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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION - OFFICE OF
PORTFOLIO PLANNING**

**School for Community Research &
Learning**

January 5, 2010

1 [START 154_422]

2 MR. SANTIAGO TAVARES: Welcome to the Adlai
3 Stevenson Campus. My name is Santiago Tavares I
4 am the Deputy Chancellor for Teaching and
5 Learning and I would like for everyone on the
6 panel to introduce themselves before we start.

7 If you need to get something and get
8 comfortable please find a seat. Thank you.

9 MS. CHANTAL PATTERSON: Hello I'm Chantal
10 Patterson [phonetic] the Chairperson for SCRL
11 and SLT.

12 MR. MATT ELLIS: Hi I'm Matt Ellis an
13 English teacher here at SCRL, a member of the
14 SLT and one of the community members affected by
15 this decision.

16 MS. ELENA POPOLIVERAS: Elena Popoliveras
17 [phonetic] Superintendent Bronx High Schools.

18 MS. DENISE SULLIVAN: Good evening my name
19 is Denise Sullivan; I'm the Citywide
20 Representative for the Citywide Council for High
21 Schools. Thank you.

22 MR. TAVARES: We may be joined by other
23 members of the Community Education Council 8 and
24 if they come in we will introduce them at that
25 time.

1 Buenos noches; good evening. Thank you for
2 coming tonight to join the public hearing for
3 the proposed phase-out and eventual closure of
4 the School for Community Research and Learning,
5 SCRL.

6 I am Santiago Tavares Deputy Chancellor for
7 Teaching and Learning. I am joined by Matt
8 Ellis, School Leadership Team and Chantal
9 Patterson and School Leadership Team for SCRL.
10 I'm also joined by the Bronx High School
11 Superintendent Elena Popoliveras and also by
12 Denise Sullivan representing the Citywide
13 Council on High Schools.

14 We may be joined later on by Norma Mendez-
15 Cruz from CEC 8 and one other person that may
16 join us later.

17 The purpose of this hearing is for you to
18 provide comments about the proposals. All those
19 who wish to speak must sign in to speak in the
20 area located outside the auditorium. Since we
21 are starting five minutes late we will close the
22 signing area at 6:20.

23 This proposal is something the department
24 takes very seriously and has considered in
25 comprehensive manner. Over the past six years

1 the Department of Education has phased out over
2 90 schools and opened 335 new schools that have
3 demonstrated remarkable success in helping
4 students excel.

5 For example our new high schools have
6 achieved an average four-year graduation rate of
7 75 %; well above the citywide average of 60%
8 even though these schools serve some of the
9 highest need students in the city. This
10 proposal will continue that important work. The
11 department is not blaming anyone or any
12 individual for this situation but we have
13 determined it is important to give students the
14 best possible opportunity for long-term success.

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

20 The school's graduation rate is both low and
21 declining. In 2009 the school graduated just
22 fewer than 44% of their students; that is down
23 from 47% in 2008. Simply put a graduation rate
24 of 44% of the students does not meet any
25 standard of success. At this school students

1 fall behind early in their education making it
2 difficult to catch up and get back on track as
3 it is evidenced by the school's extremely low
4 graduation rate. Only 53% of the students are
5 accumulating 10 credits or more their first
6 year. Students need to earn 44 credits in order
7 to meet graduation requirements. That means
8 that they should be accumulating an average of
9 11 credits per year.

10 First year credit accumulation is an
11 important predictor of graduation rates and
12 having only 53% of students earn 10 or more
13 credits in their first year does not indicate
14 adequate preparation of students for college and
15 careers.

16 Additionally the demand for the school has
17 increased slightly but remains extremely low.
18 The School for Community Research and Learning
19 received only 3.3 applications per seat in
20 September 2009. The school is designed to serve
21 423 students but only enrolled 364 students in
22 the 2008/2009 school year.

23 The bottom line is this school is trending
24 downward in performance and demand. Performance
25 in the 8th percentile of high schools citywide

1 and is in need of improvement according to the
2 state standards. Again when considering that
3 comprehensively, these factors demonstrate that
4 the school is not serving our students well.

5 Some have argued that a high percentage of
6 Special Education students and English language
7 learners have contributed to the school's
8 academic challenges; however other small schools
9 in the Bronx have high percentages of Special
10 Education students such as Morris Academy for
11 Collaborative Studies and Bronx Engineering and
12 Technology Academy have graduation rates over
13 70% and a special education population over 20%.
14 In short, SCRL graduates 25% less students
15 despite similar populations as these other
16 successful schools.

17 Let me be clear about the consequences of
18 this proposal. All students currently enrolled
19 in the school will have the opportunity to
20 graduate from SCRL. We will continue to support
21 the school during the three-year phase-out
22 process; a new school is proposed to open in
23 September 2010 with the 9th grade and will
24 eventually serve Grades 9 through 12.

25 Thank you. I look forward to hearing your

1 comments and questions. In order that all
2 people who signed up to speak are given the
3 opportunity we will limit comments to two
4 minutes. After 1 minute and 30 seconds there
5 will be a warning bell; in this case where is
6 Barbara? She will show that there are 30
7 seconds left and when the final second ticks
8 down she'll show that the time is up.

9 It is really important that we adhere to
10 this so that we give every single person the
11 opportunity to speak that has come out here
12 tonight to do so.

13 Before that we're going to have the School
14 Leadership Team do a presentation. Is that you
15 Matt who's going to lead that or - - so let's
16 have those folks come up now and do that.

17 I also want to say that if you have not
18 signed up please sign up at the back. You still
19 have another seven or so minutes to do so and at
20 that time we'll start calling, after this
21 presentation, the people to speak but also if
22 there is anyone from any of the elected officers
23 or their city council borough president that
24 would like to speak please let us know so that
25 you could do that before the comments start.

1 Matt who's presenting? And what's your
2 name?

3 JAY: Jay.

4 MR. TAVARES: Jay, pleasure to meet you.

5 JAY: Thank you so much. I appreciate your
6 help.

7 This is a presentation about the Bronx.
8 It's a presentation about our school and it's
9 about the Bronx getting interrupted in our
10 education.

11 This is called Bronx Interrupted: The
12 Closing of SCRL. What we're going to show you
13 right now is some numbers. These are really
14 important numbers. The Department of Education
15 spent a lot of time putting these numbers
16 together so we need to talk about them.

17 We have some important graduation rates,
18 some things that people need to see and I'm just
19 going to go real quick over those because the
20 Deputy Chancellor was nice enough to talk about
21 most of them.

22 Last year we got a B right? We got a B last
23 year, B is not that bad. This year we got a C;
24 we went down. We definitely went down. Our
25 score actually went up; it went from a 43.5 to a

1 44.1. We went up a little bit but the metrics
2 changed one way or the other we wound up with a
3 C this year.

4 We're a C school. Last year we got a
5 proficient on our quality review which we had
6 some really nice things--Department of Education
7 had some really nice things to say about the
8 school when they evaluated our school. They
9 gave us a proficient on it.

10 This year because of our proficient we
11 didn't have to have another quality review.
12 They were so happy with us last year we didn't
13 have to have a quality review this year.

14 Our accountability status has stayed in good
15 standing; federal and state. This year we've
16 become a city school where improvement needs
17 comprehensive improvement; that means we need
18 both the math and the English improved okay?

19 We're going to talk to you today about
20 numbers 'cause this is part of the debate about
21 numbers but it's also about some other stuff
22 too.

23 Our grad--excuse me our attendance rates in
24 2008 was 80%, it fell to 77.7%; a couple of
25 points. Graduation rate dropped 47.3% to 43.9%.

1 What these numbers aren't saying, what these
2 numbers aren't saying they're not talking about
3 our community okay and they're not talking about
4 the challenges we face and they're not talking
5 about the challenges we've overcome and they're
6 not talking about the hard lessons that we've
7 learned. That's what we're going to talk about
8 today. Next slide please.

