

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF  
PORTFOLIO PLANNING  
Expansion of Girls Prep ES -  
12/13/12**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 [Background Noise]

3 [Crosstalk]

4 MR. TIMOTHY BEHR: Good evening and welcome.  
5 This is a joint public hearing of the Department  
6 of Education, Community Education Council and  
7 School Leadership Teams for the proposed  
8 expansion of the collocation of the Girls  
9 Preparatory Charter School of the Bronx with  
10 M.S. 302 Luisa Dessus Cruz in building X052  
11 beginning in 2013/2014. I am Community School  
12 District 8 Superintendent Timothy Behr. We have  
13 asked the District 8 Community Education Council  
14 and the School Leadership Team in building X052  
15 to participate in this joint public hearing.

16 I am joined by Principal Lisa Ortiz, Mr.  
17 Hinesley, Ms. Ocasio, Ms. Gonzalez, Ms. Cabrera  
18 from 302 School Leadership Team; Versha Muncshi-  
19 South, Ian Rowe, Erica Hunt, Katie Carroll from  
20 the Girls Prep Bronx Leadership Team; Sajo  
21 Touray from District 8 CEC. Please note that  
22 this hearing is being recorded. The purpose of  
23 this hearing is for you to provide comments  
24 about the proposal. Before I describe the  
25 proposal, I want to make sure you are all aware

1 of the opportunity to provide your input. All  
2 those who wish to speak must sign up in the  
3 speaker sign-in area located just outside the  
4 auditorium. This sign-up list will close in 15  
5 minutes. Speakers will be given the floor in  
6 the order that they are signed up. All comments  
7 are limited to two minutes.

8 There may be elected officials who arrive at  
9 different times throughout the evening. If they  
10 wish to speak, we will do our best to  
11 accommodate them at the first opportune moment.  
12 Those who are here at the start of the public  
13 comments segment will be asked to speak first.  
14 All comments will be mentioned in the analysis  
15 of public comment to be published and provided  
16 to the Panel for Educational Policy the evening  
17 before the panel votes. That vote is scheduled  
18 for December 20, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. at the High  
19 School of Fashion Industries located at 225 West  
20 24th Street, New York, New York, 10011. Hard  
21 copies of the educational impact statement and  
22 the BUP [phonetic] describing the proposal in  
23 detail are available in the main office of  
24 middle school 302.

25 In addition, we welcome any comments and

1 feedback that you may have at any time before  
2 the panel votes on the proposal. The email  
3 address and phone number where comments may be  
4 made are D08PROPOSALS@schools.nyc.gov. So  
5 that's D, District 08, so  
6 D08PROPOSALS@schools.nyc.gov. Or you may call  
7 212-374-5159.

8 The proposal summary: the New York City  
9 Department of Education, or the DOE, is  
10 proposing the expand the grades served in  
11 building X052 by Girls Preparatory Charter  
12 School of the Bronx, also known as Girls Prep  
13 Bronx, from kindergarten through fourth grades  
14 to kindergarten through fifth grades. Girls  
15 Prep Bronx has been authorized to serve  
16 kindergarten through fifth grades under its  
17 charter by the State University of New York  
18 Charter School Institute. Girls Prep Bronx is a  
19 public charter elementary school serving  
20 kindergarten through fourth grades in the X052  
21 building located at 681 Kelly Street in District  
22 8 in the Bronx where is collocated with middle  
23 school 302, Luisa Dessus Cruz, a zone middle  
24 school serving students in grades six through  
25 eight. A collocation means that two or more

1 school organizations are located in the same  
2 building and my share common spaces like  
3 auditoriums, gymnasiums and cafeterias.

4 Girls Prep Bronx currently admits students  
5 through a charter lottery application.  
6 According to the 2010/2011 blue book, the X05  
7 [phonetic] building has the capacity to server  
8 1,137 students. Currently the building serves  
9 944 students, yielding a building utilization  
10 rate of 83% meaning the building is not being  
11 used as efficiently as it might be. If this  
12 proposal is approved, Girls Bronx Prep will add  
13 a fifth grade in 2013 and 2014 and enroll  
14 approximately 68 to 86 additional students.  
15 Including those additional Girls Prep Bronx  
16 students in 2013/2014, X052 is projected to  
17 serve approximately 1,002 to 1,144 students in  
18 total from Girls Bronx Prep and middle school  
19 302 yielding an estimated building utilization  
20 rate of 88% to 101%.

