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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING
Automotive High School - 3/28/12**

1 [START 290_176]

2 MS. OLIVIA ELLIS: Good evening. We'll
3 begin in about two minutes. Good evening. My
4 name is Olivia Ellis and I will be acting as
5 moderator-facilitator for this joint public
6 hearing. This is a joint public hearing of the
7 Department of Education Community Education
8 Council and the School Leadership Team to
9 discuss the proposed closure of Automotive High
10 School, 14K610 and opening and co-location of
11 new high school, 14K434 with Frances Perkins
12 Academy, 14k632 in Building K-610 beginning in
13 2012 to 2013. Tonight's proceedings will be
14 recorded and transcribed. Before we begin the
15 hearing, we ask that anyone who wishes to speak
16 during the public comment portion of the
17 evening, sign up at the table in the back. Sign
18 up will end at 6:30. If you have a question
19 that you want to be addressed during the Q&A
20 portion of the agenda, please write the question
21 on the index cards provided at the back and
22 submit them to the volunteer by the table. Only
23 people who have signed up to speak will be able
24 to participate in the public comment. All panel
25 participants were asked to be here no later than

1 5:30 p.m. We invited the CEC 14 and we will
2 accommodate them if they arrive. Now that we've
3 started, if a panel participate arrives late, he
4 will be given time to speak at the first
5 opportune moment. We want to be respectful of
6 everyone's time. There may be elected officials
7 who arrive at different times throughout the
8 evening. If they wish to speak, we will do our
9 best to accommodate them at the first opportune
10 moment. Those who are here at the start of
11 public comment segment will be asked to speak
12 first. Please look at the agenda. The format
13 will include a presentation of the proposal and
14 presentations by hearing participants followed
15 by public comment speakers, should have already
16 signed up at the sign and the table in the
17 lobby. Public comment can be no longer than two
18 minutes each. The time will be strictly
19 followed and speakers will be informed when
20 their designated time has ended. There will be
21 a question and answer period. Members of the
22 audience, if you had a question, each of you had
23 to write your question on a post card that was
24 supplied at the sign-in table when you arrived
25 this evening. When the public comments are

1 taking place, staff members will organize the
2 questions into categories and get them ready for
3 the Q&A period. Some questions will be asked
4 directly and others will be batched under
5 headings in order to avoid repetitiveness. Even
6 though all individual questions will not be
7 addressed in the forum tonight, the answers will
8 be on the website prior to the panel meeting.
9 If at the end of the hearing, you still have
10 questions, we encourage you to direct them to us
11 by calling the number on the bottom of the fact
12 sheet or sending them to us via e-mail to the
13 address provided on the fact sheets. I would
14 now like to introduce the panel which has been
15 assembled for this evening's joint public
16 hearing. Deputy Chancellor David Weiner, the
17 principal of Automotive, Caterina Lafergola--
18 sorry if I mispronounced your name--a
19 representative SLT parent and the PTA president
20 Alisa Dialo [phonetic] and the SLT chairperson
21 or president, Tiffany Jawkins [phonetic]. I
22 will now turn the program over to Deputy
23 Chancellor David Weiner who will present the
24 proposal.

25 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR DAVID WEINER: Thank you,

1 Olivia and thank you to everyone who came
2 tonight. Thank you for being here this evening.
3 This joint public hearing was convened to
4 discuss the proposed closure and replacement of
5 Automotive High School. Before I present the
6 proposal, I'd like to say a few words about why
7 we're here today. By closing Automotive and
8 replacing it with a new school, we are seeking
9 to rapidly create a high quality school
10 environment that children need to prepare them
11 for success in college, career and life. The
12 new school will build on the strongest elements
13 of Automotive. It will also incorporate new
14 elements in order to create a rigorous culture
15 for teaching and learning. These new elements
16 will include things such as a new small learning
17 community that will be aligned to the most
18 successful Automotive current CTE programs, a
19 new Saturday academy to provide additional
20 support for struggling students and a new
21 approach to professional development for
22 teachers. Students will have access to higher
23 quality educational option while they continue
24 to attend school in this very building. We
25 believe this process will ensure that all

1 students are set on a path to accomplishment.
2 The decision to close the school is a difficult
3 one and we do not take these decisions lightly
4 but when a school isn't improving quick enough,
5 we have to take action to ensure that the
6 students don't fall even further behind and that
7 future students will have a school that can
8 support their success and achievement. I want
9 to acknowledge that there are families and
10 students who feel that they have been well
11 served at the school environment. These are our
12 success stories of Automotive and we honor these
13 success stories. We also need to consider the
14 many students who have not experienced the same
15 success and consider alternatives to help
16 improve the environment for all students.
17 Automotive High School is located at 50 Bedford
18 Avenue in Community School District 14 in
19 Brooklyn. It currently serves students in
20 grades nine through twelve. Automotive High
21 School is co-located with Frances Perkins
22 Academy, a high school in Building K-610. A co-
23 location means that two or more school
24 organizations are located in the same building
25 and may share large common spaces. On December

1 27, 2012, the New York City Department of
2 Education published a proposal to close
3 Automotive High School and open a new high
4 school, 14K434. By closing Automotive and
5 opening a new school, the Department of
6 Education was seeking to improve student
7 learning from the levels currently seen at
8 Automotive. As I mentioned before, Automotive
9 has some very positive elements that we believe
10 are worth preserving in this new school. For
11 example, Automotive is having success in
12 graduating students in self-contained special
13 education classes. Twenty-nine percent of such
14 students graduate in four years, placing the
15 school in the top 33percent of schools city-wide
16 on this measure.

17 [light applause]

18 The DOE will seek to continue Automotive
19 High School's efforts to support these students
20 in the new school while implementing new
21 supports to other student populations that have
22 continued to struggled at Automotive. Based on
23 the most recent data and feedback from members
24 of the New York City Board of Regents that the
25 pace of change in New York City's persistently

1 lowest achieving schools was not quick enough
2 to meet student need, the DOE concluded that
3 Automotive High School should be closed and
4 reopened with a new school with new supports and
5 programs. The structural and programmatic
6 elements that are part of this proposal and the
7 ability to quickly screen and hire staff who are
8 able to implement those enhancements, will allow
9 the school to address its core problems that have
10 led to its poor performance for some students.
11 Here's some examples of why the school is not
12 doing as well. Automotive was designated a
13 persistently low achieving school by the New
14 York State Board of Regents during the 2009,
15 2010 school year and again in the 2010-2011
16 school year because Automotive have remained
17 consistently low for over a decade. In 2011,
18 the school's four year graduation rate,
19 including August graduates, was 54 per cent,
20 well below the city-wide graduation rate of 65
21 percent and putting the school in the bottom 14
22 percent of schools city wide.

23 If Regent's diplomas, which is a special
24 type of diploma that students can receive alone
25 counted towards graduation as they will be for

1 most students beginning next year, the four-
2 year graduation rate at Automotive would drop to
3 31 percent putting the school in the bottom six
4 percent of schools city wide.