9 Give it to us. So this is SCRL. To me this
10 is SCRL. To Department of Education it's those
11 numbers; it's what we're looking at okay? To us
12 SCRL is to Tacqira [phonetic] Fox and it's
13 Stacey Ocassio [phonetic]. It's Mr. Mulqueen
14 [phonetic] and it's Mr. Ellis in the classroom.
15 SCRL is Serena and Najabird [phonetic] and
16 Jalessa [phonetic] and SCRL is Cathy and Michael
17 and SCRL is Miss Bono [phonetic] and SCRL is our
18 basketball team and it's Louis. And SCRL is
19 some students in a classroom working. SCRL is
20 about a community and this is our community;
21 this is what we're going to talk to you about
22 today. Give me the next slide.

23 This is a Peer Index Score. Most people
24 aren't sure about the Peer Index Score so I'm
25 going to take a second to talk about it.

1 Schools are rated based on their peer index
2 okay. There are 483 schools across New York
3 City. Every single one of these schools is
4 given a Peer Index Score. Give me the next
5 slide.

6 There are three pieces of it. The first is
7 the math and ELA levels before you get into high
8 school. The second is the percentage of Special
9 Education students. The third is the percentage
10 of overage students. Give me the next.

11 The lower your Peer Index Score the higher
12 your population. Take a look at a good school
13 Stiveson [phonetic] High School is a 4.05, Bronx
14 Science is 3.92. Now we go to a couple of other
15 schools around here in the Bronx; Millennium,
16 Gateway, good schools, Bronx Gil, good school,
17 SCRL, hit the next slide, is a 1.86, is a 1.86,
18 hit the next slide.

19 SCRL is the 380 students; it's 25% Special
20 Education students with IEPs, its 15% English
21 language learners; people have come over here
22 from the Dominican Republic, people who have
23 come over here from Puerto Rico and need to
24 learn, deserve an opportunity to learn, need the
25 resources to learn; that's what we're here to

1 provide for them.

2 But it's not easy. It's not easy. That's
3 what we need to show here. We're a universal
4 school; more than 85% of school gets free
5 lunches. Give me the next slide.

6 There are 800--483 schools in New York.
7 SCRL is the 17th highest needs school in New York
8 City. New York City has 483 schools. We need
9 the resources, we need your help, we need the
10 help of the Department of Education, we need
11 everybody's help. It's not easy. It's a
12 struggle. That's something we've got to - - .
13 Give me the next slide.

14 What we have is we have four--we have four
15 different pieces of accountability okay. These
16 are the ways that you can get shut down
17 according to the Department of Education.

18 First you can get an F on your report card.
19 We didn't get an F on our progress report; we
20 got a C. Hit it.

21 Then you get a D on your progress report; we
22 didn't get a D on our progress report we got a
23 C. Hit it.

24 Then you can get below proficient on a
25 quality review; we didn't get below proficient

1 on a quality review. We got proficient; hit
2 it.

3 Then you get a C for three consecutive
4 years; we didn't do it. We had a B and then we
5 had a C. Finally according to the chancellor
6 the school can lack the necessary proficient to
7 improve student performance; everything Mr.
8 Santiago is going to tell you tonight,
9 everything he's talked about is going to be
10 around that point okay. It's going to be around
11 us lacking the necessary proficiency to improve
12 our students. Hit the next slide.

13 What are they talking about? Well this is
14 what they're talking about. First of all we got
15 a D on our Student Progress okay and we got a D
16 on our Student Performance. Those are two parts
17 of the Grade. That C we got; two parts of the
18 grades were Ds. There's another part. School
19 environment; we got a B on that. That's pretty
20 good. It means we got respect for our students.
21 It means we've got respect for our teachers;
22 we've got respect for our community, we got a B
23 for that.

24 But we did get two Ds. That's true, that's
25 part of it, that's what we've got to deal with

1 that. That's on us. We had a 43% graduation
2 rate. That's not good enough. I'm a math
3 teacher. I cannot stand in front of a classroom
4 and tell 43% of my kinds you're going to
5 graduate and I cannot stand in front of a
6 classroom and tell 57% of my kids you are not
7 going to graduate.

8 I can't do that. That's not good enough.
9 It's not good enough but there's more to the
10 story than a 44% graduation rate. Hit the next
11 slide.

12 School closing announced on December 3rd,
13 2009, hit the next slide; did we get a chance
14 okay? December 3rd, it's January 5th. It's
15 January 5th tonight. That's one month and two
16 days when they announced the school closing.
17 Give us the next slide.

18 Our student progress was a D that got
19 released in November 10th. November 10th
20 compared to December 3rd. We got a report card
21 21 days before the closing of the school.
22 Everything that this school is--that this school
23 closing is based on are Ds, our low graduation
24 rate; that all came from a report in November.
25 December 3rd they announced the closing. We want

1 to know and we have a right to ask did we get
2 some time? Was the proper attention paid, did
3 we go through the right steps. Give me the next
4 slide.

5 How does this community respond? Okay this
6 is a really important slide and I'm going to
7 turn this one over to our community right here.
8 We got a D on student performance, hit it. What
9 we decided to do is we brought some targeted
10 summer school and I'm going to turn this over
11 now to Ms. Delvai [phonetic]; this is an English
12 teacher of ours she's going to talk to you guys.

13 MS. DELVAI: Good evening everybody. So we
14 didn't need outsiders to let us know that we
15 weren't at 100% and we knew that and we were
16 working on it already. So some of the
17 interventions that we put into place a targeted
18 summer school this year to help juniors and
19 seniors get on track for regions preparation and
20 for credit accumulation. We had the largest
21 summer school we've ever had at SCRL history
22 with 75 students in attendance.

23 Senior interventions that are going on right
24 now and some of my seniors know that 'cause they
25 were with me yesterday afternoon. So to get

1 them on target for January regions we have
2 tutoring going on in the morning at 7:30 with
3 our principal teaching U.S. History and after
4 school every day. Okay so this is in addition
5 to the programs that Good Shepherd has been
6 giving us since year two.

7 After school credit recovery that's where
8 Good Shepard has been an excellent partner for
9 us so all those dance classes you love to go to
10 art, history, music, right across the board
11 that's always been available for our students
12 actually since year two.

13 Scantron testing that's something that the
14 English Department put into place and the Math
15 Department joined us with that. So we can get a
16 better picture of our incoming students and our
17 current students and what their literacy and
18 math rates are. So when we're planning our
19 lessons and my husband can attest, what I did
20 over the summer, was look at all my incoming
21 students rates so I can plan my lessons
22 accordingly and that's one thing we are good at;
23 differentiating instruction.

24 College planning through Good Shepherd and
25 Trio [phonetic] so Good Shepherd, our great

1 community partner, comes up again and Trio
2 with their partnership through Lehman College so
3 of course as Mr. Moore - - said our kids may
4 choose not to go to college but we want them
5 college-ready so when they decide to go and know
6 that we were right about that, they're prepared
7 to go.

8 In helping us do that we have school trips
9 outside where they actually get to visit the
10 campuses. They actually got to visit Pace
11 University a few years and Pace is helping
12 support us in that and now Trio is continuing
13 that tradition and taking groups of students to
14 campuses all over New York City.

15 In addition to that we have classroom
16 college experiences that are happening right
17 here on campus; you don't even have to leave or
18 take off your coat. So as part of the English
19 curriculum colleges are coming to visit the kids
20 right in the classrooms. In careers in junior
21 year they're coming right into the careers
22 classes to get the kids curious, give them
23 information; even our 9th Graders go to Lehman
24 College every year.

25 One of the interventions that we were lucky

1 enough to get because the state did consider
2 us a school in need of improvement and offered
3 us some help, was through our principal reaching
4 out for an online credit recovery program.
5 Trying something new they have a very extensive
6 program that offers our students a lot of a
7 variety. We try to really apply it to all the
8 differentiated late earners we have, the
9 multiple intelligences they have and we think
10 this is going to be a really good program.
11 Student rosters are already being filled and
12 this program is going to launch in the spring.

13 It's the staff here smiling. Our
14 interdisciplinary grade teams have been in
15 effect, they've taken the change this year
16 because of your change of schedule but it's
17 something that's at the core of what we do. So
18 our departments meet; our grade teams meet so
19 teachers from all the disciplines can talk about
20 the student concerns. Things that are going on
21 in their classroom, reach out with our
22 attendance team, with our guidance people to
23 make sure that we're all on the same page of
24 what our students need and how we're going to
25 get it done.

