NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - DIVISION OF PORTFOLIO PLANNING

Beach Channel High School Phase Out & Replacement

January 13, 2011

[START 181_951.MP3]

MR. ANTHONY KUMILE: Uh, I'm Anthony Kumile [phonetic] I'm going to be your, your moderator for the evening, uh, for this session. Um, I'm just going to share some information in terms of process, uh, and then we'll begin. So this is a joint public hearing of the Department of Education and Community Education Council and the School Leadership Team to discuss the proposed phase out of Beach Channel High School.

MR. DAVID S. PECORARA: Point of order. Point of order.

MR. KUMILE: Okay.

MR. PECORARA: I rise up on a point of order to just state that this is a joint meeting. As such as a member of the School Leadership Team I would like to have the agenda amended to include adoption of this resolution. But before that I would like rise on a separate point of order that this meeting is in fact illegal, in violation of the Chancellor's Regulation A-660, in that this school which has a significant population of English language learners sent out a notice of this meeting in Spanish two days ago. The Chancellor's Regulations A-66 require

parents be notified ten school days in advance of meetings in writing. Since the Department of Education failed in its responsibility to do that, this meeting is illegal, null, and void.

[Applause]

MR. PECORARA: - - point of order.

MR. KUMILE: We'll continue.

MR. PECORARA: No, no. Then I appeal the ruling of the moderator. Is there a second to appeal the ruling of the moderator?

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: Second.

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 2: Second.

MR. PECORARA: Okay. Then we move to a vote. Shall the ruling of the Chair be upheld? I - - . I would like to say shall the Chair - - those in favor of upholding the ruling of the Chair that this is legal meeting, please raise your hand.

MR. KUMILE: So let me say this. There is a process--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] All those who believe that this meeting is in fact illegal--

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: [Interposing] Raise your hands up, hands up--

[Shouting]

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: Stand up, stand over by - - what they're doing is illegal. Don't let them get away with it. This is our community school. And it should stay that way. You guys should be ashamed of yourself for destroying the schools in New York City. This is a very important school. I'm a proud graduate of this school's second class. You want to destroy it, you rip the resources out of it and now you want to close it which shame on you guys, you all should be locked up in jail.

MR. KUMILE: Okay so I wanted to say this. There is a pro--

[Crosstalk, shouting]

MR. PECORARA: Allow me to - - . The ruling of the Chair has been in fact overruled by the - -

MR. MARTIN KRONGOLD: [Interposing] You have the wrong, for a point of information, I do not represent the Department of Education, I represent students as a member--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] Then.

MR. KRONGOLD: --of - - high school - - . you did not call this meeting, the Department of Education called it. And we will continue to

have two-sided conversations on this most difficult issue--

[Interposing] - - .

MR. KRONGOLD: --that we all do appreciate this very difficult--

[Crosstalk]

MR. KRONGOLD: --but both sides. The people of New York, in this case Staten Island--

[Crosstalk]

MR. KRONGOLD: --on - - years ago in Brooklyn, he led it to being the citywide Council on High Schools and I am representing students today. Believe me, I am not representing just the Department of Education--

[Crosstalk]

MR. KRONGOLD: --Now we will have a two sided conversation because the Department of Education called this meeting, not you, not the UFT, not teachers, the Department of Education. You'll get to talk. I'll get to talk and they'll get to talk.

MR. PECORARA: And Sir--

MR. KRONGOLD: [Interposing] Everybody will talk.

MR. PECORARA: We are--we must follow the

rules. And the rules of this Department of Education require a ten school days' notice.

MR. KRONGOLD: You should - - to the Legal Department for consideration--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] Yes I am. In the meantime the Legal Department is in support of the adoption--

MR. KUMILE: [Interposing] So thank you. And--

[Crosstalk]

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] No, it's not. It's called a fact.

MALE BOARD MEMBER 1: Thank you for your opinion. Okay--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] Okay I don't know how long we have this stuff with Mayor Bloomberg. No the Borough of Staten Island--

MR. KUMILE: [Interposing] So there is a process to the sharing of information and--and I'm going to go through the process for sharing of information here. And, uh, I want to assure that everyone here has the opportunity to have their voices--a place for their voice. Uh, and so as--I'll go through this and I'll ask that people respect it, uh, to--to get through the

actual procedure for the evening. And, uh, and then we'll start. Okay. Uh, so one of the things is that as--as you see there are--there are microphones here, uh. There is a sign-in sheet, um, for anyone who would like to speak. Um, you should use, uh, it, sign up for that and, uh, I believe that in a couple of minutes that will--that shut down so if you feel that you'd like to speak you should sign up now. And then, um, later in the evening everyone will have the opportunity to come, uh, to the microphones to, uh, to share their thoughts. Um, you have two minutes for that. And, uh, we have folks here to kind of support you in that and also to--for the sake of--of time we'll monitor that time. Um, I should also say that in the course of the evening if elected officials show up, um, that we will try to accommodate their--their joining us and--and being allowed to speak as well. Um. After the--after the--after everyone has had the opportunity to speak there also will be the opportunity for a Q & A. And if, I believe, also outside there was the opportunity to--for--for individuals to--to write questions. If you

have a question, you can go to the back and see if, um, one of the folks standing in the back and they will give you an index card to write your question and then, uh, the last part of the session we will read the questions and have--have members of the panel respond to them. The end--at the end of, uh, this session if folks do have questions also there is the opportunity to--to call or email and I believe those are in other--different locations. We can get that information. And, um, so I'd like us to begin, uh. But before we start I'd like to introduce the, the panel here that is joining us. Um, I'll go down the line. Uh, Craig, Craig Dosei from, uh, the School Leadership Team; David Pecorara from the School Leadership Team and the UFT; April Wallach from the School Leadership Team; okay, um, Juan--joining us, Juan Mendez, the Superintendent joining us. Um, Deputy Chancellor Shae Suransky is here to join us. And also Martin Krongold from, uh, CCHS is--is here to speak as well. Uh, so I will open this up and we will begin, uh, with a statement from, uh, Deputy Chancellor Shae Suransky.

[One person applauding]

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR SHAE SURANSKY: Good evening everyone. Thank you. Uh, my name is Shae Suransky and I wanted to just introduce myself for folks who don't know me, uh, before I begin my presentation. Uh, I started my career as a math teacher, teaching middle school math in northern Manhattan. I became an assistant principal and then a principal for a school in the Bronx. Um. And in 2004 I began work, um, supporting the development of leaders who are opening new schools. Um. And then worked actually with, um, principals across the City, um, providing training. And in the last couple of years I've joined the Cabinet as a Deputy Chancellor of - - Performance and Accountability. Um. The decision around school closure is one of the hardest decisions, um, that we have to make. And it's something that we don't take lightly. It's, uh, a very difficult process and I think that, uh, the importance of this hearing tonight, um, testifies to that process because people feel very deeply, um, as the gentleman spoke earlier, many--many folks are alumni of some of the schools that are phased out. And there are deep

connections within communities to those schools. Um. I want to be clear that when we think about phasing out a school it is not because the kids in that school or the teachers in that school have failed. It's because the structure and the way that school is organized and the performance over a period of time has led to a situation where we don't believe it's possible to turn that school around, um. We don't believe that by doing the normal forms of support, um, that we've seen evidence that there's real growth possible within the structure. One of the things that's confusing to people about the phrase closure and I think it's part of why it's such an emotional issue is it suggests that the school's not going to exist anymore. And that's not actually true. Um. What's happened across the City over the past eight years is there have been a lot of schools that have phased out and in their place new schools have opened. And a new group of educations has had the opportunity, um, to try and work with the kids in that community and get a better set of outcomes with those kids. And it often leads to really innovative exciting

programs in communities that have been tremendously successful. So if you look across the City there have been about 100 schools closed over the past 8 years and close to 400 new schools opened. And when you look at the graduation rates on average the schools that closed, um, were 35% to 40% graduates. Four years later the schools that replaced them are 75% to 80% graduation rates.

FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: What - - ?

MR. SURANSKY:

FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: Do those other new schools accept the same exact students, the same exact populations?

MR. SURANSKY: Um, so the--the enrollment process for new schools is unlimited on the stream which means that any student can apply to that school. There's no academic stream that is created in the - - . Nine of the 400 schools, um, they were specifically designed as stream schools. Um. But the intent behind this form is not to grade schools that are excluding, um, it--the intent is actually to serve the kids and--and hopefully attract more kids to the school in that community--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] Quick question.

MR. SURANSKY: Yes.

MR. PECORARA: I would then say that these schools accept exactly the same percentage of English language learners that well Beach Channel High has School currently? The same percentage of students with high needs that - - for Beach Channel High School currently? That students who enter high school overage, that Beach Channel High School serves currently? I mean students that are part of the absent in middle school, uh, but that Beach Channel currently accepts. It's hard to say Sir that those schools accept exactly those populations served.

MR. SURANSKY: They're not - - exactly - - .

MR. PECORARA: Are you saying that there maybe within, uh, a reasonable percentage.

MR. SURANSKY: Yeah.

MR. PECORARA: Horse feathers--

MR. SURANSKY: [Interposing] Well we can--

MR. PECORARA: --oh not, you haven't got--

[Crosstalk]

MR. PECORARA: --sir I'd have to say--

[Crosstalk]

MR. SURANSKY: [Interposing] If you have - - data to--to share within--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] Oh okay but not to share date. I can show - - .

MR. SURANSKY: Okay--

MR. KUMILE: [Interposing] As--as a point of information, what-- in order to allow people to have their voice, and this is--at this point it's not dialog, at this point everyone today has the opportunity to share their thoughts. So--

[Crosstalk]

MALE BOARD MEMBER 2: - - back and forth at the end of the program.

MR. SURANSKY: So specific to Beach Channel High School, um, on December 13th the DOE issued a proposal to phase out and eventually close Beach Channel based on poor performance. And, uh, and an assessment that the school lacks the ability to turn around. Um. The progress report for the last year - - it was in the bottom 2% of all high schools in the City. Um. The DOE initiated a comprehensive review over the last several months to determine what

information--what interventions would best support the needs of the students in this school. And we looked at a lot of different data sources, historical data over the past several years, enrollment and demand data. So for example. Um, about a quarter of the kids, um, in the Beach Channel zone are actually served by the school with means three-quarters, most of the students have chosen to go to schools outside of the zone. And that is an in--indication that, um, parents of kids see opportunity that's outside of the Beach Channel zone, um, that are better. And that's a concern because it should be possible to have a school that actually will serve the kids in this zone. And part of the goal I think as we look to, um, the future, it designing options within this building that attract kids from this community at a higher rate. Um. We worked closely with the Superintendent and other ex--experienced educators, um, to understand what's happened in the school. We held a earlier engagement meeting with members of SLT and the parent community to gather feedback. Um. Based on all of this information we believe that the gradual

phase out and closure of the school is the only right thing to do for the kids currently served in this community because we believe that we can actually see many, many more kids, uh, achieving at a much higher level, um, than we currently see in--in this--in this program. Um, the way it would work, uh, if it all goes accepted, is that the school would stop admitting 9th graders, um, at the end of this current school year. Current students would continue to go to this school. Um. The, the students would continue through 2014, so students who are on track to graduate and graduate from this school, one of the things we've seen repeatedly over and over again throughout the City is that as schools phase out and get smaller, um, we actually see more individualized attention for the kids in the phase out school and they ought to achieve at higher levels than the school had previously been able to achieve it. Um, currently in this building, let me talk about the collocations. Um. There's a Channel View School for Research and the Rockaway Park High School for Environmental sustainability and a District 75,

uh, teacher support services program. Um. The Channel View school opened in 2004 and serves grades 5th--6th through 12. Rockaway Park, um, opened this past se--September with 1 cohort of 9th graders. Um. They'll be phasing in, um, until it is fully expanded in the 2013 school year. Um. PS 252Q serves emotionally disturbed Autistic or multiply, multiply handicapped students in grades 9 through 12. And there's a Light program in the building that supports, um, infants and small children for, um, kids who need it, attending the school. Um. DOE is proposing to ch--collocate a new high school, um, in this school with it. The school would admit students through a limited unscreened process as I mentioned before. And would be open to all New York City residents with priority given to Queens residents. Um. And if this proposal is approved it would be collocated at--with Beach Channel as it phases out, Channel View and Rockaway Park and PS 256. Um. A little bit on the capacity of this building, um, the building had capacity to serve 3,254 students. It currently enrolls, um, in the '09-10 school year, 1,947 students. Uh, in

that school year there were 1,275 at Beach Channel, 564 at Channel View and 108 and 256. Um. Last year it was at 61% of capacity. This school year, um, the register is still unaudited but approximately 1,857 students, so slightly fewer, 1,094 Beach Channel and, um, 547 at Channel View and, um, 108 in the new school, Rockaway Park for Environmental Sustainability. So it's about 57%, um, utilization right now. Um. This means that the building is underutilized and has extra space to accommodate more students. If the phase out is not approved the DOE would examine availability of space in the building and may revise their proposal to collocate 27Q 351, the new school I mentioned. Um. But described, um, as part of a separate proposal to the phase out. And, um, just--just to be clear on the point the--the decision to place a new school in this building is not entirely dependent on the decision to phase out the school given the fact that the building is under--underutilized. Um. This--this is sort of a brief overview of the details in the impact statement that's published online. Um. It's about 20-plus pages long and it goes into much

more depth on each of the issues that I mentioned so if you haven't already had the chance to look at it I encourage you to take a look at it. If you want to go into more detail then we'll also have an opportunity, uh, if people have specific questions to address those questions after all of the presentations by the panel and by--and the public comment by members of the audience. Um. If, again, as Anthony mentioned, if you have questions that you want to, uh, look at in that - - , please write them down and give it to one of the folks at the back, um, so that we have all of those questions in advance of the Q & A. Thank you.

MR. KUMILE: Um, I'd also like to encourage, uh, the folks that are here that if you'd like to see, um, and take your two minutes, um, that we're going to be, uh, closing the--the sign-in in--in a couple of minutes to I would ask that you go to the back and sign in. Thank you. Um, - - report? You want to go second?