5 Unfortunately, Automotive is not adequately
6 preparing students for the rigors of college and
7 career. Only one percent of the students in the
8 graduating class last year were prepared for
9 college after four years in high school, well
10 below the city wide rate. Safety issues have
11 also been a concern at the school in recent
12 years. On the recent school survey from last
13 year, only 59 percent of students reported
14 feeling safe in hallways, bathrooms and lockers.
15 So, four out of every ten students felt that
16 they were not safe at school. This response
17 puts the school in the bottom two percent of
18 high schools city-wide. In addition, only four
19 out of ten teachers reported that discipline and
20 order were maintained at the school. Based on a
21 comprehensive review of the school and evidence
22 that additional supports were not getting the
23 job done, the DOE believe that closing
24 Automotive and opening 14K434 will address
25 Automotive's long standing performance struggles

1 and allow a new school to develop that will
2 better serve students while they continue to
3 attend school in the same building. This
4 process will hopefully ensure that all students
5 are on a path for success and accomplishment in
6 school and in the future. In conjunction with
7 this proposal and as a way to support additional
8 school improvement, the DOE submitted an
9 application to the State Department of Education
10 to implement the turnaround model at the school.
11 If approved, this would make the new school
12 eligible for \$950,000 additional dollars in
13 supplemental federal funds. Before we hear from
14 other members of the panel and move to public
15 comment, I would briefly like to discuss the
16 impact of this proposal on current Automotive
17 students and families if it is approved. All
18 current Automotive students will have a
19 guaranteed seat in the new school. This
20 includes all ninth, tenth, eleventh and any
21 twelfth graders who do not graduate beginning at
22 the next school year. All incoming ninth grade
23 students who have applied to Automotive, and are
24 matched to it through the high school admission
25 process will automatically be enrolled in the

1 new school.

2 The DOE does not anticipate that the
3 proposed closure and replacement of Automotive
4 will impact the co-location of Frances Perkins
5 Academy in Building K610. Thank you. We look
6 forward to hearing your comments and your
7 questions.

8 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. The next speaker
9 will be from the School Leadership Team, Alicia
10 Dialo [phonetic] who is the SLT parent and a PTA
11 president.

12 MS. ALICIA DIALO: Good evening, everyone.
13 I sit here today as a parent because I was a
14 parent first before I became SLT and a PTA
15 president. I'm upset that the DOE feels that
16 Automotive is not doing the best that they can
17 do for our children. I can't speak for
18 everyone, I can only speak for myself because we
19 all--sorry--because we all come from different
20 roads but we all have to help each other to get
21 through the long road and the struggles that
22 come along. My son is in the 11th grade. When
23 he first came to this school, he was only about
24 playing football but as he got older and knew
25 what it was about with school, he knew that

1 there was more to being an NFL player. I tell
2 him, you can have all the dreams that you want
3 to have but first of all, you have to have your
4 education. You have to have something to stand
5 back on and with all the teachers that I see in
6 the audience today, as well as the principal and
7 Ms. Jawkins [phonetic] to my left, all of you
8 have been a great deal of support to me and he
9 has one more--excuse me, I'm nervous--I didn't
10 want to speak but I just want to let everyone
11 know that this is my passion. If I didn't have
12 this passion, I would not be sitting up here
13 today. The DOE, and I work for the DOE, and I
14 feel by changing the name of the school or
15 changing the bubble number is not going to help
16 our children because what I see as the DOE, you
17 only see our children as numbers and statistics.
18 And they're not numbers, they're human beings.
19 A lot of the kids, they come to school because
20 they feel that the school is their family. They
21 don't get the love, the support and the care
22 what they need at home. So, this is their
23 outlet here at school. We are their families
24 and by changing the name of the school and their
25 not getting what they need is not going to

1 change the problem. We have to let DOE know
2 that this is a school that has a very high
3 reputation and I see everyone in here tonight is
4 here because I know if we all put our heads
5 together and clinch together like a chain we can
6 make our children to believe that they can go
7 above and beyond and their expectations. Thank
8 you.

9 [applause]

10 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. Our next speaker
11 will be Tiffany Judkins [phonetic], the SLT
12 chairperson. Thank you.

13 MISS TIFFANY JUDKINS: Hi, everybody. Thank
14 you, Ms. Dialo for speaking. I, too, am about
15 to speak but the examples I'm going to use I
16 just want to be clear are from my own
17 experience--

18 [background noise]

19 The examples are from my own experience
20 because that's what I know best and I'm only
21 going to use them as examples to just illustrate
22 a couple of points. Sorry, I just want to put
23 that out there first. I know that what I'm
24 about to say doesn't necessarily apply to
25 everyone but it's only for the purpose of

1 bringing a few points to light. So, I came to
2 Automotive High School in one of those years
3 that you mentioned. This is my second year here
4 so, I was brought in under the transformation
5 program as one of the master teachers from
6 another building in the DOE. At that time, the
7 program was intended to be for a period of three
8 years and, of course, we're only about a year
9 and a half right now and so, this process is
10 somewhat shocking to me personally because this
11 was never, of course, anticipated that this is
12 where the schools would end up but the second
13 page of the Education Impact Statement, that I
14 know you were reading some components from
15 earlier, mentions on the second page that, "the
16 new school will put in place a process aimed at
17 hiring the best possible staff thus, immediately
18 improving teacher quality, and by extension,
19 improving the quality of learning. So, I just
20 have two things to say about that. The first
21 is, that seemed to be a recurring theme
22 throughout the impact statement, that hiring new
23 staff will immediately, and almost magically,
24 improve the quality of the teaching and learning
25 here. From my experience, I just want to say

1 that I didn't see a lot of evidence here of
2 how other, what I would consider, more pressing
3 and urgent needs would be addressed--things that
4 I actually think have an even stronger impact on
5 teaching and learning such as lack of
6 organization, rampant miscommunication in the
7 building and a lack of clarity of purpose about
8 what our short and long-term goals are. This is
9 an ongoing concern of mine and all three of
10 those things I just mentioned have such an
11 enormous impact on a teachers daily work, that
12 it makes it all the more difficult, whatever
13 staff you're working with, to be able to do what
14 we could be doing better. If there is nothing
15 to address those things in this statement, I'm
16 not sure how impactful any other reforms could
17 be. I've worked in several school buildings and
18 I've seen a lot of the things that are mentioned
19 here done well and I've seen a lot of them not
20 work. Small learning communities, breakfast in
21 the classroom, these are just a couple of
22 examples but my concern is always about the
23 processes that go along with those components.
24 So, it's not just about the content of what is
25 put in place, it's also about how those things

1 are implemented. Everything's in the details.
2 So, these sounded to me like a lot of really
3 strong ideas, a lot of good plans in place but
4 given what I have experienced here on a daily
5 basis, my real concern is that those other
6 things haven't really been accounted for and I'm
7 not sure if the DOE is even aware that those
8 things exist, if they just think that the
9 teaching and learning is really what suffers
10 when a lot of other things are going on that
11 impact teaching and learning as well. The
12 second thing I'll say is that I find a lot of
13 the initiatives that are proposed here somewhat-
14 -I do find some of them somewhat misguided,
15 highly vague and even somewhat contradictory of
16 what I had thought was the DOE's purposes in
17 these buildings to begin with. As I said two
18 years ago, the DOE established a program
19 intended to attract and retain strong teachers
20 who had shown evidence of supporting teacher
21 growth and learning in other buildings with
22 similar populations and similar challenges. The
23 promise to those teachers who were giving up
24 their positions in their current buildings was
25 that this would be an opportunity to really

1 impact struggling communities, to help their
2 colleagues become better at what they do and
3 also a promise of a career ladder, an
4 opportunity for teachers to something more with
5 the skills that they had been developing to
6 have, to be able to share those on a broader
7 scale. So, being one of those teachers who no
8 longer has a career ladder but in fact, is going
9 to get exceded in a few months, I'm quite
10 disappointed. I'm quite disappointed in the DOE
11 and its aggressive efforts to place those that
12 they actually sought, those that they hand-
13 picked, those that they filtered and interviewed
14 numerous times and then placed in these schools.
15 They asked them to leave their buildings and
16 come to these places and there's no net for
17 anyone. I'm not asking for security and I'm not
18 asking to be like, weeded out, I'm only using
19 this as an example of how the DOE's own policies
20 which claim to be or about to be used in the new
21 school--we're going to bring in the best talent,
22 we're going to hire the best possible staff, new
23 talent designed to better meet student needs--
24 all the things that were promised two years ago
25 are in this document now. And I'm not sure how

1 that's going to look any different than it did
2 this time around. I'm disappointed that the DOE
3 has allowed that to happen first of all and now
4 is using a similar approach where I'm not sure
5 if that's trustworthy anymore. And from the
6 largest school district in the country that has,
7 I'm sure many resources and very smart people at
8 it's disposal, to be honest, I expected more, I
9 expected better, I expected there to be a
10 stronger proposal, something that the community
11 could rely on that would be different, that
12 could be trustworthy and that would bring about
13 the reforms that were actually promised. That's
14 all.

