

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**

J.H.S. 302 Rafael Cordero

**2/26/13
5:30 P.M.**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MS. OLIVIA ELLIS: Good evening. Please be
3 seated. We're about to begin. Good evening.
4 My name is Olivia Ellis, and I will be the
5 facilitator for the joint public hearing. This
6 is a joint public hearing of the Department of
7 Education Community Education Counsel and the
8 school leadership team to discuss the proposed
9 phase-out of Junior High School 302 Rafael
10 Cordero School, 19K302, beginning in 2013 to
11 2014; the proposed opening and co-location of
12 two new district middle schools, 19K661 and
13 19K662 with existing schools Junior High School
14 302, Rafael Cordero 19K302 and Achievement First
15 Apollo Charter School, 84K774 in Building K302,
16 beginning in 2013 to 2014.

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

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

4 All panel participants were asked to be here
5 no later than 5:30 p.m. Now that we've started,
6 if a panel participant arrives late, he or she
7 will be given a time to speak at the first
8 opportune moment. We want to be respectful of
9 everyone's time. There may be elected officials
10 who arrive at different times throughout the
11 evening. If they wish to speak, we will do our
12 best to accommodate them at the first opportune
13 time.

14 Those who are here at the start of the
15 public comment section will be asked to speak
16 first. We have a full agenda as described in
17 the agenda around the room. The format for
18 tonight's joint public hearing will include a
19 presentation of the proposal and presentations
20 by hearing participants, followed by public
21 comment. Speakers should have already signed up
22 if they wish to speak, at the table in the
23 lobby. Public comments can be no longer than
24 two minutes each. The time will be strictly
25 followed and speakers will be informed when

1 their designated time has ended. There will be
2 a question and answer period.

3 Members of the audience, if you have a
4 question, please write your questions on the
5 index cards that are supplied at the table in
6 the back. While the public comments are taking
7 place, staff members will organize the questions
8 into categories and get them ready for Q and A.
9 Some questions will be asked directly from the
10 index cards and others will be batched into
11 categories in order to avoid repetitiveness.

12 Even though all of individual questions will
13 not be addressed in the forum tonight, answers
14 to questions will be posted on the DOE website
15 prior to the panel leaving. If, at the end of
16 the hearing, you still have questions, we
17 encourage you to direct them to us by calling
18 the phone number on the bottom of the fact sheet
19 or sending them to us via email, to the email
20 address provided on the fact sheets.

21 I would now like to introduce the panel who
22 has been assembled for this evening's joint
23 public hearing, Deputy Chancellor David Weiner,
24 Community Superintendent Joyce Stallings-Hart,
25 Principal of Junior High School, [background

1 noise] Lisa Linder. We also have Erica Perez,
2 who is the Community Education Counsel
3 representative, a representative from the
4 President's Counsel and also a PTA president.
5 And we have Greg Grant from the President's
6 Counsel.

7 We are pleased to have the following elected
8 officials here this evening, Rafael Espinal, an
9 Assembly member. I will now turn the program
10 over to Deputy Chancellor David Weiner, who will
11 present the proposal.

12 MR. DAVID WEINER: Thank you Olivia and good
13 evening, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for
14 being here this evening. This joint public
15 hearing was convened to discuss the proposed
16 phase out replacement of GHS 302, Rafael
17 Cordero. For the purposes of this hearing, I
18 will refer to the school as 302 from this point
19 forward. A separate hearing for the proposed
20 expansion of the co-location of Achievement
21 First Apollo Charter School in this building is
22 scheduled for Thursday, February 28, 2013, so
23 this Thursday.

24 The decision to phase out 302 is a difficult
25 one, and one that we do not take lightly. We

1 examined many factors and datas before we
2 proposed a course of action. We engaged family
3 members of the community in a discussion about
4 what is and is not working in this school,
5 before determining whether phase out is
6 appropriate. All of us count on our schools to
7 provide a high quality education to students and
8 we must hold all schools to the same standard of
9 excellence because every child in this city
10 deserves the best possible education.

11 When a school isn't serving its students
12 well, we have to take action to ensure that
13 current students don't fall even further behind
14 and that future students will have a school that
15 prepares them for success and college in the
16 workplace. I want to acknowledge the students
17 who are here and the families who are here of
18 the children are being well served by 302.
19 Tonight we will hear some of those success
20 stories and we honor those. But we also need to
21 consider other students for whom the school has
22 not served well and will not experience the same
23 success. These students deserve better.

24 As I mentioned earlier, tonight we'll be
25 discussing the proposed phase out or replacement

1 of 302. In addition to the proposed phase out,
2 we are proposing to replace 302 with two new
3 district middle schools. 302 is located in - -
4 K302 at 350 Lynwood Street, Brooklyn, New York
5 and is co-located with Achievement First Apollo
6 Charter School. 302 is a district middle school
7 that serves students in grades six through eight
8 and admits students through the District 19
9 middle school choice process. I

10 In addition, 302 offers English as a second
11 language and Spanish transitional bi-lingual
12 education programming. 302 has some special
13 partnerships that I would like to acknowledge.
14 302 currently partners with the New York City
15 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for the
16 mobile response. These proposals tonight will
17 not impact that partnership.

18 Additionally, 302 is selected to participate
19 in I Learn this school year. I Learn New York
20 City is a program that allows middle and high
21 school students to meet the needs of individual
22 students through online and blended learning.
23 302 will be able to continue in I Learn. 302
24 also houses community based organization Beacon
25 which provides after school programming and a

1 school based health center. The DOE does not
2 expect that these proposals will impact the
3 space allocation or services of Beacon of the
4 school based health center.

5 On January 22nd, 2013 the New York City DOE
6 published proposals to phase out and replace
7 302, based on its performance struggles. On
8 February 6, 2013, the DOE published an amended
9 proposal which included information about the
10 Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation's
11 receipt of a promised neighborhood program,
12 planning grant, and 302's partnership with the
13 New York City Department of Health and Mental
14 Hygiene.

15 As a recipient of this planning grant,
16 Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation
17 plans to work with 302 and other schools in the
18 Cypress Hill's neighborhood to develop services
19 that will support the community. The DOE does
20 not expect that the proposals that phase out or
21 replace 302 to impact Cypress Hill's Local
22 Development Corporation's receipt of the
23 planning grant.

24 These proposals discuss the track record of
25 302 and why the DOE believes that phase out

1 replacement is the best option for the 302
2 community. 302's performance data indicate that
3 the school has struggled. For example, 302
4 earned an F on its most recent progress report,
5 including an F grade for student performance, an
6 F grade for student progress and an F grade for
7 school environment. 302 has a history of low
8 performance, including an overall C grade two
9 years ago and a D grade last year, and the F
10 grade this current school year.

11 Unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of
12 302 students remain below grade level in English
13 language arts and in math. Last year only 20%
14 of the students were performing on grade level
15 in English, putting the school in the bottom 20%
16 of middle schools, citywide. Only 27% of
17 students were performing on grade level in math,
18 putting the school in the bottom 13% of middle
19 schools, citywide.

20 302 was also identified by the New York
21 State Department of Education as a priority
22 school, one of the bottom 5% percent of schools
23 in the state. Given the school's decline in
24 performance, the DOE believes that only the most
25 serious intervention, the gradual phase out and

1 eventual closure and replacement of 302, will
2 address the struggles and allow for a new school
3 option to develop in this building that will
4 better serve the students in the community.

5 In two separate educational impact
6 statements, the DOE has proposed to open and co-
7 locate two district middle schools in September
8 2013 to expand Achievement First Apollo Charter
9 School, beginning in September 2014. If
10 approved, the new middle schools will admit
11 students in the District 19 middle school choice
12 process using a limited unscreened admission
13 method, with priority to students residing in
14 the 302 residential zone.

15 The DOE has also proposed to expand
16 Achievement First to serve middle school grades,
17 beginning in the 2014/'15 school year. A
18 separate hearing will be held at this school
19 building this Thursday, to discuss that
20 proposal.

21 Before we move to the public comments
22 section of this meeting, I would like to discuss
23 the impact of a phase out proposal on current
24 302 students. If the phase out proposal is
25 approved, 302 would no longer admit new 6th

1 grade students after the conclusion of this
2 school year. 302 would continue to phase out
3 one grade at a time until June 2015, when it
4 would close.

5 Current 6th and 7th grade students will be
6 supported at 302 as they progress towards
7 completion of middle school and transition to
8 high school. Current 8th grade students will
9 have the opportunity to graduate from 302 at the
10 end of this year. 8th grade students should
11 have already applied to high school through the
12 citywide high school admissions process.

13 Students may also apply to finish school
14 elsewhere if they wish. Students at 302 will
15 get an opportunity to apply to transfer to
16 another middle school as part of our public
17 school choice process. Applications for this
18 transfer opportunity will be made available to
19 students this spring for enrollment starting
20 this upcoming September. Thank you in advance
21 to all of those who will share with us tonight
22 their feedback on these proposals. We look
23 forward to hearing your comments and questions.

24 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. Our next presenter
25 will be Erica Perez from the Community Education

1 Counsel [background noise].

2 MS. ERICA PEREZ: First of all, with all due
3 respect, when I look at this crowd, we are not
4 failures. The DOE says they want to hear the
5 parents' input. Well you have an audience full
6 of parents, teachers, staff and students. I
7 have in my hand a petition with over 1,000
8 signatures from parents that says, "To Whom It
9 May Concern, We the parents, teachers, students,
10 staff and community of Intermediate School 302
11 reject your proposal of the proposed phase out
12 of IS302."

13 I hold in my hand a letter of support from
14 Eric Martin Gallant [phonetic]. "- - dealing
15 with changes that are being proposed for IS302.
16 As you know, I have been on record expressing my
17 opposition to both the charter school expansion
18 into the IS302 building, as well as the phase
19 out of IS302. While I am not opposed to charter
20 schools, it's only fair for charter schools to
21 have their own building to grow.

22 A central concern of mine involves the
23 population of bilingual and English language
24 learners within District 19. I have already
25 reached out to Chancellor Walcott about a need

1 for a clear plan to deal with the bilingual
2 student population of District 19. Another
3 point that I have repeatedly made regarding the
4 so-called phase outs is that a leadership change
5 must precede a school closing. This is a
6 standard operating procedure in any
7 organization.

8 Leadership matters, and the leader of the
9 school should be held accountable for its
10 successes and failures so long as the Department
11 of Education provides the appropriate resources.
12 Through the Resolution A budget process, my
13 office has provided IS302 with funds for the
14 following, computer lab, gymnasium renovation
15 and - - IS302 playground renovation. I look
16 forward to working with my colleagues at City
17 Hall and Chancellor Wilcott to ensure that my
18 community's educational leads are properly
19 addressed within the city budget.

20 We must also work towards finding a balance
21 that rewards student achievement, while not
22 forgetting those students that need extra
23 resources to succeed. Thank you, Eric Martin
24 Gallant, Councilmember 37th District."

25 Being that there's so many voices here that

1 need to be heard, I'm going to cut it short.
2 I personally don't feel that 302 has been given
3 the resources or the time for us to show how
4 much we've grown. We've implemented five new
5 programs, beginning in September 2012. As you
6 know, whenever a school is restructured and
7 becomes a school of redesign, they begin and
8 have a three year process to show growth. We
9 haven't been given that experience because we're
10 only in month five of basically new re school
11 design. So if we're looking at the DOE, they're
12 the ones that fell short because when we asked
13 to be categorized as a school of redesign,
14 because the DOE didn't ask us to restructure,
15 they're ignoring our request. Thank you.

16 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. We will now hear
17 from Greg Grant.

18 MR. GREG GRANT: Good evening. It's
19 beautiful to look out there and see everybody
20 out there supporting the school. Way to go.
21 Give yourself a round of applause. Seeing that
22 everywhere you look in our district they're
23 proposing to phase out and trying to close our
24 school and move our students and consolidate the
25 middle schools - -. The middle schools have the

1 hardest problems. They're bringing the kids
2 from the feeder schools. The feeder schools are
3 allowed to pass these kids along and they're not
4 doing their job. And then we get you in middle
5 school and they give us six months to make a
6 turnaround.

7 All we ask is that you give us a chance. We
8 don't mind taking the children and working with
9 them because everybody has a right to learn. So
10 just give us the opportunity and the resources
11 to do what we have to do in our district and
12 stop proposing to phase out our - - schools,
13 because all you're doing is just putting a band
14 aid on the situation. Let's come up with a
15 solution and just fix this whole entire District
16 19. Thank you.

17 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. I would now like to
18 call up two members of the school leadership
19 team, Justin Greene and Oral Brady.

20 MR. ORAL BRADY: Good evening everyone. I
21 would like to welcome Deputy Chancellor Weiner;
22 my Superintendent Stallings-Hart; my Principal
23 Linder; our friends from the CFM Network;
24 members from my teachers' union; and my district
25 rep, Helen Weinstein, Borough President Ella

1 Shore [phonetic], John and Marta Lee
2 [phonetic]. And as a moment of personal pride,
3 I would like to welcome the assemblyman who was
4 my student right in this building, just a few
5 short years ago. And I'm quite sure that - -
6 time is actually limited which is all of those
7 reasons that I consider this to be such an
8 unfair process.

9 Everybody knows that if you have to be in
10 court and you're going to be a defense lawyer,
11 you need time to present your facts. And the
12 reality is this process, as I have seen, and
13 through all of them that I've attended so far is
14 so rushed and hurried. By the way, I would also
15 like to acknowledge my wonderful parents and
16 students who - - members and all of the members
17 of my staff, you hardworking people right here
18 at 302. I also see those wonderful gentlemen
19 from the Beacon program. - - my friends. Mayor
20 Bloomberg has no idea how hard these people work
21 on behalf of our young students, some of them
22 who show up here as early 6:30 in the mornings
23 and stay up until 9:00 at night. That's
24 dedication, my friends.

25 Let me try to get down to some business

1 here. I must say, it is with mixed feelings
2 that I'm standing here today. The 26th of
3 February marks my 21st year with the DOE. I was
4 hoping to be off someplace celebrating what I
5 thought is a reasonable career over two decades.
6 Unfortunately, I am here on my knees begging for
7 mercy for the building in which I learned to
8 become a teacher. It's very unfortunate, my
9 friends, that the statistics that the deputy
10 chancellor just read, and I'm quite sure, as
11 I've said before, Mayor Bloomberg and all of
12 these wonderful people are well-intentioned and
13 have good hearts.

14 I wonder if there are some areas in which
15 they have been - -. So we have a responsibility
16 to set the record straight. Just last weekend,
17 IS302's debate team participated in a citywide,
18 New York City urban debate league and on the
19 tutelage of Mr. Sato [phonetic], the language
20 arts teacher sitting right there [background
21 noise] my friends, guess what is coming out of a
22 failing school? - -. And the end of this event
23 Ashley Dukey, Chardonnay Parker, Mana Prado,
24 Abesh Limbo [phonetic], all have earned multiple
25 medals for their performance. - -. Ashley

1 Dukey and Chardonnay Parker won the first
2 place trophy [background noise] public forum
3 debate.

4 I would also like to add that Ashley was the
5 first place individual amongst 63 debaters on 32
6 teams, all of this, my friends, coming out of a
7 supposedly failing school. The truth of the
8 matter is when we look around at our successes,
9 it makes you really have to wonder if the
10 rubrics that Mayor Bloomberg is using to
11 determine the closing of these schools, if
12 there's a bigger agenda or some different
13 agenda.

14 Under the leadership of my principal and
15 interestingly our 5th superintendent in six
16 years, a wonderful lady who showed up at the - -
17 meeting, the first superintendent to have done
18 so with a backup plan to turn things around, was
19 not even given a chance to see what she could do
20 in this district. She was told upon arrival,
21 "Pack up all your backup plans. We have already
22 made plans." Can you imagine, my friends, if
23 when George Bush sent those troops into Iraq
24 with a surge to win this war, can you imagine if
25 he got on television the next morning and

1 announced that as soon as he has sent in the
2 generals he is now pulling out the troops and
3 sending them home? Would that make sense to
4 anyone?

5 [Background noise] last year we had a 98%
6 graduation rate. The internal restructuring
7 which was suggested by the State of New York
8 started in September of last year. As everyone
9 knows by now, the big exam that we will be
10 taking to determine if we're going to have
11 success will be in April, after the fact. Does
12 that make sense, my friends? I would think that
13 if you want to see if a school is failing, let
14 the children take some exams under the new
15 restructuring and see how well it works.

16 Right here at IS302 we went to smaller
17 school communities. We formed the Arts and
18 Science Academy, the Law and Philosophy Academy,
19 the Civics and Leadership. This - - under the
20 leadership of Colonel Benjamin, one of our
21 assistant principals, who is also a reserve in
22 the United States Army, IS302 will be launching
23 the first junior - - academic program of any
24 middle school in New York State.

25 And as I speak here today my friends, we

1 have 100% passing in the science regents,
2 100%. We have a 98% passing in math regents, my
3 friends. Does that sound like a failing school?
4 Of course, as I just mentioned, the debate team
5 which went out this weekend, after only a few
6 weeks of practice, to represent and to show Mr.
7 Bloomberg what children from a failing school
8 can do. We have some wonderful - - school
9 programming that we got the funding for in
10 September. The city - -, I can't thank them
11 enough. Give it up for city - - my friends,
12 hardworking people. These guys - -. They - -
13 my children here to try to turn things around
14 again.

15 Unfortunately, under Mayor Bloomberg's plan,
16 we won't have a chance to show the improvements
17 that we've been making. We have a new library
18 media center which began in September of last
19 year. We have a morning tutoring program, a
20 Saturday academic, after school homework help,
21 morning sports center, music programs that cater
22 towards the fact that it helps asthmatic
23 children to build up their lungs and also self-
24 esteem. I think that counts as part of the
25 verification, my friends.

1 The 21st Century with an added educational
2 component, homework help, major theatrical
3 performances. We produce Annie, Grease, Fame,
4 Lion King, Beauty and the Beast. And right now
5 we're working on another production.

6 Unfortunately we have some points here that
7 we're not very thrilled about, but we have to
8 share them anyway. IS302, of the ten schools
9 that are considered to be our peer schools--ten
10 schools out of our peer groups are charter
11 schools my friends, not that I have anything
12 against charter school. Some of the students
13 that I educated right here at IS302 are
14 currently teaching at charter school. I see one
15 of them walked in recently, who was one of the
16 officials down at - -. Also I have a young man
17 that we taught, right here in this building.

18 So I'm not here to divide the education
19 forum. We're not here to bash anybody who is
20 willing to educate children because that's one
21 of the misnomers that people like to put out
22 about the teachers' union. We are not a union
23 of mediocrity. Nobody wants to look bad. We
24 have a strong desire to make sure that when
25 these scores come on out, we are right up there

1 with the best of the best.

2 Unfortunately, my friends, the dirty little
3 secret in our public school system is the
4 discipline process, that one student that can
5 stop 29 other students from getting a proper
6 education which the principal that be and all
7 the powers that be cannot seem to get the proper
8 support from Mayor Bloomberg. I'm wondering
9 when will he start a charter school for these
10 disruptive children so we can have a place for
11 regular children who really want to learn, to
12 show exactly - - basis.

13 We unfortunately--well not unfortunately
14 because we're proud of all tasks that we're
15 committed to. We have the largest percentage of
16 special needs students in this district, the
17 largest percentage of ELL, language learners,
18 180 which comes to one third of the student
19 population.

20 Just imagine my friends. I'm teaching for
21 20 odd years. Just imagine me showing up in
22 China and after a year they said, "Brady, no,
23 you've got to take this exam in Chinese along
24 with everyone that was born in China and you
25 better be able to perform just as well as they

1 do." My friends, we need to rise up and make
2 sure that there's some legislation to stop this
3 madness. We cannot keep - - the children who
4 are only in this country for a year and a day.
5 It is just not fair.

6 We also must point out, in a community that
7 is predominantly Hispanic, we're looking at most
8 of the bilingual middle schools in District 19
9 seems to be the superior. The DOE has
10 systematically phased out all of the bilingual
11 programs across the district and I strongly
12 suspect across the city. District 19 has the
13 highest rate of children in foster care and we
14 love them dearly. We do everything to make sure
15 that they understand that they're special and
16 precious to us because you never know where the
17 next assemblyman might be coming from, or the
18 next official might be coming from.

