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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF  
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**  
**Co-Location of New Middle School  
at M158 for 2014**

**June 4, 2013**

**5:30pm**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MS. ELAINE GORMAN: Good evening. My name  
3 is Elaine Gorman, and I'll be acting as  
4 facilitator for this joint public hearing. This  
5 is a joint public hearing of the Department of  
6 Education, Community Education Council II, and  
7 the School Leadership Team of PS158 Bayard  
8 Taylor to discuss the proposed opening and co-  
9 location of a new district middle school and  
10 existing school PS158 Bayard Taylor and Building  
11 M158 beginning in the 2014/15 school year.  
12 Tonight's proceedings will be recorded and  
13 transcribed.

14 Before we begin the hearing, we ask that  
15 anyone who wishes to speak during public  
16 comments of this evening, sign up at the table  
17 in the back. Sign-up will end in 15 minutes or  
18 6:30. Only people who have signed up to speak  
19 will be able to participate in the public  
20 comment. We have a full dais, and we appreciate  
21 everyone for being here, as well as those of you  
22 in the audience.

23 There may be elected officials who arrive at  
24 different times during the evening. If they  
25 wish to speak, we'll do our best to accommodate

1       them at the first opportune moment. Those who  
2       are here at the start of the public comment  
3       section will be asked will be asked to speak  
4       immediately following those at the dais.

5               Tonight's format will include a presentation  
6       of the proposal and comments from the hearing  
7       participants, followed by public comments.  
8       Speakers who have already signed up, if you have  
9       not, remember you have until 6:30. Public  
10       comments and then no longer than two minutes  
11       each. The time will be strictly followed, but  
12       you will be given 30 seconds in order to be able  
13       to make sure that your main points are made.

14               Before I introduce the Panel assembly for  
15       this evening, I did want to tell you that, while  
16       there is no specific Q and A during the hearing,  
17       Drew Patterson from the Office of Portfolio  
18       Management and myself will be happy to stay  
19       afterwards to address any questions that you  
20       want added, and then you'll have the opportunity  
21       to, then, add additional e-mail comment or phone  
22       comment before the actual final analysis of  
23       public comment.

24               I would now like to introduce the Panel  
25       which has been assembled for tonight's joint

1 public hearing. To my right is Superintendent  
2 for District 2, Mariano Guzman. We also have  
3 sitting to his right, CEC members Simon Miller,  
4 Elizabeth Weiss, Beth Cirone, and Eric Goldberg.  
5 We also are pleased to have from the SLT, Todd  
6 Helmrich, who will represent M158's SLT, and I  
7 know we also have the PA President from the  
8 school, who is here, who has chosen not to speak  
9 from the dais, but is certainly welcome to give  
10 comment. We also are expecting a representative  
11 from Assembly Member Kellner's office, and when  
12 that person comes in, we will make sure that, at  
13 the first opportune moment, there is time to  
14 speak. Ah, she is in the back, and, once the  
15 dais has spoken, we ask you to come forward.

16 At this time, I'd like to turn the program  
17 over to District 2 Superintendent and the  
18 Chancellor's designee, Mariano Guzman, who will  
19 present the proposal.

20 MR. MARIANO GUZMAN: Good evening. The New  
21 York City Department of Education is proposing  
22 to co-locate a new district middle school in  
23 this building, Building M158 located at 1458  
24 York Avenue, Manhattan, New York, 10075,  
25 beginning in the 2014/2015 school year.

1           If this proposal is approved, this new  
2 middle school will be co-located in Building  
3 M158 with PS158 Bayard Taylor, an existing zoned  
4 elementary school that currently serves  
5 kindergarten through fifth grade students.  
6 PS158 also offers two sections of a full-day  
7 prekindergarten program. PS158 is the only  
8 school organization currently in building M158.

9           If this proposal is approved, the new middle  
10 school will open in M158 in September 2014 and  
11 will admit students through the District 2  
12 Middle School Choice Process, where 50% of the  
13 seats will be filled through a screened  
14 admissions method, and 50% of the seats will be  
15 filled through a limited unscreened admissions  
16 method.

17           Schools and programs with screened  
18 admissions methods typically rank students based  
19 on a range of factors. Schools and programs  
20 with limited unscreened admissions methods give  
21 priority to students who demonstrate interest in  
22 the school by attending a school information  
23 session, or open house event, or by visiting the  
24 school's exhibit at the middle school fair. The  
25 school's leadership will determine the specific

1 admissions and instructional plan of the  
2 school.

3 The new middle school will begin enrolling  
4 sixth-grade students in September 2014 and will  
5 add one grade every year for the next two years  
6 until it has reached full scale and serves  
7 students in grades six through eight, beginning  
8 in September 2016.

9 In the 2016/2017 school year, once the new  
10 middle school has reached full scale, it is  
11 projected that there will be approximately 1,081  
12 to 1,171 students served in M158, with an  
13 estimated building utilization rate of  
14 approximately 113% to 122%. Both the new middle  
15 school and PS158 will receive the space they are  
16 entitled to during the years of this proposed  
17 co-location.

18 The DOE, in collaboration with community  
19 members, supports the co-location of this new  
20 middle school in M158. This proposal is  
21 intended to increase the number of middle school  
22 options in District 2.

23 Elaine will facilitate the hearing  
24 presenters and the hearing adjournment.

25 MS. GORMAN: At this time, I'd like to turn

1 it over to the CEC for comment, starting with  
2 Simon Miller.

3 MR. SIMON MILLER: There we go. I don't  
4 usually need a microphone to be heard, but  
5 tonight there is a big group. Welcome,  
6 everybody. Good evening. I'm Simon Miller, the  
7 first Vice President of the CEC, and I thank you  
8 all for being here.

9 We are here, as all of you know, to address  
10 the co-location of a brand-new middle school to  
11 be formed on the Upper East Side to be co-  
12 located here in this building. As you all know,  
13 this is a very exciting eventuality that many  
14 parents, many in the audience, in fact, have  
15 worked very, very hard over many years to  
16 achieve, and so, speaking for myself, this is a  
17 momentous achievement that we should all be very  
18 happy about.

19 That being said, a co-location is always a  
20 tricky process, and, indeed, one of the  
21 advantages that we have in this case is there  
22 was a middle school population here before, and  
23 so there is some history within the building of  
24 middle school populations and the PS158  
25 elementary population co-locating.

1           So I want to congratulate all of those  
2 parents who worked so hard to see this middle  
3 school come here. It's terrific that we have  
4 new seats, middle school seats, because it's  
5 very clear that we are up here, and throughout  
6 District 2, going to need them. So that is  
7 certainly something I think we can all  
8 celebrate. I do know, and want to note, that,  
9 with respect to one of the issues to do with  
10 this school--and it is only one of the issues--  
11 that is going to deal with the formation and  
12 creation of both its middle school and the  
13 middle school community, as well as the  
14 community that it serves.

15           There is, obviously, and has been, public  
16 disagreement about, and that's, obviously, the  
17 admissions criteria. I want to encourage  
18 everybody who is here to speak tonight, and to  
19 the extent they wish to address that, to  
20 certainly make sure their voices are heard, and  
21 I want to encourage everybody in the audience to  
22 listen respectfully. And, to the extent that  
23 there is disagreement, I would urge everybody to  
24 keep it civil, because, at the end of the day,  
25 the thing we are all united by is our desire to

1 see a fantastic school to serve all of our kids  
2 up here on the Upper East Side. Thank you.

3 MS. LIZ WEISS: We also want to let  
4 everybody here know that, as a CEC, we don't all  
5 have the same idea, opinion. We are all  
6 individuals that have different perspectives, so  
7 it's not as if the CEC has a cohesive agenda or  
8 perspective of how to move forward. People are  
9 still learning and listening to get an idea of  
10 what will be best, but, as Simon said, we look  
11 forward to hearing from you, all of you, to hear  
12 what you would like.

