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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION – DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**

P.S. 050 Clara Barton

February 25, 2013

5:30 P.M.

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MS. JENNY SOBLEMAN: Good evening, ladies
3 and gentlemen. We're going to get started in
4 just a moment. I wanted just to quickly have an
5 announcement about interpretation services this
6 evening.

7 MS. JULIET ROBLES: [Speech in Spanish]

8 MS. JENNY SOBLEMAN: Great, I think we'll
9 start started. What I'm going to do is a little
10 bit - -. Bear with me. I've got one item that
11 I'm going to share with the people who are
12 speaking here, and from the panel. My name is
13 Jenny Soblemen. I'll be serving as this
14 evening's facilitator for this joint public
15 hearing. This is a joint public hearing of the
16 Department of Education, Community Education
17 Council, and the school leadership team to
18 discuss the proposed phase-out of P.S. 050 Clara
19 Barton, 12X050, beginning in 2013/2014. I also
20 want to take note that this evening's
21 proceedings will be recorded and transcribed.
22 Anyone who wishes to speak during the joint-
23 during the public comment portion of the
24 evening, we have this podium set up for you.
25 There is a sign-up list outside the door where

1 you entered, so just make your way out there if
2 you haven't already, sign up, and then once
3 you're signed up, you'll be given two minutes to
4 speak during the public comment portion, and you
5 have a timekeeper here who will let you know
6 when you've gotten to the 30 seconds, and then
7 when your time has elapsed. My job is to try to
8 keep us on task, to make sure that everyone who
9 signed up to speak has been given an
10 opportunity, and that we listen and are
11 respectful to each other and our neighbors.
12 Then once we have exhausted the public comment
13 list, we move to a portion of the evening called
14 question and answer. If you have a question,
15 please, again, at the table where you can sign
16 in for public comments, there are not cards
17 where you can write down the question. If we
18 get repetitive questions, we will batch them
19 together and try to get an opportunity this
20 evening to respond to them. Any questions that
21 we don't respond to this evening, but I want to
22 make sure everyone is aware that all of the
23 questions and all of the comments are included
24 in a document called the analysis of public
25 comment, which is published on our website, and

1 also given to the panel members prior to their
2 vote. So, if any point this evening, - - come
3 to you, thoughts, comments, questions, after
4 this evening's hearing, I will give you the
5 phone number and email, and these are ways for
6 you to continue to communicate with the
7 department after this evening, before the vote,
8 which takes place on March 11th. And I'll share
9 it with you a few times. It's D12. D, number
10 one and number two, proposals at
11 schools.nyc.gov. And the phone number is 212-
12 374-5159. So all of our panel participants are
13 here with us, and we are going to go ahead and
14 start the sign-up sheet for public comment will
15 be open for another 15 minutes. I'll try and
16 remind you a couple more times before it closes.
17 We are represented by-we have one representative
18 from - - office, Joe Bauza, representative State
19 Senator Ruben Diaz, who will speak a little bit
20 later. Now I'd like to introduce our panel - -
21 proposal. I'm going to try to start down on
22 that end. We have Carmen Sanchez from CEC 12.
23 Judge Riley Bardem [phonetic] from CEC 12.
24 Daniel Gartson [phonetic] from CEC Planning
25 Board Committee. Cathy Diaz [phonetic], the CEC

1 Treasurer. - - CEC Secretary. Wilfred Holton
2 [phonetic] CEC President. And then not on the
3 panel, but representing the - - right over here,
4 Rebecca - -. Then- - we have Superintendent - -
5 Rodriquez, and Deputy Chancellor Corianne Bello-
6 Anselmi. And now I'm going to invite the
7 Chancellor to read the proposal.

8 MS. CORIANNE BELLO-ANSELM: Thank you Jane.
9 Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and thank
10 you for being here this evening. This joint
11 public hearing was - - to discuss the proposed
12 phase-out and replacement of P.S. 050, the Clara
13 Barton School. For purposes of this hearing, I
14 will refer to P.S. 050 Clara Barton as P.S. 050
15 from this point forward. The decision to phase
16 out P.S. 050 is a difficult one. We do not take
17 this decision lightly. We examined many factors
18 and data before we proposed a course of action.
19 We engaged family and community members in
20 discussion about what is and is not working at
21 the school before determining whether a phase-
22 out was appropriate. All of us count on our
23 school to provide high-quality education for
24 students, and we must hold all schools to the
25 same standard of excellence because every child

1 in the city deserves the best possible
2 education. When a school isn't serving all
3 students well, we have to take action to ensure
4 current students don't fall even further behind,
5 and that future students will have a school that
6 will prepare them for success in college and the
7 workplace. I want to avouch students who are
8 here and their families who feel that their
9 children were being well served by P.S. 050.
10 Tonight we will hear about success stories
11 happening here, and we will honor these. But we
12 also need to consider the other students whom
13 the school is not serving well, and whom have
14 not experienced the same success. These
15 students deserve better. As I mentioned earlier
16 tonight, we will be discussing the proposed
17 phase-out of P.S. 050. In addition to the
18 proposed phase-out, we are proposing to replace
19 P.S. 050 with one new district elementary
20 school. P.S. 050 is located in school building
21 X050, and at 1550 S.E. Avenue, Bronx, New York.
22 P.S. 050 is a zoned elementary school that
23 currently serves students in kindergarten
24 through fifth grades. P.S. 050 also offers a
25 pre-K program. On January 22nd, 2013, New York

