation
5 for middle school, including a consistent school
6 culture, a consistent sense of community. Also
7 just establishing and maintaining social
8 relationships, and I believe that that will be
9 best for them. Thank you.

10 MS. KATHY FERRIOLA: Hi, good evening. My
11 name is Kathy Ferriola. I'm the first grade ESL
12 teacher. I support the expansion of our school
13 to fifth grade. As a former third grade
14 teacher, my students were very anxious when they
15 realized they had to leave our school in June.
16 And I think it's best for the children and the
17 families if we expand to fifth grade.

18 MS. MELISSA MARINO: My name is Melissa
19 Marino, and I am a kindergarten ESL teacher here
20 at Learners and Leaders. I know that the
21 expansion would benefit our students in many
22 positive ways. And I know that it would be the
23 best for our school for our school community.
24 Thank you.

25 MS. COURTNEY MCGINNIS: Good evening, my

1 name is Courtney McGinnis. I am the site
2 director for the YMCA afterschool program, and
3 youth and family director of the Ridgewood YMCA.
4 It is a pleasure to be speaking in front of all
5 of you tonight. I know many of you. I would
6 like to say that whether or not, for those of
7 you who are a part of deciding whether or not
8 Learners and Leaders P.S. 305 is granted this
9 expansion, I plead you to consider every single
10 advocate that speaks this evening. Our
11 partnership with the school is special and rare.
12 Under one roof you will find the most passionate
13 leaders in this industry, including school
14 officials, teachers, counselors, and Y staff.
15 Our amazing team of Y staff is able to expand
16 and transform the students' learning into the
17 afterschool hours with the help and support from
18 school staff and Lynn, Nick, and everyone else.
19 Our work with this school enables us as Y
20 advocates to ensure that students have every
21 opportunity to receive a healthy - - and involve
22 families in the process. At Learners and
23 Leaders, we are one team on a mission to
24 advocate for the students of today. This school
25 allows each student to be a dreamer and build

1 the foundations necessary for students to
2 become leaders. This expansion will allow
3 educational initiatives to thrive in an
4 environment that yields success. The expansion
5 will raise the platform for advocates like us
6 here tonight to empower this community and
7 create positive change for generations to come.
8 Nelson Mandela stated, "Education is the most
9 powerful weapon which you can use to change the
10 world." And I remind you that in order to
11 change tomorrow you have to change today.

12 MS. LAKEISHA HARRIS: Hi, my name is
13 LaKeisha Harris. I also work at the YMCA. I'm
14 the executive director there. And I'm really
15 excited to be here to support the expansion.
16 The YMCA has been at Learners and Leaders for
17 over five years, and I just want to take the
18 time just to really shout out Lynn, who I think
19 is an amazing - - and is needed to serve even
20 more kids and more families. We've been working
21 so closely together, and I feel like our
22 afterschool program is so much stronger because
23 of her commitment and her involvement with the
24 YMCA program. I've worked at the Y for about 14
25 years. And I can honestly say I've never worked

1 with a principal who is so committed and so
2 passionate, and so we need that for our kids,
3 not up until where we are today, but up until
4 fifth grade. Thank you.

5 FEMALE VOICE 7: [Foreign audio 01:09:33 -
6 01:09:43].

7 FEMALE VOICE 8: [Foreign audio 01:10:12 -
8 01:10:21].

9 FEMALE VOICE 5: She has two children here,
10 and she loves the school and she loves the
11 teachers and the staff and she - -.

12 MS. DIANA SALDANA: Hi, my name is Diana
13 Saldana. I'm a mother of two. And I would,
14 well I'm here on behalf of my whole family, and
15 pretty much everyone here tonight. Ever since
16 we enrolled our children at this school, we know
17 that there are going to leave after third grade,
18 but now that we're given this opportunity to
19 expand to the fifth grade, I think it's very,
20 very important that we're all here, and
21 especially because after all these years they're
22 growing closer and closer to everyone in this
23 school, all the teachers. Ever since they've
24 come into this school, they come in and they see
25 smiles. They're used to everyone, all their

1 friends. Every time they come home, every
2 day, and they're children, so they always tell
3 you how it is, and we know that they're
4 comfortable here. That's why we want to keep
5 them here 'til the fifth grade. Thank you.

