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**NEW YORK CITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION -
DIVISION OF PORTFOLIO
PLANNING
TER of I.S. 131 and Opening of SA-
Bronx 4 @ X131
10/2/13**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Good evening and
3 welcome. This is the New York public hearing of
4 the Department of Education - - for Junior High
5 School 131, the - - school and Junior High
6 School 448, - - . I am - - superintendent
7 Timothy Behr. We have asked that - - 131 and
8 Junior High School 131 and Junior High School
9 448 participate in this joint public hearing. I
10 am joined tonight by Ms. Monique Mason
11 [phonetic], Principal - - from the - - school.

12 [Applause]

13 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: And - - Marjorie
14 Bishop.

15 [Applause]

16 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Jason Clue.

17 [Applause]

18 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: And as you know, - - .

19 [Applause]

20 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: From Junior High
21 School 448 we have Principal - - .

22 [Applause]

23 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: And - - team member,
24 Ms. - - .

25 [Applause]

1 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: And also joining us
2 by the Community Education Council 8,
3 Representative Bryan D'Ottavi, president of the
4 CEC.

5 [Applause]

6 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Lisa Taylor, first
7 vice president.

8 [Applause]

9 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Jack Mosh [phonetic],
10 the second vice president.

11 [Applause]

12 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: And Marvin - - member.

13 [Applause]

14 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: And Tanisha Robinson,
15 CEC member.

16 [Applause]

17 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: And - - , CEC member.

18 [Applause]

19 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: And - - Mr. David - -
20 .

21 [Applause]

22 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Also in attendance we
23 have - - who represents the school community--

24 [Applause]

25 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Please note that this

1 hearing is being recorded. The purpose of this
2 hearing is for you to provide comments about the
3 proposal. Before I start the proposal, I want
4 to make sure you're all aware - - . All those
5 who wish to speak must sign up in the sign area
6 located just outside the auditorium. The sign-
7 in list will close in 15 minutes. Speakers will
8 be given the floor in the order they signed up.
9 All times are limited to two minutes. There may
10 be - - . If they wish to speak, we will - - at
11 the first opportune moment. Those who are here
12 to talk about - - will get to be first. All
13 comments will be mentioned in a - - to be
14 published - - the evening before - - . The vote
15 is scheduled for October 15th, 2013. In
16 addition, we welcome any comments and any
17 feedback you may have at any time before - - .
18 The email address and phone number where
19 comments may be made are
20 d08proposals@schools.nyc.gov or you may call
21 212-374-5159. The - - or DOE is to - - new
22 public charter school Soundview Academy - -
23 Building X131 - - 2014/2015 school year.
24 Building X131 is located at 885 Bolton Avenue,
25 Bronx, New York 10473 in community school

1 district 8. If this proposal is approved, the
2 proposed new charter school will be open in
3 2014/2015 with Kindergarten and first grade and
4 then add one grade each year to service grades
5 Kindergarten through fifth grade in the
6 2018/2019 school year and will be - - with
7 Junior High School 131 and Soundview Academy.
8 Junior High School 131 and Junior High School
9 448 Soundview Academy are both - - schools
10 serving grades six through eight. Success
11 Academy of New York 2 will - - process with - -
12 to District 8 residents. Concurrently, the
13 DOE's present enrollment - - in Junior High
14 School 131. Beginning in September 2014 Junior
15 high School 131 will admit only - - sixth grade
16 class of 175 to 185 students as opposed to 240
17 to 275 students it has served in recent years.
18 The school will continue to take in 175 to 185
19 sixth grade students in future years until all
20 grades--sixth through eighth--serve these
21 sessions in 2016/2017 school year. If this
22 proposal is approved, in 2018/2019, One Success
23 Academy New York 2 and Junior High School 131's
24 enrollment - - is complete, Success Academy New
25 York 2 is projected for 450 to 540 students.

1 Junior High School 131 is projected to serve
2 525 to 555 students and Soundview Academy is
3 projected to serve 285 to 315 students, for a
4 total of 1,260 to 1,410 students, yielding a
5 building utilization venue of approximately 90%
6 to 101%. The Department of Education believes
7 the building has sufficient space to accompany
8 both schools - - of over 107. Although - - in
9 excess of 100% may suggest that those schools
10 will be fully utilized for - - for more
11 efficient or different uses than the - - and the
12 utilization capitalization. In addition,
13 charter school - - class sizes than - - ,
14 contributing to building utilizations above 100%
15 while not impacting utilization of the space
16 allocation of additional public schools.
17 Therefore, it is the Department of Ed's belief
18 that the X131 building has a capacity to
19 accommodate Junior High School 131, Junior High
20 School 448, and Success Academy New York 2 - - .
21 This - - is not expected - - enrollment or
22 admissions at Soundview Academy. Enrollment at
23 Junior High School 131 will reduce the - -
24 reductions and over time, this may result in
25 changing some - - as the school population - -

1 of all citizens. So, at this time, that is the
2 proposal. We will be hearing presentations by
3 the hearing participants. I'm going to start
4 with our community educational counselor - - at
5 this time.

6 MR. BRYAN D'OTTAVI: Hi. My name is Bryan
7 D'Ottavi. I'm the president at CEC.
8 Unfortunately, the crowd is very slim tonight.
9 The reason for that? Nobody feels threatened by
10 the Kindergarten coming into the junior high
11 school, and if you had an elementary school and
12 wanted the sixth, seventh and eighth grade in
13 that school, this room would be packed. The DOE
14 knows this. They - - . It's unfortunate what
15 they're trying to do. There's no reason to - -
16 a new school when we just got approved for a new
17 one around the corner, which is an elementary
18 school. Why do we want to put these young
19 children, 5, 6, 7 years old, in a school with
20 kids twice their age? And if it's like other
21 schools that I know, I'm sure it's 15, 16, and
22 17-year olds in this building as well, and
23 they're going to tell you they're never going to
24 coexist, they're never going to interact. Lies,
25 lies, lies. I have a school that did one of the

