

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
New HS @ Herbert H. Lehman High
School (TA) 4/2/12**

1 [START 290195audiopart1of3.mp3]

2 MS. OLIVIA ELLIS: - - come in. We're about
3 to begin. [Long pause]. [Clapping].

4 TRANSLATION SERVICES: [Foreign language.]

5 [Long pause]

6 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. Please be seated.

7 We're about to begin.

8 [Long pause]

9 [Chanting and cheering]

10 MS. ELLIS: Good evening, my name is Olivia
11 Ellis and I will be acting as moderator for the
12 joint public hearing. This is the Joint Public
13 Hearing of the Department of Education,
14 Community Education Council, School Leadership
15 Team to discuss proposed closure of Herbert H.
16 Lehman High School, District 8, Bronx - -
17 [background noise] and opening a - - location of
18 new school 08X 569 with new high school 08X5 - -
19 , Renaissance High school for musical theatre
20 and technology 8X293, and District 75 - -
21 Program 75X721 in Building 08X405 beginning in
22 2012 to 2013.

23 Tonight's proceedings will be recorded and
24 transcribed. Before we begin the hearing we ask
25 that everyone who wishes to speak during the

1 public comment portion of the evening sign up
2 at the table in the back.

3 Sign up will begin at 6:20. If you have a
4 question that you want to be addressed during
5 the question and answer portion of the agenda,
6 please write them down. Please write the
7 question on the index card provided at the back
8 and submit them to the volunteer by the table.

9 Only people who have signed up to speak will
10 be able to participate in public comment. All
11 panel participants were asked to be here no
12 later than 5:15. Now that has started, the
13 panel participant Bradley Heioshi [phonetic]
14 will be given time to speak at the first
15 opportune moment. We want to be respectful of
16 everyone's time.

17 There may be elected officials who arrive at
18 different times throughout the evening. If they
19 wish to speak, we will do our best to
20 accommodate them at the first opportune moment.

21 Those who are here at the start of the
22 public comment segment will be asked to speak
23 first. Please look at the agenda. The format
24 will include a presentation of the proposal and
25 presentations by - - participants, followed by

1 public comment. Speakers should have already
2 signed up at the sign-in table in the lobby.

3 Public comments can be no more than two
4 minutes each. The time will be strictly
5 followed, and speakers will be informed that
6 their designated time has ended.

7 There will a question and answer period.
8 Members of the audience, if you have a question,
9 each of you has to write your question on a
10 postcard. They are supplied at the table at
11 sign in.

12 While the public comments are taking place,
13 staff members will organize the questions into
14 categories and get them ready for the Q&A - -.
15 Some questions will be asked directly and others
16 will be batched up in headings in order to avoid
17 repetitiveness.

18 Even though all individual questions will
19 not be addressed at the forum tonight, the
20 answers will be on the website prior to the
21 panel meeting.

22 If, at the end of the hearing, you still
23 have questions, we encourage you to direct them
24 by calling us at (212)374-5159 or email us at
25 d08proposals@schools.NYC.gov. And you will find

1 that in here and signs outside.

2 I would now like to introduce the panel.
3 Deputy Chancellor, Shael Sorensky. Representing
4 the CEC District 8, Janet Bosch [phonetic] and
5 Lisa Mateo [phonetic]. We have a representative
6 from Renaissance SLT, the leadership team, Tyra
7 Quadra [phonetic].

8 Representing Lehman High School's School
9 Leadership Team, [applause]Renee Bona [phonetic]
10 and Ellen Heizer [phonetic] [applause].

11 I will now turn the program over to Deputy
12 Chancellor, Shael Sorensky who will present the
13 proposal.

14 MS. SHAEL SORENSKY: Good evening, everyone.
15 My name is Shael Sorensky. I just want to
16 introduce myself for folks that don't know me.
17 I was a math teacher and social studies in
18 Harlem, and then became a principal here in the
19 Bronx at the North High School campus.

20 I was someone who has worked with the Bronx
21 for many years in my career and was also very
22 involved over the past year in helping you to
23 select Rose Lobianco as the principal to come in
24 this year, because of a deep belief [applause],
25 a deep belief in the possibility that this

1 school can once again be great.

2 So, I want to talk to you a little bit about
3 the proposal, because I think that there's some
4 things that folks are confused about. And I
5 want to try and address some of those up front.

6 And then, if there's anything else that
7 comes up during the testimony, I'll also speak
8 again at the end. So, let me just talk briefly
9 about the proposal.

10 This is focused on the proposed closure of
11 Lehman High School. And on February 18th, the
12 proposal to close Lehman High School was issued
13 and it was revised on March 30th.

14 The proposal is to create a new school in
15 place of Lehman High School that would build on
16 the strongest elements and staff of Lehman High
17 School. And we'll also incorporate some new
18 programs and a rigorous culture of teaching and
19 learning.

20 The goal is that students in the school
21 community have access to the highest possible
22 quality school that we can create. And I want
23 to be very clear with everyone tonight, we
24 strongly stand behind your principal, Rose
25 Lobianco, and we expect her to be the proposed

1 leader of the new school [applause] that would
2 replace Lehman if this proposal is approved.

3 Additionally, we've also applied for a
4 federal grant for \$1.8 million under the Federal
5 School Improvement Grant model, which is called
6 the turnaround model. And there's been a lot of
7 discussion around what does the turnaround model
8 mean?

9 And I just want to explain very clearly that
10 when a new school is created, that new school
11 leader creates a committee that's made up of
12 staff and representatives from the Chancellor's
13 office. And they select the staff for the new
14 school.

15 And there is, absolutely, not going to be
16 any quota on how many staff from the existing
17 school can join the faculty of the new school.
18 It will be a process of seriously looking at
19 each person to figure out who is the best and
20 who can really serve the goals of this new
21 school.

22 And I know some of the students who've
23 talked with folks on my staff said well what if
24 my favorite teacher ends up being just above
25 this 50% rule that the federal government has

1 around their turnaround law? And I want to be
2 very clear, we will never make a decision based
3 on a grant or the federal rules about the good
4 teacher staying in this new school.

5 It will be the good, strong teacher that
6 applies to be part of the school that gets to be
7 part of this new school, if this proposal is
8 approved. And so, there's not going to be a
9 cutoff at some point and then it stops, and some
10 good people don't get to stay.

11 That is how it's going to work. And so, I
12 think that's been very confusing in a lot of
13 conversations so far, and I just wanted to
14 clarify that.

15 I also want to note that there's some real
16 strengths in this school community that we
17 believe signal a potential to do something
18 great.

19 This proposal is not a faze-out proposal.
20 This a proposal that will lead to our new school
21 immediately. And every single kid who's
22 currently in Lehman High School will have the
23 option of becoming part of this new school. And
24 every single teacher will have the opportunity
25 to apply to the committee that I was just

1 talking about.

2 I do want to say that when the State looked
3 at - - performance at Lehman, they named it as a
4 persistently low achieving school, because the
5 grad rate is right around 50%. It's been like
6 that over several years.

7 Now, there are reasons for that that I think
8 we'll talk a lot about tonight. And there's
9 actually been some improvement. I want to note
10 that. It's gone up three points in the last
11 couple years, which was a good a trend. But,
12 even when you look back ten years, the grad rate
13 in 2000 was 53%.

14 So, this has fluctuated up and down a little
15 bit over the years, but this has been a
16 challenge in this school for a long time. And
17 it's not okay, I think, to accept a 50% or a 53%
18 graduation rate. It should be possible to do
19 much better, and that is why we want to build a
20 new proposal around this new school that we're
21 discussing tonight.

22 I also want to note some of the challenges
23 beyond the graduation rate. Kids, when they
24 were surveyed last year, only about 62% said
25 that they--no, 66% said they were feeling safe

1 in the hallways.

2 52% of teachers reported that discipline was
3 an issue in the school. The attendance rate is
4 78%, which is below 90% of the schools--the high
5 schools--in the city.

6 So, those are big challenges that we need to
7 work on. And I think that we as a community can
8 create a process over the next months to help
9 change some of those outcomes.

10 Because, there's clearly tremendous love and
11 passion for this building and for making this
12 into a great school, and I think that that is
13 something that should translate into a big
14 effort, whatever the outcome of the vote on this
15 is, to improve the school.

16 I also want to just be really clear about
17 the enrollment and how that will work in this
18 proposal. I want to say it again, every single
19 kid who's in the school now, if they don't
20 graduate this year, will have opportunity to
21 enroll in the new school.

22 And all incoming ninth graders who apply to
23 Lehman, and are matched in the high school
24 admission process, will automatically be
25 enrolled in the new school. That's also true

1 for any kids in District 75 Inclusion
2 Programs. And we don't anticipate that this
3 will change the other schools that share this
4 building.

5 Finally, the--if the proposal's approved,
6 the new school will go through a process to hire
7 the best possible staff. It's called the ETED
8 process. It's something in the teacher's
9 contract.

10 And I talked a little bit about how that
11 would work. What matters the most is that the
12 new-school hires are the best ones to support
13 the plan for the kids here at Lehman. And so,
14 we want to work as part of that committee to get
15 to that goal with everyone.

16 For the rest of the evening, we're going to
17 first hear from members of the EC and the School
18 Leadership Team, and community leaders and - -.
19 And then, there'll be public comment.

20 I think there are a lot of people who came
21 out tonight who want to speak, and I'm really
22 interested in listening carefully to everything
23 that people have to say.

24 There's no final decision that has been
25 made. And it won't be made until the panel

1 votes on April 26th. So, we will be taking
2 careful note of what - - . And I look forward
3 to that conversation.

4 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. Our next presenter
5 will be one of the student representatives from
6 the School Leadership Team, Ubayed Muhith, and
7 I'm sorry if I missed the last name.

8 [Applause]

9 MR. UBAYED MUHITH: Thank you, everybody.
10 As some of you may know, I'm Ubayed Muhith, I'm
11 an eleventh grader here at Lehman High School
12 and I'm here to say that I'm pretty damn proud
13 to be a part of this school, this community and
14 - - [background noise] [applause] - -.

15 - -. Because of - - for the past ten years
16 that Lehman has been - - in its graduation
17 rates. In the past ten years, a lot of time
18 went to the city in that period of time. A lot
19 of schools - - have now been closed.

20 Kids who weren't accepted into these small,
21 specialized classrooms were forced to come into
22 schools like Lehman who is one of the few, last,
23 remaining schools who get to cater to these
24 kids.

25 Today, one out of five kids in Lehman are

1 classified as - - or above. And guess what?
2 We didn't have the money to support all those
3 kids, and yet we are being blamed for that. It
4 is not fair.

5 [Applause]

6 - - it hasn't set a meeting - - but, in the
7 past five years we've received metal detectors
8 and of course the budget cuts. - - though she
9 was--unfortunately, she didn't have a good
10 relationship. The kids did not want to come to
11 school anymore. That's the kind of feeling that
12 we have around the school now.

13 And, obviously, what it first means that
14 only the bad things have been post about the
15 school. Sometimes, you know, kids feel that
16 they're not safe here. I feel safe in this
17 building. I feel safe in all these classrooms,
18 man. [Applause]

19 I feel the need - - all the good things that
20 happens to the schools, - - honest kids, but
21 also the - - building - - [applause]- - of the
22 senior class of last year with some kids about -
23 - for Lehman.[Applause.]

24 - - these programs are - -, instead they
25 focus more on graduation rates and - -. But the

1 thing is, we're not being prepared, once
2 again, we don't know how to handle all these
3 tests.

4 And I'm here to say that I'm prepared for to
5 fight for this all the way through the end. - -
6 [applause]. Thank you.

7 MS. ELLIS: Thank you, - -. [Background
8 noise.] [Applause.]

9 Mr. Muhith: So, before I sit down, - -
10 another - - going to be two more coming up here
11 today. I would like Mr. Carella [phonetic] to
12 come up and share--he worked with you guys. The
13 chair to Mr. Carella, wherever you are.

14 [Applause.]

15 So, this is Louis Carella, he's the SO
16 teacher and a great science teacher.

17 [Applause]

18 MR. LOUIS CARELLA: Thank you - - kind
19 comments. [Applause]. It is truly an honor to
20 address you this evening. We thank you for this
21 sizeable turnout and for your enthusiastic
22 support. I want you know that it is
23 acknowledged and immensely appreciated.

24 Just two or three comments very, very
25 quickly. I would like to say, with a very

1 profound sense of pride and accomplishment.

2 I'm engaged in my 29th year of teaching at
3 Lehman High School. Thank you. [Applause].

4 And I intend to make it another 29 years.

5 [Applause]. It is a noble profession for which
6 I will never lose my affection.

7 At one time, Lehman High School was like the
8 Bronx High School of Science, and - - high
9 school. However, due to the egregiously
10 misguided policies exacted by the DOE during the
11 past several years, Lehman High School has
12 precipitously declined.

13 Although our school is still--fortunately
14 still has an indeterminate number of exemplary
15 students, over the past several years we have
16 received a massive influx of extremely
17 challenging students.

18 We welcome that challenge. [Applause] And
19 despite how arduous that challenge can be on a
20 daily basis--and it often is--we invite all our
21 charges into our classrooms on a daily basis and
22 exercise the most assiduous and valiant efforts
23 to educate them. [Applause.]

24 That's an endeavor in which we tirelessly
25 engage that naturally emerges from an unwavering

1 commitment we made the first day we entered
2 the classroom as educators, and it's one that we
3 will never relinquish. [Applause]

4 Rather than acknowledging this dedication
5 those who have set - -, who should be supporting
6 us, instead exploit every opportunity to score,
7 scapegoat, ridicule, slander, and - - us.

8 [Applause] My latest perusal of the newspapers
9 makes this - - self-evident.

10 In closing these brief remarks I conclude
11 with the following, those who have participated
12 in this unsavory practice should be ashamed of
13 themselves and need to engage in the very long
14 process of self-evaluation and self-improvement.
15 Thank you. [Applause]

16 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

17 MR. MUHITH: The SLT - - . Now we want our
18 SLT Chapter 2 member of the SLT to come and
19 share a couple words. [Applause]

20 FEMALE VOICE 1: So, - - I remember when I
21 entered this building five years ago, my third
22 year of teaching, and I remember - - it was
23 when--for the teachers in the room, you'll
24 remember this--it was when Mr. - - had the - -
25 thing where all the new teachers were in a

1 meeting one period. Anyway, and I think Lou
2 was there. And Lou--I don't think he's ever
3 missed a day of school in those 29 years.

4 And I remember two or three days--or two or
5 three months into the school year--Lou had to be
6 late for a funeral. And, it was interesting
7 because everybody was talking about it in the
8 hallway. Mr. Carella, why would--he's not here.
9 Why?--and so, to hear him speak after 29 years,
10 my goal is that I'm here at least 29 more years.

11 And I'm here when your children's children
12 come back. And that's one of the most profound
13 things of working - - [background noise]
14 [applause] - - your history that belongs to this
15 neighborhood and to the families, and to--I
16 mean, we have - - whose mother works in the
17 office. You know Lynn [phonetic]. If you want
18 to know anything about this building, you go
19 over into the office and she has the history of
20 it.

21 And I think we need to be really careful
22 when we start talking about destroying schools
23 by removing so many of--we are this institution
24 and we are this building.

25 And I also want you to know, these young men

1 who sit here, who are so profound, and who
2 have, in many ways enriched my life, have done
3 so in a building that is literally falling
4 apart.

5 And continually, I've been in meetings where
6 they say oh, this building has been resourced.
7 This building has been resourced. We put
8 everything we can into Lehman High School.

9 Yeah, in December of 2011, - - I'm the - -
10 Chapter Leader, I'm going to start keep a really
11 good track of just the physical issues that are
12 in this building.

13 My students complain to me oh, miss the
14 water is dirty. Oh, miss, it's hot in this
15 room. And I've seen random things. Right?
16 Until I started to figure them out.

17 And I purposely want this to go into the
18 record. Right? They going to close this
19 building and say that you've resourced it and
20 you've done everything to help us that is
21 possible. I think it's only fair that
22 everything is entered into the record.

23 In Room 122, the lights didn't work. They
24 have not been repaired as of the last update.
25 Let's see, the technology in 152 and the smart

1 board, we have the technology, but according
2 to this report, from this teacher, it's not
3 working.

4 And I can tell you in Room 406, I have a
5 computer in the room, but the internet drop
6 doesn't work. So, it's like having a car
7 without gas. That's embarrassing. - -
8 [applause].

9 - - [applause] you can have - - in a
10 computer that as of--let's see, this was entered
11 on December 12th, 2011--were either broken or
12 did not operate properly. Those were completed.
13 I'm not sure how long that repair was completed.
14 I'm not sure how long without repair.

15 We have no electrical outlet in Room 127,
16 and also no phone.

17 FEMALE VOICE 2: Now we do - -.

18 FEMALE VOICE 1: Oh, okay.

19 FEMALE VOICE 2: - - , and I got them last
20 week.

21 FEMALE VOICE 1: Okay. Good. [Applause]
22 So as of last week, we have electricity in Room
23 127. Let's see, Room 404, is unbearably hot.
24 Now, I teach in Room 404. And I continually
25 have to call the main office and say can you

1 please turn off the heat. Because, I'm
2 teaching--

3 MALE VOICE 1: Every day.

4 FEMALE VOICE 1: Every day. I'm teaching in
5 a room where we have to open all the doors and
6 all the windows so that the students don't fall
7 asleep.

8 And it's legitimate. I mean, we are really
9 hot. We've done temperature surveys of this
10 building and I'll go on to tell you the
11 explanation that I've gotten so far about the
12 facilities issues in the building.

13 We have rooms where blinds are missing,
14 which-- - - , right? The blinds are missing.
15 Oh, no big deal. Right? Except for that when
16 the sun comes in and hits the white board,
17 students can't see to take notes. So, those are
18 big issues. And that happens all the time.

19 Oh, this is a classic. 446 the electrical
20 outlets in the far side of the room went dead
21 earlier today. Yeah, this happens to me.

22 I want to differentiate my instruction as a
23 teacher, right? So, I bring in a film. We're
24 watching the book. I want to show the clip so
25 that my--either my English language learners in

1 the classroom or my students needing support
2 services in the classroom can see the story
3 unfold through some wonderful Steven Spielberg
4 film.

5 And the outlet doesn't work. So, that day I
6 guess I'm not showing the film. Let's see. I
7 could go on. I've got about ten--no I've got
8 about three or four more pages here. And I--
9 the--this is only since when I've started
10 compiling since December of 2011.

11 And what I found in these facilities issues
12 is rather interesting. We go to meetings, and I
13 say this is what's going on. And they say oh,
14 the money's there. You know, we can authorize
15 for X project or Y project or Z project, but SCA
16 wants this person to pay for it, and SCA says
17 no. And DOE says this person. And in the
18 middle, are both of us sitting in rooms that are
19 90 degrees plus.

20 FEMALE VOICE 3: Don't forget the roaches
21 and the mice.

22 FEMALE VOICE 1: Yes. [Applause]- - my
23 school, my staff members, or the children in
24 this building victims. I - - survivors because
25 we - -. [Applause]. We - - an entire - - an

1 over-utilized building for close to ten to
2 fifteen years. I - - to my classroom either if
3 it was 90 degrees.

4 And if you look, these things--some of these
5 issues have gone on for years. Thank you.

6 [Applause]

7 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

8 MR. MUHITH: - - [Background noise]

9 [Applause] we have people who - - who like to
10 present now - - we go to SOT, Mr. Torres.

11 MR. ANDREW TORRES: I just have a question
12 for you, sir, at the end. I just want to
13 clarify something. Did you say that students
14 would have the opportunity if you're--under this
15 proposal--to apply to the school? Okay.

16 So, just correct me if I'm wrong. The
17 student's that are currently here now--students
18 that are doing well in the school, or students
19 that are just here in general, they're
20 guaranteed to be back here? Okay. So, I just
21 wanted to clarify that.

22 We--the other thing about it, is that when
23 we're going back to graduation rate, my daughter
24 graduated from here. And now, she's working on
25 her Master's degree and she wants to be an

1 educator. So, great stuff does happen from
2 this school. [Applause]. Okay? - -.

3 The thing that bothers me is this--I'm - - .
4 I'm a parent. And my main concern always is, of
5 course, what my kid is doing and to make sure
6 that he's doing the right thing. That's--as a
7 parent that's our job. Is that right? Okay.

8 So, I take the time to make sure that he's
9 doing what he's supposed to be doing. This is
10 why he's got a 90% average and he competed this
11 weekend in a robotics competition in Long
12 Island. [Applause]

13 The other thing was--is that our robotics
14 team--we were--we - - Long Island and we were at
15 Hofstra University. And the robotics team,
16 Lehman High School, under all the adversity the
17 school is dealing with, and all the - - things
18 that these kids have to deal with, they came
19 within 10 points of going to the finals. Pretty
20 amazing. [Applause].

21 But, you know what I began to see, myself,
22 as I was there? I began to see the kind of
23 support that all the schools have, and the
24 awards that were being handed out for
25 sportsmanship, for safety.

1 And I thought to myself, what are these
2 kids doing that they're not being recognized?
3 They're not getting any support, is what they're
4 not getting. To me you, guys are the
5 professionals. I'm not an educator. That's
6 your job.

7 What bothers me is that you made the
8 statement saying that the school has made a
9 marginal improvement, 3% I believe you said.
10 So, if we're making marginal improvement--and by
11 the way, I also have it here on my phone, which
12 probably none of you will ever get to see it,
13 but while we were at the robotics competition,
14 down at the Javet Center, I, actually, winded up
15 seeing--because I remembered watching him on the
16 news and I - - the man that is - -.

17 So, I went over and he had his assistants
18 with him, and I asked him if he would come over
19 visit - - the robotics. And his assistant at
20 the time said to me, he doesn't have the time.
21 And I said well let me ask you something. If he
22 has the time to meet with everyone else, why not
23 - -?

24 What is so taboo about - - that you don't
25 want to have the time to come meet with us? And

1 I said to him, I will not take no as an
2 answer.

3 [Applause]

4 So, I waited patiently, and he said sure,
5 you know, Lehman. Oh yeah, I know who you guys
6 are. He said you have an outstanding principal.
7 And I said yeah, we all stand - - Ms. Lobianco,
8 [applause] and we do.

9 And I waited around, and he went around to
10 meeting some of the other teams that were there.
11 And I walked back again and I said, hi, from
12 Lehman, remember me?

13 And he said oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. He said,
14 but - - said I'm sorry but he doesn't have the
15 time. I said no, he promised me that he would
16 have the time. And he came over, he went around
17 to an opposite side.

18 He said yeah, I'll meet you on the opposite
19 side. And I went around and met him on that
20 side, to make sure that he didn't lose his way.
21 Okay?

22 Brought him over, met with the Lehman
23 robotics team--got members of the robotics team
24 here--and he said to me, and he said to the
25 manager of the robotic team, he said you have my

1 full support.

2 You have my full support. Lehman High
3 School has my full support. So, my question to
4 you is this, if we have his full support, why
5 are we here then? That's my question.

6 [Applause]

7 The other most important thing that I want
8 you guys to be - - [background noise]
9 [applause]--the other important thing that I
10 want you to understand is, is that in every
11 profession--we all know this--in every
12 profession, you're going to have bad apples.
13 Whether it be students, whether it be teachers,
14 whether it be members of the DOE. Whether it be
15 whatever it may be. And it's not knocking you
16 guys, because I understand that this is a
17 difficult job.

18 But, you also have to understand this, we
19 get up every single day as parents and we tell
20 our kids--every single day--we sell them on the
21 American dream, the American dream to believe in
22 yourself, to educate yourself, to have respect
23 for yourself. And to believe that you can and
24 will accomplish your goals if you go out and do
25 what you're supposed to do.

1 Now, I ask you is that what we're doing?
2 Is that what we're selling them? Or have we
3 allowed--have we allowed those bad apples that
4 have poisoned the school to now turn around and
5 take all the good students--who are here, who
6 care about this school. Are they falling
7 through the cracks? How do we answer that for
8 our kids?

9 [Applause] There has to be--there has to
10 be--there has to be some sense of
11 accountability. You know what? My son is in
12 his room, and I had--when I see his - - and I
13 thank every single, individual Lehman teacher,
14 and administrators, and specialty programs that
15 are here. My son has a 94.6 average.

16 [Applause] - - . Okay? Now, let me say
17 this to you. And that is, is that when he's in
18 his room and he's doing his--whatever he's doing
19 inside of the room, his homework--I walk in and
20 I ask him, everything okay? You doing the work?
21 You're going to study for a test that you have?
22 Is there anything that you have? Is there
23 anything that you're missing? Okay?

24 And I make sure that I take the time to find
25 out what's going on with my kid's education.

1 Okay? And I personally find that it's a slap
2 in the face for you guys to come here and think
3 that in my world, in his world, and their world,
4 - -. [Applause].

5 FEMALE VOICE 4: Amen. [Applause].

6 MR. TORRES: Okay?. [Applause] - - do is
7 this, and I know that you guys, on the--in the
8 DOE--I know that guys have people, even in the
9 DOE that you work with, that don't function the
10 way you want them to function.

11 What happens to those people? Do - - of
12 them? No, we don't. You know what we do? Is
13 we look in our offices and we say listen, you're
14 not pulling your weight. Is there something
15 going on at home? Is there issues that you
16 have? What can we do?

17 You're a member of our team. Well, you know
18 what? That's what we need here? Because, you
19 can't continue--if you're thinking to yourself--
20 let's be realistic--if you're thinking to
21 yourself that letting go of 50% of this staff,
22 and bringing back the same students--and those
23 students who are even failing-- if you're
24 bringing back 50% of that staff--and you're
25 letting go 50% of that staff, but you'd have the

1 same kids--do you expect the results to be
2 differently? How?

3 [Applause] - -. - - is that here's what we
4 need to do. Here's what we need to do. Quite
5 frankly, what we need to do is figure out why
6 John, Mary, Steve, Julio, whatever it may be, is
7 having an issue, and let's figure out how we can
8 help them.

9 These teachers, these teachers work hard.
10 And I'm not saying to you that there aren't bad
11 teachers. I'm not going to say that there
12 isn't. Let's--we have to be realistic, there
13 are bad teachers, there are great teachers,
14 there are mediocre teachers. Same thing we can
15 say about members of the DOE. [Applause].
16 Okay?

17 But, the point that I'm trying to make is,
18 is that turning around this school, and letting
19 go of 50% of the staff, that have some sense of
20 unity with these kids in the school, and some
21 sense of knowing how this school runs, let's
22 tweak it. Right?

23 You don't take it apart when the engine is
24 going bad and you just started it. You tweak
25 it. You work with it. So, this is what we need

1 to do. We need to tweak our engine. We need
2 to get it going in the right direction. That's
3 what we need to do. Okay?

4 Support is what we need. As members of the
5 Parent's Association, we need more support. We
6 need you guys to stay behind your kids all the
7 time, whether they like it or not, because
8 sometimes they don't go back. And we have to
9 look forward.

10 Again, my son is a 94 average student, and I
11 have stand behind him also. Okay? That's the
12 way you do it. [Applause] So that's how - -
13 our ground. That's how we look at it and say
14 these are the issues that we have to deal with.
15 Let's try to work with these issues.

16 Let's not just take it, and start it, and
17 start all over again. When you're writing
18 something, as a writer, and you're sitting at a
19 typewriter, and you're writing something. And
20 you're writing a story, if it doesn't go your
21 way, you can start it and throw it away. It's
22 paper. It's never going to be used again.

23 This is the paper. These are people. They-
24 -we need to figure out--we really do--we need to
25 figure out how we're going to help them.

1 If you guys truly care about education, if
2 you truly went to school to become educators, if
3 you truly understand what education is, then you
4 will value what we're trying to do, and what Ms.
5 Lobianco is trying to do.

6 If you put a leader in place, like Ms.
7 Lobianco, then you have to give her the
8 opportunity to do what she needs to do.
9 [Applause] - -. And that's all we're asking
10 for. Okay?

11 You know what? We're a school in the Bronx.
12 We're not degenerates. Okay? We not--any time
13 you hear people talk about the Bronx - -, you
14 know. Man, we just can't believe you guys still
15 live in the Bronx. So, a lot of great things
16 come here from the Bronx. - - [applause]. Let
17 me tell you something. Hold on a second. Let
18 me tell you something.

19 I went to this robotics meet, and I looked
20 at all the other schools who have support from
21 J.C. Penney's, from NASA, from Motorola. These
22 guys get no financial support and they came in
23 second. Second. [Applause] Okay?

24 So, you know what? [Applause] And again, -
25 - all of the - - things that go on here.

1 There's a lot of great things that go on in
2 this school. And you've got to really need to
3 consider that.

4 You can't just turnaround--your- You know
5 what you're doing is you're driving 100 miles an
6 hour and you're going to put--jam on the brake.
7 And you know what? There are bound to be some
8 significant consequences.

9 And you know what? What you're trying to do
10 is you're - - that let go of that staff, hire
11 new people--how do we not know that the people
12 that you're bringing in are competent?

13 What do you think, that these people are
14 going to come in one day and wave a magic wand
15 and make sure that the students that are not
16 doing their work all of a sudden start to do
17 their work?

18 [Applause] - - ? Let me tell you - -. That
19 - - is wrong. When you look at it, you know it
20 starts at home. Because--you know - - it starts
21 at home? If you didn't know that it started at
22 home, you wouldn't be in that position that
23 you're at today, because, your parents stood
24 behind you a 100%. Your parents, your parents,
25 your parents, your parents, your parents, your

1 parents, your parents, your parents, your
2 parents, your parents. [Applause] all stood
3 behind - -. - - time.

4 We - -. We need to figure out the parents,
5 the kids. Let's figure out a system to work
6 with them. Let's figure out a system how we can
7 get them to work. That's how we fix it. Okay?

8 We don't fix it by temporarily putting our
9 pedal--our brake down and then all of a sudden
10 hope that everything's going to be fine. You
11 guys have to support. We're asking you to give
12 us support. Okay? [Applause]. This didn't get
13 this way - - to this.

14 I want to close with this. This didn't get
15 this way all by themselves. If you guys are the
16 members of the DOE and you saw this happening,
17 the amount of years ago that you said it started
18 to happen, why did you wait so long to do it?

19 [Applause].

20 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

21 [Chanting]

22 [Applause]

23 [Chanting]

24 MR. MUHITH: - - people to get an
25 opportunity to come down. - - want you before

1 have to - -. And that's - -. That's Mr.
2 Rodrigo - -.

3 [Applause]

4 MALE VOICE 2: Ladies softball won 18
5 [applause] - -. Boys varsity won second - -.
6 [Applause] - -

7 Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'd
8 like you to know I'm glad to say that I spent
9 most of my professional career here at Herbert
10 E. Lehman High School. And I've seen this
11 school grow from 1700 to well over 3000
12 students.

13 I work with a professional staff of
14 dedicated teachers. Where are you teachers?

15 [Applause]

16 We have been told that many of us may not be
17 here next year. We have been told that most of
18 us would be here next year. We have been told -
19 - and we don't know who to believe.

20 For those of us who have families, who have
21 children, who have - -, realized as Mr. Torres
22 came up here so elegantly to represent the
23 parents today, we, as so many of you parents do,
24 see your sons and daughters every single day,
25 every single day, every single day.

1 And [applause] I think it--as - - to the
2 attendees, what you are hoping to find in that
3 high school when you walk in to a high school
4 building, is that school spirit. And you have
5 that school spirit.

6 But I have to say that over the last ten
7 years a game plan has been enacted that was
8 decided a long time ago by people who don't know
9 what's happening in Lehman High School on a
10 daily basis.

11 And maybe, don't even know how - - children.
12 Because, the further you are away from our
13 children, the less of an impact that you have on
14 them. Yet you're talking about the greatest
15 impact, the identity of high school, and what a
16 high school means.

17 This year we're going to have one of our
18 first graduating classes come back for a reunion
19 after 36 years. [Applause] - - . - - .
20 Schools that don't have school spirit do not
21 have this kind of following. There are over
22 11,000 classmates on classmates.com that are
23 constantly emailing us. Many of the staff
24 members here attended Herbert H. Lehman High
25 School. And they came back to Herbert H. Lehman

1 High School.

2 But, I have to tell you the great - - that -
3 - has been practiced since the 1980s. Very
4 true. Okay? It's a process where you simply
5 label the school and tell us you're not doing
6 well, therefore, we have to close you down.

7 So, I'm not speaking to the members of the
8 panel. I'm not speaking to the Board of
9 Education. I'm speaking to all the teachers.
10 I'm speaking to all the children. I'm speaking
11 to all the parents, to let you know when you sit
12 back and you let them do this without a fight,
13 without speaking, then how are you going to be
14 heard. Okay?

15 Then you want - - because we've all - -.
16 [Applause] You must understand that this process
17 is mainly for the school governments. And a
18 school that governments itself is the best
19 school that you could possibly have. So, make
20 sure that after today you let every city
21 councilman, state assemblyman, and senator, your
22 congressman, know exactly how you feel, because,
23 we're going to get into this together, as a
24 family. Thank you very much. [Applause] - -.

25 - -

1 MS. ELLIS: Okay. I'd also like to
2 recognize Robert Powell[phonetic] from CCHS, and
3 also - - president. Would you like to speak or
4 say - -. Okay. Thank you.

5 We have concluded our formal presentations.
6 And, at this point in time, I'd like to
7 introduce a few elected officials.

8 Assembly Member, Michael Benedetto.

9 MR. MICHAEL BENEDETTO, ASSEMBLY MEMBER:
10 Good evening, everyone. I'm State Assemblyman,
11 Michael Benedetto, and I would say to the panel
12 thanks. Thank you very much for giving me the
13 opportunity to speak.

14 Chancellor Sorensky, I'm probably addressing
15 you more than anybody else, because I feel, for
16 the most part, the panel here understands the
17 position of the people in this audience and is
18 sympathetic to their needs.

19 And I fully believe what you say when you
20 say no decision has been formally made. I know
21 there's a lot of skeptics out there. I know
22 there's a lot of people that say that this is
23 preordained, that it's already written in stone,
24 and it's not going to be reversed. But, I
25 honestly believe that you are still open to hear

1 the arguments put forth.