15 [applause]

16 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. We have now
17 concluded the formal presentations. As
18 mentioned before, the Community Education
19 Council was invited. If they arrive, they will
20 be given an opportunity to speak. Right now, I
21 ask the following numbers to please come down to
22 the microphone and please state your name and
23 you will speak at that time. Numbers one, two,
24 three and four. You are reminded that the
25 public comment must be limited to two minutes.

1 Time will be kept and we will signal you when
2 30 seconds remaining and when your time is up.

3 MR. DANNY DELGADO: My name is Danny Delgado
4 and I'm a former graduate of Automotive High
5 School. I graduated back in 2001 and earlier
6 when you stated how Automotive doesn't really
7 prepare students for college or career, I think
8 that's a pretty false statement because after
9 graduating Automotive High School, I went on to
10 get a full time job with the New York City
11 Transit Authority which I've been at now for 11
12 years and I would not have been there if not for
13 what I learned here at Automotive. Teachers
14 like Mr. Rothenberg [phonetic], Mr. Carbalo
15 [phonetic], Mr. Casho [phonetic], you know, gave
16 us the tools we needed to succeed not only here
17 in school but also outside in the real world
18 dealing with everyday problems, not just at work
19 or at home but you know, things like, in your
20 own head when you have doubts in yourself to
21 like, get rid of those doubts, to just, you
22 know, stand strong and keep doing what you're
23 doing to succeed in life. And when I heard that
24 they were looking to close the school and put
25 something else in here it kind of hurt my

1 feelings because I wouldn't have what I have
2 if not for this school. I'm also a second
3 generation graduate of the school. My dad
4 graduated here in 1970 which pretty much
5 motivated me to want to come here and learn more
6 about the automotive industry which he started
7 teaching me about on his own and that's just
8 pretty much all I got to say, you know, that I'm
9 a big supporter of this school and I really hope
10 you change our mind about changing the school
11 name and what you want to do with it.

12 {applause}.

13 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

14 MR. WALTER LYNCH: My name is Walter Lynch.
15 I'm an alumni here too, class of '67. I'm one
16 of five in my family that graduated this school.
17 I just retired from the New York City Department
18 of Sanitation as one of their lead auto
19 machinists. If it was not for this school, I
20 would not have gotten that trade. All my
21 relatives that went to this school all wound up
22 in the trade. We've made a very good living
23 from this trade. To close this school would be
24 a disgrace to the city of New York after the
25 city of Chicago came here and looked at this

1 school to model their program after this
2 school.

3 This school has had a lot of alumni, none of
4 which are famous except for Benjamin Ward who
5 was the police commissioner of the city of New
6 York but my job, or all the city mechanics, most
7 of them are graduates of only of three programs
8 in the city of New York, this being the major
9 one. And to see this school go by the wayside
10 after all these years when DOE has not put the
11 resources into this school that should have been
12 put into this school in all these years. I
13 would be one to say that the only reason you're
14 reason you're closing this school is to get the
15 900 million dollars to try and put--to build a
16 new school. That's it. That's Bloomberg's
17 thing--money.

18 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

19 MR. RICHARD GINERANTZ: My name is Richard
20 Ginerantz, a class of 2000 alumni of Automotive
21 High School and I agree with him. This school
22 has been a backbone of my life. I walked out of
23 this school into a career where I make \$80,000 a
24 year. It prepared me for life. I've gone to
25 college, night classes. I've gone to work every

1 day. Nobody can take what I learned here away
2 from me. This place was a family to me. When I
3 walked in these walls as a freshmen, I was
4 scared. When I walked out those doors as a
5 senior, I had everybody here, staff, even
6 teachers that didn't like me, behind me, backing
7 me, telling me, go ahead, live your life, be a
8 man. They taught me how to grow up, they
9 watched me grow up and they are still my family.
10 That's why I'm here today. A family calls, you
11 show up. I don't like standing up talking to
12 anybody like this but guess what? I know that
13 if I don't, I don't know who will. This school-
14 -I agree with the man that just spoke, if you're
15 closing the school and changing the name just
16 for the sake of changing a name to get money,
17 give them the money they need. I'm standing in
18 this auditorium for the first time in 12 years
19 today and I'm looking at these walls. They need
20 a paint job. Maybe if you brought something
21 into this school, help entice the students to
22 learn a little bit more, you'll get better
23 numbers than you're looking for but if you're
24 just looking to close the school so you can get
25 a grant for some money, then it's a waste of

1 time. That's all I have to say.

2 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

3 MR. JOE PUNTINO: How ya doing? My name is
4 Joe Puntino, I'm a teacher here. It's my fourth
5 year here. Just have a couple of quick
6 comments. First of all, Ms. Dialo, I agree with
7 you and this is something the Department of
8 Education maybe they might learn it one day.
9 Education, Mr. Deputy Chancellor, is a
10 qualitative discipline, not a quantative. I can
11 manipulate numbers with the best of them and I
12 have some numbers to manipulate.

13 [Applause].

14 MR. JOE PUNTINO: The year before I got
15 here, 2007, from my understanding Automotive
16 only graduated 38 students. Since 2008, we have
17 graduated 130 and upward, okay? That's
18 progress. I'm not the only one who thinks
19 that's progress. When Meryl Tish [phonetic]
20 came here and gave her famous comment--called us
21 a warehouse--the next day, a reporter asked
22 Mayor Bloomberg what he thought about her
23 comments. I quote and this is from CBS news.
24 Quote, " I don't think there's any school system
25 in the country that has taken a school like the

1 one she talked about", meaning Automotive, "and
2 made as many improvements as we have.", Mayor
3 Bloomberg. So, Mayor Bloomberg, why you closing
4 us? Your own words, we've made improvements.
5 My data shows we've made improvements. Also,
6 you said one of the major reasons why you're
7 closing us is safety. By getting rid of me or
8 any of my colleagues, how's that going to make
9 the school safer 'cause that's the only thing
10 that's changing is getting rid of teachers. I
11 mean, let's call it what it is: this is a
12 political agenda, totally political. It's
13 against the UFT and the students are the pawns.
14 Thank you.

15 [Applause].

16 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. Numbers five, six,
17 seven, eight, nine.

18 MR. MIKE SILL: Thank you but I'm going to
19 talk until I'm finished. My name's Mike Sill
20 and I'm an English teacher. I don't care what
21 you say, I'm a good one.

22 [Applause].