MR. PECORARO: My name is David Pecorara. I am the UFT Chapter Leader of Beach Channel High School. I'm also a high school parent. I've graduate--I had a child graduate from the high

schools of the City and a student who's currently in the high schools of the City. I state for the record to begin with, uh, based on Mr. Krongold's comments, he is not my representative. I represent the - - and so I await her arrival. She is representative of the students of Queens County. And it's her voice that I would rather hear than Mr. Krongold's. So. Moving on from there. We have seen utter contempt of this Department of Education, for the students, for the parents, the staff, of the Rockaways. They've declared now three illegal meetings. Two illegal meetings for the parents as well as surprise meeting in which Superintendent Mendez thought that it was - - to arrive -- school unannounced to the parents and to take over a meeting that the parents had cancelled. That's part of the content that has been shown here. Additionally when the Department of Education sent out Spanish language notice to the Latino population of the Rockaways two days before this meeting, that is a clear message of the utter contempt that they hold for English language learners on this peninsula. When the Department of Education

pays for an ad in the Rockaway Wave for Peninsula Preparatory Academy but does not pay for a similar ad for Beach Channel's public meeting, either this year or last year, as it required, they're showing discrimination against the students and the parents that - - Beach Channel. They're showing their utter contempt and they should be ashamed. Now I listened to the Deputy Chancellor and I note that we have seen neither hide nor hair of either the current so-called Chancellor or her evil predecessor. I read that, uh, 30-odd page document that was being talked about, the EIS. And they have proven the Big Lie Theory. They can tell a lie big enough, often enough, bad enough, they make convince a few people to believe it. But those who have lived here over the years know that, uh, they wouldn't--you wouldn't--that I guess it is not fit to put into, uh, a bird tray. Uh, there has been no support for the students and staff of Beach Channel High School. And for the Department of Education to say otherwise proves their contempt for the truth. We have watched over the years, thanks to cuts from the Department of Education, the loss of this City's

only crew team, the loss of the Art Institute, the swim team, virtual enterprise, dance, peer mediation positive resolution and our honors program. We watched as the Department of Education has created a civil rights violation. Now let me explain. I am a graduate of, uh, Junior High School, Ed Junior High School 231, now slated to be closed and that's 231. And about 30 years ago, in order to alleviate overcrowding in that school an annex was formed at the elementary school 138, Rosedale. Because it made Junior High School 231 which was 80% African American, Afro-Caribbean, more segregated, the Department adjusted its rule that in fact the annex was illegal. And the students were told to return to cure that segregation. Right across the street from this school we have a school that is 50%, 5-0 percent Caucasian as of--because of the Department of Education statistics. Beach Channel High School is 6% to 8% Caucasian. By the standards set back in 1980 this situation is not legal. In fact it looks like Brown versus The Board of Education never happened. It is Jim Crow. Continuing. I also read the EIS for 231. And I

note a huge difference between the 231 EIS statement and Beach Channel's. In the 231 EIS statement the children of that building, the children who would have--in that zone--are guaranteed a seat in Junior High School--in middle--with the junior and high schools that would be formed in that building. The Board of Education has deemed our children unworthy of that consideration. There is no guarantee in that EIS statement that a child in the Rockaways is guaranteed a seat in any school on this peninsula. This is the last place where all students of the Rockaways are guaranteed a seat. In fact we are guaranteed a seat to the extent that if a student has had difficulties in other of the two the collocation schools that exist in our building, Channel View or Rockaway Park, those students have--become enrolled in Beach Channel. Another factor we spoke of with the collocation was P 256. I've been trying to teach the students from P 256 as part of the inclusion program in my classes. There is nothing in your EIS statement that addresses what will happen to that program, a program that is Federally required in the individualized

education plans of those students. I also listened to this as, uh, Deputy Chancellor, uh, Suransky stated fantastically that the students that are admitted to these new schools are similar in proportion as far as their academic preparation backgrounds. Um. I frankly was waiting for his nose to grow. Um. It was a statement that Pinocchio would have been proud of. I am a parent, perhaps [phonetic], and a parent leader at the high school construction trades, engineering and architecture which similarly has a limited constrain [phonetic]. And I know that the students that go there have significantly higher attendance rates in middle school, a pre--uh--uh, a tremendous predictor of success in high school. And I know that they do not have an ELL population that we educate every day here at Beach Channel. And I know they do not have the ISS population, the--the IEP population that we have here. That you have failed to provide funding for. That you have failed to provide resources for. For God's sake that you have failed to provide deans [phonetic]. Because of the funding problems that the Board of Education has wrecked upon us,

we lost our deans. The deans had to be sent back to the classroom. We have 1,000 students in this--over 1,000 students are registered. Are you all mad? And they spoke about our annual rating. I find it extraordinary that we actually raised our, our graduation rate and we'd love to raise it some more. We raised our graduation rate and our grade fell? That's pretty interesting math and I would like to--I'm a math teacher currently, not a former math teacher, so maybe the numbers are a bit fresher for me. And as far as the utilization of this building, they really would like you to forget that the Mayor points - - this well by basically saying that anybody that sends their children to this school and to other schools--and they specifically singled us out, that they would be irresponsible to send their children here. What did you think was going to happen? No. The--what you heard previously was the rantings of the mad. Of people who want to fool you, who want to lie to you on such and extensive and extraordinary basis. And they think that you're going to swallow it. I'd like to believe that the parents in this--and the children and the

teachers in the Rockaways are smarter than that. And that you will rise against this no matter how hard the Board of Ed has tried to make sure that this will be not as well attended as it should be. It should have been postponed on legal grounds. It should have been postponed on weather issues. Of course we saw how responsible the Mayor was yesterday so why should we expect any better today. So I have given out a resolution to most of the people that are here, I have extra copies of it here, and I am as a member of this School Leadership Team moving its adoption by the members present here. Is there a second to this motion?

[Several voices from the audience]

MR. PECORARA: I see a second. Is there discussion on this resolution? Seeing none, seeing a second, we move to a vote. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Some voices saying aye]

MR. PECORARA: Opposed?

[No voices]

MR. PECORARA: The motion carries.

[Scattered applause]

MR. PECORARA: One other note. Uh, I see

the Superintendent for District 27 here tonight. I do note that last year that when we held our public hearing they sent her like a lion to--like a--to the lion's den. Without answers. And I can only wonder if tonight and I notice we have a high school superintendent up here who has visited--who visits this school prior to this threat of closure exactly zero times. Exactly zero times. So when I asked him what he had done to help keep--to help our students the answer would be not a damned blessed thing. And what did his predecessor Francesca Pena do for this school? Not a damned blessed thing. The only thing she did was to get herself quite a scandal with fucking [phonetic] her boyfriend's fa--I'm sorry, her ex-husband--her husband's - - . And her predecessor before that by the way, what did she do for this building? How many times did she visit this building? I think she was here once. What did she do for this building? Not a damned blessed thing. You see a pattern? You see the utter contempt that you've been held in. you remember that and hopefully and this--I would say this to a certain extent that hopefully the

rest of the four Boroughs will have more sense in the next mayoral election. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. KUMILE: We have Craig Doesi.

MR. CRAIG DOSEI: Good evening. Just, uh, want to thank everybody for coming out first of all, especially, uh, you know, the - - past few weeks. Uh, I represent the, uh, School Leadership Team and, uh, I'm the Chapter Leader of the [papers rattling] - - . Uh, Beach Channel--Beach Channel has always been a, a very caring and loving neighborhood. And, uh, we're very ecstatic to see, uh, the closure, the proposed closure of the school. We want to be here to support the community especially the students. And, uh… that--that's about it. We're very excited about this meeting. Thank you.

[Scattered applause]

[Background noise]

MR. KUMILE: Okay this is April Wallach of the School Leadership Team.

MS. APRIL WALLACH: Girls you want to come in?

[Applause, cheering]

CHEERLEADING LEADER: Ladies, five, six, seven, eight…

[Cheer routine]

CHEERLEADING LEADER: Attention. Okay once more, up. Five, six, seven, eight…

[Cheer routine]

CHEERLEADIANG LEADER: Very good.

[Applause, cheering]

CHEERLEADING LEADER: Five, six, seven eight…

[Cheer routine]

CHEERLEADING LEADER: And because we won our game… five, six, seven, eight…

[Cheer routine]

[Applause, cheering]

CHEERLEADING LEADER: And that's only half of our routine.

[Cheering, applause]

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 3: Yeah.

MS. WALLACH: Hi I'm April Wallach and I'm on the School Leadership Team and I'm also a teacher. I guess I just want to say that I'm, uh, sad that everything that's been taken from the children, all the resources, all their activities, um, all the classes that used to be

available to them. There aren't even any elective sports anymore. And the students are feeling it. And they're upset. They're disappointed. And as a teacher that makes me upset. And that's not how a child should go through school. They should be having the time of their life in high school as they're learning. And I just don't feel it's right--it's not right what's being done to them.

[Applause]

MR. PECORARA: - - parents in the School Leadership Team came back I don't know if they want to - - also.

MR. KUMILE: I'm going to follow the--the - - at this point and - - .

MR. JUAN MENDEZ: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Thank--thank you for taking the time, eh, to come here whether you are on one side or the other of this issue of closure or against the closure of Beach Channel High School, the fact that we're here tonight is because this is important to you. This is important to your community and dialog is something necessary in a civilized society as we move forward in the making of the final

1 considerations regarding the proposed closure
2 by the Chancellor of the City of New York
3 regarding the Beach Channel High School. Eh, I
4 would like to point out that this is--first that
5 this is a decision that's not taken lightly.
6 And, eh, number two that this is not a decision
7 that is solely, eh, a Department of Education,
8 eh, decision. Eh, as you know Beach Channel
9 High School, it has deemed to be a PLA school,
10 eh, which stands for persistently lowest
11 achieving high school. This is a designation
12 that comes from the State Education Department.
13 Eh, it is the Commissioner of the, eh, of the
14 State Education Department Commissioner Steiner,
15 the one that decides if a good school--not only
16 New York City but throughout the State of New
17 York on the PLA list or persistently lowest
18 achieving. Once a school has fi--has been
19 identified as being a PLA school then it is up
20 to the locality, eh, in this case the Board of
21 Education, the Department of Education of New
22 York City to decide what are the next steps
23 insofar as a--what to do, eh, at the--at this
24 school. Eh, the way a persistently lowest
25 achieving school is identified, first we need to

1 look at the word achieving and achievement has
2 to do with graduation rates. As you know the
3 graduation rate at Beach Channel High School has
4 for, eh, many years now been lower performing in
5 the 50's, eh. The way the--the Commissioner, it
6 came about, eh, the designation in selecting
7 schools, every school in New York State it was
8 ranked from highest performing and there are
9 many schools throughout this state including New
10 York City, including the, eh, the Borough of the
11 County of Queens, if you have 100% graduation
12 rates, to the schools that are all the way at
13 the bottom. And when--and then they follow up
14 by looking further into the bottom 10% in the
15 whole State of New York. And they ask
16 themselves the question whether this was just a
17 one year anomaly of a low graduation rate which
18 can happen, eh, anywhere or this is something
19 that happens, it has happened for several years.
20 And they took a snapshot of the years 2006, 2007
21 and 2008, the academic years, and found out it
22 is Beach Channel High School is one of those
23 high schools, was one of those schools that
24 needed to be, eh, identified as persistently,
25 eh, lowest achieving high school. Eh, right

after that designation is made which is something that's not taken lightly, eh, because when we think about it, eh, when we think about the 50% graduation rate and we connect--we hear all, eh, very passionately, talking about students, talking about children, they--I have children of my own in the New York City public schools so this is a very real issue to me. Eh, my children also, eh, they are special education youngsters which means they have, eh, IEPs. Eh, so when we look at a situation like this and say--see a school that is consistently graduating, eh, about 50%, that means that half of the student population, eh, is not graduating in a timely fashion. That means that if you are to send two youngsters, eh, two, eh, schools such as Beach--Beach Channel or any school that's in a situation like that, the likelihood of those youngsters being successful at that school is far less so than what you and I would expect. I certainly, eh, have--happen to have two - - . If I had a--had to decide to send my child to a school that has a 50% graduation rate, that statistically is norm--is normally a number. It means that one child will graduate

from that school and the other one would not. And we as, eh, citizens and responsible professionals in this society and this City should expect far more from everyone, everyone, from the Superintendent all the way to the teacher in the classroom, to ensure that that will not be the case. Because when you do that, year after year, the public says--look--what happens that effect on the community. Eh, it means that, eh, children in the community will not have something as simple and as basic as a high school diploma, eh, which we should expect, especially in this, eh, global economy, eh, the citizens of this great City of New York to have a college degree and to have a high level of preparation so that they can, eh, economically provide for their--their families. And youngsters who do not have or the people who do not have high--high school, eh, diplomas by--by far, their income is--is far lower, number one. Number two their opportunities, eh, to, eh, provide for--for themselves and their community is far less. The, eh, the opportunities for--to have a job that provides a pension, that has a health insurance which is what we all just

fought for is, eh, in many--almost in - - . Eh, I refer to you, for example, eh, to connect with the US Department of Labor and--and do further research and look into the statistical facts as they--as they correlate in level of education of the community with the economic performance of that community and with the economic opportunities of the citizens of that community. So it is on that point of view that we need to--that we take this, eh, very seriously. And--and that the Department doesn't--doesn't stand for schools who under perform and that we need to--to do - - far and better. Eh, the question was raised insofar as the issues of process of the students, eh, eh, eh, in the future, eh, for this community. I can assure you that every youngster in this community will have a place, will have a school. That is the obligation of the Department of Education--

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: [Interposing] Where--

MR. MENDEZ: --eh.

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: Where and how many seats are you offering--

MR. MENDEZ: [Interposing] In New York City we offer every, every, uh, every student who is part of the City of New York, it applies to high school and there is a high school admissions process is given a place--

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: [Interposing] In a community school in their district.

MR. MENDEZ: --in--in a school--

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 3: [Interposing] In the Rockaways?

MR. MENDEZ: --in--in a--

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: In the Rockaways? Sir excuse me, just one second. Point of order. Sorry. You were here a month ago. You spoke to us about a month and a half ago you had a meeting. I challenged you to call me back and discuss what was here - - . The programs that existed. I asked you to lobby the sch--the Chancellor to bring the programs back to the school that we once had. You said yeah you would take the oath [phonetic]. you're a bald-faced liar. You stood in--in this room on that--

[Crosstalk]

MR. MENDEZ: - - I would ask you--I would

ask you--

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: --side and made a lot of promises and you lied to us--

MR. MENDEZ: [Interposing] I would ask you--

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: --you did not make--you should be fired. You should be ex-ed [phonetic] for lying to the public.

