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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF  
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**  
**Academy for Social Action: A College  
Board School**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MS. MELISSA HARRIS: Good evening, everyone.  
3 My name is Melissa Harris, and I will serve as  
4 facilitator for tonight's joint public hearing.  
5 This is a joint public hearing of the Department  
6 of Education Community Education Council, and  
7 School Leadership Team to discuss the proposed  
8 grade truncation of Academy for Social Action.  
9 The proposed colocation of grades five through  
10 eight of Success Academy Charter School Harlem  
11 Two with Academy for Social Action, Renaissance  
12 Leadership Academy, the Urban Assembly Institute  
13 for New Technologies and Urban Assembly School  
14 for Performing Arts, and Building N043, 10 and  
15 2014.

16 Tonight's proceedings will be recorded and  
17 transcribed. Before we begin the hearing, we  
18 ask anyone that wishes to speak during the  
19 public comment portion of the evening to sign up  
20 at the table outside of the auditorium. Sign up  
21 ends soon, 6:15. If you have a question and you  
22 want to be addressed during the question during  
23 the question and answer portion of the agenda,  
24 please write that question on the index cards  
25 provided at the back and submit it to a

1 volunteer by the table. Only people who have  
2 signed up to speak will be able to participate  
3 in public comment.

4 All panel participants were asked to be here  
5 no later than 5:30 p.m. Now that we have  
6 started, if a panel participant arrives late, he  
7 or she will be given time to speak at the first  
8 opportune moment. We want to be respectful of  
9 everyone's time here this evening.

10 There may be elected officials who arrive at  
11 different times throughout the evening. If they  
12 wish to speak, we will do our best to  
13 accommodate them at the first opportune moment.  
14 Those who are here at the start of the public  
15 comment segment will be asked to speak first.

16 The format of tonight's joint public hearing  
17 will include a presentation of the proposal and  
18 a presentation by hearing participants followed  
19 by public comment. Speakers, please sign up at  
20 the table outside of the auditorium. Public  
21 comments can be no longer than two minutes each.  
22 The time will be strictly followed and speakers  
23 will be informed when their designated time has  
24 ended. Again, there will be a question and  
25 answer period here this evening.

1           If you have a question, please write your  
2 question on the index cards that were supplied  
3 at the sign-in table when you arrived this  
4 evening.

5           While public comments are taking place,  
6 staff members will organize the questions into  
7 categories and get them ready for the Q&A  
8 hearing. Some questions will be asked directly  
9 from the index card, and others will be - -  
10 under headings in order to avoid repetitiveness.  
11 Even though all individual questions will not be  
12 addressed in tonight's format, answers to  
13 questions will be posted on the DOE website  
14 prior to the - - . If at the end of the hearing  
15 you still have questions, we encourage you to  
16 direct them to us by calling the phone number  
17 found on the bottom of the fact sheet, and those  
18 fact sheets are outside of the auditorium on  
19 that table with the sign in, or you can email us  
20 at the email address that's also provided at the  
21 bottom of that fact sheet.

22           I would like to now introduce the panel,  
23 which has been assembled for this evening's  
24 joint public hearing. Starting from my far  
25 right, Tom Frenta [phonetic] of - - CSI, Anthony

1 Lodico [phonetic], high school superintendent,  
2 and Mark Sternberg, Deputy Chancellor.

3 I will now turn the program over to Deputy  
4 Chancellor Mark Sternberg, who will present the  
5 proposal.

6 MR. MARK STERNBERG: Good evening. Thank  
7 you, Melissa, and thank you everyone for being  
8 here. My name is Mark Sternberg. I serve as  
9 the Deputy Chancellor for the Division of  
10 Portfolio Planning for the New York City  
11 Department of Education. I want to very briefly  
12 summarize the proposal that we're here to  
13 discuss, and we'll move forward to the  
14 presentations I think from a number of the SLT  
15 members across the schools here, and then move  
16 forward to your comments, public comment and  
17 then we'll get to your questions.

18 Again, if you're interested in public  
19 comment, you have a few more minutes to sign up,  
20 and if you have a question, - - question on the  
21 - - card - - .

22 I find it helpful sometimes before formally  
23 summarizing the proposal to share a few thoughts  
24 on what tonight is intended to be and what it is  
25 not intended to be. Tonight is not a decision

1 point. We do not decide tonight whether this  
2 truncation happens or doesn't happen. The  
3 decision point is in roughly two weeks - - vote  
4 on this proposal, if in fact the chancellor  
5 chooses to proceed with it. So tonight is not a  
6 decision point.

7 It's also not a night for me to convince the  
8 people in this room that they are wrong and that  
9 the department is right. Tonight is not a night  
10 for arguments. Tonight is for the department to  
11 collect feedback and input on this proposal. I  
12 know that we will have some important feedback  
13 this evening from--and I expect to hear that  
14 from the school, the Academy for Social Action,  
15 a school that is being discussed for truncation  
16 - - , and from a number of other schools - -  
17 that are valuable members of our portfolio of  
18 schools with dedicated staff and committed  
19 students. We look forward to hearing from all  
20 of you.

21 I do expect a spirited defense, both from  
22 the Academy for Social Action and from the  
23 parents and students and staff of the several  
24 other schools on this campus, and so tonight's  
25 important for us to hear from you and understand

1 your concerns and do what we can this evening  
2 to answer those questions.

3 Then for the questions we can't answer or  
4 for the questions whose answer - - happy about,  
5 spend time over the next few weeks on  
6 adjustments we can make - - continue our  
7 conversation here to explain why it is that the  
8 department and the chancellor might proceed.

9 The decision to truncate a school is not an  
10 easy one, and the story of the data, the student  
11 information and student - - at the Academy for  
12 Social Action are mixed, and that's what brings  
13 us here this evening. We see some very  
14 troubling trends that--across the 6-12 spectrum.  
15 We see performance that has declined. We see  
16 growth in our progress report values - - over  
17 straight up efficiencies, how our students in  
18 this school, across the middle school and across  
19 the high school are performing relative to 39  
20 other schools that serve a student demographic  
21 that is most similar to this school across the  
22 five boroughs.

23 So we see, when we look at that, in terms of  
24 absolute efficiency and growth in math and in  
25 English at the middle school level, in credit

1 accumulation and Regent's passage at the high  
2 school level, we see trends that are - - . We  
3 see similar set of concerns reveal themselves  
4 when we ask families, teachers and students at  
5 this school about whether they feel safe in this  
6 building, and whether they feel challenged or  
7 whether they feel there is a greater academic -  
8 - preparing them for college. That is what  
9 brings us here today to propose a truncation.

10 We propose a truncation because we also see  
11 promise. We see potential at the Academy for  
12 Social Action. We see adults that rally around  
13 an idea of how to move this school from where it  
14 is now to where it needs to be. We see that  
15 promise show up in credit accumulation in early  
16 years, so for the newest cohorts to join high  
17 school. So our hope is that this very  
18 aggressive intervention to truncate a school to  
19 eliminate grades six, seven and eight and leave  
20 the high school intact will be a strategy that  
21 helps this organization to focus on its high  
22 school students, focus on building on its  
23 strengths, and focus on delivering a high  
24 quality education that we want for all students  
25 across New York City. So that is what we're

1 here to discuss. We look forward to your  
2 feedback on this and for - - in this building,  
3 and to doing our best to answer any questions.

4 I want to just introduce a few formal  
5 details, if I may, and then we'll turn it over  
6 to hand off to the school - - . Again, we're  
7 here to discuss the truncation of ASA's middle  
8 school grades. In addition to the proposed  
9 truncation, we will also be discussing a  
10 proposed colocation with grades five through  
11 eight of Success Academy Harlem Two in this  
12 building. ASA is currently located in school  
13 building N045 509 West 100 29th Street, - -  
14 City. It is colocated with three other schools,  
15 ISN286, Renaissance Leadership Academy, the  
16 Urban Assembly Institute for New Technologies  
17 and the Urban Assembly School for - - . ASA is  
18 a secondary school that currently serves  
19 students in grades six through 12. The school  
20 admits middle school students - - the District  
21 five - - process using a screen - - method.

22 It admits high school students through the  
23 citywide high school application process, - - .  
24 On January 28, 2013, the department published  
25 proposals to truncate ASA's middle school grades

1 based on - - described, and on January 31st  
2 2013, the department published an amended  
3 proposal, which verified information regarding  
4 the school's - - .

5 In a separate impact statement, the  
6 department has proposed again to colocate grades  
7 five through eight of the Success Academy Harlem  
8 Two in this building begin the 2014/15 school  
9 year and if approved, beginning in September  
10 2014 for the 2014/15 school year, Success  
11 Academy Harlem Two will serve students in grades  
12 five and six in this building, and will add one  
13 grade level per year until the 2016/17 society,  
14 when it will serve students in grades five  
15 through eight.

16 Before we move to public comment, I want to  
17 just discuss briefly the implications for the  
18 Academy for Social Action if in fact truncation  
19 moves from proposal - - formal proposal to the  
20 Panel for Education Policy, and is in fact voted  
21 in by the panel on March 11. If approved, ASA  
22 would no longer admit sixth grade students at  
23 the end of this society. Next year, the school  
24 would serve grades seven through 12, and current  
25 eighth graders would have the option of

1 articulating up to the high school or to  
2 participate in the citywide high school  
3 application process, and they in fact are  
4 already doing that.

5       ASA will continue to--so next year, it would  
6 serve grades 7 through 12. The following year,  
7 grades 8 through 12, and then thereafter, it  
8 would continue to serve grades 9 through 12 in  
9 perpetuity. Current sixth and seventh grade  
10 students again will articulate up into grade  
11 seventh and eighth grade. They will also have  
12 an opportunity to participate in the existing  
13 District choice process, moving forward as they  
14 already do.

15       So Melissa, that concludes a description of  
16 the proposal. I look forward to the rest of the  
17 evening.

18       MS. HARRIS: Thank you. Before we begin the  
19 school presentations, is there anyone here from  
20 CEC5 right now? Okay. CEC5, they did commit to  
21 attend and as soon as a representative arrives  
22 from CEC5, they will be given the opportunity to  
23 speak.

24       I now invite the Academy for Social Action  
25 to--the School Leadership Team for the Academy

1 for Social Action to comment and give remarks.

2 MALE VOICE: Good evening, ladies and  
3 gentlemen, department. My name is - - chair for  
4 the - - the proposal that you have already  
5 presented. I'm concerned it's not merely about  
6 the truncation, but the resources and the lack  
7 of space that we - - , even if the truncation  
8 will take place.

9 At this present moment, we are actually  
10 suffering from space in terms of giving a  
11 student the adequate learning environment that  
12 they deserve. I will give you one quick  
13 example. Our gymnasium we're unable to actually  
14 fulfill the necessary requirement for physical  
15 education for our high school students.

16 Also, some of the - - offices that we have  
17 are now being shared with different programs  
18 together such as we have the college advisor for  
19 the high school students coexisting with the - -  
20 to the extent that most of the students who are  
21 applying for colleges at this moment in time do  
22 not have the resources that they need like  
23 computers or dedicated time to utilize the time  
24 that they need.

25 Also, we have problems in terms of students

1 who are in disciplinary programs. We have the  
2 coexistence of the - - along with the dean, and  
3 also we do not have a - - that's supposed to be  
4 in the building for - - in-school suspension.

5 I will also give you an example of the fact  
6 that this is a - - school, and bringing a school  
7 with 5th grade is going to create a problem.  
8 This is an issue for us. We only have - - and  
9 every student has to - - . So we already have  
10 multiple entry system in the building.

11 The same problem lies for our cafeteria.  
12 One of the schools, especially ASA, we have - -  
13 . So if you are bringing a charter school in,  
14 and it's going to - - increase in population  
15 over what already is existing, then we're going  
16 to have problems in terms of logistics of - -  
17 cafeteria and - - .

18 Our main concern is that when the charter  
19 school comes, we will be losing some of the  
20 resources that we already have, and we have some  
21 of the - - materials of some of the - -  
22 classrooms that actually costs us a lot of money  
23 to restore. And because of that, I feel that it  
24 will be impossible to have another school here  
25 when we already have four in existence.

1 I'm not going to speak too long. - - some  
2 of our student leaders in the SLT an opportunity  
3 to speak. Thank you.

4 MALE VOICE: - - my name is - - for four  
5 years, and all I got to say is that ASA as a  
6 school and the entire - - ASA - - to me, and  
7 they helped me grow as a student. I'd like to  
8 thank them for the opportunity. And for  
9 example, I would like to submit - - Regent's - -  
10 program that I've taken in school - - and  
11 afterschool programs - - leader.

12 But I would say that I was given a fair  
13 opportunity as far as education goes, and with  
14 another charter school coming into the school,  
15 it would probably be - - toward high school,  
16 they might not be given the same opportunity as  
17 - - . It would be difficult for an overcrowded  
18 school, for them to have--for the school as far  
19 as funding goes, to make it have those Regent's  
20 prep program or - - students that need - - . I  
21 would like - - school students to have the same  
22 experience as I have - - being here - - equal  
23 opportunity. Also with overcrowding, the  
24 students and the teachers are probably going to  
25 be too much - - classroom. There will be

1 overcrowding in the classroom with not enough  
2 teachers - - challenge - - .

3 I would just like to end by saying instead  
4 of hurting the population of - - , why don't you  
5 - - ?

6 FEMALE VOICE: Hi, I'm - - . I'm a  
7 secretary - - ASA, and I've been going here for  
8 about six years, since the school first opened,  
9 and I've seen students, teachers, staff - - .  
10 My experience was different from - - . I - -  
11 remember not having the materials - - now. With  
12 - - classes, you don't have enough books. We  
13 don't have enough space. People have to sit on  
14 the desk - - 40 kids to a classroom.

15 I just think it would be unfair if we  
16 brought in a fourth - - because we don't have  
17 enough space as is for schools. If you bring a  
18 fifth school into - - . And then - - other  
19 school eat because they - - come into our  
20 building - - . So it's kind of like you're  
21 putting us all into a - - . They're putting us  
22 all into one space - - move and grow. I have -  
23 - people, and I think that you guys should take  
24 into account that we are students. We need to  
25 have space for ourselves. We don't have the

1 materials we need, we don't have the space we  
2 need, then how are we - - ? Thank you.

3 FEMALE VOICE: I'm - - ASA, and I just  
4 wanted to - - this year that - - teachers are -  
5 - . They - - there are - - one teacher to 64  
6 students to one teacher who is just in back to  
7 back - - teacher to have - - learn and to - -  
8 teacher having to - - the time that he needs to  
9 get himself together and - - and the students  
10 actually being able to participate without  
11 having to have so much clutter and so much  
12 tightness of the class.

13 And in my English class, there's at least 30  
14 students, and it's like two teachers, but the  
15 students--there's students in the class that  
16 need extra help with IEPs and things that needs  
17 to have an intimate and more stable environment  
18 to learn where they can actually get the  
19 learning environment that they really need.

20 And we have no--the cafeteria, the middle  
21 school is going in to lunch at third period.  
22 Senior and high school is going to lunch at  
23 seventh period, and we don't have no library  
24 space. Students have to fit into the  
25 auditorium, and also there's a lack of the

1 scanning in the morning, which is go make - -  
2 go early than we're already coming and will  
3 cause more problems and more hassle with another  
4 school coming in, and we have to leave here on  
5 time and - - and be late for our classes. And  
6 then we won't get valuable learning time.

7 So I feel like just bringing another school  
8 which doesn't even--taking out 90 students and  
9 bringing in 500-and-some-odd students is just  
10 not right at all. But thank you.

11 MR. CAROL WILDER: Good evening, everyone.  
12 My name is Carol Wilder. Good evening,  
13 everyone. My name is Carol Wilder. I am the  
14 PTA president and SLT member for ASA. I'd like  
15 to thank everyone for coming out, - - . For me,  
16 it's all about a sense of community. It's about  
17 a sense of investment. I have invested my two  
18 children to this building, and to this  
19 institution. District 5 has the worst track  
20 record when it comes to charter schools. What I  
21 mean by that is we have one of the highest  
22 concentration of charter schools anywhere.

23 Part of the problem is that we don't speak  
24 up and let our voices be heard. This is a voice  
25 that will not be silenced. In my opinion, and

1 in my feeling, to bring a charter school into  
2 this building right now is going to be  
3 devastating. We have security issues. There's  
4 a scanner here. To put another school on top of  
5 the four existing schools we currently have, I  
6 feel like it would be catastrophic in terms of  
7 the safety of the children in this building.  
8 Additionally, I do not think that it is a good  
9 course of action to close ASA junior high school  
10 for several reasons. I won't go into each and  
11 every one, but I'll tell you one thing.

12 I thank the teachers and the staff of ASA  
13 for being here not just for my children, but for  
14 all of the children in this building, being a  
15 part of my community. They make - - their  
16 cellphones, their emails, and in many cases,  
17 they've even come into my home for the success  
18 of my children. They've taught my children  
19 things like civil responsibility, obligatory  
20 giving. They've taught them things like  
21 compassion and they've taught them an extreme  
22 sense of community.

23 At this point, I don't think it makes any  
24 sense to close the middle school. I think it's  
25 a travesty, and we have to keep vigilant. We

1 have to speak about this. I know for one  
2 thing, my school, ASA, does not have the proper  
3 supplies that it needs. There are books  
4 missing. There are gym teachers who are  
5 teaching several periods in a row in order to  
6 make sure that our kids make it through.

7 There are teachers who give beyond  
8 procession. The principal gives beyond  
9 procession. It's not about money. It's about  
10 my kids. It's about my community.

11 I can't find the words. I can't strongly  
12 say what I really want to say. I'm all choked  
13 up because I think it's ridiculous. We've just  
14 started to turn the corner. We have plans in  
15 place. We've taken corrective action where it  
16 needed to be taken, and I just think we're  
17 letting this thing go away before the sunset  
18 arrives. I think we're giving up, and it's  
19 important to tell my kids, to tell the kids in  
20 this building, specifically in ASA, that they've  
21 done nothing wrong.

22 They're going to meet their goals. They're  
23 going to achieve everything that they want to  
24 achieve, and a more important point is we have a  
25 number of schools in this building, which are

1 under-enrolled and under-utilized. Why not  
2 concentrate on beefing up those schools as  
3 opposed to bringing in a - - their own personal  
4 agenda.

5 It's been proven. We have a clear track  
6 record. Charter schools are not all they're  
7 cracked up to be. The charter schools are not -  
8 - , and I think I need to send a clear message  
9 that District 5 is not going to put up with it.  
10 We have more charter schools than anywhere in  
11 the City of New York. Why? Because people  
12 don't open their mouths.

13 To have these kids come in here is an  
14 extreme safety issue. One, for them. Two, for  
15 our kids, and it just makes no sense. There's  
16 no way to get through that door right now.  
17 Currently we have scanners. We have security at  
18 that door. You are putting our children at risk  
19 by having this charter school in there.

20 You are also putting these students at risk  
21 because their only purpose here, my opinion, is  
22 to serve and better the political agenda of a  
23 person who cares not about my children, who has  
24 - - to be selective and has - - to expel kids  
25 who don't fit in her cookie-cutter mold. - -

1 thank you. I've said more than enough.

2 [Applause]

3 MS. HARRIS: - - .

4 [Applause]

5 MS. FIA DAVIS-ROUSE: Good evening. My name  
6 is Fia Davis-Rouse. I am the principal of the  
7 Urban Assembly School for the Performing Arts.  
8 What I want to show you - - based on the  
9 proposal, in 2010 at - - regular time - - space,  
10 and - - performing arts, and academic space for  
11 our school.

12 Because we are a performing arts school, and  
13 there are others in the city, we need to be  
14 over-footprint in the academic and artistic  
15 needs of our students. For example, we take  
16 students from four of the five boroughs in New  
17 York City. However, in terms of the performing  
18 arts, we do not require them to audition. So  
19 there is an opportunity for students who are  
20 willing to travel over 90 minutes - - to come to  
21 us every day to study both academically and  
22 artistically.

23 In the 2010 school year, the Department of  
24 Education created a performing arts - - for our  
25 school. We were very excited. It was a

1 campaign comprised of our advisory board, our  
2 parents, our parent association, students,  
3 teachers, many, many, many - - planning and lots  
4 of time and resources focused on that.

5 We were excited. We felt - - validated and  
6 supported. Now it's 2013. I am now principal  
7 again charged with devoting time and energy to  
8 advocating yet again for - - space for academic  
9 and artistic study in our school. The proposal  
10 as planned, colocation, would suggest that in  
11 the 2014/15 society, we would lose some office  
12 space. This office space may seem small, to the  
13 proposal - - on paper. However, we service  
14 students with special needs and support teachers  
15 in this small office space.

16 The following year, it's proposed we lose  
17 classroom space. If we lose academic classroom  
18 space, then it will impact both arts and  
19 academics because students have to learn  
20 somewhere, and I can't imagine how one could  
21 have math class in a dance student that has  
22 hardwood floors and mirrors and barre. It's  
23 really important for our community that is  
24 recognized as an arts school, we need to be  
25 over-footprint permanently as are other

1 performing arts schools, and we should not be  
2 charged with advocating for space that our  
3 students need and deserve and that we already  
4 advocated for.

5 While my focus as principal is really on - -  
6 achievement, I now yet again have to give  
7 significant time, including this meeting, for  
8 advocating for school and our space as a  
9 community. There are four schools in this  
10 campus. We have worked long and hard to find  
11 some harmony. We are in the midst of - - this  
12 community, and we work hard so the students  
13 walking through the doors - - every day, and to  
14 feel safe and - - community together.

15 550 more children coming into this building.  
16 One, I can't imagine - - , and two, how we would  
17 allow the children who come here every day to  
18 feel validated, to experience a sense of harmony  
19 and to feel equally valid if they got pushed to  
20 the left and the right to accommodate - - .

21 Finally, as principal, I ask that you would  
22 really consider finding another location for the  
23 charter school so that we might be able to  
24 continue to develop this campus, that is the - -  
25 campus, the N43 building, as it is - - keep our

1 students safe and work toward student  
2 achievement. Thank you.

3 [Applause]

4 MS. SOLASSE HOPE MURPHY: My name is Solasse  
5 Murphy. I've been in this school for four  
6 years, the Urban Assembly School for the  
7 Performing Arts. When I first got here, we were  
8 mostly - - rooms, and there was no performing  
9 arts wing like there is now, and we were very  
10 tight and cramped up together.

11 Even though we made it work, it was still  
12 hard to do what I came to this--do what I wanted  
13 to do when I came to this school, which is  
14 performing arts. I come from the Bronx, which  
15 is not that long, but people come farther, and  
16 performing arts is mostly why I come, aside from  
17 academics, to this school. And by bringing in a  
18 charter school, we will lose space. We will  
19 lose the performing arts wing, which again, we  
20 worked very hard to get. I didn't get that  
21 until I was in my second year in this school,  
22 and to lose that space when we've barely had it  
23 is very sad because again, I come here for  
24 performing arts, and I know the underclassmen  
25 underneath me are coming here for the same

1 thing, and I want them to have more  
2 opportunities than I did coming here with the  
3 performing arts.

4 That's all I have to say. Just please,  
5 relocate the school. Thank you.

6 [Applause]

7 MS. THOMASINA MOORE: Good evening. My name  
8 is Thomasina Moore, and I'm a parent from--my  
9 daughter's here with me, and - - . I'm a parent  
10 of the SLTUASPA, and I am also a parent of the  
11 charter school. Yes, I said charter school.  
12 My--it's a conflict of interest, but I'm here to  
13 support this school at this present time.

14 It should not be the charter school students  
15 who get more, deserve more, or the charter  
16 school or charter school leaders like Eva,  
17 should be. Should be able to bully a public  
18 school out of space or resources, which is what  
19 this feels like. We are asking that the charter  
20 school be relocated elsewhere. Thank you.

21 [Applause]

22 MR. BEN SCHOTT: Good evening. My name is  
23 Ben Schott, and I'm one of the founding teachers  
24 at UASPA, Urban Assembly for Performing Arts. I  
25 was the founding special education teacher. I

1 now serve as one of the assisting principals.

2 Currently, New York City sadly graduates  
3 only 39% of students with disabilities. At  
4 UASPA, we have managed to beat that statistic,  
5 and we currently graduate way over that  
6 statistic to 60% of our students with  
7 disabilities. The way that we achieve this  
8 success is by flexible programing. The DOE has  
9 a special education initiative, but we've been  
10 doing this for a long time. We've had flexible  
11 programing since we began.

12 We take a student's needs, and we meet them  
13 with the program that best fits their needs. In  
14 order to do this, we need space. Currently, we  
15 are really creative with space. We use every  
16 inch of our school. We use offices to have  
17 small group instruction. We use offices to do  
18 assessments for students so that we can know  
19 what their needs are so that we can meet them.

20 The idea that we would lose this space and  
21 still have to, and still continue to improve and  
22 get to 100% graduation rate for students with  
23 disabilities. It would really compromise the  
24 students' civil rights. If we lose this space,  
25 we would not be able to serve them in the same

1 way.

2 So we're asking that the charter school be  
3 located elsewhere. Thank you.

4 [Applause]

5 MS. DIANE JOHNSON: Hi, my name is Diane  
6 Johnson, and I serve as the UFT representative  
7 on the UFT representative on the School  
8 Leadership Team. I have been here for six of  
9 the seven years that the school has been in  
10 existence, and I can attest to our school's  
11 academic and artistic growth. We need enough  
12 space to continue the work that we've already  
13 started. I also serve as the Dean of Students  
14 here at UASPA.

15 I know that the arts program is a program  
16 that helps with behavior, and I know that the  
17 space that we have for our arts program is  
18 definitely need for those students who are  
19 struggling. We have students that come here who  
20 are not accepted in any specialized school, so  
21 they get the opportunity to do that here. It  
22 works for us.

23 Our students, even those who have left, want  
24 to come back if they left because they thought  
25 maybe they didn't need to be here. They come

1 back, and we serve them, and we serve them  
2 well.

3 Our kids do feel safe in our school, and I  
4 think that bringing in another school will only  
5 just add to the problems that already exist  
6 here. We are a - - school, and we don't want  
7 our students to feel that they do not deserve  
8 what that charter school may be coming in with.  
9 They deserve everything, and I think money  
10 should be put into what we are doing here for  
11 our students, and they should not feel different  
12 from anyone else.

13 And believe that the charter school should  
14 be relocated. Thank you.

15 [Applause]

16 MS. DAISY GARNS: Good evening. My name is  
17 Daisy Garns. My child is in - - . It's a  
18 wonderful school. This is performing arts.  
19 What I see is in this school, there's parents  
20 here that cannot afford to send their children  
21 to any kind of music school. - - or anything.  
22 This school offers it as well as educating them.

23 They are doubling up in the classrooms.  
24 They don't have no room. You're doing things  
25 that are impossible. Some people - - looking at

1 the wrong thing. These children need the  
2 space. The school needs it.

3 Some of these children get up very early in  
4 the morning. I'm a parent - - . Mine have to  
5 leave my house at 7:00. Some leave before, but  
6 these are dedicated teachers. They're doing  
7 what they have to do. And we should not allow a  
8 charter school to come in here and - - and all  
9 of a sudden they're going to take over. It's  
10 not going to work.

11 [Applause]

12 MS. KATHLEEN DONATO: My name is Kathleen  
13 Donato, and I am the Parent Association  
14 President for Urban Assembly School for  
15 Performing Arts. The name Urban Assembly School  
16 for the Performing Arts, we are a - - high  
17 school. Without the performing arts, it's just  
18 a regular high school. My son here is a third  
19 year student, and he does and has woken up very  
20 early in the morning, depending on his schedule,  
21 and to get him here. We don't live in  
22 Manhattan. We're not down the block. We're in  
23 another borough.

24 Children from four different boroughs, other  
25 than Staten Island, come to this school. Like

1 Ms. Garn said, they wake up very early in the  
2 morning. I understand about early in the  
3 morning.

4 Now, our school has a--excuse me. In your  
5 proposal, you stated that our school, we have  
6 many extracurricular activities. That is not  
7 so. The majority of our so-called  
8 extracurricular activities are actually intra-  
9 curricular activities because our curricular  
10 activities coincide with the subject. So if  
11 they're doing history, it's also part of the  
12 performing arts. They put it all together.

13 Shakespeare, English, history all goes  
14 together. Science, they have a hip hop program  
15 which goes with the science program. We have  
16 teachers sharing classrooms with other teachers  
17 in order to teach our kids. Parents  
18 Association, which should have even a small,  
19 little classroom space don't have it. I share  
20 the tiny little space that I have when I'm here  
21 with the assistant principal, Mr. Schott.

22 Not many people will do that. So I need you  
23 to listen carefully, and we read between the  
24 lines. There's plenty of space in New York for  
25 a charter school. Plenty of space. You can go

1 right outside, walk down to 125th street, and  
2 you'll find many. You can relocate.

3 [Applause]

4 MS. HARRIS: I'm now calling the Student  
5 Leadership Team from the Urban Assembly  
6 Institute for New Technologies - - .

7 MS. DAPHNE LEDA: Hello, gentlemen. My name  
8 is Daphne Leda. I am one of the founding  
9 teachers of the Urban Assembly Institute for New  
10 Technologies, or New Tech as we like to refer to  
11 it. I'm also the UFT rep this year. I am going  
12 to tell you a story.

13 Actually, it's going to be multiple stories.  
14 If you look at the narrative of an organization  
15 such as a school, you can look at it from many  
16 different perspectives, and like any  
17 organization, our narrative is multidimensional.  
18 You can look at our data, our numbers, and those  
19 numbers tell a very interesting story, if you  
20 look at it from year one through year three, and  
21 then year four, whose numbers are not yet  
22 published.

23 Then if you talk to the people of our  
24 organization, you will hear stories that  
25 parallel those that are in the numbers. They

1 will tell a story of a school that started off  
2 kind of - - as most new schools do. Then year  
3 two shows that our progress report shows that we  
4 have a high - - . We did really well.

5 Then year three, something happened, and we  
6 lost many teachers. We lost school aids. We  
7 lost a lot out third year, including our  
8 founding principal. Then year four happened and  
9 is happening, rather. What you will not see in  
10 the numbers, but you will hear if you speak to  
11 the people of our organization, the parents, the  
12 students, the teachers, our principal, is one of  
13 an immense undercurrent of promise. One where  
14 we as public educators are working tirelessly to  
15 fulfill our mandate, as people who are trying to  
16 inspire our future children, our community's  
17 children to be critical thinkers, excellent  
18 communicators.

19 We are doing this through innovative  
20 curriculum design, learning cultures is our  
21 current curriculum that we have actually helped  
22 us catapult ourselves into our rebirth.  
23 Learning cultures is really an incredible  
24 curriculum because it enables every learning in  
25 our classroom to meet their full potential, and

1 they work in partnership with one another in a  
2 learning community, in a learning environment,  
3 that caters to the needs of every individual  
4 learner.

5 I have been teaching for six short years. I  
6 have never taught in a way that parallels my  
7 philosophy and my belief that every child is  
8 capable of learning, every child has the  
9 potential to reach the stars. And it is--it's a  
10 blessing to each at New Tech.