1 City Department of Education published
2 proposals to phase-out and replace P.S. 050
3 based on its long-standing performance
4 struggles. On February 5th, 2013, the DOE
5 published an amended proposal which provided
6 updated information regarding the availability
7 of school improvement grant funding. These
8 proposals discussed the track record of P.S.
9 050, and why the DOE believes that phase-out and
10 replacement is the best option for the P.S. 050
11 community. P.S. 050's performance indicates
12 that the school has struggled, and confirmed the
13 DOE's assessment that the school lacks the
14 capacity to improve quickly enough to meet the
15 needs of all students. For example, P.S. 050
16 earned an F grade on its 2011-12 progress
17 report, including a D grade for student
18 progress, and an F grade for student
19 performance, and an F grade for school - -.
20 Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of P.S.
21 050 students remain below the grade level in
22 Math and English Language Arts. In 2011/2012,
23 only 33% of the students were performing on
24 grade level in Math, putting the school at the
25 bottom 5% of elementary schools city-wide. Only

1 16% of students were performing on grade level
2 in English Language Arts, putting the school in
3 the bottom 1% of elementary schools city-wide.
4 Furthermore, P.S. 050 was also identified by the
5 New York State Education Department as a
6 priority school, one of the bottom 5% of schools
7 in the state. Given the school's continued
8 decline in performance, the DOE believes that
9 only the most serious intervention—a gradual
10 phase-out and eventual closure and replacement
11 of P.S. 050—will address these long-standing
12 struggles, and allow for a new school option to
13 develop in this building that would better serve
14 future students and this community. In a
15 separate Education Impact Statement, the DOE has
16 to post - - a new district elementary school in
17 this school building. If approved, the new
18 elementary school will serve students in
19 kindergarten through 5th grade in the P.S. 050
20 zone, and will also offer a free kindergarten
21 program. Before we move into the public
22 comments section of this meeting, I would like
23 to briefly discuss the impact of the phase-out
24 proposal on current P.S. 050 students. IF the
25 proposed phase-out is approved, P.S. 050 would

1 no longer admit new kindergarten-new pre-
2 kindergarten, new kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd
3 grade students after the end of this year.
4 Current 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade students who meet
5 promotional standards would continue to attend
6 P.S. 050 for the duration of elementary school.
7 Current 5th grade students will have the
8 opportunity to graduate from P.S. 050 at the end
9 of this school year. These students should have
10 already applied to the middle school - -
11 District 12 middle school Choice Process. If
12 they do not meet promotional standards, they
13 will continue 5th grade at P.S. 050. P.S. 050
14 will continue to phase-out one grade at a time
15 until June 2016 when it will close. Students
16 may also apply to finish school elsewhere.
17 Current students at P.S. 050 will have the
18 opportunity to apply to transfer to another
19 elementary school as part of our Public School
20 Choice Process. Applications for this transfer
21 opportunity will be available to students in the
22 spring for enrollment starting in September. I
23 thank you in advance for sharing - - these
24 proposals tonight. We look forward to hearing
25 your comments and your questions. Thank you.

1 MS. JENNY SOBLEMAN: Thank you. I just
2 want to recognize that we've been joined by
3 Monica Major, representing - -. I'm sorry, - -.
4 Our next presentation will be from - -. I stand
5 corrected. Hopefully we have our speaker signup
6 list coming any second, because we've now
7 finished all of our presentations from the
8 floor. So before we move into public comments,
9 I will invite the representative from Senator
10 Ruben Diaz's office, and as I said, we're
11 sharing one microphone, so I'm going to move it
12 up here, and hope that we can all be sensitive
13 to the time.

14 MR. JOEL BAUZA: Let me just turn this way.
15 I'm sorry if I give my back to you. Good
16 evening everyone. My name is Joel Bauza. I am
17 the Senior Pastor also of Calgary Church here on
18 174 Longfellow. Not only am I here representing
19 the Senator's office, but I'm also representing
20 my church and the members of my church that have
21 their children come to this school. As a
22 pastor, we're involved in our communities. We
23 feel the effect of everything that goes on in
24 our communities, and we're here, and I'm here,
25 as you could say a - - or a help or a hand to

1 anyone that needs it. I understand this
2 process today is not too easy to handle or to
3 digest, but we do pray that tonight will be a
4 night of clarity, of understanding, and that we
5 can come together in agreement, and that we can
6 just voice our opinions and that it can be
7 heard, and that we can leave here knowing that
8 something positive is going to happen, because
9 at the end of it all, it's our children that are
10 going to be affected. It's their future that
11 we're going to be discussing, and it's being
12 played out today. So we do want to just keep in
13 mind that though we are from different races,
14 different backgrounds, and we have different
15 concerns tonight, tonight we're sharing our
16 opinions, and respecting each other. So again,
17 on behalf of Senator Diaz's office, I'm here to
18 just extend our hand, and if there's anything
19 that could be done, any questions that you may
20 have afterwards, you can see me. We can always
21 address them at a later date also with the
22 Senator in his office. Again, my church is also
23 available for anyone that would like to speak to
24 me afterwards. We're here also to help you with
25 this. Once again, thank you for allowing us to

1 be here. Thank you everyone for being here
2 from CEC, the representatives, our
3 superintendent, thank you, and - - thank you for
4 this opportunity. God bless you.