23 I'm going to have to address my comments to
24 you. I didn't realize that this meeting was
25 only important enough to send one little soldier

1 to sit up there. I thought maybe there'd be a
2 few more. Look, we're here today, by and large,
3 because of our four-year graduation rate. Now,
4 you're going to tell me that we got put on this
5 list because of one matrix by and large and
6 that's what you're going to use to close the
7 school? Now, I don't expect much from the PEP.
8 They're a bunch of sycophants, rubber stamp
9 sycophants but when it comes to you, you're at
10 least nominally an educator. I expect you to
11 have a better, more nuanced idea of what
12 education means. And you're still going to use
13 a blunt instrument like a four year graduation
14 rate to decide which schools in this city close?
15 That's absurd. And for you to sit here and say
16 there's a reason why we should be in turn around
17 model as opposed to restart that has something
18 to do with what goes on in these walls, is
19 absurd, is ridiculous. It's because you guys
20 couldn't figure out what to do with the
21 evaluation system. No other reason. If you
22 can't admit that there are better matrix for
23 evaluating school achievement, then why did you
24 come up with the report card in the first place?
25 That's not a rhetorical question. Like I said,

1 take the mic from me. We've had three
2 principals in four years. None of the
3 replacements had been a principal for one day
4 before they walked in here. Not one day. We've
5 had 15 assistant principals in that same time.
6 Today, we have only one administrator in this
7 school who's been here longer than a year and a
8 half and now you want to change the teachers.
9 Let me ask you this: if consistent leadership
10 at the top is not important, then why did your
11 boss, the mayor, circumvent the rules of this
12 great city in order to get a third term?

13 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

14 MR. SILL: Take the mic from me, take the
15 mic from me. No, I'm joking. I'm not finished.
16 No. Now, it's not only the people, it's the
17 plan. Two years ago, we were in turnaround.
18 Last year, we were in restart. This year--

19 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

20 MR. SILL: I'll tell you who has been here.
21 I'll tell you who's been here. - - public
22 schools. They've been here for four years
23 taking our money and nobody's sending them away.

24 MALE VOICE: I'm going to ask you nicely
25 first. I'm going to ask you nicely first.

1 MR. SILL: I'm almost finished. Your
2 methods are simply not sustainable. You're
3 going to replace us with a bunch of neophytes?
4 And how is that going to help when they have
5 nobody that can guide them? I was a teaching
6 fellow myself. Let me tell you, that's a bunch
7 of crap.

8 MALE VOICE: Sir?

9 MR. SILL: I heard you man, I heard you.

10 MALE VOICE: You're not hearing me. Your
11 time is up.

12 MR. SILL: I heard you. I'm disagreeing
13 with you. I'm not being disrespectful. I'm
14 telling you I heard him. My name's not B, by
15 the way.

16 MALE VOICE: - - .

17 MR. SILL: Okay, you asked me nice and I
18 told nicely no.

19 MALE VOICE: Sir, we're saying your time is
20 up.

21 MR. SILL: All right? So, it's not about
22 the kids. Let's call it what it is. This is a
23 land grab, this is what you're doing. We're in
24 Williamsburg, you know it and it's about time
25 that people at the UFT stood with the other

1 educators of this city, the UFT, the CSA and
2 everybody who's saying this is wrong.

3 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

4 MR. DIYA SARSOOR: My name is Diya Sarsour.
5 I graduated here in 2004 and I had something
6 written down. I was going to read it off a
7 piece of paper and then after listening to what
8 you said, I had other things to say. You spoke
9 about numbers like we're in the bottom 14
10 percent of how many kids we graduate or whatever
11 and if we counted only the regents diplomas we'd
12 be in the bottom seven percent and I think it's
13 kind of obvious why. If you looked at those
14 bottom 14 percent of class schools and bottom
15 seven percent of class of schools, look at what
16 kind of kids go to that school. Look at the
17 neighborhoods they come from. I'm a living,
18 breathing example of a success story of this
19 school. I'm not a mechanic, I'm not an
20 engineer. I'm a student at city college and I'm
21 striving to become a teacher because the
22 teachers here taught me everything I know.
23 Teachers who didn't teach me taught me
24 everything I know. You couldn't walk down the
25 halls without getting a lesson in life and I

1 just think it's a little unfair and I don't
2 know, a little extra to close a school and
3 change the name and put new teachers in here
4 because the kids here only know these teachers.
5 The kids here only know us as a family, us as
6 friends and it isn't fair to say that I'm going
7 to bring in new teachers because the teachers
8 here are fine, the teachers here are amazing.
9 Teaching a kid who can't read in the ninth grade
10 to read at a high school level when he's in the
11 12th grade level is better than what a lot of
12 teachers do at Brooklyn Technology, Stuyvesant,
13 schools you guys would never, ever think about
14 closing. And I just think that it's a little,
15 it's a little sad that they'd send you here to
16 speak of those numbers and wouldn't research the
17 numbers I just spoke about. Thank you.

18 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

19 MR. JAVON COSME: Hi, my name's Javon Cosme,
20 class of 2011 and I graduated last year. If you
21 want to talk about numbers, statistics,
22 whatever, graduation rates, I am a success
23 story. I just graduated last year. I know what
24 it's like to be here. I probably know more than
25 a lot of people here because I've been here for

1 the most recent years, you know. I know what
2 it's like. You can't say they don't prepare us
3 for college. I was here. We had a music
4 teacher. She wasn't getting paid to help us out
5 for college but she stood there. She actually
6 stood there on the weekends, on the week nights
7 to help us prepare for college, prepare for the
8 SAT's. I'm here, I am here. I don't do
9 automotive technician stuff any more. Right
10 now, my major is aviation management. But this
11 school, it gave me the tools to get up to that
12 point. I wouldn't be able to think of that
13 stuff four years ago. The things I did, at the
14 co-op program I did, I worked for NYPD all last
15 year. I may not still be into that program but
16 networking, they taught me this. I still know
17 those people, they're still behind me. These
18 teachers are my family. I've seen them more
19 than I've seen my own family. The time I spend
20 here, it adds up--it adds up. I've spent more
21 time here than I have at home and they're still
22 behind me. They're still asking me, are you
23 still doing good in college, man? What are you
24 into now? They're here, they're here for us.
25 You can't--give us the money. To spend all the

1 money to close the school down, instead of
2 giving it to them, that sounds like an exercise
3 in counter productivity to me. That's all.

4 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

5 MR. ALFREDO PALANCO: My name is Alfredo
6 Palanco. I graduated in '04. I currently work
7 in New York City Transit and a car inspector;
8 good pension, everything, blessed to work there.
9 Before that, I work in Westchester BMW,
10 Tarrytown Road. If it wasn't for what I learned
11 here, not possible. Toyota program, Castro,
12 Caballo--all those programs put me where I'm at
13 now. It was not possible without this. A big
14 mistake changing school's name. That's pretty
15 much all I got to say.

16 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

17 MR. JOSHUA SMALLS: Hello, my name is Joshua
18 Smalls, I'm a graduate of 2010 and I'm currently
19 an Assistant Football Coach here at the school
20 and a mentor to a lot of the young people that
21 currently attend the school. I chose to come
22 back to this school because I felt that it's
23 going somewhere, that the kids here should not
24 be judged by just a number, by just a graduation
25 rate or something like that but by more than

1 that because nobody at the DOE understands
2 where these kids come from. You guys come from
3 all these different places, nice houses, nice
4 things like that. These kids don't come--they
5 come from nowhere. They come to school as a
6 place of--as a haven. That's what they want
7 school to be and in the past four years where
8 there's been three principals, it has not been
9 that. I feel that the best way for a kid to
10 learn and a best way for a kid to learn is not
11 just by what he puts on the test or by what he
12 puts in his notepad anything like that but it's
13 what they go home with because they go home--
14 they come to school with nothing and some of the
15 kids that go to the school, they leave here with
16 much more than just a grade. And a lot of the
17 teachers that are currently at this school are
18 the reason because of that. And I just want to
19 say that. Secondly, to continue that point,
20 there was a mentor here who I knew that I found
21 out recently that's not going to be at the
22 school anymore and I feel that it's a complete
23 abomination that this man is not at this school
24 anymore or will not be teaching at this school
25 anymore because he wasn't given a position that

1 he rightfully deserved. The things that the
2 teachers teach these students will not only take
3 them places now and immediately after high
4 school but they're going to learn a bunch of
5 life lessons ten years down the line from now
6 because of the people that are at the school and
7 there should be no reason at all for somebody
8 who works 12 hour days, comes here five o'clock
9 in the morning and leaves at five o'clock at
10 night, there should be no reason why people like
11 that should be forced out of here because of
12 stupid reasons. Thank you.

