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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - DIVISION OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING
K249 Hearing - January 23, 2012**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MS. CORINNE RELLO-ANSELM: Good evening,
3 ladies and gentlemen. Good evening, everyone.
4 May I have your attention, please? Good
5 evening. This is the Joint Public Hearing of
6 the Department of Education Community Education
7 Council and the School Leadership Team for the
8 proposed grade expansion of P.S. 249, The Caton
9 School, to a K-5 school, beginning in the 2012-
10 13 school year.

11 I am Corinne Rello-Anselmi, the chancellor's
12 designee for this hearing. We have asked the
13 District 17 Community Education Council and the
14 School Leadership Team of P.S. 249 to
15 participate in this joint public hearing. I am
16 joined here tonight by, to my left, Ms. Simmons,
17 district superintendent, Michelle Manning-
18 Andrews [phonetic], network leader for the
19 school, of course your principal, Elise Brown
20 [phonetic], SLT representative Nancy Bochbot
21 [phonetic] and CEC representative Nicole Job
22 [phonetic]. This hearing is being recorded.
23 The purpose of this hearing is to provide you
24 with comments about the proposal.

25 Before I describe the proposal I want to

1 make sure that you are all aware of the
2 opportunity to provide for your input. All
3 those who wish to speak must sign up at the
4 speaker signup area outside or within this lunch
5 room. The signup list will close in about 15
6 minutes. Speakers will be given the floor in
7 the order that they signed up. All comments
8 will be limited to two minutes.

9 There may be elected officials who show up
10 at different times throughout the evening. If
11 you wish to speak, we will do our best to
12 accommodate them first opportune moment, but
13 those who are here at the start of the public
14 comment segment will be asked to speak first.
15 All comments will be mentioned in the Analysis
16 of Public Comment to be published and provided
17 to the Panel of Education Policy the evening
18 before the panel votes. The vote will take
19 place February 9, 2012.

20 In addition, we welcome any additional
21 comments or feedback you might have at any time
22 before the panel votes on both these proposals.
23 The email address and phone number where
24 comments may be made are:
25 District17Proposals@SchoolsNYC.gov and the phone

1 number for this would be (212) 347-0208.

2 The proposal. P.S. 249, The Caton School,
3 is an existing zoned elementary school located
4 in the building K249 at 18 Marlborough Place,
5 Brooklyn, New York, 11226, in Community District
6 17. P.S. 249 currently serves students in
7 Kindergarten through third grade, and it also
8 offers a half day pre-K Kindergarten program.
9 This proposal to implement a grade expansion
10 whereby P.S. 249 would be extended to also serve
11 students in the fourth and the fifth grades.
12 P.S. 249 would thus serve students in
13 Kindergarten through fifth grade at full scale,
14 and its grade span will be aligned with other
15 elementary schools in District 17.

16 If this proposal is approved, P.S. 249 will
17 begin enrolling fourth grade students in the
18 2012-13 school year. Beginning that year, in
19 order to have a sufficient space at 249 to
20 expand to serve the K-5 students, P.S. 249 will
21 monitor its incoming Kindergarten enrollment to
22 limit out of zone enrollment. P.S. 249 would
23 then expand to full scale to serve fifth grade
24 students in the 2013-14 school year.

25 P.S. 249's grade expansion would create

1 approximately 230 to 250 additional fourth and
2 fifth grade seats in District 17. The New York
3 City Department of Education does not anticipate
4 that the proposed expansion of 249 will affect
5 the pre-K program. Currently, elementary
6 students in District 17 can attend their zoned
7 elementary school, apply to citywide or
8 district-wide gifted and talented programs
9 through the gifted and talented application
10 process or apply to charter schools located in
11 their districts of residence or throughout the
12 city. Under this proposal, elementary school
13 students in District 17 would retain all of
14 these options.

15 249 has the capacity to serve 683 students.
16 In 2011-2012 the building is serving 783
17 students, yielding a utilization rate of
18 approximately 115%. Although the utilization
19 rate exceeds the 100 may suggest that the
20 building will be over utilized or overcrowded in
21 a given year, this rate does not account for the
22 fact that rooms may be programmed for more
23 efficient and different uses than standard
24 assumptions in the utilization calculation.
25 Section 3b sets forth the baseline number of

1 rooms to be allocated to each school pursuant
2 to the citywide instructional footprint, "the
3 footprint," as well as the total number of rooms
4 in the building to provide a more complete
5 picture of the availability of space in K249.

