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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - OFFICE OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**
New Day Academy
January 14, 2010

1 [START 154_541_A.MP3]

2 MS. KATHLEEN GRIMM: Could I have your
3 attention, please? We're going to start this
4 proceeding right now. Hello? May I have your
5 attention? Take your seats. Thank you. All
6 right, good evening.

7 Thank you very much for coming tonight to
8 this joint public hearing for the proposed
9 phase-out and eventual closure of New Day
10 Academy. Yes, we're going to make an
11 announcement now regarding translations.

12 MALE VOICE: Buenos noches - - necessita
13 traducion en Espanol. Tenemos - - . Tenemos -
14 - . Necesita traducion - - .

15 FEMALE VOICE: [speaking foreign language].

16 MALE VOICE: [speaking French].

17 MALE VOICE: [speaking foreign language].

18 MS. GRIMM: Thank you, Elena. My name is
19 Kathleen Grimm. I am Deputy Chancellor of the
20 Department for Infrastructure and Portfolio
21 Planning. Uh, we are joined here tonight with
22 our distinguished superintendents, both high
23 schools and this district, president of the CEC,
24 also by various members of the senior, uh, the
25 school leadership team. And I'm going to ask

1 everyone here to take a minute and introduce
2 themselves, beginning with superintendent.

3 MS. ELENA PAPILIBERIOS: Elena Papilberios,
4 high school superintendent in the Bronx.

5 MS. DENISE SULLIVAN: Good evening,
6 everyone. It's a pleasure at the phase-out,
7 unfortunately for the New Day Academy. My name
8 is Denise Sullivan. I am presently the
9 recording secretary for the Citywide Education
10 Council, representing all high schools in the
11 Bronx.

12 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Marno Rodriguez [phonetic],
13 the superintendent, District 12.

14 MS. CARMEN JUDEVERAS: Carmen Judeveras
15 [phonetic]. I represent the kids in District 12
16 from the elementary to the middle level. I am
17 the president of the - - .

18 FEMALE VOICE: My name's - - . I'm the - -
19 .

20 FEMALE VOICE: I don't think people can
21 hear.

22 MS. SUSANNA FIGEROA: Susanna Figeroa
23 [phonetic], CEC member at District 12.

24 MS. GRIMM: And right in front of us, uh,
25 people who from the SLT, Andrew So, Carl Oliver

1 and Erin Gelb are also with us. If you just
2 stand up so everybody sees you.

3 [applause]

4 Three very popular members of the SLT, I
5 gather. We're going to hear a little more from
6 them in a bit.

7 Um, I would also like to mention, I don't
8 see her right now, but Anna Santos, the uh,
9 Bronx borough representative to the panel is
10 here. Anna, stand up.

11 [applause]

12 Thank you very being here, Anna. This
13 hearing is being recorded. Uh, and following
14 the hearing, a transcription of the proceedings
15 will be sent to all the members of the groups
16 who are represented here and participating in
17 this hearing.

18 It will also be made available on the
19 department's website. So all of you and all
20 interested parties can review the recorded text
21 of what is said here tonight.

22 The purpose of this hearing is for you to
23 provide comments about the department's
24 proposal. And before I describe the proposal, I
25 want to make sure that you are all aware of the

1 opportunity you have to provide your input.
2 All those who wish to speak must sign up in the
3 speaker's sign-up area, which is located right
4 outside of the auditorium. The sign-up list
5 will close in about 15 minutes. Speakers will
6 be given the floor in the order in which they
7 sign up. All comments are limited to two
8 minutes.

9 In addition, we will welcome any comments
10 and feedback you may have any time before the
11 panel for Educational Policy meeting on January
12 26th. There is an email address and a phone
13 number where comments may be made. And you can
14 find that on our website under the section for
15 the panel. Our website is schools.nyc.gov.

16 So if there's anyone here who wants to
17 speak, and you haven't signed up, please just
18 step outside and sign up now while it's still
19 open.

20 This proposal is something that the
21 department takes very seriously, and has
22 considered in a very comprehensive manner. Over
23 the past six years, the department has phased
24 out over 90 schools, and has opened 335 new
25 schools that have demonstrated remarkable

1 success in helping students excel.

2 For example, our new high schools have
3 achieved an average four year graduation rate of
4 75 percent, well above the citywide 60 percent
5 rate, even though those schools serve some of
6 the city's highest need students. This proposal
7 will continue with that important work.

8 I want to make very clear that the
9 department is not blaming any individual or any
10 group for this situation. But we have
11 determined that is important to give students
12 the best possible opportunity for long term
13 success.

14 We know that there are a lot of people
15 working incredibly hard every single day to
16 support students at this school. But we simply
17 cannot continue doing the same things and expect
18 that we will get different results.

19 New Day has not demonstrated the capacity to
20 serve students well. The school's 2008, 2009
21 graduation rate was only 56 percent, below the
22 citywide average of 60 percent. For two
23 consecutive years, fewer than 55 percent of
24 first year students in the high school
25 accumulated 10 or more credits, which ranks in

1 the 30th percentile citywide. Credit
2 accumulation is the key predictor of future
3 academic success.

4 In 2009, 40.8 percent of middle school
5 students were proficient in ELA. And 34.3
6 percent were proficient in math. In 2008, when
7 only 20 percent of middle school students were
8 proficient in ELA and 32 percent were proficient
9 in math.

10 In addition, New Day performed poorly on
11 both its middle and high school progress
12 reports. Although 2009 is the first year that
13 New Day received a progress report grade for the
14 high school, graduation and credit accumulation
15 indicators from the 2008/2009 school year are
16 low. And there is no evidence that the school
17 is capable of turning around.

18 New Day High School received a "D" grade on
19 its first high school progress report in 2009,
20 including "F" grades on both the environment and
21 student progress sub-sections of the report.

22 The New Day Middle School received a "C" on
23 its 2008 and 2009 progress reports and a "D" on
24 its 2007 progress reports. While New Day was
25 deemed proficient on its 2008 and 2009 quality

1 reviews, that report cited serious concerns
2 that suggest that the school is ill-positioned
3 to rapidly turn around to better serve students.

4 For example, the report indicated that
5 instruction at the school is insufficiently
6 differentiated to support individual student
7 needs. It also indicated that there was a lack
8 of clarity around expectations and goals across
9 the school community.

10 School safety at New Day continues to be
11 challenging and hinders the learning
12 environments of the other schools located in the
13 building, Bronx Latin and Bronx Career and
14 College Prep.

15 Given all of these factors, demand for seats
16 at the school - - is low. The high school
17 received less than five applications per seat in
18 September '08 and just about five applications
19 per seat in September '09, compared with over
20 eight applications per seat citywide.

21 Students enrolled in New Day Middle School
22 do not choose to stay on for high school. Only
23 30 percent of the 8th grade class continues on to
24 9th grade at New Day.

25 As a result, the school is not fulfilling

1 the purpose of its six to 12 grade
2 configuration, which is intended to provide a
3 seamless seven year educational experience for
4 students.

5 The bottom line is this. This school has a
6 longstanding record of academic failure, and is
7 no longer a school that students want to attend.
8 It is important to be clear about the
9 consequences of this decision. All students
10 currently enrolled in this school will have the
11 opportunity to graduate from New Day. We will
12 continue to support the school during its three
13 year phase-out process.

14 I want to thank you for your attention. I
15 look forward to hearing your comments and your
16 questions. In order to ensure that all people
17 who have signed up are given the opportunity, as
18 I said, we're going to limit comments to two
19 minutes. After a minute and a half, we have
20 some time keepers who will show you a sign that
21 says that you have 30 minutes—oh, it's a big
22 sign. Even I can read it if I'm here. And
23 then, when your two minutes are up, he'll show
24 you another sign that, um, shows that the time
25 is up. And we ask that everyone be respectful

1 of time, so we can assure that everyone who
2 comes here to speak tonight will have the time
3 to do so.

4 I would now like to give an opportunity to
5 the panel members. If anyone from the CDC's
6 would like to make a statement or the SLT, I
7 believe, has a presentation for us?

8 Carl, do you want to--am I going to be right
9 in your way?

10 MR. OLIVER: Okay, so you can see enough of
11 the presentation for me to get started. So good
12 evening, everybody. My name is Carl Oliver.
13 And I am proud to be a teacher at New Day
14 Academy.

15 [applause]

16 I'm glad to welcome the members of the CEC
17 and the Department of Education, so that we can
18 explain that our community does have the
19 capacity to serve students well, and that in
20 fact, New Day needs to stay.

21 [applause]

22 In 2005, Mayor Bloomberg said that our
23 generation of small schools will see more
24 students, will benefit from personal attention
25 and the challenge of rigorous academic work.

1 Embracing the concept and spirit of small
2 schools, we know our students well. And we have
3 small class sizes to try for in individualized
4 and differentiated education for each student.

5 We have rigorous curriculum, which focuses
6 on critical thinking and the habits of mind.
7 And we support students with academic and
8 character development.

9 All-New Day Academy is a portfolio school.
10 All students complete rigorous portfolio
11 assessments. New Day Academy was actually
12 recently approved by the New York State Board of
13 Regents to join 27 other schools as a member of
14 the New York Performance Standards Consortium.
15 As a member of this group, high school students
16 will complete portfolio based assessment tasks
17 in lieu of their exams, in order to earn regents
18 diplomas.

19 You recently heard comments from the
20 Educational Impact Statement, which we believe
21 is insufficient. So we'll be showing you
22 comment from this document. And you can look
23 along with it, as it's outside, and show you how
24 these statements ignore the fact that, number
25 one, student performance in the middle school

1 and high school at New Day Academy is higher
2 than a majority of the other schools in our peer
3 group. Right?

4 [applause]

5 Number two, New Day Academy has made
6 significant progress with students in the middle
7 and high schools—

8 [applause]

9 --that other city and state evaluations have
10 given high ratings to New Day Academy.

11 [applause]

12 Moreover, our recent grade of a "D" on the
13 report card has given us no time to improve the
14 high school grade. What is a violation of the
15 Department of Education's own accountability
16 framework.

17 [applause]

18 And lastly, New Day Academy does have the
19 tools to continue to make significant progress.

20 [applause]

21 MR. ANDREW SO: So as you can hear, I'm
22 sorry. I'm a little excited. As you can hear,
23 as you can hear from these five statements, the
24 impact statement does not justify closing New
25 Day Academy. In an email sent to reporters, low

1 ELA and math proficiency rates were given as a
2 reason for closing New Day Academy. On the
3 contrary, not only did New Day Academy receive a
4 "B" in student performance, and its progress
5 report, but the percent of students achieving
6 proficiency in ELA and math was higher than most
7 peer schools. In fact, our ELA proficiency rate
8 was higher than 94 percent of our peer schools.

9 [applause]

10 And in math, 52 percent. In the same
11 notice, low graduation indicators were given as
12 a reason to close New Day. But once again, New
13 Day Academy received a "B" in student
14 performance. And our graduation rate was higher
15 than 61 percent of our peer schools. And the
16 weighted rate was greater than 85 percent of the
17 peer schools.

18 [applause]

19 And all of these, uh, all the graduation
20 rate, every student that graduated with a
21 regent's diploma.

22 [applause]

23 And keep in mind that 2009 was our first
24 ever graduating class. It includes some
25 students that spent less than one month in

1 school. The 2009 graduation rate was also
2 equal to the city's four year graduation rate.
3 And it was 13 percent higher than the District
4 12 four year average.