6 MS. CHAN: Our next group of speakers,
7 Yamoka Garcia [phonetic], Mercedes Nunez
8 [phonetic], Rosa Orman [phonetic], Hilda Quito
9 [phonetic], Jani [phonetic], I cannot read the
10 last name, first name Jani. Tanya Torres
11 [phonetic], Janice Rosario [phonetic], James
12 Santiago [phonetic], and Angel Severio
13 [phonetic].

14 FEMALE VOICE 8: [Foreign audio 01:12:07 -
15 01:12:08]. Although I know English, I choose to
16 speak in Spanish because I see that the majority
17 of the families here are Hispanic. [Foreign
18 audio 01:12:18 - 01:13:05]. Okay, if I need to
19 say it in English, what I said is - - but I'll
20 try to say it. The most important - - from the
21 beginning that we want - - we all, it's better
22 to talk about it and tell all the other parents
23 - - you know, all the students that go to this
24 school, they're going to also become true
25 leaders, and that's what we need, especially now

1 in our Hispanic community, don't you think?
2 We need leaders that can fight for us, for our
3 dreams, for our goals. And we can achieve all
4 we want, so we need that school across the
5 street. We need it for all our kids. We don't
6 want - -. Thank you.

7 MS. MERCEDES NUNEZ: Good evening, everyone.
8 My name is Mercedes Nunez. This is my child's
9 first year attending Learning and Leaders. And
10 she's in kindergarten. My child is very happy
11 attending Learning and Leaders. She loves her
12 teacher. The environment's very welcoming. We
13 feel very welcome. And what I feel is that the
14 principal and - - principal have experienced - -
15 professional who can handle the real task of
16 this school expansion. I want the new building
17 to be part of Learners and Leaders. Thank you.

18 MS. CHAN: Please announce your name,
19 please.

20 MS. TANYA TORRES: Good evening, my name is
21 Tanya Torres. My speechwriter, Catherine Garcia
22 [phonetic] has these words for you. I work for
23 the Ridgewood YMCA, and my daughter Catherine
24 wants to stay here until fifth grade, since she
25 started in prekindergarten, because she loves

1 this school. This is why the school should go
2 up to fifth grade. Thank you.

3 MS. JANICE ROSARIO: Good evening, my name
4 is Janice Rosario. I have a child here in
5 kindergarten. And my other daughter is in
6 fourth grade in 81. She's having a very hard
7 position from being here for five years, and now
8 going over there. I think it's not fair that
9 they're here and then they go to a very
10 overcrowded school over there. And besides the
11 fact that I've heard a lot of people talk about
12 the school, the leaders, but I've met some of
13 the best teachers, and the best people that I've
14 ever met. And I strongly hope that we get the
15 school next door.

16 MR. JAMES SANTIAGO: Okay, so a principal, a
17 president, and a - - walk into a schoolyard.
18 Oh, I thought it was amateur night at a comedy
19 club. First of all, before I do anything else,
20 I'm going to say thank you to the staff at 305.
21 You are the reason why we are all here and why
22 we want our kids to continue to go to fifth
23 grade here. So I thank you for that. My
24 daughter's a second grader, - -. And for a long
25 time she was very shy, and because of you people

1 and the student body here you guys have opened
2 her up and her education has grown immensely.
3 And lastly, listen. It's my convenience that I
4 have a school across the street from my house.
5 But I'm still here to walk four or five blocks
6 away just so that my child can be here and
7 graduate from fifth grade. Thank you.

8 MS. CHAN: That was Mr. Santiago? Thank
9 you, sir.

10 MALE VOICE 6: [Foreign audio 01:17:08 -
11 01:17:28].

12 FEMALE VOICE 5: He's here to support the
13 expansion to another school, and he has a child
14 currently enrolled in the school, and having one
15 that - - next year enrolled in the school - -
16 and he wants the expansion.

17 MS. CHAN: Our next speakers will be Tamara
18 Rodriguez [phonetic], Demaris Rosario
19 [phonetic], Raoul Rosario Jr. [phonetic], Raoul
20 Rosario Sr., [phonetic], Linda Rodriguez
21 [phonetic], Enrica Feliciano [phonetic], Jose
22 Cordero [phonetic], and Hippolito Defabian
23 [phonetic].

24 MS. TAMARA RODRIGUEZ: Hello, my name is
25 Tamara Rodriguez. I have a daughter in the

1 second grade. And I'm also part of the PTA -
2 -. So I - - support the school - - the fifth
3 grade. My daughter - - like other parents said,
4 she's super shy, and she has opened up so much
5 in this school. She's learned so much. I love
6 her teachers, principal, vice principal, - -
7 Stephanie [phonetic], like she just is so
8 welcome here, and she loves coming to school
9 every day. There's never a complaint from her.
10 She wakes up in the morning ready to go - - her
11 teacher, everybody. So I really don't want her
12 to go to P.S. 81, or even - - her over to
13 another school, but I really don't want her to
14 go to 81. And I want her to continue until the
15 fifth grade, so I really hope that we go and the
16 school gets to go to fifth grade. Thank you.

17 MS. DEMARIS ROSARIO: Hi, my name is Demaris
18 Rosario. My daughter's in second grade. Her
19 name is Olivia Rosario [phonetic]. She's been
20 here since kindergarten. One of our concerns as
21 a parent, a working parent, is going to work and
22 leaving a kid behind. And here, I feel 100%
23 security that she is in good hands. I go to
24 work. I don't have any concerns, nor does my
25 husband. All the teachers here, I greatly

1 appreciate - -. My daughter went from not
2 hardly reading to going like up to like J and K,
3 and I was - - and surprised, happy. And I
4 support the whole entire staff and I hope we go
5 to fourth and fifth. Thank you so much.

6 MR. RAOUL ROSARIO: How you doing? My name
7 is Raoul Rosario. My sister is Lynn Rosario's
8 [phonetic] - -. I went to the private school
9 across the street that closed down. And we
10 stood there until about eighth grade, and we go
11 to - - and community - -, and I see my sister
12 has a bond with a bunch of students in her
13 classes, and she's only in second grade, and I
14 don't want to see that being cut short for the
15 third grade. And I would love to see that go on
16 'til the fifth grade, because that's the most
17 important thing, is the bond and the community.
18 - -.

19 MS. LINDA RODRIGUEZ: Hello, good evening
20 everybody. As a member, my name is Linda
21 Rodriguez, sorry. As a member of this community
22 for 25 years, I have been a part of the lives of
23 many children in my neighborhood. As a
24 grandmother, I would only expect for my grandson
25 to have wonderful experiences, and even better

1 experiences, as I know P.S. 305 offers,
2 allowing my grandson who is in third grade to
3 experience the positive journey that he has
4 started to - - something that I know will make
5 him happy. Please keep a smile on my grandson's
6 face and expand P.S. 305 to fifth grade.

7 MS. ERICA FELICANO: Good evening, my name
8 is Erica Felicano [phonetic]. My son Jordan
9 [phonetic] has been attending P.S. 305 since
10 kindergarten. He is now in third grade.
11 Throughout his experience here, he has never
12 once come home with any negative thoughts about
13 P.S. 305. In fact numerous times over the
14 summer during the course of the school year, he
15 questions why he has to leave the school when
16 enters fourth grade. Explaining to an eight-
17 year old the politics of the Board of Education
18 is not easy. I avoided the inevitable because I
19 felt like I was preparing him for junior high
20 school. However, since hearing that he may have
21 the opportunity to continue his experience at
22 P.S. 305 with his friends, teachers, Miss Lynn,
23 and Mr. Nick, I was relieved. Sharing the
24 possibility that Jordan may continue his
25 elementary school years here has made him grin