[Applause]

MR. MENDEZ: If I recall about the question I was asked about resources that were shared on campus. We had several meetings. We worked out a protocol, eh, by which, eh, all students on campus through the, eh, president's, eh, to the Principal's Council, eh, would be able to request the use of unique facilities within the campus are to be shared by all children and all schools on campus. Eh, that protocol was put in place. A User - - to that was created to inform, eh, the parents of the community that, eh, what was - - with what is to be the process by which a teacher may request to use the culinary facilities. The, eh, video production room. Eh, the computer room that would be, eh, a - - at another school floor. So that was one of the--several of the things that, eh, came out

of the--our discussion during the last meeting. So I beg to--

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: [Interposing] You also--

MR. MENDEZ: --I beg to differ--I beg--I beg to differ--

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: [Interposing] Oceanography. Marine Biology, the old shop that still exists here and other different things. I asked you to tour the building with me and meet with me. You did not get back to me at this time. I asked you back then, resources that we start in January to make a difference. You, excuse me, I'm not being nasty I just want to finish.

MR. KUMILE: I know.

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: You noted that the graduation rate had gone up. You said that yourself. It took you 14 years to turn a school around. I asked you to give us a 5-year plan. Give us 5 years to turn the school around with the resources that it needed or whether - - you never got back to me.

MR. MENDEZ: We--it did not take me 14 years to turn a school around. It took 4 years for

the first graduation rate to be--

[Crosstalk]

MR. KUMILE: Just as a matter of protocol because everyone does have the opportunity to--to share their thoughts and then--then we'll give the - - . So.

MR. PECORARA: This meeting started about protocol. Why would you think you should be ex--expecting protocol to follow when you can see out of protocol?

MR. KUMILE: Thank you. Uh, our next speaker is--is Martin Krongold from, you know, CCHS.

MR. KRONGOLD: Good evening everybody. Like you heard, Martin Krongold. Uh, elected representative of the Citywide Council on High Schools. It's all the presidents, vice presidents and treasurers from all the PTAs across the City vote for two representatives from each of the Boroughs. And we monthly meet and invite all parents and administrators to come to Tweed [phonetic] to talk about issues regarding high schools who are in your districts, you have community education councils that meet in individual districts. We represent

high schools. For several years we have been very concerned regarding the phase out and closure of high schools because we don't think it's done well. Two months ago the Citywide Council on High Schools passed a resolution requesting that the Department of Education cease its current policies of phasing out and closing high schools in their cur--current formats because they don't do it well.

[Scattered applause]

MR. KRONGOLD: This past week I would ask Monica Ayuso, and you have one other representative, uh, in Queens, uh, it's Christian Dale, are--are either of you here this evening? I asked Ms. Ayuso if I might testify for Beach Channel High School, uh, EIS hearing as I had done for John Dewey High School, you know, a school that ended up, uh, um, on the PLA list, not being considered for closure and phase out at this time. While I do hope that the Department of Education rethinks what it's doing with Beach Channel because of the very, very unfair, potentially unfair distribution of children having to leave the Rockaways for high school in very large numbers, I do ask you to

consider the basis of why this is being done. And petition the DOE whatever they do to do it much, much better. Don't think this started with Beach Channel. This started in Manhattan quite a few years ago, schools being closed. This started in the Bronx with schools being closed. And four times as many schools are being closed in the Bronx today as in Queens. This is going on in Brooklyn too. This is going on in Queens to a smaller degree. It has--it's set by - - for probably a variety of reasons. The Citywide Council on High Schools asked that I come out and speak to you about the issues you should be aware of and continue to petition until the PEP meeting next month makes a decision as to whether this will move forward or not. And I also ask you to keep informed, not against the DOE or for the DOE, but to the extent that your kids and you as parents and teachers who represent kids are affected and may not have all the answers and have more questions you want to ask, not personal attacks, facts. I have three kids who have been in the public school system, one right now, my wife's a teacher at a school that has problems. It's

overcrowded. My mother was a teacher. My sister is a teacher. I understand the difficulty, the positives, the negatives. But folks there are problems in the system. Your school represents some of those problems. I will not reduce children to the color of their skin when I care about the content of their character. When I care about your minds. Where I care about January 17th being Martin Luther King birthday and the promise of the hope and opportunity for those kids not because of their color but because they're as capable, as caring, as worthy of any type of quality education that I was, that my kids are, and that every one of your kids at Beach Channel, at John Dewey, at Sam Allen Tech, deserve every day. And I stand for that every day in Citywide Council for High Schools, speaks to it every month. I wish some of the folks who are the biggest advocates would come down and speak on those issues. I've read the EIS statement very closely, all 30-some pages. I've read the stats. I have a Master's degree in finance and statistics. I love numbers but sometimes numbers are real and sometimes they're played with. In this case

there's a little of both. There's a little of both. The State closes schools in seven years. The Department of Education has made a decision, you can debate whether it's right or not, to close schools within three years. You and I know, my wife knows, my mother knows, there are schools in New York City that are not effective. If you're on a list somewhere, I'm not going to talk to the teachers, I'm not going to blame the DOE, but at some point the level of success of this school, the City's seen it, the State has seen it, and in the past if the State took hold of this school it would take seven years to restructure it somehow. And there'd be no problems. It'd be a great school. The DOE in harsher, much harsher fashion, to say we're going to make a hard decision in three years. And you don't like it. And I don't like it at all either. In the EIS, these are the five points and I've passed them around to many people. I don't know if there was enough, uh, to go around. The five points that are critical to the Department of Education to consider to make this process fair, whatever they decide, and for you folks to get a level of comfort that

the decisions being made are fair and reasonable. Number one, why didn't the Department of Education's remediate--remediation efforts at Beach Channel work? They certainly said in the EIS that they did everything. Didn't work here. I also note when I read the other EISs, they say about the same thing. So chances are much of this EIS stuff is fill in the blanks. It still comes down to the quality of progress reports and the results of the school compared to everyone else who are challenging you. They've listed everything they've offered but what happened? Whether or not remediation really happened here, your principal can talk to that, the Department of Education states in the EIS interventions didn't work and all they stated was they didn't work and the progress reports show it. We need to go a little bit farther. They need to state publicly what they did. Who was contacted? And what were the results over time? You learned something from that. I learned something from--from that. Honesty would be out there. Department of Education could do a bit better with the facts Ma'am. Second, students left

behind require full support and quality instruction and transfer opportunities. They deserve priority with new school options just like teachers do. If you look in the EIS 50% priority, 50% of the teachers who have priority at the new Beach Channel High School campus. I recognize that that can be played with but I do recognize that teachers have a union and that if they're being moved, they have priority at new schools. Kids don't have that. Kids don't have a union. They have people with moms like me and that's about it. And you can imagine how much power I really have. Okay? The best we can do is honestly talk about the opportunities that kids should have just like grownups. And that means that the kids will feel that they are failures if they don't have the same level of opportunities to go to the good schools, the new schools, the succeeding schools. You saw those kids back there. They're not different from any other kids. What do you think they're going to feel like the moment the school's officially [papers rattling]? What do you think? Graduation rates may go up but that's because more kids won't be in this school. And there'll be more

kids who will--well if you have two kids left, there's one kid, 50% graduation rate. My point is that's when statistics start getting played with. Let's not always talk about statistics. I don't think kids feel about themselves knowing their school is phasing out. Give them the opportunity to go to schools that are good, that are succeeding, that they want opportunities to go to, just like the teachers do. Third, will children's first clusters [phonetic] and superintendents work as much as the school identified as failing? I think it probably [papers rattling] it's as much, one they're identified as potential candidates for it - - . They should be required, they're the top thinkers at the Department that represents schools, what they can do and put it in writing. It's--fourth, DOE needs to make sure kids continue to get proper instruction. If teachers are leaving for other schools, the electives are not offered, DOE needs to ensure that all remaining teachers have at least five years experience and have only a limited percentage of bus half-status or per diem teachers used in the school. Kids deserve quality instruction until

they graduate. Fifth, last point, tens of thousands of kids citywide are affected by the phase out policy. Department of Education here could be looked upon their agenda thinking about what they're doing without just the rubric of oh we're helping these kids get out of bad schools. Lots of kids are going into schools that are--excuse me, lots of kids now have to go to schools that are becoming more crowded. And they're in schools identified as failures. Phase out schools. These schools become potential next candidates for school closures. If you look in the Bronx, if you look in--if you look in the Brooklyn, if you look in Manhattan, schools that once were not overcrowded become overcrowded when schools get closed and become high instant chances for closure because the principals aren't ready for them. Folks, the EIS was stated and was written for your information. And it gives a lot of information. But to boil it down, to really the five or six points that I present here, that you need to think about as to whether you can accept whether this school closes or not. I hope it doesn’t. I believe there's a real chance that it will

phase out. But if it does, you should stand up to make certain that not only the kids that are here now but those kids who will remain here for the next three or four years get every opportunities to be treated equally like they all deserve. Thanks for your time.

[Applause]

MR. KUMILE: Thank you. Thank you to each of our presenters. Um, this concludes our formal presentation. And we're going to move to, to, uh, the next part of our--our session, and, uh, public comment. Um. And, uh, so we--we have two microphones. Um. We also have a representative of Assembly District Leader, uh, Lew Simon [phonetic], am I right?

MR. LEW SIMON: Yes.

MR. KUMILE: Okay just give me a second I will introduce you. I also just want to let folks know we have two microphones here and I'm--I'm going to read the names so folks can--can line up so we can--we can, uh, begin this. Um. Uh. And I'm going to go with this microphone and then that microphone, fair enough? Um. And I apologize if I--if I say your name, pronounce it incorrectly, feel free to correct me. L. A.

Powell.

MR. L. A. POWELL: Right here.

MR. KUMILE: Will be here. Okay? And Margrit Pittman-Polletta, just - - . If you want to swap that's not a problem. Just give me a minute because I just want to get folks to come to the, uh, to the--to the microphones, okay? Um. Christopher Patrillo? And Steven Padmore?

MR. STEVEN PADMORE: Yeah.

MR. KUMILE: Thank you. Um. Gustavo Medina? And David Greenberg? Greenberg? If you--right there? Uh-huh. And let me--and let me do this, uh, I'll just say this. Let me speak. A. Rosen.

MR. PECORARO: - - Rosen - - spot.

MR. KUMILE: Way over there. Um, K Kaufman? Oh--okay we're just going to do all of them. Monica Ayuso. Okay. And Janet Fash, F-A-S-H. Good. And then in this - - here, um, Leroy Boll.

MR. LEROY BARR: Barr.

MR. KUMILE: Thank you. Barr. James Vasquez. Uthan Baksh and Norman Silverman. That's--on this side? Very good. Thank you.

Um, actually I would remind folks that I--I believe at each of the, uh, at each of the microphones, uh, there is somebody to get, uh, you still have 30 seconds, you have 2 minutes, um, to share your thoughts. Um. And, uh, one of the other things I noticed that sometimes, uh, in--in the comments there may also be questions, uh, I'll ask our panel, uh, if the questions are directed, uh, that this is actually not the dialog point but that we will take notes on that and when--and then, uh, when we move to our Q & A, uh, that if a question is raised in this point, one of the panelists, uh, or somebody else, whoever makes most sense to respond to that question will respond.

MR. PECORARA: Point of order. Think about formally adopting a limit of two minutes per speaker. That's as far as votes - - in time.

MR. KUMILE: Okay we have two minutes per speaker--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] Uh, with all due respect, again, you have not [someone coughing] as such.

MR. KUMILE: Okay and I--

MR. ECARARA: [Interposing] Okay then that's

great. And I just ask that it be five minutes per speaker. Is there a second?

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: Second.

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 4: Second.

MR. PECORARA: Well--

[Crosstalk]

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] A joint meeting of the School Leadership Team I was actually elected here. And as such if the people want to speak for five minutes it isn't that big, uh, a sacrifice for the Department of Education's staff here to listen to the concerns of the citizens here for five whole minutes.

[Crosstalk, applause]

MR. PECORARA: All in favor of the 5-minute limit signify by saying aye--

[Many voices saying aye]

MR. PECORARA: Opposed?

AMF@: No.

MR. PECORARA: You can speak for five minutes.

[Laughter]

MR. KUMILE: Thank you.

MR. PECORARA: Thank you.

MR. KUMILE: Um. It's good to know that--

that this is, uh, this is you and me.

MR. PECORARA: That's our meeting.

MR. KUMILE: Okay. Um, one of the things that we want to do is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to speak, everyone is heard and, uh, and so--

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: [Interposing] You have - - people here.

MR. KUMILE: We'll begin. And there will also be the opportunity for Q & A. Okay? That'll be the next part so folks who have questions within the comments will have the opportunity to do that.

MR. LEW SIMON: I'm an Assembly District leader in this community, proud graduate of the second class in this building that was once a paradise Shangri-La. I want to talk about the old days. And I'm going to talk about my dreams for the school the way it should be. When I went to this school I came from [papers rattling] Genenic's core [phonetic] on 88th. I grew up in Arverne [phonetic] Houses and from Arverne I moved across street to Bay Callis [phonetic]. I had it made. I ran out of my apartment. I was here in two seconds. And I--

and I went to school. They had great programs in the school. Oceanography, Marine Biology, uh, a television studio which I just blossomed in and fell in love with, uh, auto mechanics, uh, cooking, etcetera. Every kind of, uh, economic, uh, economics--everything that you can think of, every program that we had. All the, uh, shops and all and basically what's happened through the years, I've watched things get plucked. Once there was a moot court where kids learned about trials and the law. There were so many great programs in here, pluck, pluck, pluck. Duck--duck--duck--all of the ills of the city into Beach Channel. The parents in Rockaway said they wouldn't send their kids to this school. Why would they send their kids? Because all they kept doing was plucking the services out of here and sending kids that--that they didn't want in the other schools. You closed Far Rockaway High School. You did a great job. Let's take the kids that were really - - at Far Rockaway High, send them over to Beach Channel High School and let's see how we can destroy this school now. So they did that. Instead of doing what they used to do, this was

a community school, with community input. It was for the community. We need to make this once again that community school, putting the programs back that--

[Crosstalk, applause]

MR. SIMON: You can accept that, I'll accept it. Bring the programs back that once were. Let our children go here and then from there open it up as a test, test for Marine Biology, Oceanography like they used to and the special programs like they do all around the City. Right now there's no incentive to send a local child to this school. That's why across the street is thriving. They have the resources. We don't have resources here. And I'm asking you please, I'm respecting you, welcome, as the new Deputy Chancellor, who should have been the Chancellor with all your education credentials so thank you. And I only ask you please, I spoke to the Superintendent and it went in the right ear and out the left ear and in the left ear and out the right ear. He didn't listen. Let's tour this place and let's see what once was. And let's get a 5-year plan to keep Beach Channel High School open, with the resources

that it needs and making that our number one community school. Thank you. And a point of order, just to remind everyone, next year they have 220, we're holding a press conference on the steps out here to save Beach Channel High School, to hear from us, so please come and join us. Thank you and God bless all of you.