5 MS. JENNY SOBLEMAN: Thank you sir. And - -
6 folks who are standing around on the edges want
7 to take a seat. Maybe folks don't want the
8 front row, but feel free to sit up front if
9 you'd like. I'm going to call up the speakers
10 in groups of five so we don't have to run back
11 and forth too frequently. If I mispronounce
12 your name, I do apologize. Just correct it for
13 the record when you do approach the microphone.
14 As I said, each person who signed up to speak is
15 given two minutes, and we've got a timekeeper up
16 front who's going to tell you when you've passed
17 30 seconds and when your time has elapsed, and
18 as the representative said, I would appreciate
19 it if we could continue to respect each other
20 and listen to each other and make the comments
21 to the panel to get your voice heard, and it
22 will be on the public record. So speakers one
23 through five. We have number one as Melvin
24 Vega. Speaker number two, Tangela Gibson.
25 Speaker number three, Josephine Walden

1 [phonetic]. Speaker number four, Kimberly
2 Asan [phonetic] I believe. And speaker number
3 five, Ersell Ananias [phonetic]. We'll start
4 with speaker number one, Melvin Vega.

5 MR. MELVIN VEGA: Hello my name is Melvin
6 Vega. I am in the 5th grade in the new class,
7 and in this school, I am a part of the - -. - -
8 we do a lot of fun stuff, and get to - -. - -
9 goes up and around - - money. We're getting
10 more money, and it's sometimes hard because-it's
11 kind of hard - - because how it's doing. You're
12 scared - - lose all your money and - -. I just
13 add also - -. It's really fun, and we are-some
14 of the - - that we do, the 5th graders, on
15 Thursdays and Fridays, we get to play-we get to
16 play activities and we just have a good time.

17 [Applause]

18 MS. TANGELA GIBSON: Hello, my name is
19 Tangela Gibson, and I am a teacher at Clara
20 Barton for almost ten years now. Total I've
21 been teaching for about 24 years now, and since
22 I only have a short time to speak, I just want
23 to focus on the leadership that this school has
24 had for the last seven years. If it hadn't been
25 clear leadership, a clear thought, what do you

1 expect the teachers to do and the kids will
2 pick up on the negativity. It hasn't been a
3 positive environment. Thank God for Ms.
4 Mellonpicker [phonetic].

5 [Loud applause and shouting in agreement]

6 MS. TANGELA GIBSON: They have finally,
7 finally picked up-she has a clear view on what
8 we need to do for our children, and the teachers
9 have been working damned hard for these kids.
10 But it's the fault of the leadership. We've
11 had, what, four, five principals? - -. Four
12 principals since Mr. Parker left, and the last
13 principal physically was awful, disgusting. I
14 didn't want him here, and I've been here for
15 more than 23 years. Kids can pick up on
16 negativity, and if the leadership is not
17 focused, not clear, things are going to fall
18 through the cracks. All I'm asking, I'm
19 begging, just to give us maybe until June to see
20 how things have turned around, and then come
21 back again and have this meeting. Only give us
22 a year. I know time is precious, and these kids
23 have no time, no more time to waste. But just
24 give us until June. You don't want to give us a
25 year; give us to June, come back here, and tell

1 us how things are going. Look at the test
2 scores, look how people are feeling about this
3 community, before you shut us down or phase us
4 out. - -.

5 [Applause and shouting]

6 MS. JOSEPHINE WALDEN: My name is Josephine
7 Walden. I've been in this community for - -. I
8 have five kids. My oldest is 33-years old. I
9 also volunteer in the community by picking kids
10 up, bringing them to the school, picking them up
11 in the morning, taking them home. This school
12 has come a long way, okay? And - -, it's not
13 right. You have to give these teachers a chance
14 to do what they - -. And these teachers are
15 great. They bust their butts, they do
16 everything they can. It's not their fault that
17 a principal who messed it up. Okay? You have
18 to give our kids a chance. Where they going to
19 go? There's so many different things going on
20 in this school. They have an after-school
21 program. - -. Give us a chance. Don't just
22 close them down like that. It's not fair. It's
23 not fair to the kids, it's not fair to the
24 parents, it's not fair at all. Please, just
25 give them a chance. Thank you.

1 [Applause]

2 MS. JENNY SOBLEMAN: Thank you - - just let
3 everybody know that the speakers list is going
4 to close in just a couple of minutes, so last
5 call if you've been inspired and you want to
6 sign up for public comment, please make your way
7 outside and sign up.

8 MS. KIMBERSLY ASAN: Good evening staff. To
9 all our staff from the lunchroom over the whole
10 building. Remember, we've only got two minutes.
11 But I just want to say to go back what the other
12 lady said, that our new principals needs a
13 chance, because what happens is you have a
14 principals that was - -, like our principal we
15 have now. Someone ask her, you want a cell
16 phone? It's a thousand dollars. She said give
17 me a thousand pencils. Okay? Who knows? The
18 old teacher might have took the cell phone. We
19 don't know that. Now we talk about the
20 important things she really can do - - for
21 somebody to have spent a lot of money on pre-K
22 and second grades. Then she partners, she
23 spends money on this and that. She did the
24 assembly. There's a lot of programs that go on
25 in here. We have, like I said, the after-

1 school. And then - - staff, if you see
2 something wrong, the staff that's been here,
3 they couldn't help it if they had a principal
4 that didn't know what she was doing. So the
5 only thing I can say is that closing down is not
6 the answer. But if you want a partnership, - -.
7 - -. If you go into a partnership and give us
8 half of the school so she can do what she does,
9 one man said the other day, the other morning,
10 "My daughter runs in. She don't kiss me no
11 more." Why? Because she's trying to get into a
12 school that's there now, that this lady made,
13 the staff members made now. But she came back
14 out and she kissed him. But it just goes to
15 show you we - - . But who would stop a child
16 that's skipping in? Who would stop a child
17 that's skipping in? So all I can say is as far
18 as closing the school, that's not a good answer.
19 But if you want to share it, give this lady her
20 props.