1 from ear to ear. He faces the day with less
2 anxiety, and he is now focused on his third
3 grade schoolwork. In addition, I am at ease
4 every morning knowing that when I send my son to
5 school, he does not only receive the best
6 education possible, but he's being taught core
7 values of tolerance, respect, and integrity.
8 Jordan looks forward to going to school every
9 morning, and I know it's because P.S. 305 has
10 become a second home for him. This school has
11 established a foundation where I know Jordan is
12 growing up to become a successful student,
13 coupled with becoming an overall good person.
14 Approving the expansion of P.S. 305 will allow
15 for not only my son, but all the students and
16 teachers to continue what they started. Each
17 and every child has received the foundation of
18 skills that has helped them grow academically
19 and socially. In essence, this school has
20 created the beginnings of well-rounded students.
21 Not only am I a proud parent, but I'm also a
22 proud educator. Having been a teacher for 12
23 years, consistency and stability are the
24 cornerstones needed for achievement. With that
25 being said, approving the expansion of P.S. 305

1 would help these cornerstones become strong
2 foundations. The students in this school have
3 consistency and structure. With the demand of
4 the Common Core learning standards and the
5 pressure of the state exam, stress becomes a big
6 factor in the upper grades. Maintaining
7 standards while achieving high grades becomes
8 the focal point of the educational journey and
9 students and testing grades. Why not eliminate
10 some of the stress our students will have to
11 endure by keeping them in a comfortable learning
12 environment? By allowing them to stay at P.S.
13 305, they can maximize their learning
14 opportunities. I work in a school where our
15 progress report indicates we are highly
16 proficient. I had an opportunity to enroll my
17 son at my place of employment when he entered
18 kindergarten. This opportunity would have made
19 life easier for me and my son as it would've
20 been convenient for him to be at my job. No
21 babysitters and no extra commuting would be
22 ideal for a single parent such as myself.
23 However, P.S. 305 has shown me that easy and
24 ideal should not be considered - - by the great
25 educational experience that is parallel if not

1 above my own school. - - because I know - -.
2 Knowing that my son has ample opportunities to
3 grow and expand assures me that I have made the
4 right decision year in and year out. Expanding
5 P.S. 305 to fifth grade would alleviate stress
6 for parents who more than one child. Being able
7 to drop both your children off at one location
8 should be a parent's right. Having a central
9 location will afford parents to create closer
10 ties with teachers. Teachers will know students
11 at a deeper level because they can track them
12 from K to fifth grade. By tracking students, it
13 will allow teachers to see growth in their
14 teaching - -. Student strengths and weaknesses
15 can be addressed by their elementary school
16 years. A journey that can start in kindergarten
17 and end in fifth grade can actually be called a
18 journey. Having P.S. 305 only go up to the
19 third grade can only be considered a short trip.
20 If the motto of our public education system has
21 been no child left behind, then why leave our
22 children behind? We know that students usually
23 do well between K and third grade because they
24 have the - - and they're closely followed by
25 parents. However, once students get into the

1 fourth grade, they are required to be self-
2 sufficient. Asking them to go to a new school
3 and becoming self-sufficient is unfair. If you
4 don't expand P.S. 305 to accommodate parents and
5 staff, then do it for the children. Give them
6 what they deserve, and expand P.S. 305.

7 MALE VOICE 7: Good evening. My name is - -
8 . I have my son in kindergarten, and then my
9 daughter in second grade. I love this school,
10 but we need space, and we don't have more space,
11 but because our community is growing day by day,
12 is growing, I hope we can - - this building
13 across the street.

