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

**Expansion of 24Q560
from 7-12 to 6-12 @ Q891**

**February 10, 2015
5:30pm**

**Building Q891
47-07 30th Place
Queens, NY 11101.**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 [Crosstalk]

3 MR. JUAN MENDEZ: Oh, great, then we have to
4 invite to forewarn you. You overheard the
5 conversation. So, good evening everyone.

6 FEMALE VOICE 1: Good evening.

7 MR. MENDEZ: Thank you for joining us here.
8 This is a public hearing of the Department of
9 Education, Community Education Council and the
10 School Leadership Team for the proposed grade
11 expansion of the Robert F. Wagner Junior
12 Secondary School for the Arts and Technology,
13 24Q560, from grades 7th through 12th to 6th
14 through 12 school in this building Q891
15 beginning in the school 2015-16. I am and the
16 district 24 high school superintendent Juan
17 Mendez. And I welcome you. We have asked the
18 district 24 Community Education Council and the
19 School Leadership Team from Wagner Secondary
20 School to participate in this joint public
21 hearing. I'm joined tonight by Principal
22 Stephanie Vu, to my right, from the SLT, School
23 Leadership Team, and Carl Chiaramonte--I took
24 Italian--from the CEC as well as members of the
25 School Leadership Team of Wagner High School and

1 others members of the community which I would
2 like to recognize. So, we have Trevor Malay, a
3 Queens ALC at Wagner joining us here this
4 evening. We have Tammy Rose, member of the SLT
5 and a principal in the district. We also have
6 David Rosenfeld, assistant principal at Wagner,
7 Jean Dropp, PTA president in SLT, Dropp.

8 MALE VOICE 1: Drop.

9 MR. MENDEZ: Good. And Maria Gallignano.

10 MS. MARIA GALLIGNANO: Yes.

11 MR. MENDEZ: Gallignano, community associate
12 and of course, Principal Stephanie Vu. The
13 hearing is being audio.

14 MS. STEPHANIE VU: Sorry, we also have two
15 students.

16 MR. MENDEZ: And we have two student members
17 of the SLT who are here in an official capacity
18 representing the student body. They are also
19 active members of the SLT and they have a voice
20 and a vote if the SLT achieves consensus. This
21 hearing is being audio and video recorded. The
22 purpose of this hearing is for you to provide
23 comments about the proposal. Before I describe
24 the proposal I want to make sure that you are
25 all aware of the opportunity to provide your

1 input. All those who wish to speak must sign
2 in in the speaker sign up area located outside
3 this room which is normally the library which we
4 is the auditorium. The sign up list will close
5 in 15 minutes. Speakers will be given the floor
6 in the order that they have signed up. All
7 comments are limited to normally two minutes,
8 but you can speak longer than that. There may
9 be elected officials who arrive at different
10 times throughout the evening. If they wish to
11 speak we will do our best to accommodate them at
12 the first opportune moment. Those who are here
13 at the start of the public comment segment will
14 be asked to speak first. All comments will be
15 mentioned in the analysis of public comment to
16 be published and provided to the Panel of
17 Education Policy the evening before the panel
18 votes. That vote is scheduled for February 25th.
19 In addition, we welcome any comments and
20 feedback you may have at any time before the
21 panel votes on this proposal. That email
22 address and the phone number where comments may
23 be made are d24proposals, plural
24 @schools.nyc.gov. Again, d24proposals no space
25 @schools.nyc.gov and the telephone number is

1 (212) 374-7621. The summary of the proposal
2 and the impact statement both in English,
3 Spanish and other languages is available right
4 outside this room as you came in. The purpose
5 of this proposal is to expand the grades served
6 by Wagner Secondary School in existing secondary
7 school that serves students in seventh through
8 twelfth grade. The New York City Department of
9 Education believes that Wagner School families
10 will benefit if students have the opportunity to
11 attend a Wagner Secondary School for their full
12 middle and high school experiences. Currently,
13 Wagner Secondary School students must attend a
14 different middle school for one year before
15 starting at Wagner Secondary School. This
16 principal initiated proposal increases access to
17 Wagner Secondary School and creates a more
18 stable environment for students. Wagner
19 Secondary School is located building Q891 at 47-
20 07 30th Place, Queens, New York 11101 within the
21 geographical confines of community school
22 district 24. If the proposal is approved Wagner
23 Secondary School will continue to serve students
24 in building Q891. Wagner Secondary School will
25 serve students in grades sixth through twelve in