6 In the 2013-14 school year, when P.S. 249
7 has reached full scale, it will serve K to 5
8 students and its half day pre-Kindergarten
9 program, there would be approximately 993
10 students to 1,053 students served in the
11 building, which would yield a projection
12 utilization rate of 145 to 154%. Once P.S.
13 249's enrollment has stabilized in 2017-18, it
14 is projected that the building would serve 708
15 to 768 students, yielding a projected
16 utilization rate of 104 to 112%, which is lower
17 than the building's current utilization rate.

18 The DOE strives to ensure that all students
19 in New York City have access to a diverse range
20 of high quality schools at every stage of their
21 education. If this proposal is approved, P.S.
22 249's third grade student would benefit by being
23 able to complete their elementary education at
24 249 because they would undergo fewer transitions
25 between schools. Currently the third grade

1 students that attend 249 must transition to
2 another elementary school for fourth and fifth
3 grade. Then they must transition to a middle
4 school for sixth through eighth. Expanding the
5 P.S. 249 community would ultimately create a
6 more cohesive K-5 educational experience for the
7 249 students.

8 P.S. 249 is a high performing school. In
9 the 2010-2011 school year, 63% of the third
10 grade students demonstrated proficiency on the
11 New York State Education Department's ELA
12 assessment, and 81% demonstrated proficiency in
13 the math assessment. On both its 2009-10 and
14 '10-'11 annual progress reports, P.S. 249
15 received an overall A grade. For these reasons,
16 the DOE believes that allowing 249 students to
17 remain at the school for their fourth and fifth
18 grade would be beneficial to them.

19 In collaboration with the P.S. 249
20 leadership, the DOE explored ultimate scenarios
21 to avoid increasing K249's building utilization
22 beyond the current utilization rate of 115%.
23 This included consideration of a temporary split
24 siting and collocation of 249's fourth and fifth
25 grades in an annex location, implementation of

1 more drastic enrollment reduction than the
2 current proposal and the elimination of the pre-
3 K program. After exploring multiple scenarios,
4 the DOE and P.S. 249 school leadership concluded
5 this proposal would enable P.S. 249 to maintain
6 the instructional continuity and provide a
7 seamless elementary school experience, part of
8 the original goal for a K-5 expansion.
9 Therefore, the DOE has proposed the expansion
10 within K249 as detailed in the EIS.

11 The DOE knows that the initial increase in
12 building utilization rate over a short period
13 results in a large number of out of zone
14 students currently enrolled in the school, as
15 described in more detail in Section 3a. As
16 discussed throughout the proposal, P.S. 249
17 would limit the number of out of zone students
18 in its incoming Kindergarten classes, resulting
19 in a long-term enrollment reduction where, by
20 the 2017-18 school year, the building
21 utilization rate is projected to decline to the
22 104, 112% which is below K249's utilization rate
23 in 2011-2012.

24 Thank you. The next presenter, we have some
25 speakers that would like to make some

1 statements. Our first will be the CEC rep,
2 Nicole Job.

3 MS. NICOLE JOB: Good evening, everyone.
4 I'm Nicole Job. I'm the CEC liaison for your
5 school. CEC 17 supports P.S. 249's school
6 committee grade expansion. We would like to
7 know what the grade expansion will look like,
8 and the council will submit a full response in
9 writing. Thank you.

10 MS. RELLO-ANSELM: Next we have SLT, School
11 Leadership Team representative Nancy Bochbot.

12 MS. NANCY BOCHBOT: Good evening. My name
13 is Nancy Bochbot. I am a teacher as well as the
14 SLT chairperson. During the last SLT meeting,
15 we reviewed the budget. There is a great
16 concern for this proposal. The proposal states
17 that there is approximately \$6,000 to furnish
18 each classroom.

19 We are adding 12 classes. That equals
20 approximately \$72,000, yet you propose a one
21 time cap award of \$25,000 for school
22 improvements. That is not enough. It is not
23 enough for furniture, books and technology. It
24 is not enough in order for us to continue in our
25 quest for our students to continue to achieve.

1 We need added funding. Thank you. [Applause]

2 MS. RELLO-ANSELM: Okay, at this point
3 we'll entertain the public comments. Okay, the
4 first speaker is a Ms. Rodriguez. Janika?
5 Shineka? Are you here, Ms. Rodriguez, Shineka
6 Rodriguez? Okay. Amelia Mendoza. Is Amelia
7 here, Ms. Mendoza?

8 FEMALE VOICE: We can't hear you.

9 MS. RELLO-ANSELM: Amelia Mendoza. Can we
10 translate this in Spanish for speaking time?
11 Ms. Amelia Mendoza?

12 MALE VOICE: You want me to call her?

13 MS. RELLO-ANSELM: Yeah.

14 MALE VOICE: La Senora Amelia Mendoza es la
15 proxima persona que va a hablar aqui por fovor.
16 Si se encuentra, pase adelante.