5 [applause]

6 The proposal to phase out and eventually
7 close New Day Academy is also based on the DOE's
8 determination that the school lacks the capacity
9 to significantly improve student performance.
10 To the contrary, we have already shown ability
11 to significantly improve student performance.

12 If we look at the ELA and math scores of our
13 incoming students, students entering New Day in
14 the middle school in 6th grade are among the
15 lowest incoming scores in the entire District
16 12. And despite the challenge of reaching these
17 students, every year for the past three years,
18 we have shown the ability to improve student
19 performance on New York State exams.

20 [applause]

21 Not only has our proficiency rate in ELA
22 math improved every single year, but last year,
23 our ELA proficiency rate jumped to 20 percent.

24 [applause]

25 In regards to our incoming high school

1 students, they also enter New Day Academy
2 below the District 12 average. If we look at
3 our first graduating class, last year's
4 graduating class, the 2005 high school cohort,
5 when the students entered in 9th grade, just 7
6 percent of the class that demonstrated ELA
7 proficiency. And only 13 percent had
8 demonstrated math proficiency.

9 Four years later, despite so many students
10 entering school significantly behind grade
11 level, 56 percent of these students passed the
12 ELA regents and graduated high school well above
13 the District 12 average.

14 [applause]

15 The impact statement also says the decisions
16 about the consequences the school face are based
17 on the quality review scores and a variety of
18 other factors. Now as was already mentioned,
19 the New York City Department of Education's own
20 school quality review process has given us
21 proficient ratings every single year. And
22 despite what the DOE's statement might have
23 suggested, we did not receive a underdeveloped
24 in any area last year.

25 Some of the highlights from last year's

1 school quality review, and the school quality
2 review's own words, the school routinely
3 identifies trends in student progress and
4 performance and determine student strengths and
5 areas of need. Teachers enhance students'
6 interest in their lessons by conducting them the
7 real world examples.

8 The principal and the faculty work together
9 effectively to do what is best for students,
10 earning them the trust of the community they
11 serve. And the school offers students and their
12 parents a comprehensive set of supports and
13 activities that bridge the cultural differences
14 between home and school.

15 And last, New York State and the federal No
16 Child Left Behind Act's accountability reports
17 have put us in good standing every single year.

18 [applause]

19 Under the Department of Education's
20 accountability framework, schools that receive
21 an overall grade of "D" on the progress report
22 are subject to school improvement measures.
23 Only if no significant progress is made on these
24 measures, then a leadership change restructuring
25 or closure is possible. But no time has been

1 given after the proper support grade to make
2 the significant progress.

3 This was our first high school progress
4 report this year. We've already shown the
5 ability to help many struggling incoming
6 students graduate with a regent's diploma. And
7 in fact, all aspects of our learning environment
8 survey, the calculating score and relative score
9 to the peer group have actually increased over
10 the past two years.

11 [applause]

12 One of the improvement measures that is
13 given is a leadership change. And this was just
14 made in November, but no time at all was given
15 to allow this change to make the significant
16 progress. So I'm going to turn it over to Erin.

17 [applause]

18 MS. ERIN GELB: Okay. Okay, so we need to
19 know about principal first before I think
20 anything else goes on, because we need to know
21 how she can help us. Okay? Um, she has a great
22 history. And if given the chance, versus the
23 three weeks that she was given for the Board - -
24 , I think she—Ms. Gonals [phonetic], Principal
25 Gonals can really help us.

1 Um, okay, who is she? She has worked for
2 two years as part of the Children's First
3 Network. She has coached schools with a focus
4 on accountability, assessment, scheduling and
5 curriculum, just to name a few. She's done a
6 lot more for us. Uh, she believes in New Day
7 Academy's philosophy in vision. And we as a
8 faculty know Ms. G for a while. We all know who
9 she is. And we know how—what a good person she
10 is.

11 Okay. How do we know Ms. G can help us?
12 She has 18 years of experience in education
13 administration. Um, as principal in Compton,
14 California, she entered a school with a history
15 of rioting and considerable gang influence.
16 Okay, on one year, Ms. G increased the school's
17 attendance rate by 60 percent. By the following
18 year, it was increased to 82 percent. Okay?

19 [applause]

20 She created an active student government.
21 Um, she created an active student government
22 association, creating unity and morale in the
23 school. And she's done that already here in New
24 Day if you give her the chance. Okay?

25 [applause]

1 The school went from four years of—the
2 school in Compton went from four years of
3 rioting prior to Ms. G to no riot incidents at
4 all during her tenure in that school.

5 [applause]

6 Along with that high school, also in
7 California, she had experienced as a grand
8 administrator for paramount high school. A
9 grant was given to her to improve the school
10 within three years. And when she arrived, the
11 school was considered a high priority school,
12 which to us should be what we call a failing
13 school. Okay? Um, she worked with the
14 administration and department leaders in all
15 core subjects to create curriculum and program
16 changes, but the best part of all of it is that
17 within her first year, California students have
18 to take an exit exam and math. And within her
19 first year, she had 69 passing, I 69 percent
20 pass rate versus a 19 percent rate when she
21 started.

22 [applause]

23 Okay. Along with California, she's from our
24 very own city, New York. She was dean at
25 Lafayette High School. She was assistant

1 principal at Midward High School. And she was
2 the evening high school principal at Washington
3 Irving High School.

4 [applause]

5 All right, so why is it so important for
6 you to know? So that we, New Day Academy can
7 have the chance to change with Ms. G's help.

8 [applause]]

9 MR. OLIVER: So we've learned In the past
10 few minutes that New Day Academy needs to stay.

11 [applause]

12 Yeah. We've seen it in our student
13 performance. We saw in our progress reports
14 that middle school and high school have
15 performance higher than a majority of our peer
16 schools. We saw that New Day Academy has made
17 significant progress with students in middle
18 school and high school. And on the city's own
19 school quality review, we've shown that New Day
20 Academy had achieved high ratings. We've never
21 once receive an under develop in any category on
22 any of our SQR's. All right?

23 [applause]

24 There has been no time, there has been no
25 time given to improve the high school grade,

1 which violates accountability framework. And
2 New Day Academy has the tools. We have a new
3 leader. And we have the spirit and the energy
4 to make significant progress.

5 [applause]

6 So right now, I want to ask the members of
7 the panel on Education Policy to reject the
8 impact statement, and vote to let New Day
9 Academy continue to serve its students. Thank
10 you.

11 [applause]

12 MS. GRIMM: Thank you, thank you very much.
13 Will you give—you will provide us with a copy of
14 this presentation? Thank you very much.

15 First of all, I'd like to ask if there are
16 any elected officials with us tonight? Ana,
17 would you like to make a statement? Okay. Ana
18 Santos, the representative of the Bronx Borough
19 President. Ana, I'm going to ask you to limit
20 to two minutes.

21 [applause]

22 MS. ANA SANTOS: Yes, I have this written
23 down so I won't take more than two minutes.

24 [laughter]

25 Well, good evening, everyone. And I thank

1 you all for coming out here and supporting
2 your community. Um, I also wanted to—

3

4 MS. GRIMM: Ana, speak right into the
5 microphone so everyone—

6 MS. SANTOS: Okay. I could be loud, too.
7 Um, well, my name is Ana Santos. And I am the
8 Bronx Borough representative to the Panel for
9 Educational Policy, appointed by the Bronx
10 Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. Okay? And at
11 December's Panel for Education Policy meeting,
12 the panel did receive a letter from the borough
13 president, which raised concerns over the school
14 closure process. Now under the current closure
15 proposals, there are inconsistencies within the
16 department's own measurement standards that we
17 believe require some substantive debate and
18 review prior to the vote that will be taken by
19 the Panel for Education Policy on January 26.

20 I'd like to highlight one of those areas of
21 concerns at today's hearing. And among the
22 seven Bronx schools slated for closure, there
23 seems to be a disconnect between the quality
24 reviews of some of these schools versus the
25 recommendation for closure.

1 For example, the following are the past
2 three year quality review scores for the New Day
3 Academy, which you've seen the presentation that
4 they've shown those facts already. But, um,
5 just to repeat them again for the record, in
6 2006 through 2007, this quality review stated
7 schools scored a proficient on its quality
8 review. In 2007 and 2008, the school scored a
9 proficient again on its quality review. And in
10 2008 and 2009, school scores again proficient.

11 Now just to give some quotes that you've
12 heard today again, uh, quotes there teachers
13 enhance students' interests in their lessons by
14 connecting them to real world examples, um, you
15 could see that here with all of you being able
16 to interact and really love your school. You
17 understand that concept very well. So despite
18 what is measured, you could actually feel and
19 understand that with your actions.

20 [applause]

21 It says that the principal and the faculty
22 work together efficiently to do what is best for
23 the students. And we see that in your
24 presentation. And the school offers students
25 and their parents a comprehensive set of

1 supports and activities that bridge the
2 cultural differences between home and school.
3 And you could see that very well when you see
4 teachers bringing in their children and being
5 able to, um, know their students in the
6 classroom. You could see that very clearly,
7 that relationship. So it's not only being
8 measured but it's seen in your own public
9 action.

10 [applause]

11 I'm trying to stick to the—um, well my
12 question here is that if a school's overall
13 quality review rating does not coincide with the
14 recommendation for closure, one must ask, is it
15 that the quality review process itself flawed?
16 Or is it the process for the recommendation on
17 school closures flawed? How can a quality
18 review be so different from the recommendation
19 of closure?

20 We understand at times, we have to make some
21 tough decisions. But with that said, I ask that
22 the Department of Education address and answer
23 the issues regarding discrepancies within their
24 own quality reviews and the decisions for
25 closure. In many instances, both of these areas

1 since to contradict each other. As the
2 borough president's representative on the panel,
3 the information presented by the Department of
4 Education on issues of school closures must make
5 sense.

6 There cannot be contradictions. And where
7 there are contradictions, I cannot support any
8 measure where the facts do not align.

9 [applause]

10 So I just want to thank all of you so much
11 for this opportunity. I know it's really tough,
12 but we could get through it one step at a time.

13 [applause]

14 MS. GRIMM: Thank you, Ana, very, very
15 much. Thank you for being here.

16 We are now going to open up the public
17 comment period. You all have orange cards. Do
18 you have cards with numbers on them? Okay, so
19 if you pay attention to your number, we could
20 make a short line here as we call the people who
21 come up. You'll come up and use the microphone.

22 The first speaker, is it Bernard Lopez
23 [phonetic], number 1, Mr. Lopez? Good evening.

24 MR. BERNARD LOPEZ: Good evening. My name
25 is Bernard Lopez. I'm high school director for

1 the CSA, the union that represents principals
2 and assistant principals in New York City. The
3 Department of Education has announced the
4 closing of 20 schools, some of them with new
5 principals, some of them just beginning to turn
6 around. And eight of them were open not very
7 long ago by the head of the DOE, Chancellor
8 Klein [phonetic].

9 CSA embraces accountability and believes
10 that schools should be closed if they have
11 failed over a period of three years or more,
12 despite receiving full support from the DOE.
13 We will not tolerate the propagation of failure,
14 but in the case of several of these proposed
15 closures, we must ask if some of the schools are
16 being held accountable, while the groups that
17 support them is not. In those cases, we must
18 ask if the schools were really failing and by
19 what measures they were failing.