19 So we're not - - for foster care. We love
20 them and we're ready to take care. We also
21 happen to be the only - - free school in
22 District 19. We have a large population of
23 overage students, mostly in and out of the penal
24 system. My friends, it's hard to educate 13 and
25 14 year old students with 17 and 18 olds men who

1 have been arrested on drug charges and - - the
2 same school district to corrupt the minds of the
3 children and to take their eyes off of the
4 prize. It is a problem.

5 And then after the - - which is the New York
6 State body that's responsible for taking a look
7 at this whole operation--after they suggested to
8 us that we need to break into smaller schools,
9 we did just that. Again, we are very concerned
10 that all of this hard work that we have put into
11 this will not have an opportunity to show what
12 it was worth. We don't blame anyone on this
13 panel. We appreciate them taking the time out
14 to listen to us. But my friends, I'm asking
15 everyone to join us on March 11th at Brooklyn
16 Tech to make sure that we put an end to this
17 madness of closing schools and depriving the
18 future of - - from - -. Thank you.

19 MS. ELLIS: While they're setting up I would
20 also like to acknowledge Gersh St. Ing
21 [phonetic] from Achievement First Apollo Charter
22 School who is also - -.

23 MR. JUSTIN GREENE: Hello. I do like to
24 move around so this might be difficult, but I'll
25 do my best. First off, I would like to welcome

1 Adam - -, Ms. Perez, Mr. Weiner, all of these
2 wonderful parents, all my amazing students back
3 there. I hope we get to continue--when we get
4 to continue at the school, maybe we can meet
5 every month like this, and have a big party
6 together, and talk about all of the great things
7 that are going on, right? So the first thing
8 that I would like to do, I would like to read
9 you something that I wrote, that I presented to
10 the panel. And then I'll have a presentation I
11 would like to present. All right?

12 Through a unique, diverse, economically
13 disadvantaged community of students, our school
14 works effortlessly to provide services that
15 bring life for our students. Rafael Cordero
16 Junior High School is not just a second home for
17 our students. It is the home for our students.
18 With collaboration of Beacon, we have provided
19 our entire community with a place to live, avoid
20 crime and a chance at a better life. We are not
21 here today to present a series of problems we
22 face.

23 Our primary focus is to present that as a
24 school community. We have never been afraid or
25 fearful to change. In fact, as of this year,

1 our school went through the most drastic
2 change of its history. Knowing our issues of
3 discipline and large population of students we
4 serve, we have split our school into three
5 separate schools, not just three separate
6 schools, but three separate schools that provide
7 our students with new skills, a motivation to
8 learn and disciplines that research has shown,
9 boost academic achievement. The Law, Performing
10 Arts, and Civics Academy provide our students
11 with unique passion, but most importantly a
12 reason to come to school, a willingness to learn
13 and development of critical thinking skills to
14 support further and higher learning.

15 If you look up here, this is what I have my
16 students come into every day for advisement. In
17 addition to our academies, our school recognizes
18 and understands the discipline and behavior
19 management we need to deal with on a daily
20 basis. Therefore an advisory class was
21 implemented into every child's schedule. During
22 this time, teachers follow a curriculum based
23 around teaching students the founding principles
24 and models of our school, as well as building
25 overall character, maturity and life lessons.

1 We believe opening our students' eye to a
2 world filled with love, compassion, hard work
3 and dedication is the best way to assure our
4 students will best stay the course, further
5 themselves in education, and be ample,
6 successful, good moral members of our society.
7 So if you look up here, this is what I have my
8 students walk into every day. And I play - -
9 song, "Fly like an Eagle," okay, all my students
10 back there. So - -. And we teach our students
11 everything. We teach our students
12 accountability. We teach our students
13 generosity. We teach our students loyalty and
14 equality.

15 And I've got to tell you, the conversations
16 that I've had in my class at IS173 have been one
17 of the best conversations I've had in my entire
18 life. I love you guys. And across the board,
19 we are teaching our students lessons that go way
20 beyond any math formula that I could ever teach
21 you because I'm telling you right now, I'm not
22 standing in front of you here today because of
23 my Master's. I'm standing here in front of you
24 today because of the lessons we talk about in
25 class, the things that we talk about in

1 advisement.

2 So this I want to present to the parents and
3 I want to present a series of things that we are
4 up against at Rafael Cordero and what we have
5 done to address these needs. So this is our ELL
6 - - and if everyone can see by this chart,
7 Rafael Cordero is the big talon right in the
8 middle. Okay. Our ELL population is almost 5%
9 more than both citywide and Brooklyn itself.
10 Okay. So what that does, there are studies that
11 show it takes students four to seven years to
12 become proficient in a native language.

13 Our students are given a year and a day to
14 take the same exact exam that I myself and I've
15 been here my entire life here. That, my
16 friends, is not fair. However, we have never
17 made excuses for ourselves that we can't handle
18 this population because we want to handle this
19 population. We are willing to handle this
20 population. We want that opportunity.

21 These are some things we have tried to - -
22 with our ELL program as long as--across the
23 board. We have extended programs and I tell you
24 right now, parents, the only way, the answer to
25 our problems is to give students the proper

1 incentives they need to go on in life. Let's
2 be honest. We all have incentives, do we not?
3 We all have incentives. They can be positive,
4 okay, and that's what our students need, so
5 incentive programs. We have a scholar dollar
6 store where students get scholar dollars. The
7 Civics Academy has this over the past years.

8 We have this for all our students, where
9 students are getting scholar dollars for doing
10 the right thing. And they can buy books and
11 supplies and so on and so forth. We also have
12 awards for students and I know that students
13 love those awards. Every student loves those
14 awards. They wait every moth for those awards.

15 We also have the monthly assemblies, honor
16 roll trips. We have presented tons of
17 incentives for our students to stay in school,
18 motivated to learn, and we will continue to do
19 this as long as we're here. Okay. This is an
20 academic intervention service and some people
21 talked about it, but we have extended day, 37
22 and a half. We have 90 minute blocks for ELA
23 and math. We have pull outs. The list goes on
24 and on. We have these things in place right now
25 to address these students. Next slide.

1 This next slide are some pie charts. We
2 took some data from our scores. This is one of
3 my classes--one of my honors classes. And if
4 you can see by this pie chart, from third grade
5 to fifth grade, students that are above--these
6 are what's called SDI ELA scores. And a big
7 reason why our school is in danger of being
8 phased out is because we have 20% of students
9 meeting reading on grade level and we have 80%
10 that are not. And we need to address that. We
11 understand that. We're willing to do that.

12 However, if you look at these charts, seven
13 - - in honors classes and ELA--this is based on
14 information understanding, literacy response and
15 expression, and critical analysis evaluation.
16 These students were above in third grade. Now
17 look what happened to the blue by 5th grade.
18 Look what happened to the red by 5th grade. So
19 my friends, I ask you whether this school--I ask
20 you and everybody, are we the problem? Or what
21 is really happening here?

22 We need to address certain needs so that our
23 students are ready to progress in a certain
24 area. Okay, next slide please. This is one of
25 another--these are of another class. If you

1 look at here, these drastic [phonetic] pie
2 chart show that students in the third grade, the
3 blue represents students that are above in ELA.
4 The red represents the below. Look at what
5 happens to the blue, everybody. There is no
6 more blue. There are no more students above.
7 The below expands and it expands and the
8 students continue and we are - - with these
9 students that are below level.

10 And we do everything in our power, but we're
11 not making this an excuse. We're saying this is
12 what we're up against and this is what we're
13 working with every single day and we need help.
14 We need intervention. We need positive
15 reinforcement for these students to continue.

16 This is one more pie chart of another class
17 and you can also see the above slowly shrinks
18 and the red slowly takes over. The students
19 slowly decrease. And this is what we're dealing
20 with, okay. So I want the parents to know that
21 Rafael Cordero Junior High School is not the
22 primary or the problem at all. There is
23 problems that are happening before students
24 enter the school that needs to be addressed.
25 But we're working on this right now, to help you

1 students be successful for the rest of their
2 lives.

3 The next, to me, is the most important.
4 This shows developing quality review results
5 over the last--from 2009 until 2012. If you can
6 see, our student performance, that's that top
7 line, which our score is at a quality point of
8 2.2, I believe. And yes, our scores are low.
9 However, there is a general trend. We are
10 improving. We have improved the student
11 performance. That's in ELA and - - exams.

12 We've have also made major improvements in
13 closing the achievement gaps because, as of last
14 year, we have tripled the amount of students
15 taking the integrated algebra regent. We have
16 100% passing in those and we have 100% passing
17 in earth science. So we are making major
18 strides at the school. Okay, next. Thank you.

19 Furthermore, most importantly, the
20 developing quality review results, which to me
21 is the most important because we shouldn't be
22 based on just test scores. We should be based
23 on people coming into the school and seeing what
24 we're working on. Here, if you can see--I'll
25 read you one or two. It says, "School leaders

1 and teacher teams consistently make purposeful
2 curriculum decision that integrate common core
3 learning standards and tasks, resulting in
4 rigorous instructions for all learners. A
5 coherent set of beliefs about how students learn
6 best is imbedded in differentiating
7 instructional practices across classrooms, which
8 allow all learners to engage in critical
9 thinking results and in meaningful work
10 products." Next?

11 Continued, "Organizational decisions are
12 purposeful and share resources that are well
13 aligned with the school's instructional goals to
14 accelerate student learning. Administration
15 provides continuous feedback to teachers in
16 order to support professional growth, aligned
17 with a research based framework which results in
18 improved teacher instructional practices. I
19 have here 2008, 2009, to 2009 to 2010 developing
20 for our youth. Every single area of
21 improvement, every single area of concern I have
22 mentioned up here, we have addressed those
23 things at the school and that's what I believe
24 that we should be based on.

25 And we will continue to--this right here is

1 one of—this is my favorite part of the
2 presentation. It speeds up a little bit here.
3 So this is Isaiah Ellerbe and Marciely
4 Hernandez. Give it up. Give it up. - - Isaiah
5 tonight. These two students are both below in
6 math. Marciely is actually a former ELO student
7 and Mr. Isaiah Ellerbe is an IEP student.
8 However, these students have provided amazing
9 things to our school. They have come up here
10 like this on the stage and this young man,
11 Isaiah tonight. He is incredible. He reminds
12 me of myself a little bit.