13 MS. BETH CIRONE: Hi. And I've spoken  
14 already at a lot of these meetings. And, as Liz  
15 just said, I agree. We don't have a consensus.  
16 We have very different views on the Council,  
17 just like we've heard very, very different views  
18 throughout our community. And so, at this  
19 point, what we really want is this meeting for  
20 people to have their say, again.

21 I mean, we did have a prior hearing, but to  
22 have another one, and I just want to emphasize  
23 what Simon said. I mean, we are a community.  
24 We've always been, I think, a really simple  
25 community. It's one of the things I love about

1 having meetings with District 2 parents. I  
2 think they are pretty amazing.

3 So I'd really ask no booing, no applause.  
4 If you disagree, just be respectful of your  
5 neighbors because, when this school happens,  
6 what ever it is, you are going to have to work  
7 together as a community. People are going to  
8 have to come together, and it's just important  
9 to remember that because the biggest part of  
10 building a new school, and we've seen this  
11 throughout the schools that have been opening up  
12 here, I mean, 151, 267.

13 What makes a great school is having a good  
14 leader, and parents who are willing to work  
15 together. That is the most important thing. So  
16 I really emphasize, that starts here and now.  
17 And, you know, if people are sitting and being  
18 disagreeable to one another, that doesn't help  
19 anybody, and it doesn't build a good community.  
20 And I'm not saying you shouldn't disagree; you  
21 should voice your opinions. I'm just saying,  
22 please don't start yelling, booing, applauding.  
23 Just listen respectfully to each other. Thank  
24 you. Anything you want to say, Eric?

25 MR. ERIC GOLDBERG: Hi. I'm Eric Goldberg,

1 also a member of the CEC. I'm certainly  
2 looking forward to the new school opening here  
3 in September 2014 and looking forward to hearing  
4 your thoughts and comments tonight on the EIS.

5 MS. GORMAN: Todd, do you wish to say  
6 anything?

7 MR. TODD HELMRICH: Yes. Should I state the  
8 position of the SLT now?

9 MS. GORMAN: Yes. You are representing the  
10 SLT, and you are next to speak.

11 MR. HELMRICH: Very good, thank you. So  
12 thank you for the opportunity. My name is Todd  
13 Helmrich. I am on the School Leadership Team of  
14 PS158, and I'm really here in a dual role. I am  
15 here both as an SLT member of the school in this  
16 building, but I'm also here as a team member of  
17 nine of the elementary schools located on the  
18 Upper East Side.

19 There are nine schools. We've got about  
20 4,300 kids, and, together, we do stand united in  
21 one thing. And, actually, I believe, though,  
22 the entire community has one wish here, and this  
23 is something, Drew, you and I spoke about, which  
24 is what does success look like. Well, the first  
25 year or two, we know are a bit rocky, but, if we

1 look down the road, what does success look  
2 like for a new middle school in this building.  
3 And I think, regardless of your position on the  
4 admissions policy, the picture is the same.

5 Success should be a line out the door of  
6 Doherty [inaudible] Middle for kids banging the  
7 door to get in. It should be a line out the  
8 door at Wagner of kids banging to get in, and a  
9 line out the door here at this school of kids  
10 wanting to get in. That is how we believe the  
11 community is best served, by having three  
12 schools that are fantastic, that kids are lined  
13 up to get into.

14 That being said, we do not believe that the  
15 plan, as it is proposed, delivers that. We  
16 believe that, for numerous reasons, the way that  
17 this 50/50 split is set up, it is not creating a  
18 school in which kids will pick this as a first  
19 choice. We believe that the structure of the  
20 system is that which will actually penalize kids  
21 if they pick it as a first choice.

22 And, may I explain my--do I have a moment to  
23 explain why I think that is the case? So we all  
24 know the choice system. A kid picks the first  
25 choice, the second choice, the third choice.

1 Now, if your child really wants to go to this  
2 new school, he or she, fortunately, have two  
3 choices at it. We've got choice number one; the  
4 student can elect to come to this school through  
5 a screened seat. Right? So there is 50/50.  
6 The seats are split 50/50, half screened and  
7 half unscreened. So choice number one on the  
8 student's application will be to come here  
9 through a screened seat.

10 Choice number two, then, would be to come to  
11 this school through an unscreened seat because  
12 the kid wants to go here. The child wants to  
13 attend this school. Well, there are only 85  
14 seats or so a year. So, statistically speaking,  
15 the chances of a child getting in here are  
16 relatively small. So, now, this student has  
17 picked this new school as the first choice and  
18 second choice because he or she really wants to  
19 go here, didn't get in, and, now, is left with  
20 the third choice.

21 Now, we all know that, in District 2 and,  
22 certainly, in this neighborhood, the schools  
23 that students go to do not accept those who have  
24 picked it as a third choice. So if you are a  
25 student that wants to go to this school, you

1 have two choices to pick it, option number one  
2 and option number two. If you don't get in, you  
3 are out of luck. You cannot get into Salk. You  
4 cannot get into Wagner SP. You cannot get into  
5 East Side Middle, Middle Lab, any of these  
6 schools.

7 So we believe that's one of the flaws and  
8 one of the reasons in which we are penalized the  
9 way the system is set up, and why we believe  
10 that this creates a system of really not  
11 success. And so that's what we asked for the  
12 DOE, as we go forward, evaluating this  
13 educational impact statement. That we look at  
14 it from the point of view, are we building the  
15 best school that we can build, that has the  
16 greatest chance of success going forward. And  
17 that is what I ask for us to look for going  
18 forward. So thank you.

19 MS. GORMAN: Thank you very much. That  
20 concludes the formal presentations. I will  
21 allow 30 more seconds for sign up, but, at this  
22 time, I'd like to call forward Helen, from  
23 Assembly Member Kellner's office, to give  
24 comments on his behalf.

25 MS. HELEN OHW: Hello. I'm Helen Ohw from

1 Assemblyman Kellner's office. I'll just make  
2 this short and sweet. The Assembly Member is  
3 still in support of a 100% screened school.  
4 That is all.

5 MS. GORMAN: Okay, short, short and sweet.  
6 We have 34 people who have signed up to speak.  
7 Can I ask that our timekeeper take their seat?  
8 While we are waiting for the timekeeper, I'd  
9 like to ask--let me apologize in advance for any  
10 mispronunciations. I'm going to ask speakers 1  
11 through 52 please line up, MaryAnne, Jackie,  
12 Wendy, Stacy, and Mark.

13 Drew, can you please raise the mic? That  
14 mic would be perfect for me, but, for the  
15 average person, they need it a little higher.

16 MaryAnne, you may begin.

17 MS. MARYANNE LEUNG: Hi. My name is  
18 MaryAnne Leung, and I am a - - .

19 MALE VOICE: I don't think it's on. There  
20 is a...

21 MS. LEUNG: I'm Maryanne Leung. I'm a  
22 parent, and I'm an SLT member of both Wagner  
23 Middle School and PS290, and I am a strong  
24 believer that, out of all the middle schools in  
25 District 2, the only schools that have

1 unscreened programs are MS104, and MS131  
2 downtown, and Wagner Middle School. What  
3 options do students have, who are not  
4 accomplished test takers, to attend a small  
5 middle school? This reminds me of sixth-grade  
6 when the two most athletic people worthy  
7 captains of gym class and got to choose who they  
8 wanted to be on the team. I feel like I'm the  
9 last one always picked, and I think you to go  
10 with a screened school, that's what you are  
11 going to have. I'm 100% for unscreened in this  
12 neighborhood.

