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

**Herbert H. Lehman High School**

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

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MR. GREG BETHEIN: Good evening, ladies and  
3 gentlemen. My name is Greg Bethein, and I'm the  
4 acting facilitator in this joint public hearing.  
5 This is a joint public hearing - - community  
6 education council and the school leadership team  
7 to discuss the proposed phase-out and  
8 replacement of Herbert H. Lehmann High School,  
9 08S405, and the proposed opening of - - location  
10 of three new high schools, 08S320, 08S348, and -  
11 - 349 with - - High School PS405. P721S - -  
12 405, - - 741 Renaissance High School - -  
13 Technology PS293, and Westchester - - 558 and  
14 the school building S405 in the 2013/2014 school  
15 year. Tonight's proceedings will be recorded  
16 and transcribed.

17 Before we begin here, I would ask anyone who  
18 wishes to speak during the public comment  
19 portion of the meeting to sign up at the table  
20 out in the lobby. The sign up will end in 15  
21 minutes at about 6:30. If you have a question  
22 that you wanted me to address during the  
23 question and answer portion of the agenda,  
24 please write the question on the index cards  
25 provided at the table and submit them to

1 volunteers who are at the table. Only people  
2 who have signed up to speak will be able to  
3 participate in the public comment period, so - -  
4 please make sure that you sign up - - . Thank  
5 you. - - here no later than 5:30 p.m., - -  
6 time. - - get started - - he or she will get  
7 the opportunity to speak at the first opportune  
8 moment. We want to be respectful of everyone's  
9 time this evening. - - elected officials who  
10 arrive at different times throughout the  
11 evening, and a number have already joined us.  
12 If they wish to speak, we will - - accommodate  
13 them at the first opportune moment. Those who  
14 are here now - - beginning of the public comment  
15 section and will be asked to speak first.

16 As you will see the full agenda is described  
17 - - . Before and after tonight's - - hearing  
18 there will be a presentation of the proposal and  
19 a presentation by hearing participants who are  
20 gathered here on the panel followed by the  
21 public comment portion. Speakers should already  
22 be signed up at the table in the lobby. Public  
23 comments should be no longer than two minutes  
24 each. This time will be strictly followed, and  
25 speakers will be informed when their - - time

1 has ended. There will also be a question and  
2 answer period. If you have a question please  
3 write the question on index cards that are  
4 provided at the table in the lobby. While  
5 public comments are taking place, staff members  
6 will organize questions - - the question and  
7 answer period. Some questions will be asked  
8 directly from the index card, and others will be  
9 - - to avoid - - . Even though all - -  
10 questions will not be addressed in the forum  
11 tonight, - - questions will be posted on the  
12 Department of Education web site prior to - -  
13 policy meeting. If at the end of the hearing  
14 you still have questions, we encourage you to  
15 direct them to us by calling the phone number on  
16 the bottom of the fax sheet or by sending them  
17 to us via e-mail to the e-mail address - - the  
18 fax sheet. That e-mail address is - -  
19 08proposals@schools.nyc.gov. Again that's  
20 the08proposals@schools.nyc.gov or by calling  
21 212-374-5159. Again, 212-374-5159. - - begin  
22 to introduce the panel. - - Suransky. To his  
23 left is Superintendent Karen Staple. We are  
24 joined by student - - . Did I say it correctly?

25 MALE VOICE: - - .

1 MR. BETHEIN: How do I say it correctly?

2 MALE VOICE: - - .

3 MR. BETHEIN: - - , my apologies.

4 [applause]

5 MR. BETHEIN: We're also joined by - - .

6 [applause]

7 MR. BETHEIN: The school leadership team  
8 member Ron Dulla.

9 [applause]

10 MR. BETHEIN: And we have other principals  
11 of the campus, Maria - - from Renaissance High  
12 School of Music - - .

13 [applause]

14 MR. BETHEIN: Frank - - from PSS721, - -  
15 School, - - joining us from Westchester Square  
16 today. We are also joined this evening by - -  
17 member, - - , and Jeffrey Greenberg from the  
18 United Federation of Teachers. - - .

19 [applause]

20 MR. BETHEIN: WE are pleased to have - -  
21 elected officials join us this evening.  
22 Katherine - - here from the Office of New York  
23 State Senator Jeff - - . Thank you for being  
24 here. Ben Imbrazi [phonetic] from Senator - - .  
25 - - is joining us.

1 [applause]

2 MR. BETHEIN: And we also have Ken Kerns  
3 [phonetic] from Bronx - - .

4 [applause]

5 MR. BETHEIN: I will now turn the program  
6 over to Deputy Chancellor Shael Suransky who  
7 will present the proposal.

8 MR. SURANSKY: Good evening. Thank you for  
9 being here this evening. Thank you - - students  
10 I see - - teachers, families and other - - .  
11 This joint public hearing - - to discuss the  
12 proposal to phase out and replace Herbert H.  
13 Lehmann High School. The decision to phase out  
14 schools is a difficult one, and a decision that  
15 we do not take lightly - - . It's really  
16 important that tonight all voices are heard, and  
17 I want everyone to understand that the purpose  
18 of this hearing is to hear - - members of the  
19 school community, so that we can be more - -  
20 chancellor has to make in order to make a final  
21 recommendation to the panel - - policy. There  
22 are a lot of different factors that we need to  
23 consider before we take action, and I think all  
24 of us count on our high schools and on this  
25 school in particular to provide a high quality

1 education to every single student who steps  
2 through the doors. When a school is not serving  
3 all of the students well, we have to take action  
4 to improve the school so that - - students don't  
5 fall any further behind, that future students  
6 will have a school that truly compares - -  
7 success after high school, in college and the  
8 work place. I want to acknowledge that tonight  
9 we will hear from students, teachers, and  
10 families and others of course in the community  
11 about those students who have been well served  
12 and are being well served by Lehmann High  
13 School, and it is important to honor those  
14 stories of success. I myself visited the school  
15 in the last couple of weeks and met a number of  
16 teachers and other staff and students - -  
17 several classes, and I also must acknowledge  
18 that there are students that the school is  
19 currently not serving well, and that's why we're  
20 here. These students are - - , and we need to  
21 figure out a school that is - - both the  
22 students that are succeeding and those that are  
23 not.

24 In addition to the proposal around the phase  
25 out, we are also discussing proposals to replace

1 Lehmann - - three different high schools, and  
2 we would acknowledge and - - mentioned that  
3 there are - - schools on campus that share the  
4 space, - - Westchester Square as well as co-  
5 located 375 - - program, PS721SX at - - .

6 On January 17th, the Department of Ed  
7 published a proposal to phase out Lehman High  
8 School, and it was revised on February 5th with  
9 additional information about a school  
10 improvement - - , and in these proposals if you  
11 have had a chance to read - - concerns around  
12 student performance. The school has - - most  
13 recent progress report, although I will note  
14 that - - the college and career - - section. -  
15 - student progress section, student performance  
16 section, and the school environment section.  
17 Lehman High School has had two - - prior to  
18 this, 2009/2010. Graduation rates remain below  
19 52% for the past five years and below 60% for 11  
20 of the past 12 years

21 Lehman High school's four-year graduation  
22 rate was 50% in 2012. The citywide average is  
23 65%. Last year fewer than half of the 900  
24 students earned 10 or more credits. This means  
25 that more than half of the current 10th-grade

1 students started the year on track. This  
2 number - - Lehman High School - - citywide.

3 Families of students have also expressed  
4 concerns about student safety on the school  
5 survey that was given last spring. Lehman High  
6 School ranks around 7% in terms of parents  
7 thinking their child is safe and about 11% - -  
8 in terms of students feeling it's safe. Given  
9 this and other performance factors, DOE believes  
10 that a serious intervention is required and have  
11 proposed a gradual phase out and eventual  
12 closure and replacement of Lehman High School.  
13 We believe that - - potential when combined with  
14 new schools opening up to create powerful  
15 learning experiences both related to distant  
16 students and future students in the community.  
17 There are several educational impact statements  
18 that describe the three new schools that are  
19 being proposed, and those statements are also  
20 subject to conversations at this hearing  
21 tonight. All three of those schools will admit  
22 students through a limited - - process, with  
23 priority given students from also the Department  
24 - - which learns that it can - - that will  
25 happen and - - academic screening program.

1           A District 75 inclusion program will also  
2 be associated with - - new District High School  
3 - - to the phase out. Before we move to the  
4 public comment section of the meeting, I would  
5 like to read - - phase-out proposal - - students  
6 and the faculty. If this proposal is approved,  
7 Lehman High School will no longer admit - -  
8 students after this year, and it would continue  
9 to phase out one grade at a time until June 2016  
10 and then it would close. Most current students  
11 would complete high school at Lehman and still  
12 remain - - on schedule and pass the requiring -  
13 - . And as the school becomes smaller students  
14 will receive more individualized attention to  
15 ensure they are getting the support they need -  
16 - Students who choose may also apply to - -  
17 school elsewhere. - - will have the opportunity  
18 to apply to a different school during round two  
19 of the - - admission process in March. Other  
20 students at Lehman High School will get an  
21 opportunity to apply for transfer to another  
22 high school as part of our - - .

23           Applications for the transfer opportunity  
24 will be available on the student - - September.  
25 Thank you in advance for all of those who come

1 out and speak tonight and others who are here  
2 to support those who are speaking. I look  
3 forward to hearing the conversation. I will at  
4 the end of the hearing after everyone has spoken  
5 come back and answer questions of everyone on  
6 the index cards and respond to some comments  
7 that have been shared.

8 MR. BETHEIN: - - you are welcome to make a  
9 statement at this point if you would like to.

10 MALE VOICE: No, - - .

11 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you very much.

12 MALE VOICE: Thank you very much.

13 MR. BETHEIN: Next are a number of  
14 presentations from the school leadership team.  
15 I'm told two things, one - - the panel. Take a  
16 seat for the moment. - - some things on the  
17 stage, and we're going to begin with a  
18 presentation I believe from - - .

19 [applause]

20 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

21 [music]

22 [applause]

23 ROBOTICS STUDENT A: What's going on, guys?  
24 We are - - . Now what we have to do during this  
25 meeting is - - voice. We also had a - - and as

1 you can see - - to do it with two or three - -  
2 at a time. So, with that said, let's - - . - -  
3 they go to all their hopes and dreams. They  
4 discover what they want in life. In this sense,  
5 Lehman High School is a shining beacon of hope.  
6 For any students who are - - , there are  
7 numerous classes and after-school programs - -  
8 student. Among such programs are - - students -  
9 - and build machines form scratch.

10 ROBOTICS STUDENT B: This team - - future to  
11 develop their skills giving them experience that  
12 far surpasses any college class. The  
13 competition is much more than just building a  
14 robot. It's about sharing experiences of - -  
15 professionalism, about gaining new skills such  
16 as machining, electrical wiring, basic  
17 engineering science, and of course problem  
18 solving.

19 ROBOTICS STUDENT A: This program has - -  
20 many engineering graduates over its ten-year  
21 lifespan. This includes many who went on to  
22 college to major in computer science, mechanical  
23 engineering and electrical engineering just to  
24 name a few. - - program at Lehman, many people  
25 not have had the - - that they enter in today.

1 Every year - - have a six-week - - . The robot  
2 will compete - - close to 70 schools for a  
3 chance to represent their region at the national  
4 championship - - .

5 ROBOTICS STUDENT B: Our school has had a  
6 great deal of success as rookie all-stars at the  
7 2003 NYC - - and the team spirit at the 2007 NYC  
8 - - . Alongside - - we were the NYC - - in  
9 2005. We were - - in 2006.

10 [applause]

11 - - and is in the Bronx High School science  
12 among other schools.

13 [applause]

14 ROBOTICS STUDENT A: - - go Lehman.

15 [applause]

16 MR. BETHEIN: I'll be representing - -  
17 regional finals on Saturday the 9th at the - -  
18 Center so I look forward to seeing - - there.

19 [applause]

20 MR. BETHEIN: - - Elvin Flores, the parent  
21 association - - . Mr. Flores.

22 [applause]

23 [music]

24 [applause]

25 MR. ELVIN FLORES: Thank you. I want to

1 welcome everyone that is here this evening and  
2 with no disrespect to the Deputy Chancellor I  
3 thank you all for being here this evening. But  
4 I don't know what statistics you're looking at  
5 because there's education going on at this  
6 school.

7 [applause]

8 My daughter graduated from this school, was  
9 on the honor roll, was - - and now my son Brian  
10 who is co-captain of the - - .

11 [applause]

12 - - I'm not a teacher, I'm not an educator.  
13 I have no skills in that field, but what I do  
14 have is passion for education.

15 [applause]

16 My home is a home of education. Lehman is a  
17 home of education. You know, we went through  
18 this, something similar to this last year, and  
19 the school was being graded on previous numbers.  
20 Now, I got to ask a question, and that question  
21 is when you hired Principal Young, did you know  
22 what you were doing because apparently you  
23 underestimated how dynamic she is - - .

24 [applause]

25 We talk about numbers, and those numbers

1 were numbers that - - in the past. My thing  
2 is you've had 12 years to address the issue, and  
3 I don't understand that. None whatsoever do I  
4 understand that, but I can tell you this I know  
5 I was taught the alphabet when I was in school,  
6 and I know - - F, I know that.

7 [applause]

8 And I know this is unacceptable. I'm going  
9 to be first to say that it's not acceptable, but  
10 I am going to be the first one to tell you that  
11 there are teachers in this school that are  
12 working - - .

13 [applause]

14 Students of this school take time to reflect  
15 on what's going on. It's important for you to  
16 understand what is happening to your school, and  
17 it's important for you to understand that you  
18 alone can make a difference. Those numbers that  
19 they were talking about, those numbers - - .

20 [crosstalk]

21 They don't. My - - to you guys is it's  
22 important as parents, the parent's association,  
23 which formed last year and had our parent  
24 association president quit in the middle of the  
25 school year, we're trying to re-establish the

1 parent association. We were told we were not  
2 able to, so we could not serve the parents of  
3 this community, but this year the parent's  
4 association has been a dedicated heartfelt plea  
5 to make sure that the parents of this community,  
6 the students of this community are well-served.  
7 I want to take one minute to introduce to you  
8 guys a couple of the members of the parent  
9 association that are here every single day  
10 working tirelessly for you, for your students.  
11 I want to introduce Elizabeth.

12 [applause]

13 MR. FLORES: Mark, Cindy and the parent  
14 coordinator, Robin.

15 [applause]

16 MR. FLORIS: All right, this is - - . This  
17 is a very - - process. There is education going  
18 on in this school, and we - - ask you guys,  
19 you're here to help, you're not here to - - .  
20 You're not. You're here to help them - - . The  
21 school is on an upswing. Why would you try to  
22 close the school? And what I don't understand,  
23 last year was - - took over this school, you  
24 came here in the middle of the school year and  
25 you needed to close - - . I don't understand.

1 Who hires someone, brings them in, and then  
2 tells them in the first couple of months you're  
3 not doing the job. You're basing that on data  
4 that's in the past. They'll be - - that Lehman  
5 is on an up swing, and we as members of this  
6 community and - - team - - letting them know  
7 that this school is important to this community,  
8 that our students are important to this  
9 community.

10 On a personal note, I - - . If you think -  
11 - came to the school, we knew nothing about  
12 robotics. We knew nothing about - - . We knew  
13 nothing about anything, okay, but the teachers  
14 that are here are tireless workers. The  
15 teachers that I see in the hallway - - school.  
16 Mr. Flores, make sure that Ryan does this. Mr.  
17 Flores, make sure that Ryan does that. I  
18 appreciate that. I really do, and - - . I've  
19 worked with teachers of other students. I've  
20 worked with parents of other students so for you  
21 to sit here and say that this school is not  
22 servicing the community, that these numbers  
23 don't reflect that, that is quite frankly an  
24 insult to - - .

25 [applause]

1           - - 20 seconds. I don't work for the  
2 school system, but I give my time because my  
3 time means a whole lot for you guys. So I ask  
4 you guys really to take note of what our young  
5 students over here on the right-hand side are  
6 modeling who graduated from Lehman High School -  
7 - .

8           [applause]

9           - - that's the kind of stuff that goes on  
10 here at Lehman High School. There are other  
11 students who have graduated from the school who  
12 have gone on to do other stuff, so I continue to  
13 ask you guys to continue to encourage each  
14 other, work hard, okay, and don't put yourselves  
15 in a position, under no circumstances, students  
16 - - don't put yourself in a position where  
17 someone is going to tell you you're not good  
18 enough because I know you're good enough.

19           [applause]

20           Last night - - support of Lehman High  
21 School, this is a great school, and I believe in  
22 anything that is going on in this school.  
23 Again, not that the - - isn't welcome here, - -  
24 Chancellor, but - - not words. - - . Thank  
25 you.

1 [applause]

2 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you. Next - -  
3 presentation.