13 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. Ten, 11, 12, 13, 14.

14 MR. JEREMY ZAMURA: Good evening. My name's
15 Jeremy Zamura. I graduated here in 2008. What
16 you see behind me are faculties and my family.
17 The students, who are alumni's, those are my
18 brothers, those are my sisters, okay. Second of
19 all, when I graduated here, when I left through
20 this aisle here, the Board of Education decided
21 to make me a student teacher. Out of this high
22 school. And many of our teachers were student
23 teachers. SVA, Success Via Apprenticeship as
24 you may know it. I'm sorry that you got all
25 these rude comments toward you but if you think

1 we're going to let you come into our house and
2 disrespect us, you're wrong, okay. The problem
3 is very simple. Here in the automotive trade,
4 we have a saying. It's called KISS. Keep It
5 Simple, Students. I don't know which ever one
6 you want to put it, the last S. We have too
7 many leadership changes. Like Mr. Sill said,
8 last four years, 15 department AP's. In the
9 four years, three different principals. How do
10 you expect teachers to be good and how do you
11 judge teachers when the leadership is constantly
12 changing? You can't. Second of all, this is a
13 specialty high school, automotive high school.
14 This school was built to teach automotive, not
15 the other way around. Why don't we have an
16 entry exam for our students like other schools?
17 Brooklyn Tech, Stuyvesant? They used to--not
18 any more. And I guarantee you if you looked,
19 when they stopped, that's when we started
20 letting everybody in. Or as they like to call
21 it, 'warehousing students" and getting away with
22 it. How do you expect teachers to succeed when
23 you give them the city's neediest students and
24 you put them in one household without the
25 resources?

1 [Applause]

2 You can close this school down and do
3 whatever you want but the truth of the matter
4 is, this will always be Automotive High School.
5 Those shop departments will always be there.
6 You don't see them 'cause you haven't been here.
7 We have. And one last thing, and this comes
8 from my brothers and sisters, is a question that
9 you should answer yourself truly and honestly,
10 how can you sit there and marginalize the
11 marginalized?

12 [Applause]

13 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

14 MR. BILL MEEHAN: Good evening. My name is
15 Bill Meehan, I'm a field director for the
16 Council of Schools, Supervisors and
17 Administrators. The Bloomberg DOE's latest
18 attempt to close 33 schools, which were already
19 in the process of a three-year reform program,
20 is a political maneuver that is not rooted in
21 sound educational practices. Rather, it began
22 as a ploy designed to avoid negotiations with
23 CSA and the UFT over new principal and teacher
24 evaluation systems. The motivation behind that
25 ploy was to allow and follow a turn around

1 model, a model that does not require principal
2 and teacher evaluations and that allows the city
3 to close and immediately reopen schools under
4 new names. Will there be anything else new
5 about them? The answer is yes. Fifty percent
6 of the teachers would be new while the others
7 are placed in excess and assigned elsewhere.
8 There is nothing educationally sound about this
9 intervention plan. It is being introduced for
10 cynical reasons, not to help children. It will
11 not contribute to the development of sound
12 principal and teacher evaluation systems.
13 Furthermore, in removing half the staff from
14 these schools and recruiting replacements from
15 other schools, Bloomberg's DOE will destabilize
16 schools throughout the system, one after the
17 other, like dominoes. While these human costs
18 are the most important ones, there are fiscal
19 costs too. Removing 1800 teachers and tossing
20 them in the ATR pool, where they will work as
21 substitutes at full salary costs the city
22 approximately 180 million dollars annually.
23 Thank you.

24 MALE VOICE: That's right.

25 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

1 MR. EDWARD GROSS: My name is Edward Gross
2 and I'm a teacher at the school and I've been
3 here, this my second year. And since this seems
4 to be about--the problem identified is the
5 staff, the teaching and that is the only
6 essentially problem that's being addressed, I
7 would like to propose an experiment. Take your
8 top school, your cream of the crop school and
9 take us where you have placed us at, where you
10 say we're at the bottom 14 percent and why don't
11 we switch staffs for one year. And then let's
12 see what the results would be in the two
13 schools. And since I don't believe the courage
14 exists for such a thing, we could do it as a
15 mental experiment. And does anyone in this room
16 think that Automotive will actually do better
17 with teachers that they--where the students have
18 no relationships? And that's all I have to say.
19 Thank you.

20 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

21 MR. PAUL HEYMONT: I'm going to shift this a
22 little 'cause I don't like to turn my back on
23 anyone.

24 MALE VOICE: Thank you.

25 MR. HEYMONT: I'm Paul Heymont. I'm

1 Assistant Principal at Automotive High School.

2 [Applause]

3 I've been here at Automotive--thank you.

4 I've been at Automotive since 1993, which makes
5 me a newcomer compared to some of my colleagues.
6 In that time, I have seen this school again and
7 again work to make the changes that everyone
8 wants. One year, out of the last many years, we
9 did not increase the graduation rate and that
10 was last year, the disaster year of impossible
11 leadership in the building.

12 MALE VOICE: Wow.

13 MR. HEYMONT: This school has worked at
14 everything that you would want. Before literacy
15 was a buzz word, we made this school a literacy
16 machine because we recognized that those who
17 said we would never get better unless we had
18 better students were wrong, that we had to make
19 students better. We have cooperated and led
20 every initiative. When vocational education was
21 being tossed in the trash bin, Automotive held
22 onto that flag and kept it until people woke up
23 and caught on to it. Now however, we are in the
24 situation that Jet Blue passengers were
25 yesterday when the plane was nearly crashed by

1 an insane, unstable captain who had to be
2 thrown out of the cockpit. We are in a
3 situation where for the last ten, twelve even
4 twenty years, we've had a constantly road of
5 superintendence's, regions, ISC's, EPC's--I've
6 lost track of half the initials. That
7 instability has eaten up hundreds of millions of
8 dollars that could have been spent on what we
9 concentrated on which is our students. And I'm
10 incredibly proud to have known all of these
11 gentlemen who were our students and now are our
12 peers and I hope you will take this into
13 consideration. Thank you.

14 [Applause].

15 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

16 MR. HARRY BRANDLE: I'm going to join Paul
17 in standing over here. My name is Harry Brandle
18 and I graduated Automotive 1968. And I want to
19 say that everything in life that I have, I owe
20 to Automotive. I remember being in junior high
21 school and taking a test. Two thousand people
22 took a test and interview and they only took 300
23 people. Newtown would have been my zone school
24 and I would only had to go to school from nine
25 o'clock to 12 o'clock, all right, but I chose to

1 take two buses and two trains to get here to
2 be at Automotive. Cutting? There was no such
3 thing, all right. This has always been a
4 family. We've always been taking care of. No
5 matter how many years you were here, you came
6 back later, there would always be a teacher or
7 administrator to take care of you. I remember
8 my first job I got from Mike Labella [phonetic],
9 one of my shop teachers. I went into the
10 military as a petty officer, into the Seabees
11 because of my experience at Automotive and
12 because of my job. I owned two shops for ten
13 years, all right. I came back as a teacher in
14 1984 to give something back to the school that I
15 love, all right. Automotive was the most
16 wonderful school in America. We had 24 shops,
17 all right. When you graduated Automotive, you
18 had a trade, all right. You could do something.
19 If you wanted to go on to college, that was
20 fine. You could go on to college, all right. I
21 have a regents and an endorsed diploma, all
22 right but if you went to an academic school, the
23 only thing that you're able to do is go on to an
24 academic school, all right. And I feel so good
25 today that I'm one of the few people that can do

1 things. I can fix things, all right. If my
2 car breaks I can do that, my plumbing breaks, I
3 can do that, electrical--all of that is from
4 Automotive and to see the school go--you know,
5 the first 50 years of Automotive there were two
6 principals. The last four years, there were
7 three all right. And that's what they're trying
8 to say. It was--the school was cohesive back
9 then, all right. They're just looking to dump
10 it, that's it, all right.

11 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. I'd like to
12 introduce Ashley Thompson, the Chief of Staff
13 from the City Council's office, Steven Levin
14 [phonetic].

15 MS. ASHLEY THOMPSON: Hi, thank you. And I
16 apologize, the Councilman wanted to be here
17 tonight but unfortunately, had a scheduling
18 conflict.

19 MALE VOICE: - - .

20 MS. THOMPSON: Councilman Levin. My name's
21 Ashley Thompson and I would like to read a short
22 statement on his behalf. "I'm not at all
23 pleased to have to submit this testimony tonight
24 because we shouldn't be talking about closing
25 down Automotive High School. I don't believe

1 that simply closing a school, firing half of
2 the existing teachers and then reopening the
3 school is the most effective way to improve
4 student performance. I have serious
5 reservations about the effectiveness of the
6 turnaround model with regard Automotive High
7 School. Automotive High School could become
8 something very special once again for North
9 Brooklyn. We could incorporate green
10 technologies; we could work to attract corporate
11 sponsors, to bring in more resources for the
12 students. Automotive High School should be a
13 21st century school for the automotive sciences
14 and engineering. There are a couple of possible
15 solutions, ways to make Automotive High School a
16 shining star once again. Unfortunately, I have
17 yet to hear a clearly articulated plan from the
18 Department of Education for Automotive. What we
19 should be discussing tonight are creative
20 solutions about how we can make Automotive a
21 successful school for the students in our
22 community who come here. And until there is a
23 clearly articulated vision from the Department,
24 I will continue to have reservations about the
25 school turnaround model for Automotive. It is

1 critically important that take an all hands on
2 deck course of action. We should bring in all
3 stakeholders to help determine the future of
4 Automotive High School, including students,
5 teachers, the administration, parents,
6 representatives from District 14 and the
7 community and - - at large. I believe that the
8 principal, teachers and most of all the students
9 need to see and feel real support from the
10 Department of Education. Instead of closing
11 Automotive, let's come together to find a real
12 mechanism to keep this school in our community
13 and to allow our students to thrive. Thank you
14 very much.

15 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. Fifteen, 16, 17, 18.

16 MR. STERLING ROBERSON: Good afternoon,
17 everyone. I should say good evening. So, let
18 me just stay that the two minutes is not enough
19 so, let me just advise you of what's going to
20 happen. I'm going to take two minutes as a
21 former student of a CTE school. I'm going to
22 take two minutes as a educator in the New York
23 City public school and I'm going to take two
24 minutes as executive privilege that represents
25 200,000 people as Vice- President for Career and

1 technical education for the United Federation
2 of Teachers. So, at minimum, that's six
3 minutes. So, I'm addressing all of you because
4 the Department of Education knows how we feel
5 already as it relates to closing of schools.
6 You have made leaps and bounds educationally but
7 this is not about you. When they don't do what
8 they're supposed to do, what do they do? They
9 blame you. When they don't do what they're
10 supposed to do, they blame you. We spent a lot
11 of time talking about why you should close.
12 Hugh, thick document about how you should close
13 and the reason for it. When you hear that in
14 America, one in four students are not college
15 and career ready. One in four in America
16 according to the New York Times October 24,
17 2011. Not only do we talk about not college and
18 career ready, they have yet to talk about in a
19 CTC school with a plan for proposal how they're
20 going to ensure that the students, not just
21 here, but the new school was going to ensure
22 that kids are college and career ready. They
23 have not talked about one iota about how many
24 companies that they recruited to ensure that the
25 program is going to provide students with an

1 opportunity in career and technical education
2 with multiple pathway options. Not one thing on
3 the plan. They gave you a proposal but no real
4 plan. I could assure you because I had
5 discussions with the CTO office of the
6 Department of Education so, let me give you some
7 inside baseball, ladies and gentlemen, parents,
8 students--they have no plan. The plan is to
9 just shut you down. End of story. There's no
10 plan to ensure that you do well. It's all
11 about, as the gentleman from the CSA talked
12 about, it's about making sure that politically
13 that it's against the CSA and the UFT. That's
14 all it's about 'cause if they wanted to close
15 you, they would have already had that proposal
16 done. The proposal would have been in there but
17 they didn't put that proposal in front of you.
18 It's also interesting that city-wide, the
19 governor talks about a work force development
20 plan that in New York City hunts for a market in
21 the Bronx, in Brooklyn, the Brooklyn Navy Yard,
22 all for economic development. Let me just say
23 this to all of you. They have a party planned
24 and we're not invited to the party.

25 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

1 MR. ROBERSON: That's what's taking place.
2 I said six minutes at minimum. Now--

3 MS. ELLIS: Two minutes, sir.

4 MR. ROBERSON: --at the end of the--okay, I'm
5 at the four minute mark.

6 MS. ELLIS: Please wrap it up. Thank you.

7 MR. ROBERSON: That leaves two minutes
8 minimum, okay? So, having said that, so, my
9 suggestion would be, right, if this is what you
10 guys want to do, do your notifications but I'm
11 not finished yet. Now, when you think about
12 from a work force and economic development
13 standpoint, every school in New York City that's
14 being proposed for closure, many of them are CTE
15 schools.

16 MALE VOICE: Right.

17 MR. ROBERSON: Most of the schools that are
18 being closed when you think about career and
19 technical education, all of the schools that are
20 named after people are being closed. So, when
21 you think about Automotive you always think
22 about the bread and butter schools in CTE, the
23 Gumpers, the Jane Addams', the Maxwell's, Grady-
24 -every single school around CTE is being closed-
25 - and now when they talk about your program--

1 think about this--the mayor talks about
2 opening up 20 more CTE schools over a period of
3 the next couple of years. They close five and
4 give you one.

5 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

6 MR. ROBERSON: City-wide they close many of
7 them and they're giving you absolutely nothing.
8 So, I say to you, ladies and gentlemen, putting
9 your mark on this public hearing by speaking
10 your mind is an important thing but let's be
11 clear, they have no plan, they have no
12 obligation. So, speaking to them is like
13 talking to this piece of paper. Someone got
14 behind a Microsoft Office document and said, we
15 take closing schools seriously. What they did
16 was they used Times Roman, they bolded, and
17 they--

18 MS. ELLIS: Thank you, sir.

19 MR. ROBERSON: --press bold and that is the
20 - - of how the emotion that they put into
21 crafting this document. So, I say that to you
22 that when you read these numbers, don't believe
23 it. Don't believe anything that you hear about
24 the data because they didn't provide you with
25 the support for you to be successful. What they

1 did was they set you up for failure and at the
2 end of the day, they blame you, okay?

