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

Frederick Douglass Academy

January 6, 2010

1 [START 154_439]

2 [background conversations]

3 SUPERINTENDENT: Good evening, everybody.
4 Please find your seats. We're going to start
5 the proceedings.

6 Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Thank
7 you all for coming to this - - hearing being
8 held by the Department of Education CEC SLT from
9 Frederick Douglass Academy. Please note that
10 these proceedings are being recorded. We are
11 providing interpreter services. So I'm going to
12 ask the interpreter to come up and speak.

13 INTERPRETER: [foreign language]

14 SUPERINTENDENT: Okay. Someone is joining
15 us. My name is Elaina - - . I am the Bronx
16 High School Superintendent. And I'm going to
17 allow the members at the table to introduce
18 themselves.

19 MR. JACOB LOWE: Thank you all for coming
20 out. My name is Jacob Lowe [phonetic]. I'm
21 the, uh, Chairperson of the FDA III School
22 Leadership Team.

23 MR. TED GARCIA: Good evening. My name is
24 Ted Garcia. I am the CEC President of District
25 9.

1 SUPERINTENDENT: And joining us now.

2 MS. DEEDEE SULLIVAN: Good evening, ladies
3 and gentlemen, parents, Board Education Staff,
4 and children, students. I'm Deedee [phonetic]
5 Sullivan, the Bronx Representative for CEC-8
6 High Schools. Thank you.

7 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you and welcome. In
8 a couple moments, I will give you a brief
9 summary of the proposal, uh, for the truncation
10 of grades at FDA III. Copies of the Educational
11 Impact Statement, um, are provided in the back.
12 There will be no question and answer period. -
13 - public hearing. But before this - - proposal,
14 I want to make sure that you are all aware of
15 the opportunity to provide input.

16 There's a speaker sign-up list located in
17 the back, outside of the auditorium. If you are
18 interested in speaking tonight, this evening,
19 please sign in at the, on that list. Um, the
20 list will be open until about 6:15, at which
21 time we will close that. And we will make sure
22 that every person who has signed up to speak
23 tonight will have that opportunity.

24 In order to provide everyone with an
25 opportunity to present tonight, every speaker

1 will have a two-minute time limit to allow us
2 to hear everyone's voice and to hear as much
3 feedback from the community as possible. We
4 expect to be respectful and courteous of every
5 presenter.

6 Are there any, um, elected officials in the
7 audience? I would also like to, um--I want to
8 see - - . Let me proceed directly to the Grade
9 Truncation Proposal for Frederick Douglass
10 Academy.

11 The Department of Education is proposing the
12 truncation of Frederick Douglass Academy III,
13 the school in District 9 that is currently
14 serves students in grades 6 through 12. Under
15 this proposal, the school would stop accepting
16 new 6th grade classes, starting September 2010.

17 While FDA III's High School has been
18 successful, its middle school has failed to help
19 students make progress. We propose phasing out
20 the middle school grades to allow the principal
21 and school staff to focus on and build on the
22 success of the high school. Despite the fact
23 that it has a selective admission policy, FDA
24 III's middle school underperforms all their
25 schools in District 9 in both ELA and Math.

1 Fifty-two one percent, point one percent of
2 the FDA III middle school students are
3 proficient in the ELA, compared to 52.2% of
4 students district wide. Sixty-eight point four
5 percent of FDA III middle school students are
6 proficient in math, compared to 71.6 of students
7 district wide. ELA proficiency is lower in 2009
8 than it was two years ago in 2007--fifty-two
9 point one percent, compared to 53.6%.

10 In both the last years, FDA III's middle
11 school received an F on the Progress section of
12 its progress report. The school received an A
13 on the Student Performance of this year's
14 progress report, which is not surprising given
15 that it is a - - school. But it has
16 consistently failed to help its middle students
17 make progress.

18 In its configuration, FDA III is not
19 fulfilling its purpose of offering students a
20 seamless education of experience from grade 6
21 through high school graduation. FDA III's 8th
22 graders compose only a 30% of the FDA III's 9th
23 grade class.

24 Under the new school governance law, every
25 phase-out proposal will be followed by a public

1 comment period for at least 45 days, during
2 which a public hearing on the proposal will be
3 held. The Panel for Educational Policy will
4 vote on proposed phase-outs this January.

5 I would also have--want to give time, and
6 the School Leadership Team has requested time to
7 present to you a presentation. Jacob will be
8 heading that.

