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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**
Co-location of Manhattan Charter II
@ M056 - 3/8/12

1 [START 285_700]

2 MS. DANIELLA PHILLIPS: Ben [phonetic], I
3 want to check this. Do we have enough
4 translation equipment for folks with raised
5 hands? Can you raise your hand if you're still
6 missing translation equipment? Laura, if you
7 could say that. No more.

8 MS. LAURA PENADO: [foreign language].

9 MS. PHILLIPS: Okay. So for anybody that
10 doesn't have equipment, can we ask that a group
11 sit together and either Ayibsa [phonetic] or
12 someone who can translate, in the back area, so
13 it's not disturbing everybody, so that there can
14 be some attempt for translation.

15 This is a joint public hearing of the
16 Department of Education, of the Community
17 Education Council for District 1, of the
18 Citywide Council for High Schools, and the
19 school leadership teams for the proposed co-
20 location of a new elementary charter school,
21 Manhattan Charter School II, in building M56
22 beginning in September in the 2012/2013 school
23 year.

24 This hearing is being recorded. I'm going
25 to ask all of the folks who will be speaking

1 from this table to introduce themselves and the
2 group or body that they are representing.

3 MS. LISA DONELIN: Good evening everybody,
4 my name is Lisa Donelin, and I'm the President
5 of the Community Education Council. A number of
6 my colleagues will introduce themselves at the
7 end of the table.

8 We are the volunteer parent board that is
9 elected by your PTA representatives to serve and
10 represent you in the governance structure of the
11 city.

12 MS. JULIA DOUC: My name is Julia Douc, and
13 I'm representing Castle Middle School, School
14 Leadership Team.

15 MS. SADIQA WAHHAJ: Hi, my name is Sadiqa
16 Wahhaj and I'm a parent, I'm in the - - School
17 Leadership Team.

18 MR. DOUG STERN: Good evening, my name is
19 Doug Stern, I'm a member of the Community
20 Education Council.

21 MS. CYNTHIA BUNANO: Hi, my name is Cynthia
22 Bunano, I'm Second Vice President of District 1
23 Community Education Council.

24 MS. ANNETT SCOTT: My name is Annett Scott,
25 I'm a member of the Community Education Council.

1 MR. DANIEL BECKER: Good evening, my name
2 is Daniel Becker, and I'm a member of CEC
3 District 1.

4 MS. RACHEL GRADER: Good evening, I'm Rachel
5 Grader, I'll be representing University
6 Neighborhood Middle School's School Leadership
7 Team.

8 MS. MAUREEN MURPHY: Hello, I'm Maureen
9 Murphy, and I'm from the State University of New
10 York.

11 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. And I'm going to
12 introduce myself. My name is Danielle Phillips,
13 and I'm the Community Superintendent here in
14 District 1.

15 I am joined by my colleague, High School
16 Superintendent, Tameka Matheson [phonetic].
17 Tameka, if you would give a wave in the back.
18 Oh, you moved over here. Okay. Thank you.

19 And I want to recognize Stanley Ng
20 [phonetic], representing the Citywide Council
21 for High Schools.

22 I'm going to ask you to listen as I describe
23 the purpose of today's hearing.

24 The purpose of this hearing is for you to
25 provide comments about the proposal. Before I

1 describe the proposal, I want to make sure you
2 are all aware of the opportunity to provide your
3 input.

4 All of those who wish to speak must sign up
5 in the speaker signup area located just outside
6 the auditorium. The signup list will close in
7 approximately 15 minutes. Speakers will be
8 given the floor in the order that they signed
9 up, and all comments are limited to two minutes
10 in time.

11 Additionally, if you have a question that
12 you want to be addressed during the question and
13 answer portion of the agenda, please write that
14 question on the index cards which are also
15 provided at the back, and submit them to a
16 volunteer at the table.

17 While the public comments are taking place,
18 staff members will organize the questions into
19 categories and get them ready for the question
20 and answer period. Some questions will be asked
21 directly and others will be grouped or batched
22 together under headings in order to avoid
23 repetition.

24 Even though all individual questions will
25 not be addressed in the forum tonight, the

1 answers will be posted on the website, prior to
2 the Panel for Educational Policy Meeting.

3 There may be, I know there are, elected
4 officials who arrive at different times
5 throughout the evening, and if they wish to
6 speak, we will do our best to accommodate them
7 at the first opportune moment. And those who
8 are here at the start of the public comments
9 segment will be asked to speak first.

10 All of your comments will be mentioned in
11 the analysis of public comment, which will be
12 published and provided to the Panel for
13 Educational Policy, the evening before they
14 vote. The vote is scheduled for Wednesday,
15 March 21st, 2012.

16 In addition, we welcome any comments and
17 feedback you may have at any time before the
18 panel votes on both--on the proposal.

19 The email address and phone number where
20 your comments may be made, if you send them by
21 email, you'll send them to
22 d01proposals@schools.nyc.gov. Let me repeat
23 that, d01proposals@schools.nyc.gov. Or if you
24 prefer to call, you call this number, 212-374-
25 3466.

1 At this time, I'm going to ask Maureen
2 Murphy, our--from the SUNY Charter Schools
3 Institute to say a few words.

4 MS. MURPHY: Good evening. The charter
5 school we are discussing today, Manhattan
6 Charter School II, is authorized by the SUNY
7 Board of Trustees. The Education Law requires
8 that SUNY hold a public hearing to discuss the
9 proposed location of a charter school, when one
10 of the schools they authorize is proposed to
11 move into an existing public school building.

12 The purpose of this hearing is to receive
13 comments related to the proposed location of the
14 charter school.

15 SUNY is conducting its hearing now, at the
16 same time as the DOE, as we rely on the DOE to
17 help us notify parents and guardians, and to
18 arrange the hearing location. However, SUNY has
19 to make its own determination regarding the
20 school using the space.

21 SUNY will not make its final determination
22 until after the decision of the PEP.

23 Manhattan Charter School was approved by the
24 SUNY trustees on June 15th, 2011. It is slated
25 to open the fall of 2012 with approximately 96

1 students in grades K1, adding one grade a year
2 until it reaches full enrolment in the 2016/17
3 school year, with approximately 274 students in
4 grades kindergarten through five.

5 I will be taking notes on all oral comments
6 made tonight, in addition, anyone who would like
7 to, may give me comments--written comments this
8 evening, or you can mail, fax or email them to
9 the SUNY Charter Schools Institute, at 41 State
10 Street, Suite 700, Albany, New York, 12207, or
11 fax them to 518-427-6510, or by email to
12 charters@suny.edu.

13 Written testimony or statements must be
14 received no later than noon on March 26th, 2012.
15 Thank you.

16 MS. PHILLIPS: Okay. Now I'm going to
17 describe or summarize the proposal.

18 The New York City Department of Education is
19 proposing to open and co-locate a new public
20 elementary charter school, Manhattan Charter
21 School II in this building, M56, along with
22 Henry Street School for International Studies,
23 Castle Middle School, the Collaborative Academy
24 of Science, Technology and Language Arts
25 Education, and University Neighborhood Middle

1 School.

2 If this proposal is approved, Manhattan
3 Charter School II would open with kindergarten
4 and first grade as you heard from Ms. Murphy, in
5 this building, located at 220 Henry Street,
6 beginning in the 2012/2013 school year.

7 A co-location means that two or more school
8 organizations are located in the same building,
9 and may share common spaces like auditoriums,
10 gymnasiums and cafeterias.

11 Manhattan Charter School II would expand to
12 serve a new grade of students each year, until
13 2016/17, when it would reach full-scale and
14 serve approximately 240 to 300 students in
15 kindergarten through fifth grade.

16 Henry Street is an existing district
17 secondary school that serves 415 students
18 currently in grades 6 through 12. University
19 Neighborhood Middle School is an existing
20 district middle school that serves 115 students
21 in grades six through eight. And Castle Middle
22 School is an existing district middle school
23 that serves 245 students in grades six through
24 eight.

25 Also this building, M56, houses the New York

1 City Center for Space Science Education, which
2 is part of the Department of Ed's Mathematics
3 and Science Department in teaching and learning.

4 This building, M56, has a target capacity of
5 1,445 students. In 2010/2011, 818 students were
6 served in the building, yielding a utilization
7 rate of 57%.

8 Currently the building serves approximately
9 775 students, yielding a utilization rate of
10 54%, which means the building is considered
11 underutilized.

12 If this proposal is approved, once Manhattan
13 Charter School II has completed its full
14 expansion, there will be approximately 940 to
15 1,130 students served in this building by a
16 combination of Henry Street School for
17 International Studies, University Neighborhood
18 Middle School, Castle Middle School and
19 Manhattan Charter School II, yielding a building
20 utilization rate of between 65% and 78%.

21 As discussed in the Educational Impact
22 Statement, and the Building Utilization Plan,
23 the building has sufficient space to provide all
24 four schools with at least their baseline room
25 allocations. Therefore, the building has the

1 capacity to accommodate Manhattan Charter
2 School II, when fully phased in, as well as all
3 existing schools and the Space Center.

4 At this time I'm going to call upon
5 Community Education Council 1 to make a
6 presentation.

7 MS. DONELIN: Thank you, and good evening
8 everybody. I'm so sorry that we had that late
9 start.

10 Because this is a double hearing, it's two
11 purposes at once, the Department of Education is
12 having us respond to the impact statement that
13 you just heard, but also the SUNY trustees are,
14 as the authorizer, meaning they granted the
15 school, Manhattan Charter School, their charter
16 to operate, we're going to be dividing ourselves
17 into two different comments.

18 I'm going to speak to the overall co-
19 location, the proposal Daniella just read, and
20 my colleagues are going to be addressing some
21 comments to SUNY [break in tape] Institute. So
22 I'd like to begin tonight by looking back a
23 little over the history of District 1.

24 In 2005, the regional administration that
25 had replaced our district officers and our

1 school board under mayoral control, along with
2 Garth Harries' Office of New Schools, which was
3 the predecessor of the Office of Portfolio
4 Planning that made this proposal, parachuted two
5 charter schools into District 1 buildings, with
6 no discussion, no input, no hearings, and no
7 interaction with anyone in the community.

8 At that time, Girls Prep Charter School was
9 located into PS15, on Avenue D and Fourth
10 Street, and Manhattan Charter School into PS 142
11 on Attorney and Ridge Streets, next to the
12 Williamsburg Bridge.

13 Later, when Ross Global Academy, another
14 charter school, began recruiting high-need
15 students in the district, the Community
16 Education Council for District 1 welcomed that
17 charter into our community, as long as the
18 selected location would offer sufficient space
19 for students to succeed, and as long as they met
20 their promise to serve our high-need students in
21 the community.

22 The proposed co-location that DOE came up
23 with at NAS [phonetic] was unsuccessful. And
24 Ross Global Academy got bounced around District
25 2 for a while, and eventually came back to

1 District 1.

2 At that time, the Community Education
3 Council supported that proposal, based on the
4 support in the community, and the way that the
5 space was divided, in that it created no winners
6 and losers, and it promised to serve all the
7 students and all the community well.

8 When Girls Prep Charter School looked to add
9 a new middle school, expanding its grades and
10 sections, the Community Education Council
11 opposed the Department of Education's proposal
12 to co-locate at M188, where it was already
13 operating as an elementary school, and they were
14 going to grow grades and sections of a middle
15 school, and that could only happen if the
16 students with autism, their program would have
17 been reduced by half in order for the charter
18 school to double.

19 We considered that unfair, and it is not the
20 premise of charter schools, and we opposed that
21 proposal.

22 A year later, however, we supported the
23 proposed co-location of Girls Prep Charter
24 Middle School in the former Ross Global Academy
25 site, at East Side Community Middle and High

1 School, because again, there was sufficient
2 room to adequately serve all the students, and
3 support from both school communities.

4 While District 1 generally believes in
5 choice and options, as everyone here probably
6 knows, we have not had catch [phonetic]--I'm
7 sorry, since 1991. We do, however, believe in a
8 form of choice that is managed fairly and
9 equitably, and provides equal access to all
10 children, and to create diverse learning
11 communities, not greater segregation, by race,
12 class or ability.

13 Most importantly, for a co-location to be
14 successful there must be sufficient space for
15 all school communities to function and thrive or
16 else the co-location plan cannot work.

17 In District 1, our schools have been sharing
18 buildings for decades, as pioneers of the small
19 schools movement.

20 As early as 2006, more than 80% of our
21 schools were already sharing a building with one
22 or more schools. As a result of that history,
23 we have a good idea about what works and what
24 does not work, when it comes to sharing
25 buildings.

1 Co-locations do not work if the playing
2 field is uneven and one of the schools has
3 political favor or access to greater resources.
4 Co-location does not work if one of the schools
5 does not serve a proportionate number of high-
6 need students and the other schools are then
7 forced to do more with less.

8 It does not work if the co-location means
9 that hallways will be overcrowded, or the class
10 size must necessarily grow, or that students
11 will lose related services or supports or
12 interventions or enrichment.

13 Co-location does not work if each school is
14 not guaranteed a chance to serve students well,
15 to thrive and to grow.

16 The proposed co-location of Manhattan
17 Charter School II at M56 meets all of the
18 criteria for what not to do when planning a co-
19 location. And thus, the CEC for District 1
20 opposes the proposal presented tonight. Thank
21 you.

22 I look forward to hearing from my colleagues
23 on the CEC, and the school leadership teams to
24 hear how they're going to be impacted by the
25 proposal. For now it's the CEC.

1 MR. STERN: Thank you Lisa. We have a few
2 questions for Ms. Murphy from the SUNY Charter
3 Institute, I hope you'll take notes on these
4 questions.

5 We believe there's not enough demand in
6 District 1 for a new elementary charter school.

7 Manhattan Charter School I claims to have
8 393 applications for 51 seats, and that only
9 after siblings were admitted, then the rest of
10 the seats in the current kindergarten class were
11 filled by District 1 residents.

12 Our first question is, how many of the
13 current kindergarten seats are taken by
14 siblings, and how many are actually filled by
15 District 1 residents?