13 And he will come up here today just to show
14 you that he's more than just a test score. He
15 is someone that provides something to the school
16 and to this community, and that's what we should
17 recognize. This is actually - - Marciely. "I
18 love what I do and it's something I have never
19 done in my whole life. Believe me, there is a
20 future for me and other kids. I love IS302."
21 Isaiah Ellerbe, "This school is a well put
22 together school that should stay. It offers
23 great education and love. I say if you shut
24 down the school, you're shutting down the love
25 and the passion of East New York."

1 This is some students in our - - .
2 Absolutely love it, next slide. "I love this
3 school." This is one of my favorite quotes,
4 next. "I love this school." I want everyone to
5 think about this for a second. "When I play the
6 drums, I feel like all of my problems go away
7 and I am in a beautiful place with music. If
8 you shut down IS302, you shut that down." Is
9 that okay with everybody, because that is the
10 kind of things that we provide? This is our
11 sign language. Where's my sign language people
12 at? Because I know - - sign language. All
13 right.

14 These are one--this is what I think one of
15 the best--one of, if not the best things that we
16 do. Sign language students absolutely love what
17 they do and they have a motivation to learn.
18 Next. These are some quotes. "Sign language is
19 a new experience, learning a new language, an
20 amazing way to communicate and motivates me to
21 come to school." Leo Lupo [phonetic] says,
22 "Sign language means a lot to me. I enjoy it a
23 lot and it makes my day the happiest."

24 I don't know what other things we can
25 provide to our students than love, joy,

1 compassion. I don't know what's better than
2 that. Okay. This is the - -. So what I say to
3 you now—what I say to you now is that rather
4 than phasing IS302 out, I tell my students every
5 single day, never give up. You know why?
6 Because I never gave up. When I was in school,
7 I was a failure. I failed some math exams, but
8 I didn't let that deter me.

9 And what I'm asking for the panel and what
10 I'm asking from all of you is to support this
11 place, because guess what? You guys are not
12 failures. And what I want more than anything is
13 I want to fight through this so we can tell our
14 students that we were once a failing school and
15 we prevailed. And that's what we expect from
16 you.

17 So I ask that we do not phase out 302
18 because this is what we provide for our students
19 and I will never give up. I said it once. I've
20 said it a thousand times. I'm standing in front
21 of you right here today - -. But I'm really
22 standing here today, honestly, because of my
23 students back then. I'm standing here today
24 because I love you guys with all my heart. This
25 has been, if not one of the best year and a half

1 of my life. I - - this school. I love this
2 school. I love the teachers who support me. I
3 love the principals who support me and most of
4 all, I love my students. Thank you. Also Ms.
5 Ms. Daly and the performing arts students are
6 now going to present for you.

7 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. We have now
8 concluded the formal presentations. We are
9 about to begin the public session—the public
10 comments session. Right now I'd like to
11 introduce Rafael Espinal, assembly member.

12 RE: Thank you everyone. Thank you, parents
13 for coming out. Thank you, students for being
14 here. Thank you, DOE panelists, - - and Ms.
15 Linder. Thank you everyone. I don't know what
16 else to say after Mr. Brady said his words,
17 pretty much labeled everything that this school
18 is doing it right and what the DOE is doing
19 wrong for this school.

20 I was a student - - with this school so I'm
21 not here only as an assemblyman or a member.
22 I'm here as a member of the East New York
23 community and I'm here as a member or a former
24 graduate of this school. And a lot of our
25 teachers who were here when I was in here are

1 still here, and I'm sure they're doing a great
2 job teaching our students to do what they have
3 to do in order to graduate.

4 So from what I hear, I don't think that
5 they're at an advantage--a disadvantage. The
6 numbers, I think, are very skewed. We have the
7 highest population of ELL students than any
8 other school in District 19. There are classes
9 in here who have 39 students to a classroom.
10 It's a disgrace. And so you pretty much have
11 two classes in one class, and probably one
12 teacher. So how can you address the needs of
13 every single student in that classroom?

14 Our students are being disenfranchised. Our
15 students are not receiving the resources they
16 need to graduate and this school is not being
17 looked at correctly. You have kids who are from
18 foster homes, kids that don't have the proper
19 guidance at home who are coming here and the
20 teachers are doing the best they can do to make
21 sure that they go home with the education they
22 deserve.

23 So I ask the DOE, keep this school open. I
24 know what this school is capable of. I know
25 what the teachers are capable of, so let's keep

1 IS302 open. Let Chancellor Walcott know that
2 the former graduate of this school and a current
3 assemblyman wants IS302 open. Thank you.

4 MS. ELLIS: I also would like to acknowledge
5 Hugh Espinal from Senator Martin - - office. At
6 this time I will begin calling speakers. You
7 are reminded that public comment must be limited
8 to two minutes per speaker. Time will be kept,
9 and we will signal you when you have 30 seconds
10 remaining and when your time is up. Numbers
11 one, two, three, four and five. Please state
12 your name.

13 MS. LEONARD: Kathleen Leonard on behalf of
14 CSA. Once again the DOE has scheduled more than
15 two dozen schools for closure. The latest 26
16 schools destined for the scrap heap don't fit
17 into any particular pattern. Several have new
18 principals who were told they would have time to
19 turn the school around. Several have effective
20 ratings from the state. Several have proficient
21 quality reviews. One actually has a principal
22 who exceeds expectations and a quality review
23 rating of well developed.

24 The DOE seems to take aim at schools as if
25 it's playing a game of Russian Roulette. The

1 DOE's worst practice often devastates children
2 and families. It usually takes aim at students
3 who have already suffered setbacks and
4 humiliations from previous school closings.
5 Many of them have been turned away from the
6 city's new schools for resources of poor
7 academic performance or for coming from families
8 without clout.

9 Then the youngsters are warehoused in other
10 low performing schools that are likely to be
11 closed also. This is a failing strategy for
12 turning around the schools. CSA supports
13 Principal Linder and all her efforts, and the
14 staff, and all of the administrative staff, and
15 all of the good work that they have done over
16 the years. Thank you.

17 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. Numbers two, three,
18 four and five. Number six?

19 MR. MANOV POUDEL: Hello everyone. So we
20 all have the upcoming vision, right? The school
21 will close soon. However, I don't want that to
22 happen and many other students are against a
23 phase out as well. The school is going to phase
24 out because the grades, right? But then also
25 don't forget that many students in this school

1 have earned honors, granted valedictorian - -
2 and etcetera. And if the phase out occurs,
3 students will lose many opportunities.

4 The school has a - -, an outdoor football
5 field, and a library with books and computers.
6 If the phase out occurs, students lose access to
7 these places. Also, the school offers many
8 electives to choose from. There's drama.
9 There's music. There's sign language. There's
10 debate. There is singing and there is after
11 school. And there are also three academies,
12 Civics for sixth grade, Law for seventh and
13 eighth and Arts Academy.

14 These opportunities can only be given to the
15 students if the school is open, right? So this
16 is why all of us, the students, the parents and
17 the staff must help keep IS302 to open. The
18 closing of the school is a big disadvantage to
19 New York City. If IS302 phases out, a big part
20 of New York City phases out. Thank you.

21 MS. DEZIOR LIBERT: Hi, my name is Dezior
22 Libert, and all I have to say is that I don't
23 really think that the school should close
24 because we have access to a lot of activities,
25 like singing and sign language and when we--

1 [singing].

2 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. At this time I ask,
3 if anyone has an index card with questions,
4 please raise your hands and a representative
5 will come and collect them. And if you have any
6 questions, this is the last call for questions,
7 please raise your hands, someone will come and
8 get the card from you.

9 MS. MARCIELY HERNANDEZ: I'm Marciely
10 Hernandez for 703. I know you guys think, oh,
11 the school should fail, but I don't. I believe
12 there's a future for everyone. Six, seven,
13 eight, even those seventh grade, eighth grade
14 perform they have passion. I come to school
15 every day with a smile. When - - seventh
16 period, I got 100 on my report card. And when I
17 told that to my mom, that made me want to cry.

18 I know it may be hard to do math, which is
19 my weakness. I know I can do best in math. I'm
20 good at art. I have a passion for drawing. I
21 spend most of my time at home drawing. I have
22 the passion. Every day for two hours or four
23 hours I look inside my pictures. And do you
24 know what I say? I love you.

25 And when I come to drama, especially that,

1 we--other schools don't have the opportunity.
2 I see like one other school like 171, and stuff
3 like that. They don't have the opportunity to
4 go on stage and have passion. I have passion.
5 I decided to say yes - -. During Hurricane
6 Sandy since they cancelled--keep canceling the
7 show, I decided to stay in my house. My mom can
8 even hear me, and my twin sister, and my little
9 brother and me practicing.

10 It took me a long time to practice, very
11 long time. It was my first time, people and
12 guess what I did? I made an effort, a real
13 effort. I used to be a shy girl last year in
14 the sixth grade with Ms. Plata, but look at me
15 now. Thank you.

16 MS. ELLIS: At this time I would like to
17 call Nabila Cruz, representative from
18 Congresswoman Lydia Vasquez' office.

19 MS. NABILA CRUZ: Good evening, everyone.
20 My name is Nabila. And I'm here representing
21 Congress member Lydia Velazquez. I want to
22 first start by commending - - for the parents
23 and the students that are here, the community
24 based organizations that are present to really
25 show their interest and their support for the -

1 - school. [Spoken in Spanish].

2 Well I just wanted to start by saying that
3 this is exhausting. I'm actually not feeling
4 well. I came in here, I'm a little lightheaded,
5 but you sit here and you listen to the teachers
6 make a wonderful presentation, a passionate
7 presentation about what could be done when there
8 are resources in a school, and what has been
9 accomplished with very little resources. And
10 that's one of the reasons why we need to fight
11 to maintain this school opened for our sixth
12 grade - -.

13 I listened to the young lady who said she
14 was shy. I'm shy, too. And it's just amazing
15 what good education, what teachers with love,
16 and care, and true direction and - - for our
17 young people, how they can open up a shrinking
18 violet and make them a powerful statement for
19 our community. And I thank that teacher that
20 influenced that young lady.

21 With that said, the Congresswoman
22 understands, as an avenue for education, the
23 urgent need to provide quality education for all
24 children, not only those who are lucky enough to
25 get selected in our lottery system. Charter

1 schools are great. If you love them, we are
2 with you. But the problem is that we've
3 experience, throughout the City of New York,
4 thanks to DOE, most charter schools usurping our
5 public school space.