3 [Applause]

4 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

5 MR. MICHAEL PERRYMAN: Good evening. Ladies
6 and gentlemen, I'm Michael Perryman, presently
7 an 11th grader at Automotive High School. Now,
8 I've heard a lot of opinions and all this but
9 allow me to give some perspective of a present
10 student. Allow me to give some present day
11 perspective on this. Now, I'm not exactly sure
12 about all the numbers and everything. I know
13 what I do see in this building--the teachers--
14 who work hard enough, who work hard beyond the
15 call to teach us all this. All the life lessons
16 I've learned, all the lessons in general. Mr.
17 Sill, Mr. Carnavarn [phonetic] - - , everybody.
18 Now, I'm not too fond of the statistics and
19 everything but I do know that I could speak for
20 myself and a couple of other students when I say
21 we earn a lot of good grades and that pretty
22 much shows for everything so, far. Now as far
23 them wanting to close the school, not really
24 feeling it, sorry. Sorry, just how I feel but
25 honestly, I see no plan to this. Like, they're

1 going to close the school just to get money to
2 open it back up or however the situation was
3 stated but it makes no sense if we can't just
4 help us in the present day now. In the past
5 three years I've been here, there's been three
6 different principals now. Under this one right
7 now, I see the most progress being done and
8 that's facts right there. Like, I'm not exactly
9 sure but this school does not deserve to be
10 closed down for anything especially when the
11 progress is being done as we speak. I could see
12 that now. I'm pretty much one of the reasons,
13 not to be cocky. I'm done.

14 [Applause].

15 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

16 MR. WILL STASIACK: Thank you, sir. My
17 name's Will Stasiack, I've been here for 18
18 years. I've been a teacher, a dean, a coach,
19 I've been a long time sports administrator at
20 the PASL. One day I woke up and I clicked on my
21 e-mail and I read this big, long document that
22 said that I suck, that something is my fault
23 along with a lot of other people in this room.
24 And it just struck me like, wow, what am I
25 reading here, you know. And then I started

1 thinking. Okay, well, if I stink, if we're no
2 good, there must be reasons. And I'm sorry if I
3 repeat numbers that some of you heard before,
4 but I get some staggering numbers here. I've
5 worked for 21 supervisors in 18 years as a
6 history teacher here. I spent six years as a
7 dean, I worked for four different supervisors
8 and by the way, no wonder kids put on the data
9 survey that you mentioned earlier, that they
10 feel unsafe because the direction is always
11 changing as far as school safety goes. I'll
12 skip the part about principals. We talked about
13 that a lot but I will say this. The last two
14 principals that were here were removed from the
15 building more or less even though it's a dirty
16 word that doesn't want to be said. Yet, they
17 got promotions. Just saying. If the school has
18 so many problems, they got promotions after
19 being removed, okay? We mentioned, I wanted to
20 address something we said before, you mentioned
21 that there will be \$950,000 in additional
22 support. We're a school that was failing, we
23 were in need of help and this and that. Well,
24 all the money we were supposed to be is
25 mysteriously not here, gone, missing and all of

1 our programs that used to fund and help
2 children are not really existent to the levels
3 they once were. I wonder what's going to happen
4 with the money next year. You know what? To
5 sum it all up, I've been here a long time. I've
6 seen amazing things happen in this building.
7 I've seen kids who couldn't read who left here
8 could read. I saw the valedictorian of Long
9 Island University in 2006 graduate from
10 Automotive in 2002. I've seen 90 percent of the
11 athletes I've coached graduate in four years,
12 things that they're not supposed to do. There
13 are amazing things that can happen but if you
14 keep changing the managers then no matter what
15 you do to the team, things will never work.
16 Thank you.

17 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. Nineteen, 20, 21.

18 MR. THOMAS BENNETT: Thank you. My name is
19 Thomas Bennett. I'm the high school district
20 rep for the United Federation of Teachers and
21 I'm also a Social Studies teacher at Staten
22 Island Technical High School. And I'm reminded
23 when I'm in the presence of a crime of one of my
24 favorite expressions that I think about all the
25 time from Dr. Martin Luther King. He said that

1 the moral arc of the universe is long but it
2 bends towards justice. And eventually the truth
3 will come around and people will see, the
4 history will be written of this criminal
5 enterprise that has been going on in education
6 over the last couple of years. And when this
7 story is written, there's going to be an
8 accounting and people are going to say, who were
9 the heroes, who were the villains, which side
10 were you on. Well, we know about Mayor
11 Bloomberg. I mean, it's been said. This has
12 nothing to do with education. He thought he was
13 going to be the education mayor and he's right.
14 He is going to be the mayor of educational
15 disaster. Chancellor Kline, do you ever see his
16 face around anymore? Okay, he was the poster
17 child of educational reform. Now, he's the
18 poster child for kryptonite. Nobody wants him
19 anywhere around, all right? Now, let's go down
20 the line. Chancellor Wolcott, the man is not an
21 educator; I have nothing to say about him. We
22 respect him as a human being but not as an
23 educator. And then we look at deputy
24 chancellors and other people and we say are
25 these people educators or are they merely

1 opportunists, parasites, there to pick up a
2 few bucks, okay, and make a name for themselves
3 in this. And then honestly, I have to look at
4 the old educators like Bill who was just up here
5 from the CSA and so many of the people in the
6 networks and the superintendents who privately
7 say, you know something? I have to feed my
8 family but this is a disaster, right. This is a
9 crime. I recognize. I can't shout it out but I
10 want you to know, okay? Which side are you on?
11 Principal Jerry - - at Grady High School, is a
12 good friend of mine, a good friend of teachers
13 and she said, I don't need to replace 50 percent
14 of the staff at Grady High School, I stand by
15 the staff. Just like I wouldn't accept it from
16 any teacher who said, you want me to be
17 successful in my classroom, let me remove 50
18 percent of my students and choose the other 50
19 percent. Well, that's what--I ain't finished
20 yet. That's what they do in the charter
21 schools.

22 MALE VOICE: That's right.

23 MR. BENNETT: That's what they do in the
24 charter school. So, we couldn't even think
25 about doing something like that, right? But

1 that's what they want to do. Has the
2 principal of this school come out and said this
3 staff is a great staff, this staff is a working
4 staff, this is a building that has a tradition?
5 Ladies and gentlemen, I want you to look around
6 this building, this room right here and look at
7 those pictures. That picture up there of that
8 car, that was probably drawn in the 1930s. This
9 building, right in this room, I don't know this
10 for certain but I do know it for certain that on
11 December the 8th, 1941, this room was filled.
12 The students were here and the principal came
13 out and they said, gentlemen, you know, we've
14 been attacked by the forces of the empire of
15 Japan and it is up to you people right now, to
16 create the engines, to engineer the vehicles of
17 victory. And the staff and the children moved
18 out and they did just exactly that. And what do
19 we see here today? A total rejection of
20 tradition, a total rejection of humanity. Of
21 all the values that those young men stood up for
22 on that day on December 8, and went out the
23 doors and fought that victory, right? That's
24 what this is about. It's about the
25 widgetization, the digitization, value added,

1 right in terms of human beings. Well--

2 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

3 MR. BENNETT: Well, you're welcome.

4 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

5 MR. BENNETT: You're welcome 'cause I know
6 which side I was on and that's the question
7 that's going to be asked, right? Thank you very
8 much. I want to thank everybody for being here
9 and thank you for what you do.