16 Can SUNY CSI or the New York City Department
17 of Education certify that there are no out-of-
18 District residents enrolled in MCS in
19 kindergarten, first and second grades?

20 MS. SCOTT: Good afternoon, my name is
21 Annett Scott from the CEC, and Ms. Murphy, I
22 have question for you for the SUNY CSI.

23 High-demand waitlist and low acceptance
24 rates are early--in early childhood programs are
25 not unusual in Lower Manhattan, the geographic

1 area in which Manhattan Charter School II
2 proposes to relocate.

3 My question to you is this, can SUNY or the
4 DOE certify that there's a waitlist consist of
5 real potential students, and they're not--and
6 they're all District 1 residents?

7 MR. BECKER: Following up on that issue, DNA
8 [phonetic] info reports that last year the most
9 popular pre K program in District 1, PS 184
10 Shuang Wen received 311 applications for 36 pre
11 K seats, whereas PS 40 accepted nearly 40% of
12 the children who applied last year, and all 54
13 pre K seats this year. The District 1 pre K
14 program, with the lowest admissions rate last
15 year was the Art School which accepted just 8%
16 of the children who applied.

17 The Progressive Elementary School
18 specializes in hands-on learning with an
19 environment focus. Therefore, my question is,
20 the CEC requests that the DOE's Office of
21 Student Enrolment report out the waitlist and
22 acceptance rates for current pre K admissions,
23 and the centralized kindergarten admissions for
24 District 1 schools to create a comparable
25 baseline for demand for seats.

1 MS. DONELIN: Okay, now we're going to
2 hear from each of the SLTs, but I just want to
3 let SUNY know that we have a very thick document
4 with lots of questions and comments about the
5 authorization of this charter, they concern
6 particularly questions about outreach, in
7 addition to our questions about demand, and
8 questions about support.

9 We're very, very much concerned by the fact
10 that the law since May 2010 demands that
11 charters serve a proportionate number of our
12 highest need students, English language
13 learners, students with disabilities, and
14 students living in poverty.

15 And since Manhattan Charter School II is a
16 replication of Manhattan Charter School I, and
17 they anticipate the enrolment to be very
18 similar, the fact that they serve zero English
19 language learners, and only 14% students with
20 IEPs, yet those students with IEPs are not
21 obviously IEPs that require a more restrictive
22 environment since they don't offer CTT, ICT or
23 self-contained classes.

24 And so we feel that it really begs the
25 question about the adherence to the law, that

1 they were replicating a charter school that is
2 not serving really the--a full demographic of
3 our neighborhood.

4 Next we're going to hear from the school
5 leadership team from Castle.

6 MS. DOUC: Hi, good evening. Once again, my
7 name is Julia Douc, and I'm speaking on behalf
8 of Castle's school leadership team.

9 In the process leading up to this hearing,
10 we have heard representatives from the
11 Department of Education attempt to justify their
12 intention of co-locating Manhattan Charter
13 School II within the Corlears Complex. This
14 complex already houses one high school and three
15 middle schools, Castle being one of them.

16 As you look through the Building Utilization
17 Plan, or BUP, it has become obvious the DOE uses
18 a formula in determining the minimum mandated
19 number of minutes classrooms are occupied, and
20 thus saying that our building and our school is
21 underutilized.

22 If you look up Castle on insideschools.org,
23 you will see a highlighted box that shows a
24 snapshot of the school. It has two categories,
25 what's special and the downside. In what's

1 special, it reads, new, well-planned small
2 school. The downside, limited space.

3 At the conception of Castle eight years ago,
4 it was recognized that small schools have
5 limited space to support all students with the
6 diverse needs that learners in the middle years
7 face, both academic delays and a need for
8 academic enrichment.

9 The middle grades are an important time in a
10 student's school career where they can have a
11 program schedule that is tailored to their
12 specific needs.

13 Although Castle has limited space, due to
14 the current co-location, we are utilizing the
15 space that we do have to provide an excellent
16 equitable education to all students that enroll
17 in Castle. We gladly accept any student into
18 the Castle community and our makeup illuminates
19 that diversity.

20 Approximately 30% of our students have
21 individual education plans, or IEPs, and many
22 students that do not have IEPs require small
23 group remediation.

24 Fifteen students in our school cannot read,
25 yet about 70% of our students begin high school

1 having received high school credit from
2 courses and exams taken at Castle.

3 From this snapshot of our school, it is
4 clear that our 245 students come with individual
5 needs that our school is able to provide by
6 utilizing our 14 full-size classrooms, four
7 half-size classrooms and six quarter-size
8 classrooms.

9 We take our students' needs seriously, so
10 that we can equip them to be competitive with
11 their peers at more affluent and spacious
12 schools.

13 We offer Wilson, a reading program for non-
14 readers, that very few middle schools offer.

15 We have a resource room where SETTS teachers
16 can pull out students and give them the services
17 that they're entitled to.

18 Our half and quarter-size rooms are
19 constantly being used by teachers on their free
20 periods to continually assess students, to check
21 their reading growth and math mastery.

22 We have rooms that are available when CTT
23 classes are in session, so that when necessary,
24 we can pull groups to equip those students with
25 the support that they need to succeed.

1 With the number of students with ADD and
2 ADHT growing, it is imperative that we provide
3 an environment where students can be focused and
4 free of distractions.

5 We incorporate extended day into the day,
6 where all teachers are teaching, all classrooms
7 are being used, and all students are receiving
8 targeted instruction.

9 Students are grouped homogenously in
10 remedial math in ELA, with groups that do not
11 exceed 10 for those that need it. While other
12 students are receiving Regents Prep, or a
13 reading program for non-readers, or ESL
14 services, or band practice.

15 Without proper space, our students will be
16 in larger groups with less individual attention,
17 which will limit our ability to provide them
18 with the education that they deserve.

19 Another barrier to having less space is the
20 impact on high stakes testing. Without proper
21 space for students that receive accommodations,
22 students will not be receiving what they are
23 entitled to, which is breaking the law.

24 There are 21 full or half-size classrooms
25 needed to administer a school-wide State or

1 local assessment. Currently we have 18, and
2 if this BUP goes through, by 2015 we will be
3 allocated 15 full and half-size classrooms.
4 This stripping of space is unjust.

5 Lastly, the rationale behind opening
6 Manhattan Charter School II is to give families
7 more choice in selecting an elementary school.
8 District 1 currently has 20 elementary schools
9 to choose from and 11 middle schools to choose
10 from.

11 This plan to permanently reduce the number
12 of classrooms in our schools will cripple about
13 30% of middle schools in District 1, and leave
14 future District 1 middle school students with
15 choices that are physically unequipped to give
16 them the education that they deserve.

17 Castle currently utilizes space to service
18 245 students with diverse individual educational
19 needs. How are we supposed to meet our future
20 students' needs if we are losing classrooms
21 every year?

22 MS. DONELIN: Thank you very much. And
23 we're next going to hear from the school
24 leadership team of University Neighborhood
25 Middle School.

1 MS. GRADER: Good evening. I am Rachel
2 Grader and I will be speaking to you on behalf
3 of University Neighborhood Middle School SLT.

4 UNMS is located on the third floor of this
5 building. We use approximately half of a
6 hallway in the Corlears Complex.

7 In our small corner on the east wing of this
8 four-storey building, we have built a thriving
9 educational community.

10 Students who graduate from UNMS invariably
11 return to visit. Some are in their sophomore
12 year of college, others are seniors, junior or
13 recent freshmen in high school.

14 These young scholars return to UNMS and
15 volunteer their time tutoring current students,
16 some interested in becoming teachers themselves
17 willingly offer up hours of their time to give
18 back to our community.

19 When they return, they walk down to Room
20 302, and undoubtedly find a new class of sixth
21 graders knee-deep in paint, or covered in
22 charcoal [phonetic].

23 They visit Mr. Maqsood across the hall in
24 Room 305, to get in a good chuckle, observing a
25 new class of seventh graders wrapped up in book

1 discussion.

2 Or as it happens year after year, they are
3 coming back to Room 328 to find Mr. Locker.
4 They're eager to share with him their plans for
5 the future, and to get a few pointers on their
6 imminent college interviews. The stories about.

7 In eight years, UNMS has established a
8 learning community whose impact has surpassed
9 the bounds of half a hallway on the third floor.

10 I'm going to tell you five reasons why the
11 plan proposed by the DOE's Office of Portfolio
12 is not in the best interest for students at
13 UNMS, or in District 1, and why we demand that
14 the Educational Impact Statement and Building
15 Utilization Plan be amended to reflect the
16 critical feedback informed by the valid
17 educational concerns of our parents, students,
18 teachers, administrators and community at large.

19 The first reason is that our current
20 instructional program cannot be sustained given
21 the proposed plan. Since our inception, UNMS
22 has been committed to developing innovative
23 teaching methods and educational designs, with
24 the sole purpose of increasing the learning
25 opportunities for all children, with an emphasis

1 on our at-risk students.

2 Over the past eight years we've refined our
3 school program to reflect our commitment to each
4 child. Our educational philosophy is rooted in
5 the belief that all students should have the
6 maximum amount of instructional time in order to
7 enquire, practice and learn in the classes.
8 Learning periods to this end, at UNMS, are
9 approximately 60 minutes, as opposed to the
10 traditional 40 minute classes offered in most
11 middle schools.

12 Future forward, 2014 to '15, let me take you
13 into the Office of Portfolio's Building
14 Utilization Plan.

15 UNMS is expected to serve six sections in
16 General Education ICT, that's CCT classes, and
17 two sections of self-contained classes in the
18 2014/15 school year. The plan provides us with
19 eight full-size classrooms and two half-
20 classrooms for instructional purposes to
21 accomplish this task.

22 In our current instructional program, each
23 General Education class receives two periods of
24 humanities, one period of math, one period of
25 science every day. So in each week, each class

1 receives 10 periods of humanities, 5 of math,
2 5 of science. Additionally, each class receives
3 either four periods of Spanish or Art.

4 This means that each class requires access
5 to a classroom for 24 instructional periods per
6 week. There are six classes, so that adds up to
7 144 instructional periods needed per week.

8 UNMS provides our self-contained students
9 with a greater access to general curriculum by
10 having our students travel to content
11 specialists for all their classes. Instead of
12 being in one room, a half-size room, our self-
13 contained students travel, just like our General
14 Ed.

15 This programming requires 24 periods per
16 week, 48 for the two classes combined.

17 In ensuring all of our students' educational
18 equity and access to the least restrictive
19 environment, space is a primary determinant.

20 In addition to these needs for the basic
21 program, we provide all students with three
22 instructional periods of book club per week.
23 The Building Utilization Plan forecasts us to
24 have 135 students. They would be split into
25 approximately 11 book clubs, meeting three times

1 a week, which will require a total of 33
2 instructional periods.

3 Our school services students who are in need
4 of mandated SETTS. This requires approximately
5 five additional instructional periods a week.
6 Services that our English language learners are
7 entitled to, we go beyond and over to provide 33
8 instructional periods per week.

9 So altogether, UNMS's base program,
10 including self-contained, book club, SETTS and
11 our English language learners equals 263
12 instructional periods.

13 A classroom can be used for instruction five
14 out of six periods per day, or for 25 out of 30
15 periods per day.

16 In order to account for our need of 263
17 periods, we would need a minimum of 11 full-size
18 classrooms. Even 10 rooms would leave the
19 school short at 250 periods available. The
20 Office of Portfolio's Building Utilization Plan
21 is allotting you in MS eight classrooms.

22 Alternatively, even if we were forced to
23 confine our students who require smaller class
24 size setting, and tell them, you need to stay in
25 half a size classroom for the entire day, even

1 if we did that, the number of instructional
2 periods needed would decrease to 215. This
3 would equate to nine full-size classrooms at the
4 minimum. The Office of Portfolio has not even
5 met their own minimal requirements in
6 determining that UNMS should operate with only
7 eight classrooms.

8 We maintain that we are committed to using
9 best practices that directly address the spatial
10 and temporal needs of our students' academic,
11 social, emotional and physical development. Our
12 programming reflects this belief, our belief in
13 educational equity, and our mission to educate
14 the whole child.

15 Our goal has been and remains to support all
16 of our students, English language learners,
17 students with interrupted formal education and
18 students with special needs through greater
19 curricular, instructional and scheduling
20 flexibility.

21 In their Educational Impact Statement, the
22 Office of Portfolio states over and over again,
23 "the proposed co-location of Manhattan Charter
24 School II is not expected to impact the
25 instructional programming of UNMS." This is

1 simply not true.

2 The second reason the Office of Portfolio
3 space utilization proposal will not work, is
4 that it does not account for the physical space
5 necessary to provide crisis intervention
6 services for our students. This will have a
7 tremendous impact on our students' access to
8 critical intervention through our UNMS cares
9 team.

10 Twenty-five percent of our students are
11 mandated to receive counseling. We educate
12 students with behavioral intervention plans that
13 designate availability and opportunity for a
14 class break in a separate location.

15 Forty-four percent of our student population
16 is overage. As of October 2011 of this school
17 year, 16% of our students are either in
18 temporary housing or living in a shelter, so at
19 UNMS we implement preventative measures beyond
20 mandated counseling.

21 Close to 40% of our non-IEP students receive
22 services that include and are not limited to
23 one-to-one in group counseling via SAPES
24 [phonetic], or a guidance counselor, dean
25 interventions, mediations, Clinic Plus, which

1 provides onsite counseling, and Turning Point,
2 it's a community-based organization.

3 The third reason the Office of Portfolio's
4 co-location proposal as drafted will not work,
5 is that it does not account for the physical
6 space necessary to provide academic, linguistic,
7 socio-emotional and physical services to our
8 English language learners, site [phonetic] and
9 students with special needs, or at risk
10 academically and emotionally.

11 Twenty percent of our current Ls [phonetic]
12 make up our population--excuse me, 20% of our
13 students are English language learners, 26% of
14 our English language learners are students with
15 interrupted formal education, 33.6% of our
16 students have individualized education plans.
17 As I've already stated, our programming has been
18 designed to allow for the maximum amount of
19 learning opportunities for all students in all
20 content areas.