[Applause, cheering]

MR. LAVERN ALLEN POWELL: Good night. Uh, my name is Lavern Allen Powell [phonetic]. I'm a teacher at Beach Channel High School. I came here about eight years ago. At the time we had 143 teachers. I think we're down to about 65 now. Uh. One of the things that I saw over time, we had over a 60%, uh, passing rating. We had to be set down on the score where they closed Far Rockaway for reutilization, that the new influx of students that we had coming in here were low on the scale. [Speaking very close to the microphone, reverb] - - education, though the grade students from 1 to 4, unlike the Green World [phonetic] we couldn't pick and choose, uh, we take all comers regardless of - - and we try to bring them up. Now granted some of our kids because of their, uh, overwhelming

needs, just to give you an idea, these are your, uh, - - report. I originally had 151 students even though one name - - up on my daily roster yet, of these 151 students, 115 are over-aged and 64 is deemed the lowest third in the City. Obviously we need resources to work with these students. Um, I had a class that had, uh, 5 girls who are pregnant or just had babies who are not coming to school. According to your-- the Chancellor's Regulations, a student is not supposed to be absent without a note more than 18 times. My first period class, I only had out of 32, 6 people eligible to pass. And in my second period class I only have 5. In my fourth period class I had 12 out of 34 and, um, I think my sixth, I only had 4 students and the number here for my eighth period class is even worse. Uh, all the folks that we have, we have children that are challenged. We have to keep on moving. And all their life they've been told that they were failures. If we don't keep on pumping them and pumping them and pumping them, sometimes it takes a year just to get their attention to come to school and fight for their education. We are a people of color without a degree, we are

nothing. We are the bottom. You could be a doctor reaching for your keys at night in New York City and we know what happens to people of color who reaches for their keys. I have two students right now from this school that's shot, - - out of my class for over two weeks and he's been shot already. I haven't even had the opportunity to teach this kid. If we don't keep them in schools, these kids literally are dying on the streets. Now. All the schools south of Hillside Avenue are destabilized, even Jamaica High that's on this side of the avenue is being destabilized. Our problem began when they reopened up as Far Rock [phonetic]. But if you look at the history of Queens, a campus was Andrew Jackson, uh, there was this one that was I think Woodrow Wilson?

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] It's a school of vocation [phonetic].

MR. POWELL: Right. They keep on changing the names of the school but you're not changing the community. You need to put more money into the school. We had Oceanography when I first came here. From the time I've been here, over eight years, the old body shop was never open.

We see on virtual enterprise go the other way. All right? Uh, I would try to get them to buy them new books because we were large ESL. I even turned - - myself, right now I have computers up in the room to Google translate so the kids could try to translate the lesson while I'm teaching it. Just having glossary at the back of the book is not enough to keeping it--students who've just come off the boats and hit the street in July, taking science in September. It takes a while. Um. If you don't know the vocabulary of the language or the subject, all right, it's difficult to learn. Our kids--I have kids who are absent 148 days, 158 days. That the Board of Education sent us a large number of students who didn't go to school in the middle school and are overage. We're good but we're not miracle workers. It's going to take some time to turn these kids around. If we give up on our children where are they going to go? Yes, I see that. I'm done, all right?

[Applause]

MR. CHRISTOPHER PATRILLO: I'm Christopher Patrillo [phonetic] and I'm an alumni of this school. I go to John Jay College now. And I

would like to thank--

[Applause]

MR. PATRILLO: --both the staff and all the support I got while I was here. That they helped me become what I am now. This school when I came here, now it's five years ago, this school was in tiptop shape. I know. I'll say the same thing I said last--last year because basically the same thing is happening. There were no resources given to the school for them to prove themselves. If there's no resources given then how can you tell that the school won't work with those resources? And excuse me Mr. Mendez, I met you, what a month and a half ago, and now what. You say that you have twin boys. You're saying if they're sent here, one of them is going to pass and one of them is going to fail? I think it comes from the house that you come from. It doesn't come from the school.

[Applause]

MR. PATRILLO: Because right now I have a 3.8 GPA.

[Crosstalk, applause]

MR. PATRILLO: You could say that this

school failed people. No. I would like to say that the DOE failed this school.

[Applause]

MR. PATRILLO: And if that is the case then maybe there should be a reorganization there.

[Cheering, applause]

MR. PATRILLO: I--I understand that I have 30 seconds left. Um. I've been to so many of these meetings--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] You have another three minutes.

MR. PATRILLO: So. Now. I said this stuff, I mean it. This school was the reason I became who I am today. Okay? When I came into this school you could ask any teacher that's in this audience, I wasn't half the student I am now. This school molded me into the student that I am now. So please and I, I leave you on a pretty high note, now, if…

MR. PECORARA: Your time isn't up. Don't interrupt her.

MR. PATRILLO: Okay. So now I implore you, I implore the DOE to now reconsider what they were thinking. This school did well for me and it could do well for everyone else. There's

also money being used to bring in another school. The reason I don't understand that is because if you guys have the money to do that, why won't you just fix this school--

[Applause]

MR. PATRILLO: --that's already here. I don't--I don't understand your logic. I don't understand anything that's going on at this meeting and all these meetings are utter shams. So, okay. I'm--on that, I'm done.

MR. PECORARA: Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. UTHAN BAKSH: Good evening everyone. My name is Uthan Baksh [phonetic] and I am a graduate of Brooklyn College. I'm a graduate of Beach Channel High School, Class of '07. I'm also a Rockaway resident for over ten years. And also I am a current student at Brooklyn College. And I have and--and when I started Beach Channel in 2003 I have--I just--I basically was kind of lost because I went to a private school before and then I came like I went from a little pond to a big ocean. And luckily I thrived at this school. I immediately--I was--I started in Oceanography.

And then I eventually got into the arts program and I eventually was on the National Honor Society. And I also have done great things like run for student government in this school. And I graduated with--with honors from this school. And…

[Applause]

MR. BAKSH: And now I hear that the school's closing. At least that you plan on closing the school down because of what? A low graduation rate or whatever it is. Uh. As--on--uh, on, uh, in - - education. As Chris Patrillo said before it's the DOE that's failed us because all the resources that were here were when I--when I was a student here are now gone. All of the stuff that kids could have done here like Oceanography and Marine Biology, I had--I was doing that for basically the first--for--for the first three years I was here in the school. And now you can't do that anymore 'cause that's been cut. And I know a lot of things like mock classroom, I used to be there. There's--that's been cut now. Kids, uh, quite basically have no encouragement to come to school anymore. Sad to say.

[Applause]

MR. BAKSH: And, and another--and also I have--also my little brother is a sophomore at Twelve Crest [phonetic] High School. And because--and--like if you close down this high school which is open admissions which any--but--which is the only open admissions school in all of Rockaway, you'll have tons of kids if they're lucky enough to go to other schools. And it's not an easy thing to do. My little brother has to wake up and leave the house at like 6: 30 in the morning. And he doesn't come home until 6: 30 at night. And when that happens there's hardly any time for homework, hardly any time to--for the family to go--to be together before bedtime. And, and people like--like - - . And it's sad. And--and also, and also another thing--and also another thing is that this community needs this school.

[Applause]

MR. BAKSH: This community needs it. The school is a reflection of the community. If this school does well then the community will do well. If this school doesn't do well, the community will not do well. That's--I've seen

that ever since I came. It's been a reflection of the community. And the people did--what people--did--came to this school and did well and have gone on to do things. I'm currently a psychology major at Brooklyn College and I plan to go get my PhD soon. And any college, I have known a lot of great things, like when I--high school actually reared me to do those things. Uh, in high school I was in student government and I was on--I was doing leadership stuff here. And in college I actually joined a group called - - and - - Research Group and they are one of the biggest public advocacy groups in the country, let alone in New York State. And so I have--and so Beach Channel has made me the student, the person I am today. And I don't know where I would be without Beach Channel. And on that note I'd like to say thank you very much. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. STEVEN PALMORE: Uh, my name is Steven Palmore. And, um, I just would like to--well first of all thank District Group Trimble [phonetic]. I have--I'm proud to say that he's one of my former students.

[Applause]

MR. PALMORE: It was not just an honor for him to be here it was an honor for me to teach him. Uh, I'm here as a teacher here. I've been here now for 11 years. And, uh, I was looking over the data and there's a great bit I feel is missing. And that's a - - , uh. Kids imitate what they see. Now, um, I've noticed in the, I guess you'd say the reorganization or restructuring of the staff, the staff at Channel View and Rockaway that, please [speaking too close to the mic, reverb] there's not one African American instructor in any one of those schools. Um. If you want to - - . You have to give them - - . Right back down in Channel View. A large percentage of the population is African American. But not in Rockaway. Um. It is - - in Beach Channel and I'm proud to say that - - it happened to be a member of - - first - - even - - adult I - - other members of the staff. I've heard about Jewish heritage. I've heard about - - heritage. I've heard about - - heritage. I've heard about Hispanic heritage. And I can continue to rant about that but - - my experience is that the children are the same.

But the--Beach Channel - - is disbursed the children will not have the opportunity to do so. Um. In the process of teaching my music courses I teach them about even the - - . Um. Irish children one-third - - biggest -- too. Just to get them to notice the - - of education. Um. So I think the - - uh, teachers from a smaller school, different teachers to teach this--these types of things better than senior teachers. Uh, I think - - just - - . And I know there have been some teachers that's been teaching here for - - . There's - - . 'Cause that - - is me.

[Applause]

MR. PALMORE: No I - - teaching - - . And I have - - to the students. And I hope that, uh, when I - - can, uh, inspire those who want to be successful - - . Um. One of the things that I've experienced here being - - of - - is that, um, in - - teacher, in - - child asked me for advice on teaching some - - . Have we ever - - ? And she asked me about - - and, um, - - small group designed for - - . And it's amazing what they did. About ten years ago I started - - designated reading teachers were asking me where

- - High School to - - . I'm one of those people who - - , okay? I'm not - - to - - . It's not - - . Last time I - - I - - . you know? And, um, I - - something like that happened at - - . I - -the student still get the opportunity to learn from a qualified teacher. And there are several things that you learn by doing over the course of time. And that's - - teachers - - can be - - teacher. I'm sure that some of them will. But it didn't happen - - and - - expect it to happen - - . I don't think that they're going to - - teachers too - - because - - teach better. One of them who represents - - of Beach Channel is that the - - has created a problem. If you persistently take down a tire, the tire is going to go down. Okay? And we're getting really tired. - - . We take it down, it's going to let it down. Okay? Beach Channel is in a situation where, um, we've had an influx of students who need additional help. Um. That's why I said the thing with the teachers - - and we're teaching - - to do well. My - - . Or some things you just learn over time. It happened with me and I guarantee that when we teach the students that's where we aim

[phonetic]. First class I was teaching there was - - . I didn't have - - . I learned. Okay? We all learned. Teachers learn. Students learn. And some - - . And you've got students who have problems, they--my concern is - - problems, they don't - - . And you can't - - , sorry you don't learn but it's the teacher's fault. It's not my fault. No. - - it's everyone's fault. What happened to making this a better place? And I have - - with DOE, just take a look at that. Put that in your - - maybe we could - - .

[Applause]

MR. ADAM ROSENSWEIG: Hi, I'm Adam Rosensweig [phonetic]. I'm a student. I was a student here. I'm now a teacher here. What am I going to say--?

[Applause]

MR. ROSENSWEIG: --one of the happiest days was the day that I found out that I was getting my transfer to Beach Channel where I learned, that I was going to get to teach in my high school in my community, kids that live around me and that I'm going to see on a day to day basis. So with that in mind, I'd like to thank the

Deputy Chancellor, the Superintendent and everybody else that was involved in destroying education in the Rockaways. I just want to know what school is next on the agenda because we all know that that is an agenda. By the time the Bloomberg Administration is done, pretty much every traditional high school in New York City will be gone as we know it. Um. Mr.--the Deputy Chancellor spoke about all that, about the pro-vision [phonetic] and that there's more--uh, what they bring up, what that there's no real hope when you cut off the legs of the school. Um. So we can't grow. Beach Channel was not a failing school until about five years ago. Bear in mind of that. And that's when Bloomberg began his massive overhaul of the school closures in the system. In response to, uh, the Deputy Chancellor, you also brought us statistics but 75% of people know that statistics are useless. And in regard to Mr. Mendez' statement, you said that we should expect more from the students, to the Superintendent--well actually he said the Superintendent to the students. I just want to know, Beach Channel students have always tried

their hardest to deliver quality education to our students, can people from the DOE say that they tried the same towards us. And with that, thank you for your time.

[Applause]

MR. GUSTAVO MEDINA: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. My name is Gustavo Medina. I'm a retired teacher from the Omega High School and I'm here to support the community of Beach Channel students, parents, and the teachers. First I would read a statement. Mayor Bloomberg's Department of Education plans to close more--plans to close 26 more schools this year despite the DOE's claim that these schools' closings are aimed on reforming the schools. They have instead opened the doors--opened the door to privately run charter schools and are giving the schools' options to those affected. According to the account of parents, students and teachers the DOE policies have--that have--they are affecting - - of the schools that are--that are slated to be closed and not facing them. Okay. Now I want to be clear about this. All this thing is on the trend to - - the - - class. All the teachers have addressed--and

the--and the speakers have addressed the questions of taking away resources from the schools. Okay? This is not an accident. It was a plan, premeditated plan, many programs became - - in New York City. Okay?