2 Just this afternoon I was speaking to your
3 boards, okay, Chancellor Wolcott [phonetic],
4 giving him my reasons why Lehman should stay
5 open.

6 [Applause]

7 - - is well known and well documented that
8 I've been here before testifying and speaking my
9 piece. Last time I was here, I mentioned that
10 we will be having hearings run by the State
11 Assembly Education Committee, of which I am part
12 of.

13 And I am proud to say that we are keeping
14 our promise on that. That a week from
15 Wednesday, on April 11th, at 250 Broadway, at
16 the Hearing Room of the State Assembly, State
17 Assemblywoman, Catherine Nolan, myself, and
18 members of our committee will be there to
19 question State Commissioner, - -. Chancellor
20 Wolcott will be there, and numerous other people
21 will be called to testify.

22 Because, it is our position, in the State
23 Assembly, that we question whether this whole
24 turnaround model that you're using to close and
25 turnaround Lehman, and the 32 other schools

1 citywide, if it is indeed legal at all.

2 [Applause] We believe - -.

3 We believe that it is not. We have serious
4 questions about the legality, and hopefully you
5 come to the forefront next week with the
6 hearings.

7 The people are--you hear their arguments,
8 and know all their arguments are well founded.
9 And I've already said that Lehman High School
10 was always a good, functioning community high
11 school. It was doing a good job in our
12 neighborhood.

13 What changes have been made at Lehman? And
14 I'm really asking you to look on the records and
15 see where the changes have come? The changes
16 have come from the DOE. Okay?

17 [Applause] If there is a problem with
18 Lehman--if there is a problem with Lehman, then
19 it's a problem that has come from without and
20 not from within. And I - - [applause] - -. I
21 believe that there are changes to be made. It's
22 not here at Lehman.

23 You yourself said, tonight, the Chancellor
24 said it to me this afternoon, with great respect
25 for the principal that he has here now.

1 If you have that respect--and in the past,
2 the faculty here and this school has worked,
3 then give them a chance to work - - .
4 [Applause]. Thank you very much.

5 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. I also would like to
6 recognize a representative from Council member,
7 James Vacca's [phonetic] office, Vido
8 Signori[phonetic].

9 MR. VIDO SIGNORI: Good evening, everybody.
10 My name is Vido Signori, representative from
11 Councilman James Vacca. And those who attend
12 Lehman High School, who are - - here know that
13 his office is right down the block.

14 So, he knows everything that goes on in this
15 school, and he's still proud to say that Lehman
16 High School is a part of his district.

17 For those who know, Councilman Vacca, before
18 he became councilman, he was district manager
19 for 26 years, in his community. And he saw
20 Lehman High School thrive year in and year out,
21 and despite the way people are thinking that
22 Lehman is going down the drain, it is not.
23 Lehman is still one of the top schools around,
24 and the education shows right here.

25 We've seen a lot of great things happen. In

1 fact, the other day the councilman and I were
2 here to present two civic citations to two - -
3 students of this school, that competed
4 internationally in the Netherlands. And when
5 the councilman found out about that he could not
6 be any more proud.

7 I'd like to - - from the councilman,
8 unfortunately he could not be here this evening,
9 but he does want you to know that he has your
10 full support here at the meeting - -.

11 I want to reiterate our support for long-
12 term solutions that are in the interest of our
13 community. We keep in--we need to keep in mind
14 that given its history Lehman is not a
15 chronically failed school.

16 Lehman building is 29 years of success - -
17 leader's leadership. We cannot hold Lehman
18 accountable for the overcrowded conditions that
19 [applause] - -.

20 The DOE should encourage an environment
21 where Ms. Lobianco is given an opportunity to
22 fully establish herself in her capacity as a
23 leader. I hear only good things about her
24 turnaround policies from parents, teachers,
25 administrators, and students.

1 I hear even greater things about the
2 progress our students are making. Suspensions
3 are down by a resounding 60%, while student
4 population has been reduced from 4,200 two years
5 ago to 3,100 for this coming September.

6 DOE needs to give these changes a chance.
7 Doe's proposals have been causing a distraction
8 to the positive changes already happening at
9 Lehman.

10 Sustainable solutions come from great
11 leadership and excellent morale among the
12 teacher and student bodies. What a disgrace it
13 would be if these things were to fade due to
14 invasive, rash decisions.

15 Let's give our kids another year. More time
16 for the strides they're already making on their
17 own to - - to the DOE. Thank you, on behalf of
18 Councilman Vacca.

19 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. We will - -
20 [applause]from the - - President - - Diaz's - -
21 office. Erica Perez [phonetic].

22 MS. ERICA PEREZ: Good evening, everyone.
23 My name is Erica Perez, [background noise] - -
24 President's Committee in Education Liaison. I -
25 - - -.

1 FEMALE VOICE 5: Can't hear you.

2 [Applause]

3 [Background conversation]

4 MS. PEREZ: Okay. Given the magnitude of
5 the expense that comes with this process. The
6 Department of Education should better you remind
7 the funding to bring more resources into the
8 school to produce better student
9 output[background conversation] and increase
10 opportunities for more students.

11 The turnaround process should not be used to
12 - - all the teachers from the schools. We have
13 - - [background conversation] is a necessary
14 remedy for these schools. The DOE has not made
15 a sufficient case that this process is needed.

16 The process only serves to further de-
17 stabilize the school, community, and no one
18 benefits from this process. Instead, Department
19 of Education must use their power and resources
20 to bring the necessary change to help these
21 schools succeed.

22 [Applause].

23 MS. ELLIS: - -. The representative from -
24 - 10, Kenneth Kearns.

25 MR. KENNETH KEARNS: Okay. Can you hear me?

1 I'm going to read a letter that - - 10 sent on
2 March 8th too, by Chancellor Wolcott. My name
3 is Kenneth Kearns. I'm the District Manager for
4 - - 10 and I'm just going to read this very
5 brief letter.

6 - - Community College--I'm sorry. - - High
7 School - - , had started a community in the
8 northeast Bronx over 30 years - - diligence.
9 Its valued technology, rewarding career in
10 commerce - - the arts. Although the school
11 would not be without its challenges, it changes
12 the leadership [background conversation] - -
13 greater concern is graduation rates.

14 All the - - administration and create a - -
15 in a new building. We have celebrated their
16 accomplishments when they've won national - - of
17 - - public service announcement.

18 [Background conversation]

19 We've seen the school as - - assistance in
20 this time of need. It is a neighborhood
21 institution that is supported by its natural
22 constituency, its graduates. Many of whom own
23 residents and are on our community board. So,
24 it's with great concern that this educational
25 future - - .

1 FEMALE VOICE: - -

2 MR. KENNETH KEARNS: - - I will go - -
3 slowly. One, the present principal - - rather
4 than keeping - - efforts, and turning this thing
5 around.

6 Two, that students have now had an academic
7 year disrupted by - - decision to prematurely
8 close the school.

9 Three, that the students and faculty do not
10 have to share facilities such as gyms and
11 libraries with yet another school.

12 [Background conversation].

13 Four, our students should continue to have
14 access to quality intervention programs. In
15 short, Chancellor Wolcott, we of the Board, and
16 many of the larger community are not entirely
17 convinced that the shutdown is necessary.
18 Instead, we are - - in closure of - - action,
19 giving time for the present administration of
20 the school to do necessary reforms that will
21 result in the school - - [background
22 conversation] needs of the students in the
23 community. We'll understand that your attention
24 - -. And that was signed by Mark - - and John
25 Randolph [phonetic] and had the - - of the

1 entire - - board - -. And we're too, just
2 down the block from you. And we see - -. And
3 we know that it's a valuable school. We cherish
4 it in the community and we want to see these - -
5 . We want to see the school succeed. So, thank
6 you.

7 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. [Applause] - - and
8 in short order its interpretation with
9 Translation Services.

10 [Foreign Language]

11 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. We will now begin
12 the public comment portion of this evening.
13 [Applause] When you came in - - you were given a
14 number. You will be asked to come down this
15 aisle with these two gentlemen to speak at the
16 mic. You'll come to the mic and state your
17 name.

18 You will be reminded that public comment
19 must be limited to two minutes. Time will be
20 kept. And we will signal you when you have 30
21 seconds remaining, and when your time is up.
22 Numbers one, two, three, four and five.

23 MR. KEVIN KEARNS: Hello. My name is Kevin
24 Kearns, I'm a teacher at Lehman. [Applause].
25 Thank you. I was going to make a speech, but

1 first we felt like the - - here. Let's just
2 kind of lay it on the line. How many people
3 here actually want this to happen? If you want
4 the flow to happen, stand up. Anybody? Okay.
5 So, just to point out, this is to hear community
6 input, and clearly the community is - - against
7 this proposal.

8 Now, [applause] - - proposal. How can you
9 say that you gave us full support when according
10 to your own - - we're at 116% capacity?

11 How can you say you gave us full support
12 when you put a new principal in, that put us in
13 decline, then when putting in a better
14 principal, after four months you decide you're
15 going to close us?

16 [Applause]

17 How can you say you give us full support
18 when most of the staff have never even met our
19 network - - before this year.

20 How can you say you give us full support
21 when a hundred people attend a joint public
22 hearing last year to say no to relocation, and
23 then you went ahead and approved it any ways.

24 [Applause]

25 There are over 250 dedicated employees on

1 staff, who wake up every single morning, and
2 try their best to teach every student that comes
3 into their classrooms. Even after being labeled
4 a failing school and lowering moral, for two
5 years the staff's remained here and remained
6 dedicated.

7 If you go through a turnaround it will be -
8 - school to fail, never to be saved. Many of
9 our best teachers have already given up and fled
10 to other schools due the enormous pressure and
11 blame the DOE had placed on us. Turnaround will
12 divide and destroy this staff.

13 While I have another minute, I just want to
14 take some points I think--okay. I just want to
15 say thank you to every single person who came
16 here tonight, and to all the amazing teachers
17 and the staff. [Applause] - - make the staff -
18 - that never would have survived. I don't know
19 if I could say that about a lot of stuff--a lot
20 schools. And just thank you all for coming and
21 for standing up against these injustices.

22 [Applause]

23 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

24 Mr. JESSIE APONTE: So, I go to school to
25 learn. All right? That's what we're supposed

1 to go to school for. Some people - - I really
2 don't benefit from school. Yeah, I know. It's
3 weird. Who sets the grading policies and the
4 curriculums? Why do we go to school?

5 Do we go to school to learn through
6 creativity so that way we can become better
7 people? Or, do we go to school so that we can
8 take the tests so that other people who actually
9 aren't in our school can tell us how smart we
10 are?

11 Now, if we want to talk about the - -. So,
12 a guy came here from the last year, and he was
13 saying that whenever you talk about putting new
14 schools inside the areas, you're talking about
15 construction.

16 You're talking about building new buildings,
17 physically, into the area, so that there's more
18 space and there's more resources. So that, when
19 you put more students into that area, you
20 actually have no resources to give to all the
21 students.

22 Now, - - what it proposes is that you put
23 students inside our school, where students
24 already - -, and then you have the turnaround
25 policy, which is going to take more teachers out

1 of our school, so now you have even less
2 teachers, even more students, less resources,
3 and then, you expect the school to do better?

4 [Applause]

5 I just want to let this go on to - - Xsavier
6 and he's going to talk about - - and how much
7 bullshit there is. Thank you.

8 MR. XSAVIER DANIELS: I'm here to touch upon
9 something that's called constructivism. Every
10 day that I walk through the doors of Lehman High
11 School I have been compelled to ponder this
12 philosophical question. Are teachers teaching
13 for testing, or are teachers teaching for
14 knowledge?

15 Although the term's school - - to be
16 synonymous with the term learning, but it's
17 quite apparent that the two have grown utterly
18 distant.

19 Students no longer come to school to partake
20 in critical thought. Students no longer come to
21 school to exercise freedom of expression.
22 School is no longer the intellectual sanctuary
23 that it once was.

24 Now, students come to school to prepare for
25 tests, tests, and more tests. Teachers can no

1 longer enjoy the privilege of encouraging
2 creativity or promoting the idea of questioning
3 dogmas of our conformist society.

4 No. They come to prepare students for state
5 exams. They can't choose what books they feel
6 are important to read, or even spend that extra
7 amount of time on a subject for the purpose of
8 solidifying understanding.

9 Teachers no longer have the flexibility to
10 do what they spent years in college for, and
11 that is teach. Why? Because, they are forced
12 to abide by a curriculum that corresponds with
13 the state examination. This simple and linear
14 post-education form is sinking underneath the
15 weight of its own cause.

16 Educational improvement is not accomplished
17 through administrative or legislative mandates.
18 Education improvement is only accomplished
19 through attention to the complicated,
20 idiosyncratic, and also paradoxical and
21 difficult nature of--to measure nature of
22 learning.

23 How could we expect to produce revolutionary
24 minds that shake the structure of our
25 foundation, such as Martin Luther King or - -,

1 if the very foundation that is responsible for
2 shaping the minds of our youth is utterly
3 corrupted.

4 [Applause] - - the future leaders of the
5 world. Now, that may sound superficial, or
6 maybe even theatrical, but it's the plain truth.

7 It is with you that the responsibility of
8 dismantling this system of intellectual
9 oppression lies. It is up to you to rise up and
10 say we are not your experimental test subjects.

11 [Applause] We are the essence, we are the
12 essence of biological and psychological
13 complexity. We are not downed by intimidative
14 [phonetic] nature. We are free to feel and
15 think as we please.

16 We are fast and ever evolving people with
17 innovative and revolutionary minds. We are
18 humans and I think it's time you start treating
19 us as such.

20 [Applause]

21 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

22 MALE VOICE 3: Hello, Lehman. Since I first
23 came to Lehman, back in '09, I had high
24 expectations of this school, and there's been
25 ups and downs. And, obviously, I feel proud to

1 be a Lehman. So I, obviously, think when Ms.
2 Lobianco first came in I was actually excited
3 and I want her to have this chance to--give me a
4 moment--to better our school and have--this - -
5 so please don't drive me away. I'm pretty
6 nervous right now.

7 - - Lehman and give us the chance. Give
8 us--to improve. For the first time, less than
9 in two years, I finally passed all my classes
10 and I'm proud to - - [applause].

11 So, I have 30 seconds, - - . [Laughter]
12 Right there--Robert Powell, that's my step-dad--
13 right there. He's been part of the PTA for a
14 long time, and I'm really proud to be here and,
15 obviously--really that's it. [Applause] - -
16 thank you, all.

17 [Chanting]

18 MR. STEVE KANE: For anybody that doesn't
19 know me, I'm Mr. Kane, Mr. Steve Kane, an art
20 teacher at Lehman High School. [Applause]

21 And I want to say I've spent my entire
22 teaching career, 16-year teaching career at
23 Lehman High School. And I'm still just as proud
24 to be a teacher at Lehman High School.

25 And I see or kids working hard, and I see

1 our kids trying, and I see our kids gaining a
2 self-respect and a self-esteem. I have the kids
3 as an art teacher. They come back and they
4 bring their other friends to our room to show
5 the kind of work that they're doing, out of
6 pride.

7 I have to deal with constantly moving - -
8 these kids, - - with their failures, telling
9 them that their school is failing, it's closing.
10 It's very hard to do that, but our kids still do
11 it. And our teachers still push them to do it.

12 And we [applause] - -to do it. And we help
13 them, and we're there for them. And we're
14 always there for them. And we push them, and we
15 don't give up on them. And we want you to
16 support them.

17 And to close down their school is not the
18 answer. And telling them you're going to change
19 it is not the answer. It's supporting them and
20 fighting for them. And that's what we - -. We
21 need support, not be closed.

22 We need the kids to work hard, and to know
23 that when they work hard, they will reach
24 success. That's what - -, all students want
25 success. And my students do, and students are -

1 - for that opportunity.

2 And when you tell them you're constantly
3 going to close, close, close it doesn't give
4 them a chance to find that success. And that's
5 what we want. We want our success. [Applause]
6 - - wrong. It is wrong for me, and [applause] -
7 -.

8 MS. ELLIS: Thank you.

9 MALE VOICE 4: Good evening. My name is
10 Andrew - -. I'm a - - member and 1984 graduate
11 of Lehman High School.

12 - - professional - -for over 20 years. I
13 got my start - - , which led to a lifetime of
14 artistic endeavors. I walked in here tonight,
15 not being in this school for over 20 years.
16 There is a spirit here back with Ms. Lobianco,
17 just as there was when Mr. B [phonetic] was
18 here. I was here when - -.

19 It would be a terrible mistake to do a
20 turnaround model right now. You are not giving
21 this lady and this school a chance.

22 There are a lot of teachers from this school
23 that are invested in this community. - - each
24 child, they respond to these teachers.

25 Some have no parents. Some have one parent,

1 some don't get breakfast. You cannot change
2 this model yet. I cannot implore you enough.
3 My whole life - -. Please do not change the
4 model. Ms. Lobianco deserves a chance.

5 [Applause] - -. Thank you for your time.