13 MS. GORMAN: Jackie. Thank you very much.

14 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah, you can go. Can she  
15 go?

16 MS. GORMAN: Go ahead.

17 MS. WENDY KOHN: Okay. Thank you for the  
18 opportunity to provide my opinion on the new  
19 middle school. As the parent of a seventh  
20 grader, who has already--

21 FEMALE VOICE: [Interposing] State your  
22 name.

23 MS. KOHN: I'm sorry, Wendy Kohn, sorry. As  
24 the parent of a seventh grader, who has already  
25 gone through the stressful and flawed middle

1 school admission process, and the parent of an  
2 elementary school child at PS158, it's clear to  
3 me that the school above 158 should be an  
4 unscreened middle school for those parents that  
5 want a local, smaller school option, and who do  
6 not want to put their children through the  
7 rigors and stress of applying to multiple  
8 schools with varying entrance exams and  
9 interviews at only nine years of age.

10 All students should have equal access to  
11 choose between a large school and a small  
12 school, regardless of their test scores. Young  
13 children should also have the opportunity to go  
14 to a school near their home and not have to be  
15 nervous traveling by buses and subways over an  
16 hour away. Another small screened competitive  
17 middle school removes this opportunity for  
18 children.

19 Having a school that is half screened and  
20 half unscreened, where it was stated that the  
21 principal, essentially, has free reign to select  
22 half of the student body, seems like it would  
23 create undue friction and competition among the  
24 students, who would be well aware, whether they  
25 applied to the screen or unscreened part of the

1 school. Screened schools have a propensity to  
2 create a sense of elitism among students, which  
3 we've seen occur in the last few years.

4 Just a question to Todd. You know, I'm not  
5 sure why a line out the door at East Side Middle  
6 of 700 kids vying for 120 spots, for children  
7 just 10 years old, is a success. I think that's  
8 a failure.

9 MS. GORMAN: Jackie will be followed by  
10 Stacy, Mark, Cheryl, and Dave.

11 MS. JACKIE PHILLER: Hello. My name is  
12 Jackie Philler, and I'm the parent of two  
13 children at PS151, Co-PTA President, represent  
14 the SLT. I want to thank the CEC members, the  
15 elected officials, all the time with the DOE,  
16 and all of your patience in working with us  
17 through this.

18 I'm going to keep it really short and sweet.  
19 A 50/50 split in District 2 is unprecedented.  
20 With the over 1,000 e-mails that have been sent  
21 to the elected officials in the DOE in support  
22 of a 100% screened school communicates that the  
23 community, that the majority of the community,  
24 is interested in a screened school that is not  
25 based on test scores. That is the real crux of

1 the matter here.

2 We are interested in a diverse learning  
3 community where children of all interests and  
4 all educational levels have equal opportunity to  
5 attend, so we are requesting that you withdraw  
6 the current EIS and propose for a 100% screened  
7 school. Thank you.

8 MS. GORMAN: Thank you. Stacy, Mark,  
9 Cheryl, Dave, and Debbie.

10 MS. STACY WASSERMAN: Stacy Wasserman, and  
11 thank you, again. The first thing I think of--

12 MS. GORMAN: Can you speak into the mic?

13 MS. WASSERMAN: Is this better?

14 MS. GORMAN: Yes.

15 MS. WASSERMAN: When I think of raising my  
16 children here, I remember being at interviews  
17 and being screened for nursery school, so that  
18 was an experience. I don't know how they do it,  
19 but they did it. It was, like, play groups.  
20 Then, you want to screen for Lower Lab and other  
21 elementary schools, and you want to screen for  
22 middle school, and you want to keep going.

23 I understand that's it's going to help us  
24 eventually when we apply for college for our  
25 children, but, at this time, all children at the

1 age of a middle school child deserves a chance  
2 to go to a school without their test scores as  
3 the only thing that identifies them as being  
4 good enough for a school.

5 MS. GORMAN: Thank you very much. Mark--

6 MS. WASSERMAN: [Interposing] I'm from 183  
7 and Wagner, two children both schools, thank  
8 you.

9 MR. MARK SHATNER: Hi, thank you. My name  
10 is Mark Shatner. I'm an SLT member from PS183.  
11 I'd like to take two seconds just to thank the  
12 DOE and the CEC for getting us this far. As has  
13 been said, it's been a long road and well worth  
14 it. And I'd also like to applaud Drew for  
15 listening to the community and trying to come up  
16 with a very creative solution.

17 And when I first heard this, I had the same  
18 reaction as Todd, that we both said we'd really  
19 like to like this more than we do. And when you  
20 put the glasses of a parent on, and you examine  
21 this plan, the logistics of it, unfortunately,  
22 don't work.

23 We all want to same thing here. We know  
24 that there are seats for kids who have 4's and  
25 do great. We know that there are kids who can--

1 you know, seats for kids who can ace a science  
2 test. What we all want are seats in the  
3 community for kids who were just good plain old  
4 kids, and that we don't want to have to put them  
5 through all the stress of trying to get into  
6 these highly competitive schools.

7 And I certainly, you know, applaud people  
8 who are saying they don't want their kids  
9 through these stressors; however, this is such a  
10 small school that, if you are adding 30  
11 unscreened seats, you are still going to have to  
12 put your kid through the screening process  
13 'cause there just aren't enough unscreened  
14 seats.

15 If you were to make the whole District  
16 unscreened, a lot of people would applaud that,  
17 but, for the mechanics of this, it has to be  
18 screened. And where the real work has to be  
19 done is choosing the correct screening system.  
20 We polled our parents at 183, and over 70% of  
21 the parents suggested that they wanted 100%  
22 screened school. So, please, listen to our  
23 community and thank you for your time.

24 MS. GORMAN: Think you, Mark. Cheryl  
25 Holprin, Dave Gross, Debbie Smith, Debbie

1 Ginsberg, and John Keller

2 MS. CHERYL HOLPRIN: Hi. My name is Cheryl  
3 Holprin, and I have a third-grader at PS158. I  
4 am in support of a screened middle school. The  
5 students should be screened based on their  
6 report cards. If a school is focused on a  
7 specialty, a school, like a stem, a lottery  
8 system does nothing to identify if a student is  
9 actually interested in the focus of the school.  
10 Beyond the most basic idea that if a child is  
11 not interested, he or she won't apply. This  
12 process does nothing to help create a successful  
13 school. We want a successful school in our  
14 school, PS158, and we want a successful school  
15 in our community. That is why I'm in favor of a  
16 screened, 100% screened, middle school. Thank  
17 you.

18 MS. GORMAN: Thank you.

19 MS. DANA GROSS: It's not Dave.

20 MS. GORMAN: Oh, it's Dana.

21 MS. GROSS: Dana, actually.

22 MS. GORMAN: Dana, I apologize.

23 MS. GROSS: That's okay. Hi. My name is  
24 Dana Gross. I'm the PTA Co-President at PS527,  
25 which is one of the newest schools in the

1 District. We have only kindergarten right  
2 now, so it's a long time before our kids get to  
3 middle school, and many of our parents--well,  
4 they are not supposed to be focused on middle  
5 school.

6 We have posed the question to them. And our  
7 question is, at this point, you talked about how  
8 you can use up two of your choices getting into  
9 the school, and then your third choice, you are  
10 probably not going to get in 'cause all the  
11 first and second choices will get in. By the  
12 time our kids get to middle school, there are  
13 going to be a lot more kids who need middle  
14 schools.

15 So, by creating this issue with using up  
16 your two choices, you are penalizing them even  
17 further. There is not going to be enough seats.  
18 There aren't going to be enough seats probably  
19 anywhere, at that point, unless we maybe get  
20 another school, even. So we are in favor of a  
21 100% screened school so that, at least, there is  
22 focus, and that there can be a determination of  
23 what's going into the school, and it will be  
24 easier for our kids to decide when they are  
25 faced with that decision.