1 same things with three middle schools that they
2 line up one school - - while the other one is
3 leaving. They're never supposed to interact.
4 But guess what? They do. Go by in the morning
5 at arrivals. Where's every school? In the yard
6 together, but they're not supposed to associate.
7 This is what it's going to be. It's sad that
8 they're willing to put little kids at risk just
9 because somebody woke up in the morning and said
10 this is a good idea, it won't affect them, it
11 won't affect their kids, don't affect me. How
12 come that person's - - tonight? I don't know.
13 Because it doesn't concern them. They don't
14 care. It's sad to say these are the educators
15 of our children. We're supposed to drop off our
16 kids where it's safe, not worrying is something
17 horrific going to happen. If it happens once,
18 it's too many times. I'm strongly against this
19 as well as other schools that they're trying to
20 do this in, and they're trying to overwhelm us
21 because they know we're volunteers, we only have
22 so many hours in the day to juggle our normal
23 lives, our personal lives, and try to get this
24 serious business taken care of. So, what do
25 they do? They - - at us at one time. Hey,

1 we're going to co-exist all schools. - - and
2 you know what they turn around and say - -
3 program? Don't matter what the CEC does, they
4 ain't going to stop it. They're wrong. I'm a
5 fighter. I ain't going to go down like that and
6 neither is my - - . That's why they stand
7 behind me. But like I tell everybody else,
8 we'll only be - - the parents - - . That's - -
9 and if - - was packed tonight, I would say very
10 good chance it's not going to go through, but
11 it's not, and it's not because it doesn't upset
12 anybody because it doesn't affect them in a
13 serious way. But I'm here for the children that
14 are going to be in this building, before that,
15 and I'm going to make sure that they're not
16 going to be harmed by not letting this happen.
17 You're putting the kids at risk. I don't care
18 what nobody says. My - - is one too many - - is
19 too much. Who wants to be responsible that is
20 ready to call when it's going to happen? The
21 person that did this decision? Does he want to
22 go and tell the parents oh I'm sorry but this
23 horrific thing happened to your child? I get at
24 a loss of words sometimes because I don't
25 understand how something so easy, something so

1 black and white, gets distorted for some
2 people, because that's all it is. It's somebody
3 saying look boss, I did the right thing for you,
4 but you screwed all the community and all the
5 children that are going to be affected by it.
6 It's sad. These are the people that we pay with
7 our tax money to make these important decisions
8 so that our kids are safe. It's unbelievable.
9 To let you all know, I'm doing my part. I've
10 contacted senators, I've contacted - - , I've
11 contacted councilmen. I'm having special
12 meetings - - . I'm not in support of it because
13 I can't be part of this - - . I will not be
14 associated with this demised decision. But I
15 will fight it as much as I can, with everything
16 I've got, until I can so you know what, I tried
17 everything. But I'm not going to - - . I'm
18 going to keep my - - . I already got people
19 donating buses to take parents down here to tell
20 them to stop this, because DOE, what do they do?
21 Yeah, after this lovely meeting here tonight,
22 they - - whole two weeks, not even, like 13
23 days, in Brooklyn, on a Tuesday night at 6:00
24 p.m. when everybody has to come home, feed their
25 kids, do homework, and then drive - - , where

1 the decision - - doesn't matter. How come
2 they don't come into our district and do the
3 vote, where it's easy for the people who it's
4 going to affect voice their opinions and let
5 them know that this is a bad decision? Because
6 it weren't to their advantage, and they tell
7 people it's just the luck of the draw. Come on.
8 It's sad that we pay these people to make these
9 decisions. It's horrible. And I know a lot of
10 them are shaking right now because come the new
11 year, DOE is getting - - and a lot of them are
12 going to be gone.

13 [Applause]

14 MR. D'OTTAVI: - - children or you're - - .
15 I like to think 80% are them are doing it from
16 their heart, but you can't let the few apples
17 ruin the bunch. This is a - - DOE so I can't
18 even associate them with our teachers because I
19 know our teachers go above and beyond, our
20 superintendents work hard with them to keep
21 things good for our children as well. That's
22 why you have a CEC for stuff like this. We're
23 the - - for the kids. I had - - . They don't
24 even have a chance. So, I'm going to fight.
25 Like I said, I'm at a loss of words sometimes.

1 I get emotional, I get upset, I get angry, and
2 like all of you, I want to break things and I
3 have to control myself because that's not going
4 to solve anything. We have a proper procedure
5 that we have to do things and that's why we're
6 all here tonight. I wish there was more but
7 there's not. So, what I need from you is
8 please, please get the word out. Let the
9 community know this is not a decision that's
10 going to change tomorrow; this is a decision
11 that's going to change the children three or
12 four years from now that are going to be
13 attending the school. It's sad. It's very,
14 very sad. I thank you all for coming. I thank
15 you all for listening and I hope I've touched
16 each and every one of you in some sort of way.
17 Please, please, please get this message out.
18 Thank you.

19 [Applause]

20 MR. EDUARDO HERNANDEZ: Good evening. My
21 name is Eduardo Hernandez. I'm a CEC member.
22 I'm also an SLT principal and - - . The first
23 six, seven years that I was in the district, I
24 wasn't much involved in the school district
25 besides my daughter - - . It was until like

1 three years ago that there was a rezoning for
2 our PS 182, 138, 100. The last thing I know was
3 they tried to just shuffle kids and from - - .
4 This was - - . We stopped that the first time
5 three years ago. The last year and a half, two
6 years ago they came up with sad samples and we -
7 - had to approve that. That really pissed me
8 off and I made my point - - . I start going to
9 each and every meeting, spoke my two minutes in
10 each and every meeting - - and I made my - -
11 showing up every CEC meeting. - - know much
12 about CEC because there was no issues. There
13 was no issues in my school - - , but after that,
14 it touched me. I think - - and when they - -
15 and that's why I'm sitting here. What really
16 bothers me is the DOE is supposed to take care
17 of the kids and - - all being said about - - but
18 actions speak louder than words. You can say
19 whatever you want. Actions are not - - and for
20 the past few years you see all the school
21 failures and nobody really take the time to
22 figure out why. They just shut it down, break
23 it down, and now we're getting into the business
24 of outsourcing the charter schools now. So, I
25 have never heard the DOE coming out with a study