20 We must ask if the chancellor truly put each
21 of these schools through a thorough process to
22 ascertain whether there had been provided
23 adequate supports and guidance by their
24 superintendents and school support
25 organizations, and if the Office of Student

1 Enrollment had leveled the playing field.

2 CSA is asking the DOE to explain the process
3 by which they determined that each of these
4 schools be closed.

5 In the case of each school, we want to know
6 what the superintendent did besides visiting the
7 schools to announce their closings. We need to
8 know how thorough the superintendent was in the
9 process of helping these schools to succeed over
10 the last few years.

11 DOE should include analysis of the role of
12 the appropriate school support organization.

13 Finally, DOE should assess how fairly the
14 Office of Student Enrollment minimized
15 challenges to the schools that face so many
16 other challenges. It is important to know if
17 these institutions were sent an unusually large
18 proportion of ELL students and children with
19 special needs. When every question—

20 MS. GRIMM: - - .

21 MR. LOPEZ: --is asked and answered, we're
22 likely to discover that some of these schools
23 can't be saved. We are also likely to discover
24 that many of them can remain open and thrive
25 with adequate superintendents and support

1 networks and fair enrollment practices. Thank
2 you.

3 [applause]

4 MS. GRIMM: Okay, number 2, Steven Goldberg?

5 MR. STEVEN GOLDBERG: Thank you. Hello, my
6 name is Steven Goldberg. I am the district 12
7 representative for the United Federation of
8 Teachers. And I have also been a special
9 education teacher for 19 years.

10 [applause]

11 My brief statement. New Day Academy is one
12 of the boutique schools that Chancellor Joel
13 Klein himself opened. This school has been
14 through several administrators in its short
15 existence with little or no support from the
16 Department of Education. The Educational Impact
17 Statement is proposing that a charter school be
18 put in its place. Like other closing schools,
19 New Day Academy serves District 12's most
20 vulnerable students. 17 percent of the students
21 at New Day Academy are special needs students.
22 According to the Department of Education's own
23 data from the progress report peer indexes, the
24 two charter schools already in District 12 do
25 not serve students with special needs.

1 Are we to expect that the remaining
2 schools in this building will take on these
3 students? Are we to expect that they too will
4 be set up to fail and be slated to close as
5 well? Give New Day its day.

6 [applause]

7 MS. GRIMM: Thank you. Thank you very much.
8 Number 3 is Andre Stanley. Number 3? And if
9 number 4, Vanessa Vasquez [phonetic] wants to
10 come up and be in the bullpen. Mr. Stanley?

11 MR. ANDRE STANLEY: Yes, ma'am.

12 [applause]

13 Yeah, well, it's a pleasure to be here
14 tonight. And I enjoy going to this school.
15 Yeah, um, my speech is on life at New Day
16 Academy. Life at New Day Academy was a
17 successful journey. The past few years, I
18 enjoyed myself. We all enjoyed ourselves.
19 Coming to New Day Academy was the best choice
20 for me. I have been in this building for almost
21 seven years. I went to 158 before coming here.
22 That school closed because of its test scores.
23 Now New Day, New Day has been opened for only
24 five years from 2005 until the present. Even
25 though I am graduating this year, I would come

1 to visit every now and then. And I have
2 gotten to know a lot of people, teachers,
3 friends, people I can really talk to.

4 Just because the graduation rate is low from
5 last year doesn't mean that it will stay that
6 way forever. Things can change. We all can
7 come together and make that change. Change will
8 not take place overnight, but over an extended
9 period of time.

10 My Pastor Errol Bernard always says change
11 is not event, but change is a process. The
12 current 9th, 10th, and 11th graders can make a
13 better change. Other seniors and I can make a
14 better change for the remaining year. It is
15 never too late.

16 New Day Academy is a place of business.
17 This business will succeed if you give it a
18 chance. Not only do you learn, but you can have
19 fun learning. The teachers here, you can really
20 learn from them. Like Lacy and Meg. I learned
21 a lot of good English skills. And we've learned
22 a lot of our new books this year, like Othello
23 and Hamlet. Not only did they teach, but they
24 make the lessons full of energy and fun.

25 From teachers like Suzy, back in the 9th

1 grade, she taught me science. The most fun
2 part of her class was performing the
3 experiments. Some of the teachers and other
4 staff I really got to know like Paul and Damon.

5 It is a place of learning, growth and
6 development. It is not good to deprive future
7 students that might want to come here. They
8 might have a better chance. This school should
9 stay open for years to come. It should stay for
10 those who want to learn and better themselves to
11 make a better world.

12 [applause]

13 MS. GRIMM: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
14 Stanley. Vanessa Vasquez? Eileen Shineback
15 [phonetic] will be after her.

16 FEMALE VOICE: Number 4?

17 MS. VANESSA VASQUEZ: Number 4.

18 FEMALE VOICE: Do you have it?

19 MS. GRIMM: Ms. Vasquez?

20 FEMALE VOICE: Vanessa?

21 MS. VASQUEZ: Yes.

22 FEMALE VOICE: Thank you.

23 MS. VASQUEZ: Hi, I'm Vanessa Vasquez. I am
24 on staff here at New Day Academy, but I'm not
25 only here to speak to you as a staff member, but

1 as a community member. I didn't prepare a
2 fancy speech because my message is really clear.

3 Um, my parents were married around the
4 corner 36 years ago. The church is still
5 standing. Um, we made it out of this
6 neighborhood, because my parents got their
7 education. And they made sure that me, my
8 brothers, and my sisters also.

9 What I want to say, what I want to ask is
10 that you please give us a chance. Give our
11 school a chance. Give our new administration a
12 chance. We have not been given the opportunity
13 to show that what we really can do. Okay?

14 [applause]

15 We have not been given that chance. We need
16 to be given that chance. We have new
17 administration. It's powerful. It's organized.
18 Our teachers are wonderful. And now that I'm
19 standing up here as a community member, I want
20 to thank Ms. Danielle Trugal [phonetic]. I want
21 to thank Ms. Marylee Patousse [phonetic]. I
22 want to thank, where is she, I don't see, Kelly,
23 Kelly Roche, who in our student government, who
24 they have organized—

25 [applause]

1 --all of this, okay, because they love our
2 community. They love our school. We love each
3 other. My students I'm--that graduated last
4 year, I'm still in contact with. Where are you
5 guys?

6 [applause]

7 So I just want to say that we love our
8 school. We love our community. We want to be
9 here. We want to stay here. We want to help
10 our students. And we want to progress and move
11 forward. Please help us. We need help. Please
12 help us, thank you.

13 [applause]

14 MS. GRIMM: - - . Ellen Shineback. The
15 next person will be Marilyn Tatouse [phonetic],
16 if I have that right.

17 MS. ELLEN SHINEBACK: Okay. I'm afraid that
18 I trump all of you. I've worked in the New York
19 City Schools as a teacher administrator and
20 coach for 45 years.

21 [applause]

22 I have--what? I am presently a part-time
23 literacy coach and teacher/mentor at New Day.
24 And I've worked for the past six years in that
25 capacity at a variety of small schools. In all

1 of my years of observing the system and the
2 cyclical changes that have been instituted, this
3 is one of the worst decisions I have witnessed.
4 It is both cynical and inefficient. The impact
5 statement says that schools which do not make
6 significant progress over time are subject to a
7 leadership change, restructuring, or closure.
8 There was a needed leadership change made in
9 November of this school year. And Ms. G, the
10 new principal, has already taken up the mantle
11 of restructuring as well.

12 Within two weeks of her arrival, the
13 attendance procedures were improved. As of this
14 week, the school is 100 percent in compliance
15 with city and state special ed requirements.

16 [applause]

17 As of February 1st, our new program will be
18 instituted, which will enable students to make
19 up credits during the regular school day, enable
20 on track students to take elective course, and
21 implement a guidance program, which will be
22 prepare students for life after high school
23 through college and career counseling.

24 [applause]

25 The impact statement also says that the DOE

1 conducted an assessment and after consultation
2 with internal stakeholders determined that it
3 would not be able to make sufficient progress
4 with students. Who are those internal
5 stakeholders? Not the students who were outside
6 yesterday in the freezing cold, rallying for
7 their school.

8 [applause]

9 Not the teachers who have embraced the new
10 leadership and change. And certainly not the
11 parents who have shown up here tonight.

12 MS. GRIMM: I need to ask you to begin to
13 wrap up, please.

14 MS. SHINEBACK: I will. The DOE put in
15 leadership and then within three weeks announced
16 the closing of the school. This was done
17 without consultation with any stakeholders.

18 It's phasing out a new school with
19 leadership that has an excellent chance of
20 succeeding and putting in its place a new school
21 that has no proof and track record whatsoever.
22 I endorse the change of administration, which
23 took place in November, and believe that under
24 Mara Gonzalez [phonetic], the school can become
25 the school that the parents envisioned, a school

1 which will teach students with creativity and
2 academic integrity. Thank you.

3 [applause]

4 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much, Ms.
5 Shineback. Marilyn Tatouse [phonetic], number
6 6? Number 6, Marilyn Tatouse?

7 [applause]

8 MS. MARILYN TATOUSE: Good evening, everyone
9 and welcome. Standing here before you is really
10 not what I want to be doing right now. But
11 anyway, when I first started this job here at
12 New Day Academy, I was hired as the parent
13 coordinator for the school. Of course, that's
14 because it was a new school. I was pretty much
15 the first parent coordinator. Immediately, I
16 pulled up my sleeves and went to work. I did
17 what every parent wants in a school. I called
18 each and every parent of the school, introduced
19 myself, and welcomed them.

20 [applause]

21 I assure these parents that we have a job to
22 do. Parents were delighted by the idea of
23 having a parent coordinator at the school.
24 Parents came to the school just to make their
25 acquaintances and hold—and told me how welcome

1 they felt and knowing their children could
2 call 800-HOME-STREET, a home away from home.

3 [applause]

4 These children face so many challenges on a
5 daily basis. Many of these children are
6 deprived of so much privileges. I look forward
7 to their family here at New Day Academy.
8 Phasing out New Day Academy will definitely
9 convince these children that they do not deserve
10 an education and has no say in what is being
11 taken away from them.

12 [applause]

13 We at New Day Academy knows what is best for
14 our children. And believe it or not, even the
15 parents. This is the South Bronx. We call it
16 our community. This is our school. Please do
17 not take away our school. And do not stop us,
18 do not stop us from building an educational
19 community for these children and their family.
20 Thank you.

21 [applause]

22 MS. GRIMM : Thank you. Number 7, Rosario
23 Donnelly, number 7? Number 8? Number 8 will be
24 Francis Serpico [phonetic]. Let's listen to
25 her, please.

1 MS. ROSARIO DONNELLEY: New Day Academy to
2 me is a safe and fun learning environment. And
3 it has helped me with my reading, writing, and
4 spelling. And it has helped me physically and
5 emotionally by telling me I can always do
6 anything if I try.

7 By reaching for the moon, and if - - I'll
8 land among the stars. And there is not only a
9 school. It's a second home for me. If they
10 close this school, they will leave us without a
11 school neighborhood without a neighborhood
12 school. Without-with the city trying to close-
13 take away our school Metro cards, it would be
14 hard time to get to school miles away.

15 Our teachers at NDA Academy, New Day Academy
16 has helped me.

17 [applause]

18 Our teachers want to help us, but they can't
19 because they don't have the support. We as kids
20 see this every day. I - - and cords sticking
21 out of-

22 [applause]

23 We have cords sticking out of walls. And we
24 don't have soap and toilet paper in our
25 bathrooms. This is something I want to know.