21 [Applause]

22 MS. JENNY SOBLEMAN: - - everyone, I was
23 sharing the microphone, so - -. I'm going to
24 call up our next set of speakers. Number six,
25 De'Jon Thompson. Number seven, Vince Colen, Jr.

1 [phonetic] Number eight, Dana Driscoll.

2 [phonetic] Number nine, Darrell Jones. And
3 number ten, Yvette Holt.

4 MS. ERSELL ANANIAS: Hello. My name is
5 Ersell Ananias. I've been a member of this
6 school and a teacher since 1984. I've been here
7 for close to 29 years. Twenty-eight, 29 years.
8 We've had good times when people stayed after
9 school, where people were focused, where people
10 were motivated, and then after 2005, we were in
11 the dark. We've seen the light. Ms.
12 Mellonpicker came in, changed the school like
13 that.

14 MALE VOICE: Hear, hear!

15 [Loud applause and shouting agreements]

16 MS. ERSELL ANANIAS: - -, - - friendly.
17 People were leaving. As soon as they get their
18 kids, they're out the door. We're not a school;
19 we've been a family. A family since I've been
20 here. - - people stay after school, people are
21 motivated. They want to see change. We have
22 hope that things will get better. We need to
23 keep that going. We need to keep the principal
24 we have. We need to give her a chance. The - -
25 we have been - -, and we have something for it,

1 and the children have something for it. We
2 see the light; we hope you can see the light
3 also.

4 [Applause]

5 MR. DE'JON THOMPSON: Good evening. My name
6 is De'Jon Thompson. I've been a teacher at P.S.
7 050 for ten years. I've taught in grades from
8 kindergarten to 5th. I also was the Dean for a
9 year. I met my wife there. I - -.

10 [Laughter and applause]

11 MR. DE'JON THOMPSON: - - I'm driving two
12 hours every day to get here. Every day, back
13 and forth. And I just want to say - -, but I
14 hear a lot of letters being thrown out. B's and
15 C's and D's and F's. As educators, if my
16 students get a C or a D, do we phase them out?
17 I don't think we do. As parents, if our
18 students or our kids get C's and D's, they're
19 struggling, do we close up? Do we phase them
20 out? Do we replace them? I don't think we do
21 that. We help them, right? If I go - - and I
22 got C's and D's, I'm going home sleepless that
23 night to see how I can help them, how I can
24 support them, not how I can phase them out. But
25 - - phased out because they got a C - -. I'll

1 tell you what, - - support them.

2 [Loud applause and shouting in agreement]

3 Good evening ladies and gentlemen. My name
4 is Vince Colen, Jr., and I'd like to say all of
5 you have probably heard the song, "Give Peace a
6 Chance." Give Ms. Mellonpicker a chance. She
7 needs time. This lady has brought about change
8 that we never even thought about. She
9 communicates very well. She tries her best to
10 reach the parents. Some are not reachable. But
11 give her a chance. I mean, that's-one of our
12 previous speakers said give her until June.
13 That's only fair. - -. She needs to be given
14 her due. You all, the community, need to wake
15 up, and - - the better working schools have
16 parents involved. You hardly ever show up. - -
17 , look at you. In the future, show up and - -.
18 I have a saying, as - - people say, never
19 forget. I say always remember, because there
20 were some terrible things done to people of
21 color in the name of trying to get an education.
22 A lot of you know what I'm talking about. So
23 now that we're here in this modern day and time,
24 let's do the right thing. Support this lady,
25 support your community, and most of all, support

1 your children. God bless.

2 [Loud applause and shouts of agreement]

3 MR. AL GLOVER: I want to say hi to
4 everybody. My name is Al Glover. I have
5 children. Every last one of them have been in
6 this school, and I have two more on the way in.
7 I take them to church every Sunday. I've seen
8 what this school has done. My oldest graduate
9 St. Johns. He got to go to St. Johns how? He
10 started here. My oldest. My second oldest is
11 on his way to college - -. Me and him are going
12 back and forth, and I'm telling him, when you
13 got people that watch their children from when
14 they was small, and as I watched my own, and you
15 - - changes. Not just one of the teachers here.
16 But they tell me, "Oh, this child, we need you
17 to - - so that child can understand." My child,
18 he's not - - but he's slower than I expected or
19 we expected him to be. So what we done is he
20 went to a special school. He had to learn how
21 to walk properly, he had to learn how to talk
22 properly. He had to learn how to write
23 properly. But he's in this school. Second
24 grade. He walks, he talks, he runs. And when
25 he came, he wasn't like that. So I'm asking,

1 and the community here is asking, it could
2 happen through this principal. I know, I've
3 seen - - very open-minded and got things done.
4 There's security for the children to come into
5 school or out the school. I think it's - -, and
6 that is - -. - - change.

7 [Applause]

8 MS. JENNY SOBLEMAN: Speaker number eight,
9 Dana Driscoll? Great. Then I'll call up the
10 next-we have speaker ten, Yvette Holt. Speaker
11 eleven, Arlene Bisbano [phonetic]. Speaker
12 number twelve, Michelle Singleton. Number 13,
13 Dacia Patrick [phonetic]. Number 14, Soyna
14 Garbello [phonetic]. And number 15, Steven
15 Bennett.