1 saying this school failed because of A, B, C,
2 D. It's always just break it down and let's - -
3 and let's see what happens. That really doesn't
4 solve the problem. You never know what
5 happened. You seem to be hitting the reset
6 button and we start the problem because guess
7 what, five years later that same school is going
8 to be - - because you never solve the problem.
9 You never bother looking at the real issues, and
10 that's the problem. Last year I - - one of the
11 chief officers that he stated that closing
12 school was not a sign. Well, that's your
13 problem right there. It should be the signs.
14 You should be looking at the reason why the
15 school failed. It's a complication with all the
16 schools. It's an addition that is just specific
17 to that school. You need to understand the
18 problem to find the solution, but instead you
19 just go the easy way and they just shut it down
20 and shuffle the personnel and - - . And of
21 course, with changes, things always get better
22 in the beginning. Oh, it doesn't matter - - .
23 Just because you're changing something, even if
24 people are adding changes or some things - -
25 give you the appearance of improving but a few

1 years down the line, everything goes back to
2 the same way it was because you really never
3 solved the problem. And this charter school,
4 the concept, personally I would take - - rid of
5 all this bureaucracy is good. My problem is the
6 way they're doing it. They're taking away
7 resources from our school to give it to this
8 private organization, handing off their
9 responsibility, DOE's responsibility - - to these
10 people, and then they're going to claim credit
11 for it. Oh, our numbers are improved. You're
12 not doing anything, they're doing it. That's
13 the problem. And now before when they first
14 started, it was getting - - buildings and
15 everything was fine. Now all of a sudden the
16 DOE allows schools to fail. They allow them to
17 fail just for the purpose of use it as an excuse
18 to co-locate charter schools and eventually move
19 the schools out and leave the buildings for the
20 charter school, because if you look at numbers,
21 by the end of this plan, the charter school is
22 going to have all - - than anybody else is. How
23 is that not serve our middle schools? So now
24 the middle schools around here will have to
25 travel 35 miles to go to another school. Where

1 are they going? What is their plan? The DOE
2 has no plans for them. And it's unfortunate
3 there's not that many plans involved in it, but
4 I understand - - , people are tired of fighting.
5 When I grew up, there was no such a thing as - -
6 . I grew up in the Dominican Republic with my
7 grandmother, and if my grandmother had to get
8 involved, that means I was getting a whipping
9 because I did something wrong. So, the DOE
10 responsibility is to create a safe environment
11 and good educators for my kids. That's their
12 responsibility. My responsibility as a parent
13 is to make sure that my kids come here, take in
14 their homework, I help them out with the
15 education that I can. It is not for me now to -
16 - come to 20 meetings every month just because
17 the DOE is not doing their job. Now we've got
18 to fight. There's always a fight. - -
19 involvement equals a fight with DOE. It
20 shouldn't be that way. And there is, of course,
21 - - come from work, you work, because DOE is - -
22 . I work full time. Also the parents work
23 full time, and you're taking your time from work
24 - - work to come over here to fight for this.
25 So, - - not fight and go through that. But it's

1 a shame that - - lack of power of parent
2 involvement but it's okay for us to do it. That
3 is a shame. That should not be the reason for
4 you to do this, and which you always do what you
5 preach. You're looking out for the kids. It
6 doesn't take me to show you that your plan is a
7 nonsense plan that just benefits only special
8 interests. It shouldn't take 200,000 parents to
9 do that. That's your job. You should be
10 looking out, as the DOE, the Department of
11 Education, so you should be educating and do
12 what's right for the kids. All this preparation
13 for college. We spent \$19,000 for kids. On
14 what? Cut down half of the DOE and save the
15 money and give the kids a - - for college. That
16 will serve them much better. But they're still
17 going to do whatever they feel like doing, and
18 it's a shame. Hopefully they'll be some changes
19 coming up, at least with this push with the
20 charter school going to - - so hopefully at
21 least that plan will slow down, but for now,
22 this is our fight. We have to go on the 15th
23 and raise our opinions. Whether they take our
24 voice or not, at least we do our job. Thank
25 you.

1 [Applause]

2 MR. TRACY: Good evening everyone. My name
3 is Tracy - - number 80. I just [muffled
4 speaking] 80% of [muffled speaking]. So, Bronx
5 County gets nothing. [Muffled speaking]. Those
6 of you not standing [muffled speaking] that
7 allows segregation separately. Those of you who
8 are here tonight are representing - - schools in
9 New York City and see the difference in what - -
10 and what the - - is getting at - - . I don't
11 have to tell you but do your research, see how -
12 - , see the work that they do. Do some research
13 and I'll - - to come back angry and say - - this
14 school and this class - - because the thing is
15 that [muffled speaking]. One of the main
16 concerns that I have is that - - in this
17 building. I really have a problem with high
18 school kids being - - . That's a problem for
19 me. [Muffled speaking] but it's a problem.
20 You've already been told [muffled speaking].
21 One of the things that does matter is that
22 [muffled speaking]. I do know that some people
23 do go to the internet and [muffled speaking]
24 which is bias. We have - - tonight. We're
25 biased because when they go back to the office,

1 they sip over coffee and donuts [muffled
2 speaking]. I just want to make sure my point is
3 getting across because [muffled speaking]. I
4 don't have the numbers in front of me but I'm
5 going to take a wild guess and say - - every
6 student has enrolled in other schools at age 12
7 - - . It's a problem. And it generally starts
8 in the middle school, and in the middle school -
9 - middle school. Earlier today I was going - -
10 . I saw six kids in the park that day smoking
11 marijuana. [Muffled speaking]. When I was in
12 school - - in high school. They showed up in
13 class but now, in middle school, sixth grade,
14 [muffled speaking]. So, this is what I'm saying
15 [muffled speaking]. I would like to see a
16 better turnaround because this does not look
17 good for us as parents as a whole, and when - -
18 comes up, I'm asking you to vote for [muffled
19 speaking]. Go to the polls on election day and
20 - - . Thank you.