21 The building has sufficient space to provide  
22 both schools with their baseline room  
23 allocations. Although a utilization rate in  
24 excess of 100% may suggest that the building may  
25 be over-utilized or overcrowded in a given year,

1 this rate does not account for the fact that  
2 rooms may be programmed for more efficient or  
3 different uses than the standard assumptions in  
4 a utilization calculation.

5 In addition, charter schools enrollment  
6 plans are frequently based on larger class sizes  
7 than target capacity contributing to the  
8 building utilization above 100%, but which do  
9 not impact the space allocated to the  
10 traditional public school. Therefore, the X052  
11 building has a capacity to accommodate both  
12 middle school 302 and the expanded Girls Bronx  
13 Prep with serves the fifth grade. If in the  
14 future the Department of Education considers  
15 sitting in the expansion of Girls Prep Bronx to  
16 serve grades six through eight in the - - space,  
17 those grades would be sited in a separate  
18 building.

19 The Department of Education does not  
20 anticipate any impact to admissions, enrollment,  
21 academic program, extracurricular offerings, nor  
22 partnerships at middle school 302 as a result of  
23 this proposal.

24 No one wants to speak, right? No? Anybody  
25 want to speak? No? So at this time, do we have

1 any sign-in people that want to speak? The  
2 sign-in sheet?

3 [Background Noise]

4 FEMALE VOICE 1: Someone's speaking.

5 [Laughter]

6 MR. BEHR: And we hope she's okay.

7 FEMALE VOICE 2: Some people just signed in  
8 - - .

9 MR. BEHR: So you may have signed in this  
10 sheet not realizing that you just want to sign-  
11 in and speak, so that's fine. If I call your  
12 name and you do not want to speak, you do not  
13 have to speak. Only speak if you feel you want  
14 to. So we have concluded the formal  
15 presentation and will now open the floor for  
16 public comments. Speakers were given the floor  
17 in the order that they signed up. All comments  
18 are limited to two minutes. Our first speaker  
19 is Michelle Rodriguez.

20 MS. MICHELLE RODRIGUEZ: Good evening. Is  
21 this working?

22 FEMALE VOICE 3: Yeah.

23 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Good evening. How are you  
24 today? My name is Michelle Rodriguez and I have  
25 two daughters at Girls Prep. And since being at

1 this school, I believe as a Girls Prep parent  
2 that we've worked well with the middle schools  
3 and the middle school parents to kind of live  
4 together in a harmonious family, so to say, that  
5 we respect each other and we look out for each  
6 other's kids. It's not just, these are my kids,  
7 those are your kids. I see it when I see the  
8 middle school kids or the Girls Prep kids  
9 outside, we're all together as one community.  
10 So keeping the fifth grade here would be awesome  
11 because we get to keep that community together  
12 and keep everyone as a big happy family, I  
13 guess.

14 [Laughter]

15 MS. RODRIGUEZ: - -. All right. I'm done.

16 MR. BEHR: Thank you. Our next speaker will  
17 be Kim Haddie.

18 MS. KIM HADDIE: Good evening. Hi, my name  
19 is Kim. My daughter Kannia [phonetic] attends  
20 Girls Prep Bronx. She's in the fourth grade.  
21 And I'm here tonight to support giving a space  
22 to our fifth graders. We've been here for a  
23 while and—I don't know - -.

24 MR. BEHR: - -.

25 FEMALE VOICE 4: You can come fix it.

1 [Background Noise]

2 MS. HADDIE: Okay. And we've been here for  
3 a while and we've been working good with M.S.  
4 302 and we're in great partnership with them.  
5 And it's been good going here to Girls Prep  
6 with-being inside M.S. 302 with them and I think  
7 we should have the space. So thank you. Good  
8 night.

9 [Laughter]

10 [Background Noise]

11 MR. BEHR: Okay. Well, you should've told  
12 me. Caesar Guererro.

13 MR. CAESAR GUERERRO: My name's Caesar  
14 Guererro and I am - -. I'm here to support my  
15 daughter and not only my daughter, all the child  
16 that are studying in this school. And I think  
17 that-I don't see no problem that-our girls happy  
18 together with other students. And also if we  
19 have more space in this school, I think we have  
20 to give example to share with other people. We  
21 are a community. And also I think-sorry. - -.  
22 No, it's okay.

23 FEMALE VOICE 4: You can speak in Spanish.

24 [Foreign language 12:41]

25 [Laughter]

1 MR. GUERERRO: If we're going to work  
2 together, that's an example to the other  
3 students who can share the education. So we  
4 won't be fighting for the space because I think  
5 that is going to be a problem and now and in the  
6 future. So we can give an example so the other  
7 school will follow that route. Thank you.