4 [applause]

5 MR. BETHEIN: Next is - - .

6 [applause]

7 MS. ROSE LABIANCO: - - Deputy Chancellor, -  
8 - , Superintendent - - , member leader - - ,  
9 Department of Ed personnel, students and  
10 members, citywide council members, - - Lehman  
11 High School community, - - , guests, Lehman High  
12 School is a community dedicated to the perpetual  
13 learning and successful educational achievements  
14 of all of its students. I - - the principalship  
15 of Lehman High School in September of 2011, and  
16 it has been the best career choice I could have  
17 ever made.

18 [applause]

19 Staff and students embraced me from the day  
20 that I came here September 1, 2011. Since - -  
21 our school has been subject to many - - from the  
22 Department of Education inclusive of  
23 transformation and turnaround and now phase out,  
24 and we have stood resilient for our 3,000+  
25 students. - - tumultuous year and a half due to

1 the termination of the transformation model  
2 back in December 2011, last term's turnaround  
3 conditions, which included overwhelming meetings  
4 and plans for me outside of the building. The  
5 motional instability of staff and students alike  
6 from January to June, the need to interview  
7 close to 400 teachers from May to August of  
8 2012. We have shown improvements in our  
9 progress report over the past year by one letter  
10 grade, and it is my belief that - - if our  
11 community had not experienced all of these  
12 constant changes, our growth could have been  
13 more dramatic. Moreover, despite these  
14 setbacks, my own instruction plans for Lehman  
15 High School were not faulted, they were not  
16 derailed. With the assistance of our staff it  
17 was just the antithesis. These plans have been  
18 fully implemented at the onset of the school  
19 year, September 2012. My staff has embraced the  
20 new model which I am introducing, and that is  
21 called - - confidence model for large high  
22 schools.

23 This model offers the personalization and  
24 individualization of a small school through an  
25 academy-like structure underscored by the

1 wonderful curricular diversity of a large  
2 school, and this all centers around the whole  
3 child with a strong mission and emphasis on  
4 social emotional learning and growth and a  
5 student's ability to have educational choices  
6 that a large school can offer. I believe that  
7 this model and in this model large schools can  
8 exist with strong structures and students can  
9 have the best of both worlds.

10 [applause]

11 - - academies, which have designated staff  
12 that includes an academy director, two guidance  
13 counselors, one dean, one family worker, two to  
14 three school aids. Academies at Lehman High  
15 School are like small schools. They are Ann  
16 Huthinson [phonetic], - - , nursing medical,  
17 performance visual and media arts, the senior  
18 academy, and - - for over-age under-accredited  
19 students. Academies are provided with on-site  
20 training, our training and workshops from our  
21 integrated network of support services, behind  
22 the scenes in our school, which include  
23 operations, student support services, curriculum  
24 development, accountability and assessment, - -  
25 and culture and - - clients. So we have small

1 schools and a network of supports right in our  
2 building. - - the - - have even been redesigned  
3 to support academy structure and promote more  
4 contiguous space. Example, law in - -  
5 Hutchinson are found on floor one. Tech is on  
6 floor two. Nursing and medical is on floor  
7 three. The performance and visual and media  
8 arts and most of our senior academy classes are  
9 on fourth floor. Now please let - - that we  
10 share the view of the department of Education  
11 and that we must make improvements for all of  
12 our students. Thus, we have engaged in work  
13 around the data, and these are some of the data  
14 sources that we delve into.

15 Amongst the more granular sub-group data, we  
16 look at scholarship data that is going across  
17 contents. All of the four marking periods, we  
18 look at the scholarship data by academy by  
19 content. We look at students who passed all  
20 courses by academy, by cohort, by ESL, special  
21 ed, - - . We look at all students who achieved  
22 honor roll across the school. We look at all  
23 students who achieved honor roll by academy, by  
24 cohort, and we make comparisons to last year and  
25 we see growth. We see upwards of four percent

1 growth of all known scholarships from last  
2 year for the fall - - term alone.

3 [applause]

4 - - se have been - - targeted interventions  
5 and have re-thought how our school's practices  
6 and organizations can be re-designed to best  
7 meet the needs of each student and improve any  
8 areas cited by Mr. Suransky in the educational  
9 impact statements. We reflect on this data. We  
10 embrace the data. In no way is Lehman High  
11 School staff satisfied with a 50% graduation  
12 rate, and we must - - that this rate is  
13 exasperated by prior past data even prior to my  
14 leadership of September 2011. Over 150 students  
15 have been discharged with a dropout code, yet  
16 these dropout codes still remain in the  
17 graduation data, and I didn't have an  
18 opportunity to have an impact on those students.  
19 I asked myself could these numbers have been  
20 minimized with interventions, targeted systems,  
21 instructions that we are doing right now?  
22 Students who dropped out, do not attend, have  
23 long - - credit accumulation even before my time  
24 are still or were still in that cohort, and even  
25 now in the current cohort of data. However, we

1 take that data and moving forward after  
2 analysis we have implemented the following  
3 strategies to ensure an increase in this rate  
4 for our current cohort and future cohorts. We  
5 have spoken about the restructured academies,  
6 which offer more personalization, more  
7 individualization. The senior academy is an  
8 academy in and of itself so that we can target  
9 distinct needs of the seniors. We have had  
10 separate satellite academy that has been  
11 designed to focus on those under - - credited  
12 students giving them a second chance in life,  
13 provide them more options and DOE alternative  
14 schools to reverse that trend for them. The  
15 college office and our college counselors work  
16 tirelessly, and they have maintained their work.  
17 They have been attending professional  
18 developments from the Department of Education to  
19 provide our students with even greater support  
20 and mechanisms to pursue higher learning. This  
21 year and last we have increased and - - upon the  
22 credit information programs. They are enhanced  
23 by approved, on-line learning venues, flexible  
24 programming. In accordance, we have - - policy  
25 guidelines and offer multiple pathways. - -

1 School, targeted intervention, independent  
2 studies, satellite school, day school, and  
3 summer school are - - to all students.

4 [applause]

5 - - our teachers work so hard each week to  
6 work with - - . They collaborate. They look  
7 closely at student work and most - - data  
8 regarding - - ESL students, our special ed  
9 students on - - schedule - - and they create  
10 instructional change strategies to become better  
11 equipped to assist in varying groups of  
12 students. Culminating data from the fall term  
13 for our seniors reveals an increase in  
14 scholarship over the last three marking periods  
15 for all courses taken by the current cohort of  
16 students, so you see marking period one, two,  
17 three, our fall marking period data - -  
18 comparative analysis for our fantastic teams - -  
19 8%. It has gone up. We expect it to increase,  
20 and additionally we are projecting at least an  
21 increase of 4 to 5% in the graduation rate right  
22 now based on current seniors who minimally have  
23 28 credits and four to five - - . We are  
24 projecting that this number will even increase  
25 as graduation data is calculated through August.

1           We embrace the data of our school. In no  
2 way are we satisfied with a 47% credit  
3 accumulation for our incoming freshman class, as  
4 is indicated in the educational impact  
5 statement. Moving forward we have implemented  
6 the following strategies to ensure an increase  
7 in this rate of credit accumulation for our  
8 ninth-grade cohort and future cohorts.

9           They include a summer bridge program. We  
10 had our first summer bridge program last summer  
11 that - - students to high school. We had  
12 approximately 100 of our ninth-graders are  
13 cohort accumulation elective credit from newly-  
14 formed summer bridge, and they participated in  
15 social/emotional leadership programs as well. -  
16 - fall back to that academy structure. This  
17 year Lehman High School had the new - -  
18 program, the Ann Hutchinson Academy that  
19 consisted of ninth-graders at this time.  
20 Students in this academy had to meet very  
21 particular criteria from middle school. They  
22 had to present a portfolio. They had to take  
23 part in interviews. Students began their  
24 coursework at Lehman High School with honors  
25 geometry, honors chemistry, honors English,

1 honors global, Latin, Spanish or Italian and  
2 will continue with even greater rigorous  
3 coursework. It was our hope to have this  
4 academy transition into an international  
5 baccalaureate program. Four academies have been  
6 thoughtfully designed to include ninth through  
7 eleventh graders lowering student numbers and  
8 increasing the connection between staff and  
9 students providing individualized attention for  
10 each student with an emphasis upon ninth grade.  
11 There is greater teacher purity especially in  
12 ninth-grade in programming. All guidance  
13 counselors have received professional  
14 development in special education systems to be  
15 better equipped to serve students with special  
16 needs and English language learners. Attendance  
17 practices are continually being revisited,  
18 assessed and revised so that support staff can  
19 be strengthened. Social/emotional supports at  
20 Lehman High School are huge. In partnership  
21 with the Princeton Center for Learning, peer  
22 group connection that is a collaboration with  
23 the Office of School and Youth Development 100+  
24 eleventh and twelfth graders mentor 400+  
25 freshman. They are - - partnership with

1 children housed right at our school provides  
2 individual and group counseling to approximately  
3 150 at-risk students and trains students in the  
4 process of peer mediation. Peer group  
5 connection was not at our school last year for  
6 our freshman, and PWC, Partnership With Children  
7 has been strengthened, and we have even  
8 developed our own intervention team, which  
9 provides on-call services for at-risk students  
10 throughout social workers throughout the day.  
11 Teachers also have been and are continually  
12 being trained. In - - crisis intervention peer  
13 mediation, conflict resolution and restorative  
14 circles, and again credit accumulation programs  
15 are available to our freshmen as well.

16 For our freshmen we are offering greater  
17 data and college awareness. College trips and  
18 lessons are occurring on the ninth-grade level  
19 as we speak. Students have greater access to  
20 their data. This past month has been transcript  
21 review and analysis month, and it's centered  
22 around the articulation of graduation  
23 requirements. When students are articulate with  
24 their data, they have choice and they understand  
25 where they need to go.

1           In terms of technology programs like  
2 Achieve 3000, Ed Performance, Rosetta Stone  
3 determine where students are in terms of their  
4 levels and help us - - benchmarks. Lehman High  
5 School is now an - - school, and that happened  
6 just this year. It has access to a multitude of  
7 technology programs and opportunities. In  
8 addition, technology purchases which had ceased  
9 last year as a consequence of the termination of  
10 City funding under transformation has now begun.  
11 We have resumed purchasing this year and have  
12 upgraded current computers, purchased new  
13 computers, and interacted projections for every  
14 classroom. We upgraded computer labs and  
15 purchased additional media carts in an effort  
16 for teachers to differentiate their  
17 instructional practice to make curriculum more  
18 accessible to all students.

19           So, we're not satisfied with our credit  
20 accumulation for our freshmen last year. We put  
21 these interventions in place. Culling the data  
22 from the fall of 2012 revealed an increase in  
23 scholarship data over the second marking period  
24 for our freshmen for all courses taken by this  
25 cohort and improvement over 3% from last year's

1 scholarship. Data from - - fall term reveals  
2 that the percentage of freshmen students on pace  
3 to earn 10 plus credits has shown a 5.4%  
4 improvement right now if we take a look at the  
5 5+ mark over the credit accumulation of freshmen  
6 last year from the progress report. We have  
7 even identified those 44 students that you see  
8 right there, for 4.9 credits, and those students  
9 without intensive interventions can't yield, if  
10 they get those ten credits at the end can yield  
11 approximately a 16% increase over last year's  
12 progress report data.

13 [applause]

14 - - scholarship and - - child by child.  
15 That is what it is all about at Lehman for us,  
16 and as the DOE mentioned, first-year credit  
17 accumulation is the key predictor of student  
18 success, and it can help in keeping students on  
19 track to graduate in four years. The - -  
20 statement included the fact that last year  
21 three-quarters of our students only feeling safe  
22 in the building. Moving forward in safety, we  
23 have implemented the following strategies to  
24 improve climate and culture, and of course it is  
25 a work in progress. Our deans and discipline

1 office have evolved into the Office of Climate  
2 and Culture with a strong focus placed on  
3 social/emotional learning. Different - - are  
4 now enacted just by the newly designed  
5 academies. Full-time deans have been allocated  
6 in each academy thereby improving the staff to  
7 student accountability and connection. All of  
8 our deans know our students. Students know our  
9 deans and guidance staff and academy directors.  
10 Behavioral procedures and protocols have been  
11 established. Detention has evolved into  
12 behavioral support and intervention program with  
13 guidance counselors and/or social workers  
14 supporting behavior modification. Communication  
15 between designated staff around the child has  
16 been emphasized so that when the parents come to  
17 a meeting, no matter if they are meeting with a  
18 dean, a guidance counselor, a school aid, an  
19 assistant principal, the principal, we are  
20 speaking about and pull out academic data,  
21 attendance data, and behavioral anecdotal data  
22 because we understand the full perspective, the  
23 full impact of that child to help that child.

24 Parent's involvement has been strengthened  
25 100-fold at Lehman profoundly as a consequence

1 of the following interventions. We just hired  
2 a new parent coordinator. We elected a new PA  
3 executive board. Mr. Flores is our PAA  
4 associate president. Mr. Vera [phonetic] our  
5 parent volunteer. Ms. Perez, our parent  
6 volunteer, and other volunteers have been here  
7 night and day supporting our school, and we so  
8 appreciate their work.

9 Utilization of on-line program, pupil path,  
10 so that students, parents, and teachers alike  
11 can better communicate with each other, and  
12 monitor student learning and progress and - -  
13 student assignments and grades. All of our  
14 staff are using pupil path. We also use a K12  
15 phone communication system. We've improved our  
16 web site and have greater monitoring - - . We  
17 have provided parent involvement office now that  
18 is the first line of defense as parents come in  
19 from the main office in between my office and -  
20 - . We provided free adult ESL classes on  
21 Saturday beginning this spring term. And again  
22 those continued partnerships really help to  
23 strengthen the work that we do with partnership  
24 - - children. Here group connection, which is -  
25 - learning. Morning site center for teaching

1 social responsibility and our Montefiore  
2 Hospital, which is located and housed right in  
3 the Lehman campus.

4 So, culminating data from the fall term 2012  
5 indicates that principal suspensions have  
6 declined over 70% compared to the same time last  
7 school year.

8 [applause]

9 The learning environment - - 2011 that this  
10 is improvement from 2010 in all areas of  
11 academic achievement, communication, engagement,  
12 and that comes right from the - - survey.

13 Underscoring the above interventions is of  
14 course a strengthening of curriculum and  
15 instruction, which is driven by the program at  
16 our school. We have re-designed the school's  
17 program to foster an instructional lead team  
18 that is spear-headed by an academy director and  
19 assistant principal, that is comprised of  
20 teachers across the content areas, two lead  
21 teachers in English and mathematics, four  
22 instructional leads in science, social studies,  
23 English language learning and special education.  
24 And three instructional lead supports, arts and  
25 physician ed, so that we can build capacity and

1 the strength of our teachers. They meet daily  
2 with each other and weekly with the assistant  
3 principal, uniform lesson plans in place,  
4 curriculum mapping templates/assessments, and  
5 weekly professional development have originated  
6 from this team. Inter and intra academy  
7 planning across content areas are now included  
8 to promote greater collaboration around lesson  
9 planning, unit maps and the incorporation of  
10 common core learning tasks embedded in units of  
11 study. Consequently all content-specific  
12 teachers can meet simultaneously within an  
13 academy and across academies. There is greater  
14 grade level teacher purity in academies  
15 especially in ninth grade. Each week our  
16 teachers work tirelessly in case conferencing on  
17 Tuesday with students and parents, on Wednesday  
18 on increasing focus and looking at student work  
19 in varying forms of data, and every single  
20 Thursday professional development Thursdays  
21 delving into the framework of Charlotte  
22 Danielson's - - and of course common core  
23 learning standards, which add a common language  
24 that drives our instructional practice. There  
25 is increased professional development of

1 teachers in social/emotional learning and a  
2 course on science professional development,  
3 budgetary resources support, New York City  
4 writing project, - - , and scheduling of great  
5 communication.

6 Our accreditation committee this year was  
7 newly formed and - - developed, and it's  
8 comprised of teachers, a uniform grading policy  
9 that is adding informative assessments and  
10 uniformity across the school community. Lehman  
11 High School has submitted at the end of last  
12 year the application and has been selected in  
13 this year's cohort of iLearn designed for  
14 schools that wish to meet the needs of its  
15 students by providing on-line and blended  
16 learning opportunities. And just this past  
17 weekend I received an e-mail that three of the  
18 courses we submitted to the Department of  
19 Education for the college preparatory core  
20 certification have passed part one of the  
21 process demonstrating a required - - .

22 [applause]

23 The course must demonstrate either one of  
24 two outcomes, overall college persistence rates  
25 or impact on college - - rate taking student

1 characteristics into account. So  
2 congratulations to those teachers. These  
3 courses are - - virtual enterprise, computer - -  
4 four. They have - - , algebra 2, chemistry,  
5 physics, AP courses, and SUNY courses at our  
6 school, which count toward the 60 PEC index of  
7 progress report, and also this past weekend  
8 thanks to also one of the assistant principals,  
9 Mr. - - at our school, after reviewing our  
10 proposal for the 2013 emerging bilingual  
11 leadership development grant, the New York State  
12 Education Department recently informed us that  
13 Lehman High School has been tentatively awarded  
14 this competitive grant in the amount of \$30,000.

