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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION – OFFICE OF  
PORTFOLIO PLANNING  
Jamaica HS – January 7, 2010**

1 [START 154\_486a\_Part\_1\_of\_3.mp3]

2 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR JOHN WHITE: It's now  
3 beginning. This evening's Hearing is now  
4 beginning. There are ten minutes remaining,  
5 there are ten minutes remaining to sign up for  
6 public comment. For those in the aisles please  
7 take your seats so that we can give  
8 instructions. For those in the aisles or those  
9 talking please be quiet, please take your seats,  
10 thank you very much. Thank you very much,  
11 please be quiet and please take your seats.  
12 Welcome and good evening. Good evening, if  
13 everyone can please take your seats, the public  
14 hearing is about to begin. Again if everyone  
15 can please take your seats, the public hearing  
16 process is about to begin, thank you. Okay,  
17 thank you very much, thank you very much, and  
18 please take your seats. Good evening, thank you  
19 for coming to the, thank you for coming to the  
20 joint public hearing. Good evening, thank you  
21 very much, the hearing is now begun. Please  
22 listen closely as I will be describing this  
23 evening's proceedings, thank you. This  
24 evening's hearing regards the proposal to phase  
25 out and replace Jamaica High School. My name is

1 John White; I am the Deputy Chancellor for  
2 Strategy at the Department of Education. We  
3 have asked...

4 [Background Noise]

5 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Thank you very  
6 much. There are, there are 100 speakers signed  
7 up for this evening's session. We are committed  
8 to hearing every one of those speakers. The  
9 more time that we take with interruptions, the  
10 longer we delay the intent of being here and  
11 individual voices being heard. I ask your  
12 attention to each of those individuals, just as  
13 I ask your attention now. Joining me for the  
14 Hearing this evening is Superintendent Francesca  
15 Peña. I am also joined by Monica Ayuso of the  
16 Citywide Council on High Schools and I am joined  
17 by colleagues from the Jamaica High School,  
18 School Leadership Team. Representatives from  
19 the Queen's Collegiate School Leadership Team  
20 have been unable to attend. This Hearing, and I  
21 will say this once more, the more we have to  
22 delay, the longer we delay individual voices in  
23 being heard. Please be attentive. This hearing  
24 is being recorded. Following the Hearing,  
25 transcription of the proceedings...thank you.

1 This hearing, please pay attention so you have  
2 clear instructions. This hearing is being  
3 recorded. Following the hearing, following the  
4 hearing, a transcription of the proceedings will  
5 be sent to all members of the councils you see  
6 in front of you participating in this Hearing  
7 and they will be made available on the  
8 Department of Education's website. The purpose  
9 of the meeting is for the public to provide  
10 comment about the proposal before the proposal  
11 is described I'm going to give clear  
12 instructions as to how this evening will  
13 proceed. Please pay close attention as I will  
14 give these instructions once. All those who  
15 wish to speak must sign up on the speaker list  
16 within the next five minutes. Speakers will be  
17 given the floor in the order by which they  
18 signed up. If you are a speaker who is signed  
19 up you have been given a number. You will be  
20 called by that number to speak. When you are  
21 called to speak you have two minutes to speak.  
22 With 30 seconds remaining in your time we will  
23 provide you with a warning in this sign up  
24 front. You will then be asked to finish at two  
25 minutes. I would ask as we will urge when you

1 get close to your time that as we have 100  
2 speakers in order for others to be heard would  
3 you please finish your comments appropriately at  
4 two minutes.

5 In addition, we welcome any comment and  
6 feedback that you may have at any time before  
7 the Panel on Educational Policy votes on this  
8 proposal at the January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010 panel meeting.  
9 The email address and phone number where  
10 comments may be made can be found on the  
11 Department of Education's website under the  
12 section, For the Panel on Educational Policy.  
13 I'm going to describe now the details in brief  
14 of the proposal that is front of us this  
15 evening. We will then take any comments from  
16 the councils who wish to give a presentation.  
17 Elected officials in attendance this evening  
18 will then be asked to provide brief comments and  
19 we will then start with our public comment  
20 period.

21 This is a proposal to transform a school  
22 from one that is not graduating many children to  
23 one that is achieving this objective. To make a  
24 high school's graduation rate of 46% represents  
25 a trend where many students over years have not

1 graduated from this school and while the school  
2 serves a significant percentage of English  
3 language learners and significant number of  
4 children with special needs, we know that we  
5 have many schools that are serving similar  
6 student populations but are getting dramatically  
7 different results. That is why Jamaica High  
8 School has a D on this year's progress report.  
9 Students at Jamaica have often times been  
10 falling behind early in their education. This  
11 is why in the 2008/2009 school year only 44% of  
12 freshmen earned 10 credits and as you know a  
13 student must average 11 credits per year in  
14 order to graduate. Even if this is an important  
15 indicator of future successes we believe that  
16 Jamaica will continue to struggle.

17 Additionally, I'm happy to wait as we can wait  
18 early into the evening, the longer that we have  
19 to wait for this part of the presentation to be  
20 done, the longer we have to wait for public  
21 comment to be heard. Additionally, parents and  
22 students are not electing to attend the school.  
23 89 students listed the school as their first  
24 choice on this year's high school application.  
25 Under this proposal, under this proposal, please

1 take your seats, please take your seats.  
2 Ladies and gentlemen if we can not have an  
3 orderly meeting we will simply be forced to end  
4 the meeting. Please take your seats, please  
5 take your seats. Again, we will run an orderly  
6 meeting or we will not have a meeting. Please  
7 take your seats, please take your seats. Under  
8 this proposal Jamaica High School would not  
9 accept a 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2010 and in subsequent  
10 years. Instead new schools will replace Jamaica  
11 over time first taking a 9<sup>th</sup> grade and then  
12 growing as Jamaica phases out. I want to be  
13 clear about a couple of consequences of this  
14 proposal. Number 1, all students currently  
15 enrolled in the school will have the opportunity  
16 to graduate from Jamaica High School. Number 2,  
17 new schools in school building where a school  
18 has phased out are obligated to hire at least  
19 50% of the qualified staff who apply for  
20 positions and 3. all new schools in the building  
21 would serve English language learners and  
22 students with special education needs. I want  
23 to thank you for listening to the proposal this  
24 evening. We look forward to hearing your  
25 comments and questions. We will first ask for a

1 presentation from the school leadership team  
2 who will then ask if the Citywide Council on  
3 High Schools wishes to make a proposal. It's  
4 going to be a presentation. We will then ask  
5 elected officials if they care to make comments  
6 and we will commence with the public comment  
7 portion of the evening. Thank you very much.  
8 If I could have your attention please at this  
9 particular time if there's anyone in the  
10 audience who needs interpretation services I am  
11 to have the interpreters announce it in their  
12 native language.

13 FEMALE VOICE SPANISH INTERPRETER:

14 [Foreign Audio]

15 MALE VOICE HINDI INTERPRETER:

16 [Foreign Audio]

17 FEMALE VOICE FRENCH INTERPRETER:

18 [Foreign Audio]

19 MALE VOICE BANGLA INTERPRETER:

20 [Foreign Audio]

21 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Is there a member  
22 of the School Leadership Team who wishes to give  
23 a presentation?

24 MALE VOICE 1: I missed the last couple of  
25 minutes so could you fill me in. This is

1 supposed to be a joint public meeting and we  
2 are the School Leadership Team on there and we  
3 want to add something which is our right to the  
4 agenda and that's why we're calling a point of  
5 order. So the people from the DOE, we'd like to  
6 be able to add a resolution to the agenda and  
7 I'd like to be able to motivate it, that's all,  
8 okay?

9 FEMALE VOICE: Good evening, my name is  
10 Deborah Williams [phonetic] and I'm the  
11 President of the Parents-Teachers Association  
12 here at Jamaica High School. This meeting is  
13 very important so this is what I would like  
14 please. I need the parents to come forth and  
15 make a statement about your children's school.  
16 That's number one, we want to hear from the  
17 parents tonight please, that's important. One  
18 of the things that I want to point out for the  
19 Board of Education is this. I've asked the  
20 question continuously to the Board of Education,  
21 what have they done that they can show concrete  
22 proof over the last three years of how they have  
23 helped Jamaica High School grow. I have not  
24 gotten one concrete answer. I have not gotten  
25 an answer which tells me that they haven't done

1 anything but move forward in closing. When a  
2 school is failing you have to have something  
3 that you have done, some things that you have  
4 put in place to prevent it. I have asked the  
5 Board of Education to tell me what have they  
6 done to prevent it. I have not gotten an answer  
7 from that. They say that the Board of  
8 Education, the Board of Education says that  
9 Jamaican High School graduation rate is low out  
10 of 371 students who were slated to graduate last  
11 year, 258 graduated. That's a fact so when they  
12 say 46% was the rate, it's 371 graduated, that  
13 makes it 70% graduation rate for Jamaica High  
14 School and that's better than most schools in  
15 this city. We need answers from the Board of  
16 Education. We want to know what have they done.  
17 We need them to tell us that. They tell us that  
18 out of all of the reasons why they're closing, I  
19 want to know what they have done to prevent  
20 this. I'm looking for the parents to come  
21 forward please.

22 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Thank you, I  
23 couldn't tell, did the Jamaica SLT want to give  
24 its presentation?

25 MALE VOICE: I'd like to make a motion,

1 people are handing this resolution out and  
2 everybody can take a look at it. This, it's on  
3 the green paper I believe. Did people get that?  
4 I see some people have it there. It's going  
5 around; Miss Giomundo [phonetic] has it. This  
6 is a resolution to keep Jamaica High School open  
7 and I'd like to motivate it. Do I have a  
8 second? Okay, you have it working? I'm new at  
9 this folks with Powerpoint so, just bear with me  
10 for a second. It'll happen. Before I start  
11 just let me thank everybody for all over the  
12 world, it seems today for coming to support our  
13 school. It's great. We're ready, okay, presto,  
14 magic. Okay, ladies and gentlemen, you're going  
15 to hear a lot of talk about the four-year  
16 graduation rate and they keep giving this number  
17 46%. Well, where did they get these numbers  
18 from? Ask yourself that question. There were,  
19 there were 500 students in the cohort of 2009,  
20 that's people who were scheduled to graduate and  
21 141 mysteriously had no code entered in so they  
22 were listed in some kind of limbo, so with that,  
23 they keep coming up with this 46% number. We  
24 went back, we went back, Dr. Reuben [phonetic]  
25 who's our fantastic Guidance Coordinator, and a

1 couple from her staff went back and we checked  
2 the records manually of all these people and we  
3 discovered that there were 22 graduates who were  
4 never counted so even if you use the strictest  
5 standard our graduation rate is over 50%. Now I  
6 hear people saying, well, so what your  
7 graduation rate is over 50%, that still means  
8 that 40 something percent are dropping out.  
9 That is nonsense and if you want to talk about  
10 students who are non-traditional, that don't  
11 come in through the usual way from an 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
12 junior high school, Jamaica High School educates  
13 so many of them and our drop-out rate is around  
14 16% so how do you get, where are the rest of  
15 them from the mid-50s or whatever it is to 16%  
16 which would be 84 graduates. The rest of them  
17 are still in school. They just need a - - to  
18 graduate or they're in other programs so just  
19 because someone needs some more time to  
20 graduate. That does not make them a failure by  
21 any means. In any school that supports that  
22 kind of kid and nurtures them until they finish  
23 is a successful school. Okay, let's say you  
24 don't accept that now once again take a look.  
25 This is the state education department's number,

1 38%, 2005 by 2008 well, over 50% using  
2 anybody's standard. We met; we met our targets  
3 in most of those years. We had a 15% increase.  
4 Well what was the increase in the graduation  
5 rate city-wide? 14%, so we're doing better than  
6 the city-wide average. Let's look at the NAEP  
7 scores, that's the National Assessment of  
8 Education Progress. Those scores went up 15% or  
9 14% over six years. Joel Klein [phonetic]  
10 called that a great success so why is our  
11 increase which is just about the same as theirs  
12 considered a failure but their increase is  
13 considered is considered a great success. Could  
14 someone please explain that for me? You see  
15 Jamaica High School 15% increase, city-wide  
16 increase 14%, I think we're doing pretty well  
17 folks. Now another thing they say is that not  
18 enough students are moving up fast enough and  
19 they said, I think Joel Klein said on December  
20 16<sup>th</sup> that something like 24% get the Regents  
21 Diploma. Where do they get these figures from?  
22 Now we got no credit for our students who were  
23 at risk that did move up. I don't know why we  
24 didn't get any credit because Dr. Rueben showed  
25 how these students have moved on and I sent an

1 email to the Chancellor asking him to look  
2 into this. We're waiting still, I mean he did  
3 reply but we're still waiting for that  
4 investigation because we have all the data for  
5 them to look at. But we're improving. Last  
6 year 159 students got a Regents Diploma. This  
7 year it's 182, that's a 14% increase. No  
8 academic progress so they say right?  
9 Unbelievable. Another thing they say is Jamaica  
10 High School enrollments have been dropping.  
11 Well for some years that was true. They labeled  
12 us persistently dangerous which was ridiculous  
13 because we reported even minor incidents so they  
14 sent that letter out and a lot of people did  
15 transfer. Our budget was slashed and when we  
16 got off that persistently dangerous list they  
17 never said, oh, you're off the list now, why  
18 don't you come back but even so, with the  
19 excellent recruiting Mr. Pecorino [phonetic],  
20 Mr. Heist [phonetic] as ambassadors, we've  
21 managed to turn that around too and our  
22 admissions are actually going up. Take a look,  
23 list of admits from the middle schools last  
24 year, 140; this year 211. That's an increase  
25 over the counter. That's the students who

1 register after coming sometime in the middle  
2 of the year, 273 last year, and 330 this year.  
3 What's the increase in admission, 41%? I think  
4 we're doing pretty well there too. Now who are  
5 our over the counter admits? First there are 86  
6 who are not on grade level, 21 bilingual  
7 Spanish, 45 English language learners, 18 with  
8 interrupted formal education meaning in their  
9 home country they may not have been able to pay  
10 the school fees to go to school, 21 are special  
11 education, 1 is an ESL special education pupil.  
12 Now yes these are students that have some more  
13 needs, we have to get through to every one of  
14 them and do our best and we won't be happy until  
15 there's a 100% graduate rate but I have to point  
16 out that these students need resources and what  
17 resources has the Board of Education or DOE  
18 whatever they call them these days given us?  
19 Okay, you see we've had since 2003-2004, 34%  
20 decrease in enrolment which is actually starting  
21 to level off and now go up. But look at the  
22 staff increase for our, excuse me, decrease for  
23 our support staff, guidance 45% decrease,  
24 secretaries, you wonder why the records don't  
25 get in, I don't, the Chancellor and the PEP, we

1 don't have a record secretary. We're down to  
2 5 from 13, 61.5% decrease. Power professionals  
3 who work with some of our most needy students  
4 are down from 15 to 4. 62.8% decrease in the  
5 support staff and yet our statistics went up and  
6 we're a failure? No. Let's go on to the  
7 quality review. Three years straight, what are  
8 we considered? Proficient, proficient,  
9 proficient, does that mean anything to the DOE?  
10 I guess not, okay. Now every time I walk into  
11 this building it gives me a special feeling and  
12 if you go over to across the library you see the  
13 people and the pictures on the wall there, you  
14 see the people that have been here in this  
15 school, Jamaica High School, in this building  
16 and the two previous ones for 118 years. By  
17 saying they're looking at us right now and I  
18 think they're smiling upon us and hopefully  
19 you're going to get the message back to  
20 Chancellor Kline that this is a school and this  
21 is a community that's a success and this is a  
22 school that deserves another 118 years. In our  
23 leadership team is there any further discussion  
24 on this? I open it for you. Does anybody want  
25 to speak against our resolution? You're

1 welcome. Do we have a readiness for a vote?  
2 Okay, all those in favor of the resolution to  
3 keep Jamaica High School open and to supply us  
4 with the necessary resources. Are those any  
5 opposed? It carries unanimously, thank you very  
6 much ladies and gentlemen and thank you.

7 [Background noise and cheering]

8 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: We will now have a  
9 presentation from a representative from the  
10 Citywide Council on High Schools.

11 MS. MONICA AYUSO: Good evening, part of  
12 this joint session and I want to talk a sense of  
13 community about being respectful. I'm going to  
14 ensure that 100 people get heard this evening  
15 but I need your help in order to do it. When  
16 everyone comes up to this mic because they only  
17 have one this evening we have to mind the two  
18 minute rule and move forward. You guys over  
19 here I'm depending on you to show them what  
20 Jamaica is all about. My name is Monica Ayuso  
21 and I serve on the Citywide Council for High  
22 Schools and I was elected by parents to serve on  
23 that council so I'm the voice of parents. My  
24 attendance at and participation in this Hearing  
25 does not imply that I support or had an

1 involvement in or was consulted on the  
2 decision to close Jamaica High School so I was  
3 not part of this decision although I sit up  
4 there on the dais. I have been diligently  
5 working with our community because I live here  
6 in District 28 so I've been working with the  
7 community, our - - President, our elected  
8 officials to ensure that the voices of the  
9 parents and the students and the community  
10 associated with Jamaica High School is heard.  
11 This evening I have a public comment card that  
12 I'm encouraging parents to complete and return  
13 to me because this is the only way I'm going to  
14 be able to convince the Citywide Council on High  
15 Schools to support you and your endeavors to  
16 keep the school open. If I don't get these back  
17 I am voiceless at the table. The next meeting  
18 of the Citywide Council on High Schools is  
19 January 13<sup>th</sup>. It's at 6:00 p.m. It's at 52  
20 Chambers Street, the Tweed Building. If you are  
21 a parent, a student, a teacher, alumni and you  
22 want your voice to be heard at CCHS and you're  
23 unable to fill out this card but available to  
24 attend I need you there. But if you can't be  
25 physically there I need this completed. Are we

1 understood? Yes, I do. Don't waste my paper  
2 because you know we have a bunch cut and they're  
3 already cut in school's 1%. And for the record  
4 part of this process includes a phase-in.  
5 Tuesday of this week I went to the Borough  
6 President's office to review the phase-in and I  
7 can tell you that I am not satisfied but I  
8 cannot be the only voice to say that I'm not  
9 satisfied. That is why these forms are so  
10 important. I thank you, have a good evening.