6 MS. ELLIS: Thank you. Numbers six, seven,
7 eight, nine and ten.

8 [END 290195audiopart1of3.mp3]

9

10 [START 290195audiopart2of3.mp3]

11 MS. ELLY HAROLD: My name is Elly Harold and
12 I'm a - - .

13 [Applause]

14 MS. HAROLD: - - , um, I'd like to know when
15 somebody's going to start recognizing all of the
16 good that takes place in this institution,
17 instead of pointing out all the bad? When is
18 someone going to say thank you to the
19 administrators and the teachers for a job well
20 done? And when are the students of Lehman going
21 to be recognized for the achievements they have
22 made? When is the Mayor and the DOE going to
23 get that it doesn't matter how many schools you
24 open or close? If the student population and
25 the demographics remain the same, the name of

1 the school doesn't matter. If students who
2 are failing could make a commitment to
3 themselves to get a good education, it won't
4 matter who is teaching them. If the majority of
5 the parents got - - involved and - -
6 administration and staff - - the wrong kids, it
7 won't matter what the name of the school is.
8 The results will be the same. Parents need to
9 take some responsibility to their kids'
10 education and the Department of Education needs
11 to take some strides in helping schools instead
12 of cutting them to shreds.

13 [Applause]

14 MS. HAROLD: Student - - are totally
15 useless, and in no way, shape or form do they
16 get an accurate - - of what goes on within the
17 walls of this building. The goal here should be
18 to offer every single student the best education
19 the city can offer every school, even those who
20 are in the Honors Programs and Regents and AP
21 classes. Some people in - - happening here, and
22 no one wants to acknowledge it. Mrs. Rose
23 Lobianco was appointed the Principal, and now
24 the chance of succeeding is being taken away
25 from her. The teachers in the classroom, and

1 especially the students, know what their
2 school means. Somebody should ask them what
3 they mean.

4 [Applause]

5 ELLY HAROLD: - - someone who know their
6 dental and birth records, who the - - and the
7 families of this community are all in support of
8 Lehman High School being open. They are the
9 artists and the ears of this community, and they
10 should listen to it. Lehman High School needs
11 to stay open, thank you.

12 [Applause]

13 MALE VOICE: Uh, - - , Lehman High School is
14 a great school, but I was in middle school when
15 I was applying for high schools. I chose Lehman
16 as my number one school because my brother - -
17 here and Lehman was an amazing school. Like,
18 the, all the - - are amazing, like, I knew that
19 - - . I knew I would learn a lot of stuff, and
20 I did. Like, I have amazing teachers right now.
21 But, like, they support me, like, as a student
22 and as, like, a friend, because my teachers,
23 they, like, love me.

24 [Applause]

25 MALE VOICE: They are good. They are

1 amazing. When it comes to our like, - -
2 school stuff they are always there for me. And
3 when it comes to like helping with things that
4 aren't even related to school they are still
5 there for me. They are amazing people. And you
6 want to like fire most of the people or remove
7 them somewhere else, they great people. And
8 like my sister, she came to Lehman; she
9 graduated three years ago, and she wants to
10 become a teacher now, because she got inspired
11 by Lehman. All the teachers here, they were
12 like - - . So that inspired her to become a
13 teacher, because of this school.

14 [Applause]

15 MALE VOICE: You can't close us, down a
16 school with - - great programs that other
17 schools don't have. Like my friends, the go to
18 Bronx Science, and I ask them what they do in
19 their school, and, like, basically, they don't
20 do anything like - - programs. They don't do
21 any sports - - it's not far. Like they - -
22 other schools don't have. And my friends are
23 jealous that they don't have that. And you want
24 to close that down.

25 [Applause]

1 FACILITATOR: Thank you

2 MS. CATALINA FORTINO: Good evening
3 everyone. Catalina Fortino, I'm the - -
4 President of Education for the United Federation
5 of Teachers.

6 [Applause]

7 MS. FORTINO: In listening to the - - of the
8 students, the teachers and the parents in this
9 great - - community, I know that you would agree
10 with me that the city's insistence on closing
11 schools instead of fixing them, is a misguided
12 and chaotic policy of mismanagement that
13 disrupts the lives of everyone in our school
14 communities, including the students, teachers
15 and the parents

16 [Applause]

17 MS. FORTINO: Last week there was an
18 international education summit. There were the
19 20 top districts around the world, high
20 achieving schools, and they were appalled to
21 hear that New York City, the way that we reform
22 our schools is by shutting them down. Because
23 what they do in these top performing schools is
24 that instead of shutting them down, is that they
25 circle them where they offer support services,

1 the resources and - - we're saying that the
2 answer is in the room. And I know that after
3 listening to everyone this evening, I know the
4 answer to Lehman's problems are in the room.

5 [Applause]

6 So we really meet a future point than the
7 future of public education in New York City.
8 And you know that choice is very important. Are
9 we going to give up on schools that are trying
10 hard like Lehman High School to improve, or are
11 we going to redouble our efforts and commit the
12 resources that will help them to attain that
13 goal? For 10 years, the needs of this school
14 were well known to the Department of Education.
15 Where were they? - - the name of the parents
16 and teachers--

17 FACILATOR: [Phonetic] Time is up.

18 MS. FORTINO: One more point - - . It was
19 mentioned today at the 18D Committee - -
20 teachers and administrators. They are also the
21 rightful parents to sit on these committees. So
22 make sure parents, that your voices are heard,
23 thank you.

24 [Applause]

25 MS. PATRICK SINGH: Hello everybody, my name

1 is Patrick Singh. I'm a representative of the
2 SLT - - group. I'm also a representative of - -
3 of District A.

4 [Applause]

5 MR. SINGH: - - . Can I ask the committee
6 members right now, are you really listening to
7 us? Or are you going to sit there and say - -
8 listen to you. But you have a plan somewhere
9 else that says, we're just going to sit there
10 and say, yeah we get you. We're going to help
11 you. But you really want to close the school
12 down. Just last Tuesday, I was - - game - -
13 over there.

14 [Applause]

15 MR. SINGH: - - high school and - -
16 phenomenal. The first quarter - - .

17 [Applause]

18 MR. SINGH: - - to offer all of the students
19 here in the school. - - itself. A lot of jobs
20 nowadays are looking for people who are computer
21 literate. Lehman High School offers the
22 programs to make - - .

23 [Background Noise]

24 [Crosstalk]

25 MR. SINGH: Yeah, Lehman High School offers

1 the programs that helps students get ready for
2 their future. - - education thinks along those
3 lines. I mean - - the Department of Education -
4 - at this point. I mean you're just going to
5 sit there and say that stuff. Do you really
6 care about us? Or do you really care about the
7 money that you are trying to save by closing the
8 school down - - ?

9 [Applause]

10 MR. SINGH: - - because how can you lower
11 the price value of the education - - ? - - to
12 be. But how are you going to do that if you - -
13 to the country - - ? Thank you.

14 [Applause]

15 MR. CHRISTOPHER GAYLE: Good evening, my
16 name is Christopher Gayle. I'm a junior here,
17 and I play the - - academy - - .

18 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah Chris.

19 MALE VOICE: Go ahead Chris.

20 MR. GAYLE: I feel that we have - - schools
21 - - opportunities for students, like other
22 schools don't have what Lehman has to offer, and
23 all that other stuff - - . And I'm a - - , um,
24 - - you know - - recruiting - - . And I don't
25 feel that teachers should be fired. They need -

1 - teachers - - teachers that are - - like
2 affecting - - opportunities. - - thank you.

3 [Applause]

4 FACILITATOR: Thank you, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

5 [Applause]

6 MR. DAVID ROSE: Good evening, my name is
7 David Rose. I'm a - - here at Lehman High
8 School, and I've been for 11 years. - - the
9 first thing I want to ask is where is the rest
10 of the panel?

11 [Applause]

12 MR. ROSE: Where is, where is everybody? I
13 mean, and you say that you're listening to us,
14 and you know - - that you - - . Because you're
15 the first person who actually looks at us, and
16 all of these other meetings that we went to
17 while we were talking. I've seen - - on cell
18 phones. I've seen - - . I've seen people
19 reading. So this is the first one that has
20 actually managed to pay attention while we're
21 talking. But there is no way we'd be doing all
22 this if it wasn't - - . You can get a feeling,
23 but you're not going to get the words. And, you
24 did say in - - that we have improved, that we've
25 shown improvement, that we can - - . But it's

1 absolutely - - . It's not - - . That's
2 something that me and my colleagues have done -
3 - .

4 [Applause]

5 MR. ROSE: Now I - - you're saying that we
6 should give Ms. LoBianco a chance. And I agree
7 with that. We should give Ms. LoBianco a
8 chance. But she is not the one that - - . She
9 is not the one sitting in a classroom - - moving
10 her fingers around that you read in the
11 newspaper that you work around. She is not the
12 one who - - work to get those improvements that
13 you know are - - . - - work. That's - - . But
14 I also support all the teachers - - .

15 [Applause]

16 MR. ROSE: Removing half the teachers in the
17 school - - whatever - - to do - - is only - - .
18 And then, you're saying that she gets to - - ,
19 and the students get to stay, and that's - - .
20 And either Ms. - - who was the last Principal to
21 give such wonderful things to this school has a
22 job with the DOE. So what you are saying, - -
23 stand up and actually state this, but what you
24 are saying is that all the - - you and me, and
25 what we have done - - , it's your fault Mr.

1 Rose. You, the teachers are at fault.
2 Because that's the only thing you're - - . Are
3 you willing to stand on that? That all of the
4 people who - - , all of these people who care,
5 all of these people who work hard - - , it's
6 their fault that this happened totally across
7 the - - . I disagree.

8 [Applause]

9 MR. ROSE: You've been saying you support
10 the Principal. You've been saying you support
11 this school. You've been saying you support the
12 - - . But what you're saying is that the
13 teachers who are getting them those grades that
14 - - , you don't support them, and that's wrong.

15 [Applause]

16 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

17 MR. SHAMEL GEORGE: Support Lehman High
18 School

19 [Applause]

20 MR. GEORGE: - - all right, my bad. Yo, we
21 need support for Lehman High School. Look at
22 this light. - - school, - - breakfast - -
23 whatever in this school. We have to get our
24 education - - this stuff, but still, you're
25 trying to close down the school. For what?

1 Just - - , I don't know, make new schools, try
2 to - - improvement, - - half the staff and
3 everything. But that is not stopping anything
4 Mister, seriously.

5 [Applause]

6 MR. GOERGE: Hey, peace.

7 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

8 [Applause]

9 MR. DANTE GRAY: - - I'M Dante Gray and - -
10 17, something like that.

11 [Laughter]

12 MR. GRAY: - - wanted to say. I mean, like
13 many of the - - students here, I'm kind of upset
14 and--

15 FEMALE VOICE: [Interposing] Yes we are.

16 FEMALE VOICE: Yes we are.

17 MR. GRAY: - - school. It's just the
18 injustice of it. In fact, before - - , you just
19 said that you're going to close down the school
20 because you're going to fire 50% of the staff
21 and hire 50% - - . - - who have no idea how to
22 really teach students - - .

23 [Applause]

24 MR. GRAY: I just wanted to - - ask - - ,
25 Lehman is a school - - more than 4,000 students.

1 - - separate - - . in my view, - - .

2 [Applause]

3 MR. GRAY: - - has two kids, right. One of
4 those kids get separated - - also, okay, and so
5 you say, okay - - no - - still - - everyone - -
6 . - - exercise - - my parents - - something -
7 - . I hope everyone will - - .

8 [Applause]

9 MR. GRAY: I spoke to a, last, this Saturday
10 I went - - for an interview. I spoke to a girl
11 - - the New York State border. She was like, oh
12 your school has like what, 200 students? And
13 she's like well, my town is 3,000 people. Well
14 the Lehman Foundation is what, twice the size of
15 her town and - - other than - - .

16 [Applause]

17 MR. GRAY: A lot of proposals across the
18 board have been the same. - - . But I must
19 say, he or she must - - . Their - - . Wait,
20 what do you mean - - ? I guess that's - - . I
21 - - .

22 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

23 [Applause]

24 MS. PAMELA MEYER: All right, I'm actually -
25 - to walk out - - have to say. - - walk out.

1 You say you treat us with respect, but if you
2 are treating us with respect, you would not
3 agree with the charges imposed with state - -
4 not address the matter again. Mayor Bloomberg
5 is behaving more like an emperor than an elected
6 official.

7 [Applause]

8 MS. MEYER: - - public schools and charter
9 schools, although we know - - to become a
10 charter school now, it is destined to become one
11 in the near future. Why, because one, the
12 building will remain - - . Two, the student
13 body will still be over represented by students
14 with special needs. And three, 50% of teachers
15 rehired will be going to tenure, while the other
16 50% will be inexperienced, adding to the burden
17 of the - - teachers. This is a demoralizing
18 situation that is unlikely to succeed. These
19 charter schools are set up as non-union, not for
20 profit business - - . But the plan seems to be,
21 to turn them into "for profit" schools - - .
22 This plan will eliminate the teachers' union.
23 It lowers the expense side of the charter
24 schools - - as teachers lacking union
25 protection, will work more for less pay. Thus,

1 these privatized will make even higher profits
2 off of our taxpayer dollars. - - . We are
3 calling on you to take out - - , to stand up to
4 Mayor Bloomberg. If not, we have to ask, how do
5 you sleep at night? If per chance you - - .
6 Please know that we - - mean you know
7 disrespect. We only want to wake up and shout
8 out in a strong and angry voice, I will not
9 allow it.

10 AUDIENCE: I will not allow it.

11 [Applause]

12 MS. MEYER: Then we - - will know that the
13 state is not with us. Hearing your own - -
14 voice, you can make - - do the right thing, and
15 say no to mayor Bloomberg's plan. Eventually,
16 you will - - the process, thank you.

17 [Applause]

18 MR. BRYAN KARDAS: My name is Bryan Kardas.
19 I am a proud teacher here at Lehman High School.

20 [Applause]

21 MR. KARDAS: First I'd like to - - found
22 that - - after - - . Second, - - six years ago,
23 this was my dream job. Now years, and I - - of
24 Mr. Bloomberg, and the horrendous policies of
25 the DOE, I now have to stand in front of this

1 crowd of proud teachers, parents and students
2 to try and save this school. So I have one
3 question. Is there a turnaround model that will
4 get rid of half the DOE and replace our - - ?
5 Thank you.

6 [Applause]

7 FACILITATOR: Thank you, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.

8 [Applause]

9 JACK: My name is Jack [phonetic] - - .
10 I've been a junior - - . My family always told
11 me this was a great school. This was a - - .
12 So when I was - - that all of a sudden, I've
13 been hearing that - - last few years that - -
14 the school. I - - every day walking the hall
15 with dedicated teachers. Despite the bad - -
16 in the school, they always try to get them
17 inside the class rooms, and try their very best
18 to teach them. Is that really - - how they
19 should be treated by - - ?

20 FEMALE VOICE: Nope.

21 MALE VOICE: No.

22 JACK: I've never had a bad teacher in the
23 school. I'm proud - - .

24 [Applause]

25 JACK: - - teachers. Many teachers know

1 many students by name. We've all bonded. - -
2 current staff - - only - - this dedicated - -
3 school. We have future leaders in this school.
4 A - - students - - what they believe in to keep
5 the school open. Why wouldn't you want to
6 better the institution who helped raise and
7 educate these wonderful students?

8 [Applause]

9 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

10 JACK: To find a better school with so much
11 programs, music, sports, - - and yet - - we've -
12 - that we're, we - - the challenge. We're still
13 proving - - the DOE - -our school to do the
14 same.

15 [Applause]

16 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

17 FEMALE VOICE: Good evening. I'm a proud
18 parent of a sophomore here at Lehman High School
19 who just participate in the - - competition at -
20 - Center.

21 [Applause]

22 FEMALE VOICE: And also at - - University.
23 It was an amazing, amazing thing to see how our
24 school is - - and learn fast. When I say to you
25 they're learning fast, I want to share with you

1 that while at the - - Center, they beat out
2 Bronx High School scholars.

3 [Applause]

4 FEMALE VOICE: If you were part of the - -
5 and you are here tonight, please stand up.

6 [Applause]

7 FEMALE VOICE: Don't let anyone ever
8 discourage you or tell you that you can't do
9 anything.

10 [Applause]

11 FEMALE VOICE: Our - - who is also here
12 tonight, provided support for son. Our daughter
13 graduated from Lehman High School also in 2006,
14 and now she is working on her Master's degree in
15 Education, go figure. She's - - using her - -
16 day, and she doesn't even - - . And it's all
17 because of the systems that the DOE has put in
18 place. When your son started here two years
19 ago, it was a disaster. He had two - - in his
20 program. This was the work of an executive
21 principal that was put in place by the DOE.

22 [Applause]

23 FEMALE VOICE: And they paid her an extra
24 \$25, 000 to do it on top of her salary. Her
25 idea was to send them to the auditorium if they

1 could not - - schedule. But because we are
2 this very - - , we did not let this happen. We
3 came in to fight the good fight, and it was
4 settled. However, why should a parent have to
5 fight for a Principal at that, for a child's
6 schedule, to - - a full schedule for her to be
7 here? And then the two classes he had, he had
8 one in the morning, and one in the afternoon.
9 So what is he supposed to do all day? I don't
10 know. The following year Ms. LoBianco
11 graciously joined us, taking up the most
12 important task of turning the morale and the
13 structures around for good. That was destiny -
14 - . I am so glad that she was here to do that
15 for us, because our students were very much in
16 need of it. Let's give her a chance, but most
17 of all, let's give our students the chance that
18 they deserve, thank you.