17 FEMALE VOICE: Mm, better say that again.
18 If she didn't get that, something wrong.

19 MS. RELLO-ANSELM: Okay, if she comes back
20 we'll come back to her. Andrea Lashley
21 [phonetic]. Ms. Lashley?

22 FEMALE VOICE: She's coming.

23 MS. RELLO-ANSELM: Okay, we'll wait. Is
24 she in the room? Is she in the room?

25 FEMALE VOICE: She's coming. [Applause]

1 MS. RELLO-ANSELM: Here you go. Mike and
2 all.

3 MS. ANDREA LASHLEY: I have to say good
4 evening to our parents and our distinguished
5 guests today. And my question is, are we going
6 to get a nice big fat grant to push our fourth
7 grade?

8 MALE VOICE: Speak up, please.

9 FEMALE VOICE: We can't hear you.

10 MS. LASHLEY: Oh, you all can't hear me?

11 CROWD: No.

12 MS. LASHLEY: I am asking the panel of
13 judges to give 249 the grants to complete our
14 mission for fourth grade. That's what I'm
15 asking. [Applause] So with that note left, I
16 would say think on it and give it to us, please.

17 MS. RELLO-ANSELM: Your request is duly
18 noted and will be brought back to the
19 chancellor. We have Mavis Rowe [phonetic]. Ms.
20 Rowe, Mavis Rowe. [Applause]

21 MS. MAVIS ROWE: Good evening, everyone.

22 CROWD: Good evening.

23 MS. ROWE: My name is Mavis Rowe. My son
24 Michael comes to this school. And it will be
25 wonderful if they get the grant that they need

1 for grades four and five, because my son start
2 from Kindergarten. Thank you. [Applause]

3 MS. RELLO-ANSELM: Our next speaker is
4 Denise Burgess [phonetic].

5 MS. DENISE BURGESS: Good evening, everyone.
6 I just want to say to the panel that I'm pretty
7 sure all these parents would agree with me when
8 I say that our children need to complete their
9 elementary education here, not only because it's
10 an A grade school, but it's just the whole
11 elementary experience that they need to complete
12 here.

13 My daughter came from New Jersey, and this
14 was...this is her second year here, and the
15 transition that the staff, the principal, the
16 assistant principal, gave my daughter to be
17 successful as she is now in the third grade is
18 tremendous. And it would be sad to see that
19 experience have to end for her here in the third
20 grade when she should be here for the fifth.

21 My question to Ms. Bochbot: if indeed that
22 the Board of Ed cannot find the grants to
23 continue, to complete this proposal, what can we
24 as the parents, as the community, do in terms of
25 fundraising, whatever it is that we can do to

1 get this proposal approved? Because I'm
2 pretty sure all these parents here will do what
3 they need to do to keep their kids here in this
4 school. [Applause]

5 MS. RELLO-ANSELM: Thank you. Consuelo
6 Sanguino [phonetic], Sanguina, G-U-I-N-O,
7 Sanguino? Consuelo? Is she in the room? Okay,
8 we will move on. If she comes up to the front
9 we'll put her on right after. Ramon Torres
10 [phonetic]. Mr. Torres, Ramon. Okay, we'll
11 have her go next.

12 MR. RAMON TORRES: Greetings, Superintendent
13 and members of the Department of Education,
14 Principal Brown, Assistant Principal de Jesus,
15 teachers, parents, students, welcome to P.S.
16 249. My name is Ramon Torres, parent of
17 Jeremiah Torres, second grader. Unfortunately,
18 my wife Dawn Torres, PTA president, could not be
19 here today. She apologizes for this. Her
20 dedication to the school and students has never
21 wavered as a parent leader for the past three
22 years. I speak on behalf of her and myself in
23 supporting the expansion of P.S. 249 to the
24 fourth and fifth graders only if it remains at
25 the school.

1 I congratulate the efforts we have all
2 made in receiving the letter A grade. In order
3 for us to maintain this grade during the
4 transition period, I truly hope the Department
5 of Education will support the school with
6 additional funding for the teachers, education,
7 furniture for the other students, educational
8 materials for the grade expansions, and
9 supportive services for all students in working
10 with each other, parents, and teachers.

11 Additionally, I hope the Department of
12 Education will recognize that the culture of the
13 school will change and realize that a letter
14 grade for the next year might change. If this
15 should happen, it should not pose any bearing on
16 the quality of the school and work put forth by
17 the teachers or students, but recognized as a
18 process of change the school will undergo.