1 Some data that is missing from the DOE
2 statistics and I'm not a math teacher but this
3 is equally important is the progress our
4 students have made in the AP program. We are
5 one of the only schools in the building right
6 now that offer AP courses. Last year Millennium
7 Art had some - - students at SCRL taking classes
8 'cause we were the only ones doing it. And not
9 only are we offering the courses, our students
10 are doing well.

11 Our students have caused fives, the highest
12 score in AP - - . They have scored fours in AP
13 calculus, they have scored threes in AP Bio and
14 last year in AP English Literature so those
15 scores have been going up every year and that's
16 some you know, math that we would like to be
17 added in because we have exceptional children on
18 both sides of the spectrum right, so it's about
19 all the kids.

20 And Mr. Ellis is going to pick it up on the
21 campus graduation rate.

22 MR. ELLIS: Thank you. So we just, we
23 already heard our graduation rate referred to
24 today and yeah it is, it is pretty poor and it
25 isn't acceptable. But actually we just--I was

1 looking at the data we found some interesting
2 facts about the schools on this campus in
3 general and we're not doing this to point
4 fingers at other schools, by no means for
5 whatever but we'll raise some questions after we
6 look at this data.

7 SCRL we have dropped from two years ago; we
8 were at a 50% and we dropped below 50% this
9 year. Another school on this campus two years
10 ago was above 70% and over the past two years
11 they also dropped to about below 50%.

12 One other school two years ago was down
13 around 50% they went up last year but again
14 dropped this year to about 50%. Another school
15 fell pretty drastically from above 85% down to
16 about 57% this year and one other school went
17 from about an 82% to a 57%.

18 So when you look at these numbers again one
19 school had a 22% drop, another school went up
20 2%, one school had a 20% drop, another school a
21 30% drop and we went down 7%. Again why am I
22 bringing this up? It's basically to ask the
23 question we see all over the place about the
24 improvements and graduation rates in this city
25 and its good that it has been. But I guess

1 something different is happening in this part
2 of the Bronx.

3 So the question is what does reform mean?
4 What is the city's role when they see this
5 entire neighborhood that is struggling to
6 graduate their students? And maybe this is the
7 answer, maybe they said we picked the lowest
8 graduating rate from this school, we close them
9 down make them an example for others and then
10 hope that the rest improves.

11 But really I don't even know. What should
12 the city's role be when they see so many schools
13 struggling? I'm not sure what help that we got
14 from the city, I'm not sure what support,
15 someone came into my classroom and said you're
16 teaching this way wrong, you're teaching that
17 way wrong? I don't remember seeing that.

18 And I do know where I struggle and I'm
19 pretty sure that every single teacher in this
20 building can say where we struggle more
21 specifically than the impact statement can.

22 We can be much more specific and say where
23 we struggle and we could also say exactly where
24 we want to improve. And we're standing here
25 right now saying we're ready to work at it and

1 the answer coming from over there is that it's
2 time to quit and you don't have a chance.

3 Finally one more important thing that I
4 think is very important on the impact statement.
5 There's a whole section called Community
6 Ramifications. It says that approximately 385
7 high school seats will be eliminated by the
8 phase-out of SCRL. However these seats will be
9 recovered through the phase-in of 08X432 and
10 X450 and other new high schools throughout the
11 city.

12 This is another question. What is the
13 connection between a school and a community?
14 And when you think about education and reform
15 maybe you got to rethink that whole idea.
16 Because I'm pretty sure a school and a community
17 is more than just a number of seats and you guys
18 might disagree but I'm looking right now at an
19 SCRL community that is more than just seats.

20 And I hope that each of you could say what
21 does SCRL do for the community and you probably
22 have your own ideas but these are some of the
23 ways that we think the community will be
24 impacted by the closing of our school. We have
25 community fair and health fair, blood drives, we

1 started intramural basketball and softball
2 leagues within this building. Community service
3 projects, this year we're taking a habitat for
4 humanity trip, work/study, cross-age tutoring,
5 college and career fair, Bronx net connection,
6 toys for tots, food drive and the penny harvest.

7 And I'm being rushed off the stage but just
8 two more things to summarize. They gave their
9 facts on the impact statement which you can read
10 in the back of the--you can pick it up in the
11 back of the auditorium and read it. But this is
12 our--this is our--this is our response and we
13 feel that the Department of Education has not
14 provided a case for closing our school.

15 Again we know where we struggle more and we
16 could tell them where we struggle more. We
17 don't think this is right. And we'll end with a
18 quote from an SCRL alumni; someone who graduated
19 last year. She said I believe that SCRL is
20 worth fighting for because the teachers
21 themselves have shown that we are worth fighting
22 for.

23 And I just want to say that I understand
24 when the deputy chancellor said that if the
25 students are not succeeding at a school or if

1 the students can't succeed at a school then
2 yes something needs to be done. But I think
3 another way of seeing this whole idea right now
4 is that they are kind of saying that we do not
5 believe that you students can any longer succeed
6 at this school and I think that's a horrible
7 message to tell the kids and that's why we're up
8 here today to tell you guys, the students, the
9 parents, the community that we think you can
10 succeed and we're willing to work to make you
11 succeed. Thank you.

12 MR. TAVARES: Thank you School Leadership
13 Team. Right now I also want to acknowledge that
14 Jeffrey Lauford [phonetic] from the Ranimal
15 [phonetic] Palma City Council Member District 18
16 is here with us. Jeffrey Lauford, thank you for
17 joining us. Any other elected officials that
18 may want to say a word before the public
19 comments?

20 I want to remind everyone that we have now a
21 number of folks that have signed up to speak.
22 Every single person that signed up to speak will
23 be two minutes to express their reason why one
24 way or another way about this proposal that the
25 Department of Education is putting forth.

1 You have been given a number of the order
2 that you will be speaking in. We would like for
3 you to come up to these two ladies here in the
4 front. If we could have the first five so that
5 would could move quickly from one to the other.
6 Just come and stand right behind Caress.

7 CARESS: So we're lining up number one
8 through five. Only numbers one through five.
9 I'm going to start the first one is Iris
10 Rodriguez.

11 MS. IRIS RODRIGUEZ: - - ?

12 CARESS: No that's fine. Do you have your
13 number?

14 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

15 CARESS: Como esta?

16 MS. RODRIGUEZ: - - .

17 CARESS: Okay.

18 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Good evening. My name is
19 Iris Rodriguez and in the past I was the PA
20 President of SCRL. I was the PA President of
21 Stevenson High School and I was the PA President
22 of South Bronx High School and I'm a community
23 member.

24 Two reasons why this school SCRL shouldn't
25 be closed is this school was created for the

1 community. We are the community. Our
2 children are the community and they need a
3 school like SCRL. Another reason is that this
4 school as bad as you think this school has
5 performed helped my grandson graduate. He
6 wasn't performing his best but they did not give
7 him up. They did not let him be put away or
8 anything like that. They kept nurturing him,
9 looking for him, until he did graduate.

10 One reason that--another reason for not
11 closing this school if this school is so bad why
12 did one of the students, Jonathan Roman,
13 graduated and went to Cornell. Can any of the
14 schools say that? They after all the students
15 are human beings and we can not go by, by
16 looking at numbers. We are not numbers we are
17 human beings and we have our faults but the
18 staff of SCRL has always stood behind their
19 students. They care for them and they work for
20 them. And they help them achieve the goal that
21 they--that they want, not the goal the DOE maybe
22 set up. But not all of us can do that. Thank
23 you very much.

24 CARESS: The next speaker is Number Two Dr.
25 David Fletcher.

1 DR. DAVID FLETCHER: Hi. When we opened
2 our doors in 2003 the ceilings were falling in,
3 the region was changed and the DOE was changing,
4 there was much change going on and as a
5 colleague at New Visions and I agreed, being a
6 small school in those days was like being a
7 small boat in a large ocean; you're batted
8 around, direction may or may not come and so we
9 did the best that we could do to begin a school
10 and to begin educating a group of students from
11 the Bronx.