21 [Applause]

22 MS. TANISHA ROBINSON: Okay. My name is
23 Tanisha Robinson and I'm a CEC member but I'm
24 here to speak as a parent because I'm a parent
25 of Soundview Academy, and most important, I just

1 want parents to know that we should not - -
2 portfolio had to support 131 and Soundview
3 Academy if this charter school does come into
4 the picture. And not only that but if this - -
5 guidance counselor, - - teachers - - guidance
6 counselors in one room. That's an office right
7 there. So, if you're going to put in a school,
8 you should be helping what you have already.

9 [Applause]

10 MS. ROBINSON: The privacy of these children
11 going to a guidance counselor. You want to have
12 a private room with the guidance counselor. To
13 be in a room with seven other guidance
14 counselors is ridiculous. That type of thing.
15 The principal sharing an office with, what,
16 three people, three other people. So, if you're
17 going to take space from the school, that's
18 ridiculous because you have started at Soundview
19 Academy and you have started at 131. What the
20 DOE needs to be doing is helping.

21 [Applause]

22 MS. ROBINSON: And also, just because - -
23 it's not - - that the school has. They don't
24 have - - so you're going to take what you're
25 going to get. That's my biggest concern.

1 [Applause]

2 MR. TRACY: [Muffled speaking] intention no
3 questions would be answered this evening
4 regarding - - and I would just like to say that
5 - - .

6 [Applause]

7 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Do we have any
8 representatives from the school - - team - - ?
9 Where are all - - 131?

10 [Background Talking]

11 MR. STEVE DONNELLY: Hi. My name is Steve
12 Donnelly. I'm a teacher at 131 - - and I'm also
13 - - . This is nothing new. We've seen this
14 many times before. They - - funds and
15 everything that the Board said, I agree with.
16 Like, someone's going to have to explain why
17 they're putting Kindergarten - - . What - -
18 last - - of the mayor who has been - - , a mayor
19 who has been a disaster in the Bronx, and he's
20 trying to use his hands here. He's going to be
21 out of office and he wants to still make
22 decisions when he's out of office, and it's
23 junk. It's junk. Not - - . I don't know where
24 the space is. Someone has to show me the space.
25 I have teachers come to me and say I've got 33

1 kids and my administrators are really trying
2 hard to put kids places, and then they take
3 money away from them. Well, here, we'll just
4 take money away. It boggles my mind. And
5 again, it's the last wrath of the emperor. The
6 emperor is going to go but he wants to keep his
7 hands in the kettle. And I don't really fault
8 superintendents or principals. They got their
9 marching orders from the DOE, and this
10 administration - - 174 or keeps trying to close
11 down the schools and there's no logic in that.
12 There's no - - smaller class sizes. Now he'll
13 give you some information that says that doesn't
14 really work, but it works in the suburbs, right?
15 All right. Thanks.

16 [Applause]

17 MR. JASON CLUE: Good evening everybody. My
18 name is Jason Clue. I work at 131. I'm the
19 math teacher as well as the instructional coach
20 and SLT chair. I'm facing the audience tonight
21 because really it's all about you guys, and
22 first and foremost, I mean you look at this
23 information about the reduction of the
24 enrollment at 131. From what I've read and
25 looked at this literature so far--and Steve

1 already touched base on it--that they're not
2 talking about reducing classroom sizes and
3 although our student enrollment may decrease if
4 this goes through, there's no - - that's saying
5 that the classroom sizes are going to get
6 smaller. Currently I teach one of the smaller
7 classes in the seventh grade and that roster, I
8 believe, is up to 30, and another class of 33.
9 So, I mean, these are things to considered. Mr.
10 Hernandez spoke briefly about how much money we
11 spend per student here in New York City and I
12 believe our overall budget almost two years ago
13 was close to--it was something absurd, and I'm
14 going to throw a number out there--it may be
15 rough--but almost \$24 billion. So, there is a
16 lot of fat to be cut, and that is true. And
17 really, as an employee of DOE, myself, my
18 colleagues, we don't really have the strength to
19 make these changes because we're not the
20 consumers; we are the employees of the system.
21 But we do, as humans, feel and understand what
22 is right and what is wrong. One of the CAC
23 members already said that it is true, education
24 is our new civil rights movement of this
25 generation. There is no doubt about it. When

1 you look around what's going on across our
2 nation--not only in New York City but in other
3 major cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles or
4 whatever it may be--they're facing the same
5 issues that we're facing here, and why, because
6 you have to think about who lives in the inner
7 cities and who lives outside of that. It is
8 important that you grasp the future and grab the
9 bull by the horns, spread the word. You now
10 know that the date is the 15th, you now know
11 that we have to be at Brooklyn at 6:00 p.m., I
12 believe 65 Court Street, I'm assuming.

13 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: I'll get you the
14 actual address.

15 MR. CLUE: Okay. And whatever the actual
16 address may be because--

17 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: [Interposing] 52
18 Chambers, 52 Chambers Street.

19 FEMALE VOICE: No, that's wrong. Prospect
20 Campus.

21 FEMALE VOICE 2: Prospect Campus. Yeah,
22 she's right.

23 MALE VOICE: She's right. Prospect Campus.

24 MR. CLUE: Prospect Campus and obviously,
25 we're trying to disseminate that information

1 more so. But more than anything, whatever
2 your issue is, we'll always back you guys up,
3 and we'll always support the decisions that you
4 make. If you feel that the Success Academy is
5 the right decision to go with, we will support
6 that, but if you do not, then your time is
7 limited. You have to make your voices heard
8 within these next couple of weeks or this will
9 get done. And that means spending at least the
10 next couple of days talking to your neighbors,
11 letting them know that we have to go out and we
12 have to do this because if we do not do this,
13 then it will go through. Whatever you guys do,
14 as a 131 employee and I've been here for seven
15 years and although that's not very long--I'm
16 only 28 years old--so that's 25% of my life.
17 And I always feel that at the end of the day,
18 the parents know what's the best decision for
19 the children and I hope that you guys do go out
20 there and make the best decision. Thank you.

21 [Applause]

22 MS. MARJORIE BISHOP: Good evening. I'm
23 Marjorie Bishop. I'm also a parent in the area
24 so I speak as a parent in the area, and we
25 cannot afford to have a charter school coming

1 inside here, sending our students, our kids
2 away from home. They'll give them like a bus
3 pass to take and travel, while the charter
4 school will not pay for - - . They will bus
5 their students here. So, we wanted to say that
6 we want to keep our students here, our kids
7 here. We have a new principal who has been the
8 best. She's not saying she wants high-achieving
9 students. She said give me all of your
10 students. Give me your kids and I will empower
11 them. So, we want to give our students a
12 challenge, a new principal working with our
13 students and our kids in the area.

14 [Applause]

15 FEMALE PARENT: Good evening everyone. My
16 granddaughter attends 131; she's on the honor
17 roll. My daughter went here to the school 131.
18 I have a grandson that's in PS 100 who will
19 probably be transferring here. Now if they put
20 a charter school here, whereas that means--he is
21 8 years old--he would have to travel to another
22 school, take the bus, and I don't think that's a
23 good idea for him. I mean, the charter school
24 is not sufficient in this area and the charter
25 school is the elementary school whereas 131 is a

1 junior high school. The two don't mix; they
2 don't mix. And I feel that this is a good
3 school. We have a good principal now. She has
4 everything mostly in place, and it just would
5 tear up the folks. It's not conducive at all.
6 So, I don't think it's a good idea. They should
7 go somewhere else, find another school in
8 another area. Thank you.

9 [Applause]

10 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Anyone else from the
11 SLT want to be heard? So now I'm going to
12 introduce - - the guidance counselor from
13 Soundview Academy, Junior High School 448 school
14 district.

15 MS. BAYLIN: Thank you, Mr. Behr.

16 [Applause]

17 MS. BAYLIN: So, good evening. I would like
18 to just talk to you briefly about the current
19 status of Soundview Academy and how we will be
20 affected by the charter school coming into our
21 building. For 2012/2013 we had 198 applicants
22 to our school. For the following year, we had
23 over 400. We had 411 sixth-grade students
24 wanting to come to our school, and when school
25 started at the beginning of the year, we had to

1 start turning families away who wanted to come
2 to our building. So, with those numbers--I know
3 that portfolio likes to have numbers--so those
4 numbers show you that our school is on the rise
5 just in applicants wanting to come to our
6 building. The utilization plan says that we're
7 only a school of 280 but if that current trend
8 continues, you will easily have 340 students
9 within those three years, which is well above
10 what they're accounting for in their planned
11 space. The proposal also says that we'll be
12 losing three full-size rooms over the next five
13 years. At our current status--being really
14 tight on space--we have three teachers who are
15 full course subject teachers who don't have
16 their own room. They have to travel around in
17 rooms that we already have. If we were to lose
18 these three rooms, that would mean that we
19 either have to cut back on our programming or
20 have even more teachers who have to cart around
21 all of the materials in carts, and with the
22 expectations of classroom environment, when they
23 get there and the students get there, you can
24 tell that they have to prepare and they're
25 getting ready as same as the students are

1 walking into the room. So, like I'm saying,
2 our school is on the rise with enrollment and
3 we've been recognized by Central for our
4 accomplishments in post-secondary readiness and
5 our work with English-language learners. We've
6 also started construction on a multi-media
7 million dollar library that's going to be
8 finished in the spring, that was put forth by a
9 lot of push from parents, our administration,
10 and if this proposal goes forth as it's written,
11 we will only have five hours a week in that
12 library that we hustled for, that's going to be
13 finished this spring. Starting next year only
14 five hours a week allowed to be going in there.
15 Additionally, we've outperformed middle schools
16 city wide, as you can see on our New York City
17 school survey. If you look at the engagement
18 survey that asks parents, teachers, and students
19 how they feel about the school environment, on
20 all aspects, including academic expectations,
21 communication, engagement, and safety - - , our
22 2012/2013 scores are above the city-wide
23 average. So, schools that are doing well
24 deserve support and opportunities to expand, not
25 to decrease and move space. You don't shrink

1 things that are working; you expand them. We,
2 at Soundview Academy, need more, not less.

3 Thank you.

4 [Applause]

5 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: - - at this time.

6 MR. WILLIAM GOMEZ: Hello everybody. I'm
7 William Gomez. I'm currently - - teacher at
8 Soundview and I've been there three years. I
9 actually live in the neighborhood and this is
10 really frightening to me because right now I
11 went from having my own classroom to last year
12 sharing a classroom to this year - - . I go
13 into five different classrooms. I walk around -
14 - and my kids, this is - - . Bringing a charter
15 school will just take away classes from us,
16 decrease - - which means that attention that
17 needs to be in the classroom at all times and it
18 seems like those are the kids who get pushed
19 back. Like the gentleman said, the way we
20 affect these people is - - and we have - - . We
21 have to go - - is accessible. We have - - .
22 She's at - - . You knock down on her door.
23 I've done it before. I used to work at - - . I
24 would knock on her door until she pays
25 attention. - - these people are here to work

1 for us. Ruben Diaz, the - - , he's our state
2 senator. His son is the borough president. We
3 have to - - . If he doesn't listen to us, we'll
4 go to his church. We'll stand there on Sunday.
5 We'll make sure that he listens to us. But if
6 we--right now I feel like I'm speaking to the
7 choir because all I see is educators and a few
8 parents. From here on, we have - - . Because
9 like the gentleman said, petitions aren't - -
10 and become a nuisance, they will listen because
11 they become very scared. Those are votes. And
12 some of us who don't vote regularly, when an
13 issue like this comes up, we do vote. So, like
14 I said, - - become a nuisance with her. I know
15 she doesn't like - - face, but go there, knock
16 on her door, tell - - until she shows up. And
17 Ruben Diaz, we have a direct connection to the -
18 - president. We have to make this happen.
19 Thank you.