1 Why is the--this is something that I want to
2 know. New Day is not only a school to me. It's
3 more. New Day is not--New Day was only proposed
4 to closed down, so why did we have to change our
5 high school application and take New Day out of
6 one of our choices, including our test, instead
7 of taking tests, we take - - . It gives us the
8 opportunity to know--to show what we know.

9 I like my - - backs and my portfolios. I'm
10 used to it now about three years. If I could
11 sum NDA up, I would say that NDA is not only the
12 best school in the New York City, it's the best.
13 I love my family here, my friends, my teachers,
14 my principals, my staff. If you really know
15 what's best for us, you would keep this
16 community school open and give Ms. G, our new
17 principal, a chance to better us. So please,
18 keep our community school open.

19 [applause]

20 MS. GRIMM: Thank you. - - . Francis
21 Serpico? Number 8, Francis Serpico? Number 9
22 will be Tiffany Hendrix [phonetic]. Tiffany
23 Hendrix? All right, let's listen to Mr.
24 Serpico, please.

25 MR. FRANCIS SERPICO: Good evening, family,

1 friends, students, alumni, fellow teachers of
2 New Day Academy, and of course members of the
3 panel. My name is Francis Serpico. And I am
4 one of the founding faculty members of New Day
5 Academy.

6 [applause]

7 Five years ago, on a nice, warm, August day,
8 12 teachers and the principal at the time, Paul
9 Schwartz, gathered in one of the rooms on the 4th
10 floor of this very building. It was the first
11 time the staff gathered and started to develop a
12 new school that would serve the teenage
13 population of this great community. As we
14 developed this small school, it was important to
15 be unique and focus on educating one student at
16 a time.

17 When the doors opened for the first time,
18 there were many smiling faces and curious minds.
19 I say curious minds because no one knew what the
20 new school called New Day would bring to the
21 community. Quickly, we discovered New Day
22 brought and continues to bring a sense of
23 family. Through our advisory program, teachers
24 got to know our students well by team building
25 activities and holding one-on-one conversations.

1 Communicating with parents on a regular basis
2 also build a relationship between school and
3 home. Even the staff built a close relationship
4 with each other by supporting each other in
5 regular staff meetings, building a curriculum
6 that would fit the needs of our students, and
7 creating plans for our students that needed
8 extra help.

9 As a staff, being close to each other, we
10 worked together. We played together. And yes,
11 we even cried together.

12 [applause]

13 Rome was not built in a day. And neither is
14 any institutions, starting from the foundation.
15 However, many good things come out of our
16 school. In my past five years, I have seen
17 students who were left back twice in elementary
18 schools, that have academic difficulty
19 performing their very best by expressing
20 themselves through presentations when it comes
21 to a portfolio process.

22 MS. GRIMM: Would you please start to wrap
23 up, please?

24 MR. SERPICO: Our students always safe and
25 could talk to the teachers about any problem

1 they are facing, both in and outside of
2 school. This is something the founding staff
3 wanted and accomplished to set as a sense of
4 knowing our students well.

5 By closing New Day Academy, it would be
6 breaking up a family. Like any family, we are
7 always there for each other. So members of the
8 panel, I stand here before you tonight with my
9 family at my side, asking you to please consider
10 keeping New Day open. As you heard from the
11 speeches already, and as you will continue to
12 hear speeches tonight, many good things come out
13 of New Day Academy. Like a baby taking its
14 first steps, our school is young and still has
15 many good things to offer as it grows.

16 MS. GRIMM: I need to ask you to—

17 MR. SERPICO: I would like to thank you for
18 your time and consideration.

19 [applause]

20 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Number 9,
21 Tiffany Hendrix? Tiffany? Regina Jacobs would
22 be number 10.

23 MS. TIFFANY HENDRIX: New Day, New Day!
24 Good afternoon, teachers, staff, peers, and
25 visitors. My name is Tiffany Hendrix and I'm a

1 12th grader, who attended New Day Academy for
2 four years straight. But I have been in this
3 building for seven years. I have attended 158,
4 which was also closed down in the same building.

5 New Day Academy isn't a bad school. Don't
6 just us by our grades only, but judge us for the
7 good things that we do. New Day is a dichotomy.
8 It has two points of view. New Day to me isn't
9 only a school, but a home. And there isn't many
10 places you my call home. When you think of
11 home, you think of a place where you can be safe
12 and people you call family. And our school, we
13 want to program called Advisory. Advisory is
14 like a family. There are different groups with
15 one teacher to each student, where students and
16 teachers come together and talk about things
17 that are bad and good.

18 I believe that it is very important to have
19 communication with each other. Besides
20 Advisory, we have upcoming elective classes. In
21 the elective classes, it's academic wise, front
22 activity. Electives can help us be comfortable
23 with each other and talent that we have and kids
24 who share them. Electives even may help bring
25 kids together who weren't together before.

1 Many may be wondering where is the
2 academic coming in it? Well, since last year, I
3 have seen a big progress within this school.
4 Teachers have been making up different methods
5 to help kids understand the work better, such as
6 my English class. My teacher Lacy and Meg has
7 helped me with my English - - . I went from a
8 55 to a 62 and I'm still striving. Thank you
9 all.

10 [applause]

11 Wait, wait, hold on, hold on. But in
12 closing, most of the schools in the Bronx, when
13 you close a school, you are taking away the kids
14 learning. This is our community. We come here
15 to learn.

16 FEMALE VOICE: Okay?

17 MS. HENDRIX: Okay. It was once said that
18 children are the future, but when you take away
19 our schools, what future do you see for us? How
20 can we be the future if you're all not going to
21 let us a seat in the president, huh?

22 [applause]

23 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Regina
24 Jacobs, number 10? Regina Jacobs? Dominique
25 Heath or Health would be next.

1 MS. REGINA JACOBS: Um, my name is Regina
2 Jacobs and my son comes to this school. Last
3 year, when he graduated from elementary school,
4 his school was being phased out. Now that he
5 comes to middle school, his school is being
6 phased out. I just want to say that as a parent
7 being involved with both of my children's school
8 volunteering at New Day, like they said, since
9 November, I've seen a change in my son, waking
10 up and coming to school.

11 [applause]

12 Especially for the things that Ms. G is
13 implementing into the school. I feel that
14 closing New Day would be wrong right now. At
15 least, give them a chance.

16 [applause]

17 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Number 11,
18 Dominique Heath? Dominique Heath?

19 [applause]

20 MS. DOMINIQUE HEATH: I'm a FA student in
21 New Day Academy. I've been here for three
22 years. And it's been a best three years of my
23 life. I learned so many things and - - my fifth
24 grade teacher has - - me.

25 In 5th grade, I had a lot of problems with my

1 reading and writing. Thanks to my teachers in
2 New Day Academy, I am now back on track. I can
3 read on an 8th grade level, and I'm writing
4 beautiful page essays. In New Day Academy,
5 every student has to go through a portfolio
6 process. Then--this process prepares us for our
7 high school feedbacks, job interviews in
8 college. If NDA closes, there will be--we will--I
9 will not be able to continue my education at a
10 consortium high school. This worries me because
11 I'm already bad test taker. I believe--I feel
12 this would be a major impact on my life because
13 I only have to take one region studies and - -
14 backs, whereas at other high schools, I would
15 have to take five regents.

16 I would prefer to take the - - because I
17 believe they will show what I know better than
18 at the exam. Even though NDA is in a bad
19 neighborhood, I feel safe when I enter this
20 building because I feel safe when I enter this
21 building. This is like my second home. All the
22 teachers and staff knows me better than going to
23 a school where nobody knows you and being judged
24 where--and going to school where you're just a
25 number. NDA is--NDA has smaller class sizes. So

1 - - gets to know us as both people and as
2 students because of the relationship we've
3 built, no—they—we built, they know how to teach
4 us in and out the classroom.

5 Also, NDA just got a new principal, Ms. G.
6 Since she came, the school has changed a lot.
7 There are less fighting. The hallways are
8 clearer. And next semester, we'll be getting a
9 greater variety of classes.

10 I wish Ms. G could have more time to make
11 progress change, positive changes and - - . So
12 sum everything up, if you were to deny the
13 proposal, I would be very thankful because I
14 would like to continue my four years of high
15 school here at New Day Academy.

16 [applause]

17 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Number 12,
18 Danielle Fugalle [phonetic]?

19 MS. DANIELLE FUGALLE: Good evening. I'm
20 here to speak on behalf of my students, my
21 colleagues, and my community. I say my
22 community because this is why I've been teaching
23 for the past nine years. No, I don't live here.
24 I wasn't born or raised here, but I still think
25 of this area as my community. I will never find

1 children like these children from the South
2 Bronx. And that is why I want t fight for them.

3 I feel like our children in this community
4 are never given an equal chance to succeed.
5 Their schools are always being closed. I talked
6 for five years in MS 158, which was housed in
7 this building. And the DOE shut it down and
8 opened New Day.

9 Isn't the point of closing a school and
10 opening a new one to make it successful? NDA
11 will be the second school the DOE has closed in
12 this same building. Not a great track record
13 for them, if you ask me. How has the DOE, how
14 has the DOE ensured that New Day Academy was
15 successful? Where are sports programs, art, and
16 music programs? How are the students supposed
17 to be well rounded when they were not even given
18 an opportunity to use their talents?

19 Our students also need support socially and
20 emotionally, not only academically. When the
21 decision is made to face out of school, it is
22 necessary to also look at the things that could
23 be causing academic struggle. How are our
24 students supposed to focus on their academics
25 when they have to worry about being an innocent

1 shooting victim, walking to and from school
2 every day? Or how about them seeing a dead body
3 they found in a car right in front of the school
4 building one morning two years ago, as they
5 walked to school? When David Vasquez became a
6 victim, my students did not see their mayor,
7 chancellor, or DOE members in their
8 neighborhood. No one came to speak to them to
9 make them feel safe and ensure that nothing will
10 happen to them.

11 The day after the shooting, there were three
12 cops on every corner of the street. Two days
13 later, there were none. And this day, there's
14 none. Are you even aware that four out of the
15 six people involved in shooting were former
16 students of this building? What interventions
17 were done by New York City for those kids years
18 ago? Or was the teachers and students
19 responsible for that, too?

20 By closing New Day Academy, the students
21 will lose dedicated teachers who want to be here
22 working with the children from this area. This
23 has happened time and time again to the
24 children. And it is not fair to them.

25 MS. GRIMM: I need to ask you to start

1 wrapping up.

2 MS. FUGALLE: They should be able to come
3 and see the same faces year after year. Instead
4 of pointing fingers at the ones who do come to
5 the school and community every day, try to take
6 a look in the mirror and ask what you've done
7 for our children to make sure that they're not
8 left behind.

9 [applause]

10 MS. GRIMM: - - . Number 13, Liz Guertas
11 [phonetic]? Number 13, Liz Guertas? Number 14
12 will be Juliette Ramirez.

13 MS. LIZ GUERTAS: My name is Liz Guertas and
14 I'm a 9th grade student at New Day Academy. NDA
15 was the only school that had gave me a second
16 chance to improve. I chose to come to this
17 school because it is the closest - - .

18 [applause]

19 I'm a mother and - - .

20 MS. GRIMM: Take your time, dear.

21 MS. GUERTAS: I'm a mother, and it is
22 important for me to be-to go a nearby school. I
23 have been getting close to all of my teachers.
24 So I feel like it is my second home. The
25 teachers have supported me throughout the

1 struggles I've gone through, because they know
2 about my situation. Because of various that
3 have happened, my attendance in this year-

4 [applause]

5 --because various things that happened, my
6 attendance this year has not been good.