19 [Applause]

20 MR. STEVE SUZISKY: Good evening everyone.
21 My name is Steve Suzisky. I'm a Social Studies
22 teacher here at Lehman High School and I'm proud
23 to be - - .

24 [Applause]

25 MR. SUZISKY: I teach uh, - - law, uh, - -

1 of Global Studies and public speaking. And
2 this is my second year here. I - -
3 professionally. A lot of students - - forced
4 them to do is to speak to the statistics,
5 because people that you are representing, that's
6 the only thing they care about, - - statistics.
7 A lot of - - the graduation rate here at Lehman
8 High School, but the fact is that high school is
9 not an end. High school is a means to an end,
10 okay. If you want to focus on something that's
11 important, then the most important statistic you
12 have to focus on above all else is college
13 readiness, okay. And Lehman High School
14 produces a higher percentage of college ready
15 students than almost every school on - - .
16 That's a fact.

17 [Applause]

18 MR. SUZISKY: Lehman High School also has,
19 despite, despite that, Lehman High School also
20 has a proportionally high number of, uh,
21 students with special needs and, uh, English
22 language learners okay. You would think that
23 with this, uh, situation the DOE would be
24 willing to support us, but their response to
25 that has been the opposite. Every year direct

1 funding for - - and - -teachers to help their
2 students has gone down. We have funding for
3 other programs, but the funding that's going
4 directly to help these kids has gone down every
5 single year. There are alternative solutions to
6 helping - - that are less disruptive and
7 expensive, but the DOE is not interested. As
8 you can see, from the - - the local community is
9 completely against this. We've heard from
10 Community Board 10. We've heard from our local
11 officials. We have tremendous parental support.
12 Give yourselves a round of applause.

13 [Applause]

14 MR. SUZISKY: - - support from our students.
15 You should also give yourselves a round of
16 applause.

17 [Applause]

18 MR. SUZISKY: On a personal note, I've
19 become attached to my students, my colleagues
20 and this family as a whole. The PEP may have
21 the power to do this, but they shouldn't. We
22 have great teachers. We have a phenomenal new
23 principal, and we have great parents who care
24 about the school and their kids. We don't want
25 this. They don't want it. No one wants it.

1 Tell the DOE, our message is simple, no. No -
2 - . - - , thank you.

3 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

4 [Applause]

5 MS. JACQUELINE PARISH-HILLSBERG: Good
6 evening everyone. My name is Jacqueline
7 [phonetic] Parish [phonetic] Hillsberg
8 [phonetic]. So I just wanted to - - little bit
9 about myself. So graduated two years ago, class
10 of 2010, from Lehman High School.

11 [Applause]

12 MS. PARISH-HILLSBERG: So after I graduated
13 high school, I - - to study in Stony Brook
14 University with a three, eight GPA. I - - . I
15 worked while I was in school. I was - - of - -
16 Awareness Program at that university.

17 [Applause]

18 MS. PARISH-HILLSBERG: So I - - , and then I
19 - - and I got accepted to Cornell University - -
20 school.

21 [Applause]

22 MS. PARISH-HILLSBERG: So I'm - - and I - -
23 to see at Cornell University. I worked and I
24 also do a - - at Cornell University. When I
25 came to this school, my experiences at, my

1 accomplishments at these two great
2 universities would not have been possible if it
3 weren't for this school. This school shaped it.
4 I was born in New York City, raised in the
5 Bronx, attended Lehman High School. Because of
6 Lehman High School, I grew a love for public
7 service. I started the - - program, the SPARK
8 program, Little - - , which I might add - - for
9 - - in this school. But they don't shake me in
10 my love for public service, which is why I plan
11 to attend the Air Force upon graduation at
12 Cornell. Ms. - - a dance teacher here at
13 Cornell and - - my love of dance. Mr. Serene
14 [phonetic] and Mr. Reiger [phonetic] - - of
15 acting and dancing and just performing on stage
16 - - only about education and learning, but - -
17 and learning different things. I, after my
18 senior year of high school, I applied to 16
19 colleges. My college counselor Mr. Elliot
20 [phonetic] had to deal with me applying to 16
21 colleges. Can you imagine how many questions I
22 must have had? A lot of questions about
23 financial aid, and he always - - asked a
24 question, he would find out for me and tell me -
25 - tell me the answer the next day. And Mr.

1 Mitchell [phonetic] was my Calculus teacher.

2 I - - Calculus easy. - - .

3 [Applause]

4 MS. PARISH-HILLSBERG: And he would stay an
5 hour or two extra just to tutor us, tutor the
6 students. And he - - and - - his love for the
7 students. And there are a whole bunch of the
8 teachers that have really influenced me and just
9 really - - , but that's - - here right now that
10 would take forever. But for this school, and
11 for the teachers, because they really, they
12 helped shaped me. And I will become a wonderful
13 person, one day successful, and it's because of
14 this school, and because of these teachers,
15 thank you.

16 [Applause]

17 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

18 MALE VOICE: Good evening everyone. I just
19 want to take a moment to point out that we are
20 the - - trying to decide the future of our
21 school and, um, of Lehman, and we can't even get
22 a proper word in - - . We can't even touch the
23 mic. Um, and it's taped up, as you can see.
24 This is, this is the type of things that the
25 teachers have to deal with. So we have to add

1 another one to the list.

2 [Applause]

3 MALE VOICE: My name is - - , and I'm a 2010
4 graduate. I heard about the arguments, the
5 educational argument that Lehman High School
6 gives to the students. And they do give an
7 amazing, amazing educational things. Like we
8 take, uh, for the rest of our lives I, I've
9 learnt so many things here. But I want to focus
10 on the - - culture for my - - two minutes. And
11 I'll say that about 50% of the things that I've
12 learned from Lehman High School were taught to
13 me going from the, going from like class to
14 class and being able to interact with kids that
15 were different than me, and kids that were, that
16 had much different ideas than I did. And these
17 interactions helped shape who I am today, and
18 are helping me with my education. I made
19 outstanding friendships and I was able to - - .
20 I have to say that the actions that they are
21 planning to take are completely destroying the
22 rich and - - , the rich and - - of the Lehman
23 experience. Instead of moving forward, I see
24 you, I see these ideas, you have the same as the
25 ones coming from the outside people will have,

1 is very - - that we are all criminals in that
2 we need to be caged in. So we can't be moving
3 around. I want you guys, while you guys add
4 security bars and metal detectors to our school.
5 You plan to fire 50% of the staff here, and I
6 can't believe that you guys are thinking that
7 that's the best thing for the school. If you
8 have, if you took the moment to go ahead and
9 look around and just meet these incredible,
10 incredible teachers, you would understand how
11 fatal this is to the Lehman community. I, um,
12 okay, so I want - - the teachers, and I hope you
13 guys like change your minds and just reevaluate
14 what you are trying to do, thank you.

15 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

16 [Applause]

17 FACILITATOR: 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25.

18 [Applause]

19 JASON: - - . We are students, and my name
20 is - - . I'm a - - at Lehman High School. I
21 would like to enlighten our - - . First and
22 foremost - - people - - who tell - - . There
23 are negative powers among us in this school and
24 - - . As a student, I figure it's our job to -
25 - our - - followers. Our education will page a

1 better future for us and our children. And
2 now the - - taking that away from us. Now is
3 the time when we - - . We have to overcome the
4 ignorance and become educated. We have to learn
5 how to - - each other - - instead of - - . How
6 can you - - when you don' have to - - the - - ?
7 What will happen - - the public school if they
8 shut down? What chances are we going to - - in
9 this condition? What is their agenda? Are they
10 helping us - - or separating us as a people?
11 How can you - - each other? Being a teacher is
12 a very important role. We are - - Bloomberg - -
13 . You all should not have to pay the price.
14 Who is truly responsible for - - our failure? I
15 see myself - - optimistic figure. I believe
16 that there are better ways to get - - , like - -
17 , my role is the messenger. I take this
18 responsibility very seriously. Everything that
19 I have said comes from my heart. In my efforts
20 to awaken the students we need to start
21 evaluating ourselves. I have learnt some things
22 - - part - - . For further information - - come
23 to the - - mission council meeting after school
24 Mondays and Fridays, and you can also email me
25 at - - 555@yahoo.com. I am serious about this -

1 - , and I know that you are too. Before you
2 leave tonight, let's exchange - - so we can get
3 better over - - . Examine your issue. Know who
4 you are and what you can do. I hope this will
5 bring us a little closer together and help us
6 realize what's at stake here. We are the future
7 - - .

8 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

9 [Applause]

10 FEMALE VOICE: - -

11 [Applause]

12 MR. ANTHONY RAUL: My name is Anthony Raul.
13 I've been a teacher for 15 years - - for the
14 last eight years at Lehman High School. And the
15 first thing I want to do is - - to leave. And
16 this is not - - . Mayor Bloomberg, Chancellor
17 Walcott, I invite you to come to Lehman High
18 School at any time. We might get to see
19 students engaging, teachers teaching, staff and
20 students helping each other. - - is a student
21 in my first year class. She has a full
22 scholarship to the - - University - -
23 prestigious - - who have represented - - this
24 summer. - - still - - refused. Being with the
25 students - - wasn't acceptable. So - - helping

1 students - - program - - meeting people.
2 These are the people you - - . People not - -
3 statistics. There are great people in this
4 school doing great things. The students - -
5 every school deserve a full chance at success in
6 life, and the education to achieve that.
7 Replacing - - teacher - - risk their chances of
8 success. That - - should not be taken. - -
9 when I was a young boy, and the - - , my parents
10 - - gave me and eventually my sister, a better
11 chance at having a successful life. Fortunately
12 they could. - - the Bronx - - anymore. It's
13 thriving because of the young people working
14 hard like the students here at Lehman.

15 FEMALE VOICE: That's tight.

16 MR. RAUL: I love teaching. I love this
17 school. I love teaching here. I love working
18 here. - - the education of these students,
19 their future, our future. Mayor Bloomberg,
20 Chancellor Walcott, please reconsider this
21 decision. Come to see - - . You're invited to
22 see, thank you.

23 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

24 [Applause]

25 MALE VOICE: Thank you Mr. Raul. Good

1 evening. There may be some things you might
2 want to applaud or cheer, please don't. I'd
3 like to have my full two minutes and have your
4 attention, for the time is limited. I'm a
5 history teacher by trade, and teaching for 40
6 years, more than 30 - - in New York. And some
7 of - - parents of students here. And that's the
8 one - - I can tell you. Perhaps you are, but I
9 know you can't say yes. About 10 or so years
10 ago, the city of New York decided to go to - -
11 which - - don't know - - parent - - child - -
12 talk about vouchers, which a republican idea - -
13 10 years ago. They've decided to - - those
14 folks into the - - supposed to, to keep all the
15 - - and make sure we have - - exercise any idea
16 - - vouchers. Give me the money, and let me go
17 around - - . So they created these small school
18 environments on faulty research, and really,
19 excuse my French, bull crap science, and decided
20 to break up the City of New York High Schools
21 into these so-called small - - . I was elected
22 as a teacher representative. I was on a
23 committee here in the Bronx that selected the
24 first six small schools. So I know what I'm
25 talking about - - first - - . I knew what

1 schools were going to be cited even before we
2 voted to do so. And of course I couldn't - -
3 into that, which didn't make any sense with
4 anybody. What I want you to understand folks,
5 is that you've been placed with chumps, suckers
6 and fools by these people and the City of New
7 York. You have to understand that the small
8 school environment is a - - one. It doesn't
9 work. In my school we now have seven principals
10 for the same number of kids that we had 10 years
11 ago. And it - - jobs, everybody felt happy.
12 And this way you guys wouldn't take your kids
13 out of public school. So I want to say - - . I
14 bet you don't like being placed with suckers and
15 chumps. Well I totally don't, because these
16 guys are doing it to you. They knew about it,
17 and they let it happen. Now you look like a
18 good guy. You've been a teacher. I'm retired,
19 so Mayor Bloomberg is happy with that. I want
20 to - - because I speak my mind. But you are the
21 man who is important to me. I don't want a job.
22 I'm not looking for anything. I'm - - to give
23 you some on the street, real world impressions
24 of what all of this insanity has done. You guys
25 got to rise up this community and say we ain't

1 taking this shit anymore.

2 [Applause]

3 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

4 FEMALE VOICE: - - I want to say something
5 and I can't say it strong enough. Stop
6 skateboarding teachers for your - - politics.

7 [Applause]

8 FEMALE VOICE: - - . The Bloomberg
9 administration - - . And I write down in our
10 local press all the time, and people here who
11 read it know. There is a game going on here,
12 okay, and it seems to me it's a very clear plan.
13 This school is just one of a citywide dominoes,
14 okay, that are going to fall. You started with
15 charter schools. 12 schools are being saved. A
16 lot of them are run by non-profit corporations.
17 - - money, Bill Gates' foundation - - people who
18 are running them are hiding behind them. These
19 schools pick and they choose who goes into them.
20 The schools - - pick who don't go into them.
21 Kids - - other kids. Kids with special needs go
22 into the public schools. The public schools
23 then become overcrowded and over - - , and then
24 finding resources is tough. So - - the scores
25 drop. They are surprised the score is dropping.

1 Your school is failing. You teachers are
2 failing. We need to print their names in the
3 paper because they are failing. What happens
4 then? The school is broken up. Why? Because
5 the scores show you're failing. What happens?
6 More charter schools, more charter schools and
7 the cycle begins again and again. And you might
8 think why - - . Because the Bloomberg
9 administration is trying to run the public,
10 trying to destroy the public education system,
11 or trying to run the education system like a
12 corporation, making schools privatize and public
13 centers.

14 [Applause]

15 FEMALE VOICE: - - not Bloomberg Media Corp,
16 thank you.

17 [Applause]

18 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

19 MS. ASHANTI: My name is Ashanti White. I -
20 - since 10th grade.

21 MALE VOICE: Speak into the mic.

22 MS. WHITE: Sorry, I've been in the law
23 association program. Being that I get the
24 opportunity to learn - - in law and criminal
25 justice, and that's what I did. - - criminal

1 investigator. And I know so much - - being -
2 - . What you guys are doing is - - . Um, being
3 - - clearly, I have the opportunity to - -
4 involved in many activities such as musical,
5 dance, I could - - yoga. I - - a movie here. I
6 can do so much here. The opportunities are
7 abundant. I mean, this is what makes Lehman
8 High School - - every day. You ever heard of
9 senioritis? Well I don't have it. I enjoy
10 coming here every day, and especially - - .

11 [Applause]

12 MS. WHITE: This will be - - me at Lehman -
13 - . I love all my teachers, and they have done
14 a hell of a good job with me. They teach
15 really, really well, the fact that they have
16 students being accepted to over 10 colleges,
17 like you see negatives, but I see a whole bunch
18 of positives. It's like - - all on paid
19 scholarships. So like, - - bunch of colleges -
20 - . So these students are able to - - us - -
21 sitting here - - future okay. And we're - - .
22 So help us to help you, okay.

23 [Applause]

24 MS. WHITE: - - school, whereas when I
25 graduate next year I'll go to Howard. I'm

1 planning on probably going to - - . But I
2 plan to come back and see the teachers that I
3 know. I would love to come back. Like, - - .
4 I want to see these teachers here, not new ones.
5 And I want other children to have the same
6 opportunity I did. And just give them a chance.
7 People, I know - - like yoga, - - Math, this and
8 that. They have so many opportunities here.
9 Lehman is a great school. Please reconsider and
10 just give us a chance, thank you.

11 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

12 [Applause]

13 FACILITATOR: 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

14 [Applause]

15 FEMALE VOICE: - - and the students, I want
16 - - here, that the - - is a failed educational
17 policy, and it will decide our future. It's not
18 - - here. There are - - on the - - . - -
19 recorded by Mayor Bloomberg. - - so our
20 citizens, the - - keep us open - - of 13 members
21 state that our employers are Mayor Bloomberg.
22 My, exactly, my question, my question is to the
23 panel, um, my question is, has there ever been a
24 vote or a decision made by any of the eight
25 Bloomberg appointed members of the panel that is

1 has - - and - - opposed our Mayor's plan for
2 the future of our public schools? When, why and
3 who? I respectively ask you to review the votes
4 in the eight panel Bloomberg appointed - - as -
5 - our wishes and our request for our public
6 schools to stay open - - realize it's eight to
7 five. Has there ever been one of those eight
8 who go against Mayor Bloomberg's wishes - - to
9 close our school. That's all I want to know,
10 thank you.