20 [Applause]

21 MS. HOPE BROWN: Good afternoon everybody.
22 My name is Hope Brown. I know that - - in 131
23 and Soundview Academy. I just want to say that
24 for the safety aspect of the charter school
25 coming in, here at 131, it's being developed one

1 of the top-notch BRT teams, and the ability of
2 Mr. Frapperton [phonetic] and Ms. Mason, we've
3 got to come together and be unified. In the
4 past, it was a struggle and we've come a long
5 way, and to take away from what we've developed,
6 it's kind of heart wrenching. The safety here,
7 the kids - - deal with the nonsense of the
8 community that comes and spills at our doorstep
9 that has absolutely nothing to do with us. To
10 think that junior high school students are
11 dealing with high school students who want to
12 come and just fight right here in front of our
13 school, imagine elementary kids. Their parents
14 - - .

15 [Applause]

16 MS. BROWN: So, - - and we need to fight in
17 order to keep the charter school out because
18 they're not going to understand sharing the same
19 bathrooms with junior high school students, the
20 same lunchroom, the same common space, and the
21 junior high school students are not going to
22 understand these smaller kids wanting to be in
23 our space. So, what about conflict? What kind
24 of safety provisions does the charter school in
25 place? What do we have to offer? Absolutely

1 nothing. So, I think right now it's going to
2 set us back if we have to now train a whole new
3 school to come in and be where we are. So, we
4 have to think about that and - - again and - - .

5 [Applause]

6 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: All right. - - team
7 member - - speak at this time. So, we have now
8 concluded with all presentations. We will now
9 open the floor up for comments. Speak - - all
10 kinds of - - . Our - - is Patricia Lowery
11 [phonetic].

12 [Applause]

13 MS. PATRICIA LOWERY: Good evening everyone.
14 As a parent of Soundview Academy--

15 MALE VOICE: [Interposing] Can't hear you,
16 miss.

17 MS. LOWERY: You can't hear me? Okay. I
18 can talk louder.

19 [Laughter]

20 MS. LOWERY: I am a parent of Soundview
21 Academy. My oldest son was one of the first
22 students in Soundview. He went from being an
23 average student to when he left Soundview--he
24 was the first graduating class--he was on honor
25 roll. Every year I see great improvement in

1 everything that Soundview is offering our
2 children. They take time out in every aspect,
3 meaning one is the safety issue - - in every
4 teacher I see out here every morning protecting
5 our students every day. On top of protecting
6 our students, they're here on Saturdays, early
7 in the morning, late in the evening, teaching
8 our children, getting them ready for tests,
9 ready for college, making sure their work is
10 done. They have mentors that are in the school
11 and making sure that the teachers are doing what
12 they're supposed to do to help the children in
13 their work if they have any issues. They handle
14 every situation and aspect, even things that's
15 not even involved in educational things, meaning
16 their teenagers. So, what they're doing is
17 giving their time mentoring the students because
18 they're young adults going into adulthood. So,
19 if you want to do anything, what you should do
20 is expand Soundview to make sure that they have
21 more space to provide the services to our
22 children that we need. That's what we need;
23 someone that cares. He doesn't know the
24 students as students; he knows the students on a
25 personal level by name, every single student,

1 every principal, guidance counselor, they know
2 all of the parents. These are the people that
3 care for our students and trying to teach them
4 and make them be better at every aspect of life
5 with college, work, and everything. My son is
6 in high school and he still comes back here to
7 get advice from his mentor, all from Ms. - - .
8 You know that that's not good to put little
9 children in the school with these kids. They
10 are going to get hurt. How much can you put on
11 the staff to sit down here and protect the
12 students from outsiders, protect the students
13 from fighting themselves, and then they have to
14 turn around and protect younger students? I
15 don't understand that. I don't understand the
16 concept. They don't even have that much space
17 to do what they need to do to perform, and they
18 are performing and our children are exceeding.
19 And this year my youngest son is in Soundview
20 and wants to go to school every day and there's
21 so many children and all I hear is Soundview,
22 Soundview, Soundview, that all the children want
23 to come. If you cut back students coming into
24 the school, they're going to take the fundings,
25 they're going to take the programs, they're

1 going to take every single thing away from the
2 school, and I don't think that's something that
3 you should do. You need to expand it, not bring
4 another school in, and especially not bringing
5 in younger students. And as a parent, I'm going
6 to do whatever I can to make sure that this
7 doesn't happen, and somebody needs to hear us
8 and listen to us because they are doing a great
9 job for our children and I am a person with two
10 children at this school and they are doing
11 great.

12 [Applause]

13 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Naomi. Our next
14 speaker will be Naomi Saledo. Naomi?

15 MS. NAOMI SALEDO: I'm here.

16 [Applause]

17 MS. SALEDO: Good evening ladies and
18 gentlemen, Mr. Behr.

19 FEMALE VOICE: Put the mic--

20 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: [Interposing] They
21 don't hear you. There you go.

22 MS. SALEDO: Okay. Good evening ladies and
23 gentlemen, Mr. Behr. I am a current - - at
24 Soundview Academy and I just want you guys to -
25 - so far - - graduate and I'm telling you right

1 now that my experience here has been amazing
2 and part of that has been because of the arts
3 and crafts. It's so strong. I remember as soon
4 as I walked in, everybody was so welcoming. My
5 mentors, I'm so close to them to this day. I
6 can tell them anything. But I was one of the
7 first to get enrolled of the very first musical
8 in this school. As a 11-year old, I performed
9 on the Broadway stage. I have never met anyone
10 do that, and from this experience, that is
11 amazing. Last year I have traveled with our
12 past former teacher. I've gone to - - and have
13 had so many important teachers and faces and
14 I've experienced things that I know that a lot
15 of students my age have not, and the academics
16 in this school is amazing and it improves every
17 year. This year I'm - - because I'm - - algebra
18 - - . I'm taking film every day.