12 When I look around the room I see students
13 who are still at SCRL, students who have
14 graduated, students who will be graduating, I
15 see staff members who are committed to the
16 students here. I see secretaries, who give it
17 their all, I see school counselors, who meet
18 with parents on an ongoing basis. I see a
19 principal who extends his own credit card when
20 the budget runs short, I see teachers of VSL
21 students who work with students who come in to
22 ES every--at the second grade reading level. I
23 see teachers who work with students; for example
24 OCIPO [phonetic] has had a constant policy of
25 assigning SCRL students who for example this

1 past September one student was assigned to the
2 2010 cohort supposed to graduate and has no
3 credits. Came to SCRL 18 years of age with no
4 credits but yet is supposed to graduate June
5 2010.

6 Another student came with a spattering of
7 credits, not--had been supposed to graduate in
8 June, has not passed a single test. This is a
9 policy that OCIPO and the DOE has as an
10 albatross around SCRL's neck; however SCRL has
11 never turned students away. That is not our
12 policy and that is not what we do.

13 So even though, even though the odds were
14 against us--

15 MR. TAVARES: [interposing] Dr. Fletcher
16 your time is--

17 DR. FLETCHER: --we did not--

18 MR. TAVARES: --up.

19 DR. FLETCHER: --turn them away. Thank you.

20 MR. TAVARES: Thank you.

21 CARESS: Jonathan Roman.

22 MR. JONATHAN ROMAN: Uh I just got a watch.
23 I like to - - too. My name is Jonathan Roman,
24 Class of 2007 SCRL, Class of 2011 Cornell
25 University, currently Cadet E-6, of the U.S.

1 Army future Lieutenant. So why I came here
2 today is to say that you can never step in the
3 same river twice. That was a quote that was
4 taught to me by one of my professors uh
5 professors--one of my teachers Mr. Romero,
6 freshman year.

7 So I wrote it down. Education changes your
8 life but not as much as where you get it. See
9 education is something you can get anywhere but
10 where you go makes a difference. That's why
11 rich people put their children in the best
12 private schools they can afford. That's why
13 parents will interview schools to find the best
14 pre-Ks for their kids.

15 That's why as seniors in high school our
16 parents and ourselves do our research on
17 countless colleges and universities and that's
18 the same reason why that as 8th Graders we
19 attended all these high school fairs. Little
20 did I know that choosing this school would
21 change me.

22 Example one while I was naturally inclined
23 to my work I was also naturally inclined to be
24 lazy. This came out once when I had to do a
25 presentation of learning. I put together a

1 lackluster presentation and when I gave it I
2 disappointed two people who not only cared about
3 me but those opinions--but whose opinions I
4 valued, Miss Levisa [phonetic] and Miss Mitchell
5 [phonetic].

6 I, in turn was disappointed in myself after
7 letting them down. Regardless of the
8 presentation being a B I didn't expect the
9 teachers to care as much; part one, point one
10 teachers at SCRL care a lot when you haven't had
11 the nurturing or encouragement at home. It
12 means something. Fortunately I was relatively
13 an easy student to deal with but without the
14 bond that's fostered between students and
15 teachers here I wouldn't have done as well.
16 Nobody who comes to SCRL can slip through the
17 cracks but teachers can't be expected to run
18 people's lives either. Teachers can make kids
19 sit through classes but the students mentality
20 will decide whether he or she student actively
21 listens.

22 If you believe the problem is at the school
23 you can't be more wrong. Please. Still the
24 school does everything it can and with that it
25 would have to change the mentality of the

1 students towards education. After school
2 programs, careers, formal and informal guidance
3 counseling; it's all paid attention and I can go
4 on but you know what? This school taught me to
5 aim higher and its no wonder that I'm at Cornell
6 today, it's no wonder I am the scholar that I am
7 because of SCRL.

8 MR. TAVARES: Thank you Mr. Romero. Thank
9 you.

10 CARESS: Myra Perez-Hill Number Four.

11 MS. MYRA PEREZ-HILL: Hi. My name is Myra
12 Perez-Hill. This is my daughter Lesage
13 [phonetic] Perez. She is an Honor Student not
14 only by SCRL but nationally. I just don't want
15 to squeak that's why and I want you to
16 acknowledge that there's not a lot of us. You
17 could give us like maybe extra money you know.
18 I wasn't going to try to come out this way but
19 I'm going to say it this way. When SCRL called
20 me I answered. When there was students that
21 needed to be seen I came. If I had to come meet
22 with them or see them I showed up. It's pretty
23 relevant there's not 365 parents here. And this
24 is what parent teachers like for them. So I
25 think that we need to acknowledge that it's a

1 team effort. They're not alone. Where are
2 the parents? This is what they go through you
3 know. Excuse my voice 'cause I don't have my
4 pump and my chest is a little tight.

5 Please give them the benefit of the doubt
6 and please acknowledge that because some of
7 these high schools they kind of bully the
8 parents and the students out. That's why they
9 have such a high graduation rate. If you go to
10 Lehman High School you see the big signs up.
11 They don't do that, they stick it out with their
12 students and they try to make the difference.

13 Acknowledge that as well please because
14 she's doing phenomenal. And I have to thank
15 them for that and she didn't do it alone and I
16 didn't do it alone but they needed me too. And
17 that's why I'm here today and acknowledge the
18 fact that they don't have the support that they
19 need from all the parents and I'm not talking to
20 you that are here 'cause it's pretty relevant we
21 care. I'm talking about the ones that aren't
22 here and this is what they go through. They
23 need help.

24 High school is a trying time; kids are
25 making it or breaking it. These kids are like

1 dropping out. If the parent is not on them
2 that's not the school's fault. - - it happened.

3 CARESS: Thank you. Number Five James Marle
4 [phonetic].

5 MR. TAVARES: Next five please come and line
6 up; six through ten. Thank you.

7 MR. JIM MARLE: Good evening. My name is
8 Jim Marle I'm with Good Shepherd. We've been at
9 SCRL from the beginning and the thought of its
10 closing is very sad. SCRL is an experiment. We
11 don't say that it's a perfect experiment but
12 it's a critical experiment to serve students who
13 nobody else is serving.

14 It opens its doors to everyone. Some come
15 with histories of poor attendance, some come not
16 knowing what they want to do with their future,
17 all are welcome. And in a city that has so many
18 students who can't find a high school SCRL is an
19 important asset.

20 The over the counter families who come here,
21 we have made ourselves an open school. We take
22 chances on students and we accept the risk of
23 students.

24 As you've heard tonight from testimonials
25 and will hear is this school has made a

1 difference in many students' lives. At the
2 end of the day we need to find better ways to
3 educate our children and SCRL has been part of
4 that process.

5 We don't need less experiments; we need more
6 experiments and sometimes that involves trial
7 and error. But there are too many students who
8 have no place to go, no educational prospects
9 and need people who will fight for them and this
10 school has fought for those students.

11 Closing SCRL takes an experiment off the
12 table but we will not have really a successful
13 educational system or city until we multiply the
14 experiments, make more of them and live with the
15 trial and error.

16 This is the work that brought Good Shepherd
17 here; it's why we'll stay in this building.
18 This has also been the mission and really the
19 vision of SCRL. We're committed to that mission
20 and to that vision and we very much honor the
21 blood, the sweat and the tears that so many
22 parents, students and teachers have put into
23 serving children and changing their lives.
24 Thank you.

25 MR. TAVARES: I just want to acknowledge

1 that Ms. Barry from CC 8 has joined us so
2 thank you Ms. Barry.

3 FEMALE VOICE: Hi everyone. I'm a senior
4 here and I just want to say that my years in
5 SCRL I met a lot of great people like fantastic,
6 fantastic people but I'm not just talking about
7 my friends. I'm talking about everyone; the
8 staff, the teachers. They've done a lot for us
9 and they made a really big impact in our lives
10 and I just want to say thank you. Whether the
11 school closes or not they did a lot for us and
12 they made really big impact and that's why
13 closing down this school has such a big impact
14 on us. So I just want to say thank you.