11 [Applause]

12 MS KAPLAN: Hello, my name is Ms. Kaplan,
13 and they call me Ms. When you work in high
14 school you don't have a last name, you're Ms.
15 I'm not a teacher here. I'm a guidance
16 counselor here. And that's what my title is.
17 But quite honestly, I'm really not a guidance
18 counselor anymore. I'm a paper pusher. I'm a -
19 - walker. I'm a telephone caller. I don't
20 really get a chance anymore to really sit and
21 just talk to students about what life is all
22 about, what high school is all about, what is
23 their home life like. Do they even live in a
24 home? Do they live in a shelter? Today, I
25 spent an hour running around with a parent and a

1 student because his daughter was cutting
2 class. Another parent called me wanting to know
3 if the child was in class. The child wasn't in
4 class. The mother left her job and came to the
5 school. Went, actually went home, got her child
6 out of the house, came to the school with the
7 kid, who is a freshman, and who tried - -
8 together. I don't have any resources for this
9 job. We do have a program in the school called
10 the I-Team, where counselors have a specific
11 group of students that they try to find, but the
12 problem is, those kids don't come to school. A
13 lot of the time is spent on trying to get
14 students to come to the building. Now 11 years
15 ago, I worked at Morris High School, and one
16 August afternoon, I got a phone call - - sitting
17 in here that I was excess to Morris High School.
18 And I had come to Lehman High School to
19 interview that year before, because I had
20 friends in my neighborhood who worked here. I
21 was praying can I get to Lehman High School. I
22 got here. I put a - - into heaven. I thought I
23 would never, ever have to look for another job,
24 'cause this school was fantastic. This was like
25 a suburban school in the Bronx. But that

1 changed. Every year I saw it change. I saw
2 less and less parent involvement, less and less
3 involvement that I had to directly work with
4 students. The way that the building is run,
5 it's not the fault of the administration. It's
6 all these mandates that are outside the
7 building. All these things that everybody has
8 to do, rather than really teach, sit with
9 children, listen, learn and talk with them,
10 figure out how they - - survive their life.
11 Because there are so many students in this
12 building, who unlike the parents that are in
13 here, don't have that support system, thank you
14 very much.

15 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

16 [Applause]

17 FEMALE VOICE: - - hello - - . I'm not
18 going to give out my name - - I - - necessary.
19 I'm a teacher. - - . But I do have a son that
20 attends Lehman High School. - - student, he and
21 I - - , he - - Columbus - - has a wonderful - -
22 New York. But I am the one - - told him to go
23 to Lehman. He could have gone to - - . But I
24 said no. - - I said okay, let's give Lehman a
25 shot. Since he's been coming to Lehman, his

1 average - - over an 80. He knows - - . He is
2 not a - - child. He knows that I expect - -
3 twos and ones, he likes - - threes and fours - -
4 . - - are looking at - - the closure of Lehman
5 High School and the co-location of the new
6 school. What's the new name going to be? Is it
7 going to stay Lehman High School? - - have a
8 problem with this, you could also - - . It - -
9 that we're talking about drugs now, okay,
10 because his brother - - drugs now. And his
11 brother happens to be his idol, his inspiration,
12 and for him to have a high school that says new
13 school, I'm going to have a problem with that
14 because - - he's - - . So I don't know. I
15 don't think Lehman should be closed - - okay. I
16 believe that my son is ready to graduate from
17 his - - school, but he will graduate make sure
18 that he does that. When he goes to Georgetown
19 that diploma will say Lehman High School, thank
20 you.

21 [Applause]

22 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

23 FEMALE VOICE: - - in med school. When I
24 came here, I - - because - - . - - and - -
25 right now I'm just - - . Now I'm taking the - -

1 classes - - . Still, - - .

2 [Applause]

3 FEMALE VOICE: Now I'm - - for multi-
4 national - - and I - - so many - - and also - -
5 necessary. I - - Mr. - - . He is so cool.

6 [Applause]

7 FEMALE VOICE: I'm also on the swimming
8 team. All of the people that - - so cool and I
9 - - nice - - and the coach is great. I'm also
10 on the - - team. - - this school - - . It's
11 like awesome. I love it.

12 [Applause]

13 FEMALE VOICE: I'm also a member of the - -
14 team and I really, really love it. This is my
15 first year that I'm with them, and it's really
16 awesome. I - - want to - - . I' really not
17 surprised, myself - - surprised. I didn't know
18 what - - . - - the staff - - with so many - -
19 high judges. All right, okay, so I just want to
20 say that I - - . I really - - a chance to just
21 - - .

22 [Applause]

23 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

24 MR. JOHN DESOTO: Hello, my name is John
25 DeSoto. I'm the Director - - . I'm a student

1 at - - College. - - . I actually, I came to
2 this school for temporary - - , and I came here
3 - - and I was pretty sure that I would be an
4 outcast in this school. But within a few weeks
5 I was actually accepted - - . And not only
6 that, the staff of Lehman High School is
7 honestly the best staff - - , better than my
8 current record, better than the three high
9 schools I went to. And I just want to thank the
10 staff that helped me along - - people like Mr.
11 Elliot [phonetic], Ms. Stephens [phonetic], Mr.
12 Graham [phonetic] - - who is not here anymore.
13 And that's actually it. I do want to say
14 something to those of you - - and that's - -
15 luck is - - , thank you.

16 [Applause]

17 FACILITATOR: Thank you, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.

18 [Background Noise]

19 DR. JENNY: Hi, my name is Dr. Jenny
20 [phonetic] - - , and I'm a - - teacher at Lehman
21 High School. I want - - this year - - . And if
22 it's not me, it's probably not - - , okay. I -
23 - practice for - - for 25 years, serving the
24 Bronx community and in some wild mid-life crisis
25 decided I wanted to be a teacher. And I - - ,

1 okay, and now we're faced with a crisis, a
2 crisis that we as teachers didn't exactly create
3 - - , okay. I've heard a lot of good things
4 about the dedication of the teachers here at
5 Lehman High School. I could probably - - have
6 enough time to let you know that - - . I know
7 about the dedication of the staff, but in the
8 short time that I've been here, I was hired by
9 Mr. - - . I was - - and now there is - - . I
10 really would like to know why you're even
11 thinking about the students that changed the - -
12 , flowing the - - and making all these kinds of
13 changes in order to make a difference when the
14 demographics are still the same. I also would
15 like to know, in your statement about Lehman
16 closing and about a more rigorous approach - -
17 that - - Lehman - - my class, because I miss
18 that - - , because as far as I know - - of
19 academic - - every day within this program. We
20 can't expect to understand why Mayor Bloomberg
21 wants to do this, but perhaps maybe coming from
22 a Massachusetts suburb, and - - to New York City
23 might - - . Perhaps he doesn't understand the
24 unique dynamics of the city. Perhaps he thinks
25 that his - - classes, and the fact that he paid

1 for public school, compares to free education
2 in New York. You want to systematically - - in
3 our school. And you say that in its place you
4 want to bring a new school into our community.
5 And then I say to you - - and taking the
6 community out of our schools, reconsider.

7 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

8 [Applause]

9 [END OF 290195audiopart2of3.mp3]

10

11 [START 290195audiopart3of3.mp3]

12 FEMALE VOICE 1: Good Evening. I graduated
13 from Lehman.

14 FEMALE VOICE 2: For what?

15 FEMALE VOICE 1: --. I graduated in 1981
16 and met my husband here, Mr. Sanchez [phonetic].

17 [Applause]

18 FEMALE VOICE 1: My world is settled here
19 and my youngest daughter now goes here.

20 MALE VOICE: Rebecca.

21 REBECCA: What?

22 [laughter]

23 FEMALE VOICE 1: Lehman offered when I
24 attended a variety of educational opportunities.
25 Rebecca comes here. She has a variety of

1 educational opportunities. This school has
2 wonderful teachers. The teachers set the tone
3 of the school. The principal sets the guidance
4 and mentorship. The principal supports the
5 school and the teachers. The teacher's guide
6 and train the students. It's a wonderful
7 package. It is sad to hear that you don't
8 recognize that full package. The principal has
9 made remarkable improvements because with her
10 leadership and support the teachers now have the
11 time with the students. My daughter is a
12 sophomore. There are 3,000 students in this
13 school. She probably knows 2,000 of them. I
14 think she knows almost every teacher. She has
15 learned discipline and control. The students
16 encourage you speaking, public speaking in front
17 of a large crowd. That's not an easy task.
18 Those teachers should be given great -- and
19 recognition. How comfortable do you feel public
20 speaking and how long did it take you to achieve
21 that? That is something. You're looking at
22 high school, sophomores, and juniors. You need
23 to recognize that. You need to reconsider this
24 and I can only hope that you do. Thank you.

25 [applause]

1 Rebecca Morgan [phonetic]: Hi, my name
2 is Rebecca Morgan and I'm in -- grade here. And
3 since I've been here, I -- I am an actress. I
4 do a lot and for this school to give the
5 opportunity to be here, to come here every day
6 with so many friends it's really [crosstalk].
7 And these teachers work so hard. They try to
8 get us in class, even the kids that don't want
9 to be in class and they try their best to get
10 our attention. And in their class to get us very
11 intrigued with it. And--

12 MALE VOICE: --

13 [applause]

14 MS. MORGAN: They taught me to be somewhat
15 of a-- I want to be--I planned on being in drama
16 club-- being a double major. Becoming a local
17 teacher and becoming an English teacher for the
18 --

19 [applause]

20 MS. MORGAN: there's something about Lehman,
21 Lehman has great teachers that be here. Many of
22 you may not know that are very and as a graduate
23 of Lehman High of this awesome high school,
24 thank you.

25 [applause]

1 SPEAKER 2: Thank you. Speaker number
2 24 is Sandy Watts. She and I are community
3 residence. We are also part of -- improve our
4 organization. We live here. We put our hearts
5 into advocating for students. We used to go to
6 public meetings when they meant something.
7 Because of Sandy's advocacy, 094 now exists.
8 She believes in education. She's not an
9 educator but she's truly an educator as far as
10 advocating for our children and very clearly
11 years ago already we saw the writing on the wall
12 with Mayer Bluebird. He's a billionaire and
13 bought his way into the mayoralty. He bought
14 his way into a third term. He does not listen
15 to we the people. All thanks to our preamble to
16 the constitution, we the people of the United
17 States we are here tonight because we think
18 large schools have been the target by the city
19 and sad to say wish it wasn't so but Lehman is
20 another bull's eye. The bull's eye is on Lehman
21 right now and we can be here, we can go to the
22 pep meeting next month, but the writing seems to
23 be on the wall and that's a sad thing to think
24 that in a democracy Arabs are having Arabs right
25 here in New York. We can't even be heard as a

1 people and citizens of the United States and
2 the citizens of New York City.

3 [applause]

4 SPEAKER 2: So while Lehman turned into a
5 part of my community for all these years, with
6 less than a year ago we were going to transform
7 it and then page number four they are saying oh
8 U of T wouldn't negotiate over teacher -- wow
9 that is a terrible habit. And governor Quomo
10 forced an agreement over evaluations so this is
11 a bit of a bogus excuse. By January 1st, if no
12 agreement, hum, he can be vindictive. He didn't
13 like the facts that teachers were able to keep
14 their due process so like a little child he said
15 in a tantrum and unfortunately we became a
16 target. Pretty soon so will Mayor Blumberg,
17 it's sad to say, two times citizens of New York
18 had recommended a two-term limit and he is going
19 to the third term. Thank you.

20 MALE VOICE 1: Um, hello residents. I'm
21 ESO student. I came to America last year and I
22 didn't know how to speak English at all. I was
23 very lucky because I had so many good teachers
24 last year. I didn't even know what they were
25 saying. They didn't debacle me. They gave me

1 rules in my language to try to help me, for
2 me to understand the whole class material and
3 I'm very thankful for all their work. Teachers
4 like Ms. Banks, Ms. Kelly, Ms. Murphy, those who
5 tutor me Saturdays, after school, and now last
6 year I passed all my -- with high scores.

7 [applause]

8 MALE VOICE 1: And now they're not only my
9 teachers. I feel like there's something more.
10 I feel like we are my friends. I can talk to
11 them. I can tell them my problems. I can tell
12 them whatever I want to tell them and they're
13 there to help me and listen to me and I really
14 want to see my teachers next year. I'm a junior
15 now and next year I want to see my teachers.
16 All my great teachers here with me. I want to
17 see my teachers at plum with me, celebrating my
18 graduation and this is my way of saying thank
19 you to all my teachers, the teachers who have
20 helped me so much. Thank you very much and I
21 just want to come here next year and think it is
22 a great school and thank you very much.

23 SPEAKER 2: Thank you. Speaker 6, 37, 38,
24 39, 40.

25 [applause]

1 MS. ANN MORALES: Hi, my name is Ann
2 Morales and I'm -- in this school. So I just
3 wanted to make sure that you're not fooled by
4 the amount of people that are left here because
5 as of this week we have mentors and I am here
6 supporting my school all the way.

7 [applause]

8 MS. MORALES: My personal experience about
9 life has been a rocky mountains all over the
10 place and coming to Lehman made me feel a lot
11 alive because I was very quiet and shy and I
12 became loud and happy and can personally say
13 that I have built a connection with everyone
14 here, the teachers, the staff members, and the
15 students, my peers. In the same way you all
16 have bosses, we have bosses. Our bosses are the
17 teachers and the teachers have bosses as well.
18 And if people came to you and try to change
19 everything you had gotten used to right when you
20 were about to graduate to the next level, you
21 would feel hurt and angry. I'm a junior. I
22 want to graduate next year and visit my school
23 Lehman. It's upsetting because not only are you
24 planning to take away teachers that are writing
25 my recommendation letters, that are writing my

1 recommendation letters to college that's
2 going to make my future, but you are also taking
3 away our happiness at this school. A lot of us
4 don't have a whole family. A lot of us have
5 been losing people this year and Lehman is like
6 our home to us and when you take that away it's
7 like taking away our family member so I just
8 wanted to point that out. As for this
9 opportunity I thank you all for my class. Thank
10 you.

11 [applause]

12 SPEAKER 2: Thank you.

13 MS. WENDY CORTEZ: My name is Wendy Cortez
14 and I supposed to teacher of the year at Lehman
15 and as my phone we can read it. Schools are
16 values, schools are not recyclable trash. Our
17 children are not interchangeable. Our teachers
18 are not interchangeable and yet you move our
19 policies of closure are discriminate closures,
20 reckless closures are treating us just like
21 that. It is insane to think that you're going
22 to close 33 schools and just shuffle around
23 teachers and that the kids are going to be ok
24 and the teachers are going to be ok. That's not
25 right. We are a family and this is our home.

1 And what families need in order to thrive is
2 stability, continuity, patience, and love and
3 you have heard a lot of love here tonight and
4 while this auditorium is emptying out, we're
5 still here showing that love. Ok? I love my
6 kids. I call them my kids. I have 150 kids.
7 People ask me, do you have kids? I say yes, I
8 have 150 kids.

9 [applause]

10 MS. CORTEZ: And every teacher in this
11 school feels that way and our students feel that
12 way about us. Ok? Newberg's policy is
13 basically destroying us. A school is a place
14 where you can come back and go home. I want to
15 see my kids grow up. I love it when I see my
16 kids are graduating. They come back and they
17 come back and tell me how successful they are.
18 Please do not close this school. We need to
19 stand up to a mayor that has taken our voices
20 away. If this was farm town or break night,
21 this would not be happening. And that's the
22 truth.

23 [applause]

24 MS. CORTEZ: -- and when my kids say I'm not
25 a Jew it's maybe a little bit racist.

1 FEMALE VOICE 2: I want to start by
2 telling everyone to just look around this
3 beautiful auditorium here and know that students
4 did this. Students.

5 [applause]

6 FEMALE VOICE 2: I think that is just
7 absolutely ridiculous. Imagine this was your
8 student's school. Imagine this was your child's
9 school. How would you feel? You would do
10 something about this wouldn't you? You would do
11 something. I want to ask you something. Put
12 yourself in our shoes, in the teachers' shoes,
13 in the kids shoes, in the parents' shoes. What
14 would you do? That's the question.

15 [applause]

16 FEMALE VOICE 2: I'm not typical student.
17 We are doing something about this. This is
18 going to change. We are --- I am graduating
19 here saying I went to Lehman High School and I'm
20 proud of it. Aren't you?

21 [applause]

22 FEMALE VOICE 2: I know that you are. We
23 are not going to just sit here and just talk the
24 talk. We are going to need to take action and
25 we are going to do something about it. Daily.

1 [applause]

2 MR. MARK TORRES: Good evening, my name is
3 Mark Torres and I'm a member of the people power
4 movement and we support Lehman High School and
5 Lehman United. I just want to say a couple of
6 things here. One is that the fact that Mr.
7 Polanis [phonetic]. I hope I didn't
8 mispronounce his name, did I? What's that?
9 Seranstin's [phonetic] here is an indication of
10 all the hard work you've done. And for that you
11 should give yourself a round of applause.