[Applause]

MR. MEDINA: Overcrowded schools. Then you say you have a problem. Then there is another problem. And then before you know it's a pendulum school, it's a failing school. The report card that you use for failing schools is very sub--subjective. It's like a teacher taking you know like two good students and just giving grades out, uh, with no basis whatsoever. There's a lot of stuff that you write in the EIS that is not--is not factual. We talk about facts. But you don't deal with the real facts in terms of accounts, students who graduated that--you're keeping time. You might find where they are in five years. They might graduate in six years. Okay you don't deal with those things. Um. Ladies and gentlemen, um, Bloomberg has played a shell game with our most vulnerable children shuffling them around to closing school to closing school. This process

has disproportionately affected students of color, only serving to further perpetuate a separate and unequal school system in New York City. Okay? I see that--

[Applause]

MR. MEDINA: --last year in August, September when the Edison School, we're taken schools, we're taking the students. That they were looking for the students--looking for schools to go. There was a lot of students that they didn't have nowhere to go. The impact reports do not count what's going to happen to the students when you close the schools. A lot of these students are going to be floating around. Okay. And you're not telling the truth to the parents of what's going to happen to their students. Okay? Uh. The other thing I want to say that somebody mentioned that, uh, the, uh, Martin Luther King, okay, the one that judge by the character not by the color. Okay this is total hypocrisy. I know that for years the schools that have failed are where the students, like the majority of the students are, uh, uh, are African American or Latino. Okay? So please don't tell me that - - you - - in

other schools because the majority of the schools that you're closing are the schools that affect those minorities that suffer the most. Okay. You're also not hiring, uh, uh, teachers of color in the schools, okay? This is another problem. Okay? If you're really interested in talking about the--the--the communities of color, okay, then you allow the parents to be participants in the decision-making process of the schools. And then work with the teachers because what's good for the students is good for the teachers. And what's good for the teachers is good for the students, okay. And you're trying to destroy that relationship by attacking the teachers and saying that the teachers only care about their jobs, etcetera, and this is what proves what you say. Okay? And you have control of the media so you--you--you create public opinion against public education because this whole thing is an attack against public schools.

[Applause]

MR. MEDINA: In addition to closing schools, the DOE gives away more public school space to charter schools, to - - patients and when the

former school is - - and the previous school - - . Okay. This has already happened. If you make that high school you have little schools that open up in there. They're already struggling for resources. One has everything. The other one doesn't have anything. Okay this is happening all over the City. Okay. And we wouldn't be having this conversation with the school, the charter schools, okay, a lot of - - $25 million here, $10 million here that have been donated to the school system in theory and try not to - - to this money. Okay. You cannot deny that. Okay. All these millionaires are behind this to privatize the schools and to determine the curriculum and the--the education that the school--the--the students serve. And I'm sure they're not interested in the ed--in the real education of the students. With them in, proper resources in support of our public schools not closing and privatization. And we're asking the parents, the school, teachers and committee members to rally, to - - to stop the school closings. January 27th, from 4: 30 to 6: 30 at City Hall Plaza new--new--uh, bridge, we're going to have a demonstration for

all - - the media to stop the closing--closing Channel - - . And, uh, I think it's composed of, uh, many leaders [phonetic], teachers, students, parents. Okay? And ladies and gentlemen please you know that we have this control of those people on top and they're very powerful. And they created a public opinion against public schools. Okay? If we go to this rally you will be able to hear a different point of view. And already--

MR. KUMILE: [Interposing] I--I apologize but I'm going to have to stop you--

MR. MEDINA: --the leader of the schools, representatives. The - - member of his school has represented the real sentiments of the school, of the School Leadership Committee. And that's what they--democracy is. Not in the board. Not people that are hired and they have to say that all communications wasn't the same because they will say what they have to say and we can fight them. And you know that that happens.

MR. KUMILE: Thank you.

MR. MEDINA: Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. DAVID GREENBERG: Good evening My name is David Greenberg. I'm - - a paraprofessional here at Beach Channel. I'm also an alumni, the Class of '89. When I first applied here in the summer--summer of '85, for June--for September of '81, (sic) I was told that I had to go to the Oceanography Institute which I loved. I chose Beach Channel for two reasons. One I was sick and tired of being compared to my brother so I didn't want to be forced to go to John Addison [phonetic] and to be compared to him. Second, I love the ocean. I came to my home. I now live here, it's five years. I have started working at Beach Channel. It's 17 years and majority rights of my tenure of--of the school--of being a para has been at Beach Channel. Over the years Beach Channel has served the community with many different programs. Thus those same programs was when I was a student here. Oceanography, Marine Biology, Auto Shop. We--we had a great--we had a, uh, weather station. A mock trial. All these different items, we had--we had--I remember we had the--we had the cook, we had a fully stocked cooking classroom. All these programs have either been cut or removed

from Beach Channel's permission to be used. And if we do want to use them we have to fight to use them. Where is equality? Where is all the funding that we were promised? If this is supposed to be a true, equal opportunity school, where is all the equality for the funding that we are promised? Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. LEROY BARR: Leroy Barr, directive staff, you have taken. Uh. I could--thank you--

[Applause]

MR. BARR: --I could stand here and give you a bunch of different stats. I could tell you that the special ed population here at Beach Channel is 17.8% higher on average for their peer group, schools that are like that. In my view DOE decides which peer group that this school was added to but it's 17.8%. I could also tell you, um, that, uh, 34% of Beach Channel's special education population, they're in a self-contained class. Unlocked [phonetic]. some of the schools that they were in - - it's a lot higher. It is in fact, um, 29% higher than in their peer group. But the deal here is that

we want to educate every child. So I don't know how they got too much--but it's important to look at those things because I stand here and I listened to every presentation and I heard every word. Let me tell you what I heard. I heard the people speak about how they felt like their voice is not being heard. That they have been left out in the cold, that they've been asking for the resources to do their job. That over time, over the last few years that you've taken the programs and the things that worked out of this school building and they feel like they've been left to really die on the vine. And then I heard the Department of Education stand up and give you statistics. They stated to you that well the school's on the PLA list, as if they have no responsibility in that. They said to you that the - - but that's great as if they had no responsibility in that. They are disconnecting themselves from what's going on here except they are here merely to give you the statistics on what's going on here. And not giving you a plan on what they've done to change what has taken place here. I humbly suggest to you that we will not allow you to abdicate your

responsibility to do the right thing, not just by this school, but by every school in this City. It is your job. And if you're not doing your job, then you should lose your job. It's as simple as that.

[Applause]

MR. BARR: That's what you say to us. You tell teachers that we have to be accountable. And by picking up - - if the grades don't go up, somebody has to be what, accountable. If schools aren't doing well, don't let them stand there and--and tell you that schools are not doing well and they're just here to report that. Hold them ac--accountable. What have you done? In everything that you heard tonight, you have not heard one thing that they've done. They're coming to you, bring you statistics. You should be insulted. You should be offended. And you have the power, you should hold them accountable. It is their job.

[Applause]

MR. BARR: Now look. I'm a parent. I have two kids. And, you know, I'm--I'm tickled by the fact that somebody got a--a child has to mention that it's what happens in the household

first and not what happens at school. I'm tickled by that but the - - . If I were to treat my children differently and I'm going to talk about the other school that's here and I--I want to do both because we represent everybody. I want them to do absolutely well. But you are treating your children differently. You are not the parents. If I were to treat my children differently the State would have something to say about that. And I'm accountable to the State but - - as a person as a man, I'm accountable to God, personally. If I were to treat my children differently, there would be a problem. You treat your children differently. You give some children everything that they need. And you starve the others, give them nothing. You take from them. You take away so that some of the kids can have the most modern technology, laptops. I can take you places around this city where the things that happened here over the last five years, the exact opposite has happened in those places. It is a crime that you would do that. You should treat your children the same way. So I'd probably suggest to you again that you have failed your

kids. And--and we charge you--we charge you with that failure. And we ask that you actually think about what you're doing because ultimately in--and all this is policy - - . I'm not going to get into the political differences and, um, that I--the realities that I believe - - . Look if it's Jack Rush [phonetic] if it's whatever you believe in terms of business model, the bottom 10%, you can't create the bottom 10% and then cut them off. There's something criminal about that. But if it's the bottom 10% you want, then cut your own 10% because again you have failed.

[Applause]

MR. BARR: You have failed. You have failed for years. We are the people, not you, you work for us. So we are supposed to be accountable for what they're supposed to be doing. And teachers, if our kids don't get it, what have we learned? Ultimately in the end we have to go back, we have to retool. We do our lesson plans over because our part is to figure out a way to try to help them get it. You haven't done that. It's--it's your responsibility. So again, if you are only out to - - us, do not insult the

intelligence of the people who are taking the time to come out tonight. Come to them not just with statistics that put distance between you and your responsibility. Come to them - - . come to them and say look, honestly we haven't done this, we haven't done this, we haven't done these 20 things that have led us to be in the position that we're in today. Be honest about it and then we can talk. But until you do that, you're blowing smoke and quite frankly you should be fired. Yeah--

[Applause]

MR. BARR: --because you haven't done your job.

[Applause]

MR. KUMILE: Okay but--

MR. BARR: [Interposing] So I just want to say - - .

MR. KUMILE: It's way past the 5 minute - - .

MR. BARR: They told--at the end, it's not about the failure of--of the kids because again in our view of hope--hope--hope that the kids are doing well, all across the City there are public schools that are doing extremely well.

And when you look at the schools that aren't doing well 'cause I--I come from one of those schools that 12 years ago there was a program called the Chancellor's Districts, they labeled certain schools citywide that was failing. The Chancellor came in who I believe at that point cared about kids, came in, put the programs, the funding, the training and all those other things in place and guess what, the same teachers, the same kids, the same building, the same [Speaking too close to the mic, reverb] neighborhood--not to - - we turned that school around and the school became a beacon of light not just for the City but for the country. So the kids can do it. But if the - - don't have their act together, they keep it--accountable. So again I ask you, do not--

[Applause]

MR. KUMILE: Thank you.

MS. JANET FASH: Good evening. I am here in support of the students at Beach Channel High School, the teachers, the parents and the existing community of the Rockaways that is hoping and really rooting for all in this building, whether it's a small school or a large

school. Beach Channel High School represents history today. When I walk in here I see the history of this building. The only disappointment for me in this building is the sm--the small pool that was built. We are a beachfront community and that small pool is not being utilized but we could still teach swimming there but not for a competitive aquatic swim team. So that's the little right there--that small pool, to me, represents how the Department of Ed can get things wrong. And I think here tonight what I'm hearing is that the school is on the way up. It may not be there all the way. I'm in a small high school and we have all types of children as well. And some of those students are not going to be graduating in four years. We are working hard to get them in a school. The attendance teacher is there in the afternoon calling, we're calling, everyone's calling. We're really trying to root for those children. But in a large high school you are going to have more of those students and the challenge is there. And I really am here tonight to speak to all of you that are in the position of power that could actually bring resources to this

community. And the Rockaways is isolated traditionally from New York City, traditionally the Rockaways we see very little resources for the community. And the students that are here, the 9% that live here or go here, I don't know what that translates into how many children here but they deserve an education. And the students that are coming over from the mainland that enjoy coming to Beach Channel, they also deserve an education in this building. And quite frankly when I was walking in here and I saw the plaque from 9/11 and I know those four men that died. And they also came here. So when I--when I'm coming in this building I'm thinking there's a history here. Don't let the history just die out. Instead the community here is waiting and wanting Beach Channel High School to be revised. Give us the resources. Give them attendance teachers. The quality review was provisioned in 2008 and 2009, I--I predict that it could be still rising. If the graduation rate is rising and you can give the, uh, more attendance teachers to this school and other resources that they might need, um, I think Beach Channel could be on the rise instead of it being on the

downfall. Thank you and have a good evening.

[Applause]

MS. MAGRIT PITTMAN-POLETTA: Good evening ladies and gentlemen, parents and teachers, and students of Beach Channel High School. My name--my name is Margrit Polletta. I teach third grade at PS 24 in Sunset Park. And I'm here representing a coalition to stop school closings this evening. And I just wanted to talk to you all about these feelings of frustration and sadness and anger at the closing of this school and other schools around the City and to echo the sentiment that Leroy just shared with us of standing up for these schools. We must hold the DOE accountable. We just hold all of the administrators, all of the management, all of the people that do not come to our schools and see the work that we do with our students on a day to day, that would tell us that we are not doing our jobs. We just hold them accountable. And there are people organizing to fight back against the closing of our schools. Next Friday, not tomorrow but a week from then there will be Fight Back Friday Rallies across the schools in New York City. So that communities

of schools that are closing communities that are in support of schools that have been slated to close can stand up and speak out together against these--just it's these abominations that are being brought on the public school system. And the--the attacks that we are feeling as teachers, as students, as poor communities and communities of color over and over again historically. We have to stop this trend. Because if we don't speak up they're not going to listen. So next Friday there will be Fight Back Rallies across the City. If you're interested in getting information or organizing one yourself at your own school you can contact me. We have support information at the coalition and I can send that to you. I have a sign-up sheet right here. There will also be groups of people going to the Panel for Education Policy meetings to welcome Kathy Black to her very first meeting. And to speak up at those meetings where there schools that are being slated to close are announced and where it will be voted for in their closure. Those will be January 19th, to defend public education; February 1st, to stop the invasion of charters

and to fight back against the school closings'; February 3rd and February 15th. I have a flier here if you're interested. There's also, like I said earlier, there's also going to be a citywide rally at City Hall where there's people from all across the City, the five Boroughs, are going to come out and fight against the budget cuts, fight against the attack on our public schools, the attacks on public school teachers and the charter collocations of invasions in our schools. So just because we're feeling this incredible sadness does not mean that we have to feel it alone. We need to come together. This is a time when we can make the biggest impact, where we can harness that energy and fight for it together. So I encourage you to come and sign up to participate in the Coalition to Stop School Closings and I have information for you if you're interested to get involved. And let's not take this. Let's keep our schools open and let's fight for our students and for our communities.

[Applause]

MR. K. KAUFMAN: Good evening Chancellor.