9 MR. LOWE: Thank you very much. The SLT's
10 team, along with the faculty, have put together
11 a Power Point presentation to show that we are
12 not in agreement with the closing of our middle
13 school, and to present to you some facts that
14 show why the data that the Superintendent just
15 spoke to is, in some situations, a bit flawed.

16 So as the Impact Statement that is in the
17 back of the room says itself, FDA III does not
18 meet the criteria, according to its own
19 standards, for school closing. While the
20 overall scores on the DOE accountability schools
21 do not meet standard criteria for closure, FDA
22 III has shown a lack of capacity to improve
23 student performance in significant and
24 consistent ways.

25 We will be speaking to that, but before we

1 do, let us ask ourselves: How was this
2 measured exactly? And how and when were the
3 faculty, staff, and the administration informed?

4 Since that, they have said that the criteria
5 for closing were not met, the shift was made to
6 say that the DOE conducted an assessment of FDA
7 III's capacity to improve student performance in
8 the middle school grades. And after
9 consultation with internal stakeholders,
10 determined that FDA III had not made sufficient
11 progress for its middle school students.

12 Let us all be clear here tonight that
13 internal stakeholders does not mean the faculty
14 and staff of FDA III. In fact, we were never
15 informed what this assessment was, when it was
16 taking place, or the results of this assessment.
17 The manner in which we were informed of this
18 assessment was when we were told that our middle
19 school was being phased out.

20 So right now, I will turn the mic over to
21 Ms. Acosta, who will speak to the school culture
22 of the school. After which, I will speak a
23 little bit more about the data used to make this
24 decision.

25 MS. ACOSTA: Good evening. Just taking a

1 look at what our students said about FDA III...
2 According to comparing it to the city, our
3 students said academically and with an Academics
4 and Engagement, we had a high rating. Students
5 said that the school had a high rating with the
6 Academics and Engagement. And according--also
7 average with Safety and Communication, we were
8 average.

9 Now, if we want to say, we said the School
10 Culture. As a, treated--they were treated with
11 respect. If you want to compare it with the
12 city, it says on average, 6 as opposed to 5
13 stopped bullying. And in our school, bullying
14 is not really apparent.

15 Respect Achievement and respect Teachers.
16 As you see, our school, we have a high rating as
17 opposed to the city.

18 What do our students say about the teachers?
19 Inspire me to learn. Look at the high rating we
20 have. Our teachers give extra help after
21 school, at lunch time, or prep time, we always
22 give extra help.

23 Now, drugs and gangs hardly exist in our
24 schools. You can ask any student here. Drugs
25 and gangs. With the city rating, I mean,

1 honestly. Drugs. Our school is very small,
2 and our, our students, everyone knows each other
3 from 6th grade to 12th grade. We all know each
4 other. Teachers can name every student in the
5 school. We know what's going on with our
6 students from 6th grade to 12th grade. There's
7 visually no gangs, no drugs. So that is
8 definitely the culture of our school.

9 MR. LOWE: Thank you, Ms. Acosta. I now
10 want to speak some of the data that has been
11 used to make this decision. Specifically, the F
12 grade on Progress.

13 Now, while it is true that on the school
14 progress report, the middle school of FDA III
15 did receive the, an F, as we all know,
16 statistics can be used to serve any purpose
17 deemed necessary. It's just a matter of how you
18 look at the numbers.

19 FDA III received a C on its overall progress
20 report this past year, which is an improvement
21 over the D it received last year, by the way.
22 But an F on the sub-grade called Progress. And
23 the F, as the Superintendent has already stated,
24 is a big part of this decision. But what
25 follows is an explanation of how FDA III was

1 disadvantaged by the way that these statistics
2 and numbers are manipulated by the Department of
3 Education.

4 Schools without large Special Education
5 populations look like they are underperforming.
6 And keep in mind that this statistic, keep in
7 mind that this statistic is based on our results
8 compared to the rest of our peers. And I think
9 it's important right now to skip a little bit
10 ahead so we can see how many Special Ed students
11 our school has compared to the other schools in
12 our district--I'm sorry, in our peer group.

13 As you see, we are the red one at the end
14 there. And those are the other percentages of
15 Special Ed students that, um, that exist in the
16 other schools in our peer group, and against
17 which we are measured. Let me go back and
18 explain that a little bit.