11 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: I will now call on  
12 Assembly Member Lanceman.

13 ASSEMBLYMAN LANCEMAN: Good evening  
14 everybody, I'm Assemblyman Rory Lanceman  
15 [phonetic]. I represent the 25<sup>th</sup> Assembly  
16 District which covers a very large piece of the,  
17 we'll take a couple of claps, thank you very  
18 much, which covers a very large piece of the  
19 area that Jamaica High School is supposed to  
20 serve although I myself went to Hillcrest  
21 [phonetic] High School. Don't hold it against  
22 me please. But I've lived in this community  
23 almost 35 years and most importantly in addition  
24 to being the Assembly Member for this  
25 neighborhood, this is, Jamaica High School was

1 also the high school that was zoned for my  
2 children so my children in Grade 3 and 4 and 7  
3 will end up being at Jamaica High School.  
4 That's the school that was in their future. I  
5 come here tonight not just as an Assembly Member  
6 therefore but also as a parent and I'm here to  
7 advocate on behalf of all the students for whom  
8 Jamaica High School is succeeding and you just  
9 need to look around this room and see how many  
10 students, how many students, no, no, no, don't  
11 get up, don't get up. You're going to get me in  
12 trouble with her and she's tough. But I'm here  
13 to advocate for all the students for whom  
14 Jamaica High School is succeeding but I'm also  
15 here to advocate for those students who are not  
16 succeeding at Jamaica High School and let me say  
17 plainly as I've said from the beginning in my  
18 view the decision to phase out Jamaica High  
19 School in favor of three small experimental  
20 schools is a mistake. Neighborhood high schools  
21 like Jamaica High School provide an important  
22 connection to the community in which the high  
23 school sits. Breaking up the high school  
24 dilutes accountability rather than increases it.  
25 It makes the community less willing to invest in

1 education and most importantly, particularly  
2 at Jamaica High School, it throws out what works  
3 with what doesn't work and plainly there are a  
4 lot of things at Jamaica High School that work  
5 very well. Now in the meetings that we've had  
6 with the Department of Education with the  
7 Parents Association of Jamaica High School, with  
8 elected officials, community leaders, civic  
9 leaders and the parent leaders of the Community  
10 Education Councils that are covered in Jamaica  
11 High School's zone one thing that you can  
12 certainly be certain of is the passion that the  
13 people in this community have for the successes  
14 at Jamaica High School. So as we go forward I  
15 want to emphasize that on behalf of the 125,000  
16 people that I represent in the 25<sup>th</sup> Assembly  
17 District, on behalf of all these students who  
18 are succeeding at Jamaica High School, on behalf  
19 of the ones who are not succeeding, on behalf of  
20 my own children who in a few short years could  
21 be coming to Jamaica High School, I want to make  
22 sure that the education that's provided in this  
23 building is the very best that the city has to  
24 offer. That it is available to the kids in this  
25 neighborhood as a right that the successes at

1 Jamaica High School are built upon and not  
2 discarded and that the parents, the community,  
3 the students are involved in the future of  
4 Jamaica High School in every way. Thank you  
5 very much.

6 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Assembly Member  
7 Scarborough [phonetic].

8 ASSEMBLYMAN SCARBOROUGH: Good evening, my  
9 name is William Scarborough, I'm the Assemblyman  
10 for the 29<sup>th</sup> Assembly District which is the  
11 district just below this. I don't cover Jamaica  
12 High but I'm here in support of my colleague,  
13 Assemblyman Lanceman and in support of the  
14 people of Jamaica High School. I'm here this  
15 evening because I have heard your concern. I  
16 saw the shock which you had which is the same  
17 shock that I had when we found out that Jamaica  
18 High was about to be closed. I remember reading  
19 that Jamaica had come off of the Persistently  
20 Dangerous List. I remember hearing the good  
21 things that the Principal and the administration  
22 were doing here and it seemed clear to me that  
23 the school was on an upward trend and so I am  
24 surprised that the DOE has take this time to say  
25 they're going to close this school down.

1 Sometimes closing a school down and putting in  
2 small schools helps but sometimes it doesn't.  
3 My old high school was a school about as big as  
4 Jamaica High School and it was broken down into  
5 four smaller schools and now they're closing one  
6 of those smaller schools. And so the answer in  
7 my opinion is not always closing the school but  
8 providing the support for people who are heading  
9 in the right direction by listening to the  
10 parents and the students and the administration  
11 who are showing how passionately they care about  
12 Jamaica High School and about collaborating and  
13 working with the school and with the community  
14 and not imposing something on them. So I stand  
15 with you, I hope we can win this, God Bless you,  
16 have a wonderful evening, thank you very much.

17 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Thank you, former  
18 Council Member Webrin [phonetic].

19 MR. DAVID WEBRIN: Good evening, I'm David  
20 Webrin and a 1974 graduate of Jamaica High  
21 School. And my mother, Sylvia Webrin taught at  
22 Jamaica High School for over 35 years. I know I  
23 was as proud as all of you were just this past  
24 June when this school became a landmark. This  
25 school as was pointed out has a 118 year history

1 of excellence. I'm very proud of that  
2 excellence and I would like to see that  
3 excellence continue. It's very important that  
4 the Department of Education, and I was as  
5 shocked as everyone else, when I found out that  
6 Jamaica High School was being proposed to be  
7 closed. After having completed eight years as  
8 Chair of the Finance Committee of the city  
9 council and conducted many, many hearings, it so  
10 elementary that the first thing that the  
11 Department of Education should do which clearly  
12 they have not done, is go to the community  
13 first. Go to those who are in the neighborhood,  
14 those that are affected. Don't impose something  
15 from the outside. As you can see statistics can  
16 be altered and misused and as was pointed out  
17 earlier the graduate rate is really 70%, not  
18 46%. The answer is to put more resources into  
19 Jamaica High School, to expand the programs that  
20 are working and maybe modify the programs that  
21 aren't working but please, please Chancellor  
22 Klein, please Mayor Bloomberg, please Department  
23 of Education, don't close Jamaica High School.  
24 Listen to the people, thank you.

25 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: The final comment

1 before our public comment period from a  
2 representative from Community Board 8.

3 MS. MARIE ADAM-OVID: Good evening, my name  
4 is Marie Adam-Ovid [phonetic] and I'm the  
5 District Manager for Community Board 8.  
6 Community Board 8 is not ready at this time to  
7 present a resolution from the full Board which  
8 meets next week, however, the Executive  
9 Committee met last night and came to this  
10 conclusion. Based on meeting the Department of  
11 Education leaders of the four new school  
12 programs it became clear that they are not ready  
13 to implement their program in time for September  
14 2010. They were not well received by  
15 participants at the January 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. One  
16 project leader did not know why he was sent to  
17 Queen's. Educationally inexperienced project  
18 leaders make the likelihood of success  
19 improbable. In light of the above the continued  
20 educational improvement being made at Jamaica  
21 High School can be accelerated. The strong  
22 support exhibited for Jamaica High School by  
23 parents, students, teachers and community can be  
24 harnessed and an educational partnership amongst  
25 all stakeholders with very positive educational

1 outcomes. Jamaica High School should be  
2 permitted to accept new students for September  
3 2010. And, Jamaica High School should remain a  
4 zoned school, thank you.

5 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: We're now going to  
6 start the public comment period. Let me say one  
7 more time and please listen closely as we do  
8 have many speakers. We're going to call  
9 speakers by numbers. We're going to call them  
10 in groups of five. So we will first call  
11 speakers who hold numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.  
12 Those speakers will have two minutes and at one  
13 minute and 30 seconds we ask for the speakers to  
14 stop their comments and to bring them to a close  
15 by raising a sign. At two minutes we will ask  
16 you to stop and if you do not stop we will ask  
17 you to give us the microphone. Please if  
18 speakers 1 through 5 would come to the  
19 microphone, speaker number 1.

20 SPEAKER NUMBER 1: Hello everyone, I came  
21 out to this meeting, this meeting is in favor of  
22 keeping Jamaica High School open. We are also,  
23 I go to Beach Channel High School and we are in  
24 the same predicament as you guys. Please listen  
25 to me here. I want to form an alliance here

1 with you guys because we need to step up. I  
2 want to meet with the student leaders here. I  
3 want to see what we can do because if we stand  
4 together at that meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> we won't be  
5 able to be stopped and we have a greater chance  
6 of staying open. My school is also proficient  
7 in everything. We have the same stats as you  
8 guys. We stand in the same position as you  
9 guys. People, the DOE does not care. They  
10 care, the people up there, they somewhat care  
11 but Chancellor Klein does not. I had, I had a  
12 meeting with Chancellor Klein and I was blown  
13 off. In that meeting I was going to explain why  
14 schools shouldn't be closed. Why, alright,  
15 pretty much in closing here, just help the city  
16 without these schools here, communities will  
17 crumble and we'll see it in the Rockaways  
18 [phonetic] and you guys will see it here so  
19 please align with Beach Channel.

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Thank you, Speaker  
21 2.

22 SPEAKER NUMBER 2: Before I begin I would  
23 like to ask James' eternal question, "Were you  
24 consulted by the Department of Education about  
25 the closure of Jamaica High School before their

1 announcement?" A lie, I speak not only as the  
2 Chapter Leader of Beach Shadow High School I  
3 teach - - . I speak as a parent of two public  
4 school students. I speak as a person who  
5 graduated from a public school which you guys  
6 closed. Children learn at different rates. If  
7 you learned anything in education 101, if you  
8 were in the class one day you would have heard  
9 about PIJ who said children learn at different  
10 rates. You would have - - education 101 for  
11 what you're doing now to these kids. This mayor  
12 and his meat puppet, Joel Klein are out of  
13 touch. This mayor said when he was eliminating  
14 the parking at Keyspan Park in Brooklyn, "I have  
15 no problem parking my limo". So what do you  
16 expect out of this man? These people, the  
17 Department of Ed lied to us last night about  
18 Beach Shadow. You lied to me once; I know that  
19 you're a liar forever. How in the heck are  
20 these people supposed to believe you? And  
21 Superintendant Francesca Peña, this is the first  
22 time I'm meeting you and you're our  
23 Superintendant. You were supposed to be at our  
24 meeting; you weren't there, shame on you, shame  
25 on you. Keep this school open, don't believe

1 their lies.

2 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Speaker number 3.

3 SPEAKER NUMBER 3: My name is Edna Vener-  
4 Harris [phonetic]. I'm a 1958 graduate of  
5 Jamaica High School. Our two daughters  
6 graduated in 1986 and 1991. Okay, I firmly  
7 believe that this plan was in the works many  
8 moons ago because things have been whittled  
9 away. I believe that this plan was hatched and  
10 I will stop if these people are on their  
11 Blackberries. I will stop. That is a rude  
12 thing, they're obviously not teachers. Now, I  
13 believe that every one of these little programs  
14 that the fact that there are no school buses out  
15 there in the afternoon, that all the little  
16 things that the children deserve in this high  
17 school have whittled away because somebody wants  
18 this building closed. I firmly believe that we  
19 have to stand up to whoever these people are in  
20 their little enclosed rooms. Mr. Bloomberg and  
21 Joel Klein, they know nothing about education.

22 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Speaker number 4.

23 SPEAKER NUMBER 4: Have you started the  
24 clock? Okay, good evening, my name is Robert  
25 Coloris [phonetic]. I'm the President of

1 Community District Education Council 26 and  
2 many of our students should be coming to Jamaica  
3 High School and many do. I would like to start  
4 with a confession. At the end of the day I'm a  
5 lawyer and part of my job is deciding if there  
6 are issues of fact. If there is an issue of  
7 fact, whatever it is--

8 [END 154\_486a\_Part\_1\_of\_3.mp3]

9 [START 154\_486a\_Part\_2\_of\_3.mp3]

10 --that is being asked for is denied. We  
11 have seen two presentations, one says Jamaica  
12 High School doesn't work well; the other says it  
13 does. Both have statistics; that's an issue of  
14 fact. That means what they're asking for would  
15 not, could not, should not be allowed in any  
16 free and fair discussion of an issue. Besides  
17 the fact the school shouldn't close what they  
18 want to put here is a joke. I have heard the  
19 presentations of these new programs. These new  
20 programs are designed for English Literature  
21 students. That is it. They will not in any  
22 way, shape, form or develop these students the  
23 way Jamaica High School does. None of them,  
24 none of them discussed science, none of them  
25 discussed math, and none of them discussed

1 computers. How the hell are they going to  
2 prepare kids for the future if that's all they  
3 do? I could only hope. I could only hope that  
4 Herr Bloomberg and Herr Klein, for once in their  
5 lives decide to change their minds. Thank you  
6 very much.

7 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Speaker number 5.

8 SPEAKER NUMBER 5: My name is Arthur  
9 Goldstein [phonetic]. I'm the UFT Leader at  
10 Francis Lewis [phonetic] High School, thank you.  
11 Our building is at 250% capacity right now.  
12 Every year the good people at the DOE send us  
13 300 or 400 more kids and I watched the  
14 presentation that James Turnoe [phonetic] gave  
15 with his 100s of over-the-counter students  
16 coming in and I'm wondering where are those  
17 students going to go? We have no room, it  
18 doesn't matter, and they send them to us anyway.  
19 And in a few years we're going to be in the same  
20 place because of this. A few years ago they  
21 closed Far Rockaway, now they want to close  
22 Beach Channel. They're closing Jamaica today;  
23 they'll be closing Francis Lewis in a few years.  
24 This is unacceptable. It's unconscionable, it's  
25 unnecessary and they're basing it on false data.

1 The big thing that they bandy about is that it  
2 graduates fewer than 50%. We all know that it  
3 graduates well more than 50%. That one in four  
4 students do not, that one in four students only  
5 get a Regents Diploma. We know that that's not  
6 true, that there are fewer people enrolling for  
7 Jamaica High School and we know that that's not  
8 true. And so this entire closure is based on  
9 lies. It's unacceptable, we cannot accept it.  
10 We must not accept it. Thank you very much.

11 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Council Member  
12 Conbray [phonetic] is here. Is Council Member  
13 Webrin in here?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK WEBRIN: Ladies and  
15 gentlemen my name is Mark Webrin I understand  
16 that you heard from a different Webrin before.  
17 Like him I am an alumnus of Jamaica High School,  
18 class of 1979. I got goose bumps just being in  
19 this auditorium I got to say. And I'm sure my  
20 brother mentioned my mother taught here for many  
21 years. She taught Spanish, she taught Biology  
22 and she taught ESL Biology. And thanks to the  
23 internet and to Facebook and everything else I  
24 have spent the last month getting emails from  
25 1,000s of Jamaica High School graduates like

1 myself. Now, I also, I'm going to tell you,  
2 am a parent of an 8<sup>th</sup> grader and I know the  
3 process that's going on. We're trying to get 8<sup>th</sup>  
4 graders into high schools and I realize that  
5 things need to be improved at Jamaica High  
6 School but we can make cosmetic changes and  
7 throw the baby out with the bath water by  
8 getting rid of a school which has such a rich,  
9 deep history here in Queens County. I am one of  
10 over 100,000 graduates of Jamaica High School  
11 and to destroy our city's history and the  
12 importance of alumni like myself who may  
13 contribute to a school in the future who may  
14 have deep feelings. We have some very  
15 distinguished alumni like I saw one just walk in  
16 now and I don't want to steal his thunder but  
17 Council Member Leroy Comrie [phonetic], also a  
18 Jamaica High School grad. He's older than I am  
19 but we need to make sure, the deal we need is to  
20 make sure that if we need to make, if we need to  
21 put resources in, if we need to be innovative  
22 and change some of the programs, that's great.  
23 If you want to encourage people to come to the  
24 school and put it number one on those things I'm  
25 all for that. But don't get rid of Jamaica High

1 School. It's a part of the city's history but  
2 more importantly, it's part of individuals'  
3 histories and as I said walking into this room I  
4 got goose bumps because I'm emotionally attached  
5 to this school and I'm emotionally attached to  
6 its future, thank you very much.

7 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Now our  
8 representative from Queens Borough President,  
9 Helen Marshall's [phonetic] office, Dimitri  
10 Olfikowski [phonetic].