21 In definitive opposition, the Office of
22 Portfolio has put forth an erroneous plan that
23 will strip the space these students are entitled
24 to have.

25 The fourth reason that UNMS is adamantly

1 opposed to the Office of Portfolio's co-
2 location proposal, is that in order to
3 accommodate the co-location and growth of
4 Manhattan Charter School II to a total of 300
5 students, they've capped UNMS at 135.

6 UNMS services all students that apply and
7 are matched to our school, we are not self-
8 selective.

9 In capping our potential growth, the Office
10 of Portfolio is inherently reducing the
11 viability of middle schools in District 1 that
12 will educate all children equitably.

13 In District 1, there is a 12% population of
14 English language learners. Citywide, 14% of
15 students are English language learners.
16 District-wide, the population of students with
17 individualized education plans totals 25%, and
18 citywide 15.

19 After five years of operation in our Lower
20 East Side, Manhattan Charter School II--excuse
21 me, Manhattan Charter School I, a public and
22 privately funded school has zero English
23 language learners and zero percent of its
24 student population is composed of such students.
25 But they're supposed to be held accountable to

1 provide instruction to students who are
2 English language learners.

3 Manhattan Charter School specifically states
4 in their mission on their website that they
5 educate a diverse student body that is
6 representative of the Lower East Side.

7 According to the New York City Department of
8 Education, charter schools are subject to the
9 Federal statutory and regulatory requirements
10 applicable to all public schools, including laws
11 governing the provision of special education,
12 and instruction to students who are English
13 language learners.

14 Manhattan Charter School has a special
15 education population comprising only 14.4% of
16 its student body. In their charters proposal to
17 SUNY, they state, Manhattan Charter School II
18 will replicate Manhattan Charter School I's
19 model.

20 Furthermore, they state, they "expect
21 student demographics to remain consistent in
22 future years."

23 In their SUNY proposal, the preliminary
24 enrolment targets for the charter, established
25 by the SUNY trustees, and the charter's current

1 enrolment are as follows.

2 Special education is 16.6%, currently they
3 only have 14%. English language learners,
4 11.9%, currently they have zero percent. They
5 state that Manhattan Charter School II "will
6 make every effort to recruit four and retain
7 additional special education students to meet
8 the minimum target of 16.6% enrolment.

9 Manhattan Charter School II will also put in
10 place solid strategies to recruit and retain
11 English language learner students. However, the
12 Building Utilization Plan demonstrates
13 otherwise.

14 While UNMS, Castle and Henry Street are
15 projected to maintain their current two
16 sections, two sections, three sections
17 respectively, of their self-contained special
18 education classes, Manhattan Charter School II
19 has a projection of zero.

20 Manhattan Charter School does not and will
21 not service students who through evaluation are
22 mandated to learn in smaller class size
23 settings.

24 On speaking with the representative from the
25 Manhattan Charter School office, I was informed

1 that if a child requires such mandated
2 services, Manhattan Charter School and Manhattan
3 Charter School II would not be able to educate
4 this child.

5 All children at Manhattan Charter School are
6 educated in a class of 24 students with one
7 teacher and an assistant teacher, and will not
8 provide a smaller class setting, true. When
9 Office of Portfolio's Director, Elizabeth Rose,
10 was questioned about this matter, she was
11 conveniently unaware of this fact.

12 The fifth reason we're opposed to this co-
13 location plan can be summed up by the New York
14 City Department of Ed's tenet, that charter
15 schools are open to all students in New York
16 City through a non-discriminatory lottery.

17 Charter schools were established to increase
18 learning opportunities for all students with an
19 emphasis on at-risk students. Yet Manhattan
20 Charter School II will not service students who
21 require small class setting, and today they do
22 not serve English language learners, or as I
23 could find, students with interrupted formal
24 education.

25 UNMS, we've never had to recruit special

1 education or English language learner
2 students. I mean in fact just today, we
3 enrolled brand new English language learner
4 students who are sixth grade.

5 As the New York City Department of Education
6 frequently--in their frequently asked questions
7 about charter school states on their website for
8 the DOE, "Charters are subject to the Federal
9 statutory and regulatory requirements applicable
10 to all public schools, including laws governing
11 the provision of special education and
12 instruction to students who are English language
13 learners." Furthermore, one of the tenets that
14 govern the operation of a charter school states
15 that "any child eligible for admission to a
16 traditional public school is eligible for
17 admission to a public charter school." Sorry.

18 Admission to a charter school cannot be
19 limited on the basis of disability, race, creed,
20 gender, national origin, religion, ancestry,
21 intellectual ability or measures of achievement,
22 aptitude. Taking a moment to review Manhattan
23 Charter School I's data, it's evident that they
24 have not yet achieved this goal.

25 In conclusion, we, the UNMS SLT, strongly

1 oppose this co-location proposal because it
2 will have a significant negative impact on our
3 innovative program and our ability to provide a
4 flexible academic program that is less
5 restrictive and that supports the social,
6 emotional, academic and physical needs of all of
7 our students.

8 Our students need and deserve to keep their
9 little more than half of a hallway, currently
10 known as University Neighborhood Middle School.
11 Thank you.

12 MS. DONELIN: Before I introduce the next
13 school leadership team, I just want to follow up
14 on something that my esteemed panelist just
15 alluded to. I just want to point out that it's
16 not a problem of location, and by changing
17 locations the demographics aren't going to
18 change, because PS 142, where Manhattan Charter
19 School I, the original, is now located, has--
20 serves 13% English language learners, and those
21 students are being served in the same building
22 at that percentage.

23 So it is now my pleasure to introduce the
24 school leadership team from Henry Street School
25 of International Studies.

1 MS. WAHHAJ: Hi. My name is Sadiqa, and
2 my son is a seventh grader at the Henry Street
3 School for International Studies.

4 In the process leading up to this hearing,
5 we have had representatives from the Department
6 of Education attempt to justify their intention
7 of co-locating Manhattan Charter School II
8 within the Corlears Complex.

9 This complex already houses three different
10 schools, including the upper and lower schools
11 of Henry Street School for International
12 Studies.

13 In our dealings so far with the Office of
14 Portfolio Management, it has become obvious that
15 they and the Department of Education use a
16 bottom-line formula in determining exactly how
17 many students, teachers and staff should occupy
18 a building for maximum efficiency, keeping cost
19 as low as possible, while maximizing benefits.

20 With this in mind, we would also like to
21 look at the bottom line of this proposal. What
22 are the pros and cons, what are the benefits,
23 and what--or should I say who, are the costs?

24 First the benefits. For an eventual
25 projected 300 families, Manhattan Charter School

1 II will provide another K through five school
2 option for parents who cannot find a suitable
3 option among the 20 already existing District 1
4 elementary schools.

5 So far this is the only benefit that has
6 been provided by the Department of Education for
7 the co-location proposal in the junior high
8 school 56 building.

9 So what about the cost? According to the
10 Building Utilization Plan, the full
11 implementation of Manhattan Charter School II
12 will eventually cause University Neighborhood
13 Middle School four classrooms. It will cost
14 Castle Middle School five classrooms, and it
15 will cost Henry Street School 12 classrooms. In
16 addition, it will further stretch the already
17 exhausted limits of our shared spaces.

18 What will it mean to the children of Henry
19 Street School to lose 12 classrooms?

20 First, it will mean the general shrinking
21 of their physical space. Our current plan,
22 which houses 6th through 8th grade classrooms on
23 the third floor, and 9th through 12th grade
24 students on the fourth floor would no longer be
25 feasible after eliminating 12 classrooms.

1 It is easy for anyone here to imagine the
2 difficulty of navigating a slim hallway at the
3 same time as 425 other people. Now imagine
4 doing it as a 4-1/2-foot, 70-pound sixth grader,
5 in the same hallway as a 6-1/2-foot, 230--these
6 are not imaginary figures.

7 More urgent for parents like myself and over
8 400 other families concerned with their
9 children's education, are the academic
10 ramifications of the contraction. This space
11 shrink would result in a sharing of our
12 classrooms.

13 The Department of Education blueprint is
14 based on a notion that all classrooms should be
15 utilized at all times, meaning that there is
16 always a class in session in every room. This
17 assumes that when classes are not in session,
18 that room is to being utilized. Nothing could
19 be further from the truth.

20 At Henry Street, the faculty pride
21 themselves on creating lessons and curricular
22 that provide student-centered, flexibly-grouped
23 activities with materials that appeal to a
24 variety of learning styles.

25 Preparing a classroom for a lesson that

1 truly engages our children and appeals to
2 their interests at an appropriate varied
3 developmental levels requires more from the
4 instructor than waiting for the previous class
5 to dismiss, and walking in at the same moment as
6 the students.

7 This is doubly true for the many teachers in
8 our school who already teach multiple grades and
9 classes with widely different ability levels and
10 linguistic backgrounds, a necessity in small
11 schools such as UNMS, Castle and ours.

12 What utilizing every classroom, every period
13 will mean is that no classroom is ever utilized
14 to its fullest instructional potential for our
15 children.

16 Cramming multiple classes and teachers into
17 the same classroom will also mean inadequate
18 wall and board space for our teachers to post
19 routines and references and house the materials
20 that are so vital to the students who attend
21 Henry Street.

22 When I walk down the hallways and through
23 the classrooms here, I see a wonderful variety
24 of student work displayed, and I know how proud
25 it makes my son when his work is shown as

1 exemplary. I wonder where this work will end
2 up when one of the walls of the classroom is
3 covered with a periodic table of elements, one
4 wall features Spanish verb conjugation charts,
5 and the board is divided into three different
6 teachers' aim, objective and do now.

7 When classes are split between subjects, and
8 teachers and their spaces are treated as
9 interchangeable parts, we weaken the quality of
10 our students' education and undermine its
11 importance.

12 For most of our kids, of course, Henry
13 Street is not just a place of learning in
14 classrooms, but a kind of second home. They
15 bring not just their academic issues, but their
16 social and emotional joys and sorrows with them
17 every day, and they share them with each other
18 and the staff.

19 Teachers at Henry Street have told me of
20 students who have come to them with issues of
21 parental abuse [phonetic], pregnancy and drug
22 use. Those kinds of conversations and the
23 sensitivity they require do not come out in the
24 middle of a crowded, busy classroom lesson.

25 They happen in "unutilized classrooms"

1 during spare moments and odd periods. Take
2 away those classrooms and you take away those
3 conversations.

4 Even for those of our children with
5 supportive lives and happy homes outside of
6 school, the Henry Street population's 95%
7 poverty rate indicates the difficulties that all
8 our children face, and the tenuous lives they
9 lead.

10 Shouldn't we at least use their school time
11 hours as a chance to give them some stability
12 and ownership of their space?

13 Finally, we come to the issue of the
14 gymnasium. Currently the gym in this building
15 is utilized every period of every day, in a plan
16 that has been arduously been hashed out over the
17 years by the three schools that share this
18 building.

19 While gym time might seem like an
20 afterthought or extra to some, even despite this
21 nation's growing problem of childhood obesity,
22 the fact is that the State requires our high
23 school students to have seven semesters of gym
24 credit to graduate.

25 With the complexity of scheduling that

1 already exists here, Henry Street has even had
2 to resort to putting 12th graders in the same
3 gym class as 6th graders, to ensure their on-
4 time graduation.

5 Can that delicate scheduling really stand up
6 to the introduction of an entire new school to
7 the mix? Will I have to watch my son work his
8 tail off over the next five years, working to
9 pass his Regents, in Science, Math, English and
10 Social Studies, only to fail to graduate on time
11 because the gym wasn't available enough to get
12 him the credits that he needs?

13 The Educational Impact Statement put forth
14 suggests that this problem can be solved by
15 having students travel to Basketball City, an
16 athletic facility several blocks away.

17 How many minutes of instructional time will
18 be lost as students transition back and forth
19 from that facility? Who is going to guarantee
20 the safety of those children as they walk those
21 blocks and cross the FDR? What about days that
22 are rainy, snowy or frigidly cold? I'm pretty
23 sure it's not the kindergarteners of Manhattan
24 Charter School that are going to be asked to
25 make that trek. It's going to be the high

1 schools of Henry Street, the same ones who are
2 already perilously close to not graduating due
3 to a lack of gym time. It's going to be my son.

4 And while I trust him to make the right
5 decisions, can we really expect dozens of 15 to
6 18-year-olds to travel back and forth, several
7 times a week, without succumbing to the
8 temptations along the way? It feels like we're
9 inviting disaster.

10 After hearing these complaints,
11 representatives of the Office of Portfolio
12 Management suggested that the incoming Manhattan
13 Charter School would be willing to hold their
14 gym classes in a regular classroom for the first
15 year. That's nice, but ultimately is indicative
16 of the Department of Education's response to
17 each of our questions and complaints so far in
18 this process. It answers the question without
19 solving the problem.

20 Forcing MCS students to have gym in the
21 classroom doesn't eliminate the unfair treatment
22 of children, it just alters which students are
23 treated unfairly, and redirects the cost of this
24 co-location, rather than eliminating it. All of
25 the sacrifice made by our children, teachers and

1 families, and for what? So that the City can
2 brag of another trendy charter school? So that
3 300 families can have wider choice of elementary
4 schools, while the 800 families already enrolled
5 in this building watch their children's
6 education suffer?

7 I hope this equation doesn't show up on the
8 Regents, because I doubt my son will ever figure
9 out that math.

10 MS. DONELIN: Okay, thank you very much. It
11 is now my pleasure, we're not going to open up
12 the public session, and first, we're going to
13 hear from our elected officials who are present.
14 And so the first person I would like to bring up
15 to make a statement is Iris Quinones, who is
16 representing U.S. Congresswoman, Nydia
17 Velázquez.

18 So until Iris comes back, we're going to
19 hear from Paul Goldstein, who is representing
20 New York State Assembly Speaker, Sheldon Silver
21 this evening.

22 MR. PAUL GOLDSTEIN: Thank you Lisa, thank
23 you all.

24 First of all, sorry Speaker Silver could not
25 be here himself, but he did want to thank you

1 all for coming, it's a great turnout, thank
2 you all for being here and for the interest you
3 have in your schools, in your children and thank
4 you for the students themselves for coming down
5 and being part of this, it's great.