6 And what happens is that it really has an
7 impact like mentioned here. I was shocked to
8 hear the assemblyman say that you have 39
9 students. Even 30 students in a classroom, how
10 can a student who comes from a sub par housing
11 conditions, many of them, who come from living
12 in transitional or temporary housing, who come
13 from homes that are fractured, learn in a
14 classroom vying with 30 students, 30 more
15 students, even 25 students.

16 There's a large population of English
17 language learning students in this community
18 overall. I mean, I think one third of the
19 school is an English language student
20 population. And they can't—they need extra
21 time. They cannot - - to other cohorts in
22 education. They need more than a year, year and
23 a half, two years in order to succeed.

24 And I think the teacher demonstrated the
25 blue chart versus the red chart. Something was

1 lost in translation between third grade,
2 fourth grade and fifth grade. And it's evident
3 that it has been a lack of investment because
4 we're confident, the Congresswoman is confident,
5 that DOE has been planning to expand a charter
6 so why continue to really invest in this
7 community? And that's the real problem.

8 The other is this is a district that DOE has
9 neglected. It has been neglected because
10 someone said earlier, when you appear to be a
11 voiceless community, you're not organized like
12 my community in Williamsburg or - - that they
13 have economic power and they have academic
14 power. Then they are a force to reckon with
15 DOE.

16 Our community is a hardworking community.
17 It's a community that's, like I said,
18 predominantly English language learner that's a
19 poor community. And the parents are working one
20 job, two jobs if they're lucky to put their kids
21 through public school education. And it's an
22 embarrassment for DOE that in the past two years
23 they've had five superintendents. How can any
24 district perform well if you have five
25 superintendents coming in and out of the door?

1 They can't seem to hire someone who has
2 the ability to stabilize the district and really
3 invest in the academics of this school district,
4 especially Rafael Cordero School. So that is a
5 big bling on DOE. The other is that we're
6 learning about these programs. The success of
7 the school, we want to understand what kind of
8 plan. Were the parents engaged in this
9 discussion or was it again another exclusionary
10 process, no stakeholders to talk about how are
11 we going to really improve the school and how
12 are we planning to expand the school? And do
13 need to expand it?

14 I haven't heard that. I read the report.
15 It wasn't clearly indicated. It did say that we
16 will expand. This is an opportunity to expand
17 and if it doesn't get approved, then we can
18 still expand. So what's the sense of having a
19 public hearing? You can do it with or without
20 it. It's just really embarrassing. It's just
21 embarrassing.

22 The other is, again, smaller class sizes
23 that the Congresswoman is concerned about, the
24 lack of real investment in English language
25 learner students to key additional after school

1 service, and how the district is designed, the
2 school district. And these are the kids from
3 other schools that come here to - - school for
4 sixth, seventh and eighth grade. And if we're
5 not investing at the lower levels, then why
6 can't we anticipate at this school level? So
7 again, I think that there are many concerns.

8 I stated with the other elected official
9 that we need to do the best we can to maintain
10 this school open. What Rafael Cordero School
11 needs is to downsize existing classrooms. We
12 need to expand classrooms. We need more
13 classrooms, less expansion of charter schools in
14 public spaces and public schools.

15 And I think that we need to work on a
16 winning recipe and we need a superintendent that
17 really cares about the diverse community of East
18 New York students in District 19. And that is
19 what I think has been a real core failure to the
20 success of most of the schools here. When I go
21 through the report and I see the big F's and I
22 see the big D's and the big C's, we're
23 constantly in contact with DOE at the Washington
24 level and at the local level inquiring what the
25 hay is going on.

1 When we look at the class sizes--this is a
2 DOE decision, and so it's either, you know, it's
3 a design for failure, not a design for success.
4 It's a design to break up, you know, many of the
5 good teachers, part of the UFT and it's a design
6 to really make parents have to make a choice
7 between winners and losers, charters or public
8 schools and I have to say that public school is
9 the best school system in the City of New York
10 and we need to [background noise]. Thank you.

11 MR. CHRIS GOKHUL: Hi, my name is - - Gokhul
12 but my friends call me Chris for short. Ever
13 since I was at IS302, the teachers were nice,
14 cool and sometimes crazy. IS302 have given me
15 the opportunity to express my - -, my own self.
16 I'm a talented young boy expressing my talented
17 drawing talent by drawing. But when I need help
18 sometimes with my drawing I can always turn to
19 my favorite teacher, Ms. Howell.

20 As you can see to the right, you can see my
21 lovely drawing of IS302. In my homeroom, 703,
22 my teacher, Mr. Higland [phonetic] is sometimes
23 crazy, but he always makes learning fun. In
24 conclusion, as my classmate, - - said, if you
25 close down our school - -, you are crushing my

1 dreams. Thank you for your time and please
2 save IS302.

3 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. Number seven, eight,
4 nine, 10, 11, 12.

5 MS. JANELL PLUCK: Hello. Good evening.
6 First and foremost, I would like to say
7 something to the students of IS302. Please do
8 not let the DOE deter you from your dreams and
9 your full reach and your full potential. They
10 say that 302 has received an F but - -. I would
11 like to address something to you all, the DOE.
12 There's a mixed message being sent.

13 Now you want to close or phase out part of
14 the schools because it's struggling or it's
15 failing. The schools receive F. But what kind
16 of message do you send out if you're saying,
17 "You're not doing well so that's it. We'll do
18 away with you." Is that message that we send
19 our children? Is that the message that we send
20 the students in the community? You're dealing
21 with a struggling school but you haven't sat
22 back and taken a look at the community.

23 Forget the numbers. Take a look at the
24 faces. These are children coming from all walks
25 of life. I like it in this community. I'm an

1 activist in this community. I am a mother in
2 this community, not just to my children but to
3 many others. They call me Mama Jan.

4 Now there was something that Mr. Weiner said
5 assume--I see my 30 seconds. It's all right.
6 That says the school isn't serving its students
7 well. If the school is not serving its students
8 well or is it the resources that the schools are
9 being deprived of - - our school. What is it?
10 IS302 is not just a school that's a failure. We
11 are a community and our teachers who went above
12 and beyond their call of duty, not to just help
13 these students with their academics, but to help
14 them enhance their social skills, to help them
15 to get - - home. How the hell can you perform
16 properly in school?

17 Something else he said, address the
18 struggles of the school. How do you address the
19 struggles of the school if you are not finding
20 out what the school's struggles are? Where are
21 the students struggling? Where are the parents
22 struggling? Where are the teachers struggling?

23 And parents who are here, I want to
24 something to you all. You all can't just sit
25 back and say, "I don't like this or I don't like

1 that." You all have to get up here and open
2 your mouth. We are the school. - - shut us
3 down. You show your children that you are there
4 to fight for them. You don't just show up - -.
5 You don't just show up - -. You show up and you
6 fight for the rights of your student. You
7 fight. You fight. You fight.

8 MR. SHAQUELL WARREN: Hi, my name is
9 Shaquell Warren and I am a seventh grader, and I
10 am in the Arts Academy. And my school, IS302,
11 they gave me the chance to explore my dreams as
12 becoming a multi talented kid, and drawing and
13 dancing. My true dream is becoming a basketball
14 player, but I can't do that if my grades aren't
15 up.

16 - -, I can see - -. That is why I started
17 to go to 37 and a half. At 37 and a half, my
18 homeroom teacher, Mr. Greene, he goes over
19 homework and my strengths--and he goes over my
20 strengths weaknesses in math. And I performed
21 in all the shows we had at IS302. I had stage
22 fright in the first show. Then after I finished
23 I heard clapping - -. Ever since then I love
24 performing and I saw that everybody loved me and
25 my talent.

1 In conclusion, if we close this school
2 down, then you're closing our dreams. Let us
3 eagles fly. Let an eagle soar, watch out high
4 school. I'm knocking on your door.

5 MR. ISAIAH ELLERBE: Good evening, everyone.
6 - -. I have to take heed to what you said here,
7 very true. And you have that passion and some
8 of the parents need to have that. I understand
9 what you're saying. Well I would like everyone
10 to raise up their signs please. DOE, I would
11 like to explain to you, this is love right here.
12 And through my past years in this school, I've
13 been loved by Ms. Linder, the wonderful,
14 excellent teachers in this school that taught me
15 how to stand up and achieve my goals.

16 And I'm going to keep saying this until it
17 bugs everyone out. If you take away or fade
18 this school away, you're taking a part of
19 family, a family that is loved by millions, 300,
20 - - count, of children that are family in the
21 school. If you fade us out, then I don't know
22 what to say. And if I could say it's sorry to
23 conduct this in a way that I'm going to say it.
24 And it's not to you guys, understand, that I
25 don't understand how in an amount of time people

1 give us supplies in order to work with it, but
2 at the same time they're saying shut down the
3 school. But we didn't get supplies before that.

4 So how are we supposed to achieve what we're
5 supposed to do if we don't have the supplies to
6 do it? And then PTA teachers are calling, but
7 nobody is responding. So I don't understand.
8 Mr. Greene has helped me, Ms. Eiler, Ms. Chris,
9 Ms. Plata, Ms. Medina, Dr. Evans, - -, everyone
10 in this school - - Ms. Bailey, Joe, Beacon, - -
11 Williams [phonetic]. And from my heart, I--yes,
12 from my heart I know that we can thrive and can
13 we please get some, please? We can do this.
14 Please don't let the DOE take us out of service.
15 We're in service. - -.

16 [Background noise]

17 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

18 MR. JOSEPH PEREZ: My name is - - IS302. I
19 have learned a lot of new things since I was in
20 this school. My teacher, Ms. Medina, she was
21 telling me - - how to solve problems, equations
22 and expressions. It was really wonderful
23 learning those new things because like there's
24 going to be things in your life that you're
25 going to have to do by yourself.

1 Another thing that I have to thank for is
2 - - member in my class and her name is Ms. Alex.
3 She has helped me with my work and my--yes, my
4 math, yes. And I just thank her.

5 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. Number 12, 13, 14,
6 15.

7 MS. JEINI BELMY: Good evening, everybody.
8 My name is Jeini and I am a liaison of the PA
9 for IS302 and you want to phase out IS302. I
10 don't understand why. I've come from a phase
11 out - -. Now you say that, one, everything is
12 to be shared. There's no way of sharing, okay?
13 Because, one, first of all, all of the programs
14 that IS302 has, first it starts off that you
15 can't go here. You can't go there, and it's
16 limited because now what you're going to be
17 doing is you're limited at how you're going to
18 go here, how you're going to go there. All
19 right.