11 MR. DIMITRI OLFIKOWSKI: Thank you, good  
12 evening ladies and gentlemen. My name is  
13 Dimitri Olfikowski. I am your Queens rep on the  
14 Panel for Educational Policy and it is my  
15 pleasure to be here tonight. This is great.  
16 Although I don't have the emotion you have for  
17 this place I can feel it and it feels good. In  
18 late December I called a meeting with parent  
19 leaders from the affected school communities  
20 that were going to be phased out. And it was  
21 not clear to me and many of them in the meeting  
22 and elected officials as to how the DOE was  
23 going to take on this Herculean task in such a  
24 short time. These proposals seem to be moving  
25 forward at an alarming rate and these were the

1 concerns and questions that came out of that  
2 meeting. How can the quality review be so  
3 different from the recommendation for closure?  
4 What benchmarks were established by the  
5 Department to move forward with this plan? How  
6 was the list developed? These benchmarks should  
7 be made public so that every school along with  
8 their community can understand through a  
9 transparent process and how the decisions are  
10 made to close our schools. What kinds of  
11 interventions were implemented by the department  
12 before the phase-out proposals became a reality?  
13 Are there any charter schools coming into our  
14 phased-out buildings? Will financial resources  
15 remain in these phased-out schools so they can  
16 carry out the program incentives for their  
17 students? What will happen to the many programs  
18 in the proposed phased-out schools if funding  
19 decreases? Because as we all know this is a  
20 major concern because the special programs  
21 motivate the students to come to school. Why  
22 weren't financial resources infused to help save  
23 our community from closure? How will the  
24 department of education absorb tens of millions  
25 of dollars into the budget over the next four

1 years in order to pay for these 50 to 60 new  
2 schools? Will the Department of Education  
3 provide some assurance to the future of the  
4 students affected by these school communities be  
5 guaranteed a seat in these new schools? It's no  
6 secret we have high school zones throughout the  
7 Borough of Queens and the community pride and  
8 involvement will help make such schools  
9 successful. What will happen to the  
10 displacement and discharge of the English  
11 language learners and special education  
12 students? What will happen to the at-risk  
13 students who may be left without sufficient  
14 support? Will they find appropriate services  
15 when their schools close? How will this be  
16 handled? I firmly believe that the department  
17 needs to monitor these, monitor enrolments at  
18 the existing high schools especially those that  
19 may be receiving students from these phased-out  
20 schools because we don't want this to happen  
21 again. And what will happen to most of the  
22 staff in the building when these schools are  
23 phased out? Now comments on the impact  
24 statements many feel do not identify these above  
25 concerns adequately. They reflect from the

1 fallout of the closure of these schools. Our  
2 school communities need to understand the impact  
3 this will have on our families. I implore upon  
4 the Department of Education to suspend these  
5 drastic proposals and only implement them as a  
6 last resort. Other methods of intervention must  
7 be exercised over time to let this work. In  
8 closing, I'm of the opinion that the schools  
9 that demonstrated outstanding commitment to  
10 their communities. Many students, past and  
11 current, have succeeded and met the challenges  
12 put before them. These accomplishments have  
13 created successful members of society and it's  
14 only a matter of time before they become future  
15 leaders of this great city. Thank you very  
16 much.

17 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Council Member  
18 Comrie.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Good evening  
20 everybody. I want to wish everybody a Happy New  
21 Year and I want to wish all of you to have,  
22 during this year to make sure that you have  
23 insight, that you don't take anything for  
24 granted and that you don't believe the hype,  
25 that you don't believe that you work hard to let

1 the truth not be known about what is happening  
2 here at Jamaica High School. That you work hard  
3 to let people know that last year Jamaica High  
4 School, 82% of the parents signed a survey  
5 saying that they like the school. That last  
6 year at Jamaica High School most of the children  
7 said that they liked the school in the survey.  
8 That the gateway program here at Jamaica High  
9 School, that the gateway program here at Jamaica  
10 High School is a program that deserves to stay  
11 in place and should stay in place. That Jamaica  
12 High School as an entity should stay in place.  
13 Tom Hillman [phonetic] who came late and  
14 couldn't speak and I, as Mark Webrin said are  
15 both alumni of Jamaica High School. My brother,  
16 I'm not telling you what year I graduated. But  
17 my brother also graduated from Jamaica High  
18 School. As you know from Facebook there's a  
19 Jamaica High School website of many alumni that  
20 never have been asked to contribute, to help out  
21 this school. It's a shame when you have alumni  
22 that are as strong as Oliver Stone, when we have  
23 people that won Pulitzer Prizes that they were  
24 never asked to contribute to maintain Jamaica  
25 High School. It's a shame that the Department

1 of Education in their desire to create small  
2 schools in all these environments want to  
3 eliminate the opportunities and what's going on  
4 here at Jamaica High School. Jamaica High  
5 School is the only high school I know that has a  
6 PTA that's actually working in the school. Out  
7 of most of the high schools in Queens, Jamaica  
8 High School has athletic programs that would end  
9 if they allowed this change to happen and would  
10 not start and be able to restart for at least  
11 another two years. It's unfair to the children  
12 that are attending here at Jamaica High School  
13 and trying to change the image. The Department  
14 of Education wants to ignore the fact that over  
15 the last six years they allowed anybody they  
16 wanted to attend school even if you just got out  
17 of Riker's to come here to Jamaica High School.  
18 They want to ignore the fact that Jamaica High  
19 School took in the highest amount of last-minute  
20 registrations than any high school in south east  
21 Queens or in this part of the Borough. They  
22 want to ignore the fact that they never change  
23 their requirements to make sure that the  
24 teachers had an opportunity to re-teach a new  
25 class of people coming in. I am, you know my

1 parents came and I was the first child to go  
2 through the education system in their country.  
3 Most of the children that are attending Jamaica  
4 High School have parents that are not conversant  
5 in filling out the high school application.  
6 They're not adept and adroit in figuring out  
7 what all these little stupid high schools mean.  
8 We have to save general high schools. We have  
9 to save the general high school concept because  
10 they're coming after Jamaica today. They're  
11 going after John Adams tomorrow. They're going  
12 after Martin Van Buren. You know as Mark Webrin  
13 said, ten years ago Francis Lewis High School,  
14 nobody wanted to go there but now ten years  
15 later, Francis Lewis High School is considered  
16 one of the best high schools in Queens. What  
17 happened, did the Department of Education allow  
18 an investment, put resources in, committed to  
19 working with the staff, the same thing can be  
20 done here at Jamaica High School. It's  
21 ridiculous that the Department of Education is  
22 not allowing that to happen. As one of the  
23 speakers said earlier I attended a meeting the  
24 other day and listened to some of the  
25 Principals, most of whom were no bigger than her

1 and they said they wanted to run a high  
2 school. It's not going to happen; it's just not  
3 going to happen, thank you teacher. Most of the  
4 Principals barely came out of the Principals'  
5 academy with no administrative experience. Most  
6 of the Principals barely came out of the  
7 opportunity to have any administrative  
8 experience at all. We know what works at  
9 Jamaica High School; we know what could work at  
10 Jamaica High School. It's incumbent upon the  
11 Department of Education to maintain Jamaica High  
12 School. The fact that Jamaica, that the DOE  
13 never re-sent out letters saying that Jamaica  
14 was off the list of schools they say should not  
15 send their children to. You know it's  
16 ridiculous that people said the other day that  
17 no one wants to come to Jamaica High School. No  
18 one in all of the schools, John Adams, Martin  
19 Van Buren, none of those are first choice  
20 schools. But it's incumbent upon the Board of  
21 Education to put more resources in schools that  
22 are the last choice as opposed to the schools  
23 that are the first choice. It's more important  
24 for the Department of Education to come up with  
25 resources to make sure that they can take care

1 of schools when their registrations are not  
2 set until October so they can't do a real budget  
3 when they have transitional children so they  
4 can't do a real budget. It's more important for  
5 the Department of Education to put resources in.  
6 It was horrific that the Department of Education  
7 put in a brand new school in here and brought in  
8 new resources and did not give the existing  
9 school an opportunity for the same resources.  
10 It demoralizes schools; it broke the school's  
11 spirit. It was only due to the fact that the  
12 new Principal that has come in the school has  
13 tried to restore the spirit of the high school  
14 which is not easy to do and Mr. Akron [phonetic]  
15 needs to be applauded for trying to change the  
16 school dynamic. I'm sorry my time is up. I  
17 think I've made my point but what you need to do  
18 between now and the 21<sup>st</sup> email and visit the  
19 Chancellor, thank you very much.

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: We'll now have  
21 speakers 6,7,8,9 and 10. Please come to the  
22 podium, speaker 6 is up. Speaker number 6  
23 please.

24 SPEAKER NUMBER 6: Good evening everyone,  
25 I'm here on behalf of the closing of the school

1 because I have a son that came from Guatemala,  
2 speak no English at all and he's only two years  
3 here and he speaks English better than I speak  
4 it. Every student here should pray to God that  
5 this school does not close. This is a very,  
6 very good school. We parents should help the  
7 Principal to let the school grow because someone  
8 that never speak English in their life, speak to  
9 my son, he speaks just goodness as the  
10 Principal. I praise everyone that work here.  
11 Thank you.

12 SPEAKER NUMBER 7: Good evening everyone, my  
13 name is Leroy Bard [phonetic] Director of Staff  
14 for the UFT. I come to you to let you know that  
15 we support 100% the resolution that passed  
16 unanimously by the body not to close Jamaica  
17 High School. There is one thing that is  
18 glaringly clear to me tonight when I look out  
19 here and I see all these parents, kids and  
20 stakeholders, who are here, who are making it  
21 clear that they do not want this building to  
22 close. That says to me that the Department of  
23 Education has failed; they have failed to talk  
24 to the stakeholders before a decision was made.  
25 They have failed not Jamaica High School. There

1 are some real basics here. They have failed  
2 to be consistent. The graduation rate is not  
3 46%; it's a whole lot higher than that, they  
4 failed to give you the right numbers. There  
5 were two basic things that had to happen  
6 according to the standards that they have for a  
7 school to be closed. One of them is a school  
8 has to receive a D or an F. Well you know what  
9 this school got a D but everybody in this city  
10 knows that the grading system of D or E has been  
11 off and wrong. The system has failed you. The  
12 other thing is that you have to get less than a  
13 proficient on your quality review. Well this  
14 school was proficient in their quality review.  
15 They have failed to follow their own rules. The  
16 management of DOE has consistently failed. Next  
17 thing, consistency, they have failed to be  
18 consistent. When you look at the fact that  
19 large high schools are being closed one by one  
20 and small schools being put in you would think  
21 that they think that small schools work better.  
22 Small is not always better. You have small  
23 schools opened up by Joel Klein that are on the  
24 list to be closed this year. Joel Klein has  
25 failed.

1           DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Thank you, thank  
2 you for your comments.

3           MR. BARD: Almost done, so the thing that  
4 you've got to keep in mind is this. It is clear  
5 to us that they got 760 million dollars to  
6 reduce class size. We don't know what happened  
7 to those funds. They never reduced class size.  
8 Over the last few years, the last three years in  
9 this city class size has gone up. They failed  
10 to tell you where those funds are going and to  
11 use those funds to reduce class size. And  
12 finally, the NATE scores, NATE scores have shown  
13 that math scores are flat citywide. Joel Klein  
14 claims that all scores have gone up citywide.  
15 It says to me once again that the management of  
16 the DOE has failed so in conclusion we've been  
17 keeping data on DOE. DOE should close and  
18 Jamaica High School should stay open.

19           SPEAKER NUMBER 8: Good evening, my name is  
20 Jackie Forrestal [phonetic] and I am the  
21 Corresponding Secretary for the Hillcrest Estate  
22 Civic Association which is a community north of  
23 Grand Central Park. We have about 1100  
24 families. It is a growing community with lots  
25 of divisions, new buildings and buildings being

1 converted to multi-family homes. It has a  
2 growing population of young families. My  
3 neighbor is a sophomore here at Jamaica. Her  
4 cousin applied to be a freshman in September.  
5 She also lives in Hillcrest Estates. I just met  
6 another neighbor of mine who is a freshman here.  
7 The Jamaica High School PTA President and her  
8 daughter are residents of Hillcrest Estates.  
9 The Hillcrest Estates Association objects to the  
10 phase-out and closure of Jamaica High School.  
11 We also object to the Department of Education's  
12 decision to leave our community without a zoned  
13 school but giving us a place at a small new  
14 school is not a good solution because our  
15 community of students may not be interested in  
16 attending a school with a specific focus for  
17 which they have no interest. There is a place  
18 for small schools but there is also a place for  
19 large schools like Jamaica High School. We want  
20 the Principal, Walter Acham [phonetic] to  
21 continue his work at improving the school so  
22 that it continues to serve the population of  
23 Hillcrest Estates and the other communities for  
24 which it is currently zoned. Mr. Acham became  
25 Principal in September 2007 and he certainly has

1 not been given enough time to fulfill the  
2 mission of giving the students a quality  
3 education. He hasn't even seen his own first  
4 graduating class yet. We suggest to the Panel  
5 for Educational Policy that they must, this is  
6 very important, please. We suggest to the Panel  
7 for Educational Policy that they must look very  
8 closely at the lack of specifics in the  
9 Educational Impact Statement for Jamaica High  
10 School and we suggest that they should look at  
11 the others issued by the Department of Education  
12 as well. The Jamaica High School EIS does not  
13 give any specifics about the number of students  
14 who needs seats at Jamaica High in September.  
15 It does give any specifics about where those  
16 displaced students will go. The EIS merely says  
17 that seats will be available in the borough or  
18 in the city. In Queens, a Borough particularly  
19 hard-hit by high school overcrowding, we find  
20 this a huge omission. The PEP must look at this  
21 phase-out as a loss of seats for Queens. The  
22 DOE's Deborah Kershan [phonetic] said that  
23 Jamaica currently has 590 9<sup>th</sup> grade seats. For  
24 September the DOE proposes just 224 seats in two  
25 small schools. Ask yourself where all the other

1 young people go. Large schools provide  
2 opportunities for all children and the Hillcrest  
3 Estates Civic Association wants Jamaica High  
4 School to remain open and zoned for the children  
5 of our community. Thank you and good evening.

6 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: With all due  
7 respect we have 100 speaks tonight and we're  
8 only up to number 10 so in order for, number 9,  
9 I stand corrected, so if possible, if you can  
10 please keep to the two minute rule, thank you.

11 SPEAKER NUMBER 9: Good evening ladies and  
12 gentlemen, my name is Marjorie Damashek-Levine  
13 [phonetic] and I've stood in this auditorium in  
14 front of the microphone but unfortunately it  
15 wasn't for this sad reason. I performed in  
16 Jamaica High School. I am a graduate of Jamaica  
17 High School and I was a faculty member of  
18 Jamaica High School. I love Jamaica High  
19 School. My 85 year old lives in Jamaica Estates  
20 and I spoke to her today and said Mom, "Do you  
21 want Jamaica High School to close?" She said,  
22 "No, nobody in the Jamaica Estates Association  
23 wants Jamaica High School to close". We cannot  
24 let that happen. This is a beautiful landmark  
25 for our neighborhood. This is a wonderful place

1 that made me what I am today. I am a teacher  
2 for Beach Channel High School which they are  
3 also trying to close. I just received a grant  
4 from Target to run theater programs. I am an  
5 excellent teacher and I am a product of this  
6 school. I was on the track team of Jamaica High  
7 School. A track team went to the Olympics. Do  
8 not close this school; this is an excellent  
9 school. I am filled with so much warmth I would  
10 do my senior sing for you if I had enough time.  
11 We have great faculty members here. We have an  
12 enthusiastic staff; we have to keep this school  
13 open. Don't let them lie about the statistics.  
14 They're lying about the statistics for Beach  
15 Channel High School too and we love this school.  
16 Please keep it open. Thank you.

17 SPEAKER NUMBER 10: My name is Allan Coles,  
18 I'm a recently retired teacher at Jamaica High  
19 School and I'm also the Girls Track Coach at  
20 Jamaica High School. I wish the Department of  
21 Education would admit to their master plan. The  
22 master plan was that they needed a big facility,  
23 a big building, a building that was centrally  
24 located, where they could house their so called  
25 charter schools in because as we all know

1 there's limited buildings in the city for  
2 these types of schools. As I said before this  
3 was planned years ago when we had the Department  
4 of Education in our school walking around the  
5 building three, four years ago looking to see  
6 how they could change it. Alright, that's one  
7 thing, okay then the next thing in the master  
8 plan was sending us every student in one year,  
9 34 students from Riker's Island. We really  
10 don't know how many more after that, special  
11 education students. We had students from Far  
12 Rockaway, Brooklyn; all these places were sent  
13 here. Then our incident rate went up. We were  
14 listed a dangerously persistent school and at  
15 that point there they sent letters to all the  
16 parents in the school to take their students out  
17 which a lot of them did leave. Alright, my  
18 thing is, there's a master plan going on here  
19 and I would like an outside investigation as to  
20 how their numbers came up and how was it that  
21 50% of the students that supposedly did not  
22 graduate, where did they come from and how did  
23 they get here. Alright, that's one thing, okay  
24 now I have a girl's track team here. We have  
25 many teams here. We are the defending Queens

1 champion for the last five years in a row.

2 These students have to be academically eligible  
3 to compete on a team which means that they are  
4 suffice and follow what they have to do here.

5 Alright thank you.

6 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Numbers 11 through  
7 15, please come to the mic, numbers 11 through  
8 15, numbers 11 through 15 please.

9 SPEAKER NUMBER 11: Hello, my name is Mr.  
10 Hurtz [phonetic] and I am a math teacher at  
11 Jamaica High School. I've been here for a  
12 while, I see what's going on and we're being  
13 ambushed. We were, at 9/11 we were ambushed  
14 from abroad, today we're being ambushed from  
15 within, shame on you, shame on you. We've taken  
16 in students that were from off the street, from  
17 all walks of life. We've tried to help each  
18 student. We're not able to make every student  
19 graduate - - on time but we are able to help the  
20 students greatly. I don't think that's a  
21 failure; I think that's wonderful. I asked for  
22 some paper today so I could write my speech,  
23 sorry no paper. What's going on here? Who's in  
24 charge of this? Mr. Klein, Mr. Klein, Mr.  
25 Klein, where are you Mr. Klein? You're in

1 charge of the DOE right? Where are you Mr.  
2 Klein, Mr. Bloomberg, you're in charge of all of  
3 it. Where are you Mr. Bloomberg; you're  
4 supposed to be here if you care. I don't see  
5 your face. Where are you? Shame on you Mr.  
6 Bloomberg, shame on you. Mr. Bloomberg your  
7 time is limited. In four years you won't be  
8 here anymore; Jamaica High School will.