6 I want you to know that the Speaker has
7 heard from the parents, he's heard from the
8 students, he's heard from the principals, from
9 the CEC, from the many members of this concerned
10 community, and he himself has studied this plan
11 for the co-location, and he has joined with the
12 other local elected officials in putting out a
13 letter that we have here tonight that we can
14 give out for those who haven't seen it, that
15 urges the Chancellor to pull this and reconsider
16 this proposal.

17 Now obviously you know what the situation
18 is, we have three middle schools, we have a high
19 school and we have that space school that shares
20 this space. So the major issue that the speaker
21 sees and that has his concern is the sharing of
22 space. We have had the pleasure of touring the
23 school, so we understand these are smaller
24 schools, they're sharing spaces, it's confined,
25 and there's a lot of high-need students that

1 have special needs. So put together, it's
2 just not a strong plan, and his concern is
3 strengthening and supporting the existing
4 schools, that's the number one priority.

5 And the bottom line is that by taking away
6 so many classrooms and spaces from the existing
7 schools, he is not convinced that that can be
8 done without doing it to the detriment of you
9 and your children who attend these current
10 schools.

11 I don't want to go on too long, but the
12 fundamental issues as you've already heard are
13 the sharing of spaces, the gymnasium you've just
14 heard about, the auditorium, the cafeteria,
15 special science rooms, art rooms, all those
16 types of facilities, we don't think--and
17 bringing in yet another school is a very good
18 idea.

19 The bathrooms we've also heard about, and
20 that sort of raises another topic, which is,
21 again, the school only has one single entrance.
22 And when you're talking about bringing in this
23 very young group of children, we don't know if
24 it's going to be good for them either. This
25 school is filled with middle schools, skills

1 students, and high school students, frankly
2 who are a lot bigger than I am, and I really
3 don't think that's a good mix, it's not a safe
4 mix, and I don't think it's positive for the
5 schools.

6 So let me just summarize by saying, again,
7 anyone who wants a copy of this letter, please
8 raise your hand, we're happy, Monica [phonetic]
9 from my office is here, Monica, maybe you could
10 try to start distributing these letters, I'll
11 also come around.

12 Again, thank you for being here and we're
13 with you and we're going to try to convince the
14 DOE to reconsider this plan. Thank you again.

15 MS. DONELIN: We're down to one mic. So it
16 is now my pleasure to introduce Iris Quinones,
17 who is the representative for U.S.
18 Congresswoman, Nydia Velazquez. Please come up.

19 MS. IRIS QUINONES: Thank you and good
20 evening everyone. My name is Iris Quinones and
21 I'm here representing Congresswoman Velazquez.

22 As a representative of the 12th
23 Congressional District, including Chinatown on
24 the Lower East Side, the Congresswoman Velazquez
25 is really concerned with the Department of

1 Education-proposed co-location of Manhattan
2 Charter School II in the Corlears M56 Complex.

3 The Congresswoman Velazquez strongly
4 believes and urges the Department of Education
5 to reconsider its decision on work--and work
6 with parents, community groups and educators to
7 find an alternative solution.

8 Why would you cut back and give opportunity
9 to charter schools, when we can have public
10 school improve and grow?

11 The Department of Education has the
12 privilege of being these families' first line of
13 defense when the schools are no longer catering
14 to the population they serve. To turn your back
15 on such an issue inspires distrust and
16 resentment towards the very institution whose
17 duty is to protect and enhance the fundamental
18 right of education.

19 The proposed co-location of Manhattan
20 Charter School at the Corlears Complex will
21 inevitably reduce space in the building. The
22 Department has said that the building is
23 underutilized. However, the parents and staff
24 who are with our children every single day,
25 state the school does not have enough room to

1 expand.

2 The co-location will further diminish the
3 quality of school life and students. There with
4 less physical education space a smaller lunch
5 area.

6 Parents and teachers, what the school needs
7 is a library, not a co-location. Thank you.

8 Every child in United States deserves to get
9 a quality education, the children of New York
10 City should not be an exception. Every teacher
11 in the United States deserves to be provided
12 with adequate resources and training, the
13 teachers of New York City are not an exception.

14 Every family in the United States deserves
15 to be involved in any decision making that
16 impacts the future of the children, the families
17 of New York City, and especially here at
18 Corlears Complex are not an exception.

19 Every Department on Education in United
20 States has a duty to fight for and uphold these
21 rights. Please, do not be an exception. Thank
22 you.

23 MS. DONELIN: Next we're going to hear from
24 Yume Kitase from Councilwoman Chin's office.
25 Margaret Chin's office.

1 MS. YUME KITASE: Hi, my name is Yume, I'm
2 here from the Office of New York City
3 Councilmember Margaret Chin. She's very sorry
4 that she couldn't be here tonight,
5 unfortunately, she had like five places she had
6 to be simultaneously. So until we develop
7 cloning, that's going to be a problem.

8 I'd like to thank the principals for
9 organizing a tour of the space, it was very
10 helpful for us to get just a visual idea of the
11 plan, and I'm here to testify on behalf of
12 Councilmember Chin.

13 First of all, I'd like to relate to her
14 disappointment that Manhattan Charter School has
15 chosen to pursue public school space. She does
16 not--Councilmember Chin joined in the letter
17 that Paul mentioned before, and we have more
18 copies if you didn't get one, opposing the co-
19 location of Manhattan Charter School in this
20 building.

21 And I just want to give a little bit of
22 history. We met actually--the Councilmember met
23 with Stephanie [phonetic] and Jeanie [phonetic]
24 from Manhattan Charter School last fall, and at
25 the time they asked for help to look for private

1 school space, which we then strenuously tried
2 to help them with. Councilmember Chin talked to
3 the archdiocese twice on their behalf, we gave
4 them at least five or six locations to look
5 into, and I'd just like to say that
6 Councilmember Chin always tries to support all
7 students in her districts, whether they're in
8 public space, charter space or private school
9 space.

10 However, and you know, obviously we're
11 disappointed that none of those spaces worked
12 out, and I will say, however, that she is
13 opposed to them being in this public school
14 space.

15 And so of course we were disappointed to
16 learn that the application that they originally
17 submitted after doing all this work to help them
18 find private school space, the application they
19 originally submitted actually states that their
20 preference and the space that they're looking
21 for is public school space. So we were a little
22 surprised to see that.

23 We have a lot of concerns, and the
24 Councilmember feels that there are a lot of
25 concerns that still have not been addressed. We

1 have more detailed testimony which I can share
2 with anyone, but just briefly, they are, you
3 know, what happens post the first year when
4 Manhattan Charter School needs more gym space,
5 and who is it who is going to be doing the 10-
6 minute walk each way to Basketball City?
7 Because it isn't clear whether that's going to
8 be Manhattan Charter School or the schools that
9 are already here and using the gym that they
10 have.

11 What will happen to the size of the schools
12 in the building that are currently here as
13 Manhattan Charter School grows? According to
14 the numbers that we've been provided, Manhattan
15 Charter School is going to be the second largest
16 school in this building, and what we're
17 concerned is, how is that going to translate in
18 terms of how big the schools can actually be--
19 the ones that already here, can they actually
20 all fit when Manhattan Charter School is at its
21 full utilization?

22 And we've seen some of the numbers that make
23 us a little concerned that this may in fact come
24 at the expense of one of the schools.

25 So we just would ask to see, you know, we

1 would ask to see workable math that makes this
2 work when all the schools are still at their
3 full capacity, keeping the schools that are here
4 at the size that they are.

5 We also are interested to know the schools'
6 ability to serve their special needs ELL
7 students and other high-need students will be
8 impacted as classroom space becomes more and
9 more constricted.

10 And we're uncomfortable that--at the idea of
11 elementary school students occupying the same
12 space as high school students, especially when
13 the principals have already worked so hard to
14 keep the middle school students and the high
15 school students separate within this building,
16 and having elementary school soon is going to
17 make that complicated.

18 And finally, Councilmember Chin just
19 questions the logic of siting a charter
20 elementary school in this building, at the
21 expense of high-needs middle school and high
22 school students when there are still elementary
23 schools in this district that aren't full, that
24 have empty seats. And so we'd just like to urge
25 the Chancellor to reconsider this proposal.

1 Thank you.

2 MS. DONELIN: Thank you. Thank you. Thank
3 you. Can you hear me? No? All right, thank
4 you very much, I'm speaking right into the mic.

5 I'd like to recognize also, there were go,
6 Rosemarie Diaz who is here representing New York
7 State Senator Daniel Squadron. Rosemary. As
8 well as Monica Guardiola, who's also from
9 Speaker Silver's office. Thank you Monica. And
10 Donna Manganello who is our UFT District
11 Representative, is with us also here tonight.
12 Donna.

13 We're going to proceed to public comment,
14 I'm going to call you up by the order in which
15 you signed up. The first person we have signed
16 up is Elissa Curasco. You have two minutes.
17 Thank you.

18 MS. ELISSA CURASCO: Hello everyone, my name
19 is Elissa, I'm a former student at University,
20 soon to be a graduate.

21 And out of all the time I've been to school,
22 I've traveled a lot since I was a kid, and every
23 school I've been to, not one school has had all
24 the teachers push their students so hard and
25 show them so much care that the students who

1 have graduated actually want to come back to
2 the school.

3 And for the government to look at us as
4 numbers, and not at the people that we truly
5 are, is messed up. Because people in prison are
6 looked at as numbers and we are not in prison,
7 we deserve to be looked at as humans and deserve
8 to have our needs met.

9 Everyone in this room has needs, and I'm
10 sure all the parents, your kids have needs too.
11 And for us to be chopped down on space, and not
12 have the space to provide your kids with your
13 needs is truly just not right, and it limits us
14 because right now we're already a little school
15 enough as it is. We have barely any support on
16 our behalf, and that's why we're testifying and
17 everything.

18 And to have a guidance counselor who's there
19 for you 24/7 and teachers you can go to is
20 actually good for the students, because they can
21 express whatever's going on in school,
22 whatever's going on in life that they can't
23 express to their parents, they have someone to
24 go to. Because I know I wouldn't talk to any of
25 my parents, and it's kind of bad, I would talk

1 to a guidance counselor or something. It's
2 the first person I would go to, I'm not going to
3 lie.

4 But at least we're--knowing that we're
5 provided a safe place in this school, and if you
6 take away our space, it becomes less safe of an
7 environment. And to have little kids and a
8 group of older kids only provides more of a
9 safety hazard because the bigger kids may bully
10 the younger kids, that's already some of the
11 cases you see in streets and stuff like that,
12 and that's--we don't want this to become the
13 streets, we don't want this battle of the
14 schools and battle of the grades, and none of
15 that. So thank you.

16 MS. DONELIN: Thank you very much. Our next
17 speaker is Linda Surls. Linda? Come on down.

18 MS. LINDA SURLS: Hi. As you know, my name
19 is Linda Surls.

20 When I was told about this charter school
21 being added to this school, I didn't realize
22 that my grandson actually goes to this school,
23 in Castle, DeQuan Smith [phonetic].

24 So this is a great concern to me as a
25 parent, the way that the DOE is just looking at

1 our kids as a slop of bacon, a piece of meat,
2 you know, that you could just shove over in the
3 corner until you want to get it out the freezer.
4 But these are our future, these kids are the
5 future, and if we don't treat them as such, then
6 we're all going to have price to pay here, we
7 really do.

8 So I think that the DOE should really
9 consider this proposal, and from what I have
10 heard from these SLT teams, there's just not
11 enough space here. And why force the space,
12 force yourself in this school when you're not
13 wanted, you know? You're really not wanted.

14 So I really hope and I pray that you all
15 revise your proposal and go to a catholic school
16 or somewhere, because us--these public children--
17 -public school children are having enough
18 problems. Like some of them are homeless or
19 their families don't have the proper food to
20 feed them or cloth them properly, and then to
21 come in here and be crowded up, and not even
22 have the space where they could be educated
23 properly, it's just unfair, it's very unfair.

24 So I hope that the changes come about that
25 are needed for our children because I love

1 children. I was going to come even though I
2 didn't know it was my grandson's school. But it
3 means even more to me now that I do know it's
4 his school. So thank you.

5 MS. DONELIN: Next up is Erin McMann, and
6 after Erin is Christina Spencer. And the
7 timekeeper is right in front of the mic for
8 everybody.

9 MS. ERIN MCMANN: Hi. My name is Erin
10 McMann, and I'm the Principal of the Henry
11 Street School for International Studies, and I'm
12 going to be brief.

13 So would you guys all stand up please. Stop
14 right there guys. Stop. Would you all stand
15 up? Would the panel please stand up? All of
16 you, please stand up. Okay, please stand up.
17 Okay.

18 So this represents right now the high school
19 on the fourth floor of this building. I just
20 want you to go from Dan, right down to--is it
21 Mary? To Maureen. So Dan to Maureen is our
22 current high school, that's our fourth floor.

23 So now what we're going to do is next year
24 we're going to take away five rooms. So would
25 you guys just move down a little bit? Dan,

1 would you move just--come down just a little
2 bit. Move down this way. And Melissa
3 [phonetic] and Mark [phonetic], would you just
4 come around the table and join them. Okay.

5 So this is 2013 to 2014. This is now the
6 school. Okay. So now this is 2014 to 2015.
7 Anthony [phonetic]--Mr. Taley [phonetic], come
8 on over, Mr. Epps [phonetic], come on over. And
9 now would you guys move up a little bit? Just
10 move over, just come down a little bit. Come
11 down--it's really easy, just come right down,
12 it's so simple what you're doing, just come on
13 down. Okay, how are you feeling? Okay.

14 No, no, don't go away Rachel, I don't want
15 you to drop out of school, please stay in. No,
16 no, Rachel, really, you're important to me. Oh,
17 oh, no Rachel, I'm sorry, you know, you're a
18 student with special needs, so I'm going to put
19 you right here, right here next to me in this
20 [break in tape]. Okay.