15 CARESS: Number Seven.

16 MS. DELVAI: Exactly one year ago today at
17 about this time I was waking up from back
18 surgery and there were two thoughts on my mind
19 as the reality of the post-surgery pain filled
20 my brain. One I wish I wasn't me right now and
21 two, how soon can I get back to my students.
22 The next morning I looked scary enough to make
23 the physical therapist say its okay sweetie I'll
24 come back tomorrow. But I quickly replied I
25 have to get back to my students, I'm getting out

1 of this bed and I did and I'm here.

2 The lesson I can reflect upon on this
3 anniversary night is that it has been, always
4 will be, is today about the kids. Where they
5 are, what they need, and where they want to go.
6 So here's another reality more challenging than
7 any surgery. Education is not only science it's
8 mostly art. There is magic involved in building
9 a relationship of trust and respect between an
10 adult and a teenager. Be it a principal, a
11 teacher or a staff member. And believe me each
12 adult at SCRL has their own special way of
13 making that connection and our teens show up on
14 our steps with heavy life issues weighing upon
15 them.

16 When those burdens overwhelm them the art of
17 our work shines through. So don't fall prey to
18 the science of data because the number, our
19 numbers do not tell you the full story of the
20 work that goes on SCRL, of the successes we have
21 achieved, of the lives we have changed.

22 Of course we want to do it all better. We
23 will not be satisfied until 100% of every 12th
24 Grade student graduates. Anything else, even
25 one means that a student has not reached their

1 goal, realized their dream, fulfilled their
2 promise. On January 1st Mayor Bloomberg our
3 boss, your boss promised that his third term
4 would be based upon listening then leading.

5 Tonight more than ever before we ask, no we
6 implore you to listen; listen to our students,
7 our families and our friends and then lead us,
8 talk to us, work with us so we can better the
9 lives of even more students in the community.

10 If you're not happy with the work we're
11 doing, that I'm doing as a teacher, train me,
12 teach me. I'm a student, I'm a teacher. If
13 you're still not happy with me fire me but don't
14 make my kids pay. If I'm not doing it good
15 enough I'll be responsible but don't take it out
16 on my students.

17 CARESS: Jay.

18 JAY: I just want to start by thanking Mr.
19 Tavares, Elena again for coming down and
20 listening so respectfully to all the stuff we
21 have to say. We know you guys got a lot of
22 these to go to and we really appreciate you guys
23 being down here.

24 I want to yield my time right now to a math
25 teacher; she's coming here from Global

1 Enterprise, another school that's being shut
2 down and she has just a couple of words to say
3 in solidarity.

4 ANGELA: Thank you. I'm Angela - - and as
5 he said I'm a math and business teacher. We
6 also have an individual from Christopher
7 Columbus High School who also has the same fate
8 as us and our hearing is on Thursday.

9 I just wanted to say that for--I know for at
10 least for GEA as well as SCRL we don't meet the
11 criteria for closure and I really want to ask
12 the DOE if you're going to make criteria then
13 why not stick to it 'cause right now we don't
14 know which school's safe.

15 We got a B, we got two Cs, we don't meet the
16 criteria and neither do they. Also SCRL is
17 Number 17 out of all high schools for high need.
18 I also found out recently from our data tech
19 that Christopher Columbus is Number 1 for self-
20 contained populations in the District 11; in the
21 Bronx and Global Enterprises Number 3 for that
22 self-contained population.

23 Where are our kids going to go? Oftentimes
24 our students don't graduate within four years.
25 Where will they go? Is it really logical to rip

1 them from their home, from their schools, a
2 place that they have established a rapport with
3 the teachers for four years and then have them
4 have to leave?

5 Also where will these children go in general
6 if they're not going to the top needs schools
7 that already exist? Finally I'm kind of of the
8 opinion you don't throw the baby out with the
9 bathwater if something's improving. You let it
10 keep improving. Global I know has improved by
11 over ten points from last year to this year. I
12 saw that SCRL is in the same situation. They
13 improved yes, the criteria changes as it seems
14 that it's changed again but we're improving.

15 So we don't know what the graduation rate of
16 the new school coming in CAPP [phonetic] has
17 proposed. We don't know for sure if it's
18 happening but we don't know for sure if they're
19 going to have a good graduation rate as they
20 only have grades 9 through 11. What's their
21 graduation rate? Who knows? I also heard that
22 SCRL had--at the proposed school to come in is
23 brand new. So why is it throwing out schools--
24 why are we throwing out schools that are showing
25 improvement for schools that we don't even know

1 what they will have. Thank you.

2 CARESS: Number Nine Joanne Frank.

3 MS. JOANNE FRANK: Good evening I'm here on
4 behalf of the Council of School Supervisors and
5 Administrators. I would like to begin by saying
6 that the Council of School Supervisors and
7 Administrators supports accountability at all
8 levels.

9 Having said that I have to ask the question
10 why has the Department of Education consistently
11 redesigned itself many times over the past eight
12 years? As the kids would say what's up with
13 that?

14 However the DOE is not being called to task
15 here. On the contrary the DOE is consistently
16 congratulating itself in the press on how well
17 its schools are doing, how its data has
18 improved, how scores are soaring. In fact the
19 DOE is on a high. We have to wonder what it has
20 done to support our schools.

21 In the case of this school we would like to
22 know precisely what the superintendent has done
23 to support this school. Has the superintendent
24 walked the halls, visited classes, made
25 appropriate suggestions to improve the outcomes

1 for our students?

2 We also would like to know what the school
3 support organization that supports this school
4 has done to ensure that school soars.

5 These are answers that we would like for our
6 children. I would also like to point out that
7 we believe on faith and we're taking it on faith
8 that there is not an ulterior motive or an
9 agenda for the closing of any school. But we
10 really don't know that.

11 We would really be very grateful to know
12 what the superintendent, the school support
13 organization, the office of student enrollment
14 and the DOE has done to ensure that this school
15 soars? We don't have an answer.

16 As I said CSA embraces accountability for
17 all. Thank you.

18 CARESS: Number Ten.

19 MR. TAVARES: The next five; numbers 11
20 through 15 please come and line up on the side
21 please. Thank you.

22 MS. ANGOZIA NAHA: Hi everybody. Good
23 evening. My name is Angozia Naha [phonetic]. I
24 graduated with the Class of 2007. We were the
25 first graduating class and I'm very proud of

1 that. I tell everybody that wherever I go.
2 I'm very proud of that. I'm not going to take
3 up much of your time. Unfortunately I don't
4 have the speech; I guess everybody else is like
5 very prepared for it.

6 I am here though to speak about it because
7 I--it really, really bothers me that this school
8 is closing because we worked so hard for it.
9 Like Dr. Fletcher said we came in 2003, there
10 was no ceilings. I sat on a chair--I sat on a
11 chair and before this I, I could tell you I
12 didn't even know where I was going. But I came
13 to SCRL ready for something new because I wanted
14 a second chance.

15 And I came here I sat on a chair with no
16 desk, half of us didn't even have desks, half of
17 us sat together sharing desks but we listened
18 and we learned and we grew and that shows
19 something. And that that shows something I want
20 everybody to remember that. I also want to talk
21 about the fact that what was most important to
22 me was that SCRL and especially Mr. Mulqueen he
23 made sure that I knew that I had the potential
24 to be a leader and that potential is what I see
25 in every single student that I was with when I

1 was here and every student past, past my
2 graduation.

3 That's extremely important, that is
4 extremely, extremely important and I take that.
5 That confidence that he had in me I took that
6 my, my senior year I graduated President of this
7 school which I never would have expected and
8 nobody would ever have expected from me.

9 I graduated President. I graduated at the
10 top percentile of my graduation class. I was
11 accepted to Penn State. I took the cross-age
12 tutoring program we had here, we started the
13 cross-age tutoring and Jonathan as well, we
14 started the cross-age tutoring program my
15 freshman year here. We started that program and
16 by the time I graduated I think we had about
17 three schools and there was I don't even know
18 how many students.

19 You know Ms. Delvai, I don't know how many
20 students were spread across the city. I mean in
21 the Bronx and I took that, that experience that
22 helped me to get a feature in *Teen Vogue*
23 Magazine. This is what I'm talking about.