19 So the small population of Special Education
20 students dramatically hurts FDA III's progress
21 grade. So it's dearly highlighted when test
22 results for - - Special Ed students make
23 significant, larger gains than General Ed
24 students as this data shows.

25 The flawed tests, uh, gave middle school

1 students with high Special Ed populations a
2 boost for their progress reports. Then they got
3 another boost because the DOE, DOE gave weight
4 to Special Ed students, making those students'
5 scores count more on the report. Since as you
6 saw earlier, we had a significantly smaller
7 Special Ed population, we did not get that
8 statistical boost as this graphic right here
9 just states.

10 So when you add all that up, a comparison of
11 progress scores in schools in FDA III's peer
12 group based on Special Ed population, FDA III's
13 middle school, remember, only has 5% Special Ed
14 population, the smallest Special Ed population.
15 And so the least progress.

16 Now, our score for Progress, as you can see,
17 is 59.4 there. But which compared to our peer
18 group is low. But like I just explained, we are
19 by far the smallest Special Ed population of all
20 the schools in our peer group.

21 Before I conclude, I want to speak to one
22 more statistic which the Superintendent
23 mentioned. And I'm not sure if other people are
24 going to speak this as well, but I feel it needs
25 to be said. And that was the fact that 30% of

1 our 9th grade class is made up of our 8th
2 graders. Now, this statistic is true, but once
3 again, it is an example of how all numbers can
4 be manipulated to serve your cause.

5 Now, the reason for that is our 8th grade
6 has roughly 50 students in it. Whereas, our 9th
7 grade has roughly 90 students in it. Now, when
8 you look at those numbers. That makes it seem
9 as if our kids aren't staying in the school.
10 But, in fact, they are. It's just that since
11 our 9th grade population is so much higher, we
12 take on more students from other schools. It's
13 an important thing to keep in mind, and sheds
14 light on this point that all data can be
15 manipulated to suit any particular need.

16 Now, we have chosen to show the data that
17 shows that this is a good school, that students
18 want to be here. And I think that the speakers
19 who are going to come up here are going to show
20 that point again. Thank you for your time.

21 [applause]

22 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you, Mr. Lowe. We
23 now will begin the public hearing, and we'll
24 hear public comments. Um, I have been given the
25 list of speakers. I will be calling speakers by

1 numbers. And we will be asking that we use
2 two microphones that you see up front. Those,
3 uh, speakers who have odd numbers will be to my
4 left, and the even numbers to my right.

5 So I'm going to ask that the first three odd
6 numbers come up--1, 3 and 5. If they could line
7 up. And then we could have 2, 4 and 6 on the
8 other side.

9 MR. EASE PHILYEARS: Hello. Good evening.
10 My name is Ease Philyears [phonetic], and I'm
11 here to represent Assemblyman Michael Benjamin's
12 Office. Uh, the Assemblyman. Hello. Can you
13 hear me?

14 The Assemblyman couldn't make it today
15 because of the State of State. So he's up in
16 Albany, so I will just be, um, reading a
17 statement.

18 When the assembly has said in past school
19 governance reform, we put in measures for
20 transparency, community input, and the process
21 for school closure. These measures were
22 developed with input from the community and
23 concerned parents resulting in a law that
24 addressed past problems, and instituted new
25 reforms.

1 Two weeks before announcing the plan to
2 close Frederick Douglass Academy 3,
3 representatives of the Department of Education
4 met with me at my district office. There they
5 laid out a rationale for phasing out FDA III.
6 Their concern was the lack of progress for the
7 middle school students at FDA III.

8 I'm a firm believer that weak middle schools
9 lead to increased drop-out rates and,
10 subsequently, poorer high school performance for
11 those who remain. My overall concern is
12 providing a quality education for all students.
13 Poorly performing middle schools cannot be
14 allowed to exist because they co-sign their
15 students to low-wage or no-wage job futures.

16 We need academically well-prepared students
17 if our city, state, and nation are going to
18 prosper. Is FDA III is ultimately phased out, I
19 want a new quality middle school phased in that
20 will educate the children in the Morris Heights
21 [phonetic] community.

22 Any phase-out must focus on strengthening
23 the skills and scholastic achievement of current
24 and incoming middle school students. For our
25 children to reach their fullest potentials,

1 parents, educators, and public officials must
2 work together. I will continue to monitor this
3 process and support the best solution for our
4 children in Morris Heights. Thank you.

5 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
6 Philyