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NYC BOARD OF EDUCATION

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District #2

Contract for Excellence
Presentation and Hearing
October 26, 2011

1 MALE SPEAKER 1: So if anybody wants
2 to come up and comment on the
3 presentation or if they have any
4 questions, just let me know, okay.

5 MALE SPEAKER 2: Okay.

6 FEMALE SPEAKER 1: Thank you,
7 Reverend (ph.). Can council members come
8 back up to the table so we can use the
9 microphone so that we can record the
10 questions (indiscernible) to this. Thank
11 you, Demitri (ph.).

12 MALE SPEAKER 2: Matthew (ph.),
13 could you describe a little bit better
14 about class size reduction of the 2.3
15 million and District 2, what that
16 actually means?

17 (Indiscernible speaking)

18 MALE SPEAKER 2: Yeah. Forgive me.
19 A lot of this is also because I don't
20 understand what some of these terms mean.
21 I don't understand what "time-on task"
22 means.

23 MALE SPEAKER 1: There are
24 definitions of all those different
25 programs on the C4E website. If you go

1 to the website it gives you a breakdown
2 on the school allocation memorandum.
3 It's a school allocation memorandum
4 for -- and it gives a breakdown of the
5 six different categories. Time-on task
6 is a (indiscernible) for after-to-school
7 programs, additional instruction
8 emphasizing learning and standards. I
9 could just read them off if you want to
10 know what they mean.

11 MALE SPEAKER 2: No. Just
12 practically speaking, so class size
13 reduction, 2.3 million was spent for D-2.
14 Does that mean, basically, salaries for
15 teachers?

16 MALE SPEAKER 1: No. That class
17 size reduction really (indiscernible)
18 class to reduce the class size over one
19 grade, or (indiscernible) reduce the
20 student-teacher ratio. Those are the two
21 things we've managed with class size
22 reduction.

23 MALE SPEAKER 2: Could you give us
24 examples of what -- how that money has
25 actually been spent here in our district?

1 So for class size reduction --

2 MALE SPEAKER 1: I can't give you
3 specifics yet for District 2. I'm sure
4 we could find one if we looked at a
5 school's specific allocation.

6 MALE SPEAKER 2: Well, that's the
7 only thing we're actually (indiscernible)
8 understand.

9 MALE SPEAKER 1: Right.

10 MALE SPEAKER 2: If this money is
11 being spent effectively or if it makes
12 actual sense. Or if we actually want to
13 do some reallocation.

14 MALE SPEAKER 1: No. I didn't say
15 that. You wouldn't want to cut that.
16 You could look on the DOE's website
17 (indiscernible). I would suggest
18 contacting your specific school and
19 asking how this money is spent in the
20 school. Because I don't have that
21 information, I just have about district-
22 wide level.

23 MALE SPEAKER 2: I'm a little
24 confused then. You're presenting a
25 presentation and we need to vote on this.

1 MALE SPEAKER 1: Right.

2 MALE SPEAKER 2: So the question I
3 have is how do we vote on this if we
4 don't completely understand it?

5 FEMALE SPEAKER 1: (Indiscernible)
6 don't vote on this.

7 MALE SPEAKER 2: We're having a
8 vote? It's a -- there's a public
9 comment --

10 FEMALE SPEAKER 1: You're not voting
11 on this.

12 MALE SPEAKER 2: This is a public
13 comment hearing.

14 FEMALE SPEAKER 1: Yes.

15 MALE SPEAKER 1: Right.

16 MALE SPEAKER 2: So then how do we
17 (indiscernible) our parents about this?

18 MALE SPEAKER 3: Sir, the purpose of
19 the public comment is because New York
20 City has to submit -- New York City
21 submits a plan to the State that then
22 gets approved. There's a preliminary
23 planning, which is what Matthew just
24 presented. So public comment can help
25 tweak that plan and revise that plan, and

1 that's why the DOE is asking for public
2 comment now through the month of
3 November.