15 [applause]

16 We are very proud of that work so - - , and  
17 of course we never want to fail to mention - -  
18 offers six - - courses, honor courses, SUNY  
19 courses that add to that level of rigor to our  
20 work. Now the intervention of the Department of  
21 Ed must be noted as well. Overall 2012/2013  
22 school enrollment declined from approximately  
23 3,590 students when I took over last year to  
24 right now about 2,881, about 2890 students, a  
25 drop of more than 700 students, which is three

1 times the amount that the enrollment decrease  
2 projected by the Department of Ed in last year's  
3 impact statement. Now, this decline just  
4 occurred or enrollment reduction just occurred  
5 in September 2012 and was an intervention  
6 strategy proposed last year, and we too have  
7 assisted in this decrease as we worked with  
8 those under-credited students and equipped them  
9 with the knowledge of Department of Ed  
10 alternative transfer settings so that they have  
11 the educational opportunity they deserve.

12 Now, last December 2011 that is a year ago,  
13 the Lehman High School community had received  
14 the letter that is on the screen that indicated  
15 while the school faces challenges, phasing out  
16 is not the right - - for a school of this - - .

17 [applause]

18 - - and significant actions are needed to  
19 ensure that all students graduate from Lehman  
20 prepared for future successes. And I'm reading  
21 from the letter. Targeted support will be  
22 provided over the course of the school year with  
23 oversight from the DOE and may include a wide  
24 variety of actions and supports, such as  
25 increasing the leadership - - , strengthening

1 the - - and instructional strategies to staff  
2 working with struggling students, continuity to  
3 identify grants aimed at specific needs,  
4 reviewing existing programs and - - school  
5 register, assessing and support the development  
6 of small learning communities by decreasing  
7 enrollment. With the conditions of last year it  
8 was very possible for all of these actions and  
9 supports to come to fruition. Thus how can we  
10 be expected to show even greater progress.

11 Now, I just ask and reflect on this  
12 question. If phase out was not the appropriate  
13 action last year at this time when I just took  
14 over, how can it possibly be an appropriate  
15 action now with all of - - improvement, - - .

16 [applause]

17 - - the interventions that our school  
18 community has implemented - - .

19 [applause]

20 Through the interventions that our school  
21 community has implemented this year along with  
22 the Department of Ed lowering school registered,  
23 we are now moving toward the stages that are  
24 mentioned in that letter. This is the  
25 intervention that we need, not the extreme phase

1 of phasing out the school. This is the  
2 intervention that we need.

3 [applause]

4 So I ask you please when making your  
5 decision for the future of Lehman High School  
6 please take into consideration the  
7 aforementioned conditions, the systems, the  
8 structures, the processes, the interventions,  
9 the passion of our staff, the wonderful  
10 achievements of our students, the targeted  
11 interventions of--

12 [applause]

13 --which were planned very thoughtfully  
14 around the data. That is the only way that I  
15 proceed and in alignment with - - structure of  
16 Lehman High School coupled with the Department  
17 of Ed intervention measures in order to support  
18 student services and - - practice, drive school-  
19 wide improvement for every child and strengthen  
20 parental involvement. Since these changes were  
21 just enacted in September 2012 major effects  
22 have not yet been revealed. How can they? Yet  
23 positive trends as evidenced tonight have been  
24 seen and - - . As a consequence of just some of  
25 the interventions mentioned, I contend that the

1 central premise of these changes as embraced  
2 by my staff and community, the whole child is at  
3 the forefront of our planning and the insurance  
4 of high-quality education for all of our  
5 students. We believe these changes along with  
6 stability in our community so that we may focus  
7 on this work has already shown positive progress  
8 and will increase our capacity in terms of  
9 personnel, reveal greater positive trajectory as  
10 we move forward and sustain improvement efforts  
11 for student achievement, and I thank you ladies  
12 and gentlemen. I thank you - - .

13 [applause]

14 MR. LOU CIRILLO: Thank you, Ms. Labianco,  
15 for that inspiring presentation of the data. We  
16 truly honor you and - - . - - and greatly  
17 appreciate everything you have done for our  
18 school during - - .

19 [applause]

20 During the - - for our school, was a very  
21 profound sense of pride. I would like to inform  
22 you that I am currently engaged in my 30th year  
23 of teaching at Lehman High School.

24 [applause]

25 And it is without reservation I can reaffirm

1 that Lehman High School is making a comeback.

2 [applause]

3 The evidence is indisputable and  
4 incontrovertible. Lehman High School despite  
5 the multitude of impasses, roadblocks and  
6 arduous challenges it has faced during the past  
7 several consecutive school years is making  
8 unmistakable progress. Ninety-three percent of  
9 our June 2012 graduates are enrolled in post-  
10 secondary institutions.

11 [applause]

12 Obviously Lehman High School is doing  
13 something right.

14 [applause]

15 - - 95 of the graduates in the same  
16 graduating class, June 2012, earned awards, and  
17 the total of sum of scholarships they earned for  
18 college of - - \$8,140,456.

19 [applause]

20 Obviously, Lehman High School is doing  
21 something right. Three of our June 2012  
22 graduates earned the very highly prestigious - -  
23 Foundation scholarship.

24 [applause]

25 One in the amount of \$170,440, and another

1 in the amount of \$167,576 and a third in the  
2 amount of \$147,880. Obviously, Lehman High  
3 School is doing something right.

4 [applause]

5 - - and I'm sure you do, peruse the  
6 newspapers here in New York City on a daily  
7 basis, you'll be - - small schools, what I like  
8 to call the - - high schools, the - - schools  
9 that - - they claim that their graduation, four-  
10 year graduation rate ranges from 80% to 85%, but  
11 it's those same markers that also unequivocally  
12 state that the percentage of their graduates who  
13 are college and career - - range from only 10%  
14 to 15%.

15 [applause]

16 - - . Now, - - he acknowledges it takes a -  
17 - to six years to graduate, but based on the  
18 evidence - - 68% of our graduates are college  
19 and career ready of which - - .

20 [applause]

21 - - that Lehman - - college and career  
22 readiness. However, this is something that is  
23 not - - known. The DOE with its whole obsession  
24 with - - including - - here at Lehman is - -  
25 college-level classes were included in the

1 assessment that Lehman High School grade of  
2 college and career readiness - - .

3 [applause]

4 And again I reiterate obviously Lehman High  
5 School is doing something right.

6 [applause]

7 Now, the DOE - - progress - - we welcome  
8 their participation. However, if the DOE cannot  
9 or will not offer wise counsel, if the DOE  
10 cannot or will not offer us the resources Lehman  
11 High School desperately needs. If the DOE  
12 cannot or will not offer - - then get out of our  
13 way and let us do - - re-establishing a model of  
14 excellence Lehman High School once exemplified.

15 [applause]

16 MALE VOICE: - - side of the school. - -  
17 confidence, the confidence that I required from  
18 Lehman High School and - - atmosphere. What - -  
19 is that there is - - that the school dictates  
20 and follows - - essential interests lie. That's  
21 our freedom - - high school where - -  
22 exploration and key finances. - - arts,  
23 sciences, and humanities. We have a robotics  
24 team that engineers top - - program that also -  
25 - each and every year as well as - - . - - so

1 soon. That is something that small schools  
2 can never offer, and by - - this school it is a  
3 future of - - and uncertainty. For students - -  
4 video of - - . - - .

5 [applause]

6 [video]

7 - - therefore there should be no reason to  
8 assume that forcing - - he or she wants to - - .  
9 Without help I believe - - institution - -  
10 facilities. This is - - .

11 [applause]

12 MR. JEFFEREY GREENBERG: My name is Mr.  
13 Greenberg. I'm the - - chapter of - - SLT. - -  
14 other teachers - - . - - support of Lehman High  
15 School at this public hearing about the phase-  
16 out of our school, Lehman, one of the last - -  
17 high schools in the City of New York. - - New  
18 York City DOE - - already, but we continue to  
19 live on. At this moment we live - - DOE model -  
20 - DOE. To illustrate - - not to allow - - moved  
21 from our statistics, which - - released by the -  
22 - . Thus, a student who moved away from New  
23 York City after eighth grade who was enrolled in  
24 Lehman High School - - is part of the Lehman  
25 graduation statistics for six years, or until

1 he's - - a statistic against us. According to  
2 our records he is a non-graduate, so after three  
3 years - - past records the DOE - - somewhere to  
4 phase out - - Lehman High School - - turnaround  
5 a project high school. - - students the Courts  
6 ruled against the turnaround, and the students  
7 at Lehman continue their comprehensive  
8 education. - - the DOE said college, further  
9 education, the working force, and the - - DOE -  
10 - oh, they have programs, so the DOE - - came up  
11 with a college readiness statistic, and threw  
12 that into the school's grading, 10% of the  
13 grade, so - - evaluation tool, and we may need  
14 it for - - the year after. In his inaugural  
15 year, - - college readiness. The - - .

16 [applause]

17 Somehow this slum dog millionaire actually -  
18 - .

19 [applause]

20 So we have - - this auditorium to listen to  
21 people tell us why Lehman should continue and  
22 we've heard many already. Yet to get her, the  
23 students have participated in the - - of last  
24 year's - - turnaround model, or three principals  
25 in four years, from - - high school to - - high

1 school. Assistant principal - - to AP - -  
2 academies, whatever - - one year and out the  
3 next year or modified enough that it was  
4 unrecognizable from the previous year. All of  
5 this - - structure of the school, the students -  
6 - change, change, change. The college - - the  
7 DOE and the former principal were not letting -  
8 - run its course through a four-year cycle to  
9 find out if the students would or could improve.  
10 This has left the students and the teachers - -  
11 frustration and a sense of failure, which is - -  
12 the students' hopes and have left many of the  
13 students to the feeling that - - education - -  
14 does not have faith in them and their ability to  
15 excel. Throughout these trying times the  
16 students have weathered the storm to partake in  
17 the very - - in a large, comprehensive high  
18 school. As we have seen tonight some of the  
19 various programs have been offered. They have  
20 made it through rocky times, - - last large high  
21 schools in the city. Lehman High School has  
22 shown to be a place where students can - - and  
23 experience a variety of programs - - model UN,  
24 robotics, - - court, - - , chess club, - - club,  
25 Cisco academy, - - programs, SUNY and advanced

1 placement classes, - - classes and - - .

2 [applause]

3 These are the ones that still exist, but - -  
4 years. - - mediation and conflict resolution,  
5 peer tutoring, student council, - - school - - .  
6 These - - our students to expand their  
7 adolescent - - made available in a small school?  
8 In most cases all school - - one specialty with  
9 limited resources outside of the school's basic  
10 college readiness - - eighth grade students - -  
11 four years is limited. As students show asking  
12 an eighteen-year-old results in the same  
13 question resulting in - - three times on average  
14 in his next four years of schooling. - - is a  
15 time for exploration. Young people need to  
16 explore their possibilities and to stretch their  
17 wings. Only large schools can offer this.

18 [applause]

19 So we see - - available at Lehman. They  
20 will never be equaled by a small school. The  
21 plan envisioned by the DOE - - in education. My  
22 personal experience in helping to start a new  
23 school and watching it grow for the first six  
24 years of existence, we graduated a higher  
25 percentage of students, but these students did

1 not have a very - - indication has been made  
2 possible here at Lehman. As a result, I have  
3 learned that there is more to a high school  
4 experience than a graduation rate or a GPA. I  
5 have--

6 [applause]

7 I have dealt with many students that at a  
8 particular school - - only to find that in  
9 another two years their interest in the school  
10 specialty has waned and the student will have  
11 little opportunity to explore other - - at their  
12 high school - - students' interests - - the DOE  
13 policies he was not allowed to pursue them. - -  
14 this is implemented all of the time. So, we sit  
15 in this auditorium tonight to tell DOE that  
16 Lehman High School, a large comprehensive high  
17 school where students - - and grow to their  
18 individual responsibilities needs to stay open.  
19 As the DOE says there are choices of high  
20 schools throughout the Bronx, the choices for  
21 the students of the Bronx if the DOE closes  
22 Lehman will be a small high school. The DOE  
23 talks about choices of high schools but they do  
24 not talk about types of high schools, except for  
25 the promise - - high school assignments in a

1 small - - schools, not a large comprehensive  
2 high school such as Lehman. It is that that the  
3 DOE does not trust the Bronx students to be able  
4 to learn responsibility and to create their own  
5 culture in an environment - - that the city  
6 politicians feel that the Bronx - - need to be  
7 controlled, restricted, and oppressed, and on  
8 occasion to be stopped - - .

9 [applause]

10 So, this is - - we are - - future of our  
11 beloved Herbert Lehman High School. Will it  
12 have six schools or three schools? Will it be  
13 changed into - - losing the person's name and  
14 some history in the Bronx to be replaced by a  
15 name of a place known by George Washington as -  
16 - .

17 [applause]

18 So, I will - - to represent - - that the DOE  
19 had - - the students - - we will close you or we  
20 will not and we will support you. We will close  
21 you. No we will not. We will phase you out.  
22 So I leave you with these great written words.

23 [applause]

24 They call it - - as if in his entire life he  
25 has never had - - . He was a jack of all trades

1 - - the little town in Pennsylvania where I  
2 spent my childhood responded to him. He was  
3 four and lived in utter - - . Our townspeople  
4 which had - - did not particularly like him. -  
5 - stayed out of people's way. - - bothered no  
6 one. He had a Master's in the art of rendering  
7 himself insignificant, invisible - - . Year  
8 two, book two, - - most vulnerable year my  
9 father gave me sound advice that's been turning  
10 over in my mind ever since. Whenever you feel  
11 like criticizing anyone, he told me, just  
12 remember that all of the people in the world  
13 haven't had the advantages that you have. He  
14 didn't say any more, but we've always been  
15 unusually - - in a reserved way, and I  
16 understand that he meant a great deal more than  
17 that. In consequence, I've concluded to reserve  
18 all judgments. I have - - offered many curious  
19 - - to me, and also made me the victim of not a  
20 few - - and it goes on and on - - . But after  
21 the third book, I'm sorry but I have to read the  
22 whole book. It's - - popular or as famous as  
23 the other two books even though it's now on its  
24 60th anniversary. - - . Quick or slow?

25 MALE VOICE: Quick.

1 [crosstalk]

2 MR. GREENBERG: A little boy - - a carrot  
3 seed. His mother said, I'm afraid you - - .  
4 His father said I'm afraid it won't come up.  
5 His big brother said it won't come up. Every  
6 day the little boy pulled up the weeds around  
7 the seed and sprinkled the ground with water.  
8 But nothing came up, and nothing came up.  
9 Everyone kept saying - - come up, but he still  
10 pulled up the weeds around it every day and  
11 sprinkled it around with water, and then one day  
12 it came up, a carrot came up just as the little  
13 boy had known it would, and I thank you all - -  
14 .

15 [applause]

16 Thank you.

17 MR. BETHEIN: - - 15 minutes of school  
18 leadership team presentations. I want to be  
19 clear on the remainder of our agenda we have 60  
20 people that are signed up. - - two minutes  
21 each. That's potentially two hours. Before we  
22 do so - - elected officials who have been here  
23 since the beginning of the hearing to speak  
24 first. I would invite Council Member - - to the  
25 mic, Councilman - - , I'm sorry.

1 [applause]

2 COUNCILMAN JAMES BACHA: It's my pleasure to  
3 - - speak - - council. My name is James Bacha.

4 [applause]

5 Thank you. I proudly represent - - in the  
6 New York City Council, and I want to let the  
7 people here from the Department of Education,  
8 the - - building, the Deputy Chancellor, I want  
9 him to know that he doesn't have to close Lehman  
10 High School.

11 [applause]

12 Not only is the school, many of the  
13 students, many of you are parents, I think many  
14 of us know the history, but let's refresh our  
15 memories a bit. This building four years ago  
16 had a principal that was here for 28 years.

17 [applause]

18 The Department of education after 28 years  
19 of success he ran a building without Title 1  
20 money - - Title 1 - - millions of dollars, never  
21 had it, and in his final year the school was  
22 rated a B. But then he had - - because they  
23 didn't like the way the football team was being  
24 run, and that's why - - was told to leave, so  
25 then when he left - - the football team, they

1 put someone else here, and this person was  
2 wonderful, wonderful, and this person was given  
3 \$25,000 over and above what principals make, he  
4 or she was wonderful, wonderful, and then the  
5 Department of Education said, oh, we're going to  
6 close the high schools in the Bronx, which are -  
7 - which are almost all of the high schools in  
8 the Bronx - - started to fail, and you know what  
9 they closed those big high schools that were  
10 failing and you know where so many of the kids  
11 went because they had nowhere else to go?  
12 Lehman High School.