11 I fear, and now speaking more as a UFT rep  
12 as well as someone who looks at her children  
13 every day--her students, rather, every day, and  
14 conferences with them and speaks to them about  
15 that potential that they have. I've done a  
16 little bit of reading on what colocated  
17 buildings look like with charter schools, and I  
18 am afraid of how I can look at my students in  
19 the eye and tell them you matter. You can reach  
20 your potential, but sorry, I have to transition  
21 out of my classroom right now because I share it  
22 with two of my colleagues because our school is  
23 losing 50% of its space in the next year in  
24 preparation for a school that's going to open  
25 its doors in two years.

1 I'm sorry. Downstairs when you look at  
2 the charter school and all of the technologies  
3 that they have, and we've got 22 non-functioning  
4 laptops that we can't get serviced. Charter  
5 schools represent a conversation of a moralist  
6 idea, but as someone who has taught and believes  
7 and is so passionate, I am afraid of what our  
8 future holds, what this sentence will do to our  
9 school's promise.

10 [Applause]

11 MS. HALLIE LEVINE: Good evening. My name  
12 is Hallie Levine. I'm the special education  
13 coordinator at New Tech. Like Daphne, I'd like  
14 to tell you just a quick story about what we do  
15 at New Tech.

16 In November, we had a young girl in the  
17 sixth grade transfer into our school. Her  
18 mother warned us that she was very shy, that she  
19 was coming from a charter school. She had been  
20 diagnosed with clinical depression. She was no  
21 longer speaking in class. She was not  
22 participating. A multitude of issues, she was  
23 coming to us with, so as her teachers, we were  
24 expecting a child who wasn't really going to  
25 function for a while.

1           Within three weeks of working in learning  
2           cultures with her reading teachers, she has  
3           become one of the most vibrant students that we  
4           have, one of the most vocal students that we  
5           have. I see no signs of depression. I see no  
6           signs of a child who can't learn. We are aware  
7           that she has dyslexia, and that apparently her  
8           charter school felt that they couldn't meet  
9           those needs, but we meet those needs, and we  
10          take every student who comes to our school.

11           [Applause]

12          Our school currently has 46% of our students  
13          have special education services. They range  
14          from sets to self-contained. We, too, like  
15          Performing Arts, are working very hard at giving  
16          our students flexible programing. And to echo  
17          what Mr. Schott said, you need space and you  
18          need resources to give your students, our  
19          special students, these services that they  
20          require.

21          The proposal as Daphne said, will result in  
22          our school losing 50% of our classrooms, which  
23          will make it virtually impossible to meet the  
24          needs of each and every one of the students who  
25          we have accepted, many of whom have been asked

1 to leave charter schools because the schools  
2 could not meet the needs that they have.

3 We've come a very long way in one year. Our  
4 classroom environments look completely different  
5 from what they did last year, and our students  
6 are all learning. Our DRP scores prove how much  
7 progress our students have made in three to four  
8 short months. Please locate this charter school  
9 in another building and not in ours, and  
10 continue to allow us to make the progress that  
11 we've started to make.

12 [Applause]

13 MS. SYLVIA PASQUALE: Hi, good evening. My  
14 name is Sylvia Pasquale. I'm a parent, and I'm  
15 a parent, and also I belong the PTA. I'm a  
16 secretary. Well, I'm here tonight to support  
17 New Tech because my daughter, I feel so happy  
18 that my daughter has been in this school for the  
19 past two years.

20 She came from a school that was closed down  
21 in District 5, and she was welcome to come into  
22 - - school. Her grades were very bad. Now she  
23 has improved, and she has come a long, and I'm  
24 very welcome with the work they have done. The  
25 teachers, the principal, everybody, and I'm very

1 proud to be belonging to the PTA in this  
2 school.

3 Like Ms. Levine said, the numbers from the  
4 DPR is not just the top - - . The numbers are  
5 tremendous. The reading level are better. If  
6 you compare from last year till now, the reading  
7 levels are great. One of the classes have a - -  
8 score right now. None of them had that before,  
9 and I'm pleased--ask you guys please as a parent  
10 and as a PTA member to please allow our schools  
11 to stay in this building.

12 Our children need this school very much, and  
13 I'm here to support 100%. I'm not saying  
14 charter school could not make it, but they could  
15 make it outside, not in this building.

16 [Applause]

17 Please - - school to stay. Thank you and -  
18 - .

19 MR. CRAIG RITTS: Good evening, everyone.  
20 My name is Craig Ritts. I'm the SLT president.  
21 I just want to say - - my son, - - Asher to New  
22 Technology. When he came here, to be perfectly  
23 honest, I was willing to take him out - - to  
24 another school before the present principal came  
25 into the school--before the present principal

1 came in and there was this dramatic change.

2 It's almost like a dream to me.

3 My son has went from acting out, not wanting  
4 to do his work to now coming home and asking  
5 questions about how can I become a better man.  
6 Not only is he trying to do that, he also has  
7 more focus for going to college to further his  
8 education. Now by having this charter school  
9 come in and taking the little space that we do  
10 have now, it's going to be a great disservice  
11 not only to my son, but to my daughter who is  
12 expecting to go there next year. So I don't  
13 really understand why you're going to do that an  
14 disrupt the whole lives of everyone that's in  
15 this school already and disrupt the lives of the  
16 kids that you're trying to - - . It's taken  
17 basically almost an entire year to get the  
18 school to one of positive - - . It's like a  
19 snowball effect. You don't stop a snowball  
20 that's coming down the hill - - making a lot of  
21 progress within the school.

22 So mostly what I really have to say, I'm  
23 just a parent like everyone else. I grew up in  
24 Camden, New Jersey. Now, if you know anything  
25 about Camden, New Jersey, it's very negative.

1 School district, by the time I graduated out  
2 of middle school going to high school, I was at  
3 a fifth grade reading level. This school has  
4 shown me and made me and given me a voice and  
5 the courage to stand up here and join the SLT.

6 [Applause]

7 - - respective schools. I'd like to say one  
8 more thing. There is a lot--New York is very  
9 big. It's huge to me. There's a lot of space,  
10 like everyone has said already. You can take  
11 that around the corner or down the street.  
12 That's all I have to say.

13 [Applause]

14 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. I now invite - - .

15 FEMALE VOICE: [interposing] - - for New  
16 Tech - - math was 65. Now he's 95. - - .

17 [Applause]

18 FEMALE VOICE: [Indiscernible yelling]

19 MS. HARRIS: I now invite the SLT of - - .

20 MR. CORDELL DIXON: Thank you very much.

21 Good evening. My name is Cordell Dixon. I'm  
22 the - - principal of - - Leadership Academy.  
23 There's just a couple of things I want to  
24 address.

25 One, five schools in a building is just not

1 a great idea. We brought this building from a  
2 building that was highly volatile. We work  
3 together as principals to create a dynamic  
4 environment.

5 Just thinking about my school alone, aside  
6 of all the great things happening academically  
7 and even as some of the parents mentioned, we've  
8 had students that have come in at a kindergarten  
9 reading level, and have left and gone to high  
10 school on grade level. It's been a fight for  
11 space in the building as is.

12 Wonderful things are happening in our  
13 schools. Just thinking we have to all share a  
14 gymnasium. I have to have my entire grade at  
15 gym in one time. There's no 6-31 goes to gym  
16 and 6-32 goes to gym and 6-33 goes to gym. We  
17 don't have enough space, and there's not enough  
18 time in the day in order for us to do those  
19 things.

20 So because we have to share such space, it  
21 limits our schools in what we can do. So  
22 bringing in a fifth school is just going to add  
23 to that dynamic of not being able to get things  
24 done.

25 When you speak about our school, our double

1 dutch team is number two in the world. They  
2 have to practice in the cafeteria, and sometimes  
3 we have to share the space in the cafeteria  
4 because there are other schools that have things  
5 that need to happen. Our basketball team's  
6 still undefeated. They've won championship  
7 after championship, and we have to share the gym  
8 where we have young men that are being recruited  
9 by every private school in New York City, and we  
10 can't even have coaches come to see them  
11 practice because we don't have enough time  
12 sometimes.

13 And just the idea of having five schools in  
14 the building, just thinking about safety, I'm  
15 thinking about fifth graders being in a building  
16 with 12th graders. I'm thinking about 5th  
17 graders who may not have to go through scanning,  
18 and there may be someone else that says, you  
19 know, - - 5th graders. You don't have to go  
20 through scanning. I'm going to put this in your  
21 book bag, and you're not going to say anything  
22 about it.

23 And then we have some things in the building  
24 that shouldn't be here. If you decide to make a  
25 different space for those fifth graders to come

1 into, there's no guarantee that anyone  
2 wouldn't be able to slip inside the building.  
3 There's so many other elements that are going to  
4 be added to a building that we've really been  
5 working hard to bring together.

6 So my idea is simple. You know, I've never  
7 asked for more space because I never wanted to  
8 disrespect what was happening in the other  
9 schools, but we have a dynamic middle school  
10 already as well as - - . We took the school  
11 from a school that was about to be closed, to a  
12 school that's a great school where great things  
13 are happening - - . I come back every day to  
14 double dutch practice. They come back to see  
15 the teachers, things of that nature.

16 Now we have a school such as New Technology,  
17 which I'm proud to have in the building. They  
18 have really - - and gotten things together and  
19 great things are happening in our schools. So  
20 there's no reason why the two schools can't work  
21 together and we can lose our enrollment. We  
22 don't have a problem - - because in the end,  
23 it's really about what's best for children.  
24 That's what it's about, and when you see school  
25 leaders that are working for what's best for

1 children, you have to let those school leaders  
2 do what they need to do.

3       What should happen in the ideal world is you  
4 come in and say, how can we support you to  
5 support the children? So moving forward, I  
6 don't have a - - with charter schools, and if  
7 charter schools are working where they're  
8 working, let them work. I do have the same  
9 experience with other schools where we end up  
10 getting students out of the charter schools that  
11 the charter schools did not want, and I hear  
12 about their experiences in those schools, and we  
13 take them. - - that was then, this is now, and  
14 we build them up to do dynamic things.

15       But look at what's already happening. Look  
16 at what's happening in the building. It was a  
17 building that was highly violent. it's not  
18 highly violent anymore, and there's dynamic  
19 leadership in this building.

20       So if you - - someone in, and the charter  
21 school doesn't work, then we're all the way back  
22 to square one, and then we have to regroup and  
23 rebuild, and it's not fair to those children and  
24 those parents who believe in what's happening in  
25 the building. Again, I'm speaking from a space

1 where our space is not being bothered, but I'm  
2 bothered that space is being bothered by my  
3 colleagues because in the end, it's still going  
4 to affect my school. And when it affects my  
5 school, it affects my students and affects my  
6 families.

7 Then it affects me. When it affects me,  
8 it's just--it's just - - dynamic that we don't  
9 need to have. So I highly recommend that you  
10 take the charter school - - maybe it will be  
11 very successful, but it can be very successful  
12 someplace else.