4 The formal plan or the final plan
5 gets submitted to the State sometime at
6 the end of November -- early December,
7 and then it either gets approved or not
8 approved by the State.

9 MALE SPEAKER 2: Am I
10 misunderstanding the whole point of this
11 C4E money? The whole point of this was
12 to reduce class size, correct?

13 MALE SPEAKER 3: Well, that --

14 MALE SPEAKER 2: So then it --

15 FEMALE SPEAKER 1: That was part of
16 it.

17 MALE SPEAKER 2: So what were the --
18 (indiscernible) in class.

19 MALE SPEAKER 1: That wasn't the
20 whole -- there are six programs that the
21 C4E could have gone to.

22 FEMALE SPEAKER 2: What I think I'm
23 going to do is read a sample resolution
24 sent in by the class-size numbers.
25 Because many of the whereases will

1 explain some of the questions we have.
2 So if I may? Council MacDougal (ph.), I
3 will read through the sample resolution,
4 okay.

5 "Whereas in the Campaign for Fiscal
6 Equity case, Judge Leland DeGrasse
7 concluded that New York City students
8 were deprived of their constitutional
9 right to an adequate education as a
10 result of large class sizes.

11 "Whereas the Contracts for
12 Excellence Law passed in 2007 required
13 New York City to reduce class size in all
14 grades in return for receiving billions
15 of dollars in additional state aid.

16 "Whereas smaller classes has been
17 the top priority apparent on the DOE
18 learning and violence survey every year
19 it has been given, and eighty-six percent
20 of New York City principals say they are
21 unable to provide a quality education
22 because of excessive class sizes.

23 "Whereas in 2007 the DOE submitted a
24 class size reduction plan calling for
25 average class sizes of no more than

1 twenty in grades K through three, twenty-
2 three in fourth through eighth, and
3 twenty-five in high school.

4 "Whereas DOE has received more than
5 a billion dollars in total C4E funds
6 since 2007, but class sizes have risen
7 sharply in all grades since then.

8 "Whereas this year, the final year
9 of the City's five-year mandated
10 reduction plan, class sizes are expected
11 to be the largest in eleven years in the
12 early grades.

13 "Whereas the State and the City
14 scheduled C4E presentations this year
15 after the funds had already been
16 allocated, contrary to the intent of the
17 law.

18 "Whereas there was a pre-approved
19 process in which DOE submitted its plan
20 to the State Education Department before
21 any public inquiries had occurred, also
22 contrary to the intent of the law.

23 "Whereas the City has refused to
24 hold public hearings as required by law,
25 instead providing only brief and

1 inadequate PowerPoint presentations
2 before CECs with insufficient public
3 notice.

4 "Whereas the City and the State have
5 a moral and legal obligation to provide
6 the smaller classes that the State's
7 highest court said was necessary for New
8 York City children to receive their right
9 to a sound, basic education.

10 "Be it resolved that CECD2, if we so
11 choose, raises its voice in objection to
12 the failure of the New York City DOE to
13 comply with the Contracts for Excellence
14 Law either in terms of the required
15 public process or the results in class
16 sizes.

17 "And be it resolved that the New
18 York State Education Department should
19 immediately require that DOE use all
20 available funds to hire more teachers and
21 reduce class sizes from now on, including
22 the 504 million dollars in C4E funds
23 provided this year."

24 So I'm not saying that you should
25 consider this resolution, but it has a

1 lot of information that gives you
2 background on what this is all about.
3 The bottom line is the money was won by
4 the City to reduce class sizes. The
5 subsequent negotiations between DOE and
6 the State department turned it into six
7 different program areas, but the intent
8 of the law is to reduce class sizes.

9 FEMALE SPEAKER 1: Anybody else have
10 comments (indiscernible)?

11 MALE SPEAKER 2: All right.
12 Matthew, thank you for coming. For me,
13 this is my fifth year sitting on this BEC
14 (ph.), and in every one of those years,
15 sad to say, school overcrowding has
16 increased and class sizes have gone up.
17 Worse -- worse -- two things, then I'll
18 relinquish the mic.