Are you [speaking too close to the mic, reverb throughout] to you because I know that in the current democracy that we live in that the reason why you were appointed was because the superintendent said that you must. And since you are an educator at that level I have to call you Chancellor. And I thank you very much for coming to see us right now. I really appreciate it because last year or the year before all we had were well people who really didn't have the power but I know that you do. I know that you have the authority. I know that--from your background you have the moral obligation as well. As a support [phonetic] educator who's been here all day, I'm also a teacher here, uh, I must echo the other teachers that are here, echo the parents who I spoke to today. I had a parent who said to me Mr. Kaufman what can you do about my son. I said to her well let me help you. Then she said Mr. Kaufman I'm only one here at home I need you to guide me. He's the only one I have and you're the only one he ever talks about. So that's why I'm here because after school I was talking then to the young man and after school he was bringing work that he

had done today. As a poor student, pardon, as a support educator, and in a school that once had--yeah, that's--I'm--I'm not kidding. We had President Clinton here. I don't know if they briefed you. We had President Clinton right there speaking to you. As a school that once had marching band teams that went to Disney World as a representative of that school--I really have to buckle here. I really want to call you Chancellor because I know that the reason why you're in your position of power is because as you--as some said it recently, a little while ago, the Commissioner said you had to be or else he would never authorize Ms. Black, and the only reason why she was placed there was because the previous - - they--that the Mayor led by--well 31% of the people here voted so what's that, 16.5% of the registered voters, that the Mayor really--couldn't really put--because that person was too much involved with the charter schools. So I'm really happy, I know a lot about what's going and I'm really happy to see you here. However as a history teacher I have to have to tell you and I tell everyone that I'm here because of res publicus

[phonetic]. I said that last year and I'll say it again. It's a term that represents our public. It means for the good of the public. I'm here because you have signed an agreement with the Mayor after both the originating court judge and the appellate court judge said that it was illegal to close this school down. And in exchange the UFT signed an agreement that this school was to hold--it will receive additional resources. Former young man who I was counseling, guiding today, unfortunately he didn't get the resources because I still have a classroom of 34 on my roster. He didn't get a classroom of 25, 21 or 20 and before today that everyone gets the same resources, frankly my little man here needs more than that little man across the street in the other fancy stance [phonetic]. Yes I used the words fancy stance because if you look at the City's data you'll notice certain peculiarities that each school's territory can draw. And I use that word deliberately. [Speaking to close to the mic, reverb] In - - versus Ferguson which said that - - to give separate but equal, I say okay fine, give us the equal resources for my students who

need that equality - - for them getting equality is guaranteed but frankly here at Rockaway resources are only going to certain places gents. Not everywhere. And the same dollars don't - - that because a school gets - - $5,000 it's set, and here is $5,000, it's equal. It's not. My student doesn't have two parents at home. My student talked about her brother who was shot when I asked the young lady to create a little poster, right, about leadership and about the goodness of the school [phonetic] all she could do was create a poster about her brother being shot. That's not the same as that student over there. It's not. Over there, her brother wasn't shot last year, my student here was. $5,000 doesn’t cover it when you say equal monies to equal schools. And the name of the group of people in our republican constitution in the name of the - - of the lack of resources for this school, I would appeal to you, I appeal to you, to just--to stop generating the same social outcomes. What would happen in Arizona. - - read the newspapers to go find out what this next school is like. How about if they didn't have mental re--resources for--mental health

resources. And I helped - - . I start to research of - - and I knew it would be the same thing because that place was cut. There resources were cut then - - someone committed that heinous crime. I'm trying to stop that every day in here. I see it all over the school. I see lots of students who have such troubled backgrounds that - - my resources but of course my resources don't - - .

MR. KUMILE: I'm going to have to ask you to--

MR. KAUFMAN: [Interposing] Okay excuse me. The Mayor thinks he made $800 million. 8-- almost $1 billion on programs where you cannot - - extra. Tell me. Tell me about the case. Because I'm prepared. Are you going to tell me that because the Mayor spent $800 million, $1 billion almost, I couldn't have five minutes, extra three minutes or two minutes?

MR. KUMILE: This is about getting your voice. I'm sure that everybody has equal voices.

MR. KAUFMAN: Okay. Okay. I'll tell you what, now I'll make it real fast. [speaking too close to the mic, reverb] - - the principals, I

want to appeal to anyone in power, obviously - - the Chancellor. How about giving us 10%? - - . I--I'll tell you--I'll tell you where we have problems. You give us $5 million. You give to Dr. Hess [phonetic]. You can pay - - that's about - - intent of the incentive and give it to the other principals in this area. You give us that money, you'll see what changes. All I'm asking is a half a percent of the $10 million - - . That's only one. - - . You ought to - - change the - - deciding better. It's the right thing to do. Why - - to me? I know we can. Where--1994 came around, I was sitting and I was giving instruction to a student and we couldn't believe that something [phonetic] was going to change in my lifetime. Shoot I can't believe--I still can't believe the Soviet Union is gone. I - - those people of good character made good decisions and good choices. And I'll be happy to help my--I'll be happy to help my little sugars, the powers that people do it but don't let my student who gave me a poster on her brother being shot, don't tell me she's the same as over there. I need equal resources for her. I can do it. This school has--look around the

room. See these pictures? They were created by students here when the school got the resources. You've heard it - - change. I am asking for my--100% miss in the right of the Great Depression, recession or whatever you wish to call it, in the cut to services, today it was said that we needed to cut essential services. We can't cut sanitation once we have it. We have less money. And you don’t even say--

MR. KUMILE: [Interposing] I'm sorry you have to--

[Crosstalk, shouting]

MR. KAUFMAN: --I care about the schools resources--

MR. KUMILE: [Interposing] Thank you very much.

[Applause]

MR. GENE ZASKERS: Hi I'm Gene Zaskers [phonetic] I'm the District Representative of Queens High Schools for the UFT. Now I--I thank you for coming out tonight. And I know that this--everybody here today for the DOE has come out en mass. You know, when I see eight staff members, the Deputy Chancellor, a senior Deputy Chancellor, the Superintendent, actual high

school Superintendent sitting here, um, as opposed to what performance was shown--made was--was subjected to last year, cluster leaders are here, all of these staff members are here and they're here for one reason. Because they don't know what they do to school. They were here last year and they said that they were going to close the school and they were insistent on closing the school. And they did not--were not able to do that. They sat here and disrespected this community, disrespected the students, disrespected the parents, the staff members here and they sat there and said they had no answers just like they have no answers tonight. It was said several times. This is not a dialog. They don't look to dialog with the community. They are looking to sit here and to present and then everyone will speak and then they will go away and make their decision. And how do we know this? Because this is what they did last year when they sat here and said they thought the school should close and kids were crying and parents were crying, asking what are you doing for my kids. They said it should close. When the UFT, the NAACP and parents throughout the

City sued the City of New York for closing the schools, they said that the schools should close. When will--we won that lawsuit in April. The Chancellor and the Mayor said that the schools should close. When we won the appeal in July, that the Mayor and the Chancellor said that the schools should close. And when we walked in in September without the resources, without the things that were promised, without the kids that were supposed to come to the school, we knew what they wanted to do was to close the schools. We know that they have done nothing to help these schools. When you look at the EIS plan and they sit there and they talk about so many different things. These strategies that they've had. These, uh, wonderful plans sitting there and saying that we're going to be doing these things. And I was here along with the people in the community listening for a pre-meeting, at least three meetings, listening for hours about all of the feedback that they had. And the insulting part of it is in this EIS they leave us three bullets of what they walked out of here with after hours of meetings of listening to the community. They

don't care. They come with a 35-page legal document of gibberish talking about what they can--what's going to happen to the kids in the community. So what are they going to do? They--like I said, they said the curriculum in the document the kids can go to any school in Queens. How lucky. You don't need to go to Peninsula. You can go to any school in Queens. They cited 18 different schools in--in NCY--sorry, 18 that they--other kids can go to including kids in schools in Manhattan and Staten Island. They don't care about the kids in the peninsula. They don't care about the kids in the community. And it's an insult. It is an insult again because we know where the Chancellor is going with this. You abdicated your responsibility last year and you abdicated your responsibility this year. We have no reason to believe that you will actually have--your plan of putting in the school in here will be just to give you--for the success of the students that are already in this building. You've already closed schools or tried to close schools that you also created. So what makes you think that any of these schools are safe

including Channel View, including Rockaway Park because you'll close them too. The Super--the Department of Education has no real plan. They say that right now this building has a 51% capacity, excuse me, a 575 capacity and when the new schools come in and everything is supposed to be Shangri-La, it'll be at 51% capacity. How insulting is this? If you really want the schools to be--to be successful you need to listen to the community. I'm glad everybody's here but we're going to be holding all of you accountable. To be--listen to the community and to get the resources to the school - - .

[Applause]

MR. RON SILVERMAN: Um, I'm Ron Silverman and I will speak to two groups. The first one is the star in the early 1960's, this community, West End, the Rockaways have no, uh, high school. We have overcrowded Far Rockaway High School. The - - parents of the Rockaways got together, they said they demanded a school. They worked through all their elected representatives to have a school that the children of the whole peninsular could attend and would provide the services that everybody

needed and bring everyone together. We were pleasantly surprised with the Board of Education came up with such a beautiful plan for the school in the - - and would spend $8 million to provide a school for the children of the Rockaways. Some of us questioned whether we should--whether the City should be spending this kind of money but we said we would always have this school. And 50 and 100 years from now we would have a school, we would have a building that everyone in the community could use. Unfortunately it's about 40 years from now, they want to close this and what they will replace it with I don't know. The other way I want to speak is as a retired eighth grade teacher who's worked in the Rockaways in junior high school 188 which was across the street and IS 53 of Far Rockaway. And our eighth grade students would be looking to go to high schools around the City. And they kept a nice - - who else is in there and some of them looked and some of them were saying, hey I can learn aviation. I'd love to have this. What can I do? And I would look at them and say all right, you can--you can take a test for that or take the raw - - and come

back and then see if that's a school you want to put down. I only helped one student who wound up going there. Yes it's in Queens but don't take a trip going over with 13 or 14 years old and have--and enjoy your day. I know one student from the Rockaways who got to Bronx High School in science. The family decided to move to the Bronx because they couldn't make the trip from Rockaway. A couple of students qualified for music and art. Many others did and did not choose to go. My own son qualified for Brooklyn Tech and decided that as a family decision that it would be too difficult to take a trip. We depend upon the schools in the Rockaways. Rockaway must have a school that kids can have all the, uh, programs available. If we take this school away, what school will provide these various courses of - - , uh, uh, information technology. Or a swim team. A swim team so that people in the Rockaways can learn to swim. We have life guards to protect the rest of us. Which school - - and have a diverse enough population to provide the advanced placement courses that kids need to get into--get into, uh, into a, uh, good college and go ahead with a

program which will prepare them for jobs in the--in the sciences and other areas? My son was at the--at, uh, Far Rockaways which no one - - he was in one of the last classes that had advanced placement calculus course. He's been promised that this will be available in which school. Will kids from different small schools in the area be able to enroll in a course in another school? If they do are we playing a game in actually taking separate small schools with more room - - and then the kids enroll. So I'll say that's a question. Where will these programs be? How will children in one school be able to access courses in another school? And how will we bring our community together? A large school as Beach Channel High School was brought children of the whole community together. We have different ethnic groups. We have certainly different economic groups. They were all in the same school. They didn't all achieve to the same level but everybody got something from being together with others. If we divide by the interest--

MR. KUMILE: [Interposing] Let me ask you--

MR. SILVERMAN: --groups how do we bring--

how do we bring all these people together? And for those who have these grand ideas about making small schools around, I would like to hear about how you will offer the courses that everyone needs and how they would work to bring everyone together so that we have one community not a division of small groups in different places. We never get to talk to each other. I thank you for your attention.

MR. KUMILE: Thank you. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

MR. KUMILE: That closes the public comment section of our--our evening, uh, though I do want to invite, um, Monica Ayuso to--to join us. She was a part of the panel. She--she was detained.

[Applause]

MS. MONICA AYUSO: Thank you very much. Um, my comments are going to be directed at what I heard last year and what I've learned from last year. And - - why am I here again this year. For beginners, I'm surprised to see so lack--I'm surprised to see less parents here, less community here. It only represents the fact

that no one's listening to what their opinions were and their feelings towards the school. The fact that we had to file a lawsuit in order to stop the closing of the school and to read an EIS statement now that says the lawsuit prevented DOE from the forward [phonetic] is sad. Because we should have learned from a lawsuit that the DOE needed to do more. That it was an opportunity for the DOE to review again what they saw happening here and to really execute a better plan. In the summer they released the persistently low achieving schools and with that they submitted an application in order to get Race To the Top dollars. And in that list of schools was Beach Channel. We continued to ask the DOE as this school year began, what would happen, what would that look like for these schools? And we couldn't get an answer. They gave pre-engagement [phonetic] sessions throughout the schools that fell on the list but we still couldn't get concise answers to what they were going to do with Beach Channel. Later they released the app for the school and then it just seemed like it just plummets. But never once

did I see a strategy or plan in place. So whatever plan was executed last year to close this school, they've done nothing to show us what was the change or what really supported that decision. In this EIS they still continue to fail to give us the information about what resources they put in the school. They say that they did. They say they gave the school resources but they don't specify what it was and how unsuccessful it was and why it's not worth doing that again. If I saw that type of response then I can say okay they tried and we are just not doing what has to be done. They list here that they included extensive training for the School Leadership Team. What does that extensive training entail? The School Leadership Team is not a classroom. There are people that evaluate and make a CEP. So that's not showing up what's going into the classroom. In this statement they show us that the--the graduation rate has risen to 52%. I believe that was the argument the school was making or the parents was making that the graduation rate was on--was on the climb. Parents tonight, community said, that this school was not a failed school and I'm

quoting "not a failing school until five years ago" so I have to ask what was the difference five years ago. It was the closing of Far Rockaway High School. And that's what we need to identify. When they closed one school down here, they threw everybody left over into this school and then they took away a lot of things from this school. And what we failed to really emphasize when the statements were made by the speakers before, what happened five years ago. They closed down one school. They overcrowded us. They stole from us and us alone to stand on our own.

[Applause]

MS. AYUSO: That's what you need to continue to say. To these folks, the DOE guys. Five years ago you abandoned us. We want you to stop abandoning our students. We want you to stop abandoning our community. We want you to do what you're supposed to do. The things you're going to do for the new school that's coming in the building. I do not support. I do not support keeping ineffective teachers. I do not support babysitting principals that come into a school to baby-sit it while it falls apart. I'm

into activism. People that actively do what they need to do. So if the DOE came to me as a parent and said we came here, we did nothing for the school, and 50% of these teachers need to go and we need to give you a new educational leader and we need to do things differently, that's what they're saying they need to do but they need to do it with another name, in another building, in another school. I want to see you do that and what you should probably have instead of overpopulating our students with more than one in a building, more than two in a building, and more than three in a building. And for the question portion of this evening I want to know how many kids were enrolled in this school through the application process after September 2010 since the plan last year was to close it, now many ninth graders did they get and what does that education look like for them now? I do not agree, and I make it very clear, I do not agree with just leaving the school year to stand or fall. You did not give them the resources. You depended on the lawsuit and then you lost the lawsuit. You still failed to give them the resources. And that is unacceptable.