9 SPEAKER NUMBER 12: My name is Bob Kludman  
10 [phonetic]. Alright, as many of you know, 24  
11 years I've been teaching in this building and I  
12 graduated from this high school. Now it has  
13 been my pleasure to serve with some of the most  
14 dedicated teachers I have ever met in my life,  
15 not only teachers but secretaries, Assistant  
16 Principals and guidance counselors. Some of the  
17 most dedicated people are in this school to help  
18 the children of this school. Now you can look  
19 around this school and you will see the names of  
20 some of the people who are unfortunately are no  
21 longer with us, for example, Doris Reid  
22 [phonetic] Auditorium. That was a woman who was  
23 here for 50 years in this school. Let me tell  
24 you, she was dedicated to this school like the  
25 people here today are dedicated to the school.

1 Not only that you go to the third floor there  
2 are teachers' rooms like the Marvin Underwiser  
3 Lounge [phonetic], Marvin Underwiser was a  
4 teacher here for many, many years. I believe  
5 he's here tonight, dedicated to you the  
6 students. But this goes beyond, this goes  
7 beyond Jamaica High School opening or closing.  
8 Let me tell you what's really going on here  
9 because I want you to hear this; I want  
10 everybody to hear here. There's an article for  
11 example, where the article, here. I want to  
12 start with this, here it is. I want to start  
13 with this. Klein, "Jamaica High School closure  
14 is painful but necessary", I quote him. "I  
15 would like to know who would send their kid to a  
16 school with a lower than a 50% graduation rate?"  
17 I'm going to give you the answer and I'm going  
18 to give it to you right now. The parent who  
19 knows that when their student walks out of this  
20 school they are prepared to succeed not only in  
21 life but in college as well, that's the answer.  
22 Because one thing we do not do in this school  
23 and I want to make it clear that other schools  
24 are doing, we do not inflate the grades. When  
25 we give a diploma it doesn't say a diploma I

1 can't even read. You can be sure that when  
2 the students graduate this school they can read  
3 the diploma and they can do a lot more than  
4 that. They are ready to succeed in the real  
5 world. Time is up, alright but one other thing,  
6 teachers pressured to change grades, oh if  
7 anybody ever told me to change my grade they  
8 would know what they would be getting. We do  
9 not tolerate that like that school upstairs does  
10 where they give bogus grades or the school down  
11 the hill or the schools around here. We don't  
12 do that, we give honest grades and that is a  
13 shame. It should be investigated. And remember  
14 graduate does not mean education when you  
15 graduate here though you are educated. Clueless  
16 Klein should in four years from now. Clueless  
17 Klein will be out the door, thank you.

18 MS. MONICA AYUSO: Okay, excuse me, excuse  
19 me. We want to make sure 100 people get to  
20 speak so when you get that 30 second notice you  
21 really got to start to wrap up, okay.

22 SPEAKER NUMBER 13: Hi, good afternoon  
23 everyone, my name is Molina, I'm a 2008 alumna.  
24 I spoke to the Board of Education two years ago;  
25 I spoke to them again in January. John White

1 you might remember me I told you guys to not  
2 cut me off after two minutes. What I want to  
3 say first is that you're taking away kids that  
4 are entering in 2010 and putting them to other  
5 schools so when that school becomes over-  
6 populated the class gets too big are you going  
7 to close out all those schools too? Are you  
8 going to, are you going to continue closing out  
9 public schools and then have parents send their  
10 kids to private schools which they cannot  
11 afford. Metro cards are already being taken  
12 away. You're closing down this school and it is  
13 making kids have to get jobs to buy metro cards.  
14 I'm in college but \$89.00 a month on metro cards  
15 already. That's not fair; Jamaica High School  
16 is a zoned school for many students. Many  
17 people - - from here, many struggle to graduate.  
18 Now your school is taken away, what is that  
19 supposed to do? I've said so many things for  
20 the past two years and I get really tired of  
21 repeating myself so I only have three questions  
22 for you today. First question is how long have  
23 you really been planning this? We might have  
24 heard about it two years ago but you could have  
25 planned it five years ago. Second question,

1 what's going to happen to all of the teachers  
2 here? We're in a recession, where are they  
3 going to go? You say that you're going hire 50%  
4 of the teachers that qualify. Every single one  
5 of the teachers here qualified for each job that  
6 they have. And third, are you closing down a  
7 zoned school that's for basically half of Queens  
8 and opening up a new one in Metropolitan Campus  
9 where all minorities all went together. Why  
10 take that away? I'm not going to stand here and  
11 wait for a response because what I've learned  
12 from Joel Klein and the rest of you is that you  
13 veer away from the answer and not answer it at  
14 all so let me tell you this. Think of your  
15 kids, what if they were there, they were in this  
16 school. Would you be sitting there and saying  
17 no? We're closing down the school and be  
18 sitting over here saying I want the school open.

19 SPEAKER NUMBER 14: Can everybody hear me  
20 loud and clear? Alright good, my name is Sudeek  
21 Anju Marshall [phonetic], I am the founder of  
22 Jamaica High School Step Team and not only am I  
23 the father, I'm a proud parent, now on top of  
24 that I travelled all the way to Washington, D.C.  
25 to talk to the dais so I'm going to do this.

1 I'm going to turn the microphone around  
2 because I want to talk to them right there,  
3 right. I'm a graduate of this wonderful school,  
4 this wonderful institution. I'm also a graduate  
5 of St. John's University which is right behind  
6 us and I'm also a proud Eagle Scout. I'm a  
7 product of Jamaica High School and right now I  
8 want to speak on behalf of the Parents-Teachers  
9 Association and I just want to let you know that  
10 as a proud parent the Department of Education  
11 sent a letter saying that Jamaica High School  
12 was a dangerous school. I'm a product of  
13 Jamaica High School. They say they want to  
14 close down Jamaica High School because of how  
15 dangerous it was. It was no longer dangerous,  
16 it was, Jamaica High School was no longer listed  
17 on the dangerous list but obviously they're  
18 still making steps forward to shut it down. I'm  
19 a product of Jamaica High School. If Jamaica  
20 High School is dangerous I wouldn't have gone  
21 from Jamaica High School to the White House, to  
22 the Bureau of ATF, alcohol, tobacco, firearms,  
23 to an Eagle Scout, being recognized by the  
24 President all the way down. This is my moment  
25 here to come to speak to the dais. I know that

1 Jamaica is behind me. I know they represent  
2 me but I want you to know there are so many more  
3 people out there who are like me, who are  
4 products of this institution. They're sitting  
5 out there, we have doctors, Ph.D.s, and we have  
6 people working C.I.A. We have people all over  
7 that represent Jamaica High School and I want  
8 you guys to know that from me to everybody in  
9 here. When we come together we always say  
10 Jamaica, Jamaica, and Jamaica.

11 SPEAKER NUMBER 15: I'll face this way  
12 because they already know what I'm going to talk  
13 about since they have to follow the rules and  
14 the regs. If, none of you know this so maybe  
15 some of you do. I know they do that's why  
16 they're breaking up our school. No city, state  
17 or federal funds can be used to build facilities  
18 for charter schools, none. They receive money  
19 for per pupil but they cannot build facilities  
20 for charter schools. Why, because they're  
21 privately run; they're not run by the public.  
22 And that's why they're breaking up schools like  
23 ours. They have to come up with fake reasons,  
24 make us look like we're not doing the right  
25 thing, call us failures, give us Ds when we

1 don't deserve them because they can't build  
2 their charter schools somewhere. They have to  
3 use buildings that are already here. And then  
4 let's look at that. The charter schools that  
5 they create don't take everybody. Well we take  
6 everybody. They can choose the students that  
7 they want to keep. They can pick and choose the  
8 students with the better averages; the ones that  
9 don't have disabilities, the ones that aren't  
10 ESL. They take less and less of those kids and  
11 I'll give you an example right here in this  
12 building. We have Queen's Collegiate on our  
13 third floor. Last year, wait, because not  
14 everybody knows this. Last year, they removed  
15 one of their kids because they didn't speak  
16 English and didn't understand English and  
17 they're in our school but then that student went  
18 back to their country. I guess they couldn't  
19 learn the language fast enough, whatever it was.  
20 This year there's a kid from their school who is  
21 now in our school because he needed an IEP.  
22 Well they can't supply the necessary education  
23 for these kids but we can. Oh, wow and that's  
24 about it. I'll save my time.

25 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Number 16 through

1 20 please, number 16 through 20.

2 SPEAKER NUMBER 16: I am Joanne Perkins  
3 [phonetic]. I am a former PTA President. I am  
4 a former member of the Leadership Committee for  
5 the school of which I served. I am a former  
6 member of the President's Council. I am a  
7 former Board Member for Rochedale Village  
8 [phonetic] a 6,000 unit development here in  
9 Queens. I am a professional member of the Local  
10 Development Corporation of Laurelton [phonetic]  
11 and Rosedale [phonetic] and Springfield Gardens  
12 [phonetic]. I am a parent of a third year honor  
13 student here at Jamaica. I am a 54 year  
14 resident of Jamaica, Queens. I have the  
15 Renaissance of Queens. I have been educated in  
16 the public school system here in Queens and  
17 because I have served on all the committees and  
18 all the political affiliates of which I've  
19 served I am aware of the demographics of the  
20 Renaissance that will take place and is already  
21 taking place in Southeast Queens and that  
22 affects the stability of Jamaica High School and  
23 its students. Parents who do not know, who have  
24 a lack of the ability of understanding just the  
25 seriousness of what is occurring here in Queens,

1 you should know that this is and has been  
2 carefully designed by our politicians and  
3 because it has been so carefully and  
4 meticulously designed we were not aware that  
5 this was coming down the pipe. If you sat on  
6 the leadership committee for your school, if you  
7 sat on the President's Council for your school  
8 you would know that any programs or changes that  
9 would take place would be earmarked years before  
10 it actually occurs. So that Queens is getting  
11 ready to do a huge massive change on Jamaica  
12 Avenue spreading from the Verick [phonetic]  
13 Expressway going up to 184<sup>th</sup> Street and Hillside  
14 Avenue affecting this school. The demographics,  
15 the cultural demographics consist of those habla  
16 solamente espanol, those who speak - - , who  
17 speak Patois, who are Indian-speaking, who are  
18 of Asian descent and those cultures who I have,  
19 not with intent, have not mentioned. They are  
20 aware that they have a lack of understanding so  
21 that it would be perfect to target this school  
22 that sits on the campus of a wonderful  
23 university to take and close the school because  
24 they think you're not aware of what's going on.  
25 So they use your education, they use your scores

1 as an element to convince you that the school  
2 is not doing good and so they can close the  
3 school down. I petition all the parents to come  
4 out, to be aware that this is not the real issue  
5 on the table but is taking over the committees,  
6 taking these cultures and sending you back where  
7 you came from and they can make this a new  
8 economic development that will exist without  
9 your presence here. I urge you to come out, be  
10 involved, okay, don't take no for an answer.  
11 Thank you.

12 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Again number 16  
13 through 20, if you could start making your way  
14 down to the front, number 16 through 20. Okay,  
15 if we can have, number 16 through 20.

16 SPEAKER NUMBER 17: Good evening, my name is  
17 Camille Otourno [phonetic]. I stand before you  
18 as a teacher, as a parent and as a concerned  
19 community person. I've a question for you. My  
20 first question is this. What is the social  
21 makeup of the schools that have been closed? I  
22 implore you to think about this for a minute  
23 because when you have had time to think about it  
24 you will see that the schools that are being  
25 closed are the schools primarily in southern

1 Queens and not in northern Queens. This begs  
2 the question, what are we really saying to our  
3 students of color? Are we saying that we're  
4 creating schools that are separate but are  
5 unequal? Are we saying to our students that  
6 they are less than? Are we telling our students  
7 that they're not good enough to be provided with  
8 the necessary resources to ensure their success?  
9 Are we telling our students that we're not  
10 committed to ensuring that they graduate from  
11 Jamaica High School if they choose to come in  
12 here in September of 2010? Ladies and gentlemen  
13 I ask you to open up your eyes, open up your  
14 minds and realize in my mind that this is just a  
15 racist act. They're not closing the schools in  
16 predominately white neighborhoods. Why are you  
17 closing our schools that are primarily African-  
18 American, Latino-Americans, South East Asian-  
19 Americans? We are not less than the majority.  
20 Please students it is time for everyone to start  
21 thinking about what it is that you want and what  
22 you want is to keep Jamaica High School open.  
23 And for that reason I say to you, stand up and  
24 fight for your school because if you don't fight  
25 for it, it will go down like the Titanic. Get

1 up and start fighting now, thank you.

2 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Number 18?

3 SPEAKER NUMBER 18: Is Jamaica in the house?  
4 One thing I got to say, you look beautiful. My  
5 name is Carlos Vasocellos [phonetic]. I  
6 graduated from this school is 1991. I was the  
7 second graduating class of - - . I was on the  
8 lacrosse team which is gone. I was a fencer, I  
9 was a swimmer and I was a lover of life and  
10 still am. Now, my people, my people, my people,  
11 why? Why do we got to close Jamaica High  
12 School? Why schools in the Bronx or Brooklyn or  
13 Manhattan? It doesn't make sense, education.  
14 The children are our future. When we old,  
15 they're going to be taking care of us.  
16 Seriously that's the truth though, I mean. I'm  
17 a 36 year old resident of Jamaica, Queens. When  
18 I was growing up in Queens a lot of things  
19 occurred in my neighborhood. If it wasn't for  
20 Jamaica High School I wouldn't have gone to St.  
21 John's University. If it wasn't for Jamaica  
22 High School I wouldn't have gone to Dublin,  
23 Ireland, Germany. If it wasn't for Jamaica High  
24 School I would not be here right now. I could  
25 either be under the dirt or walking that

1 straight line where you see no sunshine.  
2 Tactics that the Department of Education is  
3 using to close these schools is similar to what  
4 the mafia has done, extortionists have done,  
5 please work with the people, not against the  
6 people. Power to the people every day; voice  
7 this opinion that we should not close this  
8 beautiful, incredible, wonderful, so much blood  
9 sweat and tears, from every corner, from every  
10 hallway. I'm not going to cry but going to say  
11 don't make a bad decision, make a change like  
12 Obama banged it in November. Make a change for  
13 positivity. My people, my people, my people,  
14 let's get it together.

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Numbers 19 to 20.  
16 Can numbers 21 to 25 start making their way to  
17 the front?

18 SPEAKER NUMBER 19: Good evening, my name is  
19 James Vascas [phonetic]. I'm the District  
20 Representative for the high schools in Queens  
21 for the United Federation of Teachers. I was  
22 here the other evening when the Department of  
23 Education sent their people here to answer  
24 questions and they had no answers. The  
25 community of this neighborhood was here and they

1 asked and they asked and nobody from the  
2 Department of Education was here to answer these  
3 questions. The school leadership team here of  
4 this school has asked for a Q and A and the  
5 Department of Education has refused to answer  
6 the questions of this community. So I ask you,  
7 who is going to hold the Chancellor and the  
8 Mayor accountable? Who is going to tell them?  
9 In the back of the room right now we have the  
10 Deputy Mayor, Dennis Walcott [phonetic]. We  
11 should all be telling Mr. Walcott exactly what  
12 we want the Mayor to hear. Can everyone please  
13 tell what the Mayor should hear? Save Jamaica  
14 High School, Save Jamaica High School, Save  
15 Jamaica High School, Save Jamaica High School,  
16 Save Jamaica High School.

17 SPEAKER NUMBER 20: I teach at Brandeis High  
18 School [phonetic]. It's being closed. I came  
19 here to support you. There are 20 meetings of  
20 angry parents and students and teachers taking  
21 place in a two week period as they massacre.  
22 It's a closing of the schools tonight at  
23 Columbus High School. Up in the Bronx they're  
24 having the same kind of meeting they're having  
25 here. This is not about of which school closes

1 and which opens. This closing is part of the  
2 broad corporate takeover of public education.  
3 It is a political fight. Now some of said, like  
4 the teachers union which did not oppose  
5 Bloomberg's reelection that this is  
6 mismanagement. It's not; it's purposeful with  
7 funding from billionaires like Bill Gates and  
8 Eli Broad. Other billionaires like Bloomberg  
9 and the political henchmen of big business;  
10 they're closing schools to wedge in private  
11 management even non-profits set up by  
12 corporations. The real public schools are  
13 impoverished and put on rations to justify the  
14 attacks. The real purpose is to increase  
15 profits where the financial elite are pushing  
16 the economic crisis they created on our backs.  
17 Not only Jamaica is cut, not just schools cut,  
18 hospitals have been closed, subway and bus  
19 routes are being cut, student transportation  
20 passes are cut. New York is not even the worst  
21 hit. This comes from on top, 4.3 billion  
22 dollars by Obama, the Democrats and Republicans  
23 to push charter schools but trillions for the  
24 bail out of the banks and the wars. We are not  
25 just fighting to keep Jamaica open but to ensure

1 children have a future when they graduate.  
2 How did we go, where do we go from here? This  
3 capitalist system of profits is not the future.  
4 When we make a new political party to take  
5 ownership of the wealth and the schools that  
6 working people and families create that is  
7 socialism. If you got our leaflet visit the  
8 WWSW website or the World Socialist website and  
9 the International Students for Social Equity,  
10 thank you.

11 [END 154\_486a\_Part\_2\_of\_3.mp3]

12 [START 154\_486a\_Part\_3\_of\_3.mp3]

13 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Again, if numbers  
14 21-25 could come down to the front.

15 FEMALE VOICE: I graduated from Jamaica High  
16 School in 1950. Jamaica High School prepared me  
17 for Hunter College and beyond. It provided a  
18 core knowledge, history, English, a second  
19 language, math, science, economics, a basic  
20 core, which all of us should have if we are to  
21 be a cohesive nation. This does not mean, of  
22 course, that our views and opinions will be one.  
23 Boutique fads are not needed. Solid basic  
24 education in preparation for further technical,  
25 trade, university level pursuits, are needed.

1 Enthusiasm and discipline are needed. Jamaica  
2 High School has and can engender these. The  
3 closing of Jamaica High School should be seen by  
4 the community as unacceptable.

5 MRS. PILATE: Hi, I'm Mrs. Pilate  
6 [phonetic]. I'm a new teacher here at Jamaica  
7 High School and boy am I proud to be here. I  
8 just want to let you know that my students  
9 welcome you. They come from many countries and  
10 they are also proud to be here. Now, I see lots  
11 of students here. Raise your hand if you're a  
12 student. Here's how you can make Jamaica High  
13 School change from the MIP that it is to the MVP  
14 that it can be. You have to come to school  
15 every day and make sure that we get the funding  
16 we deserve. Every time you're absent, we lose  
17 money. You have to make sure that you bring two  
18 pencils, two pens every day, paper, have  
19 organized notebooks. And not just you, schools  
20 all over the country, all teenagers have to be  
21 serious. And how about parents? How many  
22 parents are here? Okay, you have to make sure  
23 to continue eating meals with your children.  
24 Studies show, when you eat together nothing goes  
25 wrong with those kids. You have to make sure to

1 eat together.

2 Now, make sure that those children join  
3 clubs. When they join clubs, they won't join  
4 gangs. Clubs are where they need to be with  
5 other kids their age. And if you come to school  
6 every day we'll have the money for the clubs.  
7 Please be in those seats. How many alums are  
8 here? We need you here every day. Come talk to  
9 our kids. We need guest speakers, we need  
10 people at our PTA meetings, make sure you come  
11 to PTA meetings parents, teacher conferences,  
12 alums we need you here at our events. We need  
13 you here as volunteers. My kids are asking me,  
14 have more guest speakers in the classroom. Show  
15 us what you got, show us what Jamaica High  
16 School gave you. And lastly, I fear that if we  
17 succeed, which it looks like we will, that the  
18 bad press will stop students from filling out  
19 those high school applications, so please make  
20 sure that when we succeed, that students are  
21 able to join us in September.

22 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: If numbers 24 and  
23 25 can also come to the front.

24 ASHA: Good evening everyone. My name is  
25 Asha [phonetic] and I'm a parent. My son is in

1 the eleventh grade at Jamaica High School. He  
2 has above 90 average, he's doing great. And you  
3 know what happened? When I asked him, are you  
4 willing to take a transfer if this school fails  
5 out? He says, "I prefer quit and staying home".  
6 But what the Department of Education failed to  
7 realize, they failed to realize that, by closing  
8 the school they discourage students from going  
9 to school. They close their school, which are  
10 like their home and they discourage them from  
11 going to school. And another thing is that they  
12 said they wanted to open two new schools and  
13 Jamaica High School, why don't they use the same  
14 money that they will invest in the new school to  
15 invest it in Jamaica High School. They should  
16 use the same money and invest it in Jamaica High  
17 School and Jamaica High School will definitely  
18 survive. Another thing they said, they changed  
19 the principal to improve the school, but they  
20 didn't give him any resources. With the  
21 resources can the principal alone improve  
22 Jamaica High School? They failed to realize  
23 that and thank you and I love Jamaica High  
24 School. Jamaica High School must stay.

25 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Numbers 26-30

1 please come to the front.

2 MR. KEN COHEN: Good evening. My name is  
3 Ken Cohen [phonetic] and I'm the regional  
4 direction for the National Association for the  
5 Advancement of Colored People because people  
6 come in all colors. For over 100 years the NACP  
7 has fought for the civil rights of all of you  
8 people in this room and given you the ability to  
9 get a quality education in schools just like  
10 Jamaica High. We stand with you as your  
11 parents, as you students, as the teachers and  
12 administrators of Jamaica High. We know that  
13 this school has produced some fine people to the  
14 communities of the world. We hope that you will  
15 continue this fight and challenge the Department  
16 of Education and the Mayor, because don't  
17 forget, many of the students in this room  
18 started school eight years ago. We must hold  
19 him accountable for the problems in every school  
20 and stop the closures of high schools in New  
21 York City. Today we are here to fight for  
22 Jamaica High, tomorrow it will be Francis Lewis  
23 or Bayside or maybe not Francis Lewis, that's a  
24 sensitive topic, but the bottom line is, we as  
25 community must stand together. I represent a

1 community not far from here that has served  
2 Jamaica High since its inception and we ask that  
3 you call your legislators, call the Mayor's  
4 office, call the Chancellor's office, tell him  
5 to stop the vote on January 26<sup>th</sup>. No vote on  
6 January 26<sup>th</sup>. Stop all school closures. Thank  
7 you.

8 MS. VANESSA SPARKS: Good evening. My name  
9 is Vanessa Sparks [phonetic]. I am the former  
10 vice president for Community Education Council  
11 28. I just completed my four-year term and this  
12 is to Mr. White because Mr. White you know, I  
13 have a lot of knowledge about how you guys set  
14 this school up to fail. Not only that, you and  
15 the rest of the Department of Education is going  
16 to explain to this community why you want to  
17 close Jamaica because your statistics are flawed  
18 that's number one. Number two, you're not even  
19 using the same data evenly for all schools. I  
20 have in my bag where there are two other schools  
21 in the burrow of Queens with statistics worse  
22 than Jamaica that you're not touching. I'm not  
23 going to call it out. Secondly--the next thing,  
24 I was there at Hawsley Junior High School  
25 [phonetic] three years ago when the Department

1 of Education wanted to put a middle school in  
2 Hawsley Junior High School in Forest Hills and  
3 that community came and told you that hell no,  
4 you were not going to put it there. The  
5 Department of Education has selected the name of  
6 the school, you had selected the principal and  
7 within four days the Department of Education  
8 said, "we're not going to open that school"  
9 because that community told you, you all would  
10 have hell to pay if you did it. The next point,  
11 next point about community schools and zoned  
12 schools. As per Michael Bloomberg [phonetic] in  
13 2002, there would be no more zoned high schools,  
14 yet you guys are opening a brand new zoned high  
15 school on Metropolitan Avenue in Forest Hills  
16 where nobody in this damn room would be able to  
17 go to. Now, I come--I predate the Department of  
18 Ed. I'm from the old Board of Ed. I was a  
19 school board member, I was a PTA president at  
20 two schools, I'm from Jamaica, Queens. My  
21 sister is an alumni, class of '71 from Jamaica  
22 High School and the one thing we know how to do  
23 is fight. Now, if it were left up to me,  
24 everybody would take their behinds down to Tweed  
25 and wrap all around Chamber Street until the

1 Mayor brings his behind down and explain to  
2 them why you're picking and choosing what you're  
3 going to do.

4 MALE VOICE 2: Hello everyone. I'm an  
5 alumni of Jamaica High School. As a matter of  
6 fact, I graduated last year. That was the year,  
7 not only did we get off the most dangerous high  
8 school list, but we also became a landmark, yeah  
9 Jamaica. This year I find out that we're being  
10 closed down. Like, I didn't know that improving  
11 was a bad thing. Well, the only thing you guys  
12 got on us is that our graduation rate is a  
13 little low. Well, you had that on us - - and  
14 all the other staff has proved that wrong, so  
15 you don't have nothing on us, so leave Jamaica  
16 alone. Another thing is that my four years in  
17 this high school I've seen through my own eyes  
18 this high school getting safer and academically  
19 better. Former speakers have mentioned other  
20 high schools that are in the same predicament as  
21 us, as well as a public school who's already  
22 been victimized by you guys, please don't let  
23 Jamaica High School join that list. We got off  
24 the most dangerous high school list. Give us a  
25 couple more years, then we'll get on one of the

1 most best high schools in Queens list. Save  
2 Jamaica and don't let it get closed down.  
3 That's it. Thank you very much.

4 [background noise]

5 MALE VOICE 3: My name is--I do not want to  
6 teach at 167-01 Gothic Drive. I want to teach  
7 at Jamaica High School. We're here tonight to  
8 put the first word in school and that's public  
9 school. We are the public. We do not need to  
10 destroy Jamaica High School to save it. If a  
11 child is doing poorly in my class I do not give  
12 up on them. I give them more attention. I help  
13 them more. Maybe they deal - - in that lesson.  
14 I do not have a calculator. I am not good in  
15 math. Accordingly to the DOE master plan for  
16 this building, Jamaica High School has 1,500  
17 kids. There are only--their plan right now is  
18 to open up only two schools of 500. Five  
19 hundred and 500 is equal to? I'm sorry?  
20 Where'd the other 500 go? The DOE will do what?  
21 Spend more money with teachers on the ATR list  
22 than they have to save Jamaica High School.  
23 Thank you.

24 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Numbers 31-35  
25 please come to the front.

1 MS. KATHLEEN FORESTOL: My name is  
2 Kathleen Forestol [phonetic] and I am a Jamaica  
3 High School graduate, class of 1994. My time.  
4 A failed school is one that has been given every  
5 opportunity and every tool needed to succeed and  
6 yet has failed to show improvement. It is one  
7 that the teachers, the students and the  
8 community do not support. Jamaica is not a  
9 failed school. According to the DOE's Quality  
10 Review Report, Jamaica possesses a studious  
11 climate in classrooms and a vision for  
12 successful learning community. Parent surveys  
13 as you heard earlier, conducted by the DOE  
14 indicate that 88% of parents are pleased with  
15 the education their child is receiving at  
16 Jamaica. Do those who speak in favor of the  
17 closing of Jamaica really believe that 88% of  
18 parents are satisfied with failure? The DOE's  
19 published statistics may appear grim and you've  
20 heard that they are entirely questionable and  
21 doubtful, but they do not even come close to  
22 painting an accurate picture of Jamaica High  
23 School. I oppose the closing of Jamaica, not  
24 because I'm an alum, but because I know that the  
25 school is capable of creating scholars and of

1 giving struggling and thriving students alike  
2 the time and attention they need. I'm confident  
3 that the school is capable of overcoming any  
4 struggle. Jamaica has a 117 now 18 year  
5 history, not just of success, but of overcoming  
6 hard times. Nearly half of the schools being  
7 closed in this round of closings are new, small  
8 schools. Small and new is not the answer.  
9 Dedicating resources to make the schools we  
10 already have more successful is. The DOE has  
11 said that developing and promoting successful  
12 programs in this school is not an option or a  
13 solution, but the DOE is very proud of the  
14 success that they had in turning Edison right  
15 next door, into a more successful school. If  
16 the city has the resources to launch and fund  
17 several new schools in the building at  
18 considerable cost, why hasn't it allowed  
19 Jamaica's current students to benefit from those  
20 resources? I am the alum, but it is the current  
21 students rather than nostalgia that lead me to  
22 defend Jamaica High School. The current  
23 students in this room, and those who have  
24 applied and hope to attend in 2010 and students  
25 who haven't even learned about the advantages

1 Jamaica can offer the school's present and  
2 future. The DOE has unjustly labeled Jamaica a  
3 failure. This school can defy this label given  
4 the chance. It should have that chance for the  
5 sake of students.

6 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Numbers 35-40  
7 please make your way to the front.

8 MR. NILES BINUM: How's everybody doing? My  
9 name is Niles Binum [phonetic]. I'm a Jamaica  
10 High School alum class of 2007. When I went to  
11 Jamaica I was part of the Gateway Program, I  
12 participated in football, basketball and in  
13 track. When I graduated over 50% of the  
14 students graduated in my year. Also, in  
15 Gateway, 100% of the students graduated that  
16 year too. Now I attempt Temple University in  
17 Philadelphia and still to this day, Jamaica has  
18 been the best four years of my life. In  
19 closing, all I'd like to say is that if you make  
20 Jamaica High School four smaller schools or  
21 however many smaller schools that you want to  
22 make it, you're not--what you're not doing is  
23 you're not creating any opportunities for  
24 students, you're diminishing them. Thank you.

25 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Again, if numbers

1 35-40 could come to the front. I hold in my  
2 hand number 40, so please--

3 FEMALE VOICE 3: Hello everybody. I'm a  
4 2008 alumni as well, just like Melina  
5 [phonetic]. Thank you. First of all, Mr. John  
6 White, I know your phone is on your lap and  
7 whatever you're doing it can wait I'm sure.  
8 Second of all, I don't know where you guys got  
9 your degrees from, I don't know how you  
10 graduated math class, but our graduation rate is  
11 not 46%. What proof do you have? Don't say  
12 that you came to the school and you walked  
13 around. You did not come and walk around this  
14 school to look at how the students are doing or  
15 what you can do to help the school. You came  
16 here to create a plan to close us down and you  
17 have no right to do that. We are not failures.  
18 These people here are not failures. You're the  
19 failure. You never supported us, you never  
20 guided us, you never gave us money, you were  
21 never here when we needed you. You're going to  
22 close down this high school, which high school  
23 is next and then the high school after that?  
24 Before you know it, every high school in Queens,  
25 Manhattan, Bronx, it's all going to be four high

1 schools in one, three high schools in one.  
2 What are you trying to do, corrupt the economy?  
3 Corrupt the Board of Ed? You guys are already  
4 corrupted, but you're going to get worse. You  
5 crossed the limit by bringing another high  
6 school in here last year. You're crossing the  
7 limit even more now, and these people here, will  
8 not stand for it.

9 MALE VOICE 4: Hello. The first thing I  
10 want to say is I'm proud. I'm proud to be  
11 called Ravelers. I'm proud to be on the Varsity  
12 football team. I'm proud to be a sophomore.  
13 I'm proud to be co-captain of the wrestling  
14 team. I'm proud to be part of the NAACP. I'm  
15 proud of being part of the Gateway Program. I'm  
16 proud of working for the burrow president. But  
17 the only thing I'm not proud of is coming here  
18 tonight. The reason why this school shouldn't  
19 be shutdown right now. It shouldn't be in this  
20 predicament as the other schools are. It's just  
21 going to get worse. My question is, what will  
22 happen when the charter schools has to phase  
23 out? You can't make a smaller school smaller.  
24 One divided by two is half, half divided by two  
25 is one-fourth, you can't keep smaller. Where

1 are the people going to go? The reason why  
2 I'm able to speak up here is I've spoken in  
3 other places. I have gone up to Albany and  
4 spoken for the summer youth program to get  
5 summer jobs. Another question I have is, why  
6 close big schools and kids in the neighborhood  
7 will have to travel to a school where they want  
8 to go to, to have a better high school  
9 experience, other than academics? High school  
10 is the beginning of life. You don't want to be  
11 a social shell. You don't want to be a turtle  
12 hiding in your shell when you go to college.  
13 Let's see. I want to thank the people on the  
14 Board that has clapped when the other people  
15 said something good. I want to thank you guys.  
16 I do not want to thank the people that just  
17 stare emotionless. One thing I said last time  
18 is, when I look at myself in the mirror I see a  
19 good looking man, but the people over there,  
20 when they look at themselves in the mirror at  
21 night when they're not getting paid, they have  
22 to see their faces. They need to understand  
23 that they're not getting paid at home and they  
24 need to understand that I'm not getting paid and  
25 I'm here. I live in Long Island and I still

1       come here to support my school. I love this  
2       school. I love the people that came. And can I  
3       just say one more thing? One more thing is,  
4       where are the teachers and not only the  
5       teachers, the coaches are going to go? My coach  
6       has a family to support. He coaches three  
7       teams, football, wrestling and baseball and if  
8       you close this school down, that's one team  
9       taken out and that's a paycheck taken out. If  
10      you close another school, that's another team  
11      and another paycheck. Thank you.

12           MS. CHRISTINE MARTIN: Good evening. My  
13      name is Christine Martin [phonetic] and I'd like  
14      to read a statement on behalf of the CSA, the  
15      Council of Supervisors and Administrators. The  
16      DOE has announced the closing of 20 schools,  
17      some of them with new principals, some of them  
18      just beginning to turn around and a full eight  
19      of them that were opened not very long ago by  
20      the head of the DOE himself, Chancellor Kline.  
21      CSA embraces accountability and believes that  
22      schools should be closed if they have failed  
23      over a period of three or more years, despite  
24      receiving full support from the DOE. We won't  
25      tolerate the propagation of failure. But in the

1 case of several of these proposed closures, we  
2 must ask if some of the schools are being held  
3 accountable while the apparatus that supports  
4 them is not. In those cases, we must inquire if  
5 the schools who are really failing and by what  
6 measures they were failing. We must ask if the  
7 Chancellor truly put each of these schools  
8 through a thorough process to ascertain whether  
9 they have been provided adequate support and  
10 guidance by their superintendents and SSOs, and  
11 if the Office of Student Enrollment had leveled  
12 the playing field. CSA is asking that the DOE  
13 to lay bear the process by which they determined  
14 that each of these schools be closed. In the  
15 case of each school, we want to know what the  
16 superintendant did besides visiting the school  
17 to announce the closing. We need to know how  
18 thorough the superintendent was in the process  
19 of helping these schools succeed over the last  
20 few years. DOE should include an analysis of  
21 the role of the appropriate support  
22 organizations since each school pays an SSO to  
23 advise them on student achievement, coach  
24 principals on school improvement and perform  
25 many of the support functions, what sort of

1 service did each of these 20 schools get for  
2 their money. Finally, DOE should assess how  
3 fairly the Office of Student Enrollment  
4 minimized challenges in schools that face so  
5 many other challenges. It is important to know  
6 if these institutions were sent an unusually  
7 large proportion of ELL students and children  
8 with special needs. When every question is  
9 asked and answered, we are likely to discover  
10 that some of these schools can't be saved. We  
11 are also likely to discover that many of them  
12 can remain open and thrive with adequate  
13 superintendent support and network and fair  
14 enrollment practices. That was the statement  
15 from the CSA. For myself, as a retired  
16 principal of a small school, I would say there  
17 is a place for small schools, but it's not the  
18 only option. A small school cannot provide all  
19 of the services and opportunities that large  
20 schools provide. I implore the DOE to keep that  
21 in mind, that they are not doing our kids a  
22 service if they are only providing the small  
23 school opportunity. Thank you.

24 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: If I could have  
25 numbers 41-45 start coming to the front please.