19 Laney Nathan (ph.), who was
20 scheduled to be here tonight, and Juan
21 Gonzalez exposed a letter that is sent
22 from then State Commissioner Steiner to
23 then Chancellor Klein, effectively
24 agreeing to what we locally know as a
25 backroom deal to in effect take the

1 earmark off of this money, throw it into
2 the educational general fund -- the
3 training programs and professional
4 development, none of which any reasonable
5 person would think contributes to the
6 reduction of class size.

7 Going back even farther, about four
8 years ago the State wrote a letter to the
9 City Department of Education asking why
10 at -- I forgot the exact number of
11 schools and the exact amount of money --
12 as memory serves it was seventy-five
13 schools and millions of dollars. The
14 City took the Contract for Excellence
15 funds designed for class-size reduction,
16 and both of the metrics being used by the
17 State: pure number of kids and student-
18 teacher ratio, they both went up.

19 So what the State wants to know --
20 and what I think many of us want to
21 know -- and I personally want to know is
22 how can the City keep taking this money,
23 class sizes go up, the defense is it
24 wasn't earmarked. And I've actually got
25 this in writing from the DOE, that were

1 it not for this money class sizes would
2 have gone up even more. To me the whole
3 thing is just simply unacceptable.

4 We want to see that money go -- as
5 per the original Campaign for Fiscal
6 Equity -- to the most needy schools who
7 Judge DeGrasse said "the more
8 disadvantaged the kids are, the more they
9 need" -- bottom line -- "smaller class
10 sizes". Yet DOE keeps putting the money
11 in the slush fund, class sizes go up:
12 this is unacceptable.

13 Thank you very much.

14 FEMALE SPEAKER 2: Anybody else have
15 any comments?

16 (No response.)

17 FEMALE SPEAKER 2: Okay. Matthew,
18 thank you so much for being here. And I
19 know you're the messenger; we did -- we
20 don't mean to shoot you.

21 MALE SPEAKER 1: Correct.

22 FEMALE SPEAKER 2: And I apologize
23 for making you wait for a long time, but
24 thank you so much.

25 MALE SPEAKER 1: You're welcome.

1 FEMALE SPEAKER 2: You can go bring
2 collective message back to the
3 chancellor.

4 MALE SPEAKER 1: I just want
5 everybody to know that there is a website
6 that you can go to if you come up with
7 something later on that you want -- you
8 know, a grievance that they want to air.

9 FEMALE SPEAKER 2: A grievance you
10 want to add, you can check out the
11 website.

12 FEMALE SPEAKER 3: Can you just tell
13 me that -- the name of that website
14 again?

15 MALE SPEAKER 1: The website.

16 MALE SPEAKER 4: For what?

17 MALE SPEAKER 5: If you're going
18 (indiscernible) --

19 FEMALE SPEAKER 1: It's on the last
20 page.

21 MALE SPEAKER 1: You can e-mail
22 contractsforexcellence: F-O-R, contracts
23 F-O-R excellence at schools.nyc.gov. And
24 they'll read those e-mails and they'll
25 reply to them. Also you can go on the

1 C4E website, which is through the DOE.
2 You can just put in a search, C4E. It'll
3 come up and this presentation will be
4 there, and there'll be a narrative and
5 some of the background information
6 (indiscernible), so you can look into
7 this a little more if you want to.

8 Thank you.

9 FEMALE SPEAKER 2: Thank you again,
10 Matthew.

11 I'm not quite sure what happened to
12 Lynn Hazan (ph.), but she is not here so
13 we'll have to skip over the agenda. I
14 have a very quick -- really quick
15 presidents report. All I have to say
16 today is that we have reached out to
17 public community boards --

18 (Audio ends mid-sentence)

19 (End of Audio)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, Avigayil Roth, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcription, to the best of my ability, of the sound recorded proceedings submitted for transcription.

I further certify that I am not employed by nor related to any party to this action.

In witness whereof, I hereby sign this date:
November 29, 2011.

Avigayil Roth

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