14 MS. CHAN: Our next set of speakers, Daniela
15 Cotto [phonetic]. I think it's Juliana Osorio
16 [phonetic], Suvara Gelka [phonetic], Erica
17 Peters [phonetic], Shelly Ann Carson [phonetic],
18 Domenica Reilly, Myra Amache [phonetic], Roxanne
19 Nieves [phonetic], Stephanie Santiago
20 [phonetic], and Lumeer Lupa [phonetic]. We want
21 to be very respectful of everybody's time, and
22 it's very hard to say your two minutes is up,
23 but there are still many teachers in the
24 audience, and I know they need to get some rest,
25 as well as the younger children, so we're going

1 to ask you to please respect the two minutes.
2 Thank you.

3 FEMALE VOICE 9: [Foreign audio 01:27:01 -
4 01:27:22].

5 FEMALE VOICE 5: She says good evening, and
6 she's here for her support to the expansion of
7 the next building. She - - the children that
8 are here, the teachers, the staff, and
9 everything that this school provides - -. She
10 would want us all to be excited and go for the
11 expansion - -. Thank you.

12 FEMALE VOICE 10: [Foreign audio 01:27:55 -
13 01:28:33].

14 FEMALE VOICE 5: Her child is in third
15 grade, and for her and her child it is very
16 stressful to have to look for another school
17 which she doesn't think that they have the
18 potential and the ability to teach them as well
19 as this school. She really loves this school,
20 and her child is very comfortable in this
21 school. So she would like to have - - for the
22 expansion - - school.

23 MS. MYRA AMACHE: [Foreign audio 01:29:08 -
24 01:30:01]. Good evening, everyone. My name is
25 Myra. I was saying that I had a child who came

1 here for third grade, and it was very
2 difficult for him to adjust to a new school, to
3 new friends, and everything new. And I don't
4 want any of those feelings, and that anxiety to
5 happen to any child, any of your children. And
6 I have a kindergarten who I'm sure is going to
7 benefit so much from having the school expand to
8 fifth grade. Thank you.

9 MS. SHELLY ANN CARSON: Good evening,
10 everyone. My name is Shelly Ann Carson. My
11 daughter had just started pre-K here, and the
12 moment she came here, they - -. I have a son
13 who - -. With the expansion of the new building
14 there will be so much more open to him. Here -
15 -. My daughter is very protective of her
16 brother. At the other school, she won't be able
17 to do that. So - - better for them. The
18 board's question is asking why should we get
19 this school? My question to the board is why
20 shouldn't we get this school? We don't need - -
21 . We don't need an apartment building over here
22 'cause - - apartment building, - - kids.
23 There's no place to put that. We don't need an
24 - - over here. We don't need a - -. We need
25 new school, and we should get it. Not somebody

1 else, not a charter school, not P.S. something
2 else - -. P.S. 305 should get this - -.

3 MS. DOMENICA REILLY: Hi, everyone. Good
4 evening. My name is Domenica Reilly. I was a
5 previous pre-K teacher here, and now I'm
6 teaching first grade, and it's just wonderful to
7 see these young children come in. To me they
8 come in. They're like seeds and then they just
9 grow and blossom throughout the years. And I
10 think going to fifth grade will just be
11 beneficial to the students and the families of
12 this community, so I strongly support that.

13 MS. ROXANNE NIEVES: Hello, my name is
14 Roxanne Nieves, and I'm the mother of two
15 beautiful boys. One is in second grade; the
16 other one's in third grade. And both of them
17 have been here since kindergarten. And I was
18 raised in this neighborhood since I was about
19 four years old, living in both Bushwick and
20 Ridgewood. And I - - P.S. 81 myself. And to be
21 honest, I really do love this neighborhood, even
22 though I may not know all the parents. I don't
23 have that strong bond with a lot of them, even
24 though this year I would like to meet a lot of
25 you guys. But one thing I could really say for