21 So Rachel, how do you feel? Do you feel
22 like you're a part of things?

23 MS. GRADER: Claustrophobic.

24 MS. MCMANN: Oh, you do? I'm sorry. I'm
25 sorry about that. Okay.

1 So now it's 2015 to 2016, and we've lost a
2 total of, wait for it, 12 rooms.

3 Okay, so Ms. Scott and Ms. Reggae and Ms.
4 Beck and Mr. Ellis and Ms. Pensky [phonetic] and
5 Mr. Lawrence, would you come on up? Okay, so
6 these are my teachers and my faculty, and this
7 is what's going to happen to them. So let's--
8 would you guys come in, and will you just come
9 in behind them? Because I know you're not going
10 to have enough room down there. So just come on
11 in and fill--just come right in. Come right in,
12 keep going. Is it difficult for you to get
13 around them? I'm so sorry.

14 Okay, so now--okay, so now--now, now, this
15 is 2016, and this, welcome to the Henry Street
16 School for International Studies, a 6th through
17 12th grade school, seven grades in one hallway.

18 So Mark, how do you feel over there? What
19 adjective would you use, being on the corner of
20 that table right now? You feel crowded? I'm
21 sorry Mark, I didn't do my job.

22 MS. DONELIN: All right, Christina Spencer
23 is up next. Christina? Is Christina still
24 here? Okay. Come on up to the mic. And after
25 Christina is--I've lost my list, someone covered

1 it up, Rachel Ellis--no, it's Daniel Ellis,
2 sorry. Oh sorry, Judy Grewin [phonetic] is
3 next, I'm sorry.

4 MS. CHRISTINA SPENCER: Hello. I apologize,
5 my little talk is not going to be quite as
6 interactive, but I just want to speak for a
7 moment, I'm a teacher at Henry Street School,
8 I've been here four years and I'm a Special
9 Education teacher.

10 When my classroom isn't being used for a
11 class period, I'm in there with small groups of
12 students, I'm doing testing with students, and
13 I'm working with small groups and I'm working
14 one-on-one, and I know all of our classrooms are
15 always being used in this way and all of our
16 teachers are always working to make an
17 environment that our students enjoy being in and
18 enjoy learning in, and I ask you to not take
19 that environment away from our students. Thank
20 you.

21 MS. DONELIN: All right. It is Judy Grewin
22 who is next, I'm sorry about that, and after
23 that is Michael Locker.

24 MS. JUDY GREWIN: Hi everybody, my name is
25 Judy Grewin and I'm speaking on behalf of the

1 related service providers. I'm a Speech and
2 Language Therapist, and I service children in
3 Castle Middle School as well as University
4 Neighborhood Middle School.

5 As Ms. Douc mentioned previously, there are
6 a lot of support services for special education
7 children in this building. She mentioned some
8 of them, but there are actually many others in
9 addition to SETTS and CTT and the Math clinics
10 and the ELA Clinic and the Wilson Reading
11 Program, and the ELL Program and counseling, the
12 Dean's Offices, the Dean's Offices in all the
13 buildings. There's also adaptive Phys Ed that's
14 provided, there are two occupational therapists
15 that service all the children in the building,
16 and there are two full-time speech therapists
17 and one part-time speech therapist.

18 I've been in the building for six years, and
19 in the time I've been here, there have actually
20 been two part-time speech therapists and two
21 full-time speech therapists to service the whole
22 building.

23 We service children with IEPs, individual
24 educational plans, who have mandated, which
25 means legal services, to support them.

1 In the six years I've been here, the
2 Special Ed population has increased from about
3 18% in Castle, to up to about 30% to 33% in
4 Castle and University Neighborhood Middle
5 School.

6 In the last two weeks alone I've been given
7 two additional children who need speech and
8 language services. I don't expect this
9 population to decrease, at best it may remain
10 the same, chances are likely it will continue to
11 increase.

12 All the support services, including speech
13 and language need small rooms, these one-quarter
14 rooms that people have been describing. I need
15 a location in order to give an optimal
16 environment to the children I work with, that is
17 a separate location, and that is quiet. A lot
18 of these kids are distractible. They have been
19 diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder, they
20 have difficulty with focus. They themselves
21 will close the door if there's too much noise in
22 the hallway, because they know the environment
23 that they learn best in.

24 It's very difficult if not impossible
25 situation for me to be sharing a classroom with

1 one, two or three other related services
2 providers, because the children are going to be
3 the ones that suffer. Okay, my time is up.

4 MS. DONELIN: Thank you very much. After
5 Michael Locker, whose next, is Daniel Ellis.
6 Daniel, you're next.

7 MR. MICHAEL LOCKER: My name is Michael
8 Locker, I've been a teacher at UNMS since it
9 started, for eight years, and pretty much
10 everything's been said, but I'll say it from a
11 teacher's perspective at UNMS.

12 I'm not opposed to charter schools, I think
13 innovation in education is a good thing, and
14 that's supposedly what charters are here for.

15 And I think as a public school, UNMS we are
16 innovative, that's what we do, we have the space
17 to do it. We're a traditional school that's
18 innovating, we do things differently, you've
19 heard Rachel before talk about that.

20 It's a special place, we don't have the same
21 kind of schedules, we don't have the same kind
22 of classes. And by cutting down our classrooms,
23 it sort of sentences us to be traditional, it
24 sort of takes away our ability to innovate,
25 which is apparently what we all want. We all

1 want that, politicians want that, communities
2 want that. All three of our schools will not be
3 able to do that if we're cut down the way that
4 we're supposed to be cut down. All of these
5 schools deserve to be innovative and to change
6 things.

7 MS. DONELIN: Thank you. Daniel Ellis and
8 after Daniel it's Catherine Beck.

9 MR. DANIEL ELLIS: Good evening everybody,
10 my name is Dan Ellis, I'm the Phys Ed teacher
11 and the Athletic Director of Henry Street School
12 for International Studies.

13 My concerns really do just come around the
14 gym space for both our Phys Ed classes that we
15 oftentimes have to share. I have in certain
16 classes about 45 high school students, and which
17 I have to share that gym space with another 30
18 middle school students from another school. My
19 question is, how are we going to do that with
20 elementary school students?

21 Okay, that's my first point. My second
22 point is, as the Athletic Director, my job is to
23 try to get more programs for my students to
24 enjoy. Right now we have one PSAL sport that
25 we've finished this year, and we're starting a

1 softball program, a baseball program and two
2 separate soccer programs. These are the things
3 that are going to be used after school. That's
4 what the gym space is there for, what the yard
5 space is there for. We're already pushed to our
6 limits with our shared space, how am I going to
7 let my school grow? That's the goal, right? We
8 want to get more students into our schools, we
9 want to give them a place to go. And that's
10 what I'm trying to do, but I can't do it with
11 the amount of shared space we have, okay? So
12 that's my last point. Thank you.

13 MS. DONELIN: Thank you very much.
14 Catherine Beck, and after Catherine is Min-Hue
15 Hweng [phonetic].

16 MS. CATHERINE BECK: Hi, I'm Catherine Beck,
17 and I'm speaking on behalf of the Guidance
18 Department at Castle Middle School.

19 Essentially, reduction of space would
20 dramatically reduce our ability to service
21 socio-emotional needs of our students. As
22 you've heard through many, many speakers
23 tonight, we have a very high needs at-risk
24 population.

25 A third of our students are Special Ed, all

1 of our students are at risk, they need special
2 services. And right now, at any one point
3 during the day, we have many things going on.
4 We have a full case of mandated students who are
5 required by law to be served. At the same time,
6 while our mandated groups are running, we also
7 have crisis support and crisis intervention. We
8 have meetings with ACS workers and parents and
9 teachers and administration, it's a very busy
10 office.

11 And reducing our space presents two major
12 problems. One is confidentiality. Best
13 practices as counselors require that we provide
14 confidentiality to our students, and that would
15 be impossible if we were stuffed into--in one
16 room. Right now we have two rooms and it works
17 out really well because we have a waiting area,
18 so that--and there's a door, and there's--
19 actually it's a glass door that separates the
20 two rooms, so we really have the ability to
21 accommodate visitors who are coming in who have
22 meetings, and I can assure you both rooms are
23 pretty full throughout the day.

24 So in short, we have a very, very high needs
25 population right now. They are receiving the

1 service, but it would be very difficult to
2 serve them effectively without the current
3 space. Thank you.

4 MS. DONELIN: Thank you very much. Min-Hue
5 Hwang, and after Min-Hue is Naom [phonetic]
6 Reggae. Is Min-Hue here? Okay, Naom Reggae,
7 number 11. We have our person? She left, okay.
8 So number 11, Naom--Naomi, I'm sorry.

9 MS. NAOMI REGGAE: Hi, my name is Naomi
10 Reggae and I teach Ninth Grade English at Henry
11 Street. It is the third school I've taught in,
12 but it's my first year here, and it markedly
13 different from my past experiences because every
14 day when I come to work at Henry Street, I see
15 smiles on the faces of my colleagues, and I see
16 smiles on the faces of my students, and that's
17 why I love being at the school.

18 In the past, I've worked in schools where
19 space was extremely limited, and it's a lot--it
20 was a lot like what this blueprint, the EIS, the
21 plan for the co-location describes. Every
22 classroom in use every period of the day.

23 Now I don't know very much about urban
24 planning, I never studied that, but I did study
25 education, and something really important I

1 learned in my Master's program is that we
2 teach our students in two ways. We have the
3 actual content, the actual curriculum that we
4 teach, and then there's the hidden curriculum.
5 So there's what you're saying out loud to your
6 students and you're teaching them about math and
7 English, and then there's what you're saying to
8 them through what you're doing. And I'm really,
9 really, really concerned about what we're saying
10 to our kids in all three of these schools when
11 we take away the space.

12 In my last school, where every room was
13 being used every period of every day, my
14 students said things like this school is trash,
15 my students said things like, no one cares about
16 this place. I have never heard words like that
17 from my students at Henry Street, and I don't
18 ever want to hear those words, and I am
19 terrified that if a plan like this goes through,
20 that is what we are telling our students, that
21 the schools that already exist are basically
22 garbage that's about to be disposed of, and that
23 our students don't deserve more than that.
24 Thank you.

25 MS. DONELIN: Thank you. Malix Small is

1 next, and after Malix is Stanley Ng.

2 MR. MALIX SMALL: Hello, my name is Malix
3 Small and I'm a former student at Castle Middle
4 School, and I'm currently a student at
5 University Neighborhood School.

6 The main problem I have with the charter
7 school coming in is the space. My school
8 already only has half a hallway, and so the
9 students are very worried about the--I'm sorry,
10 ESL/ELL students and Special Ed students because
11 they have a right to learn too, and you're going
12 to be cutting away their spaces to get a proper
13 education, and we already have shrinking space.
14 So--yes.

15 So I feel about the school is that, after
16 you guys--no pun intended, you guys don't know,
17 you don't show, you really just don't care about
18 our school. Okay, bye.

19 MS. DONELIN: Thank you. Next is Stanley
20 Ng, and after Stanley is O'Neil Rowe.

21 MR. STANLEY ANG: Good evening everybody.
22 I'm a member of the Citywide Council for High
23 School, and I will be talking about the high
24 school concerns here.

25 Roughly looking at the history of the

1 school, you currently have about 420 seats in
2 the high school. Historically in the past, the
3 number has been higher in the 450 to 480 range.
4 One would have to question the current high
5 school admission policy, and how it applies to
6 the current high school.

7 The key thing about enrolment, it goes up,
8 it goes down. Two years from now it will go up,
9 you don't have the classrooms now. It's not
10 going to happen. That's one thing I want to
11 bring up.

12 The second thing a lot of people fail to
13 mention, in this area of Lower Manhattan, we
14 have lost two high schools. We lost Washington
15 Irving, which was a thousand seats, and we lost
16 Legacy.

17 Washington Irving was--had a program, that
18 means 16% of the kids at the bottom had to be
19 taken. Sixteen percent of those kids, 160 kids
20 were Special Ed kids, 70 seats, 70 MRE, more
21 restrictive environments self-contained class
22 kids, those seats are lost. The replacement
23 schools are unlimited screens. They don't have
24 to take these Special Ed, it's a lottery.

25 So we lost in Lower Manhattan many Special

1 Ed seats, okay? If the charter school should
2 come into this school, they will be taking away
3 all the extra classrooms. That's one thing I
4 want to make clear to everybody, that's number
5 one.

6 Number two, ESL/ELL, the current Manhattan
7 Charter School have zero percent ELL right now.
8 I also want to let you know current DOE policy
9 and practices discriminate against the Chinese
10 parents in this district. Now here's the proof.

11 This is a copy of the notice that went out
12 in Chinese for today's date. And guess what, it
13 has the wrong address on it. Look among you,
14 how many Chinese parents did you see here?
15 Apparently they're elsewhere. I'm going to
16 submit this as proof that someone screwed up,
17 okay, the practice is illegal in my opinion,
18 okay? And this hearing should be halted and
19 redone from the beginning because the Chinese
20 parents were discriminated against. And here's
21 the proof. Here you are. Thank you.

22 MS. DONELIN: Thank you. O'Neil Rowe, and
23 after O'Neil, Amber Delgado.

24 MR. O'NEIL ROWE: Hello everybody, and today
25 I'll be representing three schools. Henry

1 Street, UNMS and Castle, but mainly I will be
2 representing UNMS.

3 UNMS has been through a lot of stuff and all
4 I would like to say is that--well, like, if we
5 didn't have--if we don't have enough schools, I
6 mean, classes, it will be very hard for us to--
7 okay, as I was saying. Yes, it would be very
8 hard for us to concentrate because we--because
9 it would be difficult because teachers would
10 have to share same classes, and if we don't
11 share classes, then we would--the teachers would
12 have to carry their item--their equipment to the
13 classes that we're going to. And I would--and
14 I'm very concerned about the teachers and the
15 students' health because the teachers would have
16 to carry their equipment and in--like in carts
17 and move around in the schools, and for the
18 students, they'll be sitting down in class
19 almost all day and their legs might get tired
20 and they might be bored.