10 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

11 MR. DAVID DUBOSE: Hi, my name is David
12 Dubose and I'm a teacher in Brownsville
13 Elementary School and also a member of the
14 Williamsburg Southside Community Schools
15 Coalition. We're trying to do something about
16 it because we know that unless we do, Dr. King's
17 dream is going to die under this corporate
18 regime. So, we know it's dysfunctionality by
19 design. We know because in 1968, the parents
20 and the students of this city shut it down for
21 community control and the end of corporate
22 control and we got local control, the kind that
23 works. We had college bound--they tell us our
24 schools are failing--we had massive college
25 bound programs and Automotive was part of it.

1 It was providing the career and the technical
2 education. We all know how important that is.
3 I don't know how to fix my car and I've got a
4 Masters degree. I depend on somebody out there
5 to know how to do that. My dryer was fixed this
6 week. I don't know how the hell to do that.
7 That depends upon vocational education. Career
8 and technical and college are like this but we
9 as parents and students are going to have to get
10 together in this community and all communities
11 and shut this city down. And we've got to do it
12 as kids, we've got to do it as students and
13 we've got to do it as parents. We can't do it
14 at a meeting like this. This is not going to
15 change anything. Anybody who's interested in
16 the Southside Schools Community Coalition, if
17 you see me at the end of the meeting, you can
18 join it. We're dealing with the attack on MS 50
19 and the charter school trying to go in there.
20 They've already shut down 19 and we're working
21 hard to retain the name Roberto Clemente. So,
22 Southside Schools Community Coalition, please
23 let's join together and begin to make a
24 difference. We've got to change things by our
25 activism.

1 [Applause].

2 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

3 MS. AVA HENTON: Yes, good evening,
4 everyone. My name is Ava Henton and I've been
5 in this school, working on the school leadership
6 team 'cause I'm a member of the school
7 leadership team. My son is in the ninth grade.
8 I really believe as far as the student's is
9 concerned they need all the outreach programs
10 that they can get. A lot of our children from
11 the community here at this school, they come
12 here to use they hands. To be able to use your
13 hands as a tool to success of repairing, that's
14 something that no one can never take away from
15 you. And the different programs that's in this
16 school I think is very, very important. The
17 different outreach programs, Good Shepherd, the
18 different sports, archery, that's something to
19 enhance your children. I mean, they can also
20 show the academic achievements but the most
21 important part, you have to have self esteem;
22 you have to be proud of yourself. The teachers
23 here, as far as I've been her for seven months,
24 they're very, very supportive. They can bring a
25 child from adolescence to a young adult, to let

1 them feel proud, that they can be someone,
2 that they can be the best. I don't think that
3 Automotive need to be closed down but I do
4 believe that the monies that they want to give
5 to this new school, they need to input in
6 Automotive to help bring outreach programs.
7 Maybe different mentoring programs because when
8 the children have a form of having a change, it
9 affects them psychologically, it affects them
10 morally. They want to have some type of
11 stability. Monies that you had, that the Board
12 of Education had, they should be able to use to
13 assist the students that's here because the
14 students here are our future. And if we don't
15 stand behind them to push them, to let them know
16 that they are strong, they are victorious,
17 that's something that we parents, which I myself
18 has to know that we have to stand behind our
19 children. And with the teachers and the other
20 members that's in this here audience, we have to
21 stand up like everyone says as a unit to fight
22 because we can't let the DOE tell us how we
23 going to raise our children academically. We
24 have to let them know that we're going to fight,
25 we can read, we can write and we are educated

1 people. So, right now I believe if we
2 continue to fight and continue to back our
3 children up and bring them here and let them
4 speak because they are being affected
5 psychologically. Thank you.

6 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. We will now begin
7 the question and answer period. Remember there
8 will be some individual questions and others
9 that have been bucketed into categories where we
10 will have representative questions asked. Any
11 question that is not answered here tonight will
12 be answered on the website. If you have
13 additional questions at the conclusion of
14 tonight's proceedings, we ask that you direct
15 them to us via phone number or the e-mail
16 address on the fact sheet. I'd like to
17 introduce again our deputy chancellor, David
18 Weiner.

19 MR. WEINER: Thank you. We've got a few
20 questions here so, I want to make sure I cover
21 all of these. The first question asks, if the
22 school closes, what will happen to the students?
23 So, all current students who are enrolled at the
24 school, who have not graduated before the start
25 of September will continue at the school.

1 They're guaranteed a seat at the new school.
2 They're automatically enrolled in the new
3 school. In addition, any incoming ninth
4 graders, that have applied to Automotive and are
5 matched as part of the high school admissions
6 process, they'll be automatically enrolled in
7 the new school if this proposal is approved.
8 So, the students will be able to maintain their
9 seats. There was another question, actually
10 there were a couple of questions that were about
11 kind of questions or concern related to the CTE
12 programming that exists at the school about
13 Automotive. It's important to note that if the
14 proposal is approved and the new school is
15 opened that the CTE programming will continue to
16 be offered in the new school and students will
17 be able to continue pursuing their CTE endorsed
18 diploma. So, if they're enrolled in a
19 certification program, they got a CTE endorsed
20 diploma, they'll be able to continue in that
21 program. That's going to continue at the new
22 school. There was another question that asked,
23 why are you closing the school and why not
24 restructure instead of closing it. So, other
25 interventions at the school have been considered

1 and the school was actually initially selected
2 to implement the restart model which was a less
3 intensive intervention. However, some of
4 Automotive High School's matrix actually
5 declined during the 2010-11 school year, such as
6 the four-year graduation rate and other data
7 also indicated that the educational environment
8 was not improving at a sufficient enough speed
9 to help all of the students in the school. Some
10 of the data I talked about earlier where some of
11 the lower graduation rates and some of the
12 college and career success rates, they were just
13 must much lower. And then finally, there was a
14 question about why are 50 percent of the staff
15 being fired. So, one thing that's really
16 important to know, and this is especially
17 important for the teachers here, is that 50
18 percent of the staff are not necessarily going
19 to be removed from the school. The proposal is
20 to close out the school and it doesn't require
21 the turnover of any set number of staff.
22 There'll be a personnel committee made up of UFT
23 members and school district members and they're
24 going to interview any teacher who's interested
25 in applying and then there's a requirement that

1 of the most senior qualified staff will be
2 hired back in the school at a minimum of 50
3 percent. So, it's actually--those were the
4 questions that I had received from the audience
5 but before we close, I just--I've actually been
6 to a few of these different school closings and
7 I've never seen so many alumni come to this
8 school. As I noted--come up and speak. There
9 were speakers literally from almost every
10 decade, from the 60s forward who had graduated
11 from this school and have been very successful
12 in their life and careers. And I noted this at
13 the beginning of my speech that Automotive has
14 been successful for many students. Obviously,
15 it's been successful for years and I do thank
16 all of the graduates who came. It shows your
17 commitment to the school and your appreciation
18 for what this school did to you and helped you
19 along your way. So, I do appreciate everyone
20 for coming out tonight and speaking. Olivia,
21 you want to take--

22 MS. ELLIS: Yes. We've heard many
23 significant comments this evening. We
24 appreciate your feedback and contributions to
25 this hearing. The information will be shared

1 with the Panel on Education Policy which will
2 have its hearing on April 26th at Prospect
3 Heights campus to vote on this proposal. Please
4 use the phone number or website on the bottom of
5 the fact sheet if you have any additional
6 questions or concerns. Thank you all for coming
7 out. This joint public hearing is officially
8 adjourned. Thank you again.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

1
2 The prior proceedings were transcribed from
3 audio files and have been transcribed to the
4 best of my ability.

5
6 Signature *Cecilia Kelly*

7 Date 4-2-12
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