12 [applause]

13 MR. TORRES: Now, who said that the students
14 at Lehman as well as other high schools have
15 walked out. Understand that the staff here has
16 worked really and came up right here, you can
17 see the t-shirts and understand that the
18 administrators who love us have worked really
19 hard. Understand the parents love this school
20 have worked really hard and that's why do we
21 find it necessary to send Mr. Serantins. Now he
22 tells you when he opened up that you've already
23 won certain things from your struggle. You've
24 earned one that enough of the teachers can come
25 back. Alright? You've earned one the fact that

1 he has to tell you this to calm you all down.
2 So what I'm saying is that you've done a great
3 job up until now and you need to keep doing that
4 great job. Now, on April 19, which is 7 days
5 before the PP, there is another chance for
6 Lehman parents, staff, and students to continue
7 to do a great job. The more people we have out
8 in front of tweed on the 19th at 4:30, the
9 clearer the message is sent to Wall, Cotton, and
10 to Blumberg that Lehman is not going down
11 without a fight. That Lehman is not going down
12 at all.

13 [applause]

14 MR. TORRES: thank you. Don't let --- talk
15 each other down. They try to cut our budget.
16 They try to raise our tuition. We said if we
17 love Queenie and we did. If we love ourselves
18 and our future, which we did, then sometimes
19 we've got to shut it down. Sometimes we've got
20 to shut it down if we love it. So, the sooner
21 the students know that, we can expand that
22 walkout. All 28 schools that they want to close
23 down need to have a walkout. All parents who
24 love their children and love their schools need
25 to pull this off on April 19 because they see

1 our children as dollar signs. When they walk
2 into a school, that's dollar signs to them. And
3 if they don't get an education, they put them in
4 prison and that's dollar signs to them. So, on
5 April 19 if we love our school, if we love our
6 children, if we love our communities, then shut
7 it down. We've got to be out there on the 19th
8 in front of the sweet courthouse and we've got
9 to declare the Blumberg walkout. You cannot
10 shut down Lehman College, you cannot close down
11 future, all college futures.

12 SPEAKER 2: thank you.

13 SPEAKER 42: Yo, check this out. Just like
14 the GOP turns us back on --- My name is Jason
15 Javier. A student organizer from Washington
16 Heights where people -- I organize students
17 security and you know what? I see the same
18 problems. These boards, these officials who
19 claim to know about education and about
20 teaching, they print up these policies that
21 supposedly tell them and they make them sound
22 real good. But you know what? These policies
23 they're keeping students down and they make it
24 real difficult to go to school and get a quality
25 education. A lot of the students in -- are poor

1 schools like --- and they have a hard time to
2 get by. You know, forget we have problems
3 getting into Dodge and you know, its people like
4 them like these folks behind me that failing our
5 youth. They are, are failing our community and
6 they are failing our future with these policies.
7 So parents, teachers, staff, and students
8 Thursday, April 19 and 4:30 p.m. at the DOE
9 building, they want someone, they've got them.
10 Lehman United, Lehman United, Lehman United.

11 CROWD: Lehman United, Lehman United.

12 SPEAKER 2: 41, 42, 23, 24, 25

13 [applause]

14 MR. JOEY GONZALEZ: Hello, my name is Joey
15 Gonzales. I'm a senior at Lehman High School.
16 Everybody knows me, Captain of the handball
17 team, best in city, and I'm reading a poem so
18 I'm here to read you something. This is
19 supporting our teachers and the good students
20 that are here.

21 So I wrote Saving. Why do the young fall
22 for the blame. Why should the teachers have to
23 change? You said there's going to be a change
24 but I think the government has bad mean. You're
25 changing the teachers is going to bring us more

1 struggle and pain. Let's say you do decide
2 to do this big change. You're let whole
3 magnificent teachers to. Still there will be
4 students and once we hold our hand a mock punch.
5 So tell me government, what's your remainder?
6 Well let me tell you. -- is more a of a
7 meaning. I don't think these teachers, I
8 believe it's the students that needs to start
9 caring and that needs improvement. You're good
10 taking the good and leaving us with the bad,
11 what a great improvement. Yeah, I know, Lehman
12 has a end and by taking our only hope to the end
13 you are ---. The only ones that are here the
14 longest is the first to go. Bring us the new
15 teachers to do the job for a lot less but what
16 job are they going to do if they're getting rid
17 of the bus. The only way Lehman is going to go
18 and what it's going to be. We're not just a
19 school, we're recommend, we're a family and if
20 you break up that, how are we going to be
21 successful or succeed? These teachers are not
22 just teachers, they're our parents and they're
23 the kid. Without them we can't proceed. But
24 even our parents can only teach us so little and
25 then we grow up on our own. But you're taking

1 our parents and leaving us all alone. You're
2 not only getting rid of our second mothers and
3 second fathers and our home, where will we go
4 when we need something, where we feel welcome,
5 where we feel we can be ourselves, where we have
6 activities that help our hope. Lehman High
7 where we are and where we will always remain.
8 You can try to change our school and cause us
9 all pain but what I have here is me being the
10 same. Love you thank you.

11 SPEAKER 2: Thank you.

12 [applause]

13 SPEAKER 49: When the declaration of
14 Independence was concluded in the late 18th
15 century, our founding fathers included a list of
16 grievances to King George III. This is my list
17 of grievances to our tyrant. I'm glad to
18 announce that I now better understand the
19 process through which teachers will be evaluated
20 but I still stand by teachers have been put
21 through unnecessary strenuous pressures through
22 this school year. How can they teach? Doing so
23 is degrading their worth, their passion, and
24 their expertise as a teacher. Small schools do
25 work. My question is then who made Lehman a

1 walking school and to add to that is anyone
2 else aware of the advantages of a big school?
3 Life outside school and life in college is not
4 partitioned into small bodies of people.
5 Society is an overcrowded bureaucracy and Lehman
6 has helped me

7 [applause]

8 SPEAKER 49: And Lehman has helped me face
9 this reality, to stand up in a pool of fish. It
10 bewilders me that I'm one of the few people that
11 places an emphasis on the impact of the student,
12 it bewilders me that I'm one of the few people
13 that places an emphasis on the following point.
14 Of course teachers and administration have a
15 significant impact on the child's academic
16 success but do we take into account where the
17 student's come from, from the poverty. Someone
18 once told me that the Bronx is the poorest
19 county in the United States, not a western city
20 or a town. Last but not least, we see these
21 numbers dwindling, this is mid-term week and
22 many of us have taken time off from studying to
23 come here to fight for what's right. I need to
24 go study now so I can do great.

25 [applause]

1 SPEAKER 49: -- King George III

2 SPEAKER 2: Thank you.

3 SPEAKER 50: Good evening. I was a student
4 here in 1976 to 1980. I have been teaching here
5 since 1990 so that's half of my life. So I have
6 25 years amazing right in this building.

7 [crosstalk]

8 SPEAKER 50: Who just came to tonight and
9 just starting to -- students over here are
10 filming this event to make a documentary and
11 further students to staff here and it's just an
12 injustice that I have to stand up here after 25
13 years experience in this community and school
14 and have to defend my job because my job's on
15 the line. 100% of staffs being fired. 50% will
16 be hired. It's an injustice. And I speak on
17 behalf of all my colleagues where because I
18 believe they are all talented committed
19 individuals who work and strive to make this
20 school the best it can be and that's what this
21 is all really about. This is a hostile court
22 taking over, that's what it is. Ok? It's not
23 about education or form. It's about
24 privatization of education.

25 SPEAKER 50: Sir, it -- our union and puts

1 us -- our job on the line. Our -- is waiting
2 for -- teachers, pay for pay, you know plenty of
3 teachers hired and get rid of other teachers.
4 It is not about education reform. It is what's
5 most effective and what's most effective is not
6 in the best interest of our students.

7 [applause]

8 SPEAKER 50: I think I have the right to
9 speak and you know my daughter goes to public
10 school, I have lived in this community my whole
11 life, and I served this school for 25 years and
12 I think we are being dismissed, teachers are
13 being notified, and this is not time for --- say
14 listen cut it off. Enough is enough. That's
15 it.

16 [applause]

17 SPEAKER 50: thank you for showing up and if
18 say one thing at a time, just one union, the
19 attack the small union, the excessive -- class,
20 and those fine teachers is so unfair and I ask -
21 - competition and --- they have to be held
22 accountable. They are telling us this is right.
23 Let's fire 50% of you and hire that's 3%, that's
24 wrong. We're accountable, they're not. Let's -
25 -

1 SPEAKER 2: Thank you. 46, 47, 48, 49

2 JOSLYN: Hello, my name is Joslyn and I'm
3 going to be looking at this from the large-- but
4 everyone is so talking about statistics right?
5 Well, I'm going to go a little different. When
6 I came from this school I was a deer in the
7 headlights. I did not know what I was going to
8 do in my life. I didn't have a clue. I was
9 going to use my body in Lehman and my teachers
10 they set my path for me. I, now I have an idea
11 and I have a big idea of what I want to do and I
12 have an idea of what college I'm going to go to
13 and I understand why the teachers are-- I don't
14 understand why they have to fight for the
15 position. They're perfect. They help you
16 strive, like when they see me down they tell,
17 they ask me if something is wrong and my grades
18 are higher than I could ever imagine and --
19 about education. There's so many
20 extracurricular activities, I'm on the softball
21 team, by the way we're 4 and 2, 4 wins and 2
22 losses.

23 [applause]

24 JOSLYN: And waiting for my -- for
25 volleyball in the fall and there is so many

1 things and I don't understand why the
2 teachers have to fight for their position. If
3 they're doing everything that they can in their
4 power to help us strive. It may be the parents
5 not bringing like their students, I mean their
6 kids are in school. I just don't think it's the
7 teachers fault and my teachers are being helped.
8 I just want to say that Lehman is not even only
9 a school, it's like we're a family. Everybody
10 looks for each other. Everybody's on each
11 other, everybody says hi to each other.
12 Everybody knows everybody and to break that up,
13 it will be a shame. Thank you.

14 SPEAKER 2: Thank you.

15 [applause]

16 HALEY LOTS: Good evening. My name is Haley
17 Lots and I go to school at Lehman High School --
18 . I am here today to let you know that I am
19 part of -- and of course -- Lehman High School.
20 At the growth high school I had the opportunity
21 to receive the majority of all high school --.
22 And this wonderful -- and --Lehman High School
23 should not be closed. Good things are happening
24 here at Lehman High School. Why do we have the
25 -- to leave Lehman High School open. This

1 school has the personnel and the leadership
2 and the students we are able to move this school
3 in the right direction. We all know that the --
4 - teacher and the quality of education we have
5 at Lehman -- school-- more and Lehman High
6 school is --. The DOE never gave the
7 opportunity to --community to develop this more
8 and surprising DOE -- they-- close this school
9 down. This is a -- What-- as you can see, we
10 have the opportunity we-- you see--you see
11 people all over there--talking in the heart of
12 Lehman High School and --- before--send you a
13 message that Lehman shouldn't be closed. What
14 Lehman offers to me is --This is what Lehman has
15 to me. We all know we are --Lehman has no --
16 entire school community of Lehman High School is
17 able, willing, and able to move this thing
18 forward. Let -- do their part--

19 [applause]

20 SPEAKER 2: 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55

21 Ms. Raquel Baez: I know it's late but you
22 have to listen. My name is Raquel Baez. I have
23 lived in this community for 25 years. I am a
24 proud cousin of Jimmy Chico an English teacher
25 here at Lehman.

1 [applause]

2 MS. BAEZ: As a second year --, you know
3 why? Because she is always prepared. She is
4 working with students. She taking food on the
5 weekends. We hardly see her but, more
6 important, I'm a retired teacher. I taught for
7 38 years and I see [inaudible]. I taught for 38
8 years. All at the Department of Education D-O-
9 E. I have been in schools that have thugs. The
10 last schools I was in closed about four times
11 and let me tell you, you know we know it does
12 not work. Why would you close a school and
13 thinks should be better but they're not. It's
14 the same, same thing. It is the same policy.
15 You guys don't care. Teachers, I vowed when I
16 retired that I was going to speak up and speak
17 the truth about what really goes on at the board
18 of ed and in the schools. Nobody there said all
19 the things that go on. But then? Since 1972
20 when I started teaching, I was promised smaller
21 classroom. Has that happened? No. You should
22 at least respect and listen to the people. We
23 the people. I want to thank you for showing up.
24 And I know it's a burden and I know it's --
25 'cause everything is falling on you. However, I

1 have a question for you. Where's is Aaron
2 Blumberg? Where is --? They are --. They
3 should be visiting the schools on a daily basis.
4 Every school on this city should be.

5 [crosstalk]

6 MS. BAEZ: I'm not finished. And the last
7 thing that I have to say, you came here with a
8 proposal? I have my proposal. Let Mayor
9 Blumberg and let Wilcox teach and see how good
10 it is to learn.

11 [applause]

12 SPEAKER 2: Thank you.

13 [applause]

14 MALE VOICE 2: All right. I know --
15 Everybody that's still and money is -- I'm an
16 art teacher. I think it's important to stress
17 that. I'm an art teacher because there are so
18 few schools with art and music programs any
19 more. And I mean I really want to--I can speak
20 more forcefully but I don't think I have to.
21 I've noticed I've been watching both sides.
22 They seem to be listening and I think that there
23 is perhaps a chance to speak to you more
24 directly, not so angrily. But our school has
25 been placed under a--under such a pressure and

1 fear. There are so many teachers here and
2 it's so great and all the students that came
3 out. I'm hearing people say that it's a family
4 and a community and if you bring in 50% more new
5 teachers and replace 50% of this family, this
6 community, you're sitting on a powder keg. I
7 really want you to understand that because
8 keeping these 4,000 kids under control and
9 learning and educating and invested in their
10 work and inspired creating, it's not an easy
11 task and especially if you bring these new
12 unexperienced inexperienced teachers you will
13 have quite a hard time. You're going to have to
14 answer so I suggest to you, speaking of image, I
15 would like to keep the image of this auditorium
16 filled the way you saw it in the beginning, in
17 the mind go back and see if you can make a
18 difference with the powers that be and try to
19 safe us.

20 SPEAKER 2: Thank you.

21 [applause]

22 MR. MARTIN VELASQUEZ: Hi. I'm Martin
23 Velasquez. I'm a junior here and everything
24 sucks because if you're going to get rid of 50%
25 of the staff, let's say it's not an art teacher

1 that goes. Someone else, another junior,
2 there losing out on the teachers who have got to
3 know them the past three years and they are
4 going to lose out on people like -- am I going
5 to have some knuckle head who I've known for
6 three months running around the bleachers. And
7 the other thing is

8 [applause]

9 MR. VELASQUEZ: I'm a musician and I plan
10 to take that as my career in the future. I play
11 the drums, I play guitar, and the piano and you
12 know what? That's wouldn't be nothing if it
13 weren't for this school. I want to --

14 SPEAKER 2: Thank you

15 [applause]

16 MR. ANTHONY CERRINI: Hello, hi, my name is
17 Anthony Cerrini. I'm an English teacher here.

18 [applause]

19 MR. CERRINI: Thank you. I'm also a
20 graduate of this school. I performed on that
21 stage. I came back and I directed that stage.
22 This school means a lot to me. My family's gone
23 here. My niece graduated from here. I actually
24 had the fortunate possibly to teach her actually
25 while she was here which was a great experience.

1 And the thing that is really ironic about
2 this is as a teacher we are basically told that
3 we are supposed to provide a stable environment
4 for our students and this whole 50/50 thing to
5 me sounds a lot like divorce. You're basically
6 making the parent, the teachers and the parents
7 are fighting for custody and only one of us out
8 of the two is going to have the ability to spend
9 the weekdays with our children. It's
10 contradictory to what we're about. It's very
11 hard to think about it when you know what's
12 going to happen next year. And we don't know
13 what's going to happen tonight. And I just ask
14 you to take that into consideration and think
15 about all the amazing things that have happened
16 in this place and how well-spoken the students
17 are. They mean a lot to us and it's not about
18 us as the teachers. It's about them and what's
19 happening to them. And especially the students
20 who have been here for three years. Just think
21 about the juniors. What's going to happen to
22 them next year? Where are they? Where are the
23 teachers? Where are the people that made their
24 high school career what it was? They're not
25 here anymore. I've had students coming to me

1 and asking me for recommendations because the
2 truth is they don't if I'm going to be here.
3 And it's sad you're putting the kids in that
4 position. Because in all honesty, I'll find a
5 job if I have to, but what about them? Thank
6 you.

7 SPEAKER 2: Thank you.

8 [applause]

9 SPEAKER 2: 56, 57, 58, 59, 60

10 MALE VOICE 3: I came here with the
11 foregone conclusion that the school will be
12 closed. I think it's a lot of nonsense that you
13 didn't take our community into account because
14 DOE has said for years that they will take the
15 parents and teachers into account when they made
16 their decisions. But that's very apparent what
17 the parents and teachers of this community want.
18 It is not apparent how you are not listening or
19 you just don't have the capacity to understand
20 what going on--because it's apparent to me that
21 everybody in this community wants this school to
22 continue as it is. I just don't understand some
23 of the things they have done. I don't
24 understand why this school is singled out when I
25 can see several others in the Bronx that I would

1 not even send my son through the door of
2 those schools but they're considered fine and
3 they can exist and gone on, go forward. I don't
4 understand that. I don't understand how you
5 make your decisions or why you are making the
6 decisions. I also do know that I met with four
7 students over the past three years who have gone
8 to small school which were touted highly by the
9 guidance in our middle school and all four of
10 them after a year decided they had to get out of
11 that environment. Two of them came here but
12 apparently this is worse than where they were
13 and they are ones that should be making those
14 decisions because they don't know what they want
15 and understand what it's like to go to a school
16 that actually has caring teachers. The other
17 thing which makes absolutely no sense at all is
18 logically speaking, if we are talking about
19 staff of I don't know how many teachers, but if
20 we're going to take that staff and people that
21 are having problems with the school and I'm
22 going to take half of it and I'm going to hire
23 another 50% to replace them. First of all, can
24 you guarantee that those teachers are going to
25 be better than the ones you're getting rid of?