8 MR. BEHR: Rosanna Guerro [phonetic]? Okay.  
9 Victoria Lungia, L-U-N-G-I-A? Okay. Joan  
10 Reiner [phonetic]? Melissa N. Darrel  
11 [phonetic]? Natalie Chishim [phonetic]?

12 MS. NATALIE CHISHIM: I wasn't planning to  
13 speak, but I guess I will. The only thing I  
14 have to say is that before my girls came here to  
15 Girls Prep, I was in a charter school that was  
16 collocated with another school, but it was an  
17 elementary school that shared a building with a  
18 high school. So when I first came here I was  
19 just like, "I don't know how well this is going  
20 to work." But it happens to work really well  
21 here. And I think it's a good example for the  
22 girls because Girls Prep's core values is we  
23 stress the community, but we don't just mean the  
24 Girls Prep community. They get a hands-on  
25 experience with being in the community with

1 another school. And I think we should be able  
2 to keep the fifth grade here so they can learn  
3 that and keep that going. That's it.

4 MR. BEHR: Regina Daldoe [phonetic]?

5 MS. REGINA DALDOE: Hello. My name is  
6 Regina Daldoe. My daughter Kendal Artis  
7 [phonetic] is in the first grade here. And I'm  
8 here in support of the collocation for our fifth  
9 graders. I think that Girls Prep and M.S. 302  
10 have been working very well together since this  
11 has started. And both schools are working  
12 together to make sure all of the children in the  
13 building get a great education and access to the  
14 things that they need to have a worthwhile  
15 education and experience. So I'm looking  
16 forward to working with the other families at  
17 M.S. 302 and supporting this campus any way I  
18 can.

19 MR. BEHR: Ms. Fabian [phonetic]? I want to  
20 go with Fabian [phonetic] because I can say that  
21 name, not the first. Fabian? All right. Sonya  
22 [phonetic]? Is there a Sonya here? Can't read  
23 the last name. Sonya? Halley Castillo? Ms.  
24 Blackwood [phonetic]?

25 [Crosstalk]

1 MS. HALLEY CASTILLO: Hi. My name is  
2 Halley Castillo. I was a former PA [phonetic]  
3 President for 302. From what I understand that  
4 you want to expand to the fifth grade. My  
5 question is once you expand to the fifth grade,  
6 what happens to the children at 302? There's  
7 really not enough room in this building for  
8 expansions to one more grade. I've been in this  
9 school for three years straight and I don't see  
10 that many classrooms you could really allocate  
11 to use for another grade. I just want to know  
12 is it going to be fair amount of room for 302 at  
13 Girls Prep?

14 MR. BEHR: We're just taking public  
15 comments.

16 MS. CASTILLO: Okay. I guess that's a  
17 question I have to ask. Thank you.

18 MR. BEHR: Thank you. Ms. Blackwood?  
19 Martha Castro [phonetic]? Ms. Smith?

20 MS. SMITH: Hello, ladies and gentlemen of  
21 the panel. My name is Niombe [phonetic] Smith  
22 and my daughter goes to Girls Prep. Her name is  
23 Neema [phonetic] Smith. I'm also the VP of our  
24 council at Girls Prep. And being here for two  
25 years has been a very joyous communion between

1 302 and Girls Prep. And we also share after  
2 school programs together which in the afternoon  
3 most parents and staff members don't see what I  
4 see or the parents see with the collaboration of  
5 the after school program with these girls that  
6 come from Girls Prep and 302. Once Girls Prep  
7 girls leave and they see the older girls from  
8 the junior high school at 302, they get inspired  
9 because what we see in the afternoon with the  
10 performance and the artistry, these young girls  
11 love it. So it promotes what the core values  
12 are of Girls Prep with the collaboration of the  
13 girls from the junior high school. And the  
14 setting of the whole charisma of the place is  
15 very nice. It's very nice, it's very cordial,  
16 it's very friendly. Everyone is polite,  
17 everyone speaks to everyone in a relatively good  
18 way. So to take that and separate the Girls  
19 Prep or not give us the space to expand to the  
20 fifth grade, to another level, with this school  
21 and collaborate, I think it would be a waste of  
22 time and a waste of space. So with the  
23 collaboration and the collocation, I think it  
24 will be a great expansion for all of us, for the  
25 junior high school and Girls Prep as a whole, if

1 we do expand which will be a good thing.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. BEHR: Sharice Sexton?