1 sure about this school is that once I leave my
2 kids here, I know that they're 100% loved, and
3 they're definitely safe. That's one thing that
4 is very important to me, 'cause I do read a lot,
5 and I know a lot of schools may or may not be so
6 safe. And here I know that they completely are.
7 Sorry, and I did have a whole speech planned
8 out, but I know children are very important, and
9 whether we like to see it or not, the children
10 are our future, and once we get old and we
11 retire, our kids are going to be here, and
12 they're going to be basically running this - -.
13 And like the other parent just said, you know,
14 instead of - - or things like that, we should
15 first start with school, and preventing
16 criminals, we should be like making them
17 leaders. That's exactly what we should be
18 doing. And I do know that P.S. 81 is a very
19 good school - -, but it is very overcrowded.
20 And I know that back when I was going, they
21 didn't have the IEP that they do here. And also
22 since I know that they do have it here, and it's
23 really strong, I think that overcrowded-ness is
24 not good for kids in the long run, so them
25 having that individual attention is very

1 important for their learning. Thank you.

2 FEMALE VOICE 11: - - and as a parent - -
3 me. For me to have my kids in this school - -
4 education. I had a kid that was struggling in
5 school, and a wonderful teacher that gave my kid
6 the time and support, don't take that from them.
7 Keep up the good work, and continue their
8 education, 'cause my - -. Thanks for the
9 principal, Michelle, and everybody.

10 MS. CHAN: Stephanie Santiago, Lupeer Lupag
11 [phonetic], Sadia Edwards [phonetics], Paul
12 Rubenstein [phonetic], Francesca Garcia
13 [phonetic], Rosa Nieves [phonetic], Mercedes
14 Ramirez [phonetic], Nermi Quabor [phonetic], and
15 Kahaam Fahim [phonetic]. Please announce your
16 names so I can check you off.

17 MR. PAUL RUBENSTEIN: Hi, my name is Paul
18 Rubenstein. My daughter who goes to pre-K here.
19 It's only been a few months so far, but I am
20 very impressed by the school, by the teachers,
21 by the administration. The one word that I
22 think has come up in probably everyone that has
23 spoken so far is community. And that's what I
24 feel like this is. It feels very warm here. It
25 does not feel like a bureaucracy. So I very

1 much support continuing the school to the
2 fifth grade, and I lost what I was - -.

3 MS. FRANCESCA GARCIA: Good evening,
4 everyone. My name is Francesca Garcia. I'm a
5 kindergarten teacher. I support this Learners
6 and Leaders to expand to the new building. I
7 had - - Learners and Leaders, I have parents
8 having issues with the - -, their little
9 siblings that have go - - and it is a problem
10 when you have choose which one's going to be
11 late? My kindergartner or my fourth grader? So
12 I strongly support that we expand across the
13 street and I - -.

14 FEMALE VOICE 12: Good evening. The last
15 name is - -.

16 MS. CHAN: Thank you.

17 FEMALE VOICE 12. I'm the mother of a
18 special needs child - -. He came a long way - -
19 to kindergarten here, and it was really, really
20 hard. Every day was, he never knew what's
21 coming. Every day was tears. It was really
22 hard. Now it's a family. Now it's a family. I
23 call it a second home for him, for me. He has
24 friends here. It's a very strong community.
25 You know, we understand each other. We feel

1 each other. You know how to work with our
2 children here, and I cannot imagine my son not
3 going to fifth grade with this community, with -
4 - teachers, in this setting. - - and he
5 improved. He actually expresses himself now.
6 He can put it in words, his feelings instead of
7 hitting or screaming and crying, and I cannot
8 tell you in words how much work you need to put
9 into the child to bring him to that level. So
10 it is a family, and I cannot let go of the
11 family. That's all I can say.

12 MS. ROSA NIEVES: Good evening, everyone.
13 My name is Rosa Nieves, and I - - in school.
14 We've got a great school. All I want to say is
15 that our children are the future of our nation,
16 and they do need - - a better education, and
17 they need Learners and Leaders across the street
18 to - - and to grow. Thank you.