1 the 2015-2016 school year. Based on the
2 school's record of academic success the
3 Department of Education supports the expansion
4 of Wagner Secondary School pending approval of
5 this proposal by the Panel of Education Policy.
6 Beginning in September, 2015 Wagner Secondary
7 School will enroll between 50 to 60 6th grade
8 students. According to the 2013-2014 enrollment
9 capacity utilization report, so also called the
10 blue book, building Q891 has the capacity to
11 serve 655 students. If this proposal is
12 approved starting in the 2015-2016 school year
13 Wagner Secondary School is projected to serve
14 approximately 620 to 690 students in building
15 Q891, the same location. Building Q891 also
16 houses an alternative learning center that is
17 projected to serve approximately 20 to 60
18 students in the 2015-2016 school year. Lastly,
19 Middle College currently uses one specialty room
20 in building Q891. At some portions of the day
21 there are approximately 16 to 24 Middle College
22 students in the building Q891 thus in the 2015-
23 2016 school year there are projected to be
24 approximately a total of between 656 students to
25 774 students in the building Q891 at any time

1 yielding an estimated utilization rate of 100%
2 to 118%. The proposal is not expected to impact
3 the continuous seating of the ALC or Middle
4 College in building Q891. Although a
5 utilization rating nexus of 100% may suggest
6 that the building will be over-utilized or
7 overcrowded in a given year this rate does not
8 account for the fact that rooms may be
9 programmed for more efficient or different uses
10 than the standard assumption in the utilization
11 calculation. Also you are aware that schedules
12 run longer than the school day which allow for
13 higher level of capacity at any given site.
14 Additionally, this utilization rate includes the
15 maximum number of students the ALC can serve and
16 the students from Middle College who are only in
17 the building at certain times. Thus, the actual
18 building utilization rate at a given time is
19 likely lower than the maximum utilization rate
20 projected above. The next presenter will be
21 Carl Chiaramonte from the CEC who is welcome if
22 he elects to make a statement.

23 MR. CARL CHIARAMONTE: I spoke with other
24 CEC members earlier during the day and they're
25 on board with the proposal based on

1 Superintendent Mendez's statement before to
2 myself that the school is not going to be
3 impacted by the additional students. We are in
4 favor of it and we will support your decisions
5 and the public's decisions as well and the Panel
6 for Education Policy's decisions moving forward.

7 MR. MENDEZ: Thank you. So, we thank the
8 CEC for their support in this proposal. And the
9 next presenter will be interim acting Principal
10 Stephanie Vu from Wagner Secondary School.

11 MS. VU: Good evening. My name is Stephanie
12 Vu and I have the privilege of being the
13 principal of Robert F Wagner Secondary School
14 for Arts and Technology. I wanted to welcome
15 everyone here this evening to our school
16 especially our esteemed guests, faculty members,
17 parents, students and prospective families. I
18 fully support the expansion of Wagner from a
19 seven to twelve school to a six to twelve
20 school. The addition of a sixth grade would
21 complete our secondary school and there is no
22 doubt in my mind that every child will be
23 provided with a safe and quality educational
24 experience. There is a need in a growing
25 district like ours to provide top notch schools

1 for our kids to attend. With this growth
2 Wagner is able and ready to absorb the addition
3 of a new grade. As we look at our school's data
4 our middle remains at the top as well as strong
5 graduation figures in our high school. We want
6 to be the school families chose to send their
7 kids for seven years. Over the last few months
8 I have had many thoughtful meetings and
9 conversations with the Office of Space Planning,
10 the school construction authority,
11 Superintendent Mendez, New Visions for Public
12 Schools, the Wager community, the community at
13 large as well as prospective Wagner families.
14 There is a want as well as a need for access to
15 quality schools in district 24. I am positive
16 that by having the support of these
17 constituencies we will continue to provide the
18 kids of this district with access to quality
19 education. To close, I would like to reiterate
20 that as the principal of RF Wagner I fully
21 support this great expansion.

22 MR. MENDEZ: Thank you. At this time I
23 would like to invite any members of the SLT who
24 would care to make any public comments.

25 MS. TAMMY ROSE: Hello, my name is Tammy

1 Rose and I'm on the SLT. I'm going to be
2 honest. At first, when we heard the expansion I
3 was a bit hesitant. Hesitant because I love the
4 small family feel that we have at Wagner.
5 However, after speaking with the principal, the
6 vice principal, I'm very excited about this
7 possible expansion because as a member of the
8 community, an active member, if you look at our
9 district it's growing. It's getting
10 overcrowded, they're trying to find more
11 schools. I think it's wonderful that Wagner has
12 addressed that need and they're willing to open
13 it up and say let's bring that sixth grade here.
14 We have many schools around here that are
15 closing their sixth grade and we don't want
16 those families to feel displaced. We want them
17 to feel as though they have a school that they
18 can go to. By looking at Wagner for an answer
19 to that not only will they be able to go to
20 sixth grade they can actually stay here until
21 twelve which takes a lot of that pressure and
22 stress off of a family. But, it also takes the
23 pressure off the student. As a middle school
24 child there's all that anxiety that goes into
25 going to a new school. Now, they can find a

1 school not only for middle school, but also
2 high school so I'm pretty excited about the
3 expansion.