1           And it doesn't have to be about test  
2 scores. You know, our kids haven't taken the  
3 tests. We haven't experienced that stress yet,  
4 but we know we are going to, and we know that  
5 there are a lot of other ways that kids can be  
6 screened, whether it be even just through a  
7 creative ability or through sitting down and  
8 talking to someone and finding out how they  
9 learn. So, again, we are in favor of a 100%  
10 screened school.

11           MS. GORMAN: Thank you very much, Debbie,  
12 Debbie, John, Jack, and Amanda.

13           MS. DEBBIE SMITH: Hi. My name is Debbie,  
14 and I have a child here in the school, 158, and  
15 I can tell you that, even though they are  
16 talking about test scores--I want a 100%  
17 screened school. But they are talking about  
18 test scores and not counting.

19           My child is in first grade here, and she was  
20 telling me she couldn't have music one day. She  
21 couldn't have gym one day because a test going  
22 on. So the test is going to go on no matter  
23 what. Scores are going to be taken. The  
24 schools are going to be judging. So why not  
25 make this a school, especially if they are here-

1 -they are being penalized in some ways  
2 already, sort of, because things are being taken  
3 away from the younger kids who are not taking  
4 the tests. Let them go to a screened school and  
5 possibly get into a great school at that point.

6 Plus, I'm also a little bit worried about if  
7 you are just kind of anybody, unscreened, I'm  
8 not really sure in the neighborhood. John J, a  
9 lot of the kids come down there from Wagner.  
10 They are older. I watch them on some of the  
11 equipment. They throw our kids around. They  
12 throw the kids off. There is a lot of things  
13 happening already, and that's not before you are  
14 bringing whoever into the school. I think you  
15 need a screened school, and you need to keep the  
16 neighborhood the way it is.

17 MS. GORMAN: Thank you very much. Debbie  
18 Ginsberg.

19 MS. DEBBIE GINSBERG: Hi. I'm Debbie  
20 Ginsberg. I'm a mother of a first grader at  
21 PS158. And, as a community member and a parent,  
22 I strongly am in favor of a 100% screened  
23 schools. I feel that, if children or students  
24 want a 50%, or if they want a screened school,  
25 they are going to apply to a screened school.

1 If they want an unscreened school, they are  
2 going to apply to an unscreened school, and,  
3 with the limited number of seats, I'm not sure  
4 who's going to really apply here. So I'm in  
5 favor of a 100% screened. Thank you.

6 MS. GORMAN: Thank you very much. John  
7 Keller.

8 MR. JOHN KELLER: Yeah, hi, my name is John  
9 Keller I'm a member of the SLT at PS59 and  
10 learned today that I'll be joining the CEC in  
11 July. First of all, I want to thank Drew and  
12 all of the people who brought this school here,  
13 and I truly want to echo the comments that were  
14 made earlier that, you know, we all want this to  
15 be the best possible environment for our  
16 children moving forward, and that's why we're  
17 here. We might feel strongly on some sides of  
18 this, but that's why we are together.

19 I feel strongly that it should be a 100%  
20 screened school. For reasons that have been put  
21 forth, I think this is a case where, you know,  
22 if cutting the baby in half does not yield the  
23 desired result for the logistic or on other  
24 reasons that have been presented.

25 My core reason for being in favor of the

1 screened school is that none of us are talking  
2 about this being based on test scores, or we  
3 don't need any more of that. Okay? What we are  
4 talking about is it being based on what we want  
5 is a school where a great principal, over the  
6 next few months, can work with a truly engaged  
7 community to create a wonderful new school for  
8 our children, and that's what I'm supporting,  
9 and that's what I want. Thank you.

10 MS. GORMAN: Thank you very much. Jeff  
11 Ginsberg, Amanda Wolf, Lori Levin, Leonard  
12 Silverman, and Nancy--we'll leave it at Nancy.  
13 I'm sorry.

14 MR. JEFF GINSBERG: Good evening. My name  
15 is Jeffrey Ginsberg. I have two kids in first  
16 grade here at PS158, and I, too, am in favor of  
17 a 100% screened school. I'm simply not  
18 parroting what others are saying. This has been  
19 the result of a thorough discussion,  
20 investigation, and thought process. I can tell  
21 you that when the SLT leader, Todd Helmrich, met  
22 with a lot of the parents at 158 in the  
23 cafeteria, now about two months ago, the parents  
24 were overwhelmingly in favor of a 100% screened  
25 school.

1           We've made our voices heard. The DOE  
2 still wants 50/50. I, frankly, don't understand  
3 that you show up at a school fair, fill out a  
4 form, and you get into a school. I also  
5 understand that people don't want to go through,  
6 or have their children go through, the stress of  
7 applying to a screened school. And sometimes,  
8 that's just the necessary reality here. Why not  
9 have a school that has the greatest opportunity  
10 to have the highest achievement possible. And  
11 if that means students who have achieved till  
12 fifth grade and will continue to achieve, rather  
13 than have just a sign-up sheet, which it seems  
14 like that other 50%, it seems to make no sense  
15 to me.

16           But not only does the parent at the 158  
17 meeting show of great support for a 100%  
18 screened school, but also did the parents show  
19 support at the meeting about one month ago, and  
20 from the hundreds or thousands of e-mails that  
21 were sent to the various representatives  
22 throughout the city. So I would urge the DOE,  
23 Mr. Guzman included, to please reconsider. It's  
24 our children we are talking about, who live  
25 here, go to school here, and want to the best

1 possibility for the best education they can  
2 acquire. Thank you.

3 MS. GORMAN: Thank you very much. Amanda  
4 Wolf, Lori Levin, Leonard Silverman.

5 MS. AMANDA WOLF: Hi. I'm Amanda Wolf. I  
6 have a son at Bronx Science, and a daughter at  
7 Wagner, and I'm a former PTA president at PS6.  
8 I'm also on the SLT and the Board at Wagner this  
9 year.

10 My preference, after going through the  
11 middle school process and the New York City  
12 public schools my whole life, is 100% for an  
13 unscreened school. Middle school is too early  
14 to differentiate high and low performance, in my  
15 opinion. We see late bloomers all the time,  
16 including my children, who are high performing  
17 now.

18 I have always wanted my children to be in an  
19 environment that is the most like the real  
20 world, and I don't know what the obsession with  
21 the idea of screening is. I don't know what  
22 parents are afraid of what they are screening  
23 out, what they think they are. I see all the  
24 kids are great at Wagner.

25 And the best people in the world have always

1       come out of the New York City public schools,  
2       long before there were screened programs. I  
3       just don't get it, and I know lots of people at  
4       every school where everyone says everyone is  
5       100% for screened, and they are not all for  
6       screened. I know plenty of people who feel like  
7       me, 100% unscreened. That's all I want to say.  
8       Thank you.

9               MS. GORMAN: Thank you very much. Lori  
10       Levin, Leonard Silverman, Nancy, Adam, Andy.

11              MS. LORI LEVIN: Hi. My name is Lori Levin,  
12       and I'm a parent of a student at 151. My voice  
13       is never loud enough. I'm in favor of the  
14       proposed EIS being withdrawn, and the new middle  
15       school being opened as a 100% screened school.  
16       I do not support the unproven plan of a 50%  
17       screen and a 50% lottery environment.

18              The Upper East Side has a celebrated history  
19       of success, with three elementary schools  
20       recently joining the ranks of the well-  
21       established neighborhood schools. Under the  
22       strong leadership of the new principals who  
23       carry out their educational visions, our  
24       children are thriving.