24 SCRL has changed my life forever and I'm
25 forever grateful no matter what happens I just

1 want to say this, I know my time is up, but no
2 matter what happens no matter what happens I
3 will forever be grateful and to everybody else
4 whether they close this school or not every
5 student that's in SCRL right now look at this as
6 motivation. Graduate. Make sure you better
7 yourself no matter what happens whether they
8 give up on you or not. This can either be your
9 second chance or that's it but take this as
10 motivation. Graduate please. Better yourself.
11 Thanks.

12 MR. TAVARES: Thank you. I just--I would
13 like to remind the speakers that please be
14 respectful of your peers' time. Every single
15 one of you came here to speak and we would like
16 for every single one of you to have the
17 opportunity to have the same and equal amount of
18 time to speak. So once that Barbara shows that
19 the times up please wrap it up. We really would
20 appreciate that. Thank you.

21 CARESS: Next Catherine Mikata [phonetic]
22 Number 11.

23 MS. CATHERINE MIKATA: Oh man, oh man. Hi
24 everybody. It's Cathy obviously. Well I made a
25 little essay 'cause you know SCRL is my home and

1 you know I don't like this.

2 What is the definition of school? It's a
3 place where you sit and learn things that help
4 you in life. But a definition for it it's a
5 boring place right? Well you might not know it
6 but school and SCRL has two different
7 definitions.

8 You can walk up to any student in the school
9 and ask them why are you wasting your time - - .
10 Why do you even care? I will swear to you they
11 will always say what if your mom needed money,
12 wouldn't you help? What if your family's being
13 torn apart wouldn't you go crazy to save them?
14 Exactly what we're doing; SCRL is our home. We
15 are family here, friends are siblings, teachers
16 are parents, this school is smaller that
17 everyone knows each other and the bond between
18 us is very strong.

19 You might not believe me but each student
20 improves because of their friends and in SCRL we
21 love each even though we do bad things our
22 classmate won't hesitate us to calm down. They
23 say school is a choice so why don't you just
24 please just hear our voice. SCRL is a great
25 place and if nobody cared we wouldn't be making

1 such a fuss about it. SCRL is about love,
2 caring and we're a family. Each family has
3 their bad times and our bad time is now. All of
4 our students are working together and fighting
5 for what we love.

6 SCRL is our school and we would hate it if
7 it closed down. We all have our best memories
8 and worst. It's not fair that you can take our
9 child--that you can take your child to your
10 school and go back and visit but we can't all
11 because you feel we did bad and you want to
12 phase our school.

13 What you're doing is unfair, it's not for us
14 but our kids and the other students because no
15 one has seen--nobody sees all the things we've
16 done. We had community volunteer--we had a
17 volunteer community service, we help communities
18 but you don't see that. Also nobody would enjoy
19 having fun and the awesome teachers.

20 This school has a bond that even the
21 teachers are friends just like we have lunchtime
22 and laugh at each other and just chill. Like
23 the teachers do the same thing. Why would you
24 destroy a bond like that? Please don't close
25 SCRL. Everyone deserves a chance to learn and

1 why stop ours.

2 CARESS: Next.

3 MR. DIORIO: Thank you for the opportunity
4 to speak. My name is Mr. Diorio. Thanks. I've
5 been a proud SCRL teacher for 3½ years and in
6 that time I've seen nothing but unquestioned and
7 unrelenting dedication to the academic success
8 and growth of our students. Now maybe I'm wrong
9 'cause I'm just a teacher but we're talking
10 about education here, we're talking about
11 standards and just like us teachers would never
12 give up on a struggling student while that would
13 expeditious and painless certainly we would
14 never do that and we never have done that 'cause
15 that would be like a doctor giving up on a
16 patient 'cause he's too sick or a lawyer giving
17 up on a client 'cause the evidence is against
18 him.

19 Now that standard is held to--we're held to
20 that accountability. I would assume that the
21 Department of Education would hold itself to
22 that same standard. You're giving up on us.
23 Why because we're struggling? That's why you're
24 giving up on us. You're not helping us, you're
25 not offering solutions; you're simply giving up

1 on us.

2 You're asking us not to give up but you're
3 giving up on us so I would suggest that you
4 strongly reconsider. I'm going to yield the
5 rest of my time to Vivian.

6 MR. VIVIAN ROBERTS: Good morning ladies and
7 gentlemen. My name is Vivian Roberts and I am
8 the current President of SCRL. And coming into
9 this school I would--I just never expected to be
10 President in my Junior year. Never at any time
11 I'd never planned on being in any student
12 government team or anything like that, SLT, none
13 of that. And these teachers took their time out
14 of their daily lives to come and look at me or
15 they could look at any of us and say you have
16 the potential to be whatever you want to be; you
17 can be a leader in this school and we will
18 support you.

19 So my point is that if a teacher could take
20 time out of their lives to look at a student to
21 see that they are more than just somebody who
22 comes to school to look at the board and just do
23 work. There's nothing better than that and
24 closing our school down won't make anything
25 better, it just makes everything worse. And if I

1 wanted to come back to a school that when--in
2 the next 20 years should I say come back here
3 and want to see these teachers and what they
4 have done I'll be so happy. So please keep our
5 school open. Thank you.

6 CARESS: Number 13 Antony.

7 ANTONY: Hello, good evening. Never before
8 have I known how it felt to be just a number. I
9 mean growing up my mom, my pop, my brothers and
10 sisters, I'm one of five, were always there to
11 support me in any way, shape or form. My high
12 school principal told me in the 10th Grade if you
13 ever want a job come see me you'd be a great
14 teacher. I mean he never once said Number 13
15 which I am today; you have a 120 and seconds to
16 save your school. I just--until today I just
17 don't understand the fairness of it. A fair
18 shot is not too much to ask for. To believe in
19 kids I don't know any numbers in the room. I
20 see Latchmi [phonetic]; I haven't seen her in
21 awhile. I see Javane [phonetic]; I don't see
22 any numbers when I look across the--look at
23 these seniors. That's the number I see 12. You
24 guys are doing it. Give yourselves a round of
25 applause and everybody in this room who's up

1 here fighting for a chance just deserves the
2 right to not be a number. And you guys look at
3 them and say here's a couple of seconds, I have
4 a couple of things to say, a couple of people to
5 welcome, is just not fair. And it just goes to
6 show you how far the DOE loves our child--our
7 children. I love my job, I love doing what I
8 do. I'll continue to do it but never have I
9 came and said okay 1 of 34 come up to the board
10 and answer questions 1 through 4. It's just not
11 the way education is meant to be done and it's
12 not why I got into the business and I don't
13 think it's fair to be honest. I hope I didn't
14 waste too much time. Number 13 good night
15 everyone.

16 CARESS: Fourteen Jonathan. Do you have
17 your number?

18 JONATHAN: Alright hi everybody. I'm
19 Jonathan, you all know me. Alright I'm the 10th
20 Grade rep, president runner-up but I'm glad I
21 lost to such a good pres so he's still here. So
22 I'm glad about that but anyway I'm not going to
23 talk about now but I want to talk about future
24 for SCRL. Right now we've got 8th Graders in
25 middle school they're going to be graduating

1 soon in 2010 and we had a high school fair.

2 Our names are in the high school book that
3 they looked at alright and a lot of 8th Graders
4 are going to be wanting to put our name in that
5 book. We had a lot of names on those lists that
6 we had kids filling out themselves alright.

7 A lot of those kids came by themselves too.
8 Not a lot of kids were with parents so that was
9 kind of cool alright. And then another thing is
10 alright we are doing bad but we have been asking
11 for help alright. Now separately from the DOE
12 we went--me and Grover C [phonetic] went to go
13 talk to the city council. We asked for funds to
14 help raise our school's technologies but we
15 didn't get them. But we have been trying to get
16 help alright. We need help. We do need help
17 I'm not going to lie. Alright but where are we
18 going to get our help from? Alright. I'm one
19 kid, there's many kids in this room, there's
20 many parents in this room alright and honestly
21 I'm speaking for all the kids right now I feel
22 that I have a voice alright. And I'm talking
23 right now and this is the only time I've been
24 asked alright. That's it.