13 [applause]

14 We went from to 4,200 students, oh, and  
15 Deputy Chancellor Kathleen - - City Council, and  
16 I told them what was happening, I begged for her  
17 to help, I told them we were too big. Oh no,  
18 Mr. Bacha, things are going to - - . We're  
19 going to have interventions. That's what - - .  
20 When I hear that they're intervening, that's  
21 when all of us have to be frightened.

22 [applause]

23 If the - - persons, - - did to the school  
24 that brought this school to its knees, - - this  
25 school. Oh, - - the principal that they paid

1       \$25,000 over and above because she was so  
2       wonderful, they told her to leave, and then they  
3       brought on Ms. Labianco who was here 18 months  
4       and even they say she's doing a wonderful job,  
5       imagine if they said that she was doing a bad  
6       job. They're closing a school with a principal  
7       that they say is doing well. Can you imagine?  
8       So now what they do is that they say we are  
9       going to make Lehman a turnaround school. Oh,  
10      they turned it around all right. They turned it  
11      around and upside down because they said it was  
12      going to be a turnaround school, so in June the  
13      teacher was told to get rid of 30 to 50% of the  
14      teachers, and that - - the principal has to take  
15      the very, very difficult positions, the teachers  
16      went to Court and the Judge ruled that the  
17      Department of Education had no right to do what  
18      they did legally, but in the mean time do you  
19      know how many good teachers left this building -  
20      - ? Do you know how many - - were lost?

21               [applause]

22               So now, now comes the next step. The next  
23      step is that in September with our enrollment  
24      going down because now the Department of  
25      Education says, oh Lehman is too big. - - said

1 that four years ago. Maybe it was me. - - so  
2 we can make it a turnaround school, and we're  
3 going to bring the enrollment down. Ms.  
4 Labianco lost many good teachers who said if  
5 we're on the list what do we do? We had to  
6 bring in 42 new teachers in one year to Lehman  
7 High School.

8 One of the programs we brought in was the  
9 Ann Hutchinson program.

10 [applause]

11 I don't know if you all know the story, but  
12 I got stories to tell. Let me tell you a story  
13 about Ann Hutchinson. I went into the  
14 Department of Education about a year ago and I  
15 said, you know what would be nice at Lehman, a  
16 nice, small, specialized high school like  
17 American Studies at Lehman College or like - - ,  
18 maybe 100 kids in every grade. Well, the  
19 Department of Education convinced me that we  
20 have had that program at Lehman, they would drag  
21 the children out of Lehman itself and that  
22 Lehman would fail. Mr. Bacha, we don't want to  
23 do that. So I said, well, then I'll - - Ann  
24 Hutchinson - - Ann Hutchinson program. they  
25 said yes, yes, allow three classes within Lehman

1 that are Ann Hutchinson. Well, first they  
2 only gave us two classes in Ann Hutchinson  
3 because they said there were not enough ninth-  
4 graders in the entire building to fill out three  
5 classes for Ann Hutchinson, so they went back on  
6 their word, but now - - Lehman, now we know  
7 their word is worth zilch because now we know  
8 that Ann Hutchinson - - tenth, and there will be  
9 no opportunity for these children to have a  
10 program like that, or to have a - - or anything  
11 that that program would entail.

12 [applause]

13 I'm not going to let my community be sold  
14 down the river by - - don't know what they're  
15 talking about.

16 [applause]

17 People have never dealt with - - , never.  
18 I--we're better than this. You wouldn't dare do  
19 this to Manhattan where the rich people are.  
20 You bring them - - .

21 [applause]

22 We're sitting here February 26th, all of  
23 these beautiful new schools Lehman - - most  
24 love, we don't even know where they are. It's  
25 February 26th. We were told - - and 08X349.

1 Well, - - . Ladies and gentlemen, I would - -  
2 Columbus High School, a proud graduate, and they  
3 taught - - there too, my alma mater - - what  
4 they did there. Seven schools in one building,  
5 everybody on roller skates, but let me tell you  
6 something, let me--and then they say that's  
7 success.

8 The Department of Education has closed  
9 building after building. They closed school  
10 after school. They are closing the schools that  
11 they opened. They opened the school that they  
12 are closing, their own school that they opened.

13 [applause]

14 Now, I first told you, ladies and gentlemen,  
15 I first told you--I asked you to always be  
16 involved in government and - - because we don't  
17 have enough good people involved in politics.  
18 We need more good people. We need you. I don't  
19 want you to - - you are the leaders of the  
20 future, but you know something it's not wrong to  
21 be cynical. I'm cynical tonight. I'm cynical.  
22 I don't know if this is much to do about  
23 nothing, or is there really a sincerity, but  
24 I'll tell you something, I'm around a long time.  
25 I remember when this school was built. I

1 remember when my sister was in the first  
2 graduating class, and - - Westchester - - leader  
3 understand something. You are not - - school  
4 next year. Your - - will go to a - - . In a -  
5 - you will have - - zone school. Mayor  
6 Bloomberg - - he says he wants accountability  
7 and people who do not perform should be held  
8 accountable. Well, you know what I agree, but I  
9 don't blame the parents, and I don't blame the  
10 children, and I don't blame the teachers for  
11 what's happened at Lehman. I blame the - - lack  
12 of - - building who to this day have failed and  
13 now want to close another school and - - . - -  
14 .

15 [applause]

16 They've got to do it now. You notice they  
17 didn't close - - Clinton High School. Oh no,  
18 they couldn't close Clinton because of the  
19 powers that be so they come here and they think  
20 they can do this. But I will tell you that I do  
21 know who is accountable. It's people in the - -  
22 building, and they only have to look in the  
23 mirror to see who has brought this wonderful  
24 place to the state we're in. Ladies and  
25 gentlemen, ladies and gentlemen, and you parents

1 who are sitting here now until three or four  
2 years ago you had to knock down the doors to get  
3 in this building. - - the student has to knock  
4 down the door to get in this building, and now  
5 the DOE says I'm just - - . Sure there are very  
6 few applicants. The school went from a B after  
7 the new principle came to F's. Now we have a  
8 new principal digging us out of the home, and  
9 you want to close the books on us, and something  
10 tells me that this was the plan all along.

11 Well, - - .

12 [applause]

13 MR. BETHEIN: - - Office of - - .

14 MS. CATHERINE BOCHARDO: Well, good evening,  
15 everyone. I will be very brief because I know  
16 it's a long evening already. My name is  
17 Catherine Bochardo, and I'm here to read  
18 testimony on behalf of New York State Senator  
19 John Kline. As you may know, we're in the  
20 middle of session right now so he's up in Albany  
21 trying to work out issues about New York City  
22 funding, but I do want to read his testimony. I  
23 have to say I did not bring any props. I don't  
24 have any - - , but I am here testifying on  
25 behalf of our constituents whose children

1 current attend Lehman High School in the East  
2 Bronx. Senator Kline says, "I'm concerned to  
3 see that Lehman High School continues to be a  
4 target for closure by the Department of  
5 Education despite significant improvements of  
6 the school. Last year the school community  
7 rallied behind Principle Rose Labianco, a - - to  
8 the high school in order to allow her time to  
9 improve the school through her policies. I am  
10 here today to let you know that Principal  
11 Labianco has dramatically improved Lehman High  
12 School.

13 [applause]

14 From student grades to college readiness,  
15 even without the support of the Department of  
16 Education. Lehman High School is a large  
17 school, with a large - - average students. In  
18 the past year Principal Labianco has been able  
19 to improve Lehman High School on several  
20 fundamental levels even through the stress of  
21 being on the DOE closure list. First and  
22 foremost, the school in 2011/2012 received a - -  
23 progress report, which is a full letter grade  
24 improvement from 2009 to 2010. The school also  
25 received an impressive B in college readiness,

1 which many schools throughout our city do not  
2 have, but Lehman has a B.

3 [applause]

4 We have personally worked with several  
5 students from Lehman High School's senior class  
6 who have applied to top Ivy League colleges this  
7 coming fall. The school has also seen - - in  
8 student test scores. Current - - students have  
9 seen an increase of 8.21% and 9.45% respectively  
10 while incoming freshmen, the future of Lehman  
11 High School have increased their test scores by  
12 60.6%. This impressive progress has been  
13 achieved through the principal's - - system and  
14 breaking the high school in several manageable  
15 categories. But this improvement has been also  
16 made possible by the concerns and resilience of  
17 our teachers and you, the students.

18 [applause]

19 The - - system allows teacher to really - -  
20 basis for targeting support and gives adequate  
21 assistance to students who need it most while  
22 parent participation has also increased.

23 I believe that if the Department of  
24 Education made the appropriate investments in  
25 the school to provide extra support, Lehman

1 would continue to see a tremendous improvement  
2 and even flourish. The entire school community,  
3 teachers and administration, have already  
4 implemented an invitational policy for the high  
5 school which has shown positive results within  
6 just a few months. Instead of - - or phasing  
7 out Lehman - - and cutting funding for the  
8 school, the Department of Education needs to  
9 provide support services to build on the  
10 progress already being made. So, yes, we still  
11 have a lot of work to do, but it is our hope  
12 that Lehman High School will remain open. I  
13 know that with the proper supports we can make  
14 it great again. Thank you for your  
15 consideration.

16 [applause]

17 MR. BETHEIN: Next Assemblyman - - office -  
18 - .

19 [applause]

20 BEN: I'm here tonight to represent the  
21 Assemblyman. The Assembly is not - - he was an  
22 educator. He was a teacher for 26 years before  
23 going into the Assembly. - - ; however, - -  
24 administrators and the teachers and the - -  
25 community of Lehman High School. Simply put, I

1 believe that the proposal to close Lehman High  
2 School is wrong. The DOE has said that Lehman  
3 High School is not performing up to the level  
4 that they think is appropriate. However, when -  
5 - ? Only after the DOE removed the principal  
6 that had successfully run the school for over 25  
7 years and replaced him with a new principal of  
8 its own choosing who did not measure up to the  
9 task of keeping Lehman's educational - - sound.  
10 Thus their own handpicked principal - - .

11 Furthermore, the special education  
12 population at Lehman has increased over recent  
13 years due to the policy of the DOE. We embrace  
14 the students - - we also know that they will  
15 bring down the overall school, the score of the  
16 school. They - - reason the DOE is using--it  
17 seems that the reason that the DOE is using to  
18 close Lehman High School without - - poor  
19 overall educational performance has been the  
20 cause of these whole failed policies. It's like  
21 - - and then - - DOE has caused problems - - .  
22 A year and a half ago the DOE finally had the -  
23 - to inspect Lehman High School. It selected -  
24 - , and - - .

25 [applause]

1           - - has been at the helm - - progress has  
2       been made and continues to be made today, even  
3       with the - - instructions - - school.

4           We have seen this type of progress at Lehman  
5       that allows - - . - - who came - - four years  
6       ago and didn't speak a word of English - - Bronx  
7       science desk and - - just four days ago - - .

8           [applause]

9           I - - , but we cannot overlook the school -  
10      - Lehman High School with the - - program,  
11      dedicated teachers set the stage for - - like  
12      this to reach the American dream. - - I urge  
13      the DOE to - - Lehman High School - - over the  
14      last year and a half and evaluate the position  
15      based on the positive - - and not on any other  
16      external dispute that you may have with the  
17      school. Thank you.

18          [applause]

19          MR. BETHEIN: From the Bronx Borough  
20      President's Office, - - . Is - - still here?  
21      Again, I would call - - .

22          [applause]

23          MR. KENNETH KERNS: Well, it's very  
24      interesting for me to be here again. I did this  
25      last year. So, now I'll do it again, just like

1 all of us, and hopefully this time maybe the  
2 department will change or will actually listen  
3 to us. This is - - school, and--

4 [applause]

5 --part of our community, and you know, I've  
6 - - built around the same time as Lehman High  
7 School, as Stevenson High School, as Truman High  
8 School. John F. Kennedy High School is no more,  
9 - - , and the Department of Education - - first  
10 times the Bronx that did that, and - - because  
11 Jonathan - - get a chance to organize - - and  
12 kept the school alive. We just were phased out,  
13 and it happened so fast - - . And that's - -  
14 because - - schools do, and so - - we don't  
15 want to see that happen to you guys. - - so I  
16 have a letter that - - but unfortunately to the  
17 DOE - - the letter went out - - .

18 [applause]

19 - - Chancellor - - junior high school or  
20 more recently - - portfolio that the school was  
21 slated for closure and - - high schools are - -  
22 the cite. Mr. Chancellor, this is not the first  
23 occasion that we have - - on a subject because -  
24 - requested that the school be removed from the  
25 closure list. We felt then as we do now that

1 the school is a - - students - - the school.  
2 They - - success. Our - - as well as our - -  
3 that the school should be allowed to move  
4 forward. Having said this, - - suggestion for  
5 restructuring. The trend in the agency is - -  
6 four schools, I'm sorry - - schools. Bronx - -  
7 . Students - - special ed schools. They also  
8 have to attend - - schools. Our community - -  
9 hospital and the Bronx - - Bronx - - Center.  
10 The - - Center. - - scientists who provide jobs  
11 for thousands of our residents. - - alone was  
12 18,000 people, and - - .  
13 - - an opportunity to - - doctors and - -  
14 nurses and give help to those who are - - really  
15 any - - subject. Thank you for your attention  
16 and consideration. It's our sincere hope that  
17 the school stays open. We don't want to see - -  
18 . We don't want to see - - . We have a - -  
19 East zone school and a specialized school within  
20 - - . We thank you.

21 [applause]

22 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you, Mr. Kerns. I - -  
23 sense of - - the agenda. - - teachers - - just  
24 a second. - - we have one more student - - that  
25 I was asked to play by the School Leadership

1 Team. We'll play that - - five or six minutes  
2 or so. - - break in between the formal comments  
3 up here and the beginning of public comment. We  
4 have about 60 names on the list for public  
5 comment, also some may have left by now, but  
6 we'll go through each of those names and - - has  
7 an opportunity to speak. We are - - public  
8 comments that are offered. We want to make sure  
9 - - will be here to do that. so with that let  
10 me call - - teachers, - - as well as - - the  
11 District representative - - .

12 [applause]

13 MS. JANELLA HAYES: Good evening. My name  
14 is Janella Hayes. I'm the vice president of  
15 academic high school - - .

16 [applause]

17 I will start my comment by applauding all of  
18 you for coming out here this evening. Thank you  
19 - - listen to the arguments that should be made,  
20 but it's absolutely disgusting. It's  
21 disrespectful to this community to these  
22 students and these families that you have to beg  
23 this DOE to give you a chance, to give you an  
24 opportunity to restructure, to give you the  
25 opportunity to remain at the - - address that.

1 This community has the right to have a strong,  
2 good, effective community school. You have the  
3 right, and the thinking that the only successful  
4 school can be a small school is false. There  
5 are successful large schools all across this  
6 country, and with the right support, with the  
7 proper resources, with the leadership of the  
8 strong principal that you have here, who is  
9 ready to do the work that needs to be done,  
10 right? You've already done it, over the last -  
11 - she has already done it. With additional  
12 support, additional resources, so tell me - -  
13 we're going to prove it - - school.

14 This building is over-utilized. That is not  
15 taking into account when you think about the  
16 closure, or the failure, the lack of success of  
17 the school. It's - - false the Bronx community  
18 high schools. But this - - has created - - for  
19 this school not to have the success it deserves,  
20 and so what I have to say on behalf of the UFT  
21 and on behalf of my colleagues who are sitting  
22 over there, on behalf of all of the educators  
23 who work hard every single day in the school  
24 building with these students, is take into  
25 consideration what you have heard this evening,

1 take into consideration the goals that have -  
2 - , the data that has been presented. Take into  
3 consideration the opportunity you not just to  
4 shut a school down and start fresh, but to think  
5 about the kind of - - that can be made in the  
6 community to build, to bring about a re-birth in  
7 a large community high school - - . You're  
8 ready for that kind of birth, right? You're  
9 ready - - ?

10 [applause]

11 - - I'm asking you to - - to reconsider this  
12 proposal to close Lehman High School.

13 [applause]

14 KENNY: If I sit over there, - - the DOE and  
15 say gee, - - . My name is Kenny - - . I am a -  
16 - of the - - UFT. We are - - the DOE proposal  
17 to phase out Lehman High School. - - high  
18 school - - opportunity to reach every single  
19 high school in the Bronx, and that's - - that  
20 Lehman High School is a great - - .

21 [applause]

22 At Lehman High, the principal, staff and  
23 leadership, even the - - assure you that if the  
24 DOE backs up and allows the Lehman staff to do  
25 their job, they'll do it - - .

1 [applause]

2 Let us not forget that Lehman High School  
3 along with very few other schools was about the  
4 DOE and UFT agreeing - - confidential - - . The  
5 DOE never gave Lehman High School - - the  
6 opportunity to develop this model. That was a  
7 clear violation of that agreement.