25              With the same community commitment, thought,

1 and cooperation, our new middle school should  
2 be no exception to this. But in order for that  
3 to happen, the new middle school principal must  
4 be empowered to select the students by examining  
5 their academic achievements, not test scores,  
6 alongside their attendance, teacher  
7 recommendations, and, most importantly, the  
8 student's interest. This is the only way to  
9 ensure a diverse student community of active and  
10 engaged learners.

11 The DOE's suggestion that the principal  
12 could select a diverse population under a 50/50  
13 model from the allotted screened seats is not  
14 realistic and does not set our new school up for  
15 success. Ultimately, I'm concerned that the  
16 small school environment will become quickly  
17 taxed because the educational needs and, more  
18 importantly, the interests of the students could  
19 be too different.

20 I want my son to have the opportunity to  
21 attend a middle school that is made up of a  
22 diverse community of highly engaged learners,  
23 and I do not think that a lottery system can  
24 provide for that.

25 MS. GORMAN: Thank you very much. Leonard,

1 Nancy, Adam, Andy, and Matthew.

2 MR. LEONARD SILVERMAN: Yes. Good evening.  
3 My name is Leonard Silverman. I'm the Vice  
4 President And Director of Public Relations of  
5 the PTA at PS77 where I have a second grader. I  
6 also have another child that attends fourth  
7 grade at PS6.

8 I just want to make it absolutely 100% clear  
9 that both of those schools are in favor of a  
10 100% screened school. And it's my  
11 understanding, from what I've heard--and you can  
12 correct me if I'm wrong--that, overwhelmingly,  
13 the parents associations of these schools that  
14 are located on the Upper East Side have voted in  
15 favor of a 100% screened admissions process.  
16 And when I mean overwhelmingly, I've heard all  
17 but one school. Now, if that's the case, it's  
18 my understanding that's democracy, and that's  
19 democracy in action, if that's the breakdown,  
20 that it's overwhelmingly people choosing a 100%  
21 screened for admissions process.

22 I'd also just want to add that, when you  
23 hear about the numbers that Todd has mentioned,  
24 and you here about the lines, everyone knows  
25 that it's very difficult to get into certain

1 schools because they are in great demand. An  
2 unscreened option is simply a lottery in this  
3 area, and that's what we are talking about. So,  
4 again, just as a representative of PS77 and,  
5 also, as a parent of someone at PS6, I would  
6 just say that I would support, as a parent at  
7 those schools, a 100% screened option for  
8 admissions for this middle school.

9 MS. GORMAN: Thank you very much. Nancy.

10 MS. NANCY ZIFRONIE: My name is Nancy  
11 Zifonie. I am the parent of a third grader at  
12 YCS. And in many scenarios, a compromise works,  
13 and, in practice, I don't believe that a 50/50  
14 admission process will work. I am in favor of a  
15 100% screened school.

16 I believe that this school is going to face  
17 challenges, being a small school. And as a  
18 parent at YCS, we are very aware that it takes  
19 everyone being on board to create a successful  
20 school. And if half the kids are there because  
21 they really want to be, and deserve to be, and  
22 half of them are there because they lucked out,  
23 I believe it will impede the success of the  
24 school as a whole.

25 My daughter, in third grade right now, is

1 starting to learn that her efforts and her  
2 achievements impact the results, and that her  
3 hard work pays off. And I think that these are  
4 life lessons that children should learn, not  
5 necessarily through the screening through  
6 testing, but through the efforts of the  
7 children.

8         And if my daughter, or any of her friends,  
9 want to be a part of this school, they should  
10 have the opportunity to show the school why they  
11 want to be here and why they deserve to be here,  
12 and not just because their name got picked from-  
13 -gets picked from a lottery. And if we allow  
14 half of the students to be here solely through  
15 their luck, then we are doing a disservice to  
16 our children. I'm also in favor of the proposed  
17 EIS being withdrawn. Thank you.

18         MS. GORMAN: Thank you very much. Adam.

19         MR. ADAM RADER: Hi. My name is Adam Rader,  
20 and I'm a parent of a child at PS158. My  
21 child's experience at PS158 has been very  
22 positive. She's had excellent teachers every  
23 single year, and I firmly believe that, no  
24 matter what system is in place, PS158 will be  
25 fine and continue to thrive.

1           I personally support an unscreened school.  
2       I feel that that's a fairer process, that it's  
3       open to all people equally, and that, at this  
4       age, to have a screening process, particularly  
5       if you are not going to consider grades, could  
6       be extremely subjective. I'm of the belief that  
7       there are people on both sides of the issue, and  
8       that the support for screened schools is a  
9       little bit over exaggerated because parents have  
10      been told that there might be safety concerns at  
11      PS158 for the elementary school if it was an  
12      unscreened process, and I don't actually think  
13      there was any support for that position.

14           Given that there are two sides of the issue,  
15      I actually appreciate that the DOE has tried to  
16      come up with a compromise solution, and,  
17      although, I support an unscreened school, I do  
18      think that the 50/50 compromise will allow for  
19      some element of fairness and transparency, while  
20      still allowing a principal to have some control  
21      as to the makeup of the school.

22           I do believe the key is that, with a great  
23      principal, great teachers, and a great  
24      curriculum, the school is going to be successful  
25      no matter what. But there should be some

1 element of fairness that's respected for the  
2 entire community. Thank you.

3 MS. GORMAN: Thank you. Andy, then, we'll  
4 have Matthew, Tracy, Eric, Silva, and Michelle.

5 MATTHEW: Before I start, can I make a  
6 request? I don't like turning my back on these  
7 parents. Can't we move the microphone over  
8 there, so I'm facing you and the audience?

9 FEMALE VOICE: Put it on the side. That  
10 will be fine.

11 MATTHEW: Right over here? Thank you. In  
12 looking around this room, I noticed that I'm in  
13 a unique position. I'm probably one of the only  
14 parents here that actually sent a child through  
15 middle school in this building. And, first, I  
16 want to say to you, look over there. If you  
17 want to know how this school got built, look at  
18 the representatives, our elected officials.  
19 They are the ones that made this happen.

20 I've been fighting for this middle school  
21 for five years, and I don't want it done the  
22 wrong way. And I call for an immediate delay to  
23 this whole process. And why do I say that?  
24 This EIS was shoved through at the last minute,  
25 and it's a rush to judgment, actually, a rush to

1 approve. If it was such a great plan, why  
2 wasn't it on the table two months ago when we  
3 were considering other alternatives?

4 I also say it's because this is an unknown  
5 commodity. We have not heard the Department of  
6 Education tell us one school that follows this  
7 exact program. Thirdly, I have not seen any  
8 convincing data which supports any position,  
9 screened, unscreened, or this hybrid program,  
10 and that goes double for this hybrid program.

11 Let's stop arguing. Let's get it right.  
12 Let's get the data. Mariano, Drew, Drew, how  
13 many times have I asked you for data that shows  
14 what this community looks like? What we need to  
15 understand is what our community looks like and  
16 make sure this school reflects it.

17 I just want to add one other thing. Some of  
18 you know that I'm Executive Vice President of  
19 Pledge to Protect. I want to tell you tonight  
20 that we are well over 10,000 pledges, well over.  
21 And if you haven't signed the pledge to protect  
22 your kids from the trash dump, do it now at P2P  
23 NYC. And if you have signed that pledge, thank  
24 you. And make it your goal this week to sign  
25 out five additional members. Thank you.

1 MS. CIRONE: Can I say one thing before?  
2 Drew, just a question, if the EIS, whatever it  
3 is, doesn't go through in June, am I correct in  
4 believing that the school cannot open when it's  
5 supposed to and has to be delayed another year?  
6 Is that right? Or when does the EIS have to be  
7 voted on for the school to be open on time?