7 However, my teachers always given me extra work
8 in order to catch me up, and make sure I don't
9 fall behind. I feel like my teachers don't mind
10 staying after school and taking time from their
11 lives to help me, even though I'm just one
12 student. The teachers are always on your case,
13 but only because they care and want us to
14 succeed. Teachers are dedicated to helping us
15 academically, even when it might seem too hard.
16 They are easy to approach and always available.
17 It seems unfair that you would take our
18 community away. Closing the school does not
19 solve any of our problems. Instead of closing
20 down the school, resources should be provided so
21 that we can improve students achievement.

22 [applause]

23 It is not time to start placing the blame on
24 individuals, and to hold everyone accountable
25 for our success. We want to be able to walk by

1 this building and proudly point to our school,
2 New Day Academy.

3 [applause]

4 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Number 14,
5 Juliette Ramirez?

6 MS. JULIETTE RAMIREZ: Good evening. My
7 name is Juliette Ramirez and I am alumni of the
8 class 2009.

9 [applause]

10 What is New Day Academy to me? It is a
11 place for inspiration and motivation. It is the
12 part of my identity. As a freshman in college,
13 my vision of education is extremely different
14 from when it was when I was a freshman in high
15 school. And it is because of my experience here
16 at New Day.

17 Before I used to believe that education was
18 just something I needed to get a job and make
19 money, but because of my journey here, I now
20 envision education as a necessity for humanity.
21 Education is—

22 [applause]

23 Education is not about getting rich, it's
24 about making a change. And it is my ticket out
25 the ghetto. Here at New Day, I was introduced

1 to the five habits of mind. Believe it or
2 not, the habits of mind is a very helpful and
3 beneficial tool, not just for academic purposes,
4 but for everyday life.

5 At first, I was not a fan of the habits of
6 mind. I'd even thought it was pointless. But
7 as I grew older and started maneuvering outside
8 of NDA's four walls, I began to understand that
9 habits of mind in the social context.

10 What is New Day Academy to me? A place for
11 endless opportunity. Here, I was able to
12 interact in youth leadership program, such as
13 Leap for Girls and Advocacy Lab. These programs
14 have helped shape my morals and perception, and
15 also guided my decision to my potential majors,
16 Womens Studies and Psychology.

17 If it's not for the relationships that were
18 built here, with some of the caring teachers and
19 I, I probably would not had the chance to be
20 enrolled at Skinmore College.

21 [applause]

22 The lessons and stories that were created
23 here in this facility will forever remain in my
24 heart. There are many stories yet to be told.
25 In addition to what goes on in school, what

1 happens should also be in count. And it is
2 about what happened after also. How we choose
3 to apply what we learned here should be
4 evaluated, but if the school closed down,
5 students like myself and others would not be
6 able to come back and talk about their success
7 stories. Students would lose out on a journey
8 that will eventually become a turning point in
9 their life. And many students would lose out on
10 attending a small local high school. Thank you.

11 [applause]

12 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Number 15
13 is Suzy Kang.

14 [applause]

15 MS. SUZY KANG: My name is Suzy Kang and I
16 was one of the original teachers to start New
17 Day Academy.

18 [applause]

19 I didn't come to the Bronx thinking that I
20 would be working in a perfect school. Our
21 school knew the challenges that face us about
22 working in the South Bronx. And yet, we were
23 excited to be given the opportunity to create a
24 school with a unique philosophy. So with
25 Chancellor Klein's approval, we began planning

1 for New Day Academy.

2 We wanted a small school that personalized
3 education for each of its students. We wanted
4 to get to know students on an intimate level to
5 make sure they were supported every step of the
6 way. We also wanted to have an alternate means
7 of assessing students. And so, we implemented
8 portfolios. And since then, we have
9 accomplished these two goals.

10 We have a school culture in which every
11 student is known well by at least one adult. We
12 have worked hard to receive a regents waiver, to
13 allow students to graduate from high school
14 through portfolio based exit projects.

15 But now, six months after we have sent our
16 first graduating class to college, we are facing
17 closure. We have been in existence for less
18 than five years. Are we simply an experiment
19 for Department of Education? How many times
20 will you do this? How long will you continue to
21 play with the education and the futures of the
22 children in our community?

23 [applause]

24 This is the second school to close at 800
25 Holmes Street in just three years. We have

1 seniors who have attended a phased out
2 elementary school and a phased out middle
3 school. Will they now graduate from a phased
4 out high school as well?

5 It is clear that the Department of Education
6 has not found a viable solution to the racial
7 and socioeconomical achievement gap that exists
8 in New York City.

9 [applause]

10 Plus it has resorted simply closing any
11 school that doesn't have data to its liking.
12 Unfortunately, these are schools that have high
13 populations of black and Hispanic students, that
14 are in areas of high poverty.

15 [applause]

16 These are schools where students have the
17 greatest need, students who are overaged,
18 students who have lower test scores, students
19 with IEP's, students with language proficiency
20 issues. All who are students, who are capable
21 of achieving progress and success if given the
22 right resources.

23 MS. GRIMM: I need to ask you start wrapping
24 up.

25 MS. KANG: New Day Academy, I'm almost done,

1 New Day Academy is one of these high need
2 schools. The DOE measures need based on peer
3 index scores. The lower the score, the higher
4 the need. In 2009, our peer index score was in
5 the lowest 20 out of all high schools in the
6 city. What resources has our school received,
7 so that we can move our high need students
8 forward and have them graduate on time?

9 [applause]

10 We are a neighborhood school that is
11 dedicated to accepting all students in our
12 community, regardless of their proficiency
13 scores, age, or background.

14 MS. GRIMM: I need to ask you start wrapping
15 up.

16 MS. KANG: Every student and our student-in
17 our school has the ability to be successful, but
18 we must have time to show progress. We must be
19 given a chance, not judge solely on one year's
20 progress report card. Please do not use this
21 community as your guinea pig any longer. Stop
22 the hurtful, impulsive process of opening and
23 closing schools. Let's first consider how we
24 can make our existing school better. Thank you.

25 [applause]

1 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Number
2 16, Ann Alicia Kinney?

3 [applause]

4 MALE VOICE: I really don't know what to
5 say, but I'm going to start off by saying that
6 I've been in this building going on six years.
7 And I felt as if nothing or nobody would be able
8 to change me from being the ghetto hood rat that
9 I was.

10 And now, after these five to six years since
11 like I've been at New Day and I came back to
12 school, it feels like I'm changing a little bit,
13 because I never thought that I'd be able to sit
14 in a 45 minute class. And I've really been
15 sitting in a 45 minute class.

16 [applause]

17 So I just want to say out of all the things
18 that I realize, and all the things I learned in
19 my 16 years of living, you can have money, you
20 can have cars, you can have everything you want,
21 but without education, you ain't nobody.

22 [applause]

23 MS. GRIMM: Thank you. Thank you very much.
24 Number 17, Al Zucker? 17, Al Zucker? 18 will
25 be Andrew Mikins [phonetic]. Mr. Zucker?

1 MR. AL ZUCKER: Good evening. My name is
2 Al Zucker and I'm a teacher at the New Day
3 Academy. Before that, I was a teacher at John
4 F. Kennedy High School until the Department of
5 Education decided to downsize John F. Kennedy
6 High School. Before that, I was a teacher at
7 Theodore Roosevelt High School, until the
8 Department of Education decided to close
9 Theodore Roosevelt High School.

10 Not only am I tired and really disgusted, I
11 think my students, I think the parents of my
12 students, and I think my colleagues are also
13 absolutely tired and disgusted.

14 Under the guise of "educational reform," the
15 Bloomberg Klein Department of Education has
16 reduced, has plunged New York City school system
17 into a state of unprecedented chaos and
18 dysfunctionality. You're not only playing—you
19 are playing with the lives of children. You are
20 destroying their futures. You are in effect
21 throwing them in the garbage can.

22 [applause]

23 Okay? And I speak to the parents and the
24 members of this community. They can only
25 destroy our children. [speaking Spanish] And

1 to Mr. Bloomberg, sir, \$16 billion does not
2 buy you out of the fact that God does not like
3 ugly. Thank you.

4 [applause]

5 MS. GRIMM: Thank you. Andrew Mikins?
6 Number 18, Andrew Mikins?

7 MR. ANDREW MIKINS: Thank you. Good
8 evening, everybody. My name is Andrew Mikins
9 and I'm a 11th grade student at New Day Academy.
10 Dear New York City, Department of Education, New
11 Day Academy has been here since 2005. It has
12 been a school to learn and get a proper
13 education for kids in this community and all of
14 New York. At New Day Academy, you have teachers
15 you really care about the students and their
16 education. You have students who come here to
17 learn and graduate, so they can move on.

18 When I first came to New Day, I thought it
19 was a good school. And I still think it is. I
20 saw that all the teachers and even the principal
21 were cordial. This school stands for something.
22 It stands for all the students and teachers that
23 come to make New Day their own.

24 Your plan to close this school and establish
25 a charter school is wrong. The students that

1 live in this neighborhood would have nowhere
2 to go. It will be hard for them to fit in
3 another school when New Day is their home.

4 [applause]

5 I don't believe New Day should close in
6 2013. I think this school needs to be given a
7 chance to stay. Maybe our attendance and grades
8 are not what you expect them to be, but it's
9 never too late to make a change.

10 I can see this school improving with the
11 arrival of the new principal. NDA should stay
12 open for the future, and for the students to
13 come. I hope you reconsider in your decision
14 and keep New Day Academy open.

15 [applause]

16 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Mr.
17 Oliver? Number 19, Carl Oliver.

18 [applause]

19 MR. OLIVER: All right, New Day, I love
20 y'all. So I'm going to talk from a different
21 point of view because honestly, closing this
22 school isn't just bad for us, it's actually bad
23 for like you. Like it's bad for the DOE.

24 For real, for real. No, I just graduated
25 from a graduate program, where we used the DOE's

1 model for small schools to base off our final
2 assignment. We actually—we learned that, you
3 know, new schools, when they get started, they
4 get a million dollar grant to try and build the
5 capacity as a new school.

6 And anyways, all the fellow graduates and I,
7 we were all looking at starting schools in New
8 York City. But why would we start a school if
9 the district is going to turn their back on us,
10 if in five years, things don't work right? You
11 know, like we won that award, it's out there.
12 We just walk past it. The DOE, the Brode
13 [phonetic] award for Educational Reform, largely
14 because of the small school thing.

15 But now you're going to start shutting the
16 small schools down because they're not looking
17 right? Who's going to award that? It doesn't
18 make sense.

19 So honestly, how about instead of trying to
20 just shut down schools like we've been doing,
21 like say—one thing they say if you get really
22 good at hammering, everything looks like a nail.
23 If for the last two years they've been shutting
24 down all these failing schools that really do
25 have a history of failing. You look at our

1 school now as a school that has a history of
2 failing, and we've only been opened five years.
3 Maybe you're starting to think that we're
4 looking like—need to be closed down, but maybe
5 we actually just need to be supported in the way
6 that most schools are supported by their
7 districts.

8 [applause]

9 So I feel like more schools won't—more
10 innovative school leaders won't want to come to
11 New York City and work if they know that their
12 performance is going to be judged unfairly with
13 like guidelines that don't make sense. So I
14 think it's bad for y'all.