19 Additionally, we are concerned about the
20 special programs for the school. Have been long
21 recognized for the dual language programs and
22 healthy additions. We would like for this to
23 have as minimum change as possible. We ask for
24 the Department of Education to provide Principal
25 Brown with whatever resources she deems

1 appropriate in the upcoming year for
2 expansion. With her 12 years of school
3 dedication, she should have a clarity with
4 needs.

5 As active parents, we want to thank the
6 school body, and in particular Ms. Brown,
7 Principal Brown, the assistant principal, Ms.
8 Mackey, the parent coordinator, Ms. Bochbot,
9 head of SLT, and all teachers and parents for
10 being here at this meeting tonight, for, as
11 always, being on hand. My wife and I thank you
12 for this time. Good evening. [Applause]

13 MS. RELLO-ANSELMINI: Is Consuelo here?

14 MS. CONSUELO SANGUINO: Yes. Thank you. I
15 am okay with bringing fourth and fifth grades,
16 but with the condition that it's only going to
17 be students from this school, because if we
18 bring students from other schools, that they
19 don't have the behavior statement that we have
20 in this school, that they know how to behave,
21 they know how to pay attention and they know how
22 to respect their teachers, I'm okay bringing
23 fourth and fifth grade.

24 But if they're bringing from other places
25 that they don't have behavior standards, I'm not

1 okay, because my kids are small. My kids are
2 small. I have a second grade kid that needs his
3 behavior to be strengthened before he goes in
4 the future and he knows how to respect other
5 people as well. I'm trying to teach him to
6 respect others, and to be learning other bad
7 behaviors from other kids that they don't know
8 nothing about this school, I am really
9 concerned.

10 But I've heard that it's only be students
11 that from this school I'm okay, I'm 100% to it.
12 Because when they reach third grade, and they
13 work so hard, so hard in this school. They give
14 them a lot of help, even Saturdays help. It's a
15 lot, a lot that they learn. And when they get
16 out of this school, they feel unprotected,
17 because they go to other schools with kids that
18 do whatever they want, they have no respect for
19 nobody.

20 And my kids...my kid felt alone. I have one
21 third...one that attended third grade here and he
22 felt lost when he went to another school and he
23 saw all the kids acting out and not respecting
24 their elders or their teachers like as we do
25 here.

1 It's like a whole family we have in here.
2 [Applause] It's a very big family where we all
3 support each other, from principal to teachers,
4 to coordinators, and we all help each other, and
5 we know what's going on in here. And our
6 children feel left out. They don't feel lost.
7 They don't feel left out. They feel lost.

8 I see Miss Hall working so hard with these
9 kids and they all respect her into every level.
10 I don't see any kids jumping out and acting out
11 and cursing them out because they know that if
12 they do that, they're in big trouble.

13 [Laughter] And I like that. [Applause] I like
14 this school to be respected and its teachers to
15 be respected. We don't see that anymore.

16 I see my kid, he's in sixth grade, they just
17 insulted the teacher, they just slap their
18 teacher. I don't want my son to be there in
19 that environment. And this school is the best
20 thing ever. I've been here from...God knows I was
21 here fourth, fifth grade like years ago, so I
22 know what's around here.

23 And I love this school and I'll always love
24 this school. And I support these teachers and
25 this principal 100% all my life, and I'm

1 depending to bring my kids here till they grow
2 up. We wish we had more space to have more kids
3 and more respect. Thank you. That's all I have
4 to say. [Applause]

5 MS. RELLO-ANSELM: I think Ms. Brown's in
6 trouble. I think they want to go to eighth
7 grade. Okay, ladies and gentlemen, that
8 exhausts our speaker list and no one else has
9 signed up. Any other...?

10 MALE VOICE: Do we want to call the people
11 who have not spoken?

12 MS. RELLO-ANSELM: Okay, is Amelia Mendoza
13 here now? Amelia? The other person put a note
14 that she can't do it. She crossed her name off.
15 So it's only Amelia Mendoza. We have another
16 representative for the CEC that would like to
17 make a statement.

18 MR. MARVIN WHEELER: Excuse me. Good
19 evening, everyone. I said good evening,
20 everyone.

21 CROWD: Good evening.

22 MR. WHEELER: For those who don't know me,
23 my name is Marvin Wheeler. I've been in this
24 district for 16 years, fighting for the
25 education of children, and this is one of my

1 favorite schools. And I just want to share
2 with you that this has been a long time coming,
3 okay? Because honestly, when you look at the
4 quality of education from Kindergarten to third
5 grade, why should our kids have to make another
6 school better by fourth and fifth grade, and we
7 can do it ourselves right here? [Applause] Why
8 is that? We can do it ourselves, and take all
9 the credit, instead of people getting the credit
10 from us. Take all the credit, 'cause it's just
11 like that. That's the way the educational
12 process is in 249.