1           MR. TOM HILGARDNER: My name is Tom  
2 Hilgardner [phonetic], class of 1976, Jamaica  
3 High School. I came down here tonight. I'm  
4 just absolutely shocked and saddened that this  
5 school, which has a tremendous tradition,  
6 they're even thinking about closing it. These  
7 people have no sense of tradition. They rely on  
8 their statistics, and let me tell you, when I  
9 was a student at Jamaica High School, I read  
10 Mark Twain. Mark Twain said, "there's three  
11 kinds of lies. There's lies, there's damn lies  
12 and there's statistics". So I'm sure, just like  
13 if anybody's gone down to a police precinct  
14 lately and tried to get--report a crime, you'll  
15 know why crime is down. But you go around and  
16 you look in the streets and there's a lot more  
17 auto glass than there was about 10 years ago, so  
18 you tell me if crime's down. These people know  
19 how to play with their statistics. They have  
20 set these statistics up. I have to give a shout  
21 out to Maria Geamundo [phonetic], she gave me  
22 the minute to speak here. You know, they didn't  
23 want me to speak. I came here, I received an  
24 announcement this meeting was at 7:00 and I  
25 guess it was at 6:00, so I didn't hear about

1 that, that they changed the time, but--so I  
2 got here too late to speak. What are they  
3 afraid of, that I have to say? Mr. Walcott  
4 [phonetic], I had my eyes open tonight when I  
5 heard that what this really is, is a power play  
6 for the infrastructure of this building. They  
7 want to--what they want to do is they want to  
8 put their charter schools that can't be funded  
9 to build the infrastructure and they want to  
10 take this public building, this magnificent  
11 landmark building away from the people. This is  
12 criminal. This is just like the movement with  
13 bids, they want to privatize the parks and now  
14 they're trying to take away our high school,  
15 let's not let it happen. Thank you very much  
16 people for my two minutes.

17 PHILIP: Good evening everyone. My name is  
18 Philip - - . I'm - - Jamaica High School from  
19 last year - - . I'm currently attending  
20 Stonybrook University. I'm a chemistry major.  
21 - - Jamaica High School should not be closed  
22 because for the last 118 years we have shown a  
23 lot of excellence. And one of the  
24 accomplishments of myself and my other - - has  
25 shown that it does not go in the eyes of DOE's

1 is that we were *New York Times* scholarship  
2 semi-finalists last year, me and her. And this  
3 is something that they don't see actually and  
4 should be seen and taken into consideration and  
5 more else, I'll tell you this, the last four  
6 years has been the best years of my life and I  
7 thank Jamaica High School for that. And I've  
8 gained everything. Jamaica High School has  
9 trained me academically and mentally for college  
10 preparation. And I was also part of Gateway, I  
11 thank you for that. And I'll end it with a  
12 note, if you stay--unite, unity is the key to  
13 conquest, so if you stay unite, nobody can break  
14 us down. Thank you very much.

15 MS. BARBARA DUREEN-PAUL: Good evening  
16 everyone. My name is Barbara Dureen-Paul  
17 [phonetic]. My husband and I have one child who  
18 was a student here at Jamaica High School. At  
19 the time, I was the president of the PTA.  
20 Jamaica High School is a beacon on the hill and  
21 must be the place where the children of our  
22 diverse population get prepared for a lifetime  
23 of success. As a community person, I urge the  
24 DOE to provide necessary support for the staff  
25 here at this Jamaica High School. We don't want

1 a change of school, we want a high performing  
2 Jamaica High School here in Jamaica. So, the  
3 DOE, Mayor Bloomberg, Chancellor Kline, we want  
4 support that allows our students to perform.  
5 They are no less capable than students at  
6 Bayside or Francis Lewis or Stiverson. They are  
7 simply in a different neighborhood with  
8 different needs. As taxpayers, we demand  
9 general education in Jamaica High School, not  
10 focused education in small charter schools.  
11 Save Jamaica High School.

12 REVEREND CHARLES JOE NARIS, SR.: Good  
13 evening. My name is Reverend Charles Joe Naris,  
14 Sr. [phonetic]. I stand here as a proud parent  
15 of a son who graduated from Jamaica High School  
16 through the SEAT program. He went on there--we  
17 went from there to Alabama to attend and  
18 graduate Tuskegee Institute with a Bachelor of  
19 Science degree. He now serves with me in  
20 ministry of Pastor of Bethesda Ministry Baptist  
21 Church of Jamaica. What perturbs me now is how  
22 could a high school with such a long record of  
23 achievement fall into a status that warrants  
24 closing of the same. Is it because of any of  
25 the following? That this long-standed, monument

1 of learning has to cease, number one.  
2 Resources have been denied this facility, number  
3 two. Has the quality of teaching staff been  
4 lowered to a degree that teaching is not being  
5 done, although students are eager to learn,  
6 number three. Did 35 students from Riker's  
7 Island have such a negative impact as to put the  
8 school on the endangered list, number four? Is  
9 there some manipulating of graduating numbers  
10 that caused it to vary between 69 and 46%,  
11 something needs to be investigated there? Is  
12 this a case of another--of withholding funds  
13 from this school in preparation to open three or  
14 four small schools in the same vicinity? That  
15 is wrong. Is there more effort put forth by the  
16 Department of Education to program the failure  
17 of Jamaica High School, than to use these same  
18 available funding for its survival? Seven and  
19 finally, is this the final case or just final  
20 spinning my wheels as done when this has been  
21 already written in stone. I appeal to those,  
22 who are concerned about educating every child,  
23 especially to the eight members who are  
24 appointed on this panel by the Mayor, to see the  
25 need to keep this facility open and an

1 individual high school with components to  
2 satisfy the diverse needs of this community.  
3 Thank you.

4 MR. NORMAN SCOTT: My name is Norman Scott  
5 [phonetic]. I was a teacher in Brooklyn for 35  
6 years, retired thank God. You go to meetings,  
7 you listen to John White or Dennis Wolcott  
8 [phonetic], they'll tell you, "oh, it's not  
9 about adult, schools are about children". You  
10 watch them and see if they really listen when  
11 children speak. They talk about numbers. The  
12 46%, the 52%, but when real children are in  
13 front of them, they don't hear it. They don't  
14 listen and they don't hear it. They ignore it.  
15 They ignore children. They ignore parents.  
16 They ignore teachers and it's proof that it's  
17 not about children first. It is about adults  
18 first, for them. The very people they attack,  
19 they teachers, for them, it's about children,  
20 not the people who are running this system. In  
21 fact, they are chopping school after school with  
22 a design and a plan. The idea is, they don't  
23 want to manage any schools. They want to turn  
24 every school in this city into some private  
25 hands, and I guarantee you, someone is making

1 money. They brag about the fact that charter  
2 schools are doing better than the very schools  
3 that they run. But what they're purposely  
4 misrunning schools on--intentional. That's  
5 where I disagree with my friends in the UFT that  
6 it's mismanagement, it is not mismanagement.  
7 They are brilliant managers, because they're  
8 doing exactly what they want to do. I'm sorry  
9 that my friends in the UFT don't take that  
10 position and understand that, this is a  
11 nationwide attack that's going on in Chicago, in  
12 L.A., all over the country and until, not only  
13 the parents wake up, but the UFT has to wake up  
14 also, and not treat it like the problem is Mr.  
15 White or Mr. Wolcott or Mr. Kline, they are  
16 irrelevant, it is a nationwide attack by the  
17 corporate interests that see money. Do you know  
18 how many billions of dollars are invested in  
19 public schools? They want that money and the  
20 idea is, this is an attack on the union so that  
21 they can pay teachers less and that is part of  
22 this scheme also. Thank you.

23 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Numbers 46-50  
24 please come to the front, numbers 46--I'm sorry.

25 MS. TAMMY OSEROV: My name is Tammy Oserov

1 [phonetic] and I'm on Community Board Eight  
2 and I represent a development that literally 69<sup>th</sup>  
3 Avenue is the dividing line that separates  
4 Jamaica High School zone and Francis Lewis High  
5 School zone. It is--I grew up in this area, it  
6 was a proud, proud image school, the Jamaica  
7 High School when I went to school. And the  
8 resources should be put here and not in the  
9 meeting that I went to two nights ago that  
10 sounded like four powder-puff, writing letters  
11 school and drawing and I couldn't even discuss  
12 anymore. The resources need to be put into this  
13 marvelous landmarked institution that they just  
14 are drooling to put their four schools in  
15 because look at this auditorium, it's amazing.  
16 What are they going to do next year when all of  
17 these schools are out and the kids are applying  
18 to no-zone schools? You have a list of 12 and  
19 you get your number 11<sup>th</sup> choice? It's unreal.  
20 Francis Lewis, the other high school that I  
21 represent in my development, they're bursting  
22 out of their seams. It's probably a hazard to  
23 walk through the hallways of over-crowding. God  
24 forbid something really happens. And you know  
25 what, it should not be that situation. - - make

1 it, you guys are doing this school proud, I am  
2 so proud of you. And shame on you DOE. Shame  
3 on you. Thank you.

4 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: You're up to  
5 number 45. If your number has already been  
6 passed, in the interest of time, in order for us  
7 to hear the remaining 50 speakers, we will not  
8 be able to go back. So we're at number 45.  
9 Please.

10 MS. HAZEL DREW: Good evening. My name is  
11 Hazel Drew [phonetic]. I am the parent of a  
12 former student of Jamaica High School and she is  
13 now--has an MBA. Her classmates are all  
14 doctors, lawyers, administrators. This is what  
15 Jamaica High School has done for these students.  
16 As a former president of the PTA of Jamaica High  
17 School, I'm appalled at the suggestion that this  
18 school be closed. The idea of closing a  
19 functioning single school and opening up three  
20 smaller schools seems to be prevalent only in  
21 the minority communities. If it is such a great  
22 idea, why isn't it being done over in Bayside  
23 and Forest Hills? What has been the result of  
24 similar action done to the former Andrew Jackson  
25 High School? There, we have an even worse

1 functioning complex that is educating even  
2 fewer students. This is what the Mayor and his  
3 archaic Department of Education sees as a  
4 solution. Jamaica High School has programs,  
5 which have successfully graduating students,  
6 such as the Gateway Program and the Finance  
7 Program, which have 100% graduation rates. Why  
8 not maintain these programs and work to improve  
9 the weaker programs? We have a new principal, a  
10 dedicated staff and enthusiastic students, a  
11 formula for success. They deserve a chance.  
12 You have budgeted \$1.7 million for the three new  
13 schools, but why not put that now into Jamaica  
14 High School? We need to have more outreach  
15 programs for the local community, which has a  
16 large immigrant population, who need to be  
17 educated about the system, so they can get  
18 involved. Jamaica High School has been the  
19 object of deliberate, negative press because of  
20 a vendetta between one of the editors of the  
21 papers and someone in the administration for  
22 years. This was the reason when I was PTA, I  
23 wrote positive articles for the chronicle  
24 newspaper to get the word out that this is a  
25 fine school and to encourage parents to send

1 their students here. This school should not  
2 be destroyed. Our students deserves better, our  
3 community deserves better, and any politician  
4 who disagrees is only after his own selfish  
5 interests. Do not destroy this fine school that  
6 has produced wonderful students. Thank you.

7 MR. JOHN LAWHEAD: Good evening. My name is  
8 John Lawhead [phonetic]. I'm a teacher and  
9 chapter leader at Samuel J. Tilden [phonetic]  
10 High School in Brooklyn and teachers at Tilden  
11 support the fight at Jamaica. We fought our  
12 fight and we lost. We will be phased out in  
13 June of this year, 2010. So I'm bringing you  
14 greetings from the graveyard. You don't want to  
15 be where we are. It really makes me sick and it  
16 breaks my heart. And I could tell you all the  
17 broken promises made to students and parents in  
18 closing schools. I was at Bushwick [phonetic],  
19 which was phased out and I was at Tilden, I  
20 heard all kinds of promises. Instead of a  
21 hearing like this, it was an information center  
22 where they reached out. They told us--they told  
23 the community about the small schools and they  
24 made all sorts of promises about how students  
25 would have opportunities to transfer to other

1 schools. And the people who made those  
2 promises are gone now. There was a deputy  
3 chancellor, there was a superintendent in  
4 Brooklyn who left the city within a year. You  
5 guys are part of something much larger than even  
6 this community and it's great. You should  
7 really look at the fliers about the events this  
8 month, about the city-wide rallies and let's  
9 join together. You certainly will feel about  
10 how large and growing this movement is because  
11 we are educators and we believe in finishing  
12 what we start. And this administration and this  
13 city government has the opposite viewpoint, they  
14 believe in destroying whatever they don't start.  
15 And we're going to show them that's wrong.

16 MS. LINDA CREESH: Hi everybody. My name is  
17 Linda Creesh [phonetic] and I stand here as a  
18 proud representative of the class of 1965. When  
19 I heard that Jamaica High School was closing my  
20 heart sunk. I had to come out tonight, but  
21 first I went up into my closet, into a box and I  
22 took out this. I was the president of the drama  
23 core and spent many wonderful days on that  
24 stage. I am also a former New York City  
25 elementary school principal. I also retired

1 from a Long Island school district, Port  
2 Washington. Let me tell you something, I'm  
3 talking to Mr. White, so listen to me.  
4 Community in Port Washington was told that Paul  
5 Shriver High School was going to be closed, they  
6 would be run out of town, that Board of Ed., on  
7 a rail because you don't do to people out there  
8 what you think you can do to people here. How  
9 dare you sit here with the passion in this  
10 auditorium, knowing that the clergy, the  
11 community, alumni, the students, the teachers,  
12 the whole Jamaica area, does not want this  
13 school to close, and you're going to sit there  
14 and you're going to tell them you're closing it  
15 anyway? I'll tell you what you better to do if  
16 you have a conscious Mr. White, you better go  
17 back to your boss tonight and you better tell  
18 him, "you know something Mr. Kline, we're doing  
19 the wrong thing".

20 [background noise]

21 MS. DENA GRODIN: Hello, my name is Dena  
22 Grodin [phonetic]. I've been a social studies  
23 at Jamaica. I'm celebrating a decade at  
24 Jamaica. A decade of riding the subways and  
25 walking up the hill with the kids of Jamaica.

1 Right, you look at me, I've never had a  
2 problem. But I'm here to give this to Mr. White  
3 on behalf of the community, the students, the  
4 parents, the teachers, the community activists  
5 here. We have a petition with hundreds of names  
6 for you to read to tell you, we want to keep our  
7 school open, we love Jamaica and we want this  
8 place to be around for decades to come.

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: If numbers 51-55  
10 could come down please, numbers 51-55.

11 MS. NICKI SURMOPOLIS: Good evening  
12 everyone. My name is Nicki Surmopolis  
13 [phonetic]. I am an ESL teacher. I have been  
14 in this building for over 24 years. I am also a  
15 former graduate. I graduated from this school,  
16 went to Queens College and then fresh out of  
17 Queens College came back to teach here and I  
18 want to finish my career here. There are many  
19 people who feel the same way I feel, but I am  
20 not here today to talk about myself. I am here  
21 on behalf of the ELL, English Language Learners,  
22 for whom we have worked so hard. This community  
23 is made up of so many people from different  
24 backgrounds. What is going to happen to those  
25 students? This is a very serious issue. These

1 parents do not understand what is going on.  
2 We need to represent them. That's why I'm here  
3 tonight. I want to know, where are these  
4 students going to go when these new schools open  
5 up? Is there going to be a guaranteed seat for  
6 these ELL students? It is very sad that after  
7 all these years, I have to talk about numbers  
8 such as this. You want numbers? I'll give you  
9 numbers. When I started teaching, the cap for  
10 my classes was 24 students and I had help. I  
11 had a para in my classroom. The numbers went  
12 down, no para, zero, but my student numbers went  
13 up, 35, 34 per classroom and still I was able to  
14 succeed. You have to give us a chance by giving  
15 us the resources we need.

16 MR. SAMUEL: Hello, my name is - - Samuel, I  
17 graduated in the class of 2008. I am 20-years-  
18 old. I have taught in this school. I have  
19 coached in this school. This school is not  
20 going anywhere. This is not a building, this is  
21 a home for people who come here to get away from  
22 whatever problems they might have at home. This  
23 is not just a building. This is a home for  
24 students. You guys say that the graduation rate  
25 was low, that was the first excuse you gave us.

1 That's how the graduation rate should be  
2 calculated, not based on the freshmen that come  
3 into this school, it's based on the students  
4 that are in the school their senior year. Learn  
5 your math. It is wrong what you're doing. The  
6 last part of my pledge of allegiance that I  
7 learned in the military says, one nation under  
8 God, with liberty and justice for all. You  
9 cannot justify what you are doing here. Think  
10 about that.

11 MS. DOREEN MOHAMED: Hello everybody, my  
12 name is Doreen Mohamed [phonetic]. I am a  
13 junior in the eleventh grade. I am in the  
14 Gateway Program. I have a 98.6 average. I'm  
15 probably going to be the valedictorian and they  
16 claim our school is failing. What makes up a  
17 school? I ask you guys, what makes up a school?  
18 Students make up a school. You guys are saying  
19 students are failing. I'm failing? You call  
20 students failing? Just 2008 when I was a  
21 freshman, this boy got into Harvard, \$25,000  
22 scholarship from Coca-Cola, you call that  
23 failing? You call that failing? What else  
24 makes a school? Teachers. So you're saying  
25 that teachers are failing. The teachers of this

1 school helped me do so well on the regents.  
2 Ms. Mary Ellis [phonetic] was my living in the  
3 environment teacher. I didn't even study for  
4 that regents. I got a 92, that's how talented  
5 she was. You call that failing? The school is  
6 not failing. We have budget cuts, we are barely  
7 getting any money, yet the teachers help us so  
8 much. We still have AP courses, we have so many  
9 more, we lost all of them because of budget  
10 cuts. We had so many good teachers. Our law  
11 coordinator, Mr. Rule, we lost him, why? Budget  
12 cuts. It's not fair. You guys are mistreating  
13 us. You're not giving us the chance and you  
14 guys claim we're failing. I wonder why we're  
15 failing. This school doesn't deserve to be  
16 closed down, that's not the solution. Students  
17 aren't graduating, okay, but are they going to  
18 be admitted in the new schools that are opened  
19 here? I don't think so. You guys are going to  
20 accept the high average students and then what's  
21 going to happen to those kids? Maybe they'll  
22 end up in Van Burden, John Adams and then what?  
23 Maybe those school graduation rates will go down  
24 because those schools are already troubled due  
25 to lack of funding. So then in the end they're

1 not helping the students who need the help.  
2 The right people are being mistreated. This is  
3 not fair, this is wrong, this is unjust.