13 But in this particular building, I don't  
14 think that this is not only just a charter  
15 school, this is not the right place for five  
16 schools, period. There's not enough space, not  
17 enough time. Thank you.

18 [Applause]

19 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. We - - CEC5. I ask  
20 they come out to give remarks. CEC5? - -  
21 remarks, then I'll--I have - - .

22 MR. TOM FRANTA: Good evening. My name is  
23 Tom Franta. I'm from the City Charter Schools  
24 Institute. I'm here for tonight's public  
25 hearing on behalf of the board of trustees - - .

1 Yesterday's - - public hearing any time - -  
2 authorize - - open in an existing public school  
3 building. I'm here tonight to listen to your  
4 comments about the proposal to locate, as you've  
5 heard, grades five through eight of Success  
6 Academy Charter School - - building N43  
7 beginning in fall 2014.

8 - - holding this hearing now at the same  
9 time - - holding its hearing, so that the  
10 government - - parents, community members and  
11 school leaders to come out a second time to  
12 discuss the same proposal. I will be taking  
13 note of all comments made tonight including  
14 those that have already been made, thank you  
15 very much. In addition, if you have any written  
16 comments, please feel free to give them to me  
17 this evening. You can also email them to  
18 charters@suny.eu, mail them to 41 State Street,  
19 Suite 700, Albany, New York, 12207. And again,  
20 all of these proposals - - entrance to the - -  
21 back, or you may fax them to area code (518)  
22 427-6510.

23 SUNY will accept public comments through  
24 March 15, 2013, which is five days after the  
25 planned - - . Thank you.

1 MS. HARRIS: We have now concluded all  
2 presentations, and I will start with Sarah  
3 Mortgage, representing councilman Jackson; - -  
4 representing Senator Perkins; Duane Clark,  
5 representing the UFC; and Juanita Bass,  
6 representing CSA, to give comment.

7 MS. SARAH MORTGAGRADUATE: My name is Sarah  
8 Mortgage. I'm on the staff of Councilmember  
9 Jackson, and I am reading the testimony that the  
10 has prepared. When the Department of Education  
11 announced the proposal to truncate the grade  
12 range for the Academy of Social Action, closing  
13 grades six, seven and eight, I asked my staff to  
14 reach out to the school community.

15 Contact was made with the parent  
16 coordinator, and we learned several things,  
17 including that the administration felt it best  
18 to focus on the development of the high school.  
19 My staff was advised that most of the middle  
20 school students do not progress to the high  
21 school. The impression was conveyed that  
22 despite the fact that this had been richly  
23 envisioned as a six to 12 school, the middle  
24 school and the high school had functioned as  
25 distinct entities, and therefore the truncation

1 was not highly disruptive.

2           Meanwhile, the Urban Assembly for Performing  
3 Arts school reached out and met with my staff.  
4 The building utilization plan was reviewed, and  
5 I must express my sharp objection to the  
6 proposed BUP. In a different world, the closing  
7 of one middle school and the opening of a  
8 replacement middle school would be evaluated  
9 solely on the merits of the school selected for  
10 closure and on the anticipated value of the  
11 proposed replacement.

12           But this is the world of DOE and SCA and  
13 Success Academies, and once again, the all-too-  
14 familiar pattern of a charter school requiring  
15 more space than the school it replaced is being  
16 superimposed involuntarily on yet another  
17 community of learners. This is a space war, and  
18 in this particular battle, Urban Assembly of  
19 Performing Arts High School is merely collateral  
20 damage, an innocent victim.

21           Being asked to sacrifice specialized space  
22 that its principal had the vision to develop,  
23 and I'm referring to the basement that was not  
24 in use here, space for which I allocated funding  
25 in order that an incoming charter school can

1 grow. It doesn't seem to matter to the  
2 deciders that Urban Assembly is one of the few  
3 unscreened performing arts schools in our  
4 system. It gives those with talent so latent  
5 that they might not quality through an audition  
6 process the opportunity to become immersed in an  
7 arts curriculum, bringing those talents to the  
8 fore.

9 It doesn't seem to matter that the whole  
10 notion of the educational footprint is woefully  
11 inadequate and far below the standards  
12 established in the campaign for fiscal equity.  
13 It doesn't seem to matter that special ed.  
14 curriculum logically require more space, whether  
15 we are talking about complying about the  
16 requirements of the - - decision, and that's a  
17 decision that talks about how English Language  
18 Learners need to be offered many kinds of  
19 learning opportunities, or the arts programs,  
20 which obviously need space to deliver their  
21 specialties, or STEM.

22 The formula makes no allowances for these  
23 requirements. Why? This particular building  
24 utilization plan does not appear to ask the  
25 existing schools to make equal sacrifices to

1 absorb the incoming charter school. Why?

2 I've had longstanding opposition to  
3 colocations that are not generated by compelling  
4 educational reasons. I frequently voice my  
5 opposition to charter schools taking precedence  
6 over regular public schools in the allocation of  
7 space. Tonight, I enter for the record my  
8 formal opposition to this blatant theft of  
9 classrooms essential for programing the delivery  
10 of a specialized arts curriculum, and my pledge  
11 to work to find a better solution.

12 [Applause]

13 FEMALE VOICE: Good evening, everyone,  
14 panelists. I really want to speak to the  
15 community that came out tonight, and I commend  
16 all of you for coming out tonight and supporting  
17 our children because sometimes they say we don't  
18 care. They say that we don't support our  
19 schools, but I see students, I see parents, I  
20 see faculty, and I've listened to everyone  
21 tonight. You are a group of people that care  
22 about these schools. I wish that this were more  
23 than just a formality. I wish that I really  
24 felt as if parents were being listened to.

25 But as someone who has gone to so many of

1 these on so many occasions--in fact, this week  
2 I've got four to go to all over Harlem, all over  
3 - - . You know, I wonder if any of this is  
4 about education.

5 You know, this--we are currently  
6 experiencing an aggressive - - . This is not  
7 about education because it is more than obvious  
8 that five schools cannot be in this building.  
9 It doesn't take hours and hours of testimony for  
10 someone to make that point. If you have a sick  
11 patient, you don't squeeze them out. You don't  
12 throw them out. You help them out. That's what  
13 you do.

14 So if we have problems with a school in our  
15 building, we need to make sure that that school  
16 is doing better. If that school is failing,  
17 then the Department of Education is failing  
18 them. It's their responsibility, not to blame  
19 us, to blame parents and blame families and put  
20 us out on the street to bring in a preferred  
21 child.

22 I'm so - - about this - - . But what I want  
23 to say to you tonight is that I really didn't  
24 come to even speak to that. What I'm going to  
25 tell you is that it is time for action. It is

1 time for us to be as aggressive as they are  
2 being. So on this Sunday, Senator Bill Perkins  
3 is hosting an emergency meeting at his office.  
4 I have flyers that one of the students is  
5 handing out for me. If you are interested in a  
6 citywide coalition, a movement, against these  
7 school closings and colocations, meet us on  
8 Sunday at 2:00 p.m.

9 This is too serious. This is too important  
10 for us to let this go the way it's been going.  
11 We are being picked on. We are the most  
12 vulnerable. We are being picked on as English  
13 Language Learners. We're being picked on in  
14 underprivileged neighborhoods. We are the ones  
15 who this is happening to, and we have to stop  
16 it. We have to stop it not.

17 I just want to--you know, it broke my heart  
18 when I heard that this was happening to this  
19 particular building. I remember Urban Assembly  
20 just this past Christmas. A beautiful choir,  
21 and I'm still getting comments about how well  
22 you performed for Harlem, for this whole  
23 community, and I can't believe that someone  
24 would jeopardize your future, and you have big  
25 futures. You really do because I heard you. I

1 heard you, and no one should take away your  
2 space, especially when you have such a dynamic  
3 principal who fought to get that space.

4 We have long been victims of inferior  
5 education, inferior leaders, but that's not what  
6 we have here. We have someone who put a muscle  
7 into it, and went to the mat for this school and  
8 for this community, and got what it needed, and  
9 now we're being threatened with that being taken  
10 away. If you want to stop this, you have to  
11 join us. One other thing, if you don't join us,  
12 make sure you get to the polls this September  
13 because we are going to change what's happening  
14 in this city.

15 [Applause]

16 MR. DUANE CLARK: Good evening. My name is  
17 Duane Clark. I'm the UFT District  
18 Representative for Community School District 5,  
19 so I got two different matters I want to  
20 address. First of all, I want to focus on the  
21 Academy for Social Action because I heard the  
22 state arguing, Mr. Sternberg, that--if I'm  
23 clear. Correct me if I'm wrong--that you see  
24 aggressive intervention going on within the high  
25 school, correct? Isn't that what you said, that

1 there was some implementation of aggression?

2 I was right? That's what I said, so that's what  
3 I heard you say.

4 So my question is, whether you respond - - ,  
5 I'm just asking, why not replicate that in the  
6 middle school and do it now with additional  
7 monies, staffing and resources? We - - teachers  
8 to scaffold. Right? We do that all the time,  
9 so you know, if you scaffold, you got to  
10 scaffold from the bottom-up. So - - six through  
11 eight. That's your bottom.

12 In a regular scaffold, if you eliminate that  
13 base and that bottom, the scaffold's going to  
14 fall, correct? So now you're going to take out  
15 six through eight in ASA and just leave nine  
16 through 12. So eventually, there's going to  
17 come a time when you're going to start looking  
18 at grades 9 through 12.

19 See, as you build anything up, you have to  
20 start from the bottom and build it up. Give  
21 that base that support. You cannot have a base  
22 made out of quicksand and expect anything else  
23 to build upon it. You have to have that base  
24 made of concrete in order to build the other  
25 blocks on top of it. So I say to you, don't

1 close 6 through 8. Keep them open. Support  
2 them. Give them the resources they need because  
3 to me, if they're doing the same thing in high  
4 school aggressively and intensively, replicate  
5 it. Right there in the middle school because  
6 then now you have the same trend uniformly going  
7 through grades 6 through 12. Makes sense,  
8 right? All right.

9 Now, let me get to my other mat, our  
10 alignment with our illustrious Success Academy.  
11 So everyone's already talked about the safety  
12 issue, which is crystal clear. It doesn't take  
13 a rocket scientist, but I'm going to - - from my  
14 personal experience in dealing with Success  
15 Academy as a District representative, and I have  
16 one in my own home school where I personally  
17 teach. To give a little background - - so that  
18 you all know.

19 Now, the - - Education Impact state, so I  
20 want everyone to be clear, that word, impact,  
21 means that when they come, you, the building,  
22 the entire school community, will be impacted.  
23 Let's be crystal clear about that, and I also -  
24 - when Success Academy that's coming there, be  
25 ready for the history of rudeness, intrusiveness

1 and problematic issues that are going to occur  
2 constantly within your building.

3 And - - personal - - I tell you, and that's  
4 basically what it is in a nutshell. There is  
5 already a space issue here. There will be a  
6 myriad of issues when Success Academy arrives.  
7 So keep in mind, the people here. The - -  
8 talked about separate and unequal because you  
9 all are going to have to use it. I'm preparing  
10 you for that because that's going to be a big  
11 issue here.

12 It's been consistent, and it's been  
13 consistent, and it's been consistent. As one  
14 parent say, we have the most population of  
15 charter schools within this District, within  
16 District 5, but I have to say, my dealings with  
17 all those times, Success Academy is the one that  
18 has the reputation of muscling and expanding and  
19 taking over the entire school community.

20 So they start with grades 5 through 8 and  
21 eventually going to go 5 to 12. Then you  
22 eventually have another proposal for K to 4.  
23 And then perhaps K to 12 up in this building.  
24 Let's be crystal clear, everyone. This is the  
25 plan. And my bottom line is it's not about

1 that. It's not about the children. It's  
2 supposedly about the children - - those words.  
3 I always look at the actions of the adults.

4 It's not about the children. It's about  
5 your actions. It's about your deeds. It's in  
6 your words. That's what this is about. Is  
7 deeds and words consistently show that the  
8 children in community school District 5 are  
9 always stepped upon when it comes down to the  
10 charter school initiative, and it has to - -  
11 stop.

12 And you know what, the bottom line is you  
13 get all that money. Eva Moskowitz has money  
14 coming out of her eyeballs. There is no reason  
15 why she needs this space, and she has - - that  
16 comes to her consistently. So she doesn't need  
17 this space, but it's about location, everybody.  
18 Location, location, location. You guys have  
19 prime real estate here, and they're going to try  
20 to break up this community.

21 You have to come together and fight. That's  
22 unity right there. You have to fight this  
23 battle because that's what it's going to be.

24 So coming back to what I originally said,  
25 this is what the Department of Education wants

1 to do. This is what you're going to do.  
2 You're going to bring a charter school up in  
3 here that's going to have an impact on the  
4 entire school community that has now all come  
5 together as one. So what's really that  
6 educational impact statement all about? That's  
7 what that's - - .

8 [Applause]

9 MS. JUANITA BASS: Good evening. My name is  
10 Juanita Bass, and I'm representing Ernie - - ,  
11 president of the Council of School Supervisors  
12 and Administrators. We've been through this so  
13 many times before, and once again the DOE's  
14 proposing the phase out and the closing of more  
15 than two dozen schools. It's not just about - -  
16 who wants you to know that CSA's been fighting  
17 behind the scenes against these wholesale  
18 closures. We hope that our - - helps a little  
19 bit, if only a little bit, to do with a little  
20 ground that DOE is making a choice to just phase  
21 out a middle school. We know that's a runaway  
22 train so - - talking about that anymore because  
23 it's going to happen.

24 However, we do hope that with the closing of  
25 the middle school, the DOE takes into serious

1 consideration the placement of those grade six  
2 to eight students, making sure that they make  
3 appropriate and good choices, and making sure  
4 they get their choices because we know in the  
5 past, they've been turned away from many schools  
6 that they've applied to.

7       So you want to make sure that they get their  
8 choices. In addition, we want to make sure that  
9 the high school students that are left are fully  
10 supported both academically, socially and with  
11 the physical space that's been talked about here  
12 tonight to ensure their success. This is not  
13 just the responsibility of administrators,  
14 parents, teachers and other staff members, but  
15 the responsibility of the entire Department of  
16 Education.

17       [Applause]

18       MS. HARRIS: We're going to take a five  
19 minute break, and then - - and - - general  
20 public comment. So a five-minute break, and  
21 then - - general comment.

22       [Five-minute break]

23       FEMALE VOICE: Hi, everyone. We're going to  
24 get started.

25       MS. HARRIS: Okay, everyone. We're going to

1 get started now with the public comment. As a  
2 reminder, please keep your comments to under two  
3 minutes. The DOE staff member at the front of  
4 the auditorium, she's seated right over there -  
5 - , will be keeping time. She will raise a sign  
6 to alert you when you have 30 seconds remaining,  
7 and she will raise another sign to alert you  
8 when your time is up.

9 We want to make sure that everyone's voice  
10 is heard tonight, so we ask you to just be  
11 sensitive to those who are in attendance, and  
12 please keep with the two minute limit. I would  
13 now like to call speakers with numbers one  
14 through ten to line up at this microphone right  
15 here. Speakers number one through ten.

16 You were given tickets this evening, so if  
17 you could have your tickets available. Number  
18 one? Michelle Weib? Number two.

19 MS. APRIL ROBBINS-BOBYN: My name is April  
20 Robbins Bobyn, and I'm the advisory chair for  
21 the UASDA, and I what I would like to say is  
22 collocation is one of the potentially worst  
23 things that could happen to a school. It puts -  
24 - at their worst because they all have a common  
25 goal in - - education for their kids. However,

1 when you're in a building that doesn't have  
2 space, it doesn't work. We, as you've heard,  
3 advocated ferociously to have our performing  
4 arts space built, so we could effectively keep  
5 our promise to the students that they would have  
6 a stellar academic and artistic education. With  
7 another school coming in, we will no longer be  
8 able to keep that promise. We will have to go  
9 back again and struggle to find out how we can  
10 make this work. We will essentially be going  
11 backwards.

12 You have four schools that - - that every  
13 year as their population grows, will have to be  
14 refootprinted to find out how many classrooms  
15 each school has, how many offices each school  
16 will have, and because these are - - schools  
17 which have to accommodate which - - will come  
18 into the neighborhood, - - shelter or - - , they  
19 have to go to school in the zone. You can't  
20 have a zoned school. So these numbers, they're  
21 not - - .

22 500 additional students in a school that has  
23 common space, one library, one auditorium, one  
24 cafeteria, one gymnasium, this school wasn't  
25 originally designed for five schools. It was

1 designed for one, and the one thing that does  
2 not change, is numbers.

3 The space, the size of this school will not  
4 expand as the population expands. It will  
5 remain the same. The children will be  
6 overcrowded. The teachers will be overburdened,  
7 and it will not be a place that's conducive to  
8 education. I - - you not to allow this  
9 collocation to take place. This isn't the  
10 optimal environment for either school. Thank  
11 you.

12 MR. GABRIEL SILVA: Hello, my name is  
13 Gabriel Silva, and I am the theater teacher at  
14 Urban Assembly School of Performing Arts.

15 [Applause]

16 I'm also personally a teacher, and my  
17 student teacher experience prior to my work in  
18 the school, my - - teachers and I pushed into  
19 classrooms in order to deliver theater lessons.  
20 Of course this was intrusive and inconvenient  
21 for both us and the teachers who were kind  
22 enough to share their space. I feel like in our  
23 space, - - send a clear message to our students,  
24 the arts are a side show, an ancillary - - that  
25 interrupts the real world.

1           Now, for a typical school that may very  
2 well be the message we want to send. However, a  
3 school like UASPA where arts education is on  
4 equal standing with our - - learning, using - -  
5 space is - - . We have a school team - -  
6 passionate students who came - - space, and now  
7 you're telling them that their artistry, their  
8 passion, their interests are secondary and not  
9 important.

10           I think my colleagues in the Performing Arts  
11 will join me in saying that our dedicated arts  
12 spaces aren't a luxury. They're a necessity in  
13 accommodating the creativity of our students and  
14 supporting - - learning that only participating  
15 in arts can achieve. We learn by doing in our  
16 arts spaces. Please help us keep them.

17           [Applause]

18           MS. TREVON BARNES: [Singing] - - because I  
19 sing. Before I used to be shy. When I came  
20 here, I was some comfortable and joined my  
21 students to join in. - - and everyone sitting  
22 here, and - - .

23           But I love coming here every, single day - -  
24 day for the teachers, - - . But I love each and  
25 every one of them - - and pushing me forward,

1 and I really - - . Thank you.

2 [Applause]

3 MR. SETH GILMAN: - - . So what makes a  
4 good educator? What makes a good - - educator?  
5 I don't know. - - but I think that - - as a  
6 teacher, if I - - class that's been - - that  
7 that's huge. And if we lose the space, it's  
8 going to make my job that much harder, and - -  
9 students, and - - apply my undergraduate degree  
10 with my master's degree, sort of put them all  
11 together and sort of - - teach.

12 And if we lose our performing arts - - space  
13 that we need - - . The other thing is I teach  
14 in the basement and end up walking through - -  
15 and New Tech all the time. It really is a  
16 community. There are other principals that - -  
17 out there - - it's just really - - not into our  
18 space.

19 [Applause]

20 MS. MEGAN MCMAHON: Good evening. My name  
21 is Megan McMahon. I am the founding history  
22 teacher and currently serve as one of the  
23 assistant principals at Urban Assembly School of  
24 Performing Arts. In 2006, I was originally  
25 drawn to UASPA because I want to combine my

1 passion for history, the arts and - - . I was  
2 also drawn to UASPA because it's the only arts  
3 high school that does not require auditions, but  
4 does provide students with a rigorous - -  
5 curriculum as well as - - .

6 We therefore, because there are no  
7 auditions, serve a very, very different  
8 population in school - - . UASPA provides - -  
9 through the arts, and our children deserve a  
10 space they need to thrive academically and - - .  
11 As the assistant principal, I also work very  
12 closely with the program, and I can tell you  
13 that we use every, single classroom and every,  
14 single office every period of every day.  
15 There's no way for us to sustain our mission and  
16 our program with a loss of space, and therefore  
17 I ask that the charter school be located  
18 elsewhere. Thank you.

19 [Applause]

20 MS. DANIELLE JOHNSON: My name is Danielle  
21 Johnson, and I'm - - Urban Assembly School of  
22 Performing Arts. Basically - - allows me - -  
23 school, but - - . The charter school should be  
24 located somewhere else and not be placed - - .  
25 Thank you.

1 [Applause]

2 - - .

3 MS. YULANDA KNIGHTS: Good evening. My name  
4 is Yulanda Knights, and I'm the - - Urban  
5 Assembly School of Performing Arts. When I  
6 first came here, I was - - had here, and - - and  
7 we started - - right across from the main  
8 office, and - - regular classroom with - - just  
9 plain space. Our classes often spill into the  
10 hallway - - students grow. - - kids in the  
11 hallway. They were working - - . We can't go  
12 back to that. Our principal and our community -  
13 - space - - students. We - - students here. -  
14 - grow - - here, which - - and our kids - -  
15 balance. We grow - - students - - and special  
16 needs and - - . Our - - turn our classes into  
17 an art space - - classes to teach art in their  
18 classes - - .