20 No, it doesn't work that way because when I
21 was at the high school where I had a child, all
22 right, it was you have to go this staircase or
23 you can't go that way. Now you have to go this
24 way or you have to eliminate what you can do.
25 The gym, it has to be divided. It's what I say

1 so, okay. The gym or the library, it's when I
2 say so.

3 Right now in IS302, yes, I know about that.
4 When you have to go to the library, it's
5 limited. Okay. Right now--Apollo right now
6 only has one floor and they all over the place.
7 They constantly everywhere. Okay. The fourth
8 floor, our kids cannot use the bathroom because
9 they little. So if one of our kids go to the
10 bathroom, they're escorted out. Okay. They're
11 escorted out and they're little. They go to the
12 cafeteria. They're all over the place, okay.
13 They're all over the place. All right?

14 You can't, you know, our kids have to wait
15 for their kids to be escorted first, and then
16 they're allowed to walk. Right? Okay? There
17 are teachers are all over the place. They're
18 really nosy, okay? And I'm sorry. Whoever
19 doesn't like it, oh well, I am a parent - -
20 school. I don't give a damn, okay, because kids
21 come first. I don't care whose kids. I believe
22 in kids. Everybody deserves an education,
23 equal. What the DOE is doing is wrong, and it's
24 making kids against parents. I believe in equal
25 education.

1 What's going to happen if you guys decide
2 to phase out IS302? What's going to happen with
3 our kids that are disabled, IEPs? What's going
4 to happen with our kids, foster kids, okay, our
5 children that are in homeless? Our children,
6 what's going to happen with them?

7 FEMALE VOICE: they don't really care about
8 us.

9 MS. JEINI BELMY: Thank you. What's going
10 to happen to them? Where are they going to go
11 if IS302 gets closed? Apollo Alternative
12 schools are not going to take them. They're not
13 going to take them. What's going to happen to
14 them? Where the hell are they going to go? - -
15 .

16 FEMALE VOICE: Thank you. Hello. My name
17 is- -. I'm in seventh grade. - - IS302, all my
18 friends and stuff. IS302 is like my second
19 home. So if they close it, where am I supposed
20 to go? So like can you keep it open for us,
21 like seriously? Because the programs here are
22 the only programs that I think this school has
23 that are the most fun out of all the schools in
24 the district.

25 We have science. We have electives. We

1 have even gym in the morning, in the
2 afternoon. We have a field where you can go out
3 and like get some fresh air, so like why would
4 you take that away from us and then replace it
5 with all these little kids that just want to be
6 in classes all day - -.

7 But seriously IS302, it is like the only
8 school here that could be available to kids. It
9 has Beacon. It has all the great teachers. It
10 has my 6th grade teachers and then my 7th grade
11 teachers. They helped me last year and this
12 year. They're still helping me, so why would
13 you take that away from all the other kids that
14 might want to come to this school? We have Ms.
15 Plata, Ms. Eire, Ms. Wick, Ms. Daly, Mr. Greene.
16 We have all of them, and they can help kids out
17 if they're scared, or shy or whatever. So like-
18 -so if you took that away from us, where are we
19 going to get that kind of education?

20 - - chorus. He can help you with your
21 singing if you need it. We have this - - who
22 wrote - -. We even have Ms. Howard who is
23 helping improve their art skills. And we have
24 Mr. Andrews who helps with your music - - that
25 kind of music. So - - most schools they don't

1 have those. And even if you go to a
2 performing arts high school and stuff, I bet
3 they don't even have that as much, because well
4 high schools are also strict, so like, just keep
5 the school open. Why would you close it if all
6 these little kids are going to need it somewhere
7 else? Where are they going to go, because most
8 of the schools might not even accept them. This
9 school will--might accept them, so like leave
10 the--

11 MS. ELLIS: 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20.

12 MR. ISAAC WILSON: Good evening. My name is
13 Isaac Wilson. I'm the ELL coordinator and
14 teacher here at IS302. I wanted to elaborate on
15 some of the numbers brought up earlier about the
16 ELL population. Right now, we have 176 ELLs,
17 which is 20% of our population. We just - -
18 today. That does not include 116 former ELLs,
19 or the fact that 50% of our population is native
20 language Spanish. Of these students, 68 are - -
21 , 39% are students with interrupted formal
22 education. 35% of all ELLs are considered
23 newcomers. That's zero to one years of service.
24 Of these, 34% of our current students were
25 taking the test, the ELLA test for the first or

1 second time last year.

2 In spite of that, year one students, 55%
3 made progress - -. 66% made progress in year
4 two, going up to 68% in year three. That trend
5 continued into year four, with over 50% making
6 progress - -. It does not reverse until we get
7 to year five, long term ELLs. So by definition,
8 students who come to us as newcomers are making
9 progress. To continue, we know that New York
10 City is out of compliance, as far as parents'
11 preference is concerned. That means that
12 schools are not - - with regards to bilingual
13 classes. 75% of our students, our ELL students,
14 are - - class. I was reading the educational
15 impact statement pages 6 and the 18. I saw no
16 mention of parent preference here. It's my
17 understanding that neither middle school this
18 building will have a [background noise]. We
19 have a viable program. We were audited by the
20 state in 2008 and found to be exemplary. Thank
21 you.

22 MS. PENA: Good evening. My name is Ms.
23 Pena. I'm a schoolteacher here, at IS302 for
24 the last 20 something years. And I'm looking
25 forward to continuing. I believe in my

1 students. I believe that all kids can learn.
2 I believe that they believe in themselves. They
3 have dreams. They have passion. They have
4 passion, and it has been my passion to teach
5 since I was a little girl. And I remember when
6 I was a little girl, I used to play teacher. I
7 used to get the ruler and bang on the table, and
8 tell my brothers and sisters, you know, to
9 listen, and all of that.

10 And when I look at my purse right now, I
11 found that I get--I have some stickers, stars.
12 And what will my students do for some scholar
13 dollars, you know, so I know that I chose the
14 right career. I'm a professional and I vote,
15 and I do care for my students. I care for this
16 community. I care for everybody here. I thank
17 you for coming. I teach--also I have the honor
18 of teaching a group of parents through the - -
19 program, and in that program, they learn how to
20 use the computers. They learn how to access the
21 Board of Ed, look into - -, look at their
22 websites, look at their own children scores, and
23 resources that the Board of Ed is giving--is
24 providing through the internet. I want to--one
25 of my goals is to cut that gap, that digital gap

1 by providing my students with all the
2 technology that I can. We need more. We need
3 more time. Thank you.

4 MS. EVANGELLINA PEREZ: Hello. My name is
5 Evangelina Perez - - regent's class through
6 science and math. This school has taught me
7 everything I believe in. Now do you really want
8 to shut down this school that lets the kids
9 express who they really are? You would be
10 shutting down one of the best schools that's
11 ever been built, that lets you have art, music,
12 acting, and so on.

13 This school is family. There's so much love
14 here. Ms. Palacio and Ms. Belazer, my teachers,
15 have all helped me get ready for the regents.
16 Dr. Evens and Ms. Nelson, my old teachers, have
17 also helped me too. Where would they go if you
18 shut down this school? Where--what would happen
19 to all these children who have grown to love
20 this school or the ones who love after school
21 activities like Beacon or Century 21? You just
22 can't shut us down.

23 MS. ELLIS: 21, 22, 23, 24, 25.

24 FEMALE VOICE: Hello. I just want to
25 reiterate what I said before, and this is

1 especially to parents, like parents like
2 myself. It is so, so, so very important that we
3 remain involved in our students' education, in
4 our children's lives because while I know
5 everyone has a day to day hustle, whether it be
6 school, whether it be work, whether it be just
7 trying to get on your feet, we cannot neglect
8 our children.

9 When our children come into these school
10 buildings, it's not just there for them to just
11 hang out. When they come home, we have to
12 inquire, what are they doing? What are they
13 learning? If they'd let us--let them tell us
14 what they have learned and so many times or
15 sometimes, you don't want to be at school and
16 you don't want to follow protocol or rules.
17 It's all right. It's understood. We've all
18 been there.

19 But the joy that you get when you receive an
20 education, a proper education, there is nothing
21 that no one can take away from you. Excuse me.
22 There is nothing that anyone can take away from
23 you. They cannot take away your pride, your
24 esteem. And if you do fall, know that you are
25 able to get back up again. There is no phasing

1 out in life. All you can do is continue to
2 grow and grow and keep getting better.

3 And just let this be a life lesson for you,
4 because there will be people who tell you you're
5 not doing good, that you need to stop, or they
6 want to shut you down. But to my students
7 especially, please, you are our future. The
8 very same folks who work in the Department of
9 Education, who want to shut you down, one day
10 they are going to need you, doctors, lawyers,
11 engineers, teachers, future preachers,
12 presidents, whatever, scientists, inventors. We
13 need you. We need you.

14 Don't get caught up in the hype right now,
15 throwing up your papers. I understand all that,
16 but we have to continue to fight. When you come
17 to school and your teacher is telling you to do
18 something, understand they don't want to just
19 get on you. They want the best of you. They
20 want so, so much for you. They want so much for
21 you. I'm not finished.

22 One minute. You all just keep on
23 fighting. Reach out to your fellow students who
24 may not be feeling school right now the way you
25 are, but you have that voice to encourage them.

1 Encourage your parents to get involved. Thank
2 you.

3 FEMALE VOICE: My English is not good, but I
4 will try. I'm not to fear. I'm proud of my
5 daughter. She's in 601, Ms. Nelson. I don't
6 know how this is a failing school when my
7 daughter be on the honor roll twice, and the
8 student of the month already. So I don't
9 understand, honestly. And thank you Ms. Nelson
10 for the support to her and Ms. Howard to be so
11 special to her.

12 The first thing, I believe you don't care
13 about the DOE. The first day, my daughter, when
14 she came to this school, she was crying. Why?
15 All the teacher was against this school, or
16 PS108, all these adults against this school, and
17 I don't understand why. The first day that we
18 opened the door right here, Ms. Brian opened her
19 heart to her. And she was so lovely, so
20 respectful with me, and she saw that she was
21 crying. And I told her, "Mami, you can do it.
22 You did it in fifth grade. You watched a
23 student four, so you can do it too. You can
24 show up."