8 [applause]

9 - - the DOE cannot - - for Lehman High  
10 School, - - . In this matter the DOE was trying  
11 to get rid of Lehman High School once and for  
12 all and bring a charter school with a different  
13 name - - other school. UFT and - - together and  
14 sued the DOE and we won the case and Lehman  
15 stayed open.

16 [applause]

17 But that was only six months ago. Now, the  
18 DOE - - again, - - to close Lehman High School.  
19 - - next week, phase out Lehman High School.  
20 Ladies and gentlemen, this is a joke. The DOE  
21 should stop - - . Let - - . What the DOE - -  
22 shut down and - - school, and Lehman is the next  
23 in line for them. But let me tell you that we  
24 have been - - that Lehman cannot be - - .  
25 Lehman - - . Lehman needs to be here - - .

1 [applause]

2 Lehman needs to receive the necessary  
3 resources and support to move forward. You are  
4 - - improve a school - - . - - think for a  
5 moment - - in this - - . Leave Lehman High  
6 School open. Leave Lehman High School alone.  
7 Thank you.

8 [applause]

9 MR. BETHEIN: - - .

10 [applause]

11 COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE: Good evening. I  
12 brought - - . I'd like to first address the  
13 city-wide - - of the DOE and - - at Lehman High  
14 School. Once again, the DOE has - - for  
15 closure, the latest - - anything - - . - - to  
16 turn the school around. They don't have  
17 "effective - - " from the state. They don't  
18 have proficient - - . The DOE shouldn't take  
19 aim at schools and - - playing a game of Russian  
20 roulette. This DOE - - children and families.  
21 Lehman High School, Rose Labianco - - last year.  
22 She made plans. She made changes. This is a -  
23 - school. Changes - - slow and small at first.  
24 Since she took over at - - the school was first  
25 labeled transformation, then turnaround, then

1 phase out. When these changes in designation  
2 happened, a different kind of - - a different  
3 limitation, a different professional development  
4 is required. Mrs. Labianco - - staff - -  
5 constant - - . They can't fulfill and improve -  
6 - yet she did it. Because - - . All - - staff  
7 members - - . A teacher effectiveness model  
8 was used, but when the turnaround came around,  
9 that model wasn't used any more so that - -  
10 forgetting the change in professional  
11 development and teaching methodology. Student  
12 enrollment would stay high. - - . Parents were  
13 concerned. They - - again - - chosen to do.  
14 She made it improve. She made this whole - -  
15 changes and improvements even with all of these  
16 problems.

17 To close the school now after installing a  
18 principal with vision, one who has demonstrated  
19 her dedication to - - without - - would - - .  
20 It's a scam, and it's a scam on students and - -  
21 . Education at Lehman has been disrupted  
22 enough. Let it stabilize. Allow us to provide  
23 education - - . Table - - and let it be claimed  
24 by the - - people and - - .

25 [applause]

1 MR. BETHEIN: - - list of district  
2 representatives, elected officials, the  
3 leadership team - - short break now for our  
4 students here at Lehman High School can use that  
5 as a break before we transition into the full  
6 public comment. Thank you.

7 [music]

8 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you. Now we will begin  
9 public comment. I would remind - - two-minute  
10 procedure. Time will be kept - - and we will  
11 signal when you have 30 seconds remaining to - -  
12 time is up to allow you to finish your thought.  
13 As a reminder, please keep - - time. We'll  
14 raise - - 30 seconds remaining and again when  
15 your time is up. We want to make sure that  
16 everyone's voices are heard this evening, so  
17 please be sensitive to those who are - - trying  
18 to keep their comments to a certain time limit.  
19 I would now call on speakers - - CSA. I'll call  
20 speakers 2 through 5 starting here on the right  
21 with speaker number two, Jay Suni, speaker  
22 number three, Kimberly Cionca, speaker four  
23 Anthony Cerin, and speaker number five - -  
24 Rodriguez. As you come up, please - - at the  
25 table and - - .

1 [applause]

2 MR. JAY SUNI: Hi, my name is Jay Suni, and  
3 I am a senior at Herbert H. Lehman High School.

4 [applause]

5 Why did I come here? Oh, I know, - - the  
6 Department of Education is - - after my school  
7 even though we have improved across the board -  
8 - . Instead of being here - - I should be home  
9 studying for my AP psychology test.

10 [applause]

11 I should be home - - for the remaining tests  
12 that I have - - . But - - so remind me that - -  
13 . It's - - said that the DOE is trying to - -  
14 that come with it, such as the - - of AP  
15 classes, or the opportunity to have - - . Last  
16 summer - - coordinator of student activities I  
17 had the privilege of - - . - - to work in a  
18 hospital as a neurosurgeon. I can - - say that  
19 I am now preparing for my future - - whether I  
20 was in - - .

21 [applause]

22 So I ask you to please reconsider your rash  
23 decision and allow - - to have a chance to shine  
24 without interference. Thank you.

25 [applause]

1 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you.

2 MS. KIMBERLY CIONCA: Dear ladies and  
3 gentlemen, my name is Kimberly Cionca, and I am  
4 a senior here at Lehman High School as well as  
5 the current salutatorian. I am in support of  
6 keeping my high school open because I  
7 wholeheartedly believe that - - . After  
8 countless - - I have concluded that the - - . -  
9 - that such a decision is not for education  
10 reform, but instead large school obliteration.  
11 Ninety-nine percent of - - universities that I  
12 apply to are large schools.

13 [applause]

14 - - opportunities much like the reality of -  
15 - High School and much like the - - . Now, - -  
16 high school is in dire need of improvement, and  
17 our administration has already taken the first  
18 steps. However, I insist let's go back to the  
19 drawing board for education reform. - - because  
20 - - the scope of education. One wouldn't be  
21 able to say that they - - law or AP - - shape  
22 their future in a school with very few academic  
23 options. An aspiring journalist like me won't  
24 be able to say that the - - class that they - -  
25 . Further, more this I have established

1 Lehman's first ever broadcast news - - .

2 [applause]

3 - - . Thank you.

4 MR. ANTHONY CERIN: I'd like to ask  
5 everybody to - - just one thing. How would you  
6 describe the last 13 years of your life. If I  
7 had to answer, I would give you one word,  
8 Lehman. When was the last - - complain about -  
9 - take our jobs, - - blah, blah, blah. The  
10 truth is you don't have to listen to a teacher  
11 say that because I'm a student. I graduated  
12 from here. I came back because this place is -  
13 - . It doesn't have to end right there. My  
14 sister - - .

15 [applause]

16 - - positive things in the community. I  
17 hated English when I came here. I come from a  
18 family of accountants who were confused at the  
19 fact that I'm an English teacher. I went on to  
20 graduate with highest honors in English in my  
21 Department in college. How did that happen if I  
22 - - English with two years or so left? - - a  
23 couple of questions. One, why are our students  
24 here instead of home studying or in some - -  
25 after-school activity? Two, if it's so bad

1 here, why are so many former students teachers  
2 here? How can we succeed when we're constantly  
3 being told that we fail? How can we instill a  
4 sense of family when the DOE is constantly  
5 tearing us apart? How can pride grow in  
6 constant scrutiny, and ultimately why can't we  
7 all just get along? Thank you.

8 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you.

9 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Good evening - - . I want  
10 to put you all right here, - - you came into my  
11 class the other day and you - - participating.  
12 If I'm not getting along - - you. I want our  
13 voice to be heard. I want to inform you that  
14 I'm in AP English class, I'm in AP science  
15 class, and my average this year has gone up to a  
16 95. - - I went to my - - and my studies have  
17 been - - the teachers and the staff, by my  
18 principal, Ms. Labianco and every classmate I  
19 have got - - this school, I can - - geometry. I  
20 didn't know geometry, and I didn't know algebra.  
21 I wasn't that bad - - . I didn't know - - my  
22 voice be heard. How is it that I have learned  
23 all of that while being in school? How is it -  
24 - my Lehman High School - - I wouldn't be  
25 standing up here giving this speech so that you

1 all - - .

2 [applause]

3 As a student I am - - to be here to support  
4 their students.

5 [applause]

6 A building without kids is not a school. So  
7 let me tell you right now it's not the teachers  
8 who are failing because I've been with them. I  
9 know - - students - - . You have to do the  
10 work. You've got to pass. You've got to  
11 graduate. You've got to put your mind to the  
12 future. It's their fault? I don't think so.

13 [applause]

14 MR. BETHEIN: - - speakers 6-10, - - speaker  
15 seven, Jason Padera, speaker number eight  
16 Christine Roland, speaker number nine Eugene  
17 Lee, speaker number ten, Ruchir Shah.

18 MS. MARISOL SANTAN: Yes, good evening to  
19 everyone. First of all, I want to thank God for  
20 Lehman High School and staff. - - is my  
21 daughter. - - what she said. I have a son - -  
22 this, and when he entered the school as a ninth-  
23 grader he had a traumatic - - surgery. He was  
24 disabled, and when he was - - in the tenth  
25 grade, the teachers became my ally. This school

1 gave me the support to push my son forward.  
2 My son - - . He's in college, and I am very  
3 grateful - - the teachers, the counselors, the  
4 staff, the principal, that they - - extra time  
5 to those childrens, and my daughter she is an  
6 excellent - - . As a ninth-grader she was an  
7 honors student, so what went wrong? Nothing. -  
8 - if Lehman needs help, help them out. Help  
9 these young kids to make it through, - - future.  
10 Don't push them down because they get - -  
11 everyone gets tempted to give up. You was  
12 tempted to give up when you was in high school  
13 and somebody helped you move forward. Why don't  
14 you - - that helped you when you was tempted to  
15 give up. No - - down here. Lift them up. - - .

16 [applause]

17 Thank you.

18 MR. BETHEIN: Next, Mr. Padera?

19 MR. JASON PADERA: Good evening, my name is  
20 Jason Padera. I'm a person here in Lehman High  
21 School. I want to share part of my testimony  
22 here. When I was a freshman - - of high school.  
23 I felt like - - in my way due to the - -  
24 environment - - individual. Starting my junior  
25 year with only 0.58 credits, I see myself - -

1 but God had different plans for my life.  
2 Thanks to the staff, teachers, guidance  
3 counselors, and - - , one year later I - - to  
4 graduate - - .

5 [applause]

6 Last night I - - I received two awards. The  
7 first award I received was a physical fitness  
8 award, and the second one was a - - award. - -  
9 potential. Since she has stayed here, she  
10 rarely - - most hard working and truly  
11 supportive person I know - - . Give her the  
12 chance to make this school number one. If it  
13 was not because of the help that the staff  
14 members, teachers, counselors, - - and most of  
15 all God, I would not - - to graduate. Thank  
16 you.

17 [applause]

18 MR. BETHEIN: - - .

19 MS. CHRISTINE ROLAND: Good evening. Thank  
20 you. My name is Christine Roland, and I'm here  
21 from Christopher Columbus High School with my  
22 principal, Lisa Fuentes [phonetic] so that - - .

23 [applause]

24 - - to celebrate some very good news for  
25 Lehman High School. Every year New York State

1 releases a report called public participation  
2 and - - by a school, and it's a longitudinal  
3 report. It looks at student achievements in  
4 college. It measures the percentages used from  
5 - - school that actually get 30+ credits in the  
6 first two years in New York State public  
7 colleges. Now, the year in question the  
8 graduates of 2006/2007 how they did in college.  
9 Lehman had 631 graduates that year of whom 403  
10 were low-income students. Of those students,  
11 62.5% made the 30+ credits - - actually of the  
12 68 schools in the Bronx with a report that year,  
13 Lehman ranked fifth.

14 [applause]

15 That's the fifth after Bronx Heights,  
16 Clinton, American Studies and one other, only  
17 one small school beat out Lehman, and it was  
18 Aster Academy - - . - - Black or African  
19 American students, 15 percentage points above  
20 the state average, and an important - - to make  
21 is that college readiness is one score. Lehman  
22 students are ready for college unlike--they  
23 don't have to negotiate and organize in a large  
24 setting. Even the - - are 23,000 students and  
25 an 11-step process to negotiate just to get

1 through the registration process. If you've  
2 been in a small setting - - four years that may  
3 be a very daunting experience. So thank you,  
4 and I wish you well in your - - . Thank you.

5 MR. BETHEIN: - - .

6 MR. EUGENE LEE: Good evening. My name is  
7 Eugene Lee. I'm assistant principal of the tech  
8 academy. I'm here to speak on behalf of the  
9 students in our career and technical education  
10 programs and ask you to respect them, to allow  
11 them to continue to be provided - - educational  
12 opportunities of the students of New York City.  
13 We have several well-developed - - programs that  
14 are serving our students well including  
15 television, film and media, information  
16 technology, weather - - , engineering robotics,  
17 entrepreneurship, computer apprentice and law.  
18 Each of these programs is led by a highly-  
19 qualified and dedicated teacher with extensive  
20 professional experience in their respective  
21 fields.

22 Just to name a few our media program is led  
23 by award-winning director, Mr. James - - .

24 [applause]

25 Students - - have the benefit of learning -

1 - great teacher also - - .

2 [applause]

3 - - who is highly - - by two professionals.

4 Mr. Lynch who - - engineering program has 20

5 years of professional experience as an

6 electrical engineer.

7 [applause]

8 I can't possibly tell you everything about

9 all of these programs, but allow me to share a

10 few highlights of the IT program. Students

11 learn IT certifications such as Cisco,

12 Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard, Networking Plus, B

13 Plus, B certification that qualifies them for

14 employment in the IT industry - - credit. These

15 students gain hands-on experience with

16 internships. This - - students installed new

17 computers in 44 classrooms. They updated and

18 rewired two computer classrooms, set up the new

19 computer lab and our new teacher's center.

20 Since the inception, hundreds of - -

21 students have - - IT certification. Some of

22 them have - - Google, Microsoft, Nasa. Some of

23 then are so excited by their experience here at

24 Lehman that they have returned to - - career as

25 technology engineers.

1           this year three - - students in my class,  
2 Jason - - and - - , and a- - are here at Lehman  
3 as mentors, as student teachers in our  
4 technology program, just as - - impact on our  
5 program that this school has had on their lives.  
6 Think of that - - these programs have on our  
7 students. - - respectfully ask you to allow us  
8 to continue to do it. Thank you.

9           MR. BETHEIN: - - 15 - - number 11 Steve  
10 Kane, number 12, - - , number 13, Rosemary  
11 Martinez, number 14 Jason Roads. Number 15,  
12 Devin Kearns.

13           MR. RUCHIR SHAH: My name is Ruchir Shah.  
14 I'm a math teacher at Lehman High School. I've  
15 also taught - - for the past six years. Can you  
16 all hear?

17           [crosstalk]

18           MR. SHAH: With that being said, I would  
19 like you to direct your attention to the screen  
20 here. This is the real report. What you want  
21 to examine here is a couple of statements. I'm  
22 going to take you to a number of pages where you  
23 can examine the truth.

24           If you examine the first paragraph, however,  
25 under the Bloomberg administration, a school

1 report card has substituted a real  
2 comprehensive strategy to improve struggling  
3 schools serving the cities highest need  
4 students. Okay, now they have substituted a  
5 strategy instead and chosen to close schools - -  
6 . If you examine--let's go down a paragraph,  
7 further down, nearly half of the 11 out of 25 -  
8 - are schools opened during this administration,  
9 a cycle of closure that damages students and  
10 communities without accomplishing any actual  
11 school improvement. There is no data that would  
12 show - - is going to do any better, none.

13 Let's go to the next page. All right, their  
14 own, next page, further down, right there.  
15 Okay, a little further up. Okay, they have  
16 their own consulting group, however they don't  
17 listen to them. We're talking, okay, right  
18 here. I have known since early 2006 the steps  
19 necessary to improve both graduation rates and  
20 meet the needs of - - students. However, this -  
21 - group commissioned by the New York City  
22 Department of Education issued a report that  
23 recommended specific steps for the reform of New  
24 York City Schools. They're not following it.  
25 They're not taking it into consideration. The

1 point is, I could go on and on. The point is  
2 this wasn't done, the right thing was not done.  
3 I'll add this little comment. I'm not here to  
4 ask anybody to do anything. They very well know  
5 what they need to do. - - .

6 Have the courage to say no. Have the  
7 courage to face the truth. Do the right thing  
8 because it is right. These are - - keys to  
9 living your life. Vince Lombardi said it's not  
10 really if you get knocked down. It's whether  
11 you get up. Thank you.