21 MS. DONELIN: Thank you. Amber Delgado, and
22 she'll be followed by Patrice Senta.

23 MS. AMBER DELGADO: Hi, my name is Amber and
24 when I came to this school there was a lot of
25 things that I had done here that I never thought

1 that I would do, and it changed a lot for me,
2 because it's a new school and a new grade and I
3 would be like really scared.

4 And--well, to me, since it changed for me,
5 it changed what I thought was going to happen
6 and everything. So I had made some posters and
7 I would like to read one of them.

8 This one is a new oath [phonetic] to UNMS.
9 U is for the unbelievable way you've made us
10 feel at home, N is for never giving up on us, M
11 is for the many services you provided, and S is
12 for the happy sounds your neighborhood children
13 make.

14 I think that one of the things that I
15 thought was so great was that--to make new
16 friends, and I think that the most friends that
17 I really do have could probably be the teachers
18 because I get along with them really well. Same
19 thing with Ms. Penado.

20 And I just want to say that this has been so
21 great for me so far, being in seventh grade
22 probably is the most fun this year, and I would
23 really like for you guys not to take that away
24 from us. Thank you.

25 MS. DONELIN: Next is Patrice Senta, and

1 after Patrice, Diana Jenna [phonetic].

2 MS. PATRICE SENTA: Good evening. My name
3 is Patrice Senta and I've been a Science Teacher
4 at UNMS for the past five years.

5 I have two points that I would like to make
6 about how this co-location will cause inequities
7 for Special Ed students at our school and other
8 schools in the building. [break in tape] from
9 the DOE's Special Education Office.

10 Determining the location of services. The
11 IEP team must determine whether the related
12 service will be provided in the General
13 Education classroom, or in a separate location.
14 Location of services should be based on the
15 optimal environment for skill acquisition.

16 At UNMS, 33.6% of our students receive
17 special education services, compared to 16%
18 citywide. If every full-sized classroom is to
19 be fully utilized throughout the day how will
20 the IEP team at UNMS be able to provide services
21 in a location that is based on, as the DOE
22 mandates, the optimal environment for skill
23 acquisition?

24 The answer is that they won't. Students
25 will have to receive services in the General

1 Education classroom because there will be no
2 separate locations available.

3 Secondly, the Building Utilization Plan
4 projects that UNMS will have two self-contained
5 Special Education classes through 2017. It also
6 shows that MCS II is projected to never have a
7 self-contained class. The BUP calls for UNMS to
8 lose a total of four classrooms through the
9 years of 2012 through 2017 as MCS II continues
10 to gain classrooms.

11 However, the projected number of self-
12 contained classrooms for both schools does not
13 change during this time. Why is this footprint
14 formula that the BUP was created with based
15 solely on the number of students enrolled and
16 not the needs of those students that we are
17 mandated to service?

18 As a teacher I would receive an
19 unsatisfactory rating if I treated every student
20 as a number, indistinguishable from the next.
21 Why is the DOE allowed to do this in planning
22 for the spaces that our students will learn in?
23 I strongly oppose this co-location and I urge
24 the DOE to reconsider.

25 MS. DONELIN: Thank you, next is Diana Jenna

1 and after that is Colin Lawrence. No? Okay,
2 Ashley Marie Miller [phonetic], I'm sorry. I
3 can't remember--I'm sorry, you are? Colin, I'm
4 sorry, welcome. And then Ashley Marie Meha
5 [phonetic].

6 MR. COLIN LAWRENCE: Hello, my name is Colin
7 Lawrence and I'm a 1st year teacher at Henry
8 Street. Actually I'm not a 1st year teacher but
9 it's my first year at Henry Street where I've
10 been very impressed with our Principal, Ms.
11 McMann and the school that she's been building
12 before I got here and continuing to build this
13 year.

14 A lot of the discussion tonight has focused
15 on physical space, but I would like to talk
16 about something else which is a lot harder to
17 measure and that's psychological space.

18 So there's two things about this proposed
19 co-location that concern me. One is that it's
20 an elementary school and the second is that it's
21 a charter school. And the reason that charter
22 school--the fact that it's a charter school
23 concerns me has to do with the way that the
24 rhetoric and the narrative that's talked about
25 in the media, where charter schools are very

1 much in favor and there's an education reform
2 movement with a lot of powerful people behind it
3 who are proposing charter schools in lots of
4 different places.

5 The reason it's an elementary school
6 concerns me is because given a school that has K
7 through 12, who is the priority is going to go
8 to? I think that even the high school students
9 would say we need to take care of the little
10 kids first.

11 So as a History teacher I'm made to think of
12 Brown versus Board of Education, and in the
13 court's ruling in that decision they said that a
14 sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a
15 child to learn.

16 And so my question to Chancellor Walcott and
17 to others who are considering this proposal is
18 does the moving a charter school, K through 5
19 charter school, into this building make our
20 students feel inferior, and if it does, what
21 does that--how hard does that make our jobs as
22 teachers to educate them when we're already
23 battling negative stereotypes every day as it is
24 trying to educate our students?

25 I think that the District as a whole needs

1 to consider if they want to reinforce those
2 stereotypes or try to fight against those and do
3 something to support the schools that already
4 exist in this building. Thank you.

5 MS. DONELIN: Ashley, is Ashley here?
6 Ashley? After Ashley is Matthew Perra.

7 MS. ASHLEY: Okay. Maybe you're a parent
8 you want--and you want to fight for us with all
9 the knowledge you have and that's awesome--

10 [Background noise]

11 MS. DONELIN: Let me just put this down and
12 you start.

13 MS. ASHLEY: Okay. Maybe you're a parent
14 and you want to fight for us with all the
15 knowledge you have and that's awesome but have
16 you sit and talk to your child about what's
17 really happening? If you haven't, maybe you
18 should because we are the only ones that know
19 what's really happening in our classrooms, in
20 our hallways because we're the ones that spend
21 the whole day in our classrooms.

22 The other day Elizabeth Rose [phonetic] was
23 answering all of our questions. A lot of the
24 parents asked what they want to know but only
25 five or four students talked and more than half

1 cut off. I'm one of them, and I was really
2 mad about what happened because I was talking
3 about how we need our classrooms for many
4 reasons but thanks to that I know there's
5 [phonetic] something.

6 She says that since we don't use all of our
7 classrooms they are going to put libraries in
8 ESL classrooms and the ones we don't use. But
9 since she cut me off she didn't hear what I had
10 to say. I said that we using--we have
11 libraries, ESL classrooms and detention rooms.
12 So maybe I wonder if you did the math wrong
13 maybe we are using all of our classroom, maybe
14 we're over-filled and you just don't know that
15 because you just have overconfidence.

16 MS. DONELIN: Thank you, next is Matthew
17 Perra and after Matthew is Rachel Grater
18 [phonetic].

19 MR. MATTHEW PERRA: Good evening, my name is
20 Matthew Perra. I'm the Special Education
21 Coordinator at the Manhattan Charter School. I
22 am not the enemy, Manhattan Charter School is
23 not the enemy.

24 I think we have far more in common than we
25 have differences. We all have a commitment to

1 our students, a commitment to our parents and
2 a commitment to serving this community, okay? I
3 proudly represent Manhattan Charter School here
4 tonight.

5 Manhattan Charter School has a proven record
6 of success resulting in consistently high gains
7 for our students. Among the assets of Manhattan
8 Charter School are sound school leadership, a
9 tremendously dedicated staff and an active
10 parent body.

11 There is a dynamic approach to curriculum,
12 instruction and assessment that ensures students
13 are making continual academic gains through the
14 intelligent and effective use of achievement
15 data at the school, classroom and child level we
16 are able to help identify students who are
17 struggling and serve them as best as we're able.
18 There's a range of supports to assist our
19 students in need including teacher development,
20 small group instruction in and out of the
21 classroom.

22 Manhattan Charter School has never rested
23 despite a record of success. In the past year
24 there have been a number of--I'm sorry, in this
25 past year alone there have been a number of

1 initiatives that further increase the efficacy
2 of instruction at Manhattan Charter including
3 Saturday instruction, small group instruction
4 for our 3rd through 5th graders, and I'd like to
5 share some relevant statistics with you all.

6 Last year, Manhattan Charter School earned
7 an A on its 2010/2011 New York City progress
8 report, not bad. Eighty-one percent of our
9 students qualify for free or reduced price
10 lunch. I'm sorry. Enrolment is in very high
11 demand and our waitlist is long. Only 11% of
12 our students who applied for admission to MCS
13 were accepted which indicates a very high level
14 of need in this community.

15 Manhattan Charter School is committed to
16 servicing District 1. In 2007 Manhattan Charter
17 School amended its charter to give preference to
18 students who live in District 1. The only
19 incoming non-district students in the past two
20 years are those with siblings already attending
21 MCS.

22 I stand before you proudly saying that
23 Manhattan Charter School is an asset to this
24 community and we look forward to the opportunity
25 to working together. Thank you, good night.

1 MS. DONELIN: So we skipped Diana Jerez
2 [phonetic], go ahead up.

3 MS. DIANA JEREZ: Hello, my name is Diana
4 Jerez, I am a 6th grade student at UNMS. Today I
5 am here to talk about the charter school that is
6 coming into this building. I have many reasons
7 why I disagree with them.

8 First of all, you have to think about this,
9 where are the Special Ed kids going to go or the
10 ESL kids? They need their extra--they need
11 their extra rooms for them to actually learn.
12 They can't learn something that they can't
13 understand. The charter school that is coming
14 in is only kindergarten and first grade. Every
15 year--every year they're going to grow, so they
16 are going to take more space from us.

17 Another reason why I think it's a bad idea
18 for them to come in is because it is just going
19 to be an unsafe and unhappy environment. We
20 don't even have enough space, we have half of a
21 hallway. If they take them out we will have
22 nothing.

23 Now let's think about this, if you were a
24 parent, would you want to send your kid, your
25 child, in a school where they will get hurt and

1 they will be unhappy?

2 MS. DONELIN: Thank you, Rachel Grater and
3 after Rachel, Laura Penado.

4 MS. RACHEL GRATER: Okay, I'm going to be
5 speaking to you from a different perspective.
6 I've been an educator for the New York Public
7 School system for 11 years. I agree with the
8 gentleman who came up to speak about Manhattan
9 Charter school that their best interest is--that
10 their interest are in the students, I agree.

11 If the DOE was able to bring us to the table
12 to create a plan that would work I am for it but
13 they have not. Chancellor Walcott has not been
14 into UNMS classrooms. The office of portfolio
15 was invited to come in while we were teaching,
16 they stayed in the hall. This is not based on
17 education, this is based on numbers.

18 I asked the Office of Portfolio, I said I'm
19 insulted as an educator. Why haven't you
20 invited myself and others to the table with
21 Manhattan Charter School, with their educators
22 to talk about this? You are being excluded from
23 this process, not just us.

24 The fact of the matter is their job is to
25 carry out whatever their plan is. Once it's

1 done they're gone. So I am not here in
2 opposition to Manhattan Charter School. Me
3 quoting your numbers is not in opposition it's
4 just stating the fact of what's going on in this
5 district and what the actual numbers of our
6 students are. And you know what you haven't
7 served them yet, you haven't.

8 If you want to come here and you want to
9 serve them great, great but when are you going
10 to come--when can we come to your school and sit
11 down and say let's our amendments to the Office
12 of Portfolio, let them amend the proposal prior
13 to the March 21st PEP vote which will be based
14 solely on their ideas, public analysis,
15 feedback. Ms. Rose said at our SLT meeting
16 rarely have they ever amended their proposal
17 based on the feedback yours or otherwise.

18 And I see someone holding up the deuces
19 sign, it is deuces because if your child came to
20 my class I'd educate them. You look angry and
21 what's interesting is that I'm not angry, I'm
22 not angry. I'm not angry over your existence.
23 I'm angry at the fact that the DOE is trying to
24 pass off this transparent process as just, as
25 righteous, as a sign for equity of education and

1 it is not.

2 So if you are in a position to actually make
3 a change to the greater system you should be
4 doing that, you should be working for that with
5 us.

6 The last thing I will say we are demanding
7 that the Office of Portfolio follow the process
8 that they set for it. They are supposed to take
9 the feedback, the valid feedback from educators,
10 parents and community members to go back to the
11 drawing table and look at what is called the
12 proposal. A proposal is a proposal, it's not
13 done. But what you have said you were going to
14 submit to the PEP is that it's done and when
15 they vote on it it's done. And the only
16 recourse we have is legal action.

17 Well I will tell you that I've been here
18 till 10:00 at night for the past two months
19 trying to sort through all the mishmash of their
20 verbiage. What should I have been spending all
21 those hours doing Manhattan Charter School
22 educators? What should I have been spending
23 those hours doing? Correct. What should you be
24 doing right now?

25 So the reality is we as educators are not

1 just doing our jobs, we are doing everyone's.
2 So how about we demand them to do their jobs
3 properly?

4 MS. DONELIN: Laura Penado and then Shirley
5 Vargas.

6 MS. PENADO: Again good evening, Buenos
7 noches. I will be brief but I will speak in two
8 languages.

9 [Foreign language].

10 I'm speaking both languages, my native
11 language is English and as you all know, there's
12 no official language in the United States of
13 America.

14 First and foremost, I am not opposed to
15 charter schools either, although I understand
16 the political agenda and right now it's
17 happening with educational reform. However, I
18 am opposed to losing classrooms at the expense
19 of students, at the expense of students with
20 special needs and at the expense of my English
21 language learners.

22 I'm sorry, my allegiance is to the students,
23 that's why I do this job, and come September
24 2012 let's see what's happening. As far as what
25 the end goal is, I'm letting you all know I'm

1 here to stay. Ms. Penado is not going
2 anywhere, Ms. Penado is University Neighborhood
3 Middle School until further notice maybe who
4 knows when. And in Espanola.

5 [Foreign language]

6 My dad here from Dominican Republic
7 visiting, and I love my country but this is my
8 country and I'm not going back. So till then my
9 dad comes and visits, I go visit but I'm here to
10 stay.

11 [Foreign language]

12 MS. DONELIN: Shirley Vargas, and after
13 Shirley is Donna Manganello. Is Shirley here?
14 Shirley Vargas? And after that is Donna
15 Manganello.