16 MR. DARRELL JONES: I thank you. No
17 disrespect to the panelists, but my comments
18 will be more directed more towards the parents
19 and the staff, so I'm going to show you my back.
20 I'm here as a representative of an organization
21 called the Coalition for Public Education. I've
22 been passing around a petition, and this is for
23 a city-wide petition drive to end mayoral
24 control system, and to end the closing of
25 schools. When I leave here, I will have to go

1 across to West Palms and the Roland Patterson
2 School next to Roberto Clemente State Park.
3 They're going through a similar exercise. - -
4 schools that have been put on the last list of
5 closings. The mayor has had control of the
6 school system for more than ten years. If he
7 knew - - education systems, it wouldn't have
8 been done.

9 [Loud applause and shouting agreement,
10 drowning out the speaker]

11 MR. DARRELL JONES: He is not an educator.
12 He refuses to get a competent professional
13 educator to run the system, because no - -
14 educator would agree with the program that he's
15 put forward. That's why he has the retired
16 politicians, the woman, Kathy Black, who had no
17 proper education whatsoever. These are the
18 people that he feels - - to run our system. I
19 have a brief petition that I'll read quickly. I
20 hope to get some support. Again, we, the
21 undersigned, support the repeal of the New York
22 State and mayoral control legislation, and it's
23 replacement - - Board of Education not under the
24 control of City Hall. Mayoral control in New
25 York has proven to be - - which allows corporate

1 control, charter schools and - - the majority.
2 It is imposed segregation by race and by class.
3 It's facilitating the disappearance of African-
4 American and Latin-American teachers and
5 principals. It is eliminating a multi-cultural
6 curriculum. It's wasted public funds on payoffs
7 to these charter school operators, and it's
8 closed neighborhood schools. And most
9 importantly, it ignored the point of view of the
10 parents in the community. We have to take
11 control of our own children's education, and
12 only a movement of parent's that uniting-as long
13 as you're dealing with only your school, they
14 don't care. These people up here are well-
15 meaning. They do not have the power or
16 authority to stop the closing. That decision
17 has already been made. So what I'm asking,
18 parents, we have to unite with the parents in
19 other schools subject to the closing. We have
20 to - -. The assembly person, the Senators, the
21 councilperson; they are the ones that can close
22 down mayoral control. We'd like to get your
23 support and supporting all the schools in New
24 York City. We have a common enemy, and the
25 enemy is mayoral dictatorship.

1 [Loud applause and shouts of agreement]

2 MS. ARLENE BISBANO: I'd like to - -
3 everyone. My name is Arlene Bisbano. I'm a
4 science teacher here at P.S. 050. It's very
5 emotional for me to speak because - -. [Crying]
6 - - because it's home to me. I grew up in - -
7 grew up here, because I grew up here. And I
8 want - -.

9 [Applause]

10 MS. ARLENE BISBANO: But - - grades of F and
11 D. The big letter F was for school climate.
12 The school climate was up here. With the
13 changes, it went down to the ground. This year,
14 we have a new administrator who came in with
15 ideas to make changes that were positive, and
16 encouraged teachers to want to stay. I'm one of
17 the teachers that comes in early, and I leave
18 here six o'clock, 6:30, because I want to make
19 sure that when your kids come to school here,
20 they get the best education that I can give
21 them. A lot of my colleagues feel the same way.
22 Your children are our children. Part of the
23 problem was we didn't have a good administrator
24 to make sure that we were able to be in a safe
25 environment, because the F was for the

1 environment, and the morale was low. Thank
2 you.

3 [Applause]

4 MS. MICHELLE SINGLETON: Hello. I come to
5 you today in three roles. I come to you as a
6 graduate of P.S. 050. I come to you as a
7 teacher who used to teach here at P.S. 050 ten
8 years ago. And I come to you as a DOE
9 administrator with ten years of experience. My
10 question is-oh, and by the way, I also come here
11 as a parent, because every last one of my
12 children attended public school P.S. 050, and
13 every last one of my children is - -. The last
14 couple of years - - principal who was not bona
15 fide - - in the school. The question, you're
16 looking at the data, and you're indicating that
17 the children at P.S. 050 failed. But I think
18 the question that every last one of you should
19 be asking yourselves is did the children fail at
20 P.S. 050, or did we fail P.S. 050 as support
21 administration?

22 [Applause]

23 MS. MICHELLE SINGLETON: As the
24 superintendent, as the network, our goal is to -
25 - schools and support the schools in every area

1 possible. I personally sent out emails last
2 year for Ms. Ferguson to get help. This year,
3 you made a wise choice. You chose a phenomenal
4 principal. Phenomenal principal.

5 [Applause]

6 MS. MICHELLE SINGLETON: My daughter, last
7 year, used to get in so much trouble. This
8 year, she's a changed child. And that's under
9 the leadership of Ms. Mellonpicker. That's one.
10 The second thing is you all have the choice to
11 keep P.S. 050 open, because several schools that
12 were designated to be closed, I personally know
13 the schools in which they gave that school a
14 second chance, and did not phase them out, and
15 did not close them. So I'm standing here as a
16 parent, as an educator, as a supervisor, and I'm
17 asking you to give Ms. Mellonpicker a chance.
18 I'm asking you to give these teachers and the
19 school who cares about these children a chance.
20 They need help, they need support, and we failed
21 them. And now - -.