25 It's not the building. It's not the school.

1 It's the teacher. Everything depends on the
2 teachers and how they care about the students,
3 okay? And so, why nobody appeals one way, now I
4 told them because my son is still there. I told
5 them what they told me, "Okay. It's you, too."
6 Yes, why not? So why they don't taught that way
7 from program? They all wanted the program at
8 their school. My kids have been for - - class,
9 and now they are strikers, so I don't understand
10 why they took him from this school.

11 Why you want to close our community school?
12 Why? You know where all the kids going to be,
13 because to be at the charter schools is to be by
14 minority. And they are - - school. You know
15 it's poor. They're not going to accept them, so
16 what are we talking about? I'd like the words,
17 one or two words that the PTA vice president
18 used, equal education [background noise] each
19 class has about more than 10 students about
20 almost 20. Ms. Pena has almost 40 students, you
21 know. And how you're going to make a balance
22 with the charter school? They've got less than
23 15 students each class, so what are you talking
24 about? Thank you.

25 MS. KELLLY ANADU: Good evening, everybody.

1 We're here to fight for our school and our
2 education. My name is Kelly Anadu. I'm in an
3 honor roll in this school. I've come to the
4 school to the top. I'm leaving, graduating,
5 from the top - - fight for the future. We're
6 here to fight for our rights. I say I want to
7 give back to the school. I'm planning on giving
8 back. How do you think they're going to give
9 back when you're going to phase my school out?
10 - - they're failing. They have an F. That
11 F we have - - the future. It will turn into our
12 future. If you - - and follow what you believe
13 in, you cannot get there. We will. We will
14 overcome this phasing. If you close the school,
15 you close our hope. If you close the school,
16 you close our life, our home. This is my home,
17 and we will not let you close our home. And why
18 - - I have a dream. I have a dream that we will
19 not let this school close. We will make it - -.
20 We will make this school become better. - - we
21 will fight and - - school. I came into this
22 school as a shy person, and look where I am. I
23 joined the debate team. I joined sign language.
24 I joined--well I won the championship for the
25 oratory competition.

1 If I can stand up here now and two years
2 ago I was shy and very, well you know, shy. If
3 I can stand up here and say I believe that we
4 can stop this. I believe that every single one
5 of my classmates and every teacher, Dr. Evans,
6 Ms. - -, everybody - - we can overcome this.
7 Thank you. Fight the power.

8 MR. ALAN WEINSTEIN: She took the words
9 right out of my mouth. Good evening. I'm Alan
10 Weinstein. I'm the UFT district representative
11 for District 19. Mayor Bloomberg - - over 11
12 years ago and said he was going to be the
13 education mayor. He was going to save schools.
14 He was going to fix them. If you own a car, it
15 needs repairs and you trade it in and buy a new
16 one, that is not fixing your car, okay? That is
17 junking it. You're getting rid of it. This
18 school needs some help. Closing it is not an
19 educational policy. It is a punishment. The
20 real failure is on the part of the DOE and its
21 policy of phasing out schools.

22 They have closed over 140 schools since
23 Mayor Bloomberg took office. And just to give
24 you an example of how well that works, the first
25 school in District 19 to phase out was PS72 over

1 on Shepherd Avenue, some of you may recall.
2 It was replaced by an elementary school and
3 middle school. Last year the elementary school
4 of 677 got an F, so that's what the phasing out
5 has done to that community.

6 Also, here's one thing that all the phasing
7 out schools have in common, and keep in mind,
8 there are three schools in District 19 being
9 phased out this year. They are primarily in
10 minority communities. They have the highest
11 number of ELL students, highest number of
12 special ed students, and the highest number of
13 homeless students.

14 In the last four years, the education budget
15 has been cut 14%. That's approximately one out
16 of every seven teachers is no longer there. As
17 a result, we have high class size throughout the
18 city. So we urge the DOE, do not phase out 302,
19 and to give it the chance to continue. As these
20 wonderful students have shown, there are good
21 things going on in this school and it should
22 remain open. Thank you.

23 MS. ELLIS: Numbers 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

24 (crosstalk)

25 ARIEL: Hello everybody. My name is Ariel,

1 as you all know, or may not. I just wanted to
2 ask you a question. What you saw up there,
3 that's what you're closing. That's what you're
4 shutting down, that inspiration. That is just,
5 you know, that's who you're closing. And it
6 hurts me, and I know it hurts Ms. Linder also,
7 right?

8 My mom, she wanted to come, but she's not
9 able to. But you know, I love this school, and
10 it's not because of my friends or nothing like
11 that. It's because of the teachers and their,
12 you know, and their hope, you know, their
13 kindness, because this is what the school is
14 about, kindness and how they help you to be
15 successful. All right. That's what they're
16 doing for us.

17 I understand maybe we have maybe, you know,
18 some bad grades or failing, but if you see, if
19 you like come closer and see closer that we all
20 work together, right? We are a family, and we
21 love each other, all right? And we help each
22 other to be successful, all right. For behalf
23 of the school - - everybody over there - -
24 school assignment to me.

25 Ms. Linder, she's like a mom because she

1 takes care of all of us. She loves us. My
2 teacher, Ms. Kenna [phonetic], she's always
3 there for you, right? She goes above and
4 beyond, okay? So she - - so we can be
5 successful, for my class to be successful, all
6 right? And I love Ms. Linder and my teacher Ms.
7 Kenna, and all of the other teachers, and any
8 grade student that--it hurts me very much that
9 you're going to do this, it really does. It
10 really does, all right?

11 And it hurts the teachers also. Where are
12 they going to go? I hate to see my teacher
13 looking for jobs. There's other jobs that they
14 won't even accept the type of teachers that they
15 have here because they're like--there's some
16 schools that they're jealous of teachers, and I
17 have seen that. These teachers right here,
18 they're awesome. They're one of a kind. One of
19 a kind, and I love them for that. I love you
20 teachers. I love you all. I love you all.

21 MR. HUUTTI SCOTT: Good evening. My name is
22 Huutti Scott. I've taught at IS302 since the
23 year 2000. I started when we were what was
24 called a Sur school. That was the name of the
25 chopping block at the time, and my first

1 education class, a well meaning teacher told
2 many of us who were also teaching at Sur
3 schools, "Oh you've got to get out of those
4 schools." And at the time, I understood that
5 she had good intentions, but it sounded like the
6 devil talking to me, and so I've done my best to
7 stay. But I have to admit that I'm starting to
8 understand the practicality of her advice.

9 And I see a system surrounding 302 that
10 honors cutting your losses, dividing and
11 conquering, whereas the mission that has always
12 been the same since I've been here, is that we
13 take anybody that comes through the door, and
14 are honored to teach them. And that does not
15 seem to be an alternative to this on the table
16 if we leave.

17 So at IS302, the best students are the
18 students that we teach, and we've always been
19 honored to offer anybody a place here. And I
20 don't want to start playing a game of dividing
21 things up so that I can save myself or a small
22 group of people around me, which seems to be the
23 best way to open your doors to all comers in New
24 York City.

25 So I'm honored to have a chance to speak,

1 but IS302 has always had, since I've been
2 here, a mission that I have not heard offered as
3 an alternative, and that is all students are
4 here. We're honored to have them, and it
5 doesn't matter where you came from or where
6 you're going.

7 MS. ELLIS: 30, 31, 32, 33, 34.

8 MR. HECTOR LOZADA: Good evening, everyone.
9 My name is Hector Lozada. I don't come here as
10 a program director or a - - at 302 Ocean Street.
11 I come here as a parent. I come here as a
12 father, a son, a brother. I come here as - -
13 this is my alma mater. I graduated in 1979, and
14 I was always taught it takes a child to raise a
15 child. I was always taught that in youth there
16 is strength.

17 Today I see that youth. Today, DOE, I want
18 you to understand. You're talking about
19 numbers. You're talking about figures. Is this
20 2011, 2010, or is it 2012? Today I see how the
21 students, the teachers, the parents, are
22 fighting - -. They want to try to - -. I work
23 with social services. I work for - - services.
24 I see children being pulled away from their
25 mother, their father, from their homes and put

1 into foster care. You know how badly that
2 hurts?

3 And - - to become robbers and stealers
4 because - - what they love. If this school is
5 giving them a future, why are you taking it
6 away? You're taking it away - - no child left
7 behind. What are you doing to them? You're
8 leaving them behind. They said that District 19
9 has the largest population of Hispanic minority
10 children.

11 A lady called me. They said, "Hector, I
12 need you to come help us." The - - Alicia
13 Cortez. She said, "I need you to come and help
14 - - give us support. With her and - - I sat
15 here with other parents, with other - -
16 organizations to come up with a plan to work on
17 and resolve this problem. We sat here on a
18 Saturday - - to let them understand, we are here
19 to help you, no matter what the problem is. We
20 are here to help you.

21 But DOE, what you're doing, you're closing
22 that door in their faces, because you're not - -
23 you're there to send them off - - charter
24 schools, but that's just a lottery. That's a
25 number. We're not a number. We are not a

1 number. We are not a statistics. We are the
2 future.

3 MS. MICHELLE NEUGEBAUR: Good evening. My
4 name is Michelle Neugebaur. I'm the executive
5 director of the Cypress Hills Local Development
6 Corporation. We are a 30 year old not for
7 profit community development organization and a
8 settlement house. We run the Cypress Hills East
9 New York - - IS302. We are part of the IS302
10 family.

11 Our services here at IS302 include a youth
12 leadership development program,
13 intergenerational services, after school
14 services, summer camp. You name it, we do it.
15 And we do it with a lot of love and caring for
16 young people in this neighborhood. Our
17 organization has also helped to found two
18 alternative schools in the neighborhood. Just
19 recently, we partnered with Principal Lisa
20 Linder to win a Promise Neighborhood planning
21 grant for the Cypress Hills Community, with
22 IS302 as the centerpiece of Promise
23 Neighborhoods.

24 It's a highly coveted grant. We're the only
25 one in New York State to win this grant. Just

1 want to clear up one of the fallacies in the
2 DOE handout today. The DOE handout explains
3 that there will be no negative repercussions by
4 the phase out of 302 for the Promise
5 Neighborhoods initiative, because we'll have a
6 year to plan with the phase out school.

7 There is no way in God's creation that the
8 U.S. Department of Education will give this
9 neighborhood and this school millions of dollars
10 if it is slated to be phased out. So you're
11 really putting this incredible opportunity for
12 the entire neighborhood at jeopardy by phasing
13 out IS302.

14 The other thing I want to say as a service
15 provider on the campus of Franklin K. Lane High
16 School, where we get hundreds of young people
17 into college, we lived through the phase out of
18 Franklin K. Lane, and it was a travesty. The
19 teachers--all the high quality teachers left at
20 once. The young people that remained had few
21 opportunities, little resources. They wound up
22 in our GED program here in the community and
23 really, it's not a tool for promoting
24 educational excellence.

25 Phase out just doesn't make sense, and the

1 DOE has to reconsider that stand. I thank you
2 for your attention. I hope you'll reconsider
3 your decision.

4 MS. ELLIS: We will now begin the question
5 and answer period. Remember, there will be some
6 individual questions and other that have been
7 bucketed into categories. Any question that is
8 not answered here tonight--

9 MALE VOICE: Hello. Once again we stand
10 here on the point of DOE taking over our
11 schools. Once again we're dealing with heavy
12 opposition. You know I'd like to innovate on
13 the word "fight." You know, a fight is where
14 both individuals put their hands up. The winner
15 is the ones who can't take no licks no more. -
16 - because right now, they're doing this by - -.
17 This is a community school, and what's going to
18 happen and it is going to happen sooner or later
19 when - - in the community and - - the schools.
20 Don't take that for granted.

21 Our kids are our future, and when you bring
22 a school from another district - - 166, that
23 charter school is coming from - -. What's the
24 matter with them staying there? This school--
25 where do the charter schools come from? They

1 have a home already. Why don't they stay
2 there? There's so many programs going on in
3 this school, so many programs going on in each
4 school in our district.

5 We have a superintendent now that's willing
6 to fight, but guess what? He has tied our hands
7 behind our back, and get principals gathering
8 with us not to help [phonetic]. We seen how you
9 all did with the 72 principal when she spoke out
10 for her school. She got transferred, then got
11 fired. Think about this. Time and time again.
12 Don't let the sleeping giant rise up, because
13 when they do, there are going to be
14 consequences, repercussions wise. Thank you.

15 MS. KYRIE THOMPSON: Hello. My name is
16 Kyrie Thompson, and I'm in the graduating class
17 of 2012 of IS302. If there is anybody in here
18 from 2012, I salute you. The teachers have
19 helped to evolve. I used to walk around the
20 halls every day and get tired of school.
21 However my mentors - - me, Mr. Cruz and Mr.
22 James, and Ms. Ira have helped me up to get on
23 track.

24 One of my favorite teachers, I love her so
25 much, Ms. Belazed [phonetic], was my

1 inspiration. She lectured me every day about
2 working to my best ability. She has prepared me
3 to take a - - regents in high school, and I
4 basically learned everything that they're all
5 teaching me. That means that she did very well.
6 Isn't that right? Also, this school is a home
7 to many, not just me. I moved all the way to
8 Brownsville, and I still find myself here every
9 day, and I can't get away from here.

10 This is my home five days a week, and
11 several hours on Saturday or the weekend. The
12 kids that come here for Saturday morning program
13 are so beautiful. This might be their future
14 choice for a school, but look at what we're
15 doing. We need to stop this. This is an
16 abomination. This is a place where people come
17 to clear their minds and have fun. You can't
18 take this away from our community. Thank you,
19 and I hope that you will make a decision that's
20 better for our future.

21 MS. ELLIS: We will now begin the question
22 and answer period. Remember, there will be some
23 individual questions, and others that have been
24 bucketed into categories. Any question that is
25 not answered here tonight will be answered on

1 the website. If you have additional questions
2 at the conclusion of tonight's proceedings, we
3 ask that you direct them to us via phone or
4 email, found on the bottom of the fact sheet. I
5 will now pass the mike to Deputy Chancellor,
6 David Weiner.

7 MR. WEINER: Thanks, Olivia. We've got a
8 few questions, actually quite a few questions I
9 want to get through. but before I do that, I
10 just wanted to--I've been to quite a few
11 different hearings. I just wanted to thank all
12 of the parents and especially the students who
13 came out and spoke.

14 It's rare when I see this many students
15 coming out and speaking so articulately, and
16 it's very special - -. I think myself, as
17 everyone else here was a little surprised that a
18 few students said that they were shy at one
19 point and how articulate they were [background
20 noise]. It was really amazing.

21 I also wanted to mention, there's obviously
22 been some very clear themes that came through a
23 lot of the speeches. I heard a lot of people
24 talking about the family that exists here, the
25 love, and the community that school--that this

1 school has provided to them. And it's clear
2 that through your passion, from literally the
3 first two teachers, from the - - who spoke and
4 did the presentation, to the students all the
5 way at the end that people really care deeply
6 about this school, and what it's done for them
7 in their lives.

8 So I just want to appreciate everyone for
9 all of your comments and everything that you
10 said here tonight, and I wanted to say that
11 before we got into questions. So what I'm going
12 to cover, there's a few questions that are
13 similar, but I'm going to cover all the
14 questions that were asked here. So the first
15 question was, "How will the ELL students and
16 students with special needs be served if 302 is
17 phased out?" And there's another question about
18 ELL programming.

19 I mentioned this at the beginning speech,
20 but actually, phasing in two district middle
21 schools into this building. Those district
22 middle schools will take the zone, that district
23 that 302 now has. And those two schools will
24 serve, we expect, a similar population to 302.
25 Those schools will offer priority to those

1 students that are residing in the 302 zone, so
2 if you have incoming 4th graders or 5th graders
3 that would be entering in 6th grade in the next
4 couple of years, those students will be accepted
5 into the new schools that are being phased in.

6 I've got another question about how
7 effective it is to phase out and replace low
8 performing schools, and so the DOE has been
9 doing a process of phase out for about ten
10 years. We have quite a bit of data about how
11 schools are performing, and fortunately, the new
12 schools that have been phased in have
13 significantly outperformed most of our phased
14 out schools.

15 In ELA they actually have about 14 points
16 higher than the phased out schools in math.
17 They have about 23 percent points higher in
18 math. And that's in spite of the fact that
19 they're serving basically the same population,
20 as well.

21 The next question we had was, "Why are
22 schools being held accountable for student
23 performance when many of the students are
24 performing below their grade level when
25 admitted?" A couple of comments that we heard,

1 and speakers also talked about, the English
2 Language Learners' status affecting the students
3 here.

4 So it's important to note that when the DOE
5 compares schools, they actually don't compare
6 static performance. They compare what is called
7 progress, and we expect all of our students to
8 make progress, no matter what level they enter
9 the school at. So even if they're three grade
10 levels below or four grade levels below, we
11 expect all students to make progress. That
12 doesn't necessarily mean they all reach level
13 three or four on the exam, but we expect them to
14 make progress.

15 Unfortunately at 302, the students are not
16 making as much progress as similar students at
17 other schools, similar schools that have ELL
18 students. They are not making as much progress.

19 FEMALE VOICE: Are you comparing them with
20 charter schools?

21 MR. WEINER: This compares with district
22 schools. There are some charter schools in
23 there, but the majority of schools we compare
24 them to are district schools.

25 FEMALE VOICE: But charter school has more

1 opportunity because - - less students, so one
2 teacher to all 40 students is not enough.

3 [crosstalk]

4 Db: I see what - - I still have quite a few
5 more questions, and the majority of schools
6 we're talking about are district schools that
7 are similar zoned and attended schools - -. Let
8 me cover a couple of the other questions here.

9 So there's one question that was asked about
10 how the school leadership and staff are
11 considered as part of the decision to phase out
12 a school. So we recognize that while leadership
13 is an important component of a school community,
14 it is not the only component. Parents, family
15 members, teachers, staff, students, those are
16 adequate other factors that must be in place in
17 a school.

18 So leadership is one component that we
19 consider when we're looking at schools to phase
20 out, but it's not the only consideration we take
21 into account. Another question asked about
22 there were some students that were concerned
23 about losing access to the gym and other
24 facilities, so students at 302 would continue to
25 have access to all building facilities in 302.

1 Additionally, a lot of the students spoke
2 about some of the extra-curricular elective
3 activities, that those will continue to be
4 offered at 302 as the school continues to phase
5 out. In addition, the Beacon and the global
6 response team will continue serving students
7 that are at 302. 302 students will have access
8 to those programs as well, as well as the new
9 middle schools coming in will have access to
10 such programs.

11 And then finally, there were several
12 questions and a few comments that people made
13 about the new charter school that's coming in.
14 As I mentioned, there was a decision made at the
15 CEC to actually hold the charter school co-
16 location on Thursday, so that process will
17 actually be here on Thursday night.

18 FEMALE VOICE: No. I sit on CEC and we did
19 not agree to have it Thursday. It's ridiculous
20 to ask parents to take off two days of work.
21 It's very inconsiderate. I sit on CEC and no,
22 we did not agree with that.

23 MR. WEINER: Okay. That's the information I
24 was given, so--

25 FEMALE VOICE: The principal asked even for

1 everything to be on the same night for that
2 consideration for the parents that work. We're
3 talking about people that work two and three
4 jobs.

5 MR. WEINER: Okay. So the phase out hearing
6 - - I'm sorry. The co-location hearing for the
7 charter school will be held on Thursday night,
8 so questions around that will--that people have
9 can be addressed there, and that's basically the
10 last question we have.

11 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. We have heard many
12 significant comments this evening. We
13 appreciate your feedback and contributions to
14 this hearing. The information will be shared
15 with the Panel on Educational Policy, which will
16 have its hearing to vote on this proposal on
17 March 11th, 2013 at Brooklyn Technical High
18 School, 29 Fort Green Place, Brooklyn, New York.

19 Public comment can be submitted via email or
20 phone until March 10th at 6:00 p.m. You may
21 submit your feedback via phone by calling the
22 phone number (212)374-0208, or in writing my
23 emailing d19proposals@schools.nyc.gov. That
24 information is also included at the bottom of
25 the fact sheet. Thank you all for coming out.

1 This joint public hearing is officially
2 adjourned. Have a good evening.

3 [END RECORDING]

4
5
6
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

Michelle R Killen

Date February 28, 2013