8 MR. DREW PATTERSON: It could have been.

9 MS. CIRONE: How much later?

10 MR. PATTERSON: - - .

11 MS. CIRONE: Okay.

12 MS. GORMAN: If you send Drew that question,  
13 we can get an answer for you.

14 FEMALE VOICE: We are going to move the--

15 MS. GORMAN: [Interposing] Line over here to  
16 accommodate the request that was made?

17 MR. MATTHEW CHUCK: Hi. Matthew Chuck,  
18 PS267 Co-President, SLT member, and Co-President  
19 of the District 2 President's Council. And I  
20 somewhat echo Andy's statements, in that I feel  
21 that this was an extremely rushed EIS. We were  
22 fortunate to hear the great news that the middle  
23 school would be opening in the upper floors of  
24 this building, and extremely shortly thereafter,  
25 NEIS came out with this admissions process of

1 50/50. And it is not something that I believe  
2 serves the needs of the community, at least as  
3 to what we are hearing today.

4 So I agree that we should have some data  
5 that speaks to how this will be successful. We  
6 have heard from the DOE and the head of office  
7 enrollment, or I don't want to call him the head  
8 if he isn't, but Sandy certainly mentioned to us  
9 that this would be an extremely successful  
10 school. Based on my experience in my school  
11 opening up two years ago, or three years ago  
12 now, I wholeheartedly agree with that; however,  
13 I would like to see how.

14 At least with a zoned elementary school,  
15 there was a vision. There was a plan put in  
16 place, and there was a long process to put that  
17 plan in place and find a leader for it, the  
18 correct leader, and it's worked extremely well.  
19 We have a fabulous elementary school at 267.  
20 We'd like to see the same for the middle school  
21 here.

22 How does this work? We don't know, and I'm  
23 not sure that the DOE does either, and so we  
24 would like some answers to see where this has  
25 worked in the past. And, if so, tell us how it

1 will work. Why is this supposed to be the  
2 testing grounds for a new admissions process  
3 that doesn't exist anywhere in District 2, and  
4 I'm not sure where it exists. There could be  
5 other schools with multiple entry points;  
6 however, we are not aware of this kind of  
7 situation, specifically for a middle school and  
8 specifically in District 2. Thank you.

9 MS. GORMAN: Thank you very much. Tracy,  
10 Eric, Silva, Michelle, and Bonnie.

11 MS. TRACY MILLUETT: Hi. I'm Tracy  
12 Milluett, and I support a 100% screened school.  
13 I have a kindergartner at PS158, and I have been  
14 through this entire process. My daughter is  
15 graduating Eastside Middle. She went to  
16 Eastside Middle when it was already at the new  
17 building.

18 But I just wanted to say that having a great  
19 middle school, a 100% screened school, here was  
20 an amazingly wonderful experience. The children  
21 engaged. The older children engaged the younger  
22 children, and everything was just very  
23 harmonious, and it ran beautifully. Our kids  
24 went to see the middle school shows here in the  
25 auditorium. They really gleaned so much from

1 these wonderful kids who were here, and they  
2 would strive to, you know, be like them. And,  
3 you know, we offer a lot at PS158 as far as, you  
4 know, tutoring and testing to make our kids  
5 reach the potential that they can. And it was a  
6 credit Eastside Middle being here, that so many  
7 of our kids tried to reach higher and tried to  
8 achieve.

9 So I really do feel that it was a wonderful  
10 thing, and, also, for new people that move here  
11 to hear that there is a great middle school  
12 here, great elementary school. That, you know,  
13 we can stay here, and we want great people in  
14 District 2. So the kids were wonderful. They  
15 were great to have around. They were a great  
16 influence on our young ones, and I do know that  
17 that is a tried and true thing. I don't know  
18 anything about how this other plan would work.  
19 So thank you. Thanks for being here.

20 MS. GORMAN: Thank you. Eric Messenger,  
21 Silva Dorokovich, Michelle Friedman, Bonnie  
22 Reiss, Amy Cantor, and Beth Miller.

23 MR. ERIC MESSENGER: Thank you. I thought I  
24 had an original point, but then Andy stole it,  
25 but I may have some others. I am a parent of

1 two, with one child who has benefited from  
2 screening and all that. Another childhood has  
3 benefited from being in a great neighborhood  
4 school, this one. I'm also a journalist that  
5 covers a lot of education issues.

6 So the 50% solution, to me, sounds more like  
7 a political compromise than an educational  
8 solution. Beyond the admissions, the very  
9 legitimate admissions questions, that Todd  
10 raised, I would add, as a parent, you know, who  
11 has been through the middle school process, you  
12 know, you are thinking intently. You are  
13 thinking strategically. And I'm not really sure  
14 what kind of a school I would be applying to.

15 Like, I mean, 50% sounds like--academically,  
16 what will the--you need a united school to tell  
17 the world this is what you get at this school.  
18 If you're telling them, on the one hand, it's a  
19 screened school suggesting, you know, academic  
20 rigor, on the other hand, an unscreened school,  
21 I think, as a parent, I would be very confused.  
22 I wouldn't necessarily believe what you're  
23 telling me. And I would be deeply confused  
24 about how to apply to it. I suppose, you know,  
25 yeah--and, then, academically, I'm not sure.

1 It's hard to imagine how that will all shake  
2 down into a united academic environment.

3 30 seconds. So I'm not really sure about  
4 how I feel, screened or unscreened. I am  
5 leaning towards screened because, especially in  
6 a cohabitation building, that would seem to be a  
7 safer way to ensure a great overall building.  
8 And I also think that if it's unscreened, you  
9 don't this is a really end up with a  
10 neighborhood school. Thank you.

11 MS. GORMAN: Thank you very much. Silva,  
12 Michelle, Bonnie, Amy, Beth, and Alex.

13 MS. MICHELLE FRIEDMAN: Hi. I'm Michelle  
14 Friedman, and I 100% support unscreened schools.  
15 I'm going to keep this short and sweet because  
16 I'm going to really repeat what I said last  
17 time, and I have nothing really planned to say.  
18 But my children, sixth and eighth grade, attend  
19 an unscreened school. And, with all do respect  
20 to the mom that spoke earlier about how her  
21 children, or her child, really thrived in a  
22 screened school, my children are thriving at  
23 their unscreened Wagner Middle School, which is  
24 amazing. And it's a little hurtful to hear  
25 these ridiculous comments.

1           I live in the same neighborhood as these  
2 158 parents, and a lot of these other parents,  
3 and it makes us feel very insignificant. And  
4 it's a little disgusting, sometimes. So  
5 unscreened Wagner is amazing. Jim - - is  
6 amazing, and my son got accepted to Baroque High  
7 School, which I said last time, 6,500 applicants  
8 and 110 accepted. So unscreened is amazing.

9           MS. GORMAN: Thank you. Michelle, Bonnie,  
10 Amy, Beth, Alex, and Deborah Millman.

11           MS. BONNIE REISS: Hi. I'm Bonnie Reiss,  
12 and the parent of two first graders at PS151.  
13 Just to acknowledge some of the really good  
14 points made already, I do wish there were more  
15 data available from the Department of Education  
16 or from some source as to the merits of one  
17 school or another because I just had a hard time  
18 finding it.

19           I think that a 50/50 option is probably  
20 worse than either 100% screened or unscreened  
21 because it sets up a divisiveness in the school  
22 community from the beginning, a lack of vision  
23 about what kind of school it's going to be.  
24 That I would prefer for it to go one way or the  
25 other.