22 [Applause drowns out the speaker]

23 MS. MICHELLE SINGLETON: Support their
24 needs, because again, P.S. 050 can become number
25 one in the district, but we need your help, we

1 need - -, and we do not need a school closing.

2 [Loud applause and shouting in agreement]

3 MS. DACIA PATRICK: Hi, I'm Dacia Patrick.

4 - -, but I graduated from P.S. 50 eight years
5 ago. I'm now 18, and your average 18 year old
6 actually does graduate from high school. I'm in
7 my second year of college.

8 [Loud applause and cheering]

9 MS. DACIA PATRICK: I have three younger
10 sisters, one who graduated from P.S. 050 and
11 keeps doing good. She's graduating from junior
12 high now, and - -. So this school wouldn't - -
13 my mom. - - our family and everybody else's
14 family who's - -.

15 [Applause]

16 MR. STEVEN BENNETT: Hello everyone. Ladies
17 and gentlemen, good evening. I'm Steven
18 Bennett. I'm the Bronx Field Director for the
19 Council of Schools Supervisors - - of the Union
20 of Represented Principals, and the Assistant
21 Principal for New York City - -. I'm going to
22 read to you first a prepared statement, and then
23 I'm going to do something that I did not do at
24 the other - - I attended in the last two weeks.
25 This is from the School Supervisor's Union, and

1 - - so bear with me for a moment, and I will
2 read to you. Once again, the DOE has scheduled
3 more than two dozen schools for closure. The
4 latest 26 schools destined for the scrap heap,
5 those - - pattern. Several of our new
6 principals were told they would have time to
7 turn the school around. Several - -.

8 [Loud applause and screaming agreement]

9 MR. STEVEN BENNETT: - -. Some of the
10 faculty - -, some - -. One actually has a
11 principal that exceeds expectations, check that
12 out. And - - will develop. And - - take any
13 schools as if it's playing a game of Russian
14 Roulette. This is - -. If - -. If you - -
15 children and families - -. If - - set back and
16 humiliations from previous school closings.
17 Many - - turn away the city's new schools - -
18 performance of - - families without - -. - -
19 low-performing schools, and they'll likely be
20 closed as well. It's a failing strategy. Not
21 only - - P.S. 050 because I've gone to a lot of
22 these meetings, and - - know me, and - -. But I
23 did not come here to put on a show. I came here
24 to speak what I had to speak. This is me
25 talking. And James Faulkner [phonetic] is

1 standing here, he's a witness. Five
2 principals in six years. How, in anyone's
3 logic, can a school succeed?

4 [Applause]

5 MR. STEVEN BENNETT: I want to convey to
6 this large crowd, I was in a meeting two weeks
7 ago with IT people, 20 people, not P.S. 050. So
8 here's what I need to say. Vernon, Corinne
9 [phonetic], you know me. You've known me very
10 long. I would never do this if there was no
11 reason to do it. Nancy, Katrina, you know me
12 very well. Kimberly, you know me. Give this
13 school a shot. You had situations here where
14 nobody could make this work. I know every
15 principal - - and my community members. And
16 they have a chance to make it work. All you've
17 got to do is tell the people downtown this is
18 wrong. And - -. This is wrong. Do not sell
19 out on this people. Give these people a chance,
20 because they've got a situation now that can
21 work. The other situations could not work.
22 They were not viable. This situation is viable.
23 The woman's doing a dynamite job. The - - are
24 here to tell you that, the parents are here to
25 tell you that. Give them a shot. It's one

1 phone call. You can take all the - - you want
2 and - -. Tell the people downtown that P.S. 050
3 needs a chance to prove they can.

4 [Applause]

5 MS. JENNY SOBLEMAN: - -. So we sort of - -
6 the numbers are a little - -. Speaker number
7 39, David Meade. Speaker number 40 is Ruth
8 Diaz. Speaker number 41 is Steven Goldberg.
9 Speaker 42 is Dana Kirten. And speaker number
10 84 is James Parker.

11 [Applause]

12 MS. JENNY SOBLEMAN: - - the two minutes - -
13 . Thank you so much.

14 FEMALE VOICE : - - CEC Rodriguez, and I was
15 - - 1996 - -. It hasn't been easy the last
16 couple of years. After Ms. Singleton's speech
17 there, we need more time to - - at this time.
18 The fact that we do have a lot of good
19 administrators that - - to us - - students that
20 - - the incidents that have happened in the
21 school. - -, I don't know if I should say this,
22 if it's appropriate, - - she is no nonsense, she
23 keeps us on our feet, we see the behavior
24 pattern in our students have changed
25 drastically, and - - work with her, and my staff

1 - -. Thank you. I said lots of stuff.

2 [Applause]

3 Mr. DAVID MEADE: Good evening. My name is
4 David Meade, and unlike all these great people
5 here, I'm brand new to the school. I arrived in
6 October. I've spent 22 years in middle school
7 in District 10, and the last 15 years I've spent
8 at a school that was closed three times, three
9 different numbers on that school. I know what a
10 failing school is. This is not a failing
11 school.