12 [applause]

13 MR. BETHEIN: - - .

14 MR. STEVE KANE: - - Steve Kane. I'm a art  
15 teacher here at Lehman High School. I'm a  
16 teacher for 17 years, and - - passionate about -  
17 - passionate about school. - - morale this  
18 year. - - numbers and are things we actually -  
19 - research, and I actually - - stats of some of  
20 those - - 663 students throughout our school, -  
21 - university, AP and college-level classes, and  
22 that's amazing because a lot of them are - -  
23 students, and a lot of them are ELL students.  
24 We - - everyone. I myself teacher two SUNY  
25 classes, and to get SUNY approval it's more than

1 writing a fancy curriculum. They actually  
2 come and they watch the students. It's not  
3 about the teacher. The teacher writes the  
4 curriculum, that's true. - - they come to watch  
5 the students. They make sure that our students  
6 are engaged. They make sure our students are  
7 critically thinking. They make sure that our  
8 students are working at the college level and  
9 then they approve the class, and we have ten  
10 different subjects approved by SUNY Albany based  
11 on those facts. In addition, we also have a  
12 large - - program all in New York City. We are  
13 - - .

14 [applause]

15 - - huge school with student interest and  
16 teachers to teacher those classes. A Newspaper  
17 man came to one of those classes. We - -  
18 student program - - was fortunate to teach those  
19 students this year. They're wonderful. They're  
20 smart, and they're - - ultimate academic.  
21 Smaller schools try, but they have - - . And  
22 one last thing we need - - large - - students  
23 with disability and students - - , and that's a  
24 fact. We include a diverse population of self-  
25 contained team, teaching ELLs and District 75

1 students, and this is the first year we are  
2 the only school where special education teachers  
3 and content area teachers have time together so  
4 that - - . Thank you.

5 [applause]

6 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you, - - .

7 MS. ROSEMARY MARTINEZ: Hello, good evening  
8 everyone. My name is Rosemary Martinez - - .

9 MR. BETHEIN: Hold on just a second. I just  
10 want to make sure is - - here, speaker 12?

11 [crosstalk]

12 MR. BETHEIN: My apologies, - - .

13 MS. MARTINEZ: Hello, good evening,  
14 everyone. My name is Rosemary Martinez, and I  
15 am a proud Lehman - - . I believe that - -  
16 Department of Education should give Ms. Labianco  
17 - - the opportunity to prove to you that we can  
18 make this school a B+ school. Please give us a  
19 chance to take our school - - community. I love  
20 - - . Thank you.

21 [applause]

22 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you. - - . Theresa  
23 Rhoades? Okay, we'll move on to speaker 15,  
24 Devin Kearns.

25 MR. DEVIN KEARNS: Good evening, - - before

1 I got up here. I grew up pretty far from the  
2 Bronx, about 15 minutes away in New Jersey. I  
3 went to a local - - high school about a mile  
4 from my house. I received a great education.  
5 We had diverse programs. We had - - . We had  
6 electives and for my - - I decided I want to  
7 come here to - - . I moved to the Bronx. I  
8 went to Manhattan College and - - education.  
9 There I was fortunate enough to student teach at  
10 - - Clinton High School, another great, large,  
11 comprehensive high school that offered a diverse  
12 education. After I graduated college at 22-  
13 years-old, I was very thankfully and luckily  
14 accepted for a position here at Herbert H.  
15 Lehman High School. Well, let me tell you  
16 something, when you are 22-years-old and you are  
17 thrown into a classroom in the Bronx, it's one  
18 of the scariest things in the world, it really  
19 is. But I was fortunate enough to be put into a  
20 department with over 20 teachers, every single  
21 one of them with many years of experience,  
22 several of them over 20 years of teaching  
23 experience and they took me under their wings.  
24 They helped me get through all of those  
25 difficulties, you know, - - issues, lesson

1 planning issues, and they befriended me and -  
2 - I became a good teacher, the teacher that I am  
3 today.

4 [applause]

5 After four years of working at Lehman High  
6 School, last year I - - program under the - -  
7 called turnaround. Through this program many  
8 teachers report - - all know, and many teachers  
9 were told that they were not expected to come  
10 back into this school. Because of this, after  
11 already seeing many of my friends - - dozens and  
12 dozens of years being thrown out, kicked out the  
13 door, I decided I could no longer work here and  
14 I left this school. - - very much because this  
15 is a really important and wonderful place and a  
16 great school. I'm telling you this because  
17 obviously - - many examples of the changes that  
18 the staff has had to undergo, the difficulties  
19 the staff has had to undergo. We have had  
20 dozens and dozens of new teachers this year, and  
21 still they are fighting for the kids in the  
22 school. The teachers who are making - - are  
23 still here fighting for the school. You need to  
24 give this school the - - opportunity - - model  
25 every six months, not change the principal every

1 two or three years. You need to allow the  
2 school under the current model, a real  
3 opportunity to grow and development into the  
4 school that it once was, into the school that it  
5 can be, thank you.

6 [applause]

7 MR. BETHEIN: - - .

8 MS. LINDITA TOOKY: My name is Lindita  
9 Tooky. I'm a senior at Lehman High School.

10 [applause]

11 - - first the safety part. I've heard that  
12 too many parents were concerned with school  
13 safety. One, - - the principal two hours a day  
14 because - - just like - - secretary, and I find  
15 - - . She'll stop what she's doing, take a  
16 parent and talk to them, help them out. I don't  
17 understand why parents are complaining and not  
18 doing anything about it. You could help pick up  
19 - - phone calls and no parents are concerned - -  
20 concerned about their student safety. So that's  
21 all I got confused about that. Then - - . I  
22 was among many students that were in her office,  
23 that we were speaking about how she wanted a  
24 better school and - - the school and make it  
25 academies - - . One question she asked of us

1 was how could she help us. That's what she  
2 asked us, not how we can--how we can make it  
3 look like we're doing better, but how she can  
4 help us and the academies have helped us a lot.  
5 Thirdly, I - - better than us, but I - - better  
6 than them on competition, and mock trial,  
7 actually - - mock trial because we just won the  
8 - - competition and - - two weeks ago so we - -  
9 practicing, but they're not. They're here, and  
10 - - support. And I just want to say that I love  
11 her, and I don't know if I can say that as a  
12 student, but she's amazing. So thank you for  
13 your time and I hope - - .

14 [applause]

15 MR. BETHEIN: Next - - , speaker 18 Janell -  
16 - , speaker 19 Danti Craig [crosstalk] and  
17 speaker 20 Nancy Chiniti. Speaker 17, - - .

18 MS. CHIPADDI NZE: Hello. [crosstalk] - -  
19 yeah. Teacher, you know. Anyway, I am known as  
20 Chichi, but all my brothers here - - . I've - -  
21 since I was 12 - - .

22 [applause]

23 So I would like to begin--good evening,  
24 welcome to - - home, Lehman High School. This  
25 is a home of - - , a home of - - . - - . Well,

1 - - you're here - - . - - decorations here -  
2 - . It's gorgeous. - - .

3 I came here timid, almost voiceless. You  
4 hear my - - , but thanks to my - - and so many  
5 more - - in the world. I - - shall not be  
6 moved. My advice - - . So, - - .

7 [applause]

8 MR. BETHEIN: - - .

9 MR. DANTI CRAIG: - - . Hi, everyone. It's  
10 Dante - - .

11 [crosstalk/applause]

12 I was - - school. I came here from a  
13 struggling school. I was - - unprepared for  
14 high school. I - - senior class - - my school.  
15 It was - - to realize that perhaps - - . Like -  
16 - but how can you as a student sit here and say  
17 that you don't want - - Lehman High School and -  
18 - . You know what I--now I'm 76 out of like  
19 what 800 students. I don't know - - myself. I  
20 have - - .

21 [applause]

22 I mean it's not about - - . Anything above  
23 that - - . - - your name, - - right? - - we're  
24 not stupid. We're - - whatever. We have - -  
25 potentially. We sit there and we - - and if

1 teachers say something like - - you know, I  
2 remember what you said in the class today - - .  
3 We think about those things. We're an 18, 17,  
4 16, I was 17 last year. We're not - - 15-year-  
5 old, - - talking to all those people, talking to  
6 all those reporters - - . Closing out schools,  
7 -phasing them out, it's wrong. Give us a  
8 chance. Thank you.

9 [applause]

10 MR. BETHEIN: - - .

11 MS. NANCY CHINITI: My name is Nancy  
12 Chinita, teacher of Italian here at Lehman High  
13 School since 1987.

14 [applause]

15 I am here to urge you not to phase out  
16 Lehman High School. It's wrong and will  
17 jeopardize the opportunities that this Bronx  
18 community can offer our public school students.  
19 I would like to emphasize I - - University of  
20 Albany and New York City College. In addition  
21 to our advanced placement courses, we offer  
22 college courses, not simply college-level  
23 courses, in multiple subjects, affording our  
24 students the opportunity to gain maturity, self-  
25 discipline and a higher standard of achievement

1 as well as the unique possibility to gain  
2 three or four college credits per course, which  
3 are transferable to virtually every university  
4 in the United States, including Cornell and  
5 Columbia University. We are the only school in  
6 New York City with this program. We have over  
7 660 different students enrolled in at least one  
8 college offering, - - different courses, and 47  
9 different - - sections. Mrs. - - , Mr. - - and  
10 our teachers worked tirelessly to craft this  
11 program. This program would not be possible in  
12 a small school setting. This is due only to our  
13 structure as a - - comprehensive model. Small  
14 schools lack the programming possibilities to  
15 make this happen. Furthermore, we offer at  
16 Lehman three distinct foreign language tracts,  
17 all of which terminate in college and AP  
18 offerings. Only Lehman is able to make it  
19 possible for even our students with disabilities  
20 to be earning college credit and create - - to  
21 create readiness. Our students are proud to  
22 participate in our college program, which  
23 equally enriches their self-esteem. Gracias.

24 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you. - - 21, - - ,  
25 speaker 22, - - , speaker 23, - - , speaker 24,

1 - - , and speaker 25, - - .

2 MR. PETER CORUCCI: - - . I'm - - Corucci,  
3 assistant principal of Lehman High School. - -  
4 Ann Hutchinson Academy for - - and also director  
5 of - - instruction here across the entire  
6 school. I simply want to say - - the students,  
7 the staff and everyone here, the parents, and  
8 all of the stakeholders, on behalf of the Lehman  
9 High School community, we urge you to seriously  
10 reconsider the proposal to phase out Lehman High  
11 School and co-locate three small schools here.  
12 Everyone who has witnessed and can very clearly  
13 see the improvements, the ideology, the  
14 transformation - - remain here and please give  
15 us the chance to succeed. Thank you.

16 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you. - - .

17 [applause]

18 MR. BETHEIN: Speaker 22, - - . Speaker 23,  
19 Cabrerra.

20 FEMALE VOICE: Good evening. - - services  
21 here at Lehman High School. Our school - -  
22 progress over the last year since - - changes  
23 based on an in-depth analysis of our systems and  
24 structures and focus on several areas - - . In  
25 our first year, - - leadership our progress

1 report card improved. However, currently we  
2 continue to move forward - - progress - - as a  
3 result of the new academy structure. Part of  
4 the success that we experience lies in the  
5 belief that we must focus on educating our  
6 child. This is a monumental task and - -  
7 instruction with social emotional development of  
8 all of our students. - - transformation last  
9 year to - - not only the academic performance of  
10 the child to create - - action, but also the  
11 fact we need to understand the nurture and  
12 social/emotional need and guide it to the  
13 forefront - - the entire school. This year - -  
14 to further structure social/emotional - - . - -  
15 is a - - program with - - positive behaviors  
16 work with incoming freshman as mentors to help  
17 them successfully transition into high school.  
18 The - - curriculum also - - building the  
19 leadership skills of our upper classroom and - -  
20 .

21 PGC - - work with our upper classmen on  
22 several aspects of the PGC curriculum, which  
23 includes - - in a series of lessons - - weekly  
24 during - - meetings with the ninth graders in  
25 what we call freshman - - outreach, during

1 freshman outreach - - in the small group sand  
2 work with - - with issues concerning school,  
3 friends and family relationships and - - provide  
4 actual feedback to - - . I know my time is up,  
5 but this just - - finish? Okay, recently - -  
6 ninth-graders in which they were asked - - their  
7 peer mentors - - high school, - - . The results  
8 of the survey were positive to say the least, -  
9 - . I also must say that PGC has a lot of our -  
10 - leaders. The upper classmen - - in the lives  
11 of others. This is an example of social  
12 emotional - - at Lehman High School - - . We  
13 are looking forward to an upcoming - - event for  
14 the parents - - assistance. This will be a  
15 night when the parents - - children - - .  
16 parents for example of the work that we do here  
17 - - . Thank you.

18 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you. - - . Speaker 25,  
19 - - . I'll just pause here for a second. Is  
20 there anybody holding numbers one through  
21 twenty-five - - ? We'll move on to speaker 26,  
22 Deidre - - , speaker number 27, Gary Summo.

23 [applause]

24 MR. GARY SUMMO: - - on behalf of the  
25 parents - - . My name is Gary Summo. I'm - -

1 but I - - Lehman High School - - . First, - -  
2 2009.

3 [applause]

4 I did not - - college - - . However, I am  
5 here because I feel so strongly about saving  
6 Lehman High School. Some of the most  
7 influential people in my life taught and still  
8 teach at this school, - - Jerry - - , - - the  
9 teachers - - the coaches - - .

10 The pushed me - - not simply - - opportunity  
11 and - - completely. I had the good fortune of  
12 also - - today. They are - - this school is not  
13 only myself but tons of other students. With  
14 them - - this - - allow these teachers to stay  
15 and - - inspire and build young minds. I - - .  
16 performed in school. They - - they help me - -  
17 what it used to be.

18 [applause]

19 - - 2011. I remember my first day at Lehman  
20 High School. I walked in - - . - - I realized  
21 that - - third floor. I began to panic, and I  
22 was - - . That's what I would do - - school - -  
23 learned many skills that - - college. Lehman -  
24 - sports teams, honors, - - help them be more  
25 successful in the - - . Also, teachers - -

1 facilitate - - . Teachers - - if and when -  
2 - . With those skills - - National Honor  
3 Society during my time at the school.

4 [applause]

5 - - students at Lehman are not pushed - - .  
6 My guidance counselors, four years at the  
7 school, - - documented pushed me not only - -  
8 pushed not only me but every student - - . She  
9 never went easy on us and always made sure we -  
10 - not only - - but - - those requirements. She  
11 personally placed me in math honors courses, and  
12 it's her - - . - - institutional injustice - -  
13 and to force the students - - .

14 Lehman High School - - . Lehman deserves to  
15 stay open. It still has so much to offer.  
16 Students - - the future of Lehman High School.  
17 - - the principal - - doing a damn good job.  
18 Let her keep the school open. Thank you.

19 [phonetic]

20 MR. BETHEIN: - - speaker 29 is I'm sorry -  
21 - . Speaker 30 is Francisca Alizar [phonetic].  
22 Speaker 31 is Omara Flores. Speaker 32 is  
23 Lehman Lion. Speaker 33 Carl - - , and speaker  
24 34 - - . Speaker 29, speaker 29, speaker 30?  
25 Francisco - - , or speaker 29 - - .

1 MS. OMARA FLORES: Good evening,  
2 everyone. Last night we were at an awards  
3 ceremony for the tech academy, and there were  
4 about 160 students who received over 300 awards.  
5 When - - spoke to the students and parents, she  
6 shared that - - does not happen over night. It  
7 is what we invest in our children each and every  
8 day - - at a time, and results in excellence we  
9 have been able to see in our children's - - .  
10 This is the same type of excellence that Ms.  
11 Labianco and her team ensued each and every day.  
12 The changes that Principal Labianco has made - -  
13 at small schools is the same as having three  
14 more schools into the building where they would  
15 have to share space. For example, the cafeteria  
16 and gym. The big - - that schools such as  
17 Lehman can offer students a choice, choice of -  
18 - classes, choice of SUNY classes, honors  
19 classes. Our students are able to take art,  
20 music, robotics. These children are not - - at  
21 all in small schools. If we're having to  
22 provide our students with these choices, then  
23 how are we getting them to be ready for college.  
24 Has anyone thought about that, or looked into  
25 what the small schools are offering our

1 children? Ladies and gentlemen, this school  
2 was - - , at the DOE assigned an executive  
3 principal to run our building into the ground.  
4 Was this planned? There was no support provided  
5 for our school. When September opening came, it  
6 was chaotic with no schedules. Students had  
7 schedules - - to them. When Ms. Labianco took  
8 over, this didn't happen. She had a plan - - to  
9 turn this school around. Ms. Labianco is a  
10 walking inspiration. She inspires students,  
11 staff and parents. Give her the time to show  
12 you what an executive principal really is.

13 [applause]

14 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you. Speaker 32, Lehman  
15 Lion. - - .

16 FEMALE VOICE: Let's go Lion.

17 [applause]

18 MS. LEHMAN LION: A few nights ago a good  
19 friend of mine went to watch the Wizard of z  
20 because she had never seen it, and she was  
21 reading the book Wicked. Only when I saw the  
22 cowardly lion crying and squeezing at his own  
23 tail, did I realize how subconsciously I put  
24 this lion - - knowing that the fight I was  
25 taking on would take courage. Although - - to

1 face down the wicked witch or a - - wizard  
2 that meant no harm, but - - . No, I had - -  
3 hopelessness. There has been a lot of  
4 hopelessness around here the past few weeks, - -  
5 . I stand before you today alert, awake, and  
6 just like when Dorothy had her friends  
7 surrounded - - , I am looking for that magical  
8 bucket of water that I need to save the day.  
9 Yet all I have are words, words that are  
10 unlikely to be heard. Perhaps this will get  
11 your attention.