1           My personal preference is that it would be  
2 a 100% screened school. I do wish I had more  
3 data to support that preference, as opposed to  
4 some sort of gut reaction, but I am very against  
5 standardized testing and academic standards  
6 being the largest, or most important, or, for  
7 that matter, in some cases, you know, any piece  
8 of the criteria because I think all children,  
9 regardless of their abilities, deserve a good  
10 school to go to. And I am heartened to hear  
11 that there are wonderful 100% unscreened  
12 schools. This is just where we are now. So I  
13 would ask to withdraw the--whatever it's called--  
14 the educational impact statement. Thank you.

15           MS. GORMAN: Thank you. Did we miss  
16 Michelle Friedman?

17           MALE VOICE: No. - - .

18           MS. GORMAN: Thank you very much. Amy.

19           MS. AMY CANTOR: Hi. I'm Amy Cantor. I'm  
20 an SLT member at both PS6 and Eastside Middle  
21 School. I'm here representing PS6, though,  
22 tonight. The PS6 parent body overwhelmingly  
23 supports a screened school. Over 80% of parents  
24 who participated in our school wide vote support  
25 a screened school. Given the relatively small

1 size of the new middle school, we believe that  
2 our parents' wishes will be best served by a  
3 100% screened school.

4 The proposed 50% unscreened, 50% screened,  
5 model is untested. Parents have expressed  
6 concerns that they would be too few screens  
7 spots available relative to existing demand at  
8 all of the Upper East Side schools. Thank you.

9 MS. GORMAN: Thank you. Beth Miller.

10 MS. BETH MILLER: Hi. I'm Beth Miller. I  
11 was a parent of a student at 158, and my child  
12 is now a sixth grader at Wagner and is having a  
13 wonderful year. I'm in favor of an unscreened  
14 school just because I think about when I went to  
15 middle school and just the environment that I  
16 had. There was not the competition of testing,  
17 and the rigor, and, you know, children may be  
18 having their self-esteem affected or having  
19 nightmares because of testing. I'm not a big  
20 fan of testing, either.

21 So I believe in the unscreened school, for  
22 those who don't want to go through the rigor of  
23 dealing with testing, who would like to stay in  
24 the Upper East Side, who would like to have a  
25 nurturing school because, net, the school is

1 only going to have 225 kids to 250. Break  
2 that down by three grades, it's not a lot of  
3 students. And just as a PS, my child, when he  
4 was here at 158, Eastside Middle was also  
5 cohabitating here. I don't remember the  
6 interaction. And there is a lot of wonderful  
7 children who go to the playground at John J and  
8 don't push children around.

9 MS. GORMAN: Remember--

10 MS. MILLER: [Interposing] The same  
11 François.

12 MS. GORMAN: I'm sorry. Thank you very  
13 much. Following Alex, if you'd come to the mic,  
14 is Deborah Millman, Douglas Chen, Amy  
15 Rabinovich, Laura Hepler.

16 MR. ALEX VASILISKU: Hello, everyone. My  
17 name is Alex Vasilisku, and I have two children,  
18 seven and eight, who are in a local elementary  
19 schools very close to this school. My interest  
20 in this, you know, when I came to this, I came  
21 in here with open, you know, thoughts about  
22 which is better.

23 But I know one thing here is that that thing  
24 is good by splitting this up between screened  
25 and unscreened. There is not one parent who got

1 up here, in the 25 who spoke before me, who  
2 endorsed a split school. And what troubles me  
3 about the process is, is that I don't think  
4 there has ever been a school that has been co-  
5 screened and open through a lottery system.

6 Now, there are merits to the lottery system.  
7 There are merits to the screened system. And I  
8 went through both of them, but when you are  
9 dealing with implementing a brand-new small  
10 school like this, crippling the principal by  
11 having this split implementation that has never  
12 been done before is highly suspect.

13 And those who are concerned that a principal  
14 somehow will not create a diverse environment  
15 don't really appreciate all the checks and  
16 balances that the community and DOE has on a  
17 principal to properly implement a screened  
18 school so that it's diversified and has the  
19 interest of the school and the community. And  
20 so, with a small school like that, by giving it  
21 50/50, the other big issue is the impact on the  
22 children, having half the kids screened, half  
23 the kids not.

24 Now, I speak with some authority in terms of  
25 the process. A gentleman earlier spoke about

1 this process being flawed, not enough notice.  
2 Years ago--I have 20 seconds--years ago, when I  
3 was in private practice, there was another  
4 implementation in the South Bronx of a school,  
5 and I brought a TRO against the DOE, halted that  
6 whole process. Here, you have a flawed system.  
7 Do not embrace the flawed system. Either go  
8 with the screened school or no screened school.  
9 I say go for the screened school, but do not  
10 experiment with this little school, cripple it,  
11 and hamper the teacher. Thank you very much.

12 MS. GORMAN: Thank you. Deborah, followed  
13 by Douglas, Amy, Laura, Agnoscio, Lisa, and  
14 Barbara.

15 MS. DEBORAH MILLMAN: Good evening,  
16 everybody. I am Deborah Millman. I'm on the  
17 student leadership team of PS59 and Community  
18 Board 6 member. Good evening, CEC members,  
19 Todd, thank you, and Drew.

20 First, I'd like to say that I've been  
21 involved in the process for quite a long time  
22 now, and I appreciate greatly the--oh, and  
23 pardon me, and Superintendent Guzman, excuse me.  
24 And I appreciate the DOE's efforts in trying to  
25 come up with a curriculum for this--or an

1 admissions process, excuse me, for this middle  
2 school. Getting the middle school is a  
3 wonderful addition to the Upper East Side, to  
4 District 2, and everybody really applauds that.

5       However, I have to echo some of the parents'  
6 concerns and, particularly, Alex, who just  
7 spoke, in that there is no precedent for a 50/50  
8 school. It does not exist in Manhattan in  
9 District 2 for a middle school. And when you  
10 have a school that you are talking about 85  
11 seats per grade, it's really not a good thing to  
12 be the test ground for this school.

13       That being said, I know Andy said earlier  
14 that there is not data. I can tell you what  
15 data there is. The data is, as we stand here  
16 this evening, just me sitting here taking a  
17 tally of those parents in District 2 that want a  
18 screened school is 66%, just based on the tally  
19 that I just took here. The 1000 e-mails that  
20 were received by the DOE, the CEC, the PEP is a  
21 majority of the parents in District 2 that want  
22 a screened school.

23       So I would say that there are excellent  
24 arguments that all the parents are making.  
25 There is excellent progress that everyone is

1 making. However, if the community wants a  
2 screened school, if a 50/50 is not tested--and  
3 there is no precedent--please DOE, please CEC,  
4 look at this. Adjourn just until July. The  
5 meeting for the PEP where they have been EIS,  
6 and please come up with a solution being a  
7 screened school, which is what the parents want.  
8 Thank you.

9 MS. GORMAN: Thank you. Douglas Chen. Amy  
10 Rabinovich.

11 MS. AMY RABINOVICH: Hi. I'm Amy  
12 Rabinovich.

13 MS. GORMAN: Followed by Laura.

14 MS. RABINOVICH: I'm the Chair of the  
15 Community Outreach Committee at PS290, one of  
16 the schools that's been involved in the group  
17 with all the other schools, and we did take a  
18 PTA vote for a 100% screened school. I  
19 personally think that the 50/50 split doesn't  
20 really satisfy anyone. And what keeps getting  
21 glossed in a lot of the comments is that when we  
22 talk about a screened school, we, really, from  
23 the very beginning of our conversations with the  
24 DOE, have said we don't want anything based on  
25 test scores. I agree. I hate tests. I think

1 we test the kids too much.

2 I think that what we are looking for is some  
3 great new creative way to make a middle school.  
4 Something a little bit different that leaves  
5 some of that up to the principal, doesn't put  
6 the principal in an awkward position of having  
7 to choose some, not choose some, and to really  
8 put together a school that maybe has a different  
9 theme, are different way, of looking at middle  
10 school they can be a creative model for the rest  
11 of the District.