12 [Applause]

13 MR. DAVID MEADE: When I arrived, with a
14 brand new principal, we had the Children's Aid
15 Society, I - - a music program into this school,
16 and where once there was darkness, I see
17 incredible diamonds in the rough shining now
18 with a fantastic leadership program that Ms.
19 Mellonpicker had the foresight to bring in.
20 I've been practicing voodooism for 30 years, and
21 the philosophy of voodooism is cause and effect,
22 and the idea that the causes that you made in
23 the past are revealed in the effects, they
24 manifest now. And the causes you make now will
25 be manifested in the future. All of your grades

1 and all of your reports for the last six years
2 are from causes that were made in the past. But
3 if we're looking at the effects, what are the
4 causes that we're making now? You have pumped
5 this school up this year with a fantastic
6 principal, with the Children's Aid Society, the
7 teachers are not demoralized, the children are
8 excited to be here, and now you want to dump it
9 out? It doesn't make sense. The causes that
10 we're making now will be revealed, the effects
11 will be revealed. I just want to thank the
12 staff, my new family, and I just again, take
13 this information back to the powers that be.
14 P.S. 050 does not need to go down at this point.
15 We've pumped it up to a certain point. To
16 revert now would make no sense. Thank you.

17 [Applause]

18 MR. STEVEN GOLDBERG: Good evening
19 everybody. My name is Steven Goldberg. I am
20 here as a District 12 representative to the United
21 Federation of Teachers. I want to start by
22 saying that it has taken about five years for
23 this school to get to the point where it is
24 today, and that is due to poor management. I
25 loved when - - into this school with her. A

1 welcoming brightness. I see change, and I
2 already see the change in the staff. You have a
3 majority of the staff from the school here
4 tonight. There's no ulterior motive for your
5 team members to be here - - other than the fact
6 that they - - to stay. They want to be here.
7 They won't lose their jobs. They'll have a job
8 whether it be at the new school or another
9 school. They're here tonight to fight to get
10 this woman a chance. That's what she needs.
11 Statistically, it takes at least three years to
12 turn around. It took the school at least five
13 years to get to where it is now. She needs that
14 chance. Thank you.

15 [Applause]

16 MS. DANA KIRTEN: Good evening panel and
17 children and our P.S. 050 staff family.

18 [Applause]

19 MS. DANA KIRTEN: My name is Dana Kirten.
20 I've been teaching here 13 years. I came on - -
21 . Hello Karen. And I came to speak about us
22 being PC and understanding that process counts.
23 - - has come in, and she's a small lady, but she
24 came in bold. This is my house, and we're going
25 to turn things around.

1 [Applause]

2 MS. DANA KIRTEN: She has come in - -. It's
3 not a free-for-all. It's - -. We greet the
4 children, we do our room rules, we are expected
5 to get upstairs quickly and in an orderly
6 fashion so we can start our academic day. We
7 have staff development twice a week which we are
8 expected to go, and it's not a burden for us to
9 go. We look forward to going and learning. We
10 have our - - program that deals with cooperative
11 learning, and how we can bring our children into
12 a more cohesive learning environment, and by the
13 way, my class will be featured in - - magazine
14 next month for cooperative learning.

15 [Applause]

16 MS. DANA KIRTEN: We have a long history.
17 Did anybody see our children dancing in the
18 hall?

19 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

20 [Applause drowns out speaker]

21 MS. DANA KIRTEN: For goodness sake, our
22 kindergarten repeated part of Martin Luther
23 King's -

24 [Applause drowns out speaker]

25 MS. DANA KIRTEN: We have our RTI

1 intervention program, we have the Schubert
2 [phonetic] Theater Art grant which our school
3 just won - -.

4 [Applause]

5 MS. DANA KIRTEN: We have our - - literacy
6 grant. We have our Arts in School grant. - -
7 has gotten more than thirty thousand dollars in
8 grants in the last three months.

9 [Applause]

10 MS. DANA KIRTEN: - - does not believe in
11 excuses. She says she wants the best for these
12 children. She holds everybody to the same
13 standards. There is no favoritism, there is no
14 back deals that are made with this one and that
15 one. Everybody's on equal footing. We are - -
16 at P.S. 050. We demand - - and do not let our
17 children down. - -. And one last thing. I
18 have to give Ms. Mellonpicker a big woo woo
19 because she is not just working for her, she is
20 here, she is working for us, and she is working
21 for the children of this community.

22 [Loud applause and cheering in agreement]

23 MS. DANA KIRTEN: - - because guess what? -
24 -. But I love my school, and I love my
25 children, and we deserve an opportunity to

1 continue to shine - - and we see it. We are
2 no longer blind. - - are no longer blind!

3 [Loud applause and cheering in agreement]

4 MS. JENNY SOBLEMAN: Speaker number 40, Ruth
5 Diaz? And speaker number 84, James Parker.

6 MS. RUTH DIAZ: Good evening everyone. My
7 name is Ruth Diaz. I am the PTA President of
8 P.S. 050. I have ten children, nine who have
9 graduated out of P.S. 050. I - - when Ms. Reed
10 was principal. Okay? So I have seen principals
11 come and go, teachers come and go, and - - come
12 and go. But not - -. She is wonderful. She
13 really is. I mean, she's very strong, and she's
14 just very put together. Now, children
15 struggling, children are - -. Our teachers are
16 good. Okay? I - -. That's my child. She
17 graduated. She's in high school, she'll
18 graduate now. She struggled - -, but the
19 teacher didn't give up, and I didn't give up. -
20 -. The kids will succeed. It's going to take
21 time; it's not going to happen overnight.
22 That's why we want Ms. Mellonpicker to be given
23 a chance, because she has worked with the staff,
24 she has worked with the parents, and she's
25 worked with the children. And that's what we

1 need. - - ten children - -, and every child
2 is different and every child learns at their own
3 pace, and we just have to work with them. They
4 will struggle, but we have to work with them. -
5 -, she's been here for 49 years. She was my
6 son's teacher, and he's 30. I just want - -
7 chance. Thank you.