12 [applause]

13 Do what you know - - . Save Lehman. Save -  
14 - .

15 [applause]

16 MR. BETHEIN: speaker 33 - - , speaker 34 -  
17 - . - - the answer - - , speaker 35 Sue Kaplan.

18 [applause]

19 MS. SUE KAPLAN: Hi. My name is Sue Kaplan,  
20 and I'm probably - - this person in this  
21 building. Why? Because I was given the job of  
22 college chancellor at - - Junior High School  
23 this past September. Why was I given that job?  
24 Because this principal knows what she's doing.

25 [applause]

1           Why was I given the job? Because I used  
2 to work at colleges. I started my career on a  
3 college level and said to myself what is going  
4 on with these students? They don't know  
5 anything. I had to go deeper. I had to go work  
6 at a high school, and I had to get these kids  
7 ready for college, so I went from college to  
8 high school. I started - - high school. I - -  
9 Lehman High School. It was the happiest day of  
10 my life. This was the school in the Bronx to  
11 work for. I was here. - - was here, and Lehman  
12 was a family, and then I slowly saw the family  
13 fall apart through no fault of the family, just  
14 - - . And then this lady came into the  
15 building, and she's here 7:00 a.m., p.m., 9:00,  
16 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 1:00 in the morning, - -  
17 work here - - , and it's improving. It's  
18 getting better, so - - spend hours on end  
19 talking to them about what they want to do in  
20 the future. They look at me like how did you  
21 get there? How did you get your Master's  
22 degree? How come you're a master? And I tell  
23 them my story. I was a really lousy high school  
24 student. I went to a community college, but I  
25 got - - started working really hard because I

1 was studying about people. I took a  
2 psychology class in high school. I said this is  
3 what life is about. It's about people going to  
4 college and to - - all the way through, and I  
5 tell them - - a 65 average, a 75 average or a  
6 103 average, - - that. You're going to make it  
7 because you believe in yourself, your parents  
8 believe in you. Your counselors believe in you.  
9 your principal believes in you. You have great  
10 friends, and you're going to make it in life  
11 because it's all about you. And the - - and all  
12 these other programs that we have in the school,  
13 the social emotional learning is where it's at.  
14 Anybody can learn anything if they want to, but  
15 they have to have the support and the help at  
16 home, help in their school and this school has  
17 both so don't - - . thank you.

18 [applause]

19 MR. BETHEIN: - - 36, 37, and 38, Myrna  
20 Blanco followed by - - and - - .

21 MS. MYRNA BLANCO: Hi. - - the support that  
22 the teachers deserve - - students because of  
23 what they deserve to have - - to experience - -  
24 right? So, - - important to - - and that's - -  
25 struggle from kindergarten all the way to high

1 school, ninth grade, get in a position with  
2 my son where he would have a good education, and  
3 I - - smart and I also went to - - opportunity  
4 for him there, and while I was looking at that  
5 school, one of the things that I saw was a - -  
6 statistic of all of the colleges that at one  
7 time the kids had been accepted to, and I was  
8 glad to see Harvard and Princeton. I was glad  
9 to see all of these top Ivy League schools and I  
10 was really surprised that the top school that  
11 three of the students that - - was NYU - -  
12 Rochester School of Technology. Where is - - ?  
13 Then I came to Lehman and one of the teachers,  
14 the counselors, - - Lehman - - had a choice of  
15 District 75, - - that's all I had, and I had a  
16 decision to make. I could take him out of  
17 District 75 and put him in general ed, and then  
18 he could go to - - School of Science. But when  
19 I looked and I - - down the hall, what did I see  
20 that same board, and I said well, let me see  
21 what schools, what colleges the kids here go to,  
22 and I saw Yale, and I Princeton, and I saw a  
23 whole slue of schools and I was amazed because  
24 you know, before that I really didn't know  
25 Lehman, and I didn't know Lehman's history but I

1 do know it now, and I am a part of the parent  
2 association - - a lot of parents that have to  
3 work here - - and other parents trying to get  
4 that decision - - Lehman is the community.  
5 However - - Lehman is the special education  
6 children, and that's - - it is important for a  
7 special education child, a District 75 or just  
8 special education to be in a community school so  
9 he can be a full participant of the student - -  
10 and this school is not here - - disclosed - -  
11 the only other option that future parents of  
12 special ed children have is either Lehman or  
13 Truman. Now, we received - - that talks about  
14 what - - needs to do and then what the plan is  
15 for Lehman and - - , but what I can see at least  
16 is what are you doing for this community, for  
17 the special needs children that will be coming  
18 into the system, okay, already coming into the  
19 system because according to - - education, okay,  
20 - - decide to call it an inclusion process,  
21 which means let's - - a more inclusion, and so -  
22 - the number of special ed children in all of  
23 the schools, okay, but you're taking away one of  
24 the schools that has the highest percentage of  
25 special ed - - okay, and there has to be a plan.

1 You can't just come and say we're going to do  
2 this, and then you don't have what's going on  
3 with these students, not just general ed but  
4 special ed. Thank you.

5 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you. - - , speaker 37,  
6 speaker 38, - - , speaker 39, Joseph Otto.

7 MR. JOSEPH OTTO: Good evening. My name is  
8 Joseph Otto. I sit on the board of the - -  
9 association, and the reason we're here tonight  
10 is - - DOE does. We have watched you for years  
11 now go into communities and take a school apart.  
12 Well, the school is not an - - itself. It is an  
13 integral part of the - - community, and in front  
14 of me and around me are those that have - -  
15 houses. First of all - - location, location,  
16 location. The next question is how good is the  
17 school. Well, we have - - and they have asked  
18 about Lehman and they have heard - - . They get  
19 a solid - - to walk away. When we have people  
20 that - - very hard to attract people to come - -  
21 . It's about to go, they walk away. That  
22 underlines how - - it is. It underlines the  
23 City's - - . That is not considered by DOE.  
24 You are creating tremendous harm to all our  
25 communities. Now, in the case of Lehman,

1 there's also a lot to be invested in - -  
2 people that live here - - resale value - - .  
3 But in the case of Lehman, - - I did not - -  
4 there. I don't know any students there, but I  
5 know this. I have been seeing - - all night  
6 long. The devil is always - - . You know, a  
7 good statistician can take the data, finesse it,  
8 work with it, and at the end you'll have a - - .

9 [applause]

10 So, - - Lehman. I just haven't seen it.  
11 It's not there. Now, New York City is still - -  
12 . This country is still - - . You write  
13 diverse programs here. - - programs. Why do  
14 you want to trash academies of - - , departments  
15 of - - to re-introduce the - - ? It doesn't  
16 make sense. As a tax-payer, what you are saying  
17 to me is let's take an investment that we put  
18 into students into the faculty, and into the  
19 administration. Let's trash it and start all  
20 over. That's expensive when - - successful, and  
21 we saw that - - business model. We heard over  
22 and over again, - - the business model to  
23 government to help service it and - - .

24 Well, let's take a business model. I don't  
25 agree that Lehman is failing, but let's say it

1 is failing. - - they qualified - - well what  
2 is it they do - - . Two hundred - - 3,000  
3 customers, steady revenue stream, Ms. Labianco  
4 will have three to five years to implement her -  
5 - in bankruptcy - - you'd give her up, six  
6 months, absurd, absurd. - - absurd.

7 [applause]

8 - - three-year concept in order to make them  
9 - - program. And I - - . Thank you.

10 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you.

11 [applause]

12 MR. BETHEIN: - - and speaker 40, Carlos  
13 Blanco, speaker 41, D. Falcon, speaker 42,  
14 Christopher Gayle, speaker 43, - - . - -  
15 speaker 43, Jonathan Astubillo [phonetic],  
16 speaker 44 Cesar Eijalla, and speaker 45 - - .  
17 Speaker 40, Carlos Blanco, you have - - .

18 MR. CARLOS BLANCO: Good evening, everyone.  
19 My name is Carlos Blanco. I parent a District  
20 75 student that - - level four. - - DOE, New  
21 York City DOE we considered a proposal based on  
22 - - . - - the option, - - . You talked about  
23 the progress report. He said that in the last  
24 five years the graduation rate was - - . Well,  
25 you know, this - - was taken five years ago.

1 Nevertheless, - - and adverse conditions in  
2 less than one year - - turnaround - - , you have  
3 the phase-out, you know, effects, - - process.  
4 - - Ms. Labianco - - folks are addressing over -  
5 - hours a week, going home with - - . This  
6 school is not - - success, and she, yes, she has  
7 turned it around and it's improving. It's  
8 improving, this school, and - - well, - - the  
9 opportunity that - - do. It could be - - says  
10 that Lehman was not - - by DOE who under-  
11 estimated the new schools, - - student  
12 population not only in New York City but  
13 virtually on this side of the Mississippi  
14 according to - - . What's going to happen to  
15 them? Good question, right? Well, getting back  
16 to the - - to advocate - - investment. - -  
17 supporting this - - when Lehman was identified -  
18 - principal was allowed - - . - - now the DOE  
19 is talking about - - determined that Lehman did  
20 not improve. Well, that's not true. I - - now,  
21 New York City DOE is basing its proposal on the  
22 one - - Ms. Labianco's leadership, right, and  
23 the two years of previous - - . That doesn't  
24 make sense, you know, that that is - -  
25 performance of somebody else's you know,

1 thoughts, you know, so that's not fair. So  
2 by the way - - is now a phased out school. It's  
3 not part of her - - right now. It gets - - you  
4 know, it was change - - you can't expect  
5 different - - the same strategies, have some - -  
6 you know, again, - - responsibility it was to -  
7 - relationship - - schools, you know, - - from  
8 the students. Let me just point something out.  
9 I think it's - - one second, I'm sorry, I'm  
10 sorry, on the title - - Title 1 school. It says  
11 here that the school must develop - - you know,  
12 - - right, restructuring a school with the  
13 consultation of parents, staff and the - - of  
14 the school in order to - - . That's a federal  
15 law, and I guess - - I don't want to go into  
16 that, but that's saying that you need to be in  
17 compliance. This is a Title 1 school. They  
18 must be in compliance with federal law, and I  
19 think - - don't want to talk about it any more.  
20 Okay, - - .

21 MR. BETHEIN: - - .

22 [crosstalk]

23 MR. BLANCO: - - Ms. Labianco's leadership  
24 has provided three things that are key, - - you  
25 know, - - . People - - why are we doing this?

1 How are we going to do this? And motivation  
2 - - to everyone, the teachers, the students, to  
3 do what was necessary to be done, so in closing,  
4 you know, I would like to say that she should be  
5 afforded that opportunity because I know that -  
6 - second to none. Thank you very much.

7 [applause]

8 MR. BETHEIN: Speaker - - .

9 MR. CHRISTOPHER GAYLE: Oh hi. I'm  
10 Christopher Gayle. - - .

11 [applause]

12 - - opportunities - - track team - - because  
13 of your help. - - always tell the teachers that  
14 - - so - - thank you.

15 [applause]

16 MR. JONATHAN ASTUBILLO: - - Christopher  
17 Gayle. - - Lehman has a lot to offer. - - .

18 [applause]

19 - - student. I tried my best. I wasn't - -  
20 . - - .

21 [applause]

22 - - you know what I'm saying like I'm here  
23 to support my school. - - what's up?

24 [applause]

25 MR. BETHEIN: - - I just want to confirm

1 that speaker 41, - - , wasn't here.

2 MR. CESAR EIJALLA: Hello. My name is Cesar  
3 Eijalla. I'm - - the track team, Lehman track  
4 team. I think that this - - I think that the  
5 phase out of Lehman is unfair. The Department  
6 of Education only sees the negative of the  
7 situation. They don't see the positives of the  
8 - - the teachers and the staff and everyone else  
9 cares for the students. They are so much - -  
10 teachers - - being there for their students.  
11 Why - - and to tell you the truth - - . So  
12 thank you for your time.

13 [applause]

14 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you, - - speaker 45 is -  
15 - , speaker 46 is Juan Martinez, speaker 47 is  
16 Wendy Cortez, speaker 48 Steven Soto, speaker 49  
17 is not here and Speaker 50, John Mari. Is  
18 speaker 45 - - ? Speaker 46 Juan Martinez? And  
19 speaker 47, Wendy Cortez?

20 [applause]

21 MS. WENDY CORTEZ: Good evening. My name is  
22 Wendy Cortez, and I'm a social studies here at  
23 Lehman High School. Colleagues - - people that  
24 I care for and - - the students, on behalf of  
25 the parents, on behalf of the teachers, and on

1       behalf of the - - that work so hard. I'm so  
2       touched by all of the people that are here  
3       because many of us were here last time going  
4       through this and it's exhausting and it's  
5       tiring. - - to have to be here again, but yet  
6       here we are and the energy earlier in the night  
7       was so positive. Many people have already said  
8       some of the points that I wanted to make. So, -  
9       - is because it's important to see students  
10      empowered. We are not failures. Our students  
11      are not failures, and school closures are wrong.  
12      The Mayor's policy is wrong. School closures,  
13      there's no proof that they work, there's no  
14      proof that these schools are doing better than  
15      large schools, but instead closing schools and  
16      co-locating multiple schools results in less of  
17      everything for our students, our children, less  
18      classes, less classroom space, less course  
19      offerings less school activities, and less - -  
20      home, and ownership of their environment. One  
21      mayor cannot possibly know what is best for over  
22      a million students. It is time for us together  
23      to act, to ask our legislators to end mayoral  
24      control because this is not just Lehman. It has  
25      been many schools and we cannot fight one at a

1 time any more. We have to join together.  
2 Please call your legislative - - and end mayoral  
3 control.

4 [applause]

5 MR. BETHEIN: - - , speaker 48, speaker 50,  
6 John Mari.

7 [applause]

8 MR. JOHN MARI: My name is John Mari, and  
9 we're here - - . What I'm going to say this  
10 school is the best part of my life. I came in.  
11 I was - - my life - - you know how it must have  
12 hurt me to see him - - he couldn't perform and  
13 he runs the - - after. That hurt me, and that  
14 not only just hurt me, but it hurt the school  
15 because - - a member of the National Honor  
16 Society doing 100 hours of community service to  
17 give back and also a member of the school - -  
18 things that we would never get anywhere else. -  
19 - to be more in charge because - - .

20 [applause]

21 MR. BETHEIN: - - Michelle - - , speaker 52,  
22 Julie - - , speaker 53 Edward - - , speaker 54,  
23 James McSheil, and speaker 55, - - .

24 MS. MICHELLE CUMINELLO: Hi, I'm Michelle  
25 cuminello [phonetic]. I am - - class of 2011, -

1 - days ago. - - entering in, I was very much  
2 - - had heard a lot of rumors - - that school.  
3 However, from the moment I entered I could tell  
4 that the rumors were wrong. I heard that the  
5 education wasn't great. However, from the  
6 moment I came in, I was told you're smarter,  
7 take honors classes, achieve more than you think  
8 you can, and so I did thanks to the teachers,  
9 the staff, the guidance counselors here. They  
10 pushed me. I began school not knowing what I  
11 wanted to do. Then - - teachers. They pushed  
12 me to take honors classes as well as advanced  
13 placement courses and to also push my  
14 extracurriculars and I was - - National Honor  
15 Society, but my question here is well start  
16 doing your service, you need to help in the  
17 community, and through that they taught me that  
18 I should - - and go on. So I have come back.  
19 Last year was my first year in college. I came  
20 back. I spoke to current juniors and seniors  
21 that were preparing to go to college. I am  
22 currently at FIT, and my teacher, Michelle Horn,  
23 prepared me with my portfolio and upon getting  
24 acceptance to the Fashion Institute of  
25 Technology, I was one of 100 students out of the

1 whole school to be accepted into advanced  
2 admission a month ahead.

3 [applause]

4 I also graduated in the top 20 of the 600  
5 graduating class and I also was able to receive  
6 college credit while in high school and - - .

7 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you.

8 [applause]

9 MR. BETHEIN: Speaker 52, - - . Speaker 53,  
10 Ann - - . Speaker 54, James McSheil.

11 [applause]

12 MR. JAMES MCSHEIL: Okay, I - - two minutes  
13 - - Lehman High School. - - 76.

14 [applause]

15 I came here as a student. I was here in 97,  
16 96, 98 and 2001 - - and still is. I started  
17 teaching here over 22 years ago, so effectively  
18 half my life has been spent in these halls being  
19 blessed - - and the students here are fantastic.  
20 I - - reason that - - students like - - who - -  
21 , beautiful slide show about his love for his  
22 teachers. These students here are who I believe  
23 in, they are standing up against injustice, and  
24 that is what is happening today at Lehman High  
25 School. It is what is happening across the City

1 - - it's injustice. Think about - - and  
2 having - - high school left that serves the  
3 students - - Bronx. That's just not fair. - -  
4 . These kids - - they need - - they need  
5 people to care for them, people to love them,  
6 not - - , and I feel that - - I know - - say it  
7 anyway. Your - - the school. Okay, let your  
8 conscience leave this school open. - - .