13 And to the parent who just spoke, I
14 truly believe in what you say, but trust me,
15 once this school becomes a fifth grade school,
16 you're going to apply to get in here. So trust
17 me when I tell you we're only going to take the
18 best of the best to keep this school going,
19 because that's the way it is. And you know,
20 you've got to respect the fact that children
21 have to adapt and change. But as long as you're
22 teaching your child the rules and regulations of
23 respecting kids, they'll be okay everywhere they
24 go. At the end of the day they come home to
25 you. I just want to be fair about that.

1 This school, like I said, has a history of
2 great things. The leadership is great. And
3 people need to understand we need to support
4 everywhere. So when I seen it was raining
5 outside, it was just like somebody saying don't
6 come, but believe me, when I come in here and I
7 see all of you all, it was worth making the trip
8 in the rain to come here to represent this
9 school. Very simple. [Applause]

10 And I just want to say in my 16 years of
11 fighting, in order for me to be on this
12 Community Education Council, I had to get voted
13 in. And you brought me up here. You voted for
14 me to continue to fight. And I just wanted to
15 share that with you. I don't forget. They
16 think because people don't get paid people don't
17 have more concern than people who do get paid.
18 We don't get paid to sit on this council where
19 we represent 32 schools, and I'm in here whether
20 it's raining outside or sunny outside, but I'm
21 here to fight for the leadership of this school.

22 And what I have done is that if I didn't
23 agree with something, I didn't have to tell the
24 whole world. I can pull the principal to the
25 side, I can speak to the PTA president on the

1 side. But that's the way you do things. You
2 can keep things in house and still make this
3 school successful. Everybody don't need to know
4 everything that happens on a day-to-day basis.
5 But as a family, as this family said before me,
6 that's what you do. You don't agree with
7 everything as a family, and whoever say they do,
8 I want you to raise your hand. You know you've
9 got family members who are I love you from a
10 distance, okay? But this is not one of those
11 schools.

12 But what I'm saying to you, sometimes in
13 order for this school to be so qualified, that
14 means a teacher had to tell you there were
15 issues with your child, and what you have to do
16 at home as a parent is make sure them issues are
17 corrected. If you want real talk, this is the
18 school to have your child in and continue to
19 have your child in. What I'm saying to you, we
20 need you out here not only today, but every
21 single time you get a letter.

22 And I can tell just by seeing what's here
23 now, they send those notices out all the time.
24 That's why you're here all the time, 'cause you
25 were alerted on time. So I'd like to say to the

1 principal and to the leaders and the new
2 leaders, our superintendent Miss Buffy Simmons,
3 like I said, this is going to be something she's
4 going to be carrying with her for her future,
5 being a part of the new process of this school
6 going up to the fifth grade.

7 So ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank you
8 for your time and your commitment. This is just
9 a start, but this is a wonderful start. This is
10 a wonderful start. And everybody needs to put
11 their hands up. Put your hands up, because it's
12 about all of you.

13 And I'm saying in the future we're going to
14 call every congressman, every senator that's
15 connected to this part of Brooklyn and hold them
16 accountable instead of waiting for voting for
17 them on election day. We want them in the
18 audience as well, 'cause when they leave office,
19 they're going to be coming right here. They're
20 going to be coming right to you.

21 At this time, ladies and gentlemen, I want
22 to thank you for your time and your commitment
23 and your future commitment to the children and
24 the parents in this community and this school.
25 Thank you very much. [Applause]

1 MS. RELLO-ANSELM: Again, I think that's
2 it for our speakers. At this point, again, we
3 welcome any comments or feedback you may have at
4 any time before the Panel of Education Policy
5 votes on this proposal. The vote takes place at
6 the February 9th meeting. An email address and
7 phone number where comments may be made is
8 D17Proposals@Schools.NYC.gov, phone number (212)
9 374-0208.

10 I personally would like to thank you all.
11 This is a truly wonderful school. We had the
12 opportunity to visit about a month ago. You
13 have a fantastic principal, a fantastic
14 community, and fantastic children. Thank you
15 all for your participation, and this Joint
16 Public Hearing is now closed. Best wishes to
17 all of you.

18 [END RECORDING]

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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 January 25, 2012