4 MS. SHARICE SEXTON: Hi. My name is Sharice  
5 Sexton. My daughter is—I'm too tall - -. Here?

6 [Background Noise]

7 MS. SEXTON: I'll do it pop star style. Hi,  
8 my name is Sharice Sexton. My daughter's Olivia  
9 Sexton. She is currently in the fourth grade.  
10 We came to Girls Prep because we wanted a  
11 choice. We wanted better schools in our area  
12 for our daughter. And it is the best choice  
13 we've ever made. She is growing well, she's  
14 becoming a young lady and it is all because of  
15 the staff and the administration here. We are  
16 collocated with 302, but it's working. And what  
17 we can do as a school is keep this same  
18 situation because it's what the real life world  
19 is. I mean we have all kinds of people, all  
20 kinds of diversity, if we keep it like this and  
21 we can make the school work. It'll take some  
22 dotting the I's and crossing the T's to make the  
23 organization work well with the two situations,  
24 but it can work. And our girls are better for  
25 it and so will 302 be better for it as well. So

1 I hope that we can keep this—stay here until  
2 fifth grade and eventually grow into the middle  
3 school as well. Thank you.

4 MR. BEHR: Monique Clark-Rodriguez  
5 [phonetic]?

6 MS. MONIQUE CLARK-RODRIGUEZ: Hi. My name  
7 is Monique Clark. My daughter Danielle  
8 Rodriguez is here in the school. She is doing  
9 well. I love this school. I come from very far  
10 travel to get here every morning. Most of the  
11 time we're late.

12 [Laughter]

13 MS. CLARK-RODRIGUEZ: But I like the way the  
14 school is. If there's any changes in the staff  
15 or anything like that—if the two schools  
16 collaborate, I'll be very sad. But as long as  
17 everything stays the same and there's no major  
18 changes, then I'm happy with the collaboration.

19 MR. BEHR: Nakima B.?

20 MS. NAKIMA BAUE: Hi. My name is Nakima  
21 Baue. I have a fourth grader, Nakia Kenner  
22 [phonetic]. We've been in the school for four  
23 years. The school is excellent. I love the  
24 atmosphere, the chemistry that I can speak to  
25 the teachers, speak to the staff about my

1 daughter's growth. She's grown tremendously  
2 from first grade to now. And every year they  
3 pick teachers; the teachers are always great  
4 teachers. I just love the fact that my daughter  
5 can come to a school and feel safe. We're - -  
6 with 302. We have no problems with 302. The  
7 staff work really hard to keep their kids in  
8 school and safe and keep our girls safe as well.  
9 And I love the fact that every day we wake up  
10 and come to the school and you see kids from 302  
11 plus our girls. Everyone says, "Good morning."  
12 They're all very friendly. And at first I was  
13 kind of nervous with our girls being on the top  
14 floor because they're with the bigger kids. And  
15 then I see how the principal works hard to make  
16 sure that our girls are safe and that their  
17 peers are safe and education's number one.  
18 Thank you.

19 MR. BEHR: Ms. Cabrera?

20 MS. ALBANIA CABRERA-RUIZ: This is not  
21 working, but I think my voice carries. Although  
22 I think that our relationship with Girls Prep is  
23 a very good relationship, there are some  
24 challenges within the expansion. We have to  
25 really think about the class sizes and

1 overcrowding. It is a reality for us at M.S.  
2 302 that we may have 30 to 34 children. And  
3 these are big children. And with expansion,  
4 that means that we have less room and less space  
5 to accommodate our ever-growing children. And I  
6 think it would be a real disservice to the  
7 community to expand and really force these  
8 children who are in CTT classes, in  
9 Collaborative Team Teaching, and ESO [phonetic]  
10 classes where they're bridge classes, to force  
11 them to be in smaller rooms because we really  
12 want to force an expansion that perhaps we may  
13 not really have the room for. I feel like a lot  
14 of the children who attend Girls Prep are often  
15 coming from outside of the community whereas  
16 many of the students at M.S. 302 are from the  
17 community.

18 MR. BEHR: The speaker list is now  
19 exhausted. Again, I personally want to thank  
20 all of you for being here this evening. It's  
21 acknowledged and appreciated. Again, we welcome  
22 any comments and feedback you may have at any  
23 time - - the Panel of Educational Policy votes  
24 on this proposal as December 20, 2012 meeting.  
25 The email address and phone numbers where

1        comments may be made are, once again,  
2        D08PROPOSALS@schools.nyc.gov, or you may call  
3        212-374-5159.  Again, that number's 212-374-  
4        5159.  I thank you for your participation.  This  
5        joint public hearing is now closed.

6                    [END RECORDING]

7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

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: December 18, 2012