9 [applause]

10 - - impact the most. So please - - this,  
11 and I - - interest. My daughter is in tenth  
12 grade. She - - there's no - - community  
13 schools. My friends and my neighbors, people  
14 that I work with, where are we going to send our  
15 kids, okay? You have one obligation to service  
16 these kids and to advocate for them, - - .  
17 Thank you.

18 MR. BETHEIN: Speaker 55, - - five speakers  
19 to line up, speaker 56, it looks like - - ,  
20 speaker 57, Yvonne Pena, speaker 58, Nancy - - ,  
21 speaker 59, Anne Cosu and speaker 50, Victoria  
22 Seisky. Speaker 56?

23 MS. PENA: Good evening. I will be short  
24 because my ride is outside and my two little  
25 children - - didn't say good night to them, but

1 I felt it was important that I stay here and  
2 speak with you and let you know that I - - stay  
3 home with my son Gabrielle who graduated in  
4 2010, and he is currently attending Columbia  
5 University and he is a - - major. He is - - .  
6 He took honors classes. He graduated - - a very  
7 good student. I'm here to also thank all the  
8 teachers that have taught him before and this is  
9 my - - Pena, - - graduating - - GPA, and I'm  
10 very proud to say that this is the best school  
11 for the children. They learn to work hard,  
12 learn to study, learn to get ready to go on and  
13 - - their lives, and - - for themselves. I'm  
14 just thankful for the teachers, and principal  
15 and every one - - my children. Thank you, and  
16 keep Lehman open.

17 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you.

18 MR. PENA: - - very complicated, if there's  
19 one thing - - said it comes - - the Bronx. This  
20 - - it's something that other than education - -  
21 diversity that we have here, the different  
22 sports, different everything else, - - why my  
23 brother can be successful and why people who - -  
24 to succeed - - other schools, this is why they  
25 can succeed because they keep on being told no,

1 but they keep on - - come to the Bronx and  
2 come to big schools like this. Thank you.

3 MR. BETHEIN: - - 58, - - . Anne?

4 [applause]

5 MS. ANNE CUSO: - - good evening, - - . I  
6 come in memory of my son who used to come here  
7 to Lehman High School in 2003, and I am here to  
8 attest that Lehman High School is the best  
9 public school in the Bronx. It's a star.  
10 Lehman High School should never fade. My son  
11 had a dream. - - he was killed without his  
12 dream coming true. What school in the Bronx has  
13 baseball? What school in - - in the Bronx have  
14 dance, not many. What school has music? What  
15 school has the arts? A lot of schools do not  
16 have dance. A lot of schools do not have - - .  
17 My son, - - speak for the students here - -  
18 because my son would have expected me to do  
19 this. He would be appalled to know that Lehman  
20 High School would be closed to the opportunities  
21 for future children. He would be appalled as I  
22 am appalled that Lehman High School would be  
23 changed to - - . - - it's a fishbowl name. The  
24 spirit of Lehman can move on. The children here  
25 are smart and - - people. They need Lehman High

1 School. Truman High School failed my son, -  
2 - was a failing school. It became - - . Truman  
3 High School - - but it was too late for my son,  
4 but Lehman High School fought for my son. And  
5 he almost went. - - just because they were  
6 getting rid of 17-year-olds here because they  
7 weren't making the grade, they wouldn't give  
8 him another chance, and he had a medical reason,  
9 but I am here on behalf to he children here  
10 because I believe in Lehman High School that if  
11 the lights are shut off, our kids won't have a  
12 place to go in the future, and their lives will  
13 be at stake. I would miss Lehman High School.  
14 I am part of the PTA of leadership team and I  
15 don't expect Lehman High School to close. Where  
16 is the ninth-graders going to go to school? Do  
17 you think that you're going to ship them out to  
18 another school? I don't think so because I live  
19 - - and my son living here. And the DOE - - I  
20 would become an activist for Lehman High School,  
21 an activist for over 30 years. Thank you.

22 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you.

23 MR. BETHEIN: Speaker 59, - - . Victoria?

24 MS. VICTORIA SEISKY: Hello, good evening.

25 I - - eight-year special education teacher in

1 the Bronx, and I started in a small school in  
2 the South Bronx, and I will never forget coming  
3 into room 358 upstairs of Lehman High School  
4 where there were - - special education teachers,  
5 and we sat around and we talked about all of  
6 those kids that become lost - - . And these  
7 beautiful - - is that there's the program in  
8 those small skills is ridiculously hard. In  
9 order to really train and support special  
10 education teachers, I do have a very serious  
11 concern about that - - because small schools  
12 will get in two SETSS kids in the ninth period  
13 box - - six self-contained - - two team-teaching  
14 units, a couple of kids that need team teaching  
15 and self-contained, and at Lehman High School we  
16 were always able to offer all other services to  
17 students here at the school, and we always did  
18 it with a lot of love. And when Ms. - - talked  
19 about how those students graduating from Lehman  
20 High School did so well in college - - over-  
21 crowded, and if you look at last year's school  
22 report card you will see that we in our - -  
23 actually had a higher college readiness rate, -  
24 - also accepted more self-contained kids - - any  
25 school possibly in the country. I think, you

1 know, - - as he stood up here, he is one of  
2 those teachers who taught me by the way. I  
3 didn't - - the way he taught new teachers, but  
4 the thing is - - be ashamed of ourselves, and  
5 especially those of us who - - this fight  
6 because children have to stand up for justice -  
7 - in this country, 16 and 17-year-olds have to  
8 come to their school and fight to have a book,  
9 fight to have a library, fight to have access to  
10 simple education, and as they - - all of you  
11 people putting on this big production, - - all  
12 the money that you spent tonight for little  
13 yellow signs and stickers saying - - DOE,  
14 something - - like books for children. We  
15 should be ashamed of ourselves, and we should be  
16 ashamed of a system that spends money that way,  
17 and we should be ashamed that we aren't talking  
18 about the things that really matter tonight.  
19 Thank you.

20 [applause]

21 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you. - - the question  
22 and answer that everybody who is holding a  
23 number - - speak. What was your number, sir?

24 MALE VOICE: I don't think I have a number,  
25 but I would just like two minutes - - .

1 MR.BETHEIN: - - .

2 MALE VOICE: - - .

3 MR. BETHEIN: Okay, we'll give you your two  
4 minutes and move on to question and answer.  
5 Sir, state your name please.

6 MR. ANTHONY LOBIANCO: Yes, Anthony  
7 Labianco, I know this wasn't scheduled, but I  
8 just want to say one thing before this  
9 concludes. Some of you do not know me, but I'll  
10 just - - those who do not know me, my name is  
11 Anthony Labianco, t he son of Principal  
12 Labianco, - - we come from a family of service.  
13 I am a police officer, and my sister is a social  
14 worker.

15 [applause]

16 I see my mother's - - determination to help  
17 all - - succeed. She is here more than she is  
18 home. I know my mother has what it takes to  
19 allow Lehman to succeed. Before I finish, I  
20 would like to add that I do believe that my  
21 mother's interventions that she mentioned are  
22 only the beginning to the - - of Lehman.

23 [applause]

24 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you.

25 MR. JOSEPH FIGARELLO: I'm Joseph Figarello

1 - - . I'm - - and I'm not going to give you  
2 some sob story but - - and I thought it was  
3 going to get worse honestly, but when I came - -  
4 and I was - - all changed. They taught me to  
5 not care what people think and to work hard no  
6 matter what you do to be successful. I - -  
7 these teachers that have sat here are a big  
8 influence on my life and who I am and how I  
9 changed and how I - - to be a better person. So  
10 you guys can sit here and look at every single -  
11 - you are, but the teacher and the staff - - and  
12 personality, I - - you should help this school  
13 instead of making it like, to shut Lehman down.  
14 - - the school - - . That's all I have to say.

15 [applause]

16 MR. BETHEIN: Thank you. - - testimony this  
17 evening. I will now begin the question and  
18 answer period. Remember, - - categories. Any  
19 question that is not answered here tonight will  
20 be answered on the Department of Education web  
21 site. If you have additional questions at the  
22 conclusion of tonight's proceedings, we ask that  
23 you directly pursue us via phone or via e-mail  
24 address on the - - sheet, and again that's - -  
25 proposals@schools.nyc.gov. - -

1 proposals@schools.nyc.gov or by phone 212-  
2 374-5159, again that's 212-374-5159. - - .

3 MALE VOICE: Before I go into the question  
4 and answer, there were four questions that were  
5 submitted. I just want to talk a little bit  
6 about what I heard this evening. I want to  
7 first thank those of you that are still here  
8 that stayed through the whole testimony and I  
9 also want to recognize those that couldn't stay  
10 but that came out - - to share their thoughts in  
11 support of Lehman High School. We heard tonight  
12 that this is a school that has developed a  
13 powerful sense of community and family. We  
14 heard about a number of experiences for alumni,  
15 for students who are currently in the school,  
16 from teachers, from parents, and community  
17 members about what is working at Lehman. Some  
18 of the programs that folks spoke about included  
19 the - - , available at the school, the robotics  
20 program, the mock trial program, the new small  
21 learning communities that have been developed  
22 over the past several years, the honors program  
23 and the college program including the SUNY  
24 courses that students are able to take and some  
25 of the new courses that have been certified and

1 developed as well as college - - for young  
2 people. We heard about parent programs and the  
3 ESL classes that are out that for parents as  
4 well as the different ways that parents get  
5 involved in supporting the school. We heard  
6 about aspiring - - and the new - - . We heard  
7 about teachers who work incredibly hard about a  
8 very powerful school leader who has brought hope  
9 to the school and across all of those stories  
10 was an intense belief that things are improving  
11 here. And I want you to know that your  
12 testimony is important, that it's been heard,  
13 and it's part of coming to a decision about what  
14 to do. I want to also talk about some of the  
15 specific questions that people asked that  
16 haven't been answered yet, and then I want to  
17 speak about some of the places where I think we  
18 agree and disagree about what should we do.

19 So let me first do the questions. What  
20 happens - - school closes? So, - - school that  
21 meets a percentage of students who are - - and  
22 that money - - to be part of the school as it -  
23 - there are new schools that - - the title 1  
24 funds go both to the phase-out school as it is  
25 phasing out and then to the new schools as they

1 are phasing in. Another question was around  
2 D75 inclusion students, and I mentioned this at  
3 the beginning, but I think we need to say this  
4 again, that students here who are part of the  
5 D75 program will continue, and there will be a  
6 D75 program available to students in this campus  
7 regardless of whether this goes forward or not.

8         Additionally other students with IEPs will  
9 continue to receive appropriate services as the  
10 school phases out, and new students with IEPs  
11 will - - individual program based on their IEPs.

12         There was a more general question about how  
13 do we know that opening up new small schools to  
14 replace large, struggling high schools works?  
15 And I want to talk about that in the context of  
16 what has happened in the Bronx over the past ten  
17 years.

18         Councilman Bacha mentioned that it's the  
19 Department that is responsible for the failure  
20 of Lehman High School. But I actually spent  
21 several months working in this building in 2000  
22 when the Bronx High School Superintendent's  
23 office was here, and I was working for the  
24 superintendent and spent time in the school - -  
25 principal visiting classes. That year there was

1 a 54% graduation rate, and so I think that  
2 the notion that this school was always great and  
3 then something terrible happened doesn't  
4 recognize that there have been challenges all  
5 along. There have been really good things that  
6 have happened for many kids in the school,  
7 amazing teachers and amazing leaders for - - but  
8 there's also always that challenge that a lot of  
9 kids didn't get - - . And part of the strategy  
10 that developed over the past ten years in the  
11 Bronx - - would ask the question, well, what  
12 happens to those students that aren't making - -  
13 . And let's just take the numbers here at  
14 Lehman over the past few years. Four years ago  
15 before the entering class that graduated this  
16 past year there were 1,600 approximately ninth-  
17 graders. The next year there were 1,394 tenth-  
18 graders. The year after that, there were 719  
19 eleventh-graders, and the year after that there  
20 were 607 twelfth-graders. A lot of kids didn't  
21 make it to twelfth grade, and that speaks to the  
22 challenge. What has happened to those students?  
23 Where are they going? Why aren't they making it  
24 to their senior year? It's true that a  
25 statistic that was shared earlier on college

1       readiness, those kids that graduated about  
2       half of them are going into college and many of  
3       those kids are succeeding, and that is an - - .  
4       But we still need to ask the question, and I  
5       think this is a question that we are going to  
6       have to - - group or whether it's the Bronx,  
7       what is happening to those hundreds and hundreds  
8       of kids who start here and don't make it all the  
9       way through? What are we doing for them? We  
10      looked just last year--we were talking earlier  
11      about half of the students didn't get the  
12      credits they needed to be promoted, and while  
13      there has been real growth this year, and - -  
14      about how there's been an increase in the number  
15      of ninth graders who are passing their classes,  
16      and that is something to be proud of and it's  
17      part of the improvements that happened over the  
18      past year, if you look at the overall - - class  
19      this year including the kids that were held  
20      back, put them all out there and ask them - -  
21      passing, it's still less than half who are  
22      passing their classes, and that means that we  
23      are going to be losing some of those students  
24      because when ninth-graders don't make it through  
25      ninth-grade, they usually stick around for at

1 least one more year. But that number that I  
2 shared with you that drop off from 1394 students  
3 to 792 students that where we lose a lot of  
4 kids, and we didn't have a lot of conversation  
5 about that. That is really at the heart of what  
6 we are trying to figure out. What is the right  
7 solution not just for the students that are  
8 succeeding, but for the students that aren't? I  
9 think there are some really powerful strategies  
10 that were - - Principal Labianco, and I think  
11 that they merit serious consideration, but I can  
12 also - - hear many people speak about those kids  
13 tonight, and I'm really concerned about what  
14 we're going to do to support those students. If  
15 you look across the hundred or so schools that  
16 have been - - in the Bronx over the past 20  
17 years, if you look into the campuses, where the  
18 schools - - campus, had a 31% graduation rate.  
19 Now the schools on that campus have over 70%  
20 graduation rate. At Roosevelt similar - - 31%  
21 to 79%. I worked at - - where the graduation  
22 rate was probably somewhere around 27% and now  
23 it's at 68%. Thousands and thousands of our  
24 kids are succeeding in those campuses. Fewer  
25 and fewer kids get lost, and if something is

1 working there that we need to take a look at-  
2 -that is why the proposal we put forward was put  
3 forward, not because there's this desire to  
4 destroy something but there is a desire to ask  
5 the question can we do a better job? I think  
6 that there are amazing people here. What we  
7 have seen in many of these campuses is teachers  
8 and leaders and assistant principals who do  
9 participate in the - - actually get involved and  
10 become the lifeblood and the leaders and the  
11 teachers of the new schools, and there are  
12 others that need to move on. I think you all  
13 know that there are folks who work tremendously  
14 hard and succeed with their kids, and then there  
15 are also folks that don't, and are not  
16 succeeding with their kids and are not - - .  
17 And that is a challenging question because the  
18 way that things are set up right now, many of  
19 those folks will continue, and many of those  
20 kids will be lost. The opportunity that is  
21 presented to - - going to a model where you  
22 could - - a new school there is an opportunity  
23 for the strongest staff to continue and be part  
24 of - - and for others to move on.

25 So I share that not because I'm telling you

1 that this is the way it has to be. I share  
2 that because I want you to understand that this  
3 is a shared problem, and whatever proposal  
4 ultimately goes to the panel and ultimately gets  
5 approved, the folks who care about this  
6 community, the folks who spoke - - tonight, need  
7 to be part of finding that solution because it  
8 hasn't been found yet and it needs to be found.  
9 Thank you.

10 FEMALE VOICE: - - questions?

11 [crosstalk]

12 FEMALE VOICE: What happened to those  
13 students who did not graduate?

14 MR. BETHEIN: Additional questions can be  
15 submitted to - - submitted. - - particularly at  
16 this late hour. We appreciate your feedback and  
17 contributions to this hearing. The information  
18 will be shared with - - and policy - - High  
19 School, which is - - replace the Brooklyn - -  
20 proposal. Public comment can be submitted via  
21 e-mail or by phone, and it is our understanding  
22 until 6:00 p.m. Again, you may submit it by  
23 phone by calling 212-374-5159 or - - an e-mail -  
24 - 08proposals@schools.nyc.gov. This information  
25 is also - - fact sheets that are - - the table

1 when you came in. Thank you all for coming  
2 this evening. - - .

3 [END RECORDIMNG]

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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



Date: February 28, 2013

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