4 MS. GEORGIA LEGNUM: My name is Georgia  
5 Legnum [phonetic]. I'm a teacher in Bryant High  
6 School. I am here because we are in this  
7 together. This is not only about Jamaica High  
8 School, it is about all the big community high  
9 schools. I wanted to ask a few questions. Now,  
10 I know you don't give answers, but I do want you  
11 to hear my questions. For one, I was wondering  
12 if you have done any statistical analysis about  
13 the impact of what you do has on the other  
14 schools in the community? I am afraid that  
15 Bryant High School will be next. I was  
16 wondering if you have done any analysis, any  
17 study on the impact that this has on the  
18 cohesiveness of the community? Because the  
19 heart--one of the hearts of the community  
20 actually beats in the neighborhood high schools.  
21 I was wondering if you care. I know you know,  
22 but I was wondering if you care about what you  
23 do is going to do to teachers that are going to  
24 become ATRs. I know you want them out of the  
25 system. I know you know that they cannot find

1 another job easily because their salary will  
2 be listed on the application that they give to  
3 any high school. And last, I do wonder if you--  
4 I read an article actually in the *New York Times*  
5 January 17<sup>th</sup>, maybe you should go back and read  
6 it. It was about hedge fund managers, coming  
7 into manage New York City high schools. I could  
8 not believe this. People making \$200-300,000  
9 right now to manage New York City high schools.  
10 And I wonder, okay, I wonder, how could you  
11 trust their ability given what they have done to  
12 the economy and how could you trust their  
13 motives given what they have done to this  
14 economy. Thank you.

15 MR. KAMAL KALIN: Good evening everyone. My  
16 name is Kamal Kalin [phonetic]. I'm a 2005  
17 graduate. I'm a living testament that Jamaica  
18 High School works. I'm a full-time employee at  
19 UPS. I also referee the high school football  
20 for PSAO. This school has taught me about life.  
21 There are many life oriented things that I  
22 learned in this school, such as forensic  
23 science. I also learned chemistry, many of the  
24 things that the other schools don't teach you.  
25 I also learned law from Mr. Rule. A lot of my

1 good teachers, you guys got rid of them. Mr.  
2 Rule, Ms. Cox, these are the people that taught  
3 me stuff that helped me on later on in life.  
4 And I'm going to let you know that life, isn't  
5 small. Life is real. And what you're doing  
6 isn't real and we have to realize that if we  
7 want people to grow up within - - within society  
8 that will leave them in real life situations.  
9 Thank you.

10 RACHEL: Hi, my name is Rachel and I'm a  
11 senior at Jamaica High School. We are starting  
12 an alliance with different schools because unity  
13 is the key to winning this. And right now we  
14 have an alliance with Beach Channel and we're  
15 going to aim for other schools who are closing.  
16 I want to also remind you guys about January  
17 21<sup>st</sup>, we would like to go to Mayor Bloomberg's  
18 house and protest because we--and we need  
19 supporters okay, so we want you guys to come out  
20 all right. The alliance is in full support of  
21 the UFT and if these schools fall it will damage  
22 the UFT. Okay. Also, to me, four principals in  
23 one building is a waste of over a half of  
24 million dollars and when I'm 18, I will vote  
25 against any politician who supports wasting my

1 tax dollars. Thank you.

2 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Could I have  
3 numbers 55-60 come up to the front please?  
4 Fifty-five through 60.

5 MR. ANDRE KALIN: Good evening everyone. My  
6 name is Mr. Andre Kalin [phonetic]. I'm a  
7 former PTA president of Jamaica High School.  
8 First, before I say what I have to say, I want  
9 to applaud all of my Jamaica High School PTA  
10 presidents that showed up today and that's one  
11 thing that the DOE should take into account.  
12 That you have PTA presidents from all eras to  
13 show up tonight once they heard about this. I'm  
14 also a proud member--I have three children who  
15 went through the Board of Ed system, three of my  
16 children have graduated from high school through  
17 the Board--

18 [END 154\_486a\_Part\_3\_of\_3.mp3]

19 [START 154\_486b.mp3]

20 FEMALE VOICE 4: --you, my solution to you  
21 is listen to what is good. We have a program  
22 called Gateway, we have a program called  
23 Finance, we have a program called Robotics. We  
24 have success here and let's work together to get  
25 the success to where we need this high school to

1 stay. Little schools may be in some places,  
2 but this high school is majestic. I am  
3 instrumental for helping to landmark this  
4 building. I bust my ass to re-zone this  
5 community. I have a baby coming and I have two  
6 at home, so I want my child to go to this  
7 school. So you're telling me that a five-year-  
8 old and a four-year-old that will grow up, and  
9 this child-to-be-due, I want them to come here.  
10 This population does have an English deficiency  
11 where we don't understand, where we can't  
12 comprehend, because it's not in the multiple  
13 language. So I say to you, the solution is,  
14 let's work together, keep it the big high school  
15 that it is, solve the problems that are there  
16 and I've got the solution, I'm at your round  
17 table, listen to them.

18 MS. FRANCINE KALIN: My name is Francine  
19 Kalin [phonetic]. I teach here at Jamaica High  
20 School. I have been here in the early '90s when  
21 we were supposed to be one of the better schools  
22 in Jamaica. I can contest to where this school  
23 is and how it is doing, and I think I can do it  
24 quite better than those who have just come into  
25 office. You have people who are coming in,

1 supposedly telling teachers how to teach  
2 their classes, and they've gone through these  
3 schools with Mayor Bloomberg. How are you going  
4 to have somebody go through his academy and tell  
5 me who has a Master's degree, what to do? How  
6 are you going to come into my classroom and tell  
7 me how to teach my children? Each child is an  
8 individual. Each child learns a different way.  
9 I cannot teach every child the same way. I  
10 cannot have people coming into my building and  
11 telling me that I am not teaching my children  
12 how they want me to teach them. I don't teach  
13 my children how anyone, Mayor Bloomberg, Kline,  
14 anybody, President Obama, anyone tells me how to  
15 teach my children. I teach my children  
16 according to what they need and how dare you.  
17 How dare you have the audacity to come in here  
18 and want to close my school with my kids when  
19 I'm the one who comes in here before 8:00 in the  
20 morning and I do not leave this building before  
21 5:00-6:00 working. How are you going to tell me  
22 that my school is failing? We work hard. Our  
23 children work hard and you need to take that  
24 into consideration.

25 MR. KEVIN FORRESTER: Good evening. My name

1 is Kevin Forrester [phonetic] and I'm the  
2 president of the Hillcrest Estate Civic  
3 Association, just north of the school. The  
4 Department of Education has stated that the  
5 sufficient--that there has not been sufficient  
6 improvement made to the graduation rate at  
7 Jamaica High School. However, they appointed a  
8 new principal Mr. Hand [phonetic] to start in  
9 September 7, 2007. I believe it is reasonable  
10 to assume that the overwhelming majority of the  
11 then eleventh and twelfth grade students who did  
12 not graduate on time were already significantly  
13 behind academically. That there was any  
14 improvement is an accomplishment in and of  
15 itself. Mr. Hand asked the students to work  
16 with their teachers and him to get educated. It  
17 was working and should be given time. To close  
18 Jamaica High School is to turn our backs in the  
19 face of the great many students who have  
20 answered his challenge. I'd just like to say  
21 some remarks to the Department of Education in  
22 writing that contradict what they say verbally.  
23 It is based on the Quality Review Report of  
24 2008-2009, part two. The principal has been  
25 very successful in establishing a calm and

1 respectful environment within the school,  
2 which has demonstrated through the strenuous  
3 climate, studious climate in the classroom.  
4 Based upon the principal's vision for a  
5 successful learning community, the school has  
6 used that that are effectively to make strategy  
7 decisions about the future direction of the  
8 school. The school has newly established goal  
9 setting system, which provides students with  
10 regularly updated individual education plans,  
11 which include long-term and interm goals based  
12 on extensive data and collaboration with  
13 guidance counselors and parents. The school  
14 checks progress at regular check points using a  
15 variety of data sources to determine areas of  
16 need and improvement. Jamaica High School has  
17 turned the corner, given time to excel, don't  
18 stop the hard work that it took a long time to  
19 establish, keep the school open and let it  
20 excel. Thank you.

21 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Number 66-70  
22 please number 66-70. Number 66-70.

23 FEMALE VOICE 4: Hello. My name is - - . I  
24 am a freshman Gateway student at Jamaica High  
25 School. I have come to only one of these

1 meetings before coming here today and that  
2 was on the 16<sup>th</sup> and then I never even got to  
3 finish what I wanted to say because I didn't  
4 want to hold up the line, but as you can see now  
5 it took so long that there is no line left,  
6 people have already left. So on the 17<sup>th</sup>, on the  
7 day after, I have written a 6.5 page speech on  
8 every single thing that I was not able to say an  
9 I have come here since 5:50 p.m. waiting for my  
10 turn and I have respected every person who has  
11 come up today and I expect the same respect in  
12 return from the people here. - - I do not want  
13 my time to be limited. Jamaica High School is a  
14 New York City landmark. It has stood here for  
15 118 years and it kind of hurts me to know that  
16 it's being closed down because of rumors that  
17 aren't really true and people know that and  
18 they're just denying it. And, for every single  
19 meeting that has come to be for this, everyone  
20 has pointed out everything that I wanted to say  
21 and yet it's being ignored because people here  
22 are being stubborn. And I have come up with  
23 one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight,  
24 nine, 10, 11, 12, 13 points that have already  
25 said and they're being ignored and it's kind of

1 annoying me now. And I want to know why  
2 people are being so stubborn. And I mean no  
3 disrespect when I talk and you people are going  
4 to vote if our school is going to close and I  
5 respect your decision about what you're going to  
6 vote for, but I don't want you to vote because  
7 you're being told to vote what you're voting  
8 for. I want you to believe what you vote for.  
9 I want you to honestly say--I want you to  
10 honestly tell me that you believe that Jamaica  
11 High School should close after what you have  
12 heard here today. The people here haven't just  
13 come here to insult you or to get mad at you.  
14 They are only mad at you because you are trying  
15 to end this Jamaica High School legacy.

16 [Pause]

17 FEMALE VOICE 4: All I want to say is that  
18 when you vote during the end of this month,  
19 please vote what you truly what you believe and  
20 not what you're told. I mean no disrespect and  
21 I'm sorry if I have insulted any of you guys,  
22 all I want to say is, vote for what you do, but  
23 don't vote because you're told to.

24 FEMALE VOICE 5: It's not evening anymore,  
25 so it's goodnight. Goodnight Jamaica. I am a

1       sophomore student of Jamaica High School.  
2       This high school provides us with many great  
3       programs like financing, engineering and law. I  
4       myself study law. Now, if you put these four  
5       schools here, how can I succeed in my studies?  
6       If you don't have these programs--will you? Are  
7       you going to provide me with the program that I  
8       came in this school for? I waited three years  
9       because I wanted a school with law, a school  
10      that I could be comfortable in. Say if I wasn't  
11      ready to do law, I could do finance. They have  
12      these programs for me. When you put these  
13      schools in, will they have it for me? Tell me  
14      here now, that they will have these programs,  
15      that I will be satisfied in what I need to do  
16      because I came here for a reason and if I am to  
17      graduate from a school with the program I am not  
18      ready to do out there in life, I'm not going to  
19      be happy. This is why there's people out there  
20      that don't enjoy their jobs, that don't go home  
21      happy, that don't walk in with a smile on their  
22      face. I walk into this school every day with a  
23      smile on my face and a glow on my heart, so if  
24      you're going to put these schools in here,  
25      you're going to subject 500, since they only

1 have 500 for each school, where are my  
2 friends going to go? Where am I going to go?  
3 Am I one of the 500 that's going to leave? Are  
4 you going to take me out? Am I not succeeding  
5 to your level, for your charter schools? I  
6 don't think so. I did not go to a charter  
7 school because I do not want to be subjected for  
8 one of those. I may not have to study as fast  
9 as everybody else, but you know these teachers,  
10 they help me. Ms. Kalin [phonetic] was my last  
11 year's teacher. This lady supported me all the  
12 way. And you can't just take her out, you can't  
13 take me out or anybody else and you're going to  
14 hear me out. All right. Ya'll just do what  
15 ya'll got to do.

16 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Number 71-75  
17 please come to the front, 71-75.

18 MS. SUSAN SUTERO: My name is Susan Sutero  
19 [phonetic] and I've been at Jamaica High School  
20 for 25 years, proud from day one. This place is  
21 something very, very special and I think the  
22 beginning of the evening showed much of that.  
23 I'm going on record, though many of the people  
24 here who were here earlier they were students of  
25 mine. I got more hugs tonight, I got to go home

1 and use Purell because I'm going to get the  
2 flu like nobody's business. I speak more for  
3 the thousands, thousands of students I've had  
4 over the years who, when they walk through this  
5 building, do feel like they've come home again.  
6 And Carlos, who was here earlier said, he felt  
7 like he came home again. He hasn't been here in  
8 awhile either. The Webrin [phonetic] brothers  
9 were here. They said the same thing. Mr.  
10 Comrie [phonetic], same thing. Jamaica High  
11 School is different. When they told us awhile  
12 ago that we had issues, we got a new principal,  
13 the issues of violence were taken care of, we  
14 got off that list. Now, we have go out and  
15 recruit students and let them know that we are  
16 up and coming again. We do that, we spend a  
17 very good amount of time in the middle schools  
18 speaking, not us because the adults don't sell  
19 schools, our students sell schools and they  
20 represent us, and kids come. So our attendance  
21 or our incoming freshman, that went up. We  
22 introduced new programs, the principal brought  
23 in three new programs that other people have  
24 spoken about. They have not yet been given a  
25 chance to flourish like Gateway and Finance

1 have. Give us our ability to run a school, a  
2 school that gives everyone a chance to graduate,  
3 whether it takes four years, six years, time and  
4 a half for ESL, double time for the students  
5 with special needs. Thank you.

6 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Number 76-80.

7 MR. ROBERT SOKOLOFF: Hi. This isn't about  
8 you guys, this is about the students. Okay. My  
9 name is Robert Sokoloff [phonetic], you walk  
10 down the hall, my name is up on the wall, it's  
11 one of them little brass names on there under  
12 1976 okay. This is about you. They didn't  
13 think you'd know there was going to be a fight.  
14 They didn't think you'd be ready for a fight.  
15 They didn't think you could win a fight, but  
16 what they didn't know was that nobody who goes  
17 to Jamaica goes down without a fight okay. Now,  
18 Mr. White, I'll get to you in just a minute.  
19 You guys are beautiful, your spirit is  
20 beautiful, congratulations on all of those  
21 championships. Your parents, your friends, your  
22 teachers, your alumni brothers and sisters are  
23 all with you. We will be there on the 21<sup>st</sup> of  
24 January. Now I'm going to speak to that  
25 gentleman for a second. Mr. White, you got a

1 lot of guts coming here, they're throwing  
2 stones and everything at you. In one thousand  
3 years I'll have the same sympathy for you I have  
4 for the guy who nailed Jesus to the cross. I  
5 know it's tough, you've got a job nobody wants.  
6 That wonderful young woman over here who said,  
7 do what your heart tells you to do, I know  
8 you're going to learn a lesson because this is a  
9 different place and it's a different school and  
10 it--old. All right, my time is up. Mr. White,  
11 do what's right. Jamaica. Jamaica. Jamaica.

12 FEMALE VOICE 5: Good evening ladies and  
13 gentlemen. I know you all have a tough job, but  
14 I want to tell you a little something about  
15 Jamaica High School. I'm a parent of two  
16 students of Jamaica High School. My son  
17 graduated from the Gateway Program in the top 10  
18 in 2006. He graduated at Hunter College at 21  
19 with a Bachelor's in science and art and now,  
20 he's doing his Masters. I'm begging my little  
21 son that's in the audience here tonight and his  
22 older brother is begging him to transfer out of  
23 Jamaica High School and go to Baruch and he  
24 said, "no, I don't want to, I want to finish  
25 here in Jamaica High School". Search your heart

1        tonight. Bring your awareness to the middle  
2        of your chest, that's where your consciousness  
3        lies and when you make a decision, don't make it  
4        on your job, just go into your heart, put  
5        yourself in these students' shoes, put your  
6        heart in the shoes of these teachers and the  
7        parents that live in this neighborhood and how  
8        much this school means to the minorities that  
9        live in this neighborhood. We don't have a  
10       better school than Jamaica High School because  
11       when everyone else refuses our children, Jamaica  
12       High School embraced them with open arms. I  
13       want to thank you tonight for listening to me.

14                DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Numbers 81-85,  
15       please come to the front, 81-85.