19 [Applause]

20 MS. SALEDO: And I know that if the charter
21 school is coming that may not happen. I may not
22 come back in two years and I can't speak to the
23 sixth graders and the whole experience - - that
24 I have experienced. And just the support here
25 every day, being able to speak to - - , amazing.

1 Everybody in the office knows my name because
2 they care for me, and that just shows all the
3 time. So, that's all I have to say right now
4 but thank you so much for listening.

5 [Applause]

6 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Brandon Molina?
7 Brandon?

8 MR. BRANDON MOLINA: Hi. My name is Brandon
9 Molina and I'm also a student at Soundview
10 Academy, an eighth grader, and I just want to
11 say that at Soundview it's amazing. All the - -
12 and I have right now two cousins in the sixth
13 grade and with this charter school coming in, I
14 think that's going to affect their experience as
15 well because the arts program, the dual
16 language, that's all going to go down - - , and
17 I have three more cousins coming in next year
18 hopefully, but with this charter school, they're
19 chances of getting in are even lower than
20 everyone else's. So, I feel - - and I hope that
21 they can get in and I hope that this charter
22 school - - doesn't get approved because I want
23 their experience to be just as good as I had.

24 [Applause]

25 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Our next speaker will

1 be Natasha Cornado.

2 MS. NATASHA CORNADO: Hi. That's me.

3 [Laughter]

4 MS. CORNADO: Nice to see you guys. I'm not
5 really very good at this but I usually say
6 what's in my heart and how I feel, and what I
7 feel here tonight is that you guys are on our
8 side and we appreciate it, but you can't do it
9 by yourselves, and power comes in numbers.
10 Okay. Tell your sister, your baby daddy--

11 [Laughter]

12 MS. CORNADO: --the husband, the
13 grandmother, everybody. We have to be heard.

14 [Applause]

15 MS. NATASHA CORNADO: I haven't went through
16 this proposal thing thoroughly but from I can
17 see and from what I hear, excuses. This is my
18 first year for my child in this building. I
19 have been through this building. I don't see
20 the space. Where? I don't see the space
21 anywhere, nowhere. The sixth grade, seventh
22 grade, eighth, I just don't see the space,
23 unless I'm missing something. And again, I'm
24 going to say I - - testimony to how the smaller
25 kids integrate with the bigger children, 100 - -

1 Kindergarten in this school. My baby was part
2 of that experiment and it was a disaster.

3 MALE VOICE: Thank you.

4 [Applause]

5 MS. CORNADO: The first thing those kids
6 learned was how to wear their pants here and
7 profanity. The parents were livid. They were
8 going to say that they told us but their
9 children pick up things very easily. You know
10 that. This also says oh, 131 hasn't had a C
11 level or a C grade or--okay, two minutes--had a
12 C grade. Ms. Mason is here. Give her a chance.

13 [Applause]

14 MS. CORNADO: We have a new principal. - -
15 I know you're going to make it happen.

16 [Applause]

17 MS. CORNADO: - - and everybody - - whatever
18 I said, your cousins, your sisters, bring them
19 out. This is our choice, not theirs.

20 MALE VOICE: That's right.

21 [Applause]

22 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Our next speaker will
23 be Sophie Thompson.

24 MS. SOPHIE THOMPSON: Good evening citizens,
25 good evening IS 131, good evening Soundview

1 Academy. I'm a former parent. My daughter is
2 Aliya Hart [phonetic]. She graduated in 2011
3 with honors.

4 [Applause]

5 MS. THOMPSON: Honors. As a parent, it is
6 my duty to stay on top of my child. I did not
7 know about Soundview Academy. I was weary of
8 the school, but when I met this man, Mr. Frap,
9 we joined forces to be together as one to take
10 care of these kids in the school. The staff is
11 wonderful. These kids have as much support as
12 they need. The space is limited as it is. Why
13 can't they - - something that they need to be so
14 strong and pull back? You don't have to do
15 that. I'm against the charter school. Build it
16 somewhere else, where it's needed, in a better
17 community where there's more space for it. Give
18 them the space that they need. Don't put it
19 here. Then they're going to have to join forces
20 with IS 131 to share space that they couldn't
21 share from the beginning when Soundview Academy
22 wasn't even here. They don't have enough
23 classrooms as it is. They don't have the space
24 to support all these children and force them all
25 together. It's not right. It's not fair to the

1 students. It's not fair to their academic
2 needs and their skills. They have wonderful
3 support systems, after-school programs, math,
4 tutoring, drama, art classes. What's going to
5 happen to the space? Where are these rooms
6 going to be built? There's no access to
7 anything for all the children to have together
8 that they can share. Everybody needs access to
9 go to a library on one day when all the kids
10 should be able to go to a library on the same
11 day if they're given a report to do a book. Why
12 should they have a day to go to a library when
13 they have to do their homework immediately?
14 There's no support. To be honest with you, I
15 just found out about this last minute. People
16 should have been like Jehovah's Witnesses,
17 knocking on people's door; did you hear about
18 what's going on at Soundview Academy and IS 131?

19 [Applause]

20 MS. THOMPSON: Let's talk about this. - -
21 that's not limited space. What about the staff?
22 What about the children? Nobody's thinking
23 about that. The - - .

24 [Applause]

25 MS. THOMPSON: Item number one, Soundview

1 Academy, I love you all. You all give my baby
2 - - and I'm proud of her. She's going to
3 graduate high school with honors. Thank you for
4 that.

5 [Applause]

6 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Our next speaker will
7 be Anthony Velez.