15 The other thing I guess since I'm 30 seconds
16 is that demand is not really an educational
17 measurement. The amount of students that want
18 to come here really isn't our business. If you
19 wanted to, we could set aside a lot of money to
20 go out to different places and try marketing.
21 We could have advertisements. We could have
22 commercials on TV. Hey, come to this school.
23 That's how it is in a lot of places.

24 But we don't. We know where our kids are.
25 They're right here. We serve the community.

1 [applause]

2 We don't need to market. That's not
3 something that we do wrong. Okay?

4 MS. GRIMM: - - . Number 20, Sidella
5 Daniel?

6 MALE VOICE: I'm going to speak for Sidella
7 first, because she's a little nervous. But I'm
8 going to start off with I've been going to this
9 school-

10 MS. GRIMM: Let's listen.

11 MALE VOICE: --I was in the 9th grade. I'm
12 11th grader now. And I was just saying I came
13 from the 11th-I come all the way from Brooklyn
14 every day to come to this school. And it takes
15 me an hour and 25 minutes to get here. And if
16 this school wasn't good, I wouldn't take an hour
17 and 25 minutes to come here.

18 [applause]

19 I will also like to say I understand that
20 closing this school, you may think it will help
21 you, but it won't help you because you're going
22 to have more problems with the kids that'll have
23 to leave and go to another school. They say in
24 order to make something new happen, they said
25 get rid of the old and come in with the new.

1 But how can the new students come in and show
2 progress if you won't let them?

3 [applause]

4 MS. GRIMM: Thank you. Number 21, Fanta
5 Caba [phonetic]?

6 MS. SIDELLA DANIEL: All right.

7 MS. GRIMM: Fanta Caba?

8 MS. DANIEL: I'm going to go. I'm 20. All
9 right.

10 MS. GRIMM: Are you Ms. Daniel?

11 MS. DANIEL: Yeah, I am.

12 MS. GRIMM: Oh, I thought you gave your time
13 to that gentleman.

14 MS. DANIEL: No.

15 MS. GRIMM: Okay.

16 MS. DANIEL: Good evening, parents,
17 teachers, staff, UFT, and students of NDA. My
18 name is Sidella Daniel. I am currently a junior
19 at New Day Academy on track to graduate in the
20 year 2011.

21 [applause]

22 I was truly shocked when I found out that my
23 high school would eventually be phased out in
24 the year 2013. I choose to come here because
25 I've been in the building for many years, and

1 thought it was a great neighborhood school.

2 It was a lot of information to take in
3 because it made me wonder what would happen to
4 the upcoming classes, not only that, but about
5 the kids in the neighborhood. Where will they
6 go if their local high school is no longer here?

7 If NDA was to be closed with the empty space
8 that is available, they will open a charter
9 school. With a charter school being in the
10 area, it will be a difficult situation for the
11 kids who live in the area because enrollment is
12 based on the screening process. I personally
13 believe that NDA cannot blame—I personally
14 believe they cannot blame NDA for the closing of
15 the school because we weren't given a chance to
16 prove people wrong with things we don't have
17 anything to offer. I truly believe that if you
18 have the kind of resources to open new schools,
19 why not put it into building up New Day Academy?
20 All we need is support.

21 New Day Academy is not only a learning
22 place, but it's like a home to others because we
23 were given the opportunity to talk to teachers
24 and get advice when we need. What will we do
25 when this is gone? New Day Academy has opened

1 doors with students who have fallen off path
2 and helped them to succeed in order for them to
3 graduate. You guys don't understand. It takes
4 time for a school to change. It doesn't happen
5 overnight.

6 [applause]

7 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Number 21,
8 Fanta Caba?

9 [applause]

10 MS. FANTA CABA: Good evening, everyone. My
11 name is Fanta Caba and I'm a junior at New Day
12 Academy and is on track to graduate in spring of
13 2009.

14 I have also been an honor roll student since
15 freshman year. I had the opportunity to attend
16 a bigger high school, but I decided to come to
17 NDA for--

18 MS. GRIMM: Let's all pay attention.

19 MS. CABA: I decided to come to NDA because
20 of its size and its environment. But hearing
21 that the DOE wants to take away my school truly
22 breaks my heart. My heart is broken because
23 I've been in this building for over six years.
24 And it's sad to see how the DOE has already
25 taken away middle school 158. And if you ask me

1 what that sounds like, it sounds like a
2 constant failure of the DOE. And how hard
3 teachers and students have worked. Instead of
4 spending money on opening new schools, why don't
5 you spend money on current schools that made
6 progress?

7 I believe that NDA believes that—NDA
8 deserves a chance, especially now that we have a
9 new principal, Ms. G. I think that the DOE
10 should give NDA its day.

11 [applause]

12 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Number 22,
13 Fernando Sanchez?

14 [applause]

15 MR. FERNANDO SANCHEZ: Testing. How's
16 everybody doing? Ain't God good? My name is
17 Fernando Sanchez. I'm currently a junior for
18 New Day Academy. And I was truly shocked when I
19 heard New Day Academy was being phased out 2013.

20 I feel you shouldn't close New Day Academy
21 because it's a learning environment as well as a
22 home for others. New Day Academy has opened
23 doors, helped people graduate. Also, New Day
24 Academy has helped people that are on track by
25 providing such as Project Uplift.

1 Before I leave, I want to shout out the
2 counselors, the staff, the students. I want to,
3 you know, appreciate everything y'all did for
4 me, for making me a better person. You know,
5 for giving me confidence, determination to know
6 a lot. And I love you all. And I'm off this.
7 You heard?

8 [applause]

9 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much.

10 FEMALE VOICE: Um, I don't even—I don't know
11 what you all think of us, but all I know is that
12 we're a family and we just need one more chance.

13 MALE VOICE: That's right.

14 [applause]

15 MS. GRIMM: Thank you. Number 23, is it
16 Shannon Ruiz [phonetic]?

17 [applause]

18 MS. SHANIQUA RUIZ: Hello, my name is
19 Shaniqua Ruiz. I'm a senior at New Day Academy.
20 And I've had the pleasure of spending—I'm fine,
21 I'm fine. I've had the pleasure of spending my
22 last seven years here in this building, as well
23 as attending all of my assemblies in this here
24 auditorium. I did not come here today to tell
25 you how good and how great of a school this is,

1 or even whether I agree with the decision
2 being made by the Department of Education. I'm
3 here on behalf of myself, my community, my
4 peers, and my teachers. Fortunately, for my
5 classmates and I, New Day Academy has not only
6 turned us into educated individuals, but
7 historians. Not only historians, but
8 journalists. And not only journalists, but as
9 much as I dislike math, we have turned into
10 mathematicians as well.

11 [applause]

12 And I have this school to thank for, and my
13 wonderful teachers for that. I still cannot
14 fathom why anyone would want to tear it down.
15 We aren't perfect, but what school is? And I
16 still want you to think twice about your
17 proposal. New Day Academy has helped us to
18 find—helped me to find my independence and
19 helped me to be sure of the fact that one day, I
20 will most definitely become a medical doctor,
21 enriched with all of what that I have been
22 taught here during these last four years at New
23 Day Academy. Thankfully for me being the way I
24 am, everybody at this school has accepted me for
25 who I was instead of putting me down, they told

1 me what I was going to be, and pick me up and
2 reassure me. And they knew what I was going to
3 be.

4 [applause]

5 We all have a different kind of love for
6 each other. One that's unbreakable. Beyond
7 this building, we sit here today beyond New Day
8 Academy's name and beyond the - - of hope we
9 receive from the Department of Education. My
10 classmates and I all have the same potential
11 within us. Within our shattered hearts, we all
12 need a place to let it shine. Give my school a
13 chance and help us to make our futures brighter.

14 [applause]

15 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Number 24
16 Bertha Liva [phonetic], number 24, a parent.
17 Number 24, Bertha Liva, a parent. Not here?
18 Okay. Number 25, Charley Alros [phonetic].

19 MS. CHARLEY ALROS: All right, I get a
20 little teary eyed. So please forgive me.
21 Shush.

22 Um, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for
23 coming and good evening.

24 MS. GRIMM: Good evening.

25 MS. ALROS: Um, a career changer who came to

1 New Day Academy last year in September. It
2 was the first time for so much for me. My first
3 time for teaching. The first time learning how
4 to understand multi faceted teenagers. Not just
5 my own students, but oh, gosh. Not for just my
6 own students, but needing to nurture the entire
7 NDA young student community. The first time in a
8 long time I questioned everything I did and
9 everything I said.

10 The first time accountable for the education
11 and the social development of tomorrow's
12 citizens that can be such a very scary notion,
13 especially for me as a career changer. But it's
14 one that I take very seriously.

15 The first time being challenged every
16 minute, every hour for 180 days. And I'm not
17 one who leaves here at 3:00. Wondering what
18 comes next, being prepared to think on my feet,
19 and change at the slightest moment. The first
20 time by being disrespected by so many young
21 people, the first time for having so many young
22 people under the age of 18 watch my back. The
23 first time seeing so many young people be
24 humbled and love and excited at the simplest
25 statement or hug or action for me, that moment I

1 love over and over again every single day to
2 keep me moving on.

3 So if you think I'm yelling at you, I am,
4 but I'm loving you every time I'm doing it.
5 Every time I'm doing it. I love y'all. 2009
6 and 10 I spent the year and a half looking into
7 the eyes of the same students. I've spent two
8 years with them. Now you say that New Day is
9 scheduled to be phased out at 2013? Shame on
10 you.

11 [applause]

12 MS. GRIMM: I need to ask you—

13 MS. ALROS: Shame. Now I have new wonders.
14 What will happen to the young people in the
15 neighborhood with no neighborhood high school?
16 What message are the city leaders sending? More
17 importantly, what is the Board of Education
18 saying? Martin Luther King, Junior, I teach
19 Social Studies, the time is always right to do
20 what is right.

21 MS. GRIMM: I need to ask you to start
22 wrapping up.

23 MS. ALROS: How wrong is closing New Day
24 Academy when we just received a new start and
25 new hope?

1 [applause]

2 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Number 26,
3 Matthew Connors. Matthew Connors?

4 MR. MATTHEW CONNORS: All right, everybody.
5 I'm an outsider who came into New Day Academy
6 last June. And I think I bring, uh, a certain
7 objectivity to the situation here.

8 I'm a 24 year teaching veteran, classroom
9 teacher. And I know a lot about schools. I
10 know the students here at New Day are smart,
11 creative, and will take any chance, any
12 opportunity given to them and do something with
13 it. And that's why I accepted the invitation to
14 come here and be part of building something. I
15 knew what I was getting into. I knew that I was
16 coming to a community that needs good schools.
17 I knew that I was coming to a community, a
18 school, that had challenges they had to
19 overcome.

20 And I'm not surprised in what I find. The
21 students here will take whatever support you
22 give them, what support you help us to give
23 them. And we will grow. Okay?

24 I also know something about adults who work
25 with children. And the staff that I came to

1 join here is a very strong staff. And they
2 have the ability to build a good school. I do—I
3 believe in accountability. I do not believe we
4 have every experienced real accountability here
5 in the city. I don't believe—I do believe that
6 you want good schools or that we say we need
7 good schools, but we have the ability here to
8 build a good school. And that's what I come in
9 as an outsider, seeing and being able to say
10 here today.

11 [applause]

12 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Thank you.
13 Number 27, Sea McShane [phonetic], number 27?