16 MS. SHIRLEY VARGAS: Good evening, my name
17 is Shirley Vargas, I'm Castle Spanish teacher,
18 ESL teacher and test coordinator. Been at
19 Castle for five years, it's going to be hard to
20 follow up a lovely motivating speech like that
21 but it's going to be very brief, points have
22 already been mentioned.

23 Two things, as a teacher it's very hard to
24 fulfill all the needs of the students. I am two
25 teachers in one, I am the Spanish teacher and

1 the L teacher, so I have to pull out students
2 and I use my classroom, I also teach my normal
3 teaching periods in Spanish.

4 So I already fulfill two roles, so I'd share
5 my classroom with myself currently. So when we
6 end up sharing more spaces I'll be sharing space
7 with a third person. So now I have another
8 class where now I'm limited to actually provide
9 this English language service for these students
10 which are currently 20% of our population, and
11 are continuing to grow because that is where we
12 currently serve. And it's quite alarming for me
13 to try to wrap my head around that.

14 Now from an administrative perspective as a
15 testing coordinator, I'm sitting down with my
16 colleagues currently trying to figure out how
17 we're going to accommodate the approximate 30%
18 of students we have with the tests just right
19 around the corner.

20 And I know that it's very difficult to
21 understand when there are charter schools out
22 there that don't really service that type of
23 population, so don't know what accommodations
24 really mean. I'm not saying Manhattan Charter
25 School does that, I'm just speaking out loud.

1 So it's very important that for us we
2 understand that the space is very valuable to
3 us. We barely have some of it, we're already
4 struggling, and we're using that old district
5 office as part of our testing accommodations.
6 But there are other schools that are testing at
7 the exact same time that we're testing and I
8 would love to know how they're going to
9 accommodate their special needs students when
10 they have just as much if not more students that
11 need that accommodation. Thank you.

12 MS. DONELIN: Thank you, Donna Manganello,
13 and after Donna is Jessica Rosner.

14 MS. DONNA MANGANELLO: Hi, I'm Donna
15 Manganello and I'm the UFT District
16 Representative proudly representing Community
17 School District 1.

18 We're right in the heart of the immigrant
19 community that once was teeming over with
20 thousands and thousands of people who saw our
21 schools as a way to improve their Latin life.

22 We're very fortunate in District 1 that we
23 don't have to have overcrowded classes so that
24 we can meet the real needs of our students. The
25 unfortunate thing we have to deal with is that

1 we are working for a system that is data
2 maniacal, they look at our students via test
3 scores and they look at our space utilization
4 via formulas and footprints. They don't look at
5 the humanity of our work and how we serve our
6 children in our space.

7 And we in District 1 are very proud that
8 we're a district of choice, the only District in
9 the entire city. The J56 complex and the
10 schools that are housed in here have an
11 incredible growth potential that's going to be
12 thwarted by the addition of another school.

13 It may seem easy in the first year, a
14 kindergarten and a first grade, but as the years
15 go on and you and you saw Erin do the
16 demonstration of how it gradually becomes
17 overcrowded, constricting and really an
18 unpleasant dynamic for all the schools in the
19 building trying to deal with their needs and the
20 needs of their students.

21 The proposal is definitely going to have a
22 negative impact on the high numbers of special
23 need students we have here in District 1 and in
24 every one of the schools in this building. We
25 are meeting the needs of a population that is

1 not as great in other community school
2 districts, and we do it in such an admirable way
3 that we can be proud of our endeavors.

4 I feel very strongly that to put another
5 school in this building, any other school, would
6 actually interfere with the three schools here
7 continuing to do the great work they do for our
8 school community and for our children and our
9 families. We need to allow them to thrive and
10 grow, and we need the Department of Education to
11 support the genuinely creative endeavors that go
12 on here.

13 MS. DONELIN: Thank you. Jessica Rosner,
14 and after Jessica is Jacqueline Stern.

15 MS. JESSICA ROSNER: Hello, I'm Jessica
16 Rosner, I teach ELA at Castle Middle School.

17 As we all know the State exams are within a
18 month away, and unfortunately, the State solely
19 assesses students and teachers by a number, by a
20 score that the kids are given over the span of
21 three days for 180 minutes.

22 Right now we're beginning to work out the
23 logistics of where these students are going to
24 be testing, the 30% of our population that is
25 Special Ed, and as Ms. Vargas said before, we

1 just don't know.

2 So is it still fair for us to be judged by a
3 number, solely by a number when our legal rights
4 are being taken away from us?

5 MS. DONELIN: Jacqueline Stern and then Gus
6 Marsalis [phonetic].

7 MS. JACQUELINE STERN: All right, good
8 evening. My name is Jacqueline Stern, I'm
9 currently a 6th grade ELA teacher at Castle.

10 I'm sure these points have been made but I
11 feel like some of them are--needs to be
12 reiterated in a different way. The issue of
13 space has come up several times and I know
14 personally that my classroom is used almost
15 every single period every single day.

16 I currently share my classroom with Social
17 Studies several days a week, and creating that
18 class environment where it's not the students'
19 normal setting changes the environment that the
20 students are learning and used to learning into.
21 Half my boards, if they want to look around, I'm
22 not prepared for them, for Social Studies to be
23 paired like that.

24 The other piece would be my hallway shares
25 it with the NASA Space Center. Everyone

1 understands that we share them, and therefore,
2 we have younger children that are walking
3 through our hallways. It's not always the
4 safest environment. I have it daily, that I
5 have to give up either my classroom space to
6 allow for them to either come in or use our
7 bathroom, and they're little children, they're
8 little K through 5 kids which is what we're
9 anticipating to come in.

10 The arguments, the intimidation factor, the
11 sharing of the physical space to walk through
12 the hallways becomes a concern. Security issues
13 as well, as the children coming out of a shared
14 space simply as something as small as a two-
15 minute overlap in the bathroom becomes a concern
16 of a child not being guarded by an adult for
17 five seconds to go in the bathroom alone. Not
18 saying the 6th graders are scary, but to a small
19 kindergarten child they are quite intimidating.

20 So these are some concerns in terms of
21 space, physical sharing of a hallway space,
22 physical space in terms of classrooms, as well
23 as other arguments in terms of CTT or SETTS or
24 being a teacher, and I know a lot of them are
25 sitting here that give up their lunch periods

1 that allow for students to come up to see
2 them. You take away one classroom, that takes
3 away one more space for that student to learn in
4 outside of those mandated minutes. Thank you.

5 MS. DONELIN: Thank you, Gus Marsalis, and
6 after Gus, we're going to hear from Richard
7 Utewitz, I think.

8 MR. JONATHAN MARTINEZ: Good evening. My
9 name is Jonathan Martinez, I represent all three
10 schools in this building as a teacher here and
11 as a member of the community for my entire life.

12 What I would like to say first off is I've
13 been a teacher that had to share a classroom
14 before. I've taught off of a pushcart and I've
15 tried to have meaningful conversations in the
16 hallway side by side next to my pushcart while
17 I'm wheeling all my books up and down the
18 hallway.

19 Those conversations don't match up to the
20 kind of conversations that I can have in my
21 classroom while I'm sitting there one-on-one
22 with a student who may be on the verge of having
23 a breakdown in the classroom, who may be on the
24 verge of trying to cool themselves off from
25 getting involved in a situation or altercation.

1 And honestly, all the PD in the world can't
2 add up to what that means to me as an educator,
3 what that means to me in my whole practice of
4 becoming more of a professional in the field.

5 In all honesty, the only thing I really want
6 to say is that is one of the main reasons why I
7 come to this building every single day, why I'm
8 happy to come to this building every single day,
9 why I've never once woken up and said I don't
10 want to go to work today. I can't really say
11 that that is something that a lot of people get
12 a chance to say but I'm privileged to say that.

13 So honestly right now I might be just
14 speaking on behalf of myself but don't take away
15 one of my main reasons for coming here. Thank
16 you.

17 MS. DONELIN: Richard Utewitz, and after
18 Richard, Marisol Rhodes [phonetic].

19 MR. RICHARD UTEWITZ: How are you doing? My
20 name is Rich Utewitz. I'm a teacher at Castle
21 Middle School, but I guess more importantly, I
22 just think of myself as a teacher in New York
23 City school system. I've been teaching--I'm in
24 my 27th year.

25 My father was a teacher, he taught in

1 Brooklyn in Utrecht High School, so I grew up
2 around teachers, he always took me to sing and
3 football games and that's when schools were big
4 schools and you went to your neighborhood
5 school. And sometimes maybe you went to maybe a
6 gifted program, you went to a different borough.

7 And I understand because I work through all
8 different decades and I was a product of the
9 school system myself, I understand that things
10 change and some change is definitely for the
11 better. So I saw how the school system was in
12 the 80s and then the 90s and then how schools
13 broke up and I understand the way is a small
14 school. But I went to a school, I went to
15 Madison High School in Brooklyn, much--over
16 1,500 students much like Corlears 56 had at one
17 point.

18 And I took in everything because I'm also a
19 parent of--I have kids who were middle
20 schoolers, now they're high schoolers and they
21 went to public school. And to find a school in
22 New York City to meet the needs, specific needs
23 of--my son has specific needs, my daughter has
24 specific needs, it's like a needle in a
25 haystack. So I'm listening as a parent, the

1 parents on the dais up here, and kids are--30
2 seconds? Oh. I mean kids are not parcel, and I
3 have nothing against the charter school really
4 coming in.

5 The point is--the point is this, the point
6 I'm trying to make is the schools in this
7 building, I go up and I see wonderful art in
8 University, and I go into classrooms, I know
9 most of the teachers in University, Henry Street
10 is higher up, I see their bulletin boards, I
11 don't know a whole lot of teachers, I know a
12 few. I share the gym space with Mr. Ellis, it's
13 like carving out a little space.

14 So my kids go--I got lucky with my kids. I
15 went to Madison High School 30 years ago. I
16 just wanted to ask this one question; 30 years
17 ago I had better services than there are
18 services in 2012. How is that in this
19 community, why is this community overlooked?
20 Why? When people are scrambling for every
21 little bit of space, and again, I have nothing
22 against the charter school, but there really is,
23 there is no space.

24 Sports team, I went to--the high school I
25 went to, five different sports teams. You can't

1 have a high school with one sports team, I
2 know two are coming in, how is that? It's not
3 the way, things are really going backwards, I'm
4 sorry to say that. But I'm still passionate
5 about teaching and I will just keep on keeping
6 on.

7 MS. DONELIN: Thank you. Is Marisol here,
8 Marisol? If not, if Marisol is not speaking,
9 Christopher Gomez? Christopher? After
10 Christopher is Judith De Los Santos.

11 MR. CHRISTOPHER GOMEZ: Good evening
12 everyone, my name is Christopher Gomez. I'm the
13 self-contained Special Ed teacher at Castle
14 Middle School or one of them. I am also a
15 member of my school's SLT team and just a
16 general kind of guy who loves to hang out in
17 this building.

18 I've been teaching for 10 years, this is my
19 fourth year at Castle, I love it. I do the
20 haunted house, I wake up every morning like Mr.
21 Martinez says, I love coming here, it's a fun
22 time. We do have a limited amount of space.

23 It's funny because when the Planning people
24 came in, being a member of the SLT I got to
25 listen to everything that they had to say. And

1 everything they had to say turned everything
2 into numbers. I'm a math teacher, I love
3 numbers, but you know what, kids aren't numbers.

4 I love their planning, they think everything
5 out, but everything works on paper. I don't
6 teach at paper, I teach at a school, where I
7 have to worry about whether or not my kids are
8 going to have the services they need and I have
9 to worry about whether or not my kids are going
10 to be able to achieve on these state tests.

11 Thirty percent of the students in my
12 classroom cannot read, and are in 6th, 7th and 8th
13 grade. I have a three-level split. Seventy
14 percent of my students do not have basic
15 mathematic skills, two of those students came
16 from MCS, so it's a little shocking to me to
17 find out that you guys give us all these numbers
18 yet my students cannot achieve.

19 I'm going to keep this short and brief and
20 simple. Your Special Ed leader came up and said
21 he does the best he is able to. I not only do
22 the best that I'm able to, but I do above and
23 beyond that to make sure that my students are
24 going to be able to get what they need and go on
25 to high school and go on to college and become

1 professionals. Thank you.

2 MS. DONELIN: Judith De Los Santos Peña.

3 MS. JUDITH DE LOS SANTOS PEÑA: So wow, how
4 to follow all of this? So good evening, for
5 those of you who don't know me, my name is
6 Judith De Los Santos Peña, I'm the Principal of
7 Castle Middle school.

8 So I stand before you today with many of the
9 points that have already been spoken about but
10 it's important because it's important for you to
11 understand the alignment. It's not about how
12 many arguments but for you to understand how
13 profound these arguments are and how much our
14 concerns are the same concerns regardless of
15 what school.

16 So if you're still wondering who Corlears 56
17 is, allow me to tell you. We are three
18 courageous schools who embrace all learners and
19 work hard every day to educate all children by
20 building a culture of high expectations and
21 demanding more of everyone, from parents to
22 teachers to administrators to students
23 themselves.

24 We have dedicated teachers who chose to work
25 in the schools that serve students of need.

1 Every day they go far beyond the call of duty
2 serving as mentors, friends, counselors and even
3 surrogate parents. We have eager young students
4 who live with violence, poverty and social
5 breakdown and still get up and come to school
6 each day because they are hungry to get an
7 education.

8 We have tireless and determined parents who
9 insist on a quality education for their children
10 and take responsibility every day to ensure that
11 their kids are well rested, well fed and
12 prepared.

13 In my years in education, I have learned
14 that success is possible under any circumstances
15 as long as we focus on children and their
16 interests. But I have also learned a lot of
17 about the barriers to success in education,
18 barriers that make it challenging to best serve
19 in the interest of students and explore creative
20 and new ways of teaching and learning.

21 Co-locating an additional school in our
22 campus will mean the loss of classrooms that
23 support instructional programming focused on the
24 research-based practice of small group
25 instruction. Co-locating an additional school

1 in this building will increase class size and
2 undermine children's constitutional rights to a
3 sound and adequate education.