And I just want to tell the Superintendent 'cause this is being recorded and this is on the record, Queens parents are tired of hearing about your personal family. They're tired of hearing about what you did for Brooklyn. They want to know what you're going to do here in Queens for us now. They want to know what you just set in place in Queens now. So all if all those - - talk the talk, but I don't see anybody walking the walk. And at the end of the day it's our children, it's our children, that are failing. It's our children with no real opportunities before them. It's just - - half coming inside here--that's the building, the board told me un-hun. Why? They already made up their mind. If the kids know you already made up your mind and you already said goodbye to them, what else can we do?

[Applause]

MS. AYUSO: It's Race For the Top. We need to race to stop. We need to tell them that their - - without a real plan. And this is not appropriate. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. KUMILE: Thank you. So there are a

number of questions that folks generated and--and--and shared with us. Um. And we want to spend a little bit of time with, uh, generating and--and have, uh, some response to them. Um. I know that, uh, one of the things that has--has come up, uh, is this question of--of what has been the support to--to Beach Channel. What has been the--or how its folks and how folks worked with the school. Um. And I believe that the--the network, uh, wanted the opportunity to respond to that question. So, um, we'll--we'll get him to respond to that question.

MR. PECORARA: Do we also get a chance to posit other questions both--this is a joint meeting.

MR. KUMILE: All right. So specific people asked to respond. I'm going to ask specific people where they've spoken on - - so. So Ms. Hess, for this.

MS. HESS: Good evening. Um. I'm going to be as brief as possible. Under, um, leadership, we did an awful lot of evaluation of data and breaking down data so that we understood exactly which students needed which support. We developed smart goals, we helped the principal

to develop smart goals, looking at the CEP, looking at his VPR and making sure that it was one complete unit. We discussed periodic assessment because we did not want to be that if some of the test is given in the beginning of the year and then another test is given nine months later. We wanted to make sure that there were different stopgaps and kids would be checked all along the way. So we worked very hard in picking the best types of assessment that we could. We also met with teachers and spoke about formative assessments. How just sitting in meeting with a kid and discussing something good that they're doing might be helpful to that child. We had several principals meetings which is very, very broad. We set up into visitations both within the building and within the network. We had instructional rounds within another one of those schools. This school was, uh, was present. We developed small learning communities, uh, using understanding by design. And this particular school and administration and myself worked on putting together the small learning communities even prior to them getting the grant. So we did

a lot of work on--on that as well. Instructionally we had a series of workshops for cabinet members on collaborative inquiry, periodic assessment, ARIS [phonetic], in particular high school graduation tracker because that identified which students need to take Regents and which Regents they needed to take. And we identified which students did not need Regents but did need credit accumulation and exactly what area they needed credit accumulation in. They had a JIT [phonetic] and we worked very, very hard to help the school prepare for the JIT. Uh, we had workshops for teachers on com--and still do, for common course state standards, curriculum mapping, the inquiry process and as I had mentioned before the walkthroughs. We had summer training programs, uh. We had support for the development of the inquiry process and the quality review which focused on strategies that teachers could use, all kinds of data, examining the new state standards, looking at our curriculum maps and seeing how much work needed to be done to bring them up to date because by 2014 we expect that the new state tests are going to reflect the

common--common course standards. And we've been doing heavy work on that. Um. We've been helping the school develop a more coherent assessment and a more coherent grading policy. We've had workshops on ELA, state standards, the math Regents, a lot of work has been done with particular teachers in mathematics, uh, who needed some additional support. We made sure to have workshops for them. Development of coherence in assessment in using rubrics to grade children and common assessments with the establishment at the end of the school right-grading policy [phonetic]. Uh, operational support, our budget person helped, uh, the principal and the assistant principals work to implement $182,000 of grants a couple of years ago and $142,000 of which was used to create the small learning communities, $40,000 of which was supported after school clubs and activities. We provided technical support in human resources and in budget. In student support services we worked, uh, with the principal and with the assistant principals to look very carefully at the progress that kids were making, to help them plan for careers and certainly to look at the

kids that--how the kids were doing when they get to college because it has been identified that students that go to a community college, we don't have further information as of yet, but students that go to a community college and come in at a remedial level do not do half as well as students that come in, uh, certainly having met all of the criteria if not more. Uh, we helped improve student attendance. We've had meetings with the attendance team. The last meeting that I was at we broke down the attendance committee so that each one of the attendance teachers and supports were going out specifically looking at their small learning community and work to come back and share the strategies that they worked with for success. Um. Again we explored best practices, looked at where are they now, meaning the, uh, the community colleges, we looked at long term goals and short term goals and college readiness. That's just a little bit of what this network has done for the school.

MR. PECORARA: Thank you. Uh, we have, uh, let's have a moment now to actually hear some semblance of reality--

[Crosstalk]

MR. KUMILE: [Interposing] Look so--

MR. PECORARA: --if --

MR. KUMILE: [Interposing] No. We--we need a moment to allow because there are a number of questions--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] No - - you said you can't - - and forget to mention that our rising ELA population had to wait for two months to get a second ELA teacher. When you forget to mention that, that you somehow meant to leave [phonetic] our students, that's called a crock. When you kill the small learning communities in this building by failing to properly fund the small learning communities which were working for our kids you've just presented a crock for us. And when you talk about--

MR. KUMILE: [Interposing] So David I need to interrupt because this is not about--

[Crosstalk, shouting]

MR. PECORARA: --yes, we'll bring it to a close. When you talk about the graduation statistics, you talk about - - Dr. Moore actually had ARVIS [phonetic] remove students from our graduating statistics because he had died unfortunately. What - - use successful if

you get that done but your ARVIS [phonetic] system is going to figure that out with all the things that we enter that student had died. That's all.

MR. KUMILE: So one of the questions that was raised, um, and I think it was directed at Shea, - - , uh, it is on instruction support services has made remarkable progress under different evolution as noted in our progress report, 20 out of 35 senior students graduated with local diplomas or better in June of 2010. It's a--it's not a question but a comment. Would you like to speak to that?

MR. SURANSKY: Yeah so the--there are a number of comments for the evening on graduation rates. And it is worth nothing that there has been a small increase in the graduation rate from 47% to 52%. For the 4-year graduation rate in the school. Um, at the same time there's been a drop in the number of students who are graduating in 6 years. This was a question that several people asked and suggested that perhaps if students were given more time, um, then more students would get--graduate. So I'm going to just share exactly how many students graduated

in six years. Um. In 2007, um, the 6-year graduation rate was--

FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 3: [Interposing] Open the mic--

MR. SURANSKY: --sorry, in 2007, the 6-year graduation rate was 62%. Um, this past year it at 56%. So we're seeing, um, some fluctuation basically, some, um, some students are showing some slight improvements in the 4-year graduation rate while the kids, if you look over the longer term you're actually seeing a weaker, uh, set of numbers. One of the things I think is important as we begin to sort of respond just to the conversation earlier is to--to also talk about the theme that I heard in a lot of comments about that the--the decision to phase out this school is an attack on public education. And I really disagree with that. I think that there is a real, uh, honest disagreement between, um, the speakers this evening, most of them who are advocates for the school and the Department of Education about the best way to improve this school. And what I head from the faculty is that there's a very strong belief that with additional funds that

the school could improve on its own. Um. We've looked at many schools across the City and there have been many times and if you look at each of those cases, it's actually possible that some schools do improve with additional funds. And you see small gains when you infuse additional funds. Maybe it goes from the 52% graduation rate to a 59% graduation rate. It is very, very rare, there are very few examples of schools where you put additional funds and you don't do any other structural changes and you see dramatic gains for the kids. And when I say dramatic gains what I mean is that 3/4 or 80% of the kids are graduating. And so the question is if--if we think about the--the--the common goal that we've been discussing tonight of meeting the needs of the kids in this community and meeting the needs of the future kids who are going to come into this school building in the coming years, um, we have a disagreement. We've come to believe after looking for years and years and years at models that attempted to improve high schools through the proposals that have been proposed tonight and sometimes failed badly and sometimes had met modest success but

almost never led to great through-gains where suddenly you have 80%, 85% of the ids are graduating. And that is why the Department developed a different model. And the model is based on the belief that while you give up some things when you change the structure of the school and it's painful and it's hard to do, you don't actually give up serving the kids in the community. And you've created a new set of opportunities for the kids in the community. And you can get great through-gains. And one of the reasons it's works is not because of the new resources. It actually isn't so much about the resources as people have suggested tonight. It's about the idea that when you have a smaller - - and you have a group of 25 teachers working with 300 or 400 kids, that it's a very different structure. Uh. You--you are in a position where the principal of the school can know each of those teachers deeply, understand their developmental needs, build coherence amongst those faculty members and really build a sense on that team that we're all pulling in a focused way in the same direction. And by doing that you also get to a point where the teachers are

able to more effectively know and support their kids in a similar way. And what I saw tonight in your comments is that there are fantastic teachers. And the gentleman who spoke about the value of experience and I think you spoke about this, I hope you didn't misunderstand me because I'm not suggesting that we need new teachers. I think that there are clearly leaders in this building who can continue to work here and build schools in this building that are going to be successful. And part of the reason why there's priority given to teachers from this building or at least 50% of the positions in the new schools that are opened here is because we believe there are great teachers here and we believe that leadership and that experience is important and there's a possibility of doing very powerful work with-- with the teachers that are here. But I think that when you look at the work and I really would encourage folks to look closely at what's happened in other places in the City because there's a lot of rhetoric about privatization and charter schools. The high school that we would open, uh, with maybe four or five sections

out of 400, they're not charter schools. They're regular public schools. And they represent teachers who are in the unions, just like the teachers here, and they are getting 75% to 80% of their kids to graduate. And we had a dispute earlier about well are they serving the same kids? Well I would challenge you to work with us in this community to create schools in this building that do serve this population. And I would predict and let--let's come back to this numberization [phonetic] of this proposal to prove three years down the road and see if I'm right or wrong. As many more kids from this zone will be attending this building, as a result of the changes that we're proposing, the fact that 3/4 of the kids are voting with their feet and are leaving and are not attending this building who could be attending here says something about what's happening. And I think that we can do much better. And I think in this community there exists a tremendous challenge to do that. And there's--there is a strong reaction that anyone is going to have to the idea that you're hearing that we--we want to make a dramatic change in this school. But

we're also saying that we believe that there can be powerful learning opportunities that will lead to much higher levels of student success in this school. And that's what we want to work on. That's what this proposal is about. And I encourage people to--to suspend the disbelief because we--we will either have the panel vote to approve this proposal or not in a few weeks. And if it is proposed and it is approved then we're going to need you all together and we're going to need to work on building, uh, a future for this school that actually does all of the things that people talked about tonight. And I don't think it's any - - I think we can do those things in--in the construct of this proposal that we've put forth.

MR. KUMILE: So Shea, one of the other questions that was raise, um, that--that I think you answered in part when--when we did--and then if there's some additional thoughts that you want to add, uh, it says how can we believe that your support for whatever school, uh, that's placed on the campus, uh, that will receive support that's placed on this campus, um, we have no--see no support from the DOE, uh, for

Beach Channel--Channel as - - .

MR. SURANSKY: So one of the things that I also heard a lot about tonight is that things were done to the school. And I think that it suggests that someone had, uh, made decisions intentionally to disrupt strong work in this school and I don't think that that's actually what happened. Um. If you look at the budgets for this school as well as other schools between 2002 and 2010, the actual increase in resources is 43%. 43% more resources between 2002 and 2010, these are public numbers--

[Crosstalk]

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] That's - - .

MR. SURANSKY: --you can go--you can go--

MR. PECORARA: [Laughing]

MR. SURANSKY: Laugh. It's dramatic. But the--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] It's--

MR. SURANSKY: --fact is--

MR. PECORARA: --fantastic.

MR. SURANSKY: Well?

MR. PECORARA: It's also fallacious.

MR. SURANSKY: Well look at the numbers. And the way that resources are distributed to

schools is based on the level of need of the students. And so the concern that you raise which I think is an important concern and I don't think that one system is perfect, I think they're definitely ways to improve it, but this is also very public how these resources are distributed. So there's a base that any kid gets. Um. No matter what their academic level or their poverty level or whether they have a learning disability or whether they're an English language learner. And then on top of that base if a kid's 90 because they've come into the schools for a level one or a level two or from a high poverty background or because they have a reading disability or because they're special education, additional dollars follow that student. And so you look across the City as budgets are allocated you see increased funding going to schools which have higher need students. And that's--because of exactly the reason that you raised, that you need to have more resources when ki--kids bring more needs to the table. Now I--I agree with you that there aren't enough resources. I think that's the real problem. In the past two years every

school in the City has suffered reductions. Overall there's been a 43% increase but part of that would have been - - without those reductions. And those reductions are not as a result of someone who doesn't believe in education because actually whatever your concerns are--or support is for this Mayor and his administration in--in his time in office he's dramatically increased the spending in the City on education. But our economy has been struck by a recession as you know and the City and the State have both lost billions and billions of dollars and it's frankly still getting worse. We're still going to be struggling with that recession for at least another year or two depending on how things go, maybe longer. And I think one of the things that teachers and the Mayor and the Chancellor have actually worked to get on very well and local politicians as well is trying to restore cuts to the school system during the course of this recession. There were much deeper cuts proposed each year and many of them were restored because of organizing and activism and advocacy. And that's work where we can--need to

continue to do together. Because it's going to challenge us. And there will be hard choices that each school has to make in that context. So when--when a school is struggling and there are less kids that are going to come to the school as a result and I agree that in this last year there's a much clearer reason why there were reductions in enrollment because of the decision to phase out the school last year but this trend does happen over many years. It’s not just this past year. That--the dollars follow the kid. And so if there are fewer and fewer kids coming then there are going to be fewer resources that attach to them but there's also less resources needed to support less kids. And that's--that's the way the funding works. So I hope that as we think about the challenges here while funding may be a very real need in the school I also think it's worth honestly looking at the schools around the City that serve high-need populations and ask them questions. What--if there are schools that are serving even higher need populations than this one and getting many more kids to get to graduation and to college, why is it? What is--

what's happening differently in those schools? And what is it that we could learn from that? Because I think that there's some very powerful factors that have to do not with all the stuff around, um, the outside of the curriculum but the core of the curriculum, what's happening in math and social studies, in English and math and--and--and science. If those classes are challenging and exciting and kids feel a sense of, of real rigor and engagement. There's powerful things that happen and it's no so much about how much money and how many different programs the schools has. It's--it's about passionate teachers working with kids and challenging them to push themselves. And I think that I've heard tonight that there's some of those really strong teachers here. And I don't know if all of the teachers in this building are doing the work that the ones who are here tonight - - . Um, and I'm not sure why that is honestly. But I think part of the opportunity of creating a campus of new schools is to build a vision amongst the teachers to have a small enough group that can really focus and work together and share that vision and

support each other in that vision. And I hope some of the folks that this proposal will improve decidedly as part of that process.

MR. KUMILE: Mr. Suransky, as one of the questions--

[Crosstalk]

MR. GREENBERG?: [Interposing] All right, I just listened to a 15 minute--a 20 minute - - and other people have been patient up here to then relate to those questions. Such as I listened to Deputy Chancellor Kessler [phonetic] suggest that somehow Dr. Morris does not help his staff. When Dr. Morris, a professor at Hofstra University, who developed dozens of teachers that he recruited here, excellent teachers was then forced, tearful, to excess those teachers because you and your folk cut the budget. He knows his staff. We may not agree on everything but the bottom line is I know he knows his staff. And for you to suggest in any way, shape, manner or form that he doesn't know his staff is a damnable lie. That's one. Two. And now I look towards the budgeting situation also, in the budget limitation that you have placed on this school, we have excessed an

extraordinary amount of staff - - . Teachers and school aids over the last couple of years. We have been prohibited by you from excessing even one member of supervisory staff. I don't want any of them to have to leave. But if there is to be excesses, fairness dictates that the culling from the classroom, it comes from the supervisory branch also. You have prohibited it. And then we have to spend over $100,000 per supervisor who could only teach three classes as opposed to a teacher who's paid less than that would could teach five classes - - . Something is very wrong mathematically. And I know that the five classes serves more students than three classes. And I hope that somehow when you look at the mathematics eventually you will see that too.

MR. KUMILE: So, uh, there was another question that was, uh, connected to that Shea that--that was directed towards you. Uh, and it's that I think - - could add some response to that. Does demographics prove that there are students who need assistance within the peninsula? How do you plan the mobilization of children whose care is - - public assistance to

survive, uh, when you close off services in the community?

MR. SURANSKY: So the--the services that the Department of Education provide are not being closed off. There will continue to be support in this building, there will continue to be a life program operating in the building. The structure of how we build those services is what's changed. Um. In terms of services beyond the perimeter of--of education purview I can't speak, um, in detail because I'm not, I'm not--the Department of Education does not control other services beyond the education program in the schools.

[Crosstalk]

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] And again what's come up that people that--that has a good answer yes. But I yield - - the Superintendent is are you prepared to guarantee that a child who lives on this Rockaway Peninsula, surrounded by water, that each and every one of those children will be guaranteed a seat on the Rockaway Peninsula? Are you prepared--

[Applause]

MR. PECORARA: --I don't want to hear - - .

I don't want to hear that you're going to send them to Richmond Hill and send them on an hour train ride to try to chase that education. And while we're at it, when you've been talking about these small schools, and I was the last chapter leader of the old Andrew Jackson High School. I saw that happen when you split that into four smaller schools. Because then you went back last year to close one of those four smaller schools. And what happened when they closed Jackson? Those children that were difficult to teach at Jackson were then sent to Springfield, my alma mater. Springfield doesn't exist anymore. It's been replaced too. And we would play this shell game with these kids. Let's be honest for once in your life--

[Applause]

MR. PECORARA: --you play shell games with these kids. You lose kids - - . Franklin Kay Lane [phonetic] that's actually where it's really - - , Lane, it's a peninsula. Far Rockaway, it's a hop [phonetic]. And we would do this circular game with a kid--with kids and the bottom line is the more difficult kids get sent to the bigger schools and I'll tell you--I

mean you told us let's see what happens, let's see what happens next year at this time when you come a-hunting for every other high--smart high school that's south of Hillside Avenue. I've seen what's there. I've seen what your plans are. I know what your plans are. There will not be an aquatech [phonetic] high school to serve the kids of those neighborhoods south of--of Hillside Avenue. I've lived in Queens County since I was six years old. I've seen what you've done. You can't lie to me. You may be able to lie to these people, maybe they don't know, but I know what's been done - - , I went to the schools in Queens County, my kids have went to the schools in Queens County, I've lived in Queens County since 1966. Damnit you can't lie to me.

MR. SURANSKY: So on this question around how enrollment works, um, that you ask, the--the goal is to provide good options for the students on the peninsula and the challenge that we're facing right now is students are actively choosing to leave the peninsula because they do not have good options. And so we want to create options that would attract--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] - - schools.

MR. SURANSKY: --that would attract students to stay on the peninsula and that is the point of the strategy. And so while we, in every single case when we open a new school, um, it's, uh, the same enrollment process. Students can apply from across the City and they can apply from Queens and they can apply from the peninsula but what you see when you have a very strong school is that kids go to it. And they're going to go to the school in their community when it's worth it. And so that's the goal is to provide strong options for kids in this community.

MR. KUMILE: And--and along with that process that's specifically for high school students that--that are at the level of - - . And--and important and it reinforces what Shea just said but it also reinforces the--the idea that--that choice is--is there for the student and - - his ability to determine what's the best for him, an important - - .

[Off mic, people saying they can’t hear the speaker]

MS. AYUSO?: The priority is of an issue so

is there going to be a priority seating for every child that lives inside this zone, that's what he's asking. And that's what the community asked last year as well. They wanted to have priority seating so that if they didn't get their first or second or third pick and they have to come back into the lottery that they at least have a priority to attend the school.

MR. SURANSKY: That the current proposal is--gives priority for Queens but not high priority for the zone. However if you look at how enrollment works in communities like this, when you rate the schools in number one or number two, um, and there are--we're creating many more seats in this zone, then there are going to be opportunities for kids to rate the school number one or number two to attend. Um, what we're seeing I think in this building is an opportunity to have many, many, many more kids served. Right now the school is just over half utilized. So if what we see after, um, we open another school that there's, uh, a strong enough surge of interest from this community and there aren't enough slots then there's space to increase the size and create additional schools

in the building. And I don't think that we're going to run out of space quickly because there's a lot of space left here.

MR. KUMILE: So we have another, uh, uh, another batch of questions that--that have - - mentioned to them, uh, and--and so--and this--and--and let's give Shea - - someone the mic to, so. - - .

MR. DAMON RONSTARD: Uh, hi my name is Damon Ronstard [phonetic] and I'm with the Division of Portfolio Planning at the DOE. The next question reads as follows. How can you justify suggesting to send students from the peninsula to Manhattan and Staten Island if you - - . I just want to clarify that yes, this does in no way, uh, suggest that we will send students, uh, to other Boroughs. We do have a test - - high school admissions process, uh, where al students regardless of whether they're applying to that one - - . I think what the question may be implying is that many students have left the peninsula but particularly those who were zoned Beach Channel and I will read one statistic off to you all. Uh, that percentage of that zone attending Beach Channel has

declined over time which therefore suggests that these students are going to other parts of the City. Uh, so--now if I think it's fair to--to look at the data prior to the announcement of the phase out, given that enrollment did decline after that announcement, uh. So if you look at the three years before that announcement of the phase out from 2007 to 2009, uh, I think it was close to 40% of the zone was attending Beach Channel and currently it's showing that it's close to 23%. The next question--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] Pardon me, after you talked upon the center--

MR. KUMILE: [Interposing] I'm going to ask that--that--that we allow the an--the questions to be raises and - - . Okay and then I'll--I'll talk about the additional performance - - to engage other questions - - this time.

Mr. PECORARA: But the people up here can answer questions too.

MR. RONSTARD: [Interposing] No pursuant--

[Crosstalk]

MR. PECORAR: [Interposing] That is not a monolog that he--that he was reading.

MR. RONSTARD: [Interposing] Mr. Pecorara

would--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] It's a joint--it's a joint meeting.

MR. RONSTARD: [Interposing] Mister--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] It's a joint meeting, that means we all participate. It's not simply a monolog from you guys.

MR. RONSTARD: From a procedural standpoint, we built the agenda together--

[Applause]

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] Yeah we didn't build the agenda together, we were - - the agenda. Why get--why do you think these people are that stupid to think that we created that agenda together? Are you, are you mad? Or you think they're stupid.

MR. RONSTARD: [Interposing] No--

Mr. PECORARA: [Interposing] I just want to know. It's one or the other.

MR. KUMILE: Okay so let me, I--I… I think it's important here that--that I think we--we should be - - and respectful of everyone's voice here tonight. I think we've been--we gave space to everybody when the request was made to allow more space for people to talk. We were

respectful of that. There were a number of questions that were directed towards Portfolio. And we wanted portfolio to respond to them. But I have--I mean we have allowed you to--to add additional response but I'm going to ask at this point is to allow--allow these questions to be read and the responses to be made. If you'd like to make additional comments after that, you can do that. Fair enough? Thank you--

MR. PECORARA: What no - - arrival. Don't tell us that, please.

MR. RONSTARD: The next question reads as follows. Why would you close a school as claimed in the EIS to be at 50%--57% capacity in 2010 but will be only at 51% capacity when all of the schools on the campus would be fully developed? It's a great question and it has a somewhat complicated answer. Uh, you know, the answer resides in the fact that when we open up new schools, uh, within campuses that we phase out, we have to look at the number of students, uh, admitted into the entry point of that school. So in the ninth grade of this school. So we look at both this past year and the year before. And the reason we look at both years,

uh, is because again, you know, the enrollment did decline dramatically this past year so we do want to look at, uh, a year prior to the announcement of the phase out. New ninth grade applicants are made up of two types of students. One are students who come through the, uh, citywide admissions process, the other students that come over the counter, that term refers to students who, uh, are placed into this school after the peak enrollment period so generally sometime between September and January. If we look at this past year, uh, approximately 80 students were newly admitted into Beach Channel. Now there's a far--uh, a higher number of ninth graders, uh, due to the fact that it has, uh, quite a number of holdovers in the ninth grade. And again we looked at the prior years' results as well. And the new school that we're opening, uh, we set prior years' target in phases of 30--excuse me 25% higher, uh, than this past year, uh, of new ninth grade applicants. So as a result of--as I mentioned, the higher number of ninth grade students, the non - - new applications to the number of students in the ninth grade and then

the fact that in the upper term of grades in Beach Channel again you do have a problem with holdovers, once the school is fully phased out, the schools that are fully phased in are by--uh, by proxy small. Uh, and so that's going to have utilization that actually goes down over time. But we do intend to meet the demand, uh, of the students and families of this community. And the EIS I should say also notes that because the building will be heavily under utilized, we do anticipate a hope that we can open up yet another school in this building in 2012. But that would require that demand would pick up. And we do want to monitor that closely but our intention it to open up schools that the community does love and supports. And it - - these schools are unscreened. We call them limited unscreened which means that the only thing left to do to get into these new schools is show up at an information session and then mark it as one of your top choices on the admission--on--on your admissions application.

MR. PECORARA: Well I have a question. So you're not saying - - you're saying that you don't need to go - - --

MR. KUMILE: [Interposing] Those are all the questions on the list.

MR. RONSTARD: You have to go to an information session or you can, uh, or a school's fair and just sign in. It's a very simple, uh, process. And each student can--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] But - - working--

MR. RONSTARD: --yeah, yeah--

MR. PECORARA: --I think after these sessions, you're saying that these kids are locked out of these schools?

Mr. RONSTARD: There are any number of different opportunities. It's not a single event. And to the extent that families do not show up at these events, they simply write an email to the admissions office or to the school leader, uh, of that school and they are permitted into the process. So we--we don't create hard and steadfast rules when it comes to the admission process--

MR. PECORARA: [Interposing] That's not what the parents were told.

MR. RONSTARD: The next question is specifically what will happen to students who

are L and special needs, uh, who are coming from the peninsula. As Shea noted, within the service provided, uh, to these students does not change. Uh, so our schools, system wide, are responsible to serve, uh, students who have an IEP or students who are categorized as English language learners. So that would not change, uh, for the schools phasing into this building or for the other schools our--and the rest of the system. The last question reads where are the members of the June 27th CEC and the June 27th DLT? Uh. As far as the CEC goes we'd like to make it very clear that they were invited and agreed upon this date and time so their absence, uh, is something that we cannot control. They did agree, uh, to be here today. The District, uh, Leadership Team, uh, was not a part of the scheduling process, uh, Chancellors' Regulation A-101 does not require the District Leadership Team to be a part of the scheduling of a public hearing but they are invited.

[Pause]

FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 4: It was a representative of the CBC?

MR. KUMILE: Yes that's--that--that's--

that's - - . I apologize for not recognizing the - - . I apologize. So, um, so let me, uh, we--we need to bring this to closure at this point. I wanted to, uh, share a couple of things. Um. That if you have additional questions or comments to be made I can leave in the materials that have been provided outside of our--there's a phone number and also an email address, um, that you can address additional questions to and everyone can--will be responded to and--and--and posted online. Um. And this--and every question will be responded to before February 3rd. Um. The--the information shared, uh, that will be shared, uh, in the Panel on Education Policy which will have its hearing on February 3rd, 2011, um, at 6: 00 P.M. I--right. And that, uh, this will take place at Airport and Tech High School, um, where at that time they will vote on the proposal. Uh, again if you have additional questions or comments please feel free to--to take advantage of the, uh, the website and the phone - - . And at this point I'd like to thank you for coming. I thank the panel for, uh, sharing your thoughts. And have a safe trip home.

MR. PECORARA: And we'll see you all here on January 20th a week from today to go to the rally--

MR. KUMILE: [Interposing] No that's it.

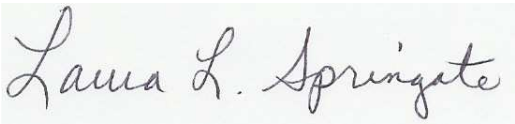
MR. PECORARA: --outside of Beach Channel to save this school from these guys.

[Applause]

[END 181_951.MP3]

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: ___Laura L. Springate____

Date: ____January 17, 2011_____