19 Right now, - - teacher has a Spanish class -  
20 - he's not there, - - teach in, and this - - for  
21 two reasons. Number one, our Spanish class  
22 should have a classroom because then - -  
23 Spanish, and everything can - - Spanish so that  
24 students can - - in that space. Then our  
25 theater teachers will be able to - - students in

1 that space.

2 As educators, we are taught to prepare our  
3 students. They are our classes so that they can  
4 - - but when the space is - - and we don't have  
5 the ability to do that, it's a problem. And - -  
6 specifically, when I have a class, students who  
7 don't have a class are there, working, working,  
8 creating. I'm there working and creating so  
9 that I can give that to them. I can't do that  
10 in the hallway - - classroom - - our space.  
11 Thank you.

12 [Applause]

13 MS. LINDSAY RODRIGUEZ: Hi, I'm Lindsay  
14 Rodriguez. I'm a student here at Urban Assembly  
15 School of Performing Arts. I travel all the way  
16 from Brooklyn, New York. I - - an hour and 53  
17 minutes, depending on the train. If the train  
18 wants to act up, it's two hours. So have to get  
19 up by 5:00, on the train by 6:00 to be here at  
20 8:00 on the dot. Two - - . So I'm a transfer  
21 student from - - , which is a - - school, but  
22 I'm - - because - - .

23 So I decided to - - school, which I love  
24 because I love singing and dancing, and I also -  
25 - school, but I never had the experience - -

1 needed. So - - of course I transferred here.  
2 Even though - - I'm still here. - - so I'm  
3 hoping that after - - to get the dance studio,  
4 which I love - - because if I didn't - -  
5 students came into the classroom, teachers were  
6 always - - me and my whole class - - something  
7 we worked hard for. You know, I don't think  
8 it's fair - - students - - because obviously  
9 it's our space, right? I mean, - - your  
10 daughter, if your daughter - - transferred - -  
11 and then - - ? You know?

12 - - because it's me. It's me. It's my  
13 friends. I'm a senior. I shouldn't care. I'm  
14 leaving, right? But then those students that I  
15 - - still that go to school that are getting  
16 affected because if - - you know, - - the  
17 school, - - this is my school. Oh, wait, a  
18 charter school now took after half of the - - .  
19 After I go to college - - . If you go to the  
20 office - - colleges to tell them you want to go  
21 to college. And to have the charter school come  
22 in and take away this office, no. You guys talk  
23 about how we're - - if you - - .

24 [Applause]

25 MS. HARRIS: - - take numbers 11 through 20.

1 Numbers 11 through 20.

2 MS. SADE OGANIMI: My name is Sade - - we  
3 still have - - teachers - - ASA - - teachers are  
4 traveling - - students to get to the classroom  
5 and - - school - - . If the charter school - -  
6 one school that's sitting - - with a noncrowded  
7 classrooms and - - overcrowded classrooms and -  
8 - space with our students - - that's not - - .

9 I get that the charter school brings promise  
10 and potential, but we have promise and  
11 potential, too. - - children have promise and  
12 potential, and taking away 50% of our  
13 classrooms. That's not - - .

14 MS. BREANN SANTIAGO: My name's Breann  
15 Santiago. I just - - and my - - taking away our  
16 programs and - - because we need - - because  
17 there are schools that people - - things like  
18 that, and it's really hard for me to go to  
19 school. I - - it's really hard - - that, and -  
20 - schools have - - education - - . Those - -  
21 and we don't get - - opportunity because we  
22 weren't able, and our parents didn't have that  
23 money - - education. Now you come to this  
24 school, you - - education, but we're still - -  
25 education that they're allowed, and I think

1 that's really great because obviously the  
2 world is not - - great right now - - things like  
3 that, but our parents - - for us to be able to  
4 come to this school, being a public school, and  
5 still get the things that our - - . I love to -  
6 - education - - options, but I also believe that  
7 our art is our expression. That's - - it's just  
8 going to take over who we are as people, and  
9 it's just not going to make it - - opportunity  
10 that - - . Thank you.

11 [Applause]

12 FEMALE VOICE: Good evening. My name is - -  
13 Urban Assembly School of Performing Arts. I  
14 just wanted to say that - - and - - school. And  
15 so when I came into this school, - - other  
16 schools as far as - - four schools in the  
17 building. I was very surprised because I had  
18 worked in - - high school where kids have space.  
19 It's not fair that our kids have to - - . How  
20 can they learn? How can you say that a kid - -  
21 is more important than a kids that goes to  
22 school at Harlem? What do we tell them? That  
23 their world's not fair, that they don't have the  
24 same opportunities?

25 That's a very important - - charter school,

1 and we don't have anything against charter  
2 school, but we feel they should go someplace  
3 else because we are a community here. Our - -  
4 work hard together, and it's very important that  
5 our kids have college - - right now, share - - .  
6 It's very hard for me to tell these kids that  
7 education - - important when they don't have  
8 computers and the same opportunities that the  
9 other schools - - . So if you can help us, - -  
10 but - - on this whole thing.

11 So if you can - - .

12 [Applause]

13 FEMALE VOICE: - - I have two children at  
14 this school, and - - now. My child that went to  
15 - - , okay, graduated. - - shy, but did his  
16 work. Worked very hard, and - - design. I was  
17 impressed because this child was - - . They - -  
18 something on my kid, and he got - - . And my  
19 son now that's at New Tech, he goes in here, and  
20 he works really hard. - - another child that  
21 they work with and - - impressed.

22 I want to say - - in the third grade, he  
23 will give 100,000 children a chance to graduate.  
24 Now, - - succeeded in the eighth grade with  
25 that. Now you all are going to say you want to

1 put another school in this school so these  
2 other children can't make a chance. You're  
3 going to tell me you're going to put a fifth  
4 grade child in a school where they can't even  
5 enjoy - - to the sixth grade, and understand  
6 what it is to be in a middle school.

7 Now you're going to tell me they're going to  
8 take all this - - children and close - - . It  
9 makes me feel very upset, very angry - - . All  
10 I'm saying is give them a chance. You're saying  
11 - - eighth and ninth grade, closing us down, and  
12 it's not that many - - . You're going to close  
13 us down - - eighth and the ninth grade, it's not  
14 fair because you have the education and grades -  
15 - children there. It's not fair to these  
16 children that have been struggling and trying.  
17 We are a poor community. We do not have like  
18 that.

19 So these are the schools that - - to care  
20 for us. This is - - from our children that - -  
21 charter schools. That's unfair to them. I feel  
22 we should have the chance that we're given  
23 ourselves - - . We have new teachers and  
24 principals that stand 100% behind the students.  
25 That's working all hours of the day. - - their

1 own computers at home. I feel we should have  
2 a chance to have nobody pushing us out. We all  
3 have - - .

4 Okay. You all have the fundings - - a new  
5 building and open a new community for  
6 yourselves. It's not fair to our - - . I feel  
7 give us justice. Thank you.

8 [Applause]

9 MS. HARRIS: - - 15 through 24? 15 through  
10 24.

11 MS. JENNIFER GRANT: Hello. My name is  
12 Jennifer Grant. I'm a teacher at the Academy  
13 for Social Action. I was - - for a year and  
14 softball coach - - . I just want to say - -  
15 last night, the space is - - school. Our  
16 special education program has one office that's  
17 occupied by three people. It used to be a  
18 storage closet a few years ago, and also a - -  
19 assessment and to our - - 25% of our students  
20 are special education students. So that's - -  
21 around 300 kids. So we - - .

22 Our softball team started last year, and we  
23 - - because we don't have space in the gym. We  
24 have to share it with the rest of the school  
25 just like all of our other teams and our

1 afterschool program. So we really - - to a  
2 bigger school who is - - .

3 Our basketball team has won their playoff  
4 game - - .

5 [Applause]

6 - - in this building, as you heard from the  
7 performing arts school. We have it, too, at  
8 ASA, and we just ask - - .

9 [Applause]

10 FEMALE VOICE: Good evening. My name is - -  
11 Davis [phonetic]. I am the security at the - -  
12 Institute for New Technologies as well as a  
13 parent of an ex-Success Academy student. My  
14 child - - class, and subsequently told that they  
15 - - . My child - - attended Success Academy has  
16 been a District 5 middle school. There he has  
17 tested - - the other students, - - test. So I -  
18 - as to why - - a Success Academy school. He is  
19 obviously intelligent enough to be successful at  
20 any school, but for whatever reason, Success  
21 Academy could not accommodate my - - .

22 I've been with Tech from the beginning. I -  
23 - and as far as space - - concerned, we were  
24 there when - - . We had to have teachers share  
25 space, share classrooms, and - - teacher moving

1 her classroom around - - , which to me is not  
2 necessarily 100% - - of a successful learning  
3 environment. She has space to - - students to  
4 celebrate the - - of her classroom.

5 - - finally have our own space where  
6 teachers and classrooms are able to successfully  
7 teach - - so to tell us that we would have to  
8 lose 50% of our space - - .

9 [Applause]

10 MR. KENYATTA ROUSE: Good evening. My name  
11 is Kenyatta Rouse. I'm the husband of principal  
12 - - .

13 [Applause]

14 I just want to briefly say that I'm proud of  
15 public education, public school, not a charter  
16 school, but that - - New York City unfortunately  
17 doesn't receive the proper funding from the  
18 State of New York annually - - and everything  
19 else from the federal government and so on. But  
20 I just want to talk about some great things that  
21 Urban Assembly is doing and - - all the schools  
22 in the facility.

23 We are - - the opportunity. This is - - but  
24 in regard to this school, this school is doing  
25 great things. If you take away the space that

1 they fought for--and trust me. I was there.  
2 I heard it from my wife when I was at home, at  
3 dinner, pillow talk, in the morning - - space.  
4 But they do great things, and this school has  
5 numerous partnerships with numerous people, - -  
6 Tony Bennett. Tony Bennett was here - - two  
7 hours, and in regard to the opening of the new  
8 wing - - Marvin Green - - Carnegie Hall, - - .

9 We had - - students at this school, - -  
10 superbowl, - - City Hall, so these kids are  
11 doing great things. If you take this space  
12 away, it's going to take away - - .