8 MR. ANTHONY VELEZ: Hello ladies and
9 gentlemen. My name is Anthony Velez. I'm in
10 tenth grade and I was a student at Soundview
11 Academy last year in 2012. I was part of the
12 first graduating class of Soundview Academy. I
13 knew Ms. Richardson's son very well. We had the
14 same mentor - - personal level - - . I'm here
15 to talk about - - talk about which was the art
16 program. In three years, if this school is
17 allowed in this building, in three years, - -
18 full-size classrooms will be taken out of the
19 schools, three teachers gone, three - - gone.
20 What's at risk is with the art programs. In our
21 program the - - and still excelling to this day
22 is film. Film started at Soundview Academy. My
23 entire life, my future started at Soundview
24 Academy. Had it not been for Soundview Academy,
25 I don't know where I would be today. Had it not

1 been for that art that I found, I wouldn't
2 know where I would be today. I have worked with
3 so many professionals outside of school. I have
4 - - Spiderman - - movie. I worked with him this
5 summer and I don't think it's fair the kids that
6 can come to Soundview Academy do not have the
7 same type of chances, the same type of
8 opportunities that I've had, that Naomi had.
9 She got to perform on Broadway and now other
10 kids can't. That's unreal.

11 [Applause]

12 MR. VELEZ: - - this art makes me the
13 happiest person in the world. It has me - -
14 after a hard day. This is something that I
15 love. I've done so many things. I've made
16 films. Right now I'm actually doing a
17 documentary. I am working with other sixth
18 graders in other schools, in other after-school
19 programs, teaching them how to make
20 documentaries, teaching them how to write, and
21 now another student that's coming into Soundview
22 Academy, because of the charter school, because
23 they're going to add an elementary school, can't
24 have the same opportunities that other students
25 had because a school wants to come in and take

1 other classrooms, take other teachers out of
2 the way so the other teachers can come in.
3 That's ridiculous, it's illogical, it doesn't
4 make sense. And that's how I feel, and that's
5 everyone with the art program feels. I think
6 that's how everyone here feels. I hope you all
7 - - . That is all I have to say. Thank you so
8 much for coming - - .

9 [Applause]

10 MR. VELEZ: Thank you so much.

11 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Our next speaker is
12 Mr. Otis [phonetic] Thomas.

13 MS. THOMPSON: And my son plays junior
14 varsity that he started his basketball playing
15 at Soundview and he's playing junior varsity
16 now.

17 [Applause]

18 MS. THOMAS: Thank you ladies and gentlemen.
19 I used to be on that board for almost four
20 years. I busted my butt to - - . I did
21 everything I can, but I can't do it alone, and
22 even though I - - right now, they're working for
23 you, and like - - said, not everybody - - get
24 these parents to come out, let them know that we
25 need to stop this, bringing in an elementary

1 school into a high school. It's wrong. I am
2 a product of this school, September of '84 to
3 June of '88--I'm sorry--'80 to '84, and 131 gave
4 me everything from music, I played the trumpet,
5 I sung and - - , all from - - . I took the
6 industrial arts class and I did - - . I did
7 graphic arts, I did ceramics. You name it, I
8 did it. Because 131 gave me all the stuff, art,
9 I'm a 24-year electrician because of 131.

10 [Applause]

11 MR. THOMAS: 24 years. I look at - - now
12 and - - 100. Next week I - - find a school for
13 my daughter to go from sixth to eighth.
14 Bringing in an elementary school, that's not the
15 way to go. It's a bad - - . Something needs to
16 be done. This is my neighborhood. I grew up
17 here 22 years. This is a slap in the face.
18 Like the gentleman said, get these parents to
19 come out to the public meeting which is on the
20 15th and tell these bandits--especially - - that
21 I haven't seen - - have to fight for 146. We
22 don't want a public school, an elementary be
23 here in a middle school. 30 seconds? Really
24 brother? I just wanted to say tell these people
25 to wake up. You're sleeping. Tell these people

1 to wake up. They're sleeping. The future is
2 for our kids. My daughter, your children.
3 Please get up, tell everybody in this
4 neighborhood something's got to be done. Go to
5 the - - . I don't care what it takes. I'll be
6 there. Remember, I'm from Queens. I live in
7 Queens. I grew up in the Bronx. I'll do
8 anything for my child and I'll do anything for
9 my community. This is where I grew up. This is
10 my school and I don't want this school to go in
11 shambles and be gone. That's all I'm saying.

12 [Applause]

13 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Our [muffled
14 speaking].

15 [Crosstalk]

16 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: [Muffled speaking]. I
17 just want to explain that to you all. [Muffled
18 speaking]. Please let everybody [muffled
19 speaking] can't do this alone. More so now than
20 ever before.

21 [Crosstalk]

22 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Thank you [muffled
23 speaking]. Thank you for letting the DOE
24 [muffled speaking] but please most important, we
25 need the message to be spread - - . Otherwise,

1 this is a done deal.

2 FEMALE VOICE: Can you give us all the
3 information about October 15th?

4 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Yes. I also want you
5 to know that this meeting is mandated by law,
6 but they also, in turn, don't send anybody any
7 questions, with the vote going on - - . So, you
8 basically came here to say your peace and that's
9 it. They - - . So, please make it stop.
10 Change it. Change the [muffled speaking].
11 Again, thank you. I hope we didn't take too
12 much of your time. Thanks for coming. [Muffled
13 speaking].

14 [Applause]

15 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: I'd like to thank
16 everyone for being here this evening [muffled
17 speaker], our principals, Ms. Monique Mason,
18 131, - - from 448, school achievement teams,
19 [muffled speaker] and - - liaison from - -
20 office, [muffled speaking]. Again, we welcome
21 any comments and feedback you have. Any time
22 you will have - - October 15th, 2013 meeting at
23 Prospect Heights Campus which is located at - -
24 in Brooklyn, New York. Email address and phone
25 number where comments where be made are

1 d08proposals@schools.nyc.gov. You may also
2 call 212-374-5159.

3 [Crosstalk]

4 SUPERINTENDENT BEHR: Thank you all for your
5 participation this evening and - - .

6 [END RECORDING]

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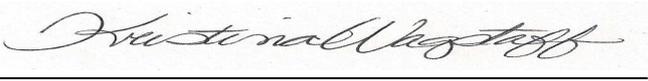
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature 

Date October 7, 2013