4 MR. MENDEZ: Okay. Any other members of the
5 SLT?

6 MS. MARIA GALLIGNANO: Well, my name's Maria
7 Gallignano and I am a member of the SLT. I'm
8 also the community associate here at Wagner and
9 I am a parent of a senior here at Wagner.

10 MR. MENDEZ: Wow.

11 MS. GALLIGNANO: So, I support the
12 expansion.

13 MR. MENDEZ: A kaleidoscope of perspectives.

14 MS. GALLIGNANO: To include a sixth grade.
15 Since the students approaching sixth grade are
16 already at an age where are they more
17 independent and should be introduced to a middle
18 school at this age. Also, I think that they
19 would be better prepared for the high school
20 because they can be, I'm sorry, I'm reading my
21 own, they will be better prepared for high
22 school and can be mentored by our seventh and
23 eighth grade students. Another idea that I just
24 wanted to mention was in transitioning from
25 middle school to high school I find it would be

1 a smoother and more comfortable environment
2 because they're familiar with their surroundings
3 and they know a lot of faces in the building so
4 I just feel that having a sixth grade would
5 really benefit the school and also it does help
6 the elementary schools that overcrowded and in
7 our district.

8 MR. MENDEZ: Yes.

9 MS. GALLIGNANO: That I'm finding so I'm for
10 it.

11 MR. MENDEZ: Thank you. Any other members
12 of the SLT.

13 MS. JEAN DROPP: Why did you wait so long?

14 MR. MENDEZ: Hi, Jean. As my daughter is a
15 junior so I'm basically done with all of the
16 middle school to high school stuff and they were
17 fortunate they went to a K through eight school.
18 My other child also went to a K through eight
19 school and they didn't have that middle school
20 thing. But, I also live right near 125 and I
21 see that something needs to be done and this is
22 a first step for the community. I think it's a
23 great step for Wagner, but also for the
24 community at large. I think this is a good idea
25 and it's been too long.

1 MR. MENDEZ: Thank you for your support.

2 Anyone else? Yes.

3 MR. DAVID ROSENFELD: Hi. Just to add on to
4 the other guys' comments that we've heard I
5 think that Wagner's a very unique and special
6 school and I think that to open those doors up
7 to a larger population especially students who
8 are moving out of elementary school and into
9 their secondary experience the more kids that we
10 can bring in and help see the world in a very
11 different way and really kind of begin their
12 educational lives as what will become young
13 adults in the next coming years, this is the
14 family for them. And I just fully support the
15 expansion on the notion that a whole new layer
16 of students are going to be able to get the
17 benefits of what this building has to offer. I
18 think it's just an amazing thing.

19 MR. MENDEZ: Thank you. Can you state your
20 name because for the record.

21 MR. ROSENFELD: Sorry, David Rosenfeld, the
22 assistant principal here at Wagner.

23 MR. MENDEZ: And prior we had Jean Dropp,
24 PTA president and a member of the SLT who spoke
25 prior to that. We have now concluded the formal

1 presentations and we will now open the floor
2 for public comments. Speakers will be given the
3 floor in the order that they sign up. All
4 comments are normally to two minutes but because
5 we have time I'll give you all the time that you
6 need. So, she's getting the list.

7 FEMALE VOICE 1: No one signed up to speak.

8 MR. MENDEZ: Eh?

9 FEMALE VOICE 1: No one signed up to speak.

10 MR. MENDEZ: Nobody else, okay. Would
11 anyone would like to make a statement for the
12 public comment section of this hearing in the
13 room? Okay. Very well. So again, we'll
14 welcome any comments and feedback that you may
15 have at any time before the Panel of Education
16 Policy votes on this proposal at its February
17 25th meeting. The email and telephone number
18 where comments may be made are d as in David,
19 24proposals, plural, at schools.nyc.gov. Again,
20 d24proposals@schools.nyc.gov and the telephone
21 number is (212) 374-7621, again (212) 374-7621.
22 Thank you for your participation. This public
23 hearing is now closed.

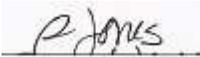
24 MS. DROPP: Was this easy or not easy?

25 [END RECORDING]

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

Signature 

Date 2/12/15