25 CARESS: Thank you. Number 15.

1 MR. TAVARES: Speakers numbers 16 through
2 20 please line up on the side here. Thank you.

3 CHRISTIAN: My name is Christian. I'm a
4 sophomore here at SCRL. When I first came to
5 this school last year I was lost and Mr. Ellis
6 over there he helped me. I was like a lost
7 person in the hallways searching for a way of
8 like to go around. And he helped me out. That
9 shows that teachers care; also you being here
10 today shows that you care about us even though
11 you probably don't want to show it. Yeah so
12 right now our school we're struggling right now
13 we're like crawling but by you closing us,
14 phasing us out you're basically kicking us down
15 and none of us likes that, none of us here likes
16 that. So I ask you please don't close us down.

17 CARESS: Okay next. Do you have?

18 KRIS: Good afternoon, good evening
19 everybody. My name is Kris and I'm from the
20 second graduating class of SCRL. Alright
21 overall I would like to say that SCRL they were
22 never picky, they never gave entrance exams,
23 they took everybody in 'cause they believed that
24 each and every one of us were equal.

25 SCRL has given each and every student a

1 voice to express themselves. I can honestly
2 say that because I was here for--since the
3 beginning or SCRL. Every day we were asked for
4 help, every day we would get them, set time
5 apart to make SCRL blossom into a school that we
6 know that even though it hasn't reached it's
7 time yet it can get there. It's getting there.

8 Closing SCRL down just goes to show that
9 y'all give up very easy; DOE gives up very easy
10 on us, the students, those the staffs, the
11 teachers and everybody else that wants to come
12 in. Where are they going to go? Where are they
13 going to go? Ten years from now I want to say
14 SCRL is still standing on the Adlai E. Stevenson
15 Campus. I still want to see that sign with the
16 eagles, the buffalos, bears. I want to see each
17 and every stand there. [Background noise]
18 alright. Come on. I love this school. I
19 graduated from this school. I've seen the
20 school grow, I've seen the school progress and I
21 think that SCRL shouldn't be shut down. Please.

22 CARESS: Thank you. Number 17; 17?

23 MS. SHARON THOMAS: Hi good evening. My
24 name is Sharon Thomas. I am a parent advocator
25 plus Committee of Special Ed. This is my

1 daughter Yuniko [phonetic] Thomas. Oh as well
2 I'm a Title 1 Rep for School for Community
3 Research and Learning.

4 This is my daughter Yuniko Thomas who's
5 currently in the 9th Grade who's in Special Ed.
6 So what you're telling these kids that's in
7 Special Ed that they might as well give up on
8 society 'cause you're giving up on them by
9 shutting their school down. Okay? Why give us
10 parents choices to go pick high schools and once
11 we pick the high schools you want to close them
12 down.

13 You can't do that. This school works hard
14 and I know they're working hard for mine 'cause
15 first marking quarter she wasn't doing good in
16 Social Studies. Second marking quarter she
17 blossomed because you know why? Because the
18 principal found people to help her pick up her
19 Social Studies when she was lacked of they
20 helped her pick that skill up. Don't close the
21 school; help the school. Thank you.

22 CARESS: Number 18.

23 MS. SONIA LOPEZ: Good evening. I'm the
24 proud parent of Jonathan Roman. My name is
25 Sonia Lopez. This is a big mistake to shut down

1 this school. My son was one of the first
2 students in this school. When I came here I
3 didn't have anything but Mr. Mulqueen was so
4 determined to make this happen along with his
5 great teachers. This is a family. This is not
6 a school where the kids are numbers. This--
7 every student in here matters. They matter to
8 all of them. They sacrifice, they put in their
9 own time in the morning, after school, they help
10 them. They give them every advantage that they
11 need to be able to excel.

12 They need help, help them. Don't shut them
13 down; don't turn your backs on them. This is
14 for the--this is for this community. They do
15 great, great work. And it's touching and it's
16 saddens to hear that you're going to turn your
17 backs and close the school down. Give them a
18 chance. They can do it. Mr. Mulqueen is the
19 king, the chief, of this school and he's
20 determined. He never gave up. He stood on the
21 top and he always said we could do it, you could
22 do it. Help them to do it. Don't shut the
23 school down. It's a big mistake.

24 CARESS: Nineteen. Yes.

25 MS. MELISSA ANN TORRES: I wasn't going to

1 speak today 'cause I'm always talking and
2 sometimes but you know--SCRL is a school that
3 works very hard for its students. The DOE
4 agrees with this statement. Excuse me?

5 My name is Melissa Ann Torres. I am an
6 English teacher at SCRL. SCRL is a school that
7 works very hard for its students and the DOE
8 agrees with this statement. The DOE states that
9 we can't keep doing the same thing. I agree and
10 each year that I've worked as a teacher I
11 reevaluate units and lessons and implement new
12 ways to provide students with an education.

13 This year my 9th Graders have been
14 collectively reading 130 books as of today.
15 This is a way that I'm providing students with
16 variety, rigor and differentiated instruction.

17 The DOE has not provided me as a teacher
18 with any support to change what I do in the
19 classroom. I have done this through the support
20 of my colleagues and through my own interests in
21 finding the ways that I can help my students and
22 I teach my students not 33 seats.

23 The DOE says that it will be offering
24 support to the school as it implements its
25 closure for 2013. Well where is the help, where

1 is the support to help us succeed through
2 2013, 14, 15, 16? Where's the support? I don't
3 want support to close. I want support to stay
4 open. Where's that support?

5 MR. TAVARES: Speakers, speakers 21 through
6 Speaker 25 please come to the side - - .

7 LADGMI: Uh huh? I think so. But I'm
8 waiting. Okay. Okay. Hi my name is Ladgmi
9 [phonetic] and I'm a sophomore from SCRL and
10 before I say my speech I would like to read a
11 letter from a SCRL alumni whose name is Arthur
12 Sanders and this is what he has to say.

13 To the Department of Education; I came to
14 SCRL from the juvenile justice system and the
15 foster care system. I did not want to be there
16 but with the support of the school and
17 especially the principal Mr. Mulqueen I was able
18 to earn the credits I needed to graduate on time
19 in the first graduating class of 2007.

20 Thanks to the support of SCRL I am now a
21 successful college student enrolled in
22 Westchester Community College. I am the first
23 in my family to graduate from high school and
24 enter college.

25 I will be transferring to a four-year

1 college soon, hopefully Lehman College in the
2 Bronx. My goal is to offer the same support to
3 students who are in the situation I was in and
4 needed a little extra help to make it.

5 There are not many schools that offer the
6 support I received and don't give up on the
7 students. That is why SCRL must not close down.

8 And for my speech I have a dream that one
9 day our school system would not be corrupted. I
10 wish there was a better system in which DOE
11 would support us in any way they can instead--
12 instead of following their greed for money.
13 Please don't close our home down. You have not
14 provided a valid reason to close it down
15 therefore your actions would be
16 unconstitutional.

17 I love my home. I love my home so do the
18 right thing and don't take it away. Thank you.

19 CARESS: Thank you. Number 21.

20 MS. BARBARA GAVEY: Hi my name is Barbara
21 Gavey [phonetic]. I'm an ESL teacher at the
22 School for Community Research and Learning. I
23 want to mention some of the things that I like
24 about SCRL that I haven't seen in other schools.

25 I like that the teachers get together; that

1 the teachers help each other rather than
2 trying to hoard everything for themselves. I
3 like the way they work together and try to work
4 through problems that they have. If I have a
5 problem with a student I know that I can go to
6 Ms. Duvalier [phonetic], I can go to Mr. Ellis,
7 I can go to Mr. Diorio and I can get input as to
8 how I might be able to reach that student; what
9 I might be doing wrong and what I might be able
10 to do better.

11 I like the way the students know each other.
12 Students in our school like each other. They
13 like to do things together; they like to help
14 each other too. I have students who want to do
15 peer tutoring. I have students that want to be
16 tutored by their peers.