14 MS. SEA MCSHANE: Okay. Okay. Dear
15 Department of Education, um, where are my
16 programs to keep me off the streets? Where are
17 my programs that I'm missing? Where are my
18 programs to express myself through dance? Where
19 are my programs to show my hidden talent of art?
20 Where are my programs to teach—yeah, yeah, teach
21 me how to act and perform? Where are my
22 programs to let me get my aggression out through
23 a good game of football? Where are my programs
24 to explore physics, so I can just be like
25 Dexter's laboratory? Where are my programs to

1 show my wicked speed? Where are my programs
2 to let me work on my baseball skills? Where are
3 my programs to get back to my community? Where
4 are my programs to express my feeling in a song?
5 Where are my programs to help me get my
6 scholarship to college?

7 I answer these questions for you. I don't
8 even know how. We don't have any programs. And
9 that is not—nor my teachers fault. This is
10 Mayor Bloomberg's fault. He claims to have done
11 so much to the point where he changes the laws
12 to run for another term. But yet in reality, he
13 hasn't done anything for me or my community.

14 But then again, why would a billionaire
15 about us? The reason why he is rich is because
16 we have struggled.

17 [applause]

18 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Number 28?
19 Andrew, Andrew So?

20 [chanting]

21 Okay, let's listen to Mr. So.

22 MR. ANDREW SO: You know, I could, um, I
23 could talk more about data, because I know
24 that's what, uh, Department of Education wants
25 to hear all the time, but schools are really

1 about community. Community, family,
2 relationships, and turning that community into
3 something that can help students grow.

4 And I've been here in the, um, four years
5 that I've been here, I've seen this community
6 grow so much. I've worked with some amazing
7 students. In particular, I've worked with a
8 student who came in in 6th grade, uh, severely
9 struggling with undiagnosed dyslexia and
10 dyscalculia [phonetic]. Uh, we worked with her,
11 collaborated with her family. She has, uh, a
12 lot of difficulty passing her classes the first
13 year. She's now been here for four years. Um,
14 passing all her classes, including reading, um,
15 including ELA and math. And she's amazing
16 writer, writing, uh, chapter books literally.

17 I work with another student who came in,
18 despite a small class environment, because of a
19 cerebral palsy on his IEP. We didn't offer that
20 at that time, but he still came here. Um, in
21 his first year, he struggled a lot, but we
22 worked as a community to support him. He made
23 the honor roll in his second year. He's, uh,
24 presented two amazing portfolios and is
25 generally happy here.

1 I work with another student who his first
2 year here I know ended up in the principal's
3 office almost every day. But five years later,
4 has made so much growth in school and out. I
5 ran into him the other day at his job taking
6 care of so many, uh, whole group of kids. And
7 he's doing really well here as well.

8 One of the few people that have got a chance
9 to work with a group of students growing up from
10 middle school through high school, 7th grade, 8th
11 grade, 9th grade, and 10th grade. And this
12 amazing group that I've seen them grow
13 emotionally and academically. And I know that
14 they're all devastated, their family and
15 community is threatening to be torn apart. So.

16 [applause]

17 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much, Mr. So.
18 Next is number 29, Camille Donnelly.

19 [applause]

20 FEMALE VOICE: She's got to laugh it up for
21 a second.

22 MS. CAMILLE DONNOLLY: I can't do this.

23 FEMALE VOICE: You can do it.

24 MS. DONNOLLY: I can't. Unh-huh, I'm not.
25 I can't.

1 FEMALE VOICE: You can do it. You just -
2 - .

3 [applause]

4 MS. DONNOLLY: I can't.

5 FEMALE VOICE: Okay, did you know that I
6 love my school? You read the next line?

7 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know that I have
8 teachers here who really care about me and-as in
9 vision?

10 FEMALE VOICE: Did you know that you are
11 making the wrong decision to close my school?

12 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know that charter
13 schools is scheduled to replace NDA?

14 FEMALE VOICE: Did you know that a charter
15 school is not open to every child in the area?

16 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know that charter
17 schools is the major way of choosing who he
18 wants in his school, so that he can then turn
19 around and say he succeeded? Isn't that
20 discrimination?

21 FEMALE VOICE: Did you know that I had a
22 water leak in my English classroom for two
23 months?

24 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know that we don't
25 have book shelves in some of our classes?

1 FEMALE VOICE: Did you know that we have a
2 library with no books?

3 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know that we have
4 computer labs for—with 25 computers and one
5 printer for over 400 students?

6 FEMALE VOICE: Did you know that there are
7 ceiling tiles missing in almost every classroom?

8 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know that the average
9 amount of money of—a teacher spends out of her
10 pocket each year is \$200?

11 FEMALE VOICE: Did you know that my teachers
12 copy machines never work?

13 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know that we don't
14 have gym equipment?

15 FEMALE VOICE: Did you know that I only get
16 22.5 minutes to eat lunch because we have to
17 share the cafeteria?

18 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know that I don't
19 have music?

20 FEMALE VOICE: Did you know that I don't
21 have art?

22 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know that some of our
23 classrooms are like 70 degrees?

24 FEMALE VOICE: Did you know that the rest of
25 my classrooms are 30 degrees?

1 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know that the
2 students at NDA have shown progress and growth?

3 FEMALE VOICE: Did you know that NDA was one
4 of the first small schools opened by Bloomberg?

5 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know that he has
6 never attended, admitted that any of his small
7 schools failed? He just closed them.

8 FEMALE VOICE: Did you know that I have to
9 worry about being shot every day when I come and
10 go from school?

11 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know--

12 MS. GRIMM: You guys need to start wrapping
13 up.

14 MS. DONNOLLY: --that we have broken chairs
15 in our auditorium?

16 FEMALE VOICE: Did you know that the
17 students in my school perform community service?

18 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know that I have to
19 worry about being cut or jumped by a gang member
20 at the age of 12?

21 FEMALE VOICE: Did you know that we deserve
22 the same education as any other child in our
23 country?

24 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know that we don't
25 receive the equal education or the after school

1 programs?

2 FEMALE VOICE: Did you know that both the
3 Yankees and the Giants got new stadiums, but my
4 school is still crumbling and we have no
5 technology?

6 MS. GRIMM: I need to ask you to start
7 wrapping up?

8 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know that there are—
9 they make million dollars and we still have
10 nothing.

11 FEMALE VOICE: Did you know that there are—
12 that their needs—that there needs to be change
13 and it needs to start at the top?

14 MS. DONNOLLY: Did you know that New Day
15 should stay open.

16 MS. GRIMM: I need to ask you to start
17 wrapping up, please.

18 MS. DONNOLLY: Now you can stay—now you can
19 say you never knew because I told you. Tell
20 Bloomberg, too, because he seems to be too busy
21 to come and listen to us.

22 [applause]

23 MS. GRIMM: Number 30, Diane Baker? Diane
24 Baker?

25 MS. DIANE BAKER: Okay. Whoo! Um, good

1 evening. My name is Diane Baker, and I'm one
2 of the founding members of New Day Academy. I
3 applied to the teaching position as a very
4 inexperienced teacher, who was extremely excited
5 about the opportunity to be a part of something
6 new. I met with Paul Schwartz, the founder of
7 the school, at his home. And he told me about
8 the philosophy and mission of the school. - -
9 wonder, whoa, a meeting interview at his house?
10 Well, that is just what part of his philosophy
11 was, to be a community where everyone is treated
12 like part of a family, who cares about you and
13 your growth.

14 We spoke about educating the whole child,
15 and showing that students have a place where
16 they are well known, understood, given high
17 expectations, and most of all, respected.

18 After I was hired, I met with other founding
19 members, including Francis Serpico, Carl Oliver,
20 and Suzy Kang. And we began to build our dream
21 school. We were a grassroots movement with a
22 clear vision of creating an environment that was
23 like a warm, nurturing blanket for everyone who
24 was enveloped in its invisible cloth. We
25 thought of policies, projects, classes

1 schedules, everyone—everything possible to
2 make sure that every child would be successful.
3 We were young, ambitious, and beyond excited.
4 We were New Day Academy. That was in 2005.

5 Today, many of us still understand the
6 concept of educating the whole child. What does
7 that mean? It means understanding the child as
8 an individual, and not a mere number in the
9 classroom, understanding that every child learns
10 differently, understanding that every child
11 comes from a different home environment,
12 understanding that every child deserves respect,
13 understanding that every child is a unique,
14 beautiful genius in his or her own right.

15 We have advisory where we get to nurture
16 that part of the child that needs to be
17 comforted when things at home or even the
18 hallways don't go right. We have small class
19 size, so that instructors can get to know each
20 child's learning style and create curricula,
21 ensure academic success.

22 Like all organizations, we recognize that
23 there are areas that need improvement. But the
24 fundamentals of what this school truly means
25 remain. And there's a school that what's

1 created to created to the needs of students in
2 the - - community. It was created to let
3 children know that they have a voice and that
4 yes, they are intelligent. Here, we teach
5 students how to step into their greatness and
6 understand that no matter what is going on
7 inside outside of this school building, they
8 must recognize their potential, because there's
9 not one of them who was incapable of being a
10 success story.

11 As for me, I am proud to be part of the NDA
12 community. My kids, your kids mean the world to
13 me. I treat them as if they were my own. And
14 you can ask them. They need and deserve a place
15 where people truly care about them and their
16 individual needs. With NDA gone, this area will
17 lose a place where many call their second home,
18 even if they don't say it aloud. Thank you.

19 [applause]

20 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Number 31,
21 Michael Ross?

22 MR. MICHAEL ROSS: Good evening.

23 MS. GRIMM: Good evening.

24 MR. ROSS: My name is Michael Ross and I am
25 the, uh, UFT chapter leader here. Most of you

1 know me as pretty passionate guy, but I've got
2 to get something on the record. So bear with
3 me.

4 This is a resolution to oppose the closing
5 of public school New Day Academy 12X245.
6 Whereas New Day Academy is a promising new
7 community school that offers a meaningful
8 education to young adults in District 12, and
9 whereas at great expense of time and money, the
10 DOE has created progress reports and quality
11 reviews, and whereas the DOE has also created a
12 written standard based upon them that the DOE
13 had claimed it will use to determine candidates
14 for closing, and whereas the educational impact
15 statements of at least half of the closing
16 schools say that the schools may be considered
17 for closing if they, and I quote, "receive an
18 overall grade of "D" or "F" on the progress
19 report or three "C's" in a row, and a score
20 below proficient on the quality review, and
21 whereas the DOE has arbitrarily changed its
22 closing standard for New Day by omitting the
23 quality review on the EIS, and now plans to
24 close the school, even though New Day has had a
25 proficient on its three quality reviews, and

1 whereas quality reviews are thorough in their
2 documentation and the independent reviewers
3 perform an in-depth, two day inspection of our
4 school, and whereas three different reviewers in
5 the last three years identified New Day as a
6 good school, and gave it a proficient score, and
7 while pointing area with room for growth, most
8 surely did not assess New Day as a school that
9 must be closed, saying in the 2008/2009 review,
10 for example, that the school disaggregates each
11 data source diligently to understand better the
12 unique needs of special education students,
13 English language learners, boys and girls. The
14 principal and the faculty work together
15 effectively to do what is best for students,
16 earning them the trust of the community they
17 serve. The school offers students and their
18 parents a comprehensive set of supports and
19 activities that bring the cultural differences
20 between home and school.