12 I think it's going to really hamper the  
13 principal with the startup if it's some other  
14 way. District 2 has among the best middle  
15 schools in the city, and the DOE has used that  
16 model of screened schools to create such  
17 incredible middle schools. And to mess that up  
18 now is really going to, I think, affect our kids  
19 going forward. So I advocate withdrawing the  
20 EIS and listening to the majority of the parents  
21 here and really trying to develop a new exciting  
22 model of a middle school that uses screening.

23 MS. GORMAN: Thank you. Laura, followed by  
24 Agnoscio, Lisa, and Barbara.

25 LAURA: Hello. My name is Laura. I'm a

1 parent here. I have a third grader and a  
2 kindergartner. And this is hard for me because  
3 I really do think I don't--I think the whole  
4 process of how the middle school works in  
5 District 2, and in New York City in general, I'm  
6 not a fan of. I do think it creates undue  
7 stress, and I hope that this school can create  
8 an environment that is not stressful. It is not  
9 competitive.

10 But I do know, also, having seen a couple of  
11 middle schools here, that it's really important  
12 to be able to have a cohesive school in the  
13 building that works well, whose leadership works  
14 well with your leadership, that, you know, that  
15 I--I'm sorry. I would like to see a school  
16 that's not competitive, but I want to know that  
17 it's a school that is supported, and that the  
18 principal can create an environment that will  
19 work well with this grade school.

20 You know, we are all in it together. And I  
21 want the principal to be able to think about how  
22 can we build our school in a way that becomes a  
23 school that will work well with this grade  
24 school. I can tell by your faces this doesn't  
25 make any sense at all.

1           And so, I guess I just want to emphasize  
2 that screening does not necessarily have to mean  
3 an ultracompetitive intense environment.

4           MS. GORMAN: Our PA President Agnoscio.

5           MR. AGNOSCIO: Good speech, Laura, there. I  
6 can't follow that, but I just want to say thank  
7 you to the DOE and to all the representatives  
8 over here that we didn't yet, at least, the idea  
9 of the middle school upstairs. And everybody  
10 reached onto great points of, you know, their  
11 ideas.

12           From being here for eight years, I  
13 experienced having a great middle school  
14 upstairs, and my daughter went through the  
15 middle school process and is in Wagner, which is  
16 a great school, like I said, you know, like  
17 other people have said.

18           But for my opinion from seeing, you know,  
19 the last couple of years, the transition  
20 upstairs and what was up there to what I could  
21 expect when we don't know what a 50/50 school  
22 is, and what kind of, you know, I'm not going to  
23 say cage, but, you know, the diversion up there.  
24 If it's a lottery, we have no idea, you know,  
25 what kind of kids are going to be coming here.

1 And, you know, we want to make it fair for all  
2 our kids that are here in District 2, so they do  
3 have another good school to go to. And, you  
4 know, being PA President, we took a vote. We  
5 are in favor of a 100% screened, like the other  
6 nine elementary schools here.

7 But, you know, I just want to say just think  
8 about what you have on the table and reconsider  
9 it in a sense where maybe get back onto the  
10 board, and we could all figure out to make it  
11 the best school upstairs 'cause I'm here another  
12 three years, and I want to make sure that my  
13 youngest one has the same experience as my other  
14 two. Thank you.

15 MS. GORMAN: Thank you. Lisa Ehrlich and  
16 Barbara Mandel.

17 MS. LISA EHRLICH: Hi. My name is Lisa  
18 Ehrlich. I am a Wagner parent, and, as of  
19 September, also an Eleanor Roosevelt parent. I  
20 was a PTA exec board member at 183 for many  
21 years, as well as a co-president there. My  
22 children are in seventh and eighth grade at  
23 Wagner, and I have been serving on the executive  
24 board there for two years now.

25 And I did not grow up in the city. I grew

1 up in the suburbs where we went to the school  
2 that was near our house, and you went to your  
3 junior high school or middle school, and you  
4 went to your high school, and that was it. I'm  
5 raising my children in the city because they  
6 have choices where they can go to middle school.  
7 And the middle school process is a choice one  
8 and should continue to be so for all children.  
9 That means every child should have choices, more  
10 than one choice, even in their neighborhood.

11 There are already two programs which exists  
12 on the Upper East Side which are screened based  
13 on test scores. This new middle school should  
14 accommodate application by all children. The  
15 middle school process is far too early in a  
16 child's life to be put under the pressure both  
17 of my children have experienced more than once.

18 I find it very interesting that the majority  
19 of parents in support of a screened school have  
20 never even experienced this application process  
21 for middle school yet. I don't believe that the  
22 decision for what the school is to become should  
23 be based on the number of cut and paste e-mails  
24 that were sent to the DOE, CEC, PEP, electives,  
25 and whoever else was fortunate enough to receive

1       them.

2               I urge the DOE and the CEC to look at our  
3 community, to look at our community and create a  
4 school that will benefit this community as a  
5 whole. And whatever the school is, and does  
6 become, it cannot detract from the beautiful  
7 programming that goes on at Wagner Middle  
8 School.

9               MS. GORMAN: Thank you. Our last speaker is  
10 Barbara Mandel.

11              MS. BARBARA MANDEL: Hi. My name is Barbara  
12 Mandel. I'm a parent at PS267. I've served on  
13 the executive board for the last three years.  
14 I'm very excited there is going to be more seats  
15 because I have twins, so I'm going to need two  
16 spots in a few years.

17              I support the 100% screened school. I like  
18 the idea of the principal being able to have a  
19 say about the curriculum and being able to look  
20 at the student body and developed a wonderful  
21 curriculum, just as we have benefited from at  
22 PS267. Thank you.

23              MS. GORMAN: Thank you. And I truly want to  
24 thank all of the speakers, as well as the  
25 audience who came tonight. I think you

1 represented yourselves and your community very  
2 well. I do want to tell you that your public  
3 comment does matter very much. We've heard  
4 significant comment tonight. The information  
5 will be shared with the Panel on Educational  
6 Policy, which will have its meeting on June 19th  
7 at 6:00 p.m. at the Michael J. Petras School  
8 located at 715 Ocean Terrace in Staten Island,  
9 New York.

10 I want to tell you that the PEP--I do want  
11 to explain that the PEP goes around the city.  
12 It just so happens that this one is in Staten  
13 Island. This is not the only proposal that's  
14 coming before the PEP, and Staten Island will  
15 tell you that the majority of them take place  
16 outside of Staten Island. So, however, if you  
17 are not able to go, I want to give you the e-  
18 mail address and phone number where comments can  
19 be made that will be added to the public comment  
20 that's analyzed before the hearing.

21 First, the e-mail address,  
22 d02proposals@schools.nyc.gov. I'll repeat that,  
23 d02, for District 2, proposals@schools.nyc.gov,  
24 or, if you prefer to use a phone number, 212-  
25 374-3466, 212-374-3466. This is the number

1 that--which is Drew, not his direct number,  
2 but he'll get those phone calls.

3 Thank you all for coming very much. This  
4 joint public hearing is officially adjourned.

5 [END RECORDING]

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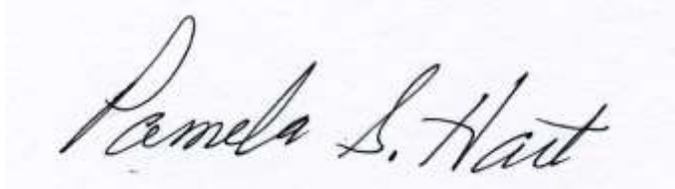
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pamela S. Hart".

Signature

Date June 6, 2013