13 [Applause]

14 MS. HARRIS: Thank you. - - public comment,  
15 and we move to Q&A period. Remember, there will  
16 be some individual questions, and others that  
17 have been bucketed into categories. Any  
18 question not addressed here tonight will be  
19 answered on the web site. If you have  
20 additional questions at the conclusion of  
21 tonight's proceedings, we ask that you direct  
22 them to us via the telephone number, and I'll  
23 give it to you right now just in case you want  
24 to write it down.

25 (212) 374-3466. That's (212) 374-3466. Or

1 you can email us at D05proposals, with an S,  
2 @schools, with an S, .NYC.gov. That  
3 information's also at - - action, on that - -  
4 over there - - .

5 MR. STERNBERG: Thank you, Melissa. And  
6 thank you everybody, including the spouses in  
7 the room. I would like to introduce you to my  
8 wife, and - - participate in a lot of that.  
9 Does that sound good?

10 MR. ROUSE: - - .

11 MR. STERNBERG: We'll get to that. We'll  
12 get to that. But I appropriate - - sing. - -  
13 dance? - -

14 MR. ROUSE: She's the singer.

15 MR. STERNBERG: Well, which of the students  
16 - - .

17 [Crosstalk]

18 MR. STERNBERG: Thank you, sir. Thank you -  
19 - appreciate it, and I think why don't you give  
20 yourselves a round of applause?

21 [Applause]

22 MR. STERNBERG: There were actually no  
23 questions submitted formally, but let's - -  
24 that. I think there were a lot of questions  
25 asked, and I want to take a minute trying to

1 address those questions, and I will say a few  
2 things as preludes to what I'm going to say.

3 First of all, you're not going to like  
4 everything I have to say, and what I want to do  
5 is present very transparently, honestly, some of  
6 the facts as we see them. Now, as I said  
7 earlier, tonight is not a decision point, that  
8 is true, and you have given us a lot to think  
9 about. I'm speaking to everyone here, and I'm  
10 going to--we're going to address separately the  
11 questions I heard from the performing art  
12 school, New Tech and ASA, but what I want to say  
13 to all of you is that I suspect over the next  
14 few weeks that we will--what I know from our end  
15 is that we want to continue talking to you. I  
16 suspect there are some of you who won't have a  
17 choice because you will be - - priorities as you  
18 were this evening, and respectful and honorable,  
19 so we welcome - - even when we don't agree with  
20 then, necessarily.

21 What I will say about every school  
22 represented in this room is that your success is  
23 our success, and there was history before your  
24 presence in this building that frankly no one in  
25 this building is proud of, and we look to you as

1 an answer to that. I would say in aggregate,  
2 both your voices this evening and your  
3 performance, you are showing us we can do  
4 better. So one of the - - is that we get your  
5 success is our success. We acknowledge that.  
6 What we are proposing here is a disruption, a  
7 disruption to something that's working, and  
8 that's something we're going to have to continue  
9 to look at in the coming weeks.

10 I would also note that a lot of the  
11 arguments that were made this evening were  
12 arguments about the introduction of another  
13 organization on this campus. I suspect they're  
14 the same arguments that were made in 2008/2009  
15 when the department, Chancellor Kline and Deputy  
16 Mayor - - saw fit to create the organizations  
17 that you so - - .

18 So we have a lot to think about. We are  
19 going to, at least for this evening, agree to  
20 disagree on some things, but we are committed to  
21 - - continuing - - on some of the questions,  
22 primarily on space. I think we heard that  
23 across the spectrum of schools, that we want to  
24 make sure this will work.

25 We're hearing from you that it can't work.

1 We have a different view, and we're going to  
2 keep talking about it in advance - - panel.

3 Let me break into the conversation - - my  
4 personal perspective here, which is not so much  
5 as a deputy chancellor for the city in a  
6 position to make very tough decisions, but as a  
7 founding principal. I started a high school in  
8 - - campus two miles north of here at - - road  
9 and Bronx.

10 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

11 MS. HARRIS: Hey, hold up. Hold up. I  
12 agree. I set foot into that building for the  
13 first time in 2004 graduation for - - , and saw  
14 something that I think you'll - - not a school  
15 we can be proud of. Regardless. The school  
16 graduated 240 students of an initial cohort of  
17 1,300 students, and that's a graduation rate of  
18 less than 20% in one of the largest high school  
19 in - - . I was a part of something there that -  
20 - and the principal over here, all the teachers  
21 - - have been a part of here. Taking a space  
22 that had been failing its students for too long  
23 and turning it into something special.

24 What I will say is that I hated the  
25 footprint when I was a principal. I knew it

1 could work, but I viewed my job as principal  
2 of that school to do exactly what you all have  
3 done this evening, which is advocate as  
4 aggressively and respectfully and assertively as  
5 you can for every inch that you can get. And I  
6 fought with my colleagues sometimes, and with  
7 the chancellor when I could get his attention  
8 and with others to get as much space as possible  
9 for my school.

10 I served in that school, I served 432  
11 students across four grades in 18 classrooms,  
12 and at the end of the day, we made it work. We  
13 made it work the way you guys are making it work  
14 here. It was never enough, but what we did on  
15 that campus - - . We took it from 20%  
16 graduation rate and turned it into an 80%  
17 graduation rate, serving the same students.

18 My point here is that I can appreciate the -  
19 - . I appreciate the fact that - - society that  
20 - - a lot of time--and I know how it is because  
21 when you were doing it in this building, I was  
22 trying to do it across the road. Advocating to  
23 deputy chancellors and to the office of - - to  
24 get something done. But I want to address for a  
25 moment very specifically the concerns about

1 space for - - school.

2 You will maintenance your performing arts  
3 space in the main school. There is no plan to  
4 breach your access or your entitlement to that  
5 space. That is not a part of our plan. That is  
6 not represented in the building utilization  
7 plan, and I'm here today to on the record say  
8 that space will be yours as long as I have  
9 anything to say about it. That is a credit to  
10 your efforts that that space is in existence.

11 I will also say that yes, will confirm that  
12 you are scheduled, starting in 2014, to lose  
13 space, but according to our building utilization  
14 plan, you will always remain above footprint,  
15 and again, you will always, with a population of  
16 about 350 students--is that correct? About 350  
17 students, which is - - fewer students than those  
18 served in the Bronx - - , always be at  
19 approximately 18 classrooms with 100 fewer  
20 students than we served at the Bronx Academy.

21 That does not mean that it would not be - -  
22 lose some classrooms. That does not mean that  
23 it would require a rethinking of how you  
24 allocate time for students and how you  
25 appropriate classrooms - - . But we are going

1 to ask you obviously we want to keep talking  
2 about this in the coming weeks and have a  
3 conversation with the principal at the school  
4 about how we think it can work, and understand  
5 the full context of your objection. We are  
6 committed to working with you to - - .

7 I want to address folks in the blue shirts,  
8 at New Technology, who had a conversation with  
9 Richard - - about - - academy in this school,  
10 about a new principal who has stepped in and  
11 rethought the curriculum. I think your UFT  
12 chapter leader - - impact that's having on  
13 teaching and learning, and - - culture at the  
14 school, which we - - . You are scheduled to  
15 lose a considerable amount of space, - - with  
16 current enrollment.

17 What I'll tell you is what I said to the  
18 other school, in a similar situation. We want  
19 to see more students in this school because we  
20 believe in your new principal, we believe in  
21 this school. I think the school administration  
22 will agree that we need to find a way to attract  
23 more students from District 5 and beyond to this  
24 school, and we hope that happens. We're eager  
25 to roll up our sleeves and work with you to make

1 that happen, through the middle school choice  
2 process.

3 If that happens and if over time the school  
4 increases its enrollment, we obviously need to  
5 come back and work with you and all the schools  
6 on this campus to rethink the allocation space,  
7 and that's what we're doing. The space, like  
8 the funding, will follow the student, and if and  
9 when, as we hope, this school attracts more  
10 students, we--and this is very consistent with  
11 what the - - has stated in the building  
12 utilization plan, that we have an obligation to  
13 come back and work with you to make sure that  
14 there's adequate spaces for our students to - -  
15 .

16 So we wish you every success and look  
17 forward to working with you in recruiting  
18 students and in making sure - - space - - .

19 I want to close by addressing folks from the  
20 Academy for Social Action, and I think - -  
21 softball coach, congratulations on the  
22 basketball - - , by the way. Good job. I think  
23 the last thing we heard this evening from your  
24 coach, consistent with a lot of the comments we  
25 heard from teachers and students and parents and

1 administrators from the Academy for Social  
2 Action is - - . So this will not--this will not  
3 be - - in this room, but in all honesty, our  
4 decision to truncate the school is a decision  
5 that - - that. It is a decision that allows  
6 this school and encourages this school to focus  
7 on building on its strengths.

8         There was a comment about how many students  
9 participate in middle school at the school wind  
10 up choosing to go to other schools through the  
11 middle school choice process. What we want to  
12 do--at the same time, I'm going to echo some of  
13 my comments up front. When you look at the high  
14 school data, we see something happening in ninth  
15 and tenth grade, when you look at - - , when you  
16 look at early Regent's pass rates, something  
17 that we do not see in the middle school - - .  
18 So what we want is for this school to continue  
19 doing what it's doing in these grades and for  
20 that to grow across the high school grades and  
21 for you to win lots of basketball games and lots  
22 of softball games and build on the strengths - -  
23 .

24         That is our hope for this school. That is  
25 not a popular position to take. I acknowledge

1 it is not a judgment on the hardworking  
2 students and parents and teachers and  
3 administrators who work every day to make this  
4 school a success. This is - - our best - - of  
5 the way - - .

6 So I appreciate it has been a very painful  
7 evening for - - to have. I look forward to  
8 those. So thank you - - .

9 FEMALE VOICE: May I ask a question? - -  
10 actually saying - - bringing to the table to  
11 these - - besides this school coming in?

12 FEMALE VOICE: She wants to know you're  
13 bringing to the table other than - - school  
14 coming in here and occupying space?

15 MR. STERNBERG: Why don't we talk after the  
16 hearing - - .

17 MS. HARRIS: We have heard many comments  
18 here this evening, and we appreciate the  
19 contributions to the hearing. The information  
20 that you've shared with us and you've shared  
21 with the panel on Education Policy, - - on March  
22 11, 2013 at the Brooklyn Technical High School  
23 to vote on this proposal.

24 Public comment can be submitted via email or  
25 telephone until March 10. You may submit

1 feedback via the telephone number that I  
2 provided to you earlier, which is also on that  
3 fact sheet, as well as submit it via email I  
4 also provided to you earlier. We thank you all  
5 for coming. This joint public hearing is  
6 officially adjourned.

7 [END RECORDING]

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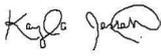
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature 

Date March 1, 2013\_\_\_\_\_