16                MS. JASMINE LOPEZ: --Jasmine Lopez, I  
17       attend Jamaica--I'm here to support Jamaica High  
18       School. I live in Brooklyn, but every morning I  
19       wake up at 4:00 in the morning to come to  
20       Jamaica High School for the simple fact that I  
21       love Jamaica High School. I believe that the  
22       Department of Education is being very unfair and  
23       the decision of closing our school. Jamaica  
24       High School is a great school. I am a freshman  
25       in this school and in the few months that I have

1       been attending this school, I have learned so  
2       much. The Board of Ed and Kline say we are  
3       failing, but you try it and try to succeed. I  
4       say keep Jamaica open and the Board of Ed say we  
5       don't care, the real statement is, they don't  
6       care. Mr. White, I'm talking to you, excuse me,  
7       can you look at me? Anyways, they also said  
8       that we are failing. We're going to see who's  
9       going to fail when this school is going to  
10      remain open.

11           MR. GUSTOV MEDINA: Good evening. My name  
12      is Gustov Medina [phonetic] and I'm a retired  
13      teacher. I worked for the Board of Education  
14      for 35 years. We had to support the students,  
15      the teachers, the parents, this community, so  
16      keep Jamaica High School open okay. What I  
17      would like to do right now is address mostly the  
18      students from Jamaica High School and all the  
19      young people here because what we have here is a  
20      lesson on democracy. We already had three  
21      meetings right here in this very auditorium.  
22      The parents that spoke up and they presented the  
23      points of view very clearly that we heard  
24      tonight. There also has been meetings in  
25      different parts of the city, right. We also

1 voted in this resolution. We voted  
2 unanimately for this resolution, so this is  
3 democracy. This is what democracy looks like.  
4 On the other hand, we have the Board of  
5 Education, I should call it the Department of  
6 Un-Education. They have all these meetings,  
7 secret agendas, the plans to close the schools  
8 have been going on for a few years back, but  
9 they never told the community, they never told  
10 the parents okay. They have a group called the  
11 Public Education Policy Members appointed--  
12 mostly appointed by the manager. If any one of  
13 those members disagrees with the policies of the  
14 manager they get fired, and that has happened  
15 already okay. So this is--what we're talking  
16 about is this democracy okay. This looks more  
17 like a dictatorship okay. Kline and Bloomberg  
18 are not educators okay, they have their own  
19 agenda, not the agenda of us, not the agenda of  
20 the people and we have to learn that. We have  
21 to learn from our own experience what is  
22 democracy. I just want to end that with this,  
23 if we go home and think that just coming here,  
24 that that's going to be enough, okay, they're  
25 going to go home and they're going to do

1 whatever they want to do. A lot of people  
2 say that this is a done deal already okay, we  
3 have to keep up with the pressure. We have to  
4 continue to struggle and join with other  
5 schools, join with other communities. We cannot  
6 keep up okay. Please, we have to continue to  
7 put pressure on them. Thank you.

8 MS. RUBY SELLIS: Hi, my name is Ruby Sellis  
9 [phonetic], I'm a senior at this school. Well,  
10 yeah. Just to let you know, this school is not  
11 going down without a fight. You're trying to  
12 shut us down, but I'm telling you, you will get  
13 something in return and mainly, this is a  
14 meeting for, so you can know our opinion, so why  
15 isn't Chancellor Kline here to listen to us?  
16 He's supposed to be here to listen to what we  
17 got to say. Instead, he's probably out doing  
18 God knows what. He's scared because he knows  
19 that what we got to say is the truth. All  
20 they're doing is making up lies and I don't know  
21 where you all is getting this from. I'll be  
22 truthful, Jamaica High School is like a second  
23 home to me. All the teachers out here, they're  
24 like my parents. My mom moved to New Jersey, I  
25 told her, I want to stay here so I can finish my

1 school here. I want to get a Jamaica High  
2 School diploma. Not only that, but you guys are  
3 letting go of great teachers. For example, a  
4 lot of law students will know Mr. Rule, he was  
5 like, oh my God, he taught us great and not only  
6 that, but if you guys are going to be phasing  
7 out the school like you guys say, we're also  
8 going to be losing other teachers. Mr. Palisko  
9 [phonetic], he might end up leaving and then  
10 when--we might not have a senior lounge anymore  
11 where we can go and we can hang out during our  
12 lunch periods. So that some of us don't even  
13 like to go to our lunch, so we just go to him.  
14 Not only that, but unfortunately, and lately,  
15 Ms. McKently [phonetic] might go and she is a  
16 great global history teacher. She's also my  
17 favorite teacher too and it's like, I don't even  
18 understand why ya'll doing this for charter  
19 schools? The smaller the school gets, the more  
20 pissed off some people might be because they got  
21 to share the school with other schools. And you  
22 guys say that we're a dangerous school? You'll  
23 find out how dangerous the charter schools are,  
24 they're going to be more dangerous than us. So,  
25 yeah like I said, you guys are not going to stop

1 hearing from us. And trust me, you will have  
2 other schools with us too.

3 MALE VOICE 6: One of the things we teach  
4 here at Jamaica High School is democracy okay  
5 and I think that's why you have so many people  
6 who showed up tonight, so many people--many  
7 people may have already left, but people came  
8 out tonight to show support, not only for  
9 Jamaica High School students, but for the  
10 community okay. We have the students who came  
11 out this evening, we have parents, community  
12 members, a total support network of people, part  
13 of this community. So Jamaica High School is a  
14 part of this community and people want to see  
15 this building and this school remain open,  
16 that's what the people want and in a democracy,  
17 I think you guys already know, you should know,  
18 that the people rule. People have decided  
19 tonight, and I think in all fairness have  
20 expressed to you, that they want this building  
21 open in our community, in our community. We  
22 know you don't live here, now maybe you do, but  
23 I don't think so, you don't look like you do  
24 okay, but this is our community, we like for  
25 Jamaica High School to remain open, to continue

1 doing business as long as we can have the  
2 resources and support that we deserve from the  
3 taxpaying parents, the taxpayers in this  
4 community who support this government in this  
5 city. So we need support, we want to remain  
6 open and we need you guys to do the right thing,  
7 whether you live in Jamaica or not. Please,  
8 work with us, not against us. Thank you.

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Numbers 86-90  
10 please come down, 86-90.

11 ELSIE: Hi, I'm Elsie [phonetic] and I want  
12 to say you plan to phase this school out and I  
13 say go ahead. You lied to us before and you're  
14 lying to us now. That shows that you're scared.  
15 You don't want to tell us the truth. We're  
16 planning to fight. We're going to fight until  
17 this is over. Tell Joe Kline that if he wants a  
18 fight, well he got one.

19 MALE VOICE 6: I appreciated those comments  
20 from that lady right there. That's what I'm  
21 here to say. 1962 graduated Jamaica High, was  
22 All-City track scholarship, have trophies out  
23 there right now in the glass, my mother  
24 graduated here, my sister graduated here, I used  
25 to sing every morning with the choir, the famous

1 Jamaica choir on this stage, my brother, the  
2 same thing, All-City high school. There has  
3 been nothing that had the impact on my life as  
4 Jamaica High and everyone I know who came here.  
5 We will come out and fight with you until the  
6 end. Now listen to this, when the 1960s came  
7 there was no school in New York City as ardent  
8 and strident in their fight for civil rights and  
9 for changing the way things were in this city  
10 like Jamaica High. You seem to have that fire,  
11 keep that fire and get more people involved.  
12 Now listen to me, they bankrupted this city  
13 through the Federal Reserve that's only in New  
14 York, not the whole Federal Reserve across the  
15 country, only in New York so that they could get  
16 financial institutions to become a part of banks  
17 and banks to become a part of investment  
18 companies. That's why they did it. They now  
19 have that. You could never have met a bank the  
20 same as a stockbrokerage home, you have it now  
21 because they did that damage to our economy.  
22 They are doing that damage to Jamaica High and  
23 the other schools so they can privatize these  
24 schools. They want to own them, they want them  
25 to be private, they don't want them to be public

1 and they will takeaway, takeaway until you  
2 buckle at the knees. You've been successful and  
3 not failed. They said you failed before they  
4 could get you to fail, but when you fail they  
5 can take it. So be aware that you've got a  
6 bigger fight here now. As he lied and took away  
7 the school leadership teams that were supposed  
8 to make all the determination in every school in  
9 this city. It changed when they - - to the  
10 Albany and it came back down here, that's not  
11 the way it was written. The - - taxpayer,  
12 you're the taxpayer, you determine everything in  
13 the school and the law said both the program and  
14 the budget. If that's so, it wasn't changed,  
15 you would have determined how this school is  
16 used and you still can, take back the right. It  
17 came out of Washington, not out of the Mayor's  
18 office, so take it back, get busy and we'll  
19 bring the support we can bring you.

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Numbers 91-95  
21 please come down, 91-95.

22 ANTHONY: My name is Anthony - - and I'm the  
23 president of the Community Education Council for  
24 District 25, one of the neighboring districts,  
25 but yet we care a lot about Jamaica High School.

1 We had a talk about this in our meeting  
2 yesterday and I've been reading a lot of  
3 articles and I'm really concerned. Our district  
4 is a very high performing school--high  
5 performing district and we see best practices.  
6 This thing can be changed. This thing can be  
7 changed by rearranging some things within the  
8 same management structure. You could promote  
9 teachers from within, make them assistant  
10 principals, and monitor the children who really  
11 need the assistance. You could focus on the  
12 child, not focus on the boss. You could--  
13 English language learning children need special  
14 assistance. It takes about five years for a  
15 child to learn a new language. It's a big  
16 change. Teenage years are difficult years.  
17 There are a lot of things that we need to factor  
18 in while you study this change, and you're going  
19 to jeopardize the school if you break it down.  
20 The spirit of the school, of the hundreds of  
21 speakers who have spoken before us, the spirit  
22 of the school is very evident. You see some  
23 great character, you see some amazing history,  
24 remarkable culture and a terrific community  
25 involvement. These are core strengths that you

1 need to capitalize on and you have the assets  
2 within the system. Focus on the child, don't  
3 focus on the boss. Thank you.

4 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Can I have numbers  
5 96-107 come down? Ninety-six through 107, 96-  
6 107, please.

7 JERRY: Hi everyone. My name is Jerry. I  
8 teach English here at Jamaica High School and  
9 I'm also the school's yearbook advisor. '03,  
10 '04 and '05 I worked in a small high school, it  
11 was seven to 12 grade. I won't mention the name  
12 of the school, but I'll tell you, I was very  
13 close with those students and we had pizza  
14 conversations, we had coffee conversations and  
15 we had tea conversations. The chief complaint  
16 was a lack of resources, activities, clubs,  
17 teams. As a matter of fact, there wasn't any  
18 clubs, teams, academies in the school. I came  
19 here to Jamaica High School in '06, became the  
20 yearbook advisor and the first thing I noticed,  
21 the first thing my yearbook committee and I  
22 noticed was the high activities, the high  
23 involvement, the high moral, the high  
24 motivation. That can't be ended. We can't let  
25 this happen. Thank you.

1           DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: Again, I just  
2 want to say one last time 96-107 and after this  
3 107 that will be the end of the speaker's list.  
4 Thank you.

5           FEMALE VOICE 6: I appreciate you being here  
6 and sitting through this. I know it cannot be  
7 easy. I want to acknowledge that. What I  
8 propose - - High School - - Jamaica High School  
9 three years to continue to show you and to show  
10 the DOE their growth. We're saying the numbers  
11 you have, the data is not correct. I'm asking  
12 the parents of this community, - - the students  
13 at - - give it - - investigate for yourself a  
14 little further. I know everybody has given you  
15 a lot of information and paperwork and data is  
16 coming from all over. I'm asking you to look  
17 for yourself, take another look or you know what  
18 they say, outside group to come in and look and  
19 then the information that we're saying is  
20 correct, and we believe it is, give Jamaica High  
21 School three more years to show you and to show  
22 the DOE that they will continue to grow. - -  
23 the small schools - - . When you put the small  
24 schools here that they came and said--I sat in  
25 some of the meetings where they were talking

1 about the schools that they wanted to put - -  
2 . The people who want to put the schools here  
3 first of all, were extremely inexperienced. The  
4 programs may be okay, it needs a lot of work and  
5 growth, they're not ready for September.  
6 They're no where near ready for September and  
7 the administrators or the people who came with  
8 their plan, they're inexperienced. They may  
9 have educational backgrounds, but there's no  
10 administrative experience at all. It takes a  
11 lot more than I think what they have. I'm  
12 asking you as the president of the Parents  
13 Association representing the parents, give it  
14 another opportunity to watch the growth.  
15 Investigate for yourself and see. The small  
16 schools that you put here, they said, I think a  
17 half a second they said they're looking at in  
18 September somewhere between 108 and 115, if they  
19 put that starting in September and they're  
20 looking at that for the next four years as they  
21 go forth, you're going to cut out and eliminate  
22 this community from union term - - clear over to  
23 Fox or somewhere way over there. - - or more  
24 students that will be misplaced. I'm telling  
25 you that's worth reconsidering. So I'm asking

1 you to reconsider. Investigate for yourself,  
2 get an outside group to look and see if our  
3 numbers are what we say they are before the  
4 final decision is made.

5 MALE VOICE 5: Good evening everybody. I'm  
6 - - and - - school. - - as you all know every -  
7 - have the same level of learning skills. Some  
8 students can catch up with the class easily and  
9 some students can't, but our proficient teachers  
10 never gives up on any of their students. They  
11 try to explain and teach us with their best  
12 efforts. Last year, while I was a freshman, I  
13 stood in second rank in two science fair  
14 competitions, one was held in Nassau Community  
15 College and another in Queens College. - - as  
16 I'm a new immigrant, without my teacher's help  
17 and effort, it would have been impossible for me  
18 to win in two science fair competitions. What I  
19 want to inform the Department of Education is  
20 that please, help us to improve our learning  
21 skills by increasing our funds, which will help  
22 and not by closing the schools and building  
23 minor schools, which will not help us at all and  
24 not even students in future. Thank you.

25 MS. SUSAN SHIROMA: Last chance for anybody

1 under 102. Good evening. My name is Susan  
2 Shiroma [phonetic]. I'm a very tired, angry,  
3 Asian woman and I wanted to let you know, I am  
4 part of this community. I've lived in the part  
5 of Jamaica that is zoned for Jamaica High School  
6 for about 25 years now. My husband's family  
7 grew up practically down the block from Jamaica.  
8 My perspective tonight is that of former PTA  
9 president at a very large middle school that  
10 feeds into Jamaica High School like many of the  
11 other parent speakers, I've served on your  
12 community district education councils, but  
13 tonight, from my heart, I am here as a parent  
14 witness. I have spent the last two years of my  
15 life at--that's my life, after 5:00 p.m. and it  
16 stops about 11:00, as a parent volunteer serving  
17 on the city-wide council of high schools.  
18 Monica Ayuso is now your Queen's rep. For the  
19 last two years I was the president of the city-  
20 wide council on high schools and then the  
21 Queen's rep., so for 24 months, one Wednesday  
22 night every month we would have hearings at  
23 Tweed, at which various DOE administrators would  
24 present to the parents aspects of public policy  
25 in the City of New York as it affects high

1 schools. I've had the opportunity to look at  
2 small high schools and visit some big high  
3 schools in every burrow of the city, I think  
4 with the exception of Stanton Island and I'm  
5 telling you, we've had over five years of small  
6 high schools and in this vibrant Jamaica  
7 community, the small high schools that the DOE  
8 is considering, replacing Jamaica High School  
9 with, won't cut it for what we need here. We  
10 need a large academic, comprehensive high school  
11 and no matter what people say about the  
12 graduation rate, you are not being ambushed at  
13 Jamaica High School. You have been targeted as  
14 part of a systematic Department of Education,  
15 policy initiative to erase the large academic  
16 comprehensive high schools. You need to call  
17 Helen Marshal [phonetic] five times a day  
18 because she controls the vote at the PEP panel.  
19 You need to call all of the politicians and tell  
20 them that you won't stand for it, because  
21 waiting until the last minute in January to get  
22 out and protest doesn't cut it at the CCH  
23 meetings or at the PEP panels. We need the  
24 politicians to back us now, especially Helen  
25 Marshal, so please call her.

1 MR. ALBERT WALKER: Good evening and  
2 Happy New Year to everyone. My name is Albert  
3 Walker [phonetic]. I'm an interior designer and  
4 I'm also a local historian here in Queens. And  
5 two things, Mr. White, the DOE was not  
6 established to interfere with the fabric of the  
7 society and social makeup of communities. The  
8 reason why this school was designated a  
9 landmark, not only because of its architecture,  
10 but because of what it has meant to the  
11 community. My older siblings graduated from  
12 this school more than 50 years ago, they still  
13 speak about this school as though they graduated  
14 from it yesterday. Also, if you are closing 20  
15 schools in this system, that reflects on the DOE  
16 every bit as much as it does on the schools if  
17 they are truly failing and that gives the DOE  
18 low marks, not high marks. And just to let you  
19 know something about the kind of people that  
20 Jamaica High produced, an hour and a half ago my  
21 older sister spoke at this microphone, she had  
22 on a teal colored sweater and a black knit hat,  
23 her name was Barbara Walker, she graduated from  
24 Jamaica High in 1950. She retired after 25  
25 years as a diplomat with the United Nations, as

1 Chief of Civilian Affairs for the  
2 Peacekeeping forces of the United Nations. Now,  
3 that example of success is not typical, but what  
4 is typical is that the overwhelming majority of  
5 students that have graduated from Jamaica High  
6 School have had successful lives and careers.  
7 Thank you very much.

8 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR WHITE: That concludes  
9 this evening's hearing. Thank you very much for  
10 all of your comments. If you'd like to submit a  
11 written comment, you can do so on the DOE's  
12 website under the section entitled "panel for  
13 educational policy". Thank you very much.

14 [END 154\_486b.mp3]  
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C E R T I F I C A T E

1  
2           The prior proceedings were transcribed from  
3 audio files and have been transcribed to the  
4 best of my ability.

5  
6           Signature     Pauline Raghubir    

7           Date   January 11, 2010  

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10           The prior proceedings were transcribed from  
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12 best of my ability.

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14           Signature     Lynn M. Wood    

15           Date   January 11, 2010  

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