1 If they're not, then it's going to get worse
2 and the reality is when a teacher is new it
3 takes them a couple of years not matter how good
4 they're going to be to orientate themselves to
5 teaching and dealing with the disciplinary
6 problems in the classroom. If you have 50% of
7 the teachers are going to be new, the school
8 will truly be out of control although it's not
9 out of control now. It will be out of control
10 then if you do what you decide to do. It makes
11 absolutely no sense and I really don't care if
12 my time is up. Just like I don't care about
13 your -- because it is absolutely makes no sense.
14 The real problems are the problems that you can
15 deal with and that no community can deal with.
16 We deal with the demographic siding through a
17 large portion of the students do fail and drop
18 out. But you know what? All the parents that
19 were here, what's the percentage of the students
20 and parents that were here that are failing? I
21 guarantee you the majority of the students that
22 are from these parents graduate. I have three
23 students at the school. All three will graduate
24 within four years. That's a 100% graduation
25 rate as far as I can see. How can you take

1 students who don't have the ability to learn?
2 I understand that I should be done. This is
3 important and I really don't care.

4 [applause]

5 MALE VOICE 3: I don't care. I want-- I
6 can talk loud. Will that stop me? Drag me out.

7 SPEAKER 2: Thank you.

8 MALE VOICE 3: Don't thank me unless
9 you're going to do what I say. Why do you thank
10 me when you're going to disregard what I say?
11 That's ludicrous.

12 SPEAKER 2: thank you.

13 MALE VOICE 3: What?

14 [applause]

15 MALE VOICE 3: When are you going to stop
16 thanking me?

17 MR. SORENSKY: Everybody give a hand for
18 this man.

19 [applause]

20 MALE VOICE 3: There are people on the
21 board need to have been educated from this
22 school with these teachers because maybe you
23 would understand how things are done. You have
24 no concept of what goes on. The reality is
25 this, you have to go beyond the financial crisis

1 because the people -- have lied to everybody
2 and told the untruth and told them things that
3 weren't true because they -- and make us more
4 money financially. It's the same thing with the
5 board. You have no clue what you're doing. And
6 if you want to tell us lies and insinuate what
7 you should do, you want to have smaller schools
8 which don't work and you want to take new
9 teachers which aren't proven, how can you take
10 50%--your plan makes no sense logically. You
11 know what? Even if this was the most horrendous
12 school there is, why would you take 50% of the
13 teachers and replace them with teachers who
14 don't know what they're doing and have them take
15 a couple of years to get their orientation to
16 how to teach children. It's not going to work.

17 [applause]

18 [crosstalk]

19 MR. SORENSKY: Thank you --

20 [applause]

21 MS. TONI BASS: My name is Toni Bass and
22 I'm here to representing the counsel of student
23 supervisors and administrators and with all due
24 respect to the DOE reps who are here tonight,
25 this message is really for all of you students,

1 staff, and parents. Please note what the
2 real deal is. The DOE's latest attempt to close
3 33 schools which are already in the process of -
4 - program, it's nothing more than political
5 maneuver that's not rooted in sound education
6 practice. Rather, it began as a ploy designed
7 for a board negotiations. With CSA and the UTF0
8 for the new principle and teacher evaluation
9 systems. The -- ploy was to follow a turnaround
10 model that does not require principal and
11 teacher evaluations and allows the city to close
12 and immediately reopen schools under new names.
13 What else are we going to allow? 50% of the
14 teachers would be new while 50% of the former
15 teachers would be put into excess, -- style.
16 There is nothing educationally sound about this
17 intervention ploy. It is being introduced for
18 similar reasons not to help students. It will
19 not contribute to the development of sound
20 principal and teacher evaluations systems.
21 Furthermore, by removing half of the staff of
22 these schools and recruiting replacements from
23 other schools, the DOE will destabilize students
24 throughout the system one after another like
25 dominos. While the human costs are the most

1 important ones, there are fiscal costs too.
2 Removing 1,800 teachers and tossing them into
3 the ATR rules where they can work as substitutes
4 at full salary will cost the city approximately
5 \$180,000,000 annually. They say children first.
6 We say children when?

7 [applause]

8 SPEAKER 2: Thank you.

9 MR. ANDREW AIMES: For those of you that
10 are left, my name is Andrew Aimes. I'm a social
11 studies teacher on the team here at Lehman High
12 School. This is my ninth year here but the
13 reality is it's like my 100th year because my
14 family has lived in the Bronx for about a
15 century now. And we've gone through this
16 neighborhood. I have had several family members
17 go here, many, many friends. I have grown up
18 with a catholic education which was a great
19 thing that I'm grateful for but at the same
20 time, I was quite envious of my friends who went
21 here. -- gym, girls, I went to an all-boys
22 school of course. All the different sports, --
23 classes, etc. etc. -- and I was fortunate
24 enough to come here in 2003 to teach with the
25 great Bob Leta [phonetic] who taught me how to

1 teach. I started at a middle school in
2 Brooklyn. That school shouldn't close. That
3 schools going to close. Alright and now you
4 take Mr. Leta's school, that was called Yonkers
5 school. I only refer to the other principal,
6 Ms. Tweed, you see because when she came here
7 she destroyed it. She almost destroyed my
8 career. She asked the teachers to lie about me
9 and put me in the rubber room at the same time.
10 I was a goner-- there is nothing in my -- in the
11 six months I was gone. Ok? That's where I was.
12 The doctor said I was going to -- all because I
13 was trying to get her fired because of what she
14 was doing to the school. Alright. We got Ds
15 every year on the --. The first year we got a B
16 and then we get to F's. The 2010 school year
17 started with hundreds of students walking around
18 this building with no programs and a lot of you
19 remember that. Alright and the DOE did nothing.
20 Alright? Now we get a different principal.
21 Someone from the Bronx like me, someone who
22 cares about the school. [crosstalk] and now you
23 want to get rid of us. I don't think that's
24 very fair. I don't think a lot of the kids
25 think it's very fair. You're also making

1 hundreds of students travel all over the
2 city. We have kids from all different boroughs.
3 For what? Because your closing the big schools
4 and those high schools. Those little schools
5 don't want that because they were nothing. What
6 they did -- criteria and they want it. And the
7 fact is we put, you told them to get on the
8 sixth train and go --. When I was in high
9 school, I rode with some Truman was a real day
10 at school. But yes, you gave Truman a chance
11 and they are doing pretty good now. And now
12 you're not giving Lehman a chance? I don't
13 know. I don't really think that's fair. Thank
14 you for your time and I will leave it open
15 consideration.

16 SPEAKER 2: Thank you.

17 [applause]

18 SPEAKER 2: 61, 62, 63, 64, 65. We will now
19 begin the question and answer period. Remember
20 there will be some individual questions and
21 others that have been pocketed into categories.
22 We will have representative questions answered.
23 Any question that is not answered here tonight
24 will be answered on the website. If you have
25 additional questions at the conclusion of

1 tonight's proceedings, we ask that you direct
2 them to us and the phone number 212-374-5159 or
3 email them d08proposals@schools.nyc.gov. I'll
4 now turn the evening back over to Deputy
5 Chancellor - - for asking.

6 MR. SORENSKY: So -- of those of you that
7 have stayed. I want to recognize the fact that
8 what we heard tonight was tremendous pride in
9 this school and tremendous unity and tremendous
10 love for the work that's happened for many kids,
11 for alumni, for teachers and parents and I think
12 that's a tribute to both the folks who are here
13 this evening as well as those folks who aren't.
14 I also want to recognize that people spoke about
15 the real strengths that they see in this school
16 which include a range of things. We heard about
17 the music program, the dance program, we heard
18 about the sports teams, we heard about --, we
19 heard about classes that inspire kids, we heard
20 about great counselors, we heard about the
21 experience which the folks have had where
22 teachers have stayed long hours and worked hard
23 with kids, we've heard about students who've
24 been inspired to be poets. These are all
25 tremendous strengths and I think it's important

1 as we think about these next steps and talk
2 about a proposal that I present to you earlier
3 as well any other changes that I have and that
4 we recognize those strengths and you can rest
5 assured that the voices here that described that
6 have been heard. We are listening carefully to
7 them. I also now want to talk a little about
8 some of the questions that people came up with
9 along the way and there are also some
10 misconceptions about this process and what it
11 means. So, if you bear with me, I can actually
12 speak specifically first to some of the
13 questions and try to answer those. Not every
14 single question will be answered individually.
15 But I can try to get to as many of them as I
16 can. So, first let me just talk about the
17 question that came up about the ATD process that
18 a new school has and if this proposal were to go
19 through. Many people asked where will the
20 teachers come from. And so, when new schools
21 start there is an opportunity for them to hire
22 teachers from the existing school, teachers from
23 other schools, or in some cases, teachers who
24 are new to the system. It's not accurate --
25 that there will be a set number in the school

1 that leave. It will depend on who the
2 teachers are that apply to continue here and
3 also who the teachers that apply from outside of
4 the school and the best teachers that the
5 committee sees will be the ones that are hired.
6 And so you might see more than the 50% of the
7 current teachers continue here and you might
8 also see very experienced teachers from other
9 parts of the city decide to come over here and
10 you also might see some new teachers but the
11 suggest a way some people feel this is a cost
12 saving measure, every single teacher who is
13 currently employed by the DOE will have a job
14 within the system. So it's not actually going
15 to save money to the system. This process is
16 based on the belief that it's possible to
17 improve a school by doing a number of different
18 things and one of them has to do with including
19 a different set of team members, teachers in the
20 development of this new school but that actually
21 isn't the only part of the proposal. That is one
22 part of the proposal and it's one that got a lot
23 of attention tonight. For teachers that don't
24 decide to apply to stay here or teachers who are
25 not selected by the committee, they are

1 guaranteed a job. They do not necessarily
2 have a job in this building so they have the
3 right to apply to other buildings or if they
4 don't find a permanent place, they have a
5 temporary placement and will work as a
6 substitute teacher until they can find a
7 permanent placement. Each year there are about
8 3,000 or 4,000 teachers that go through a
9 process like this. Some of them go through a
10 process like this because their schools are
11 closed and they do not get jobs at other
12 schools. Some of them go through the process by
13 choice because they want to find a new school to
14 teach at. On the question around data and the
15 changes that have happened over time. I want to
16 be clear that if four years ago there were 2,000
17 ninth graders that entered this school. And
18 this year we have somewhere between 600 and 700
19 12th graders. Some while there are many, many
20 kids that are succeeding and making it through,
21 and doing great work and you hear from some of
22 them tonight, there are also many who are not.
23 Who are either held back or who have dropped out
24 or who have gone to other schools and those
25 voices weren't necessarily there tonight and I

1 think that even as it is important to
2 recognize the strengths in the school community,
3 it is also important to recognize that there is
4 real challenges here and there is real work to
5 be done and this is not a new problem. There
6 have been some difficult years but if you look
7 back 10 years ago, before this administration
8 the graduation rate was about the same. So it's
9 not a new problem and it's something that is
10 important to address and I think that there is a
11 legitimate disagreement actually about how do we
12 support this school faculty. What is the right
13 thing to do? And it think that's sort -- heard
14 the discussion. Many folks tonight I heard say,
15 this is the wrong strategy. This isn't going to
16 work closing the school. We don't believe it's
17 the right way to go. I think that's a fair
18 position. I respect that position. And I have
19 listened really carefully and I asked at the
20 beginning, this feedback is important and we
21 have not made a final decision yet. But I also
22 want you to understand that this is not a random
23 decision that we are proposing. This is not an
24 attempt to privatize the school. This will not
25 be a school that is a profit center as someone

1 said. This is going to continue to be a
2 public school no matter what happens. The
3 teachers will continue to be unionized. The
4 budget that is given to this school will
5 continue to be driven by the kids who are in the
6 school so those fears while they may be real
7 fears that people have, that is not part of what
8 is being proposed here. What is being proposed
9 is an attempt to try and take the real strengths
10 that we heard about tonight and create the
11 opportunity to serve more kids successfully and
12 yes there are challenges that kids bring to the
13 table and some kids don't have families that are
14 supportive and some of the parents that were
15 here tonight. Some kids come in without the
16 right attitude towards school and we need to
17 find ways to help those kids to be successful
18 where they're struggling right now. And part of
19 doing that is creating an opportunity to have
20 the strongest possible teachers here and a
21 curriculum and set of programs that are going to
22 connect with those students. Instead of -- that
23 are going to help support the development of
24 students who might come in with lots of things.
25 And so the proposal that we made is an attempt

1 to support and strengthen what's going on --
2 and it's not an attempt to punish. It's not an
3 attempt to hurt. It's not an attempt to destroy
4 and I realize that there is a lot of anger and a
5 lot of concerns about whether this will work.
6 And if it does ultimately go forward, we are
7 going to need this community to be part of
8 whatever process evolves to help shape it.
9 Someone asked about what's going to happen to
10 the name of the school and that is going to be
11 part of any process at a new school where the
12 community gets involved in helping to define
13 that as well. So, we don't know yet where we're
14 going to go, but I do want to say that whatever
15 comes out of this process, whether it Lehman
16 continues in its current form or whether a new
17 school replaces it and I just also want to be
18 clear on this, this is not going to be a small
19 school. There are some small schools that share
20 this building but the proposal is a large
21 school. The goal is to try to bring down
22 enrollment gradually so that the overcrowding
23 that people mentioned is lessened, but that --
24 approximately 3,100 students under this
25 proposal. So this is not about creating a small

1 school in place of Lehman. This is about
2 revitalizing. Taking those strengths at Lehman
3 and trying to make it better. I also want to
4 address some questions that came up around what
5 happens to seniors who might have access to
6 teachers that worked with them for contacting --
7 and other things like that. I think that's
8 important -- something that we need to address.
9 People work hard to make sure that we can
10 maintain those connections where teachers do
11 move and where they are unable to move we will
12 work with kids to make sure that they do have
13 someone that knows them well that's in the
14 position to write those recommendations. I also
15 want to address as much as I can around sports
16 teams and will they continue. Yes. In each case
17 where there's been proposals to replace schools
18 with new schools, the sports teams have been
19 able to continue. I also want to talk about
20 some of the silliest questions that were raised.
21 The -- share this facility from that she had
22 forgotten to get something that she also sent to
23 me and the chancellor not long ago. We have
24 begun a process to one by one try to address the
25 16 different issues on the list that I received

1 and of those 16, seven have been so far.
2 Another -- of -- folks to be working in
3 conditions that are not considered -- plus
4 there are -- in 2001 when was principal here in
5 the Bronx there were 21 high schools. Today
6 there are over 100 high schools in the Bronx.
7 The graduation rate has gone up 15 points during
8 that time. In the schools that were closed and
9 replaced, the graduations rates went up 30 or 40
10 points. So thousands of more kids in the Bronx
11 are graduating high school and have
12 opportunities to go on after high school and
13 take on college or other careers. And I don't
14 think that's good enough. I think that we need
15 to not only graduate our students but make sure,
16 as someone mentioned that they are college
17 graduates. But I think it is an accomplishment
18 to see thousands and thousands more kids who are
19 not dropping out who are going on and finishing
20 high school and I'm proud of that, proud to be
21 part of that. Now that does not mean that our
22 schools are bad. There are amazing arts
23 schools. Someone mentioned Truman tonight as a
24 success story and that both for Truman and --
25 that isn't a school that's going to succeed and

1 I think that there is real lessons to be
2 learned for Lehman or the new school that gets
3 created as a large school on this campus from
4 some of those successes and I know that she's
5 someone that's been willing to -- share some of
6 those graduates because we're going to need that
7 as we work to strengthen the school. I also
8 want you to know that the warmth that people
9 found to sort of come together and talk about
10 what the future of this school looks like is
11 really important work. Even if we ultimately
12 disagree and the proposal that I put forward
13 tonight is passed, I don't want to see that
14 energy and the passion that was in this room
15 tonight go away because is what this community
16 needs in order to strengthen this school and it
17 can't only be a school for half the kids
18 succeeding. It needs to be a school for 100% of
19 the kids succeeding and we need this community
20 and energy and ideas and creativity that were
21 expressed tonight to be part of that process.
22 So I can to thank you for your thoughtful
23 comments. I want to thank you for spending your
24 evening here and taking the time and **staying** as
25 late as you have and I want to assure you that

1 what was heard here will be shared with
2 chancellor as he makes his decisions.

3 [END RECORDING 290195audiopart3of3.mp3]

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zark Dickson", is written on a light-colored rectangular background.

Signature

Date April 4, 2012

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.

Maisha A. Brand

Signature

Date: April 5th, 2012.

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 Debra L. Longstaffe

Date April 5, 2012