17 I like that I know all of the students in
18 this school. I don't want to go to a new
19 school. I don't want to go to a new school
20 that's going to have different students with the
21 same problems. I want to be able to help the
22 students that are here get through the problems
23 that they have and I want to be able to get
24 through any problems that I as a teacher may
25 have. And I want to do it here. Thank you.

1 CARESS: Number 22; 22. Number 22.

2 MR. ARTHUR WILLIAMS: Good evening everyone.
3 I'm going to make this brief and 'cause I don't
4 like to speak just to be heard. I like to be--
5 to speak to be felt and I want you guys to feel
6 this.

7 SCRL has made a difference in my son's life.
8 And I only pray you guys give them the
9 opportunity--excuse me?

10 My name? Arthur Williams. I'm actually the
11 Treasurer on the Parents Association. Okay move
12 on.

13 So the thing is I can speak for my son and
14 my son may be able to speak for the students in
15 the school but the thing I speak for my son I've
16 noticed a change in my son. He's been in this
17 school for one year. He's been in two other
18 schools prior to this and they have been schools
19 that held him back and this is the one school
20 that made a difference in him and he has grown
21 and I would only hope you guys give him the
22 opportunity to progress and keep this school
23 open. Thank you.

24 CARESS: Twenty-three.

25 MS. IVERO LIVRO: Good evening. My name is

1 Ivero Livro [phonetic] and I'm a hard-working
2 single mother of one of the SCRL students. My
3 daughter is an IEP student. My biggest fear in
4 life was my daughter not being able to graduate.
5 But I'm proud to say she is now a senior. I can
6 honestly say this school; this staff has boosted
7 my daughter's self-esteem and made her feel that
8 she can achieve the same academic goals as the
9 students without IEP status.

10 The SCRL staff has stayed late tutoring my
11 daughter; has helped me get one-on-one tutoring
12 at home. They have taken time to show me
13 different tactics so that I may be able to help
14 my child. I see that it is more than just a
15 paycheck to these teachers and staff at SCRL.
16 They have a sincere love for these kids but
17 there is no way your numbers can show that.

18 You would actually have to be hands-on to
19 see that.

20 You're proposing a new school but changing
21 the wrapping on the gift doesn't change what's
22 inside. By closing the school I fear you're
23 showing our children to accept defeat rather
24 than assess and rectify the situation. Rather
25 than pro--excuse me. Rather than proposing to

1 throw in the towel and basically tell our
2 children without words they are not worth it and
3 are hopeless. Why not propose new computers,
4 add the school programs, better resources. It's
5 our community, our children. Why not consider
6 our voices? Thank you.

7 CARESS: Twenty-four.

8 MR. JOHN HERNANDEZ: Hi I'm John Hernandez.
9 I've been in this school for four years.
10 Alright I came into the school as a very lazy
11 person. You know these school--the teachers in
12 this school never, never stopped to see my
13 potential. They always pushed me. I was lazy
14 but they always pushed me, they never stopped.
15 They're the reason that I am graduating this
16 year. I am a senior of 2010. I will be going
17 to college alright and it's all because of them.
18 The teachers in this school they--they love
19 their students you know. They really care and
20 you know to see this school shut down it really
21 hurts me because this school does nothing but
22 help its students. This school cares about its
23 students and I just want to see this school keep
24 on doing that; keep on you know helping lazy
25 students like myself you know progress. And you

1 know that to me would be amazing alright so
2 please don't shut down my school and that's all
3 I have to say. Thank you.

4 CARESS: Number 25.

5 MS. ELEANOR LARRIER: Good evening. I am
6 Eleanor Larrier [phonetic], Chief Executive
7 Officer of the Bronx Community Health Network.
8 You might be wondering why is a healthcare
9 organization here in a school.

10 We have been working with SCRL, Mr.
11 Mulqueen, Dr. Fletcher, Ms. Rodriguez, Mr. Lee
12 now for about a year and a half. We as an
13 organization recognized that statistics don't
14 tell the whole story. They're part of the story
15 but they don't tell the story.

16 Our mission is to improve the health of
17 Bronx residents. We can tell you statistics
18 upon statistics about the poor health of this
19 community. It's to also improve financial and
20 other program resources so that everyone can get
21 affordable healthcare.

22 Our patients that we serve, over 70,000 in
23 the past year, represent and reflect the
24 ethnicity, the multicultural nature of the Bronx
25 just as the students at SCRL do.

1 With the--with Mr. Mulqueen and the other
2 members of his leadership team and teachers that
3 I've mentioned before, we've worked with them to
4 develop a plan to help to bring resources to the
5 school. We are still marketing that plan for
6 funding and part of that plan included mentoring
7 students in healthcare and other careers,
8 integrating health topics into the curriculum,
9 preparing for the work world with interviewing
10 and presentation skills and developing
11 internships and school to work programs.

12 Again we recognize that school is one part
13 of it; the academic--the academics are one part
14 but the social environment in which children
15 live are also an important part.

16 We are aware of the health education and
17 employment statistics of the community and we
18 know that the students are starting with lots of
19 deficits. They, their parents and the teachers
20 of this school are fighting an uphill battle.
21 They recognize that solid education is part of
22 the solution. The teachers at SCRL are
23 committed to the struggle not only to meet the
24 academic needs but trying to ensure that social
25 and economic needs are also considered.

1 We are impressed by the number of programs
2 and resources that they've brought to SCRL and
3 we are committed to our collaboration and
4 partnership with SCRL. Please do not close the
5 school. Thank you.

6 MR. TAVARES: I believe there's one more
7 speaker. I believe there was--there were 26
8 people who were.

9 CARESS: Number 26 Jesse Mohika [phonetic].

10 MR. TAVARES: Number 26 please come up. How
11 are you doing Mr. Mohika?

12 MR. MOHIKA: Good evening ladies and
13 gentlemen. My name is Jessie Mohika and I'm the
14 Director of Education Policy for Bronx Borough
15 President Ruben Diaz, Jr. and I am very--I, I
16 wanted to come here today obviously to talk
17 about this very important issue.

18 One of the issues that we find with this
19 proposal for closure is that within your own
20 criteria you state that SCRL did not meet the
21 standard for closure. And then in the same
22 educational impact statement you state a
23 conversation with internal stakeholders that led
24 to this decision but yet the context of what
25 that conversation was and the identity of those

1 stakeholders were not in that educational
2 impact statement.

3 I think in all fairness to everybody who
4 works within this school, who attends in this
5 school we need clarity, we need transparency.

6 By your own criteria this school should not
7 be closed yet in the educational impact
8 statement it alludes to a conversation but
9 there's no specifics as to what that
10 conversation was, who was in that conversation,
11 and what was discussed.

12 Also it mentioned stakeholders. I think
13 that the individuals who work in this school and
14 who sacrifice and who work day in and day out
15 with these children should have been involved in
16 that conversation. They are the most important
17 stakeholder.

18 With that said in the December Panel for
19 Educational Policy meeting the Borough president
20 wrote a letter stating these concerns to the
21 members of the panel who will vote on this on
22 January 26th. We have a representative on the
23 panel and we have asked for this information.
24 If we do not receive this information there is
25 no way that we would support any attempt to

1 close this school or the four schools that did
2 not meet the criteria.

3 To date we have not received a response from
4 that letter. I have reached out and will reach
5 out to each individual panel member tomorrow to
6 have this conversation but once again I must
7 reiterate and I think someone had said it before
8 is that it is completely unfair to continually
9 move the target, to continually move the target
10 the school did not meet the criteria should not
11 be closed. You cannot continue to move the
12 target; it's not fair for our students and for
13 our educators who work day in and day out with
14 these children. Thank you for the opportunity.

15 MR. TAVARES: I want to thank, I want to
16 thank everybody who came out here tonight to
17 support your school and to speak tonight. This
18 information will be given to the panel of
19 educational policy at the meeting where they
20 will vote on these proposals will be January 26th
21 I believe at Brooklyn Tech High School out in
22 Brooklyn.

23 Have a pleasant and safe evening. Thank
24 you.

25 [END 154_422]

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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: Cynthia Romero

Date: January 7, 2010