8 [Applause]

9 [Loud applause, cheering, and screaming]

10 MR. JAMES PARKER: Members of the Board and
11 the representative of - -. My name is James
12 Parker, and I am the former principal of this -
13 - school. Regardless of what people say now, we
14 have an opportunity to really do something
15 positive. I'm aware of the previous
16 administrations. I'm not going to really - -
17 that situation, but I know that we have a
18 tremendous number of parents and community
19 members who, up to this point, have been totally
20 disillusioned with what has been taking place in
21 this school and - -. I think that now we have
22 an opportunity. - - there is a certificate on
23 at - - on the second floor that indicates that
24 we were the first school in the history of - -
25 to win national recognition from the United

1 States Department of Education, and we were --

2 [Applause drowns out speaker]

3 MR. JAMES PARKER: So I think, parents and
4 community members, when people say that it's - -
5 it's not done. It's not done. If we put enough
6 pressure and support and try to encourage our
7 administration. I'm very, very happy to speak
8 with the new principal today, and she was very
9 concerned about how the community has not really
10 - - because people have been disillusioned, and
11 people have felt left out. But this is an
12 indication now that people will not be left out
13 and people will be heard. And I think we must
14 make sure that our voices are heard. If we have
15 an opportunity, maybe - - the administration - -
16 is enough. But I don't think so, because you
17 need to have continuity, and if you have one
18 administration, one here, another one, another
19 there, where is the continuity?

20 [Applause]

21 MR. JAMES PARKER: Not only that, but what
22 kind of impact are we having on the children
23 when the children need some support and - -
24 something steady and something whole. So I
25 think that just by this showing that we have

1 tonight, and I hope that everyone understands
2 and everyone sees, that we are certainly
3 involved in this issue. I've been trying to
4 stay away, but I'm not going to do that any
5 longer. This is my school, this is our school.

6 [Applause drowns out the speaker]

7 MR. JAMES PARKER: On that note, I'll just
8 say keep the faith, and I say - -, and do what
9 we have to do, because we're not going to take
10 this sitting down. If you want to go to battle,
11 we'll go to battle, but we need to support one
12 another and we need to support the
13 administration, and from what I've been hearing-
14 and I've been hearing nothing but positive
15 things-so I think this administration needs a
16 chance and an opportunity to succeed. Thank
17 you.

18 MS. JENNY SOBLEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Parker.
19 So we have exhausted our speakers list, and
20 we're going to transition into questions and
21 answer. We have a couple of questions. Again,
22 they were along the same lines, so I'm going to
23 take a general question and invite the
24 Chancellor to respond. If other questions come
25 up, or additional comments, I want to reiterate

1 the ways for you to communicate with the
2 Department and the panel prior to their vote.
3 The email is district12proposal. That's D-
4 number one-number two proposal at
5 schools.nyc.gov. And the phone number is 212-
6 374-5159. So again, we'll go into the question
7 and answer, and if any other questions come up,
8 you have the opportunity to submit them by phone
9 or email. So the question that was posed, there
10 were a couple that were more about the
11 leadership, and I think the question about
12 support - - the new leader that's been brought
13 in, and just support for the principal. So I'll
14 invite the Deputy Chancellor to respond.

15 MS. CORIANNE BELLO-ANSELM: Thank you
16 everyone. I clearly heard your message this
17 evening. I clearly heard your support for your
18 principal. I think the quote that I will take
19 with me is, "The light is on, and we are no
20 longer blind," the desire from the community to
21 continue the momentum that they feel is
22 happening, and that message will be delivered.
23 I hear a lot of wonderful programs brought into
24 the school, but here is the reality of the
25 student achievement performance that we must

1 confront. We are thrilled to hear about the
2 programs being brought in, and the remarkable
3 work of the principal in her short tenure here.
4 But our position, basically, stems from the
5 belief that it's not just about leadership, it's
6 not about the programs; it's what happens with
7 our children in the classroom day-to-day. I
8 believe your - -, I understand your passion, I
9 congratulate your successes with many of the
10 people that spoke here tonight. And we will
11 deliver your message, and we wish you all the
12 best. Thank you.

13 MS. JENNY SOBLEMAN: Thank you. As I said,
14 I just want to share the email and phone number
15 again. I know it sounds repetitive, but just in
16 case one more person wants to write it down. If
17 additional questions or comments come up, again,
18 this is all the questions and comments made this
19 evening, and submitted will be included in the
20 analysis of Public Comment, which is published
21 on our website, and provided to the panel for
22 educational policy. So the phone and email stay
23 open until March 10th, and then the panel meeting
24 will be on March 11th, and that meeting will take
25 place at Brooklyn Technical High School, which

1 is located at 29 Forest Green Place in
2 Brooklyn, New York. As I said, the phone and
3 email stay open. The phone is D12. D-the
4 number one-the number two proposals at
5 schools.nyc.gov. And the phone number is 313-
6 374-5159. Thank you again for coming this
7 evening, and this public hearing is officially
8 adjourned.

9 [END RECORDING]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

5
6
7
8 Signature

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rodney Stein", written over a horizontal line.

9 Date February 28, 2013
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