19 FEMALE VOICE 13: [Foreign audio 01:39:29 -
20 01:39:49].

21 FEMALE VOICE 5: Good evening. She has two
22 children, one currently in fourth grade. She
23 had to leave the school because they don't have
24 fourth grade. She has another child in second
25 grade which she doesn't want her to go through

1 the same thing in the fourth grade. The
2 fourth grader wants to come back to this school,
3 and the second grade does not want to leave us.

4 MS. CHAN: Peter Cantalupo, Ivy Mack
5 [phonetic], Jacqueline Sandez [phonetic], Lily
6 Feldman [phonetic], Lucia Perez [phonetic], and
7 Beoncy Cruz [phonetic].

8 MR. PETER CANTALUPO: Hi, I'm Peter
9 Cantalupo, Mr. C from P.S. 305. You all know
10 me. - - we're all here to support this school.
11 I am a big believer in our family, and that's
12 really what this is. We're all here together as
13 a family. We know that we want to expand. We
14 want to stay together. It breaks my heart every
15 year to let our children leave in third grade,
16 and it's going to break my heart even more to
17 let them leave in fifth. But I know how hard it
18 is for children to transition from one thing to
19 the next, and that is the last thing that I want
20 for our children. Physical education is
21 something that's super important to me, as you
22 know. And I want to continue what I started
23 with them. None of your children will ever
24 leave this school not knowing how to throw, I
25 promise you. And if I can have them in fourth

1 and fifth grade, we can only expand and grow
2 on that.

3 MS. JACQUELINE SANCHEZ: Hi, good evening.
4 My name is Jaqueline Sanchez [phonetic]. I've
5 been in this community for over 25 years, and I
6 have to say I'm proud of everybody here. I've
7 never seen anything like this before in our
8 community. And this goes to show you that these
9 teachers truly, truly care. And at the end of
10 the day, to sum it up is our children are
11 important. And if they do not expand to the
12 next school, they're sending us the message that
13 they don't feel the same way. What matters at
14 the end of the day is the education, the
15 comfort, and the safety that our children
16 currently have and they should continue to have.

17 FEMALE VOICE 14: [Foreign audio 01:42:22 -
18 01:42:51].

19 MS. CHAN: [Foreign audio 01:42:57 -
20 01:42:58].

21 FEMALE VOICE 14: I'm sorry. I don't, my
22 name's not on there, but...

23 MS. CHAN: You snuck in.

24 FEMALE VOICE 5: Good evening. - - children
25 with special needs, and it's really hard to find

1 a school that provides children with special
2 needs, and she's seen the improvement in her
3 child - - and she wants to support every child
4 here in the school to make an expansion to the
5 next building, because she sees that the child
6 gets really good education here.

7 MS. LILY FELDMAN: Good evening, my name is
8 Lily Feldman. When this school was first
9 opening, I met Miss Lynn and she asked me to
10 come and be on the committee. And we had a
11 solid - - that opened the school. This is our
12 seventh year. Seven is a very lucky number.
13 And I am really hoping that we continue to grow
14 as our children continue to grow. Our school is
15 growing, and our school community is growing.
16 And I think it's really fitting that we continue
17 to go to the fourth and fifth grade. Especially
18 now I want to speak for the students who have
19 special needs, or special problems that they're
20 going through. It's extremely helpful that we
21 have built such strong relationships among the
22 staff, and people who have been together for a
23 long time. And that these students don't slip
24 through the cracks when they're having a hard
25 day, when they're having a hard time. We can

1 talk to the teacher from last year. We can go
2 find the gym teacher. How is he doing there?
3 Talk to the librarian. How - - do there? We
4 have really solid relationships just like the
5 parents are talking about their relationships
6 that are growing. The staff is a community, and
7 also with the parents, we have a great
8 communication. And I think especially - - and
9 very important to look after the students who
10 have difficult communication, or might have
11 speech problems or have IEPs. This two-year
12 time when they have to change twice can be the
13 time when they get lost, where their education
14 is facing a gap that they could fall through and
15 never recover from. And I have sometimes heard
16 some good stories, but I have also heard some
17 stories that worry me because continuity and a
18 routine is so important, especially for our
19 neediest children. Thank you.