4 At present Castle Middle School has
5 organized extended day classes that are
6 incorporated into our schedule and that allows
7 all our Gen Ed students, children with
8 disabilities, Ls, low performing students and
9 students performing on level to receive
10 remediation or enrichment classes.

11 This learning opportunity supports teachers
12 in addressing skills and content in a small
13 group setting that large classes will not allow
14 us to do so. Having our classroom numbers
15 reduced will not allow groups to meet
16 independent of one another. Taking our
17 classrooms means that we are not able to support
18 our students' targeted needs, but rather we'll
19 be challenged in addressing all our student
20 needs in a large setting that only promises to
21 be larger because less classrooms will result in
22 an increase in class size.

23 Our students deserve the opportunities that
24 their counterparts in other schools receive. Do
25 not take the classrooms that support our

1 differentiated learning.

2 We believe that the co-location policy
3 pursued by the DOE and imposed on our public
4 schools is deeply wrongheaded. Every available
5 inch of space is used to jam a new school into a
6 building without any regard to how this will
7 increase class size or prevent schools from
8 being able to reduce class size in the future.

9 This does not support what is necessary for
10 school children to receive their constitutional
11 right to an adequate education. The damaging
12 effects are nowhere reflected in the DOE's
13 Educational Impact Statement. This is a
14 critical error. Public education is a
15 cornerstone of our democracy and will always
16 serve all children. We must ensure all these
17 children have equal access to a quality
18 education. Thank you.

19 MS. DONELIN: Renee Livres, Renee? Is Renee
20 here? Kenya Wilson--Renee? And Kenya Wilson is
21 next if you want to get ready.

22 MS. RENEE LIVRES: Good evening, my name is
23 Renee Livres. I'm the mother of a Manhattan
24 Charter School 1st grader.

25 My daughter is receiving a rich, varied and

1 caring education at MCS I. Her teachers are
2 loyal and dedicated, and her Principal, Ms.
3 DePolo, knows each child by name.

4 I live in District 1, my kids are 5th
5 generation New Yorkers, I live a block away from
6 where I was born, and I've had the privilege of
7 sending my children to a good cross-section of
8 the elementary schools offered in our
9 neighborhood between pre-K and 4th grade,
10 straightforward public school, progressive
11 school of choice, charter and GNT.

12 Our District is richer for its variety of
13 choices. It's teeming with deserving children
14 and in need of an excellent public elementary
15 school serving our community wherever it is
16 located, Manhattan Charter School II. Thank
17 you, good evening.

18 MS. DONELIN: Thank you, Kenya Wilson and
19 after Kenya, somebody Small, Malik Small. I
20 think we already heard form Malik though, no?
21 Oh, the second Malik Small, sorry.

22 MS. KENYA WILSON: Good evening, my name is
23 Kenya Wilson and this is a Manhattan Charter
24 School student.

25 It was posed that elementary school and

1 middle schoolers and high schoolers--I mean
2 I'm a 39 year old and I'm short, she's a 9 year
3 old who's short. We walk the street with middle
4 schoolers and high schoolers and there's not a
5 problem. So I don't understand where it is that
6 it's going to be a story about space and the
7 school is underutilized, so why can't--give
8 another school a chance to come in and see how
9 it could work out. That's it, that's all I can
10 say. Thank you.

11 MS. DONELIN: Thank you, Malik A. Small.

12 MR. MALIK SMALL: Hello, good evening. My
13 name is Malik Small just like the little guy
14 that was up here. There's a couple of things I
15 want to say.

16 Number one, when Matthew was up here from
17 MCS, he read off the laundry list of accolades
18 about MCS but to me and those of you with a
19 trained ear it sounds like a job description, it
20 sounds like he was doing his job. That's not
21 the point, that's not why we're here. We had a
22 mom who was just up here, Kenya, who I'm happy
23 that her daughter is being able to receive a
24 great education, that's not the point, that's
25 not why we're here, okay?

1 I come to you as a parent of a young man,
2 as a husband of a school counselor at one of the
3 three schools here, but I also come to you as a
4 charter school leader. And I'm proud to say
5 that our charter school, and we've been in
6 business for over 10 years, has never ever
7 looked to ever co-locate with a public school,
8 we never have and we never will.

9 So I would urge those of you over at SUNY, I
10 would urge those of you in the DOE to get from
11 under those piles and piles of charter
12 applications, and I know what they look like,
13 they can--you can fill a book case with a
14 charter application. Get from under those piles
15 of paper, put your feet to the pavement, come
16 into the school and see what this school and
17 what these schools are about. You're making a
18 bad decision, okay?

19 I know what the mandated charter schools
20 are, the mandated charter schools are to
21 outperform district schools, which is great, and
22 that's what we should do and we will always look
23 to do that. But we cannot do it at the demise
24 of taking away and diminishing the capacity of
25 an existing school to do the same thing.

1 MS. DONELIN: Thank you, next is Ida
2 Kolon [phonetic], Ida? Is Ida Kolon still here?
3 Ida, Ida Kolon? Okay, next is I think Gorla
4 Ruiz [phonetic], or Gloria Ruiz, sorry, I don't
5 see an L, but Gloria Ruiz? Not here? Okay.
6 Henrietta Simmons [phonetic]? Yes, no
7 Henrietta, getting there. Jahida Mariani? Also
8 not here? She's here, that is her? Okay, Ms.
9 Mariani, thank you.

10 MS. JAHIDA MARIANI: Good evening, my name
11 is Jahida Mariani and I am a UNMS parent.

12 My daughter, Jocelyn [phonetic], is in 8th
13 grade at UNMS. As part of the Community
14 Awareness Club, she received the Service Award
15 from Mayor Bloomberg last spring and this fall
16 presented at the Women's Advisee [phonetic]
17 Conference at the United Nations.

18 Excuse me, our UNMS group of girls were the
19 only middle school presenters. Jocelyn receives
20 a challenging education at UNMS as well as
21 having every opportunity to grow as a person and
22 leader.

23 What is distressing to me, in the proposal
24 to bring the Manhattan Charter Elementary School
25 to this building, is the destruction of one or

1 more of the schools already here, schools
2 that have been designed by teachers, principals
3 and support staff to meet the needs of my
4 daughter, Jocelyn, her friends and all the
5 neighborhood children who come to these three
6 schools.

7 What is distressing to me is while Manhattan
8 Charter School will grow in a stress-free
9 classroom, rich environment, UNMS will shrink
10 and students will be expected with each new year
11 to learn in classrooms that will resemble
12 virtual strait jackets. That sounds like
13 marginalization to me, shame on you.

14 My child--our children are receiving the
15 education they have a right and deserve at UNMS.
16 I want to enter into the record tonight that I
17 demand that the DOE maintains UNMS as it is
18 today. That means the same classroom space,
19 access to the gym, cafeteria, recess yard and
20 auditorium today and four years from now.
21 Scratch your plan, let our school stand. Thank
22 you.

23 MS. DONELIN: Next is Evelyn Jerez. Evelyn?

24 MS. EVELYN JEREZ: Hi, my name is Evelyn
25 Jerez. I was a student at UNMS two years ago

1 and now I'm a former student at the Urban
2 Assemblies School of Business for Young Women
3 recommended by Ms. Penado.

4 I'm going to speak to you from a student's
5 perspective. I'm not on anybody's side but I
6 wanted to let all of you know that it's really
7 hard to concentrate where there's an overcrowded
8 class.

9 In my class, I'm on 104, there's over 32
10 students in a class. It is very hard to
11 concentrate and pay attention when you have more
12 than 20 students yelling across the room, asking
13 questions, being disrespectful, and you still
14 have to pay attention and get good grades.

15 Now I'm a straight A student, do you know
16 why and how I do it? I spend more than five
17 hours when I get home, studying, doing homework,
18 doing what I have to do, paying attention in
19 class. And I understand where most of you
20 parents are concerned about your student's
21 education. I have a 3 year old sister, an 11
22 year old sister attending UNMS right now. I am
23 very concerned about their security.

24 One, I would never send my three year old
25 sister to come to a school where there's high

1 schoolers, middle schoolers, where I know
2 there's a lot of drama. I've been through them-
3 -I'm in a high school right now, I know what
4 it's like.

5 In high school there's a lot of drama,
6 there's a lot fights that go on, there's a lot
7 of 18 to 20 year olds in high school, and I
8 would not like a 3 year old to be near an 18 to
9 20 year old fight. Thank you, that's all.

10 MS. DONELIN: Our next speaker and final
11 speaker before we go into the question and
12 answer period from any cards we got is George
13 Escalante [phonetic]. Is George here? Is there
14 anyone here who believes they signed up who did
15 not get to speak?

16 So next we're going to go to the questions
17 that were submitted on the cards, and Elizabeth
18 Rose has batched them and sorted them and will
19 be reading them and responding to them.

20 MS. ELIZABETH ROSE: Good evening everyone,
21 thank you all for staying and for being here so
22 late this evening.

23 There were several questions around how will
24 students receive their mandated services, and
25 those are certainly questions that many of the

1 teachers who spoke this evening and the
2 principals who spoke this evening also raised.

3 Mandated services are part of a school's
4 allocation of space. It's included in the
5 administrative space and the resource room space
6 that schools are expected to receive, their
7 baseline space allocation.

8 In addition to their baseline each of the
9 schools does have, in the proposal, additional
10 small-size spaces, and certainly these mandated
11 services are not required to be served in full-
12 sized classrooms in many cases, and I think some
13 people even pointed it out this evening, in many
14 cases it is better to provide some of these
15 services in smaller spaces and small-size spaces
16 because they are more focused.

17 I do want to point out that in addition to
18 the rooms allocated in the Building Utilization
19 Plan for each school that were referred to
20 earlier this evening, each school also has
21 allocated to them science classrooms above and
22 beyond that allocation that was read this
23 evening, so there is in fact more space
24 allocated for each of the schools than was
25 referenced earlier this evening.

1 A second question related to that is how
2 will mandated testing accommodations be
3 accommodated? This is actually a question
4 that's come up not just in the case of co-
5 located schools but also comes up in schools
6 that are the only organization in their building
7 but where they have many students who have a
8 variety of mandated testing accommodations.

9 And I will honestly say that we can't
10 allocate space across the city, across the 1.1
11 million students that we serve just based on the
12 one-day need of how do we organize for the
13 testing? So I don't have a specific answer for
14 exactly how will these schools be able to
15 accommodate the mandated testing, but I do
16 understand that there has been a lot of thinking
17 about how do we help schools do this because it
18 is not just an issue in co-located buildings, it
19 is not just an issue in schools that are at
20 their baseline footprint, it is an issue that we
21 have in many schools even when it's only a
22 single school in the building.

23 Another question was which students would be
24 asked to go to the offsite gym space? We are
25 not requiring or mandated that any school take

1 advantage of the offsite physical education
2 space, it's an opportunity. We heard loud and
3 clear from the schools that they felt that they
4 could not program the gym to meet the needs of
5 all of the schools.

6 We also didn't attempt to program how much
7 gym time each school needs based on standard
8 class sizes. We came up with a schedule that in
9 fact shows that there is excess or the ability
10 to program additional classes in the gym. But
11 that's a decision; the ultimate decision of how
12 the gym gets programmed is made by the Building
13 Councils, by the schools here in the building.

14 So Basketball City is an opportunity, I see
15 Erin, her head in her hands, it is an
16 opportunity, we have spoken with Manhattan
17 Charter School about the gym limitations, about
18 the amount of space that there is here, and they
19 have acknowledged and agreed that they would
20 focus their physical education particularly in
21 the early grades on dance movement that can be
22 done in a full-size classroom rather than
23 utilizing the gym. But we are not mandating
24 that any school or any particular school use
25 Basketball City as an alternative, it remains an

1 opportunity in the community.

2 Those actually are--I'm sorry, one final
3 question which was how can the Department of
4 Education afford to put five schools in one
5 building but can't afford to provide textbooks?

6 Physical space, buildings, is one set of
7 funding, largely a combination of State and City
8 funding, and obviously we're trying to minimize
9 what we spend so that we can afford to spend as
10 much of our State funding and our City funding
11 in the classroom for students on things like
12 textbooks.

13 That is one of the great tradeoffs and
14 balances in education, is if we spend more on
15 buildings it might be more difficult for us to
16 spend more in the classroom. They're not
17 directly in competition, but it is something
18 that the State and the City Government as a
19 whole we have to look at.

20 So we honestly try to put as much money and
21 funding to the principals and to the schools as
22 we possibly can, and one way that we can do that
23 is to make sure that we fully utilize the space
24 that we have so that we can serve as many
25 students as possible and conserve funding for

1 the classroom.

2 FEMALE VOICE: I'm breaking protocol and I
3 don't know what's going to happen to me but I'm
4 doing it, so I don't really care.

5 Elizabeth, your numbers are wrong right now.
6 The State tests our six States not one. Okay,
7 so just in that--and how you can stand here and
8 talk about what the DOE is trying to do and then
9 it's--off the record it's a hot mess.

10 And as being an educated person I would be
11 embarrassed in your position to come up here and
12 not be educated about the changes that are
13 currently happening such as the State tests now
14 being six days. You should be prepared to
15 answer the questions correctly since you're
16 representing the DOE.

17 The other thing is no one said anything
18 about pedagogy and small class sizes. If you
19 want to have a hearing about pedagogy you should
20 put that into your process as well. We have to
21 pick what we're going to bring to light here.
22 You give us one night to do that, not six.

23 MS. DONELIN: So at this point, at this--
24 that mic was not working so I'm going to switch
25 to this one. At this point the question and

1 answers for tonight is concluded and we are
2 going to be adjourning the meeting. But I want
3 to remind everyone, as I said at the beginning,
4 that comments and feedback are welcome beyond
5 tonight, and a quick reminder that the two ways
6 of doing that before the Panel for Educational
7 Policy votes on this proposal on March 21st is
8 either to send an email to
9 d01proposals@schools.nyc.gov or to call 212-374-
10 3466.

11 Thanks for your participation, the meeting
12 is now closed.

13 [END 285_700]

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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 12, 2012