21 Whereas the DOE has ignored its quality
22 review accountability, and claimed in its impact
23 statement that it's conducted an assessment of
24 New Day and decided to close it, I would ask
25 because I don't want to go over my time, that

1 this be read into the record. And you'll
2 allow me to close by saying be it therefore
3 resolved that this community educational
4 council, district leadership team, school
5 leadership team opposes the closure of the New
6 Day, and calls upon the New York City Department
7 of Education and Chancellor Joel Klein to
8 retract their plans for closure, and provide the
9 proposed schools with the resources necessary
10 for academic success. Thank you for your time.

11 MS. GRIMM: If you'll provide us with - - .

12 [applause]

13 Okay. 32, Mr. Leo Casey? Leo?

14 [applause]

15 MR. LEO CASEY: Good evening. My name is
16 Leo Casey and I am the vice president for
17 academic high schools at the United Federation
18 of Teachers.

19 [applause]

20 There is a New Day in the South Bronx, but
21 it's the same old story of passing the buck and
22 abdicating responsibility from the Department of
23 Education.

24 [applause]

25 The Department of Education does not follow

1 its own standards. There is one year of
2 progress report. And yet, it's ready to close
3 down a school that it creates this concentration
4 of need with these great teachers that are
5 dedicated to these young kids, who work hard
6 every day. This is wrong.

7 It is your misfortune not to go to a great
8 school, not to work in a great school. It's
9 your misfortune to be in the middle of the South
10 Bronx, where they want to create space to put
11 charter schools. That is your misfortune.

12 [applause]

13 And that is why this decision is being made
14 to close your school without giving it a chance,
15 without giving it an opportunity, without
16 allowing it to develop and grow. This is wrong.

17 [applause]

18 It is not an educational decision. It is a
19 political decision. And if there is any
20 integrity left at Tweed, any bit of integrity,
21 this decision will not stand.

22 [applause]

23 MS. GRIMM: Thank you, Mr. Casey. Number
24 33, Ashley Hernandez?

25 MS. ASHLEY HERNANDEZ: Good evening. Some

1 students and teachers already know who I am.
2 And for those who don't, my name is Ashley
3 Hernandez, and I am alumni of New Day Academy.

4 I am currently attending Sullivan County
5 Community College in Lockville [phonetic], New
6 York.

7 [applause]

8 As a student at New Day Academy, I had my
9 struggles plenty of times, and messed up the
10 majority of times. Even with these struggles
11 during high school, I managed to get up on my
12 own two feet and find my way through, so I can
13 graduate.

14 NDA very much prepared me for college.
15 Everything the teachers tell you guys and show
16 you, take them into consideration. Because if
17 you decide to go to college, which I hope all of
18 you do, everything is going to come in handy.

19 My college experience as of right now is
20 very easy for me. And I must say thank you to
21 the staff of New Day Academy. Without them,
22 college would have been harder, would have been
23 much harder than I could ever imagine. In
24 college, I have noticed that one of my main
25 necessities is using the habits of mind. Even

1 though I was sick of hearing about them the
2 whole four years of high school, now I am
3 really—now I really appreciate them.

4 If you do what you have to do in high
5 school, college would be a breeze. Before
6 leaving for college, I was horrible at writing
7 papers. And it just wasn't my thing. I gave Ms.
8 Lacy a hard time. Now I can look back and thank
9 her for everything she's done because in school,
10 the professor can now give me a paper and I am
11 able to knock it out the next day.

12 Carl's math class just seemed so boring at
13 times, right? But if you give every—but if
14 everyone gives him a chance and stays focused,
15 you would thank him in the long run. Thank you,
16 Carl.

17 [applause]

18 I would also like to say thank you to all
19 the teachers that been here. Vanessa, Ms. Sea
20 Emil [phonetic] for being a mom to me. I don't
21 know the current principal. I haven't met you
22 yet. I grew up like was here with Daisy and
23 Paul, but I hear that you're doing a good job.
24 And keep on because we cannot let them stop and
25 close New Day.

1 But thank you, New Day for making me the
2 person I am today. I probably wouldn't be here—
3 I've done worse. I would not have made it out
4 of high school if it wasn't for New Day. Thank
5 you.

6 [applause]

7 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Thank you.
8 Number 34, Warren Bailey?

9 [applause]

10 MR. WARREN BAILEY: Good evening, everyone.
11 For those who don't know me, my name is Warren
12 Bailey. I'm a special education teacher here at
13 New Day Academy. I've been with the Board of Ed
14 since 1975 and I come from a family of
15 educators.

16 I find it very instructive and informative
17 and inspirational that our meeting tonight is
18 taking place on the eve of one of my hero's
19 birthdays, Dr. Martin Luther King. And invoking
20 his name, I go back to the days that I marched
21 in this struggle along with him and many others
22 for the problems that we still seem to facing
23 today.

24 In 1963, he wrote a book called "Where Do We
25 Go From Here?" And in that book, he describes

1 the children in the ghettos living in what he
2 call islands of poverty in the midst of a vast
3 ocean of material wealth. And what he said is
4 that those young people would meet the struggle.
5 They would stand up and they would make a
6 change.

7 Now during that same decade, there was a
8 play called "The Believers" that came out. And
9 the refrain from there is what shall we believe
10 in now? Well, those children and these young
11 people have chosen to believe in education, to
12 believe in the school that they're in. And they
13 show that commitment every day.

14 And while we're speaking about that, let me
15 just say there's more to education than data.
16 As was said in the film "Gloria" about the 54th
17 of Massachusetts, there's character. And the
18 character that these children show is
19 inspirational every day. They walk past the
20 dangers of the street that the mayor won't come
21 to see, that school—that city officials don't
22 come to see to get an education every day. They
23 arrive in their first class at 8:00 in the
24 morning. And in some cases, they get here at
25 7:00 in the morning to do extra work in the gym

1 beforehand.

2 [applause]

3 Now let me just make another statement here
4 as well. The data, the contradictions. It's
5 already been well documented that there's a
6 great deal of contradiction in the data that's
7 being used to make a decision. Well, let me
8 just, our time is up, but let me just say this
9 to you right now. That the decision to close
10 this school in the face of the contradictory
11 data is arbitrary and capricious. And anybody
12 who supports it needs to be indicted in the
13 field of human understanding. These kids
14 deserve a chance. Give them that chance.

15 [applause]

16 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Number 33,
17 Ashley Hernandez. Ashley Hernandez? She left.
18 Okay, number 34, Warren Bailey just spoke. Alex
19 Morales [phonetic]. Alex?

20 MR. ALEX MORALES: You all look pretty
21 excited today, you know? All right, my name is
22 Alex Morales. I'm one of the many graduates of
23 New Day Academy from 2009.

24 [applause]

25 There are a lot of teachers and schools that

1 come and teach just for the money. You don't
2 see that in this school. You see teachers who
3 really care for the students. They want to see
4 them succeed.

5 Yeah. This is our school. We created this
6 school. You can't kill the sun. That's not
7 your creation. Yeah.

8 [applause]

9 All right, I believe in the students that
10 are in this school right now, the families of
11 the students. And I believe in the new
12 principal, because she can—we can rise with her
13 at the top.

14 [applause]

15 Yeah, this, uh, take this, I promise you,
16 you keep this school open, only good things
17 could happen.

18 [applause]

19 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much.

20 MR. MORALES: The champ is here.

21 MS. GRIMM: Number 35, Kenya Fuentes? Kenya
22 Fuentes?

23 [applause]

24 MS. KENYA FUENTES: Good evening. My name
25 is Kenya Fuentes and I am currently a sophomore

1 here at New Day. When I first came to the
2 school, I was very introverted. With time,
3 however, I made friends and strong relationships
4 with teachers. I have learned many lessons from
5 this school, both academic and non academic.
6 New Day has given me the motivation to raise my
7 standards, to realize my potential.

8 With the help of the school community, I
9 have become confident in who I am. There are
10 students across the country who will never have
11 this experience. Where will we be without New
12 Day? The teachers here truly care about the
13 well being of the students in and out of class.
14 By closing this school, you're not solving the
15 problem. The problem one is that it's large and
16 not easy to fix because it involves the
17 community, school leaders, and the Department of
18 Education itself.

19 It involves every institution being
20 dedicated to this idea of the - - students
21 achievement. And closing another-closing a
22 school is not a part of the solution. Blaming
23 one person after another for the lack of
24 progress is not the answer. Clearly, the
25 problem cannot be blamed on any single

1 individual. To do so is simply not addressing
2 the need to reaffirm urban education. It is a
3 difficult and challenging project that we must
4 not give up on. Closing New Day is closing
5 doors on hope. Thank you.

6 [applause]

7 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. Number 37,
8 Vanessa C. Wallace from Community Board 3? Ms.
9 Wallace? Is Ms. Wallace here?

10 MS. VANESSA WALLACE: Good afternoon, deputy
11 chancellor Grimm, Myrna Rodriguez, Elena
12 Papilberios, Cares Daville [phonetic], Carmen
13 Taveres [phonetic], Maura Gonales [phonetic],
14 parents, students and community advocates. My
15 name is Vanessa Wallace and I'm from Bronx
16 Community Board 3. And I'm the chairperson for
17 the education committee.

18 [applause]

19 The DOE uses the same language for each
20 educational impact statement to propose school
21 closure. The DOE must take responsibility for a
22 smaller school initiative. This intervention
23 has not been benefited all students, especially
24 in District 12.

25 Furthermore, the DOE has allowed New Day to

1 operate as a ticking time bomb. Now DOE is
2 ready to explode the bomb, because New Day
3 received a "D" in 2006, a "C" in 2007, and a "C"
4 in 2008. What has the school support
5 organization implemented during the past three
6 years? How can DOE do this to the students,
7 parents, and the community? Although the
8 students have academic challenges, they must be
9 given interventions to enable them to compete
10 with greater proficiency on statewide exams.
11 The principal, the new principal is making great
12 strides to improve accountability. There is an
13 active school leadership team.

14 The DOE proposal in the educational impact
15 statement does not ensure proficiency of the New
16 Day students. There's no plan to provide an
17 adequate education for the students. Let's look
18 at the accountability overview and practice by
19 DOE.

20 The EIS states students in the 6th and 7th
21 grade may apply to transfer, but transfers will
22 only be fulfilled based upon available seats.
23 The students are not guaranteed seats in the
24 proposed charter school. Furthermore, the EIS
25 states New Day students in the 9th grade will

1 have opportunity to participate in high school
2 admissions process, begin a different school in
3 the 10th grade, pending grade 10 students
4 availability.

5 The EIS also, I need one more a couple more
6 seconds, the EIS also states repeating 9th and
7 10th grade students are encouraged to meet with
8 their guidance counselor. DOE does not have a
9 plan for the students at New Day. Our children
10 are not cattle to be shuffled around by DOE.
11 The parents will get petition to their absentee
12 elected officials. And I will speak to the
13 District Manager at Community Board 3 about
14 safety concerns. If parents, students, and
15 faculty want to keep the school open, the
16 community board will support you. The Panel for
17 Education Policy will vote on the DOE on January
18 26 at Brooklyn Tech High School at 6:00 p.m.
19 This is not a done deal yet. Again, this is not
20 a done deal yet.

21 [applause]

22 I urge all parents and students to attend.
23 Thank you.

24 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much. That
25 concludes the public speakers that we have

1 tonight. I want to thank everyone. And I
2 want to especially thank the students who were
3 here tonight for your participation in this
4 hearing.

5 This public hearing is now closed. Thank
6 you very much.

7 [END 154_542_A.MP3]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature Chris Hwang

Date 1-18-2010