20 MS. CHAN: Iliany Canalaro [phonetic],
21 Franklin Roman [phonetic], Iliana Agualpa
22 [phonetic]. That sounds good? Eliza Javier
23 [phonetic], Carolyn Javier [phonetic], Brenda
24 Sanchez [phonetic], and Jeanette Reyes
25 [phonetic].

1 MS. ILIANA AGUALPA: My name is Iliana
2 Agualpa, and this is my second year in school as
3 a paraprofessional, and honestly - -. And this
4 is a very close community. We all work
5 together. We all come to agreements, and you
6 know, - - to raise a kid you need a community.
7 You can't build community - - kids. So I
8 believe in this school, and I think we should -
9 - so I would love to see all these kids grow up
10 to fifth grade and go to junior high school and
11 know right from wrong and know what it is to be
12 a family and be a community, so I agree to
13 expand to fourth and fifth grade.

14 MS. ELIZA JAVIER: Good evening, everyone.
15 My name is Eliza Javier. I'm an educational
16 assistant here at P.S. 305. And I'm all for the
17 expansion to go to fifth grade. I think all our
18 kids deserve the opportunity that other
19 elementary schools have, and that our kids
20 should have the opportunity to grow with us, to
21 learn with us, and for us to be able to give
22 them that. Thank you.

23 MS. JEANETTE REYES: Hi, my name is
24 Jeanette. I'm a paraprofessional here, and I
25 completely am for the expansion to fifth grade.

1 Not only would it be beneficial for our
2 students, but also for the community. Thank
3 you.

4 MS. BRENDA SANCHEZ: [Foreign audio 01:48:02
5 - 01:48:42]. Good evening, my name is Brenda
6 Sanchez, and I have a son who's currently in
7 third grade. My son has speech delay and he's
8 getting IEP at this wonderful school since he
9 started kindergarten. And he has made great
10 progress - - around everyone in the school, and
11 it will be very hard for him to go to another
12 school next year, for fourth grade. So I would
13 love the school to go up to fifth grade. It
14 will benefit me and many others that feel the
15 same way. Thank you.

16 MS. CHAN: Mia Roscalede [phonetic]?
17 Ruscalado, yeah. Where are you, Mia? She here?
18 And Michelle Lopez?

19 MS. MICHELLE LOPEZ: Am I the last one?

20 MS. CHAN: Yes, you are.

21 MS. LOPEZ: I'm the last one, okay. - -.
22 So really quick before - -.

23 [Audience noise]

24 MS. LOPEZ: So first of all, I want to say
25 thank you to those that did stay - - and as I

1 hear everybody say you know, we want it. It
2 will be the best thing. We deserve it.
3 [Foreign audio 01:50:05 - 01:50:20]. What I'm
4 trying to say is that I know each and every one
5 of you, and the ties that I've built with the
6 families is amazing. I mean really I know
7 everything that goes on in your homes and what's
8 going to happen next weekend, so instead of, it
9 would be nice to continue that. That's all - -.
10 All right, thank you.

11 MS. CHAN: You have been an amazing
12 audience. Again, we welcome any comments. We
13 welcome any comments and feedback you may have
14 at any time before the Panel for Educational
15 Policy votes on this proposal at its November
16 25th meeting. The email address and phone number
17 once again where comments may be made are
18 d24proposals@schools.nyc.gov, (212) 374-7621.
19 Am I accurate in saying that all feedback was
20 recorded? So that's very positive. Thank you
21 all so much for your participation. I just told
22 Miss Lynn I really have never seen a turnout
23 like this at a joint public hearing, so we
24 deeply appreciate that. Everyone remember
25 tomorrow school is closed. It's Veterans Day.

1 This joint public hearing is officially
2 closed. Thank you.

3 [END RECORDING]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature *Aime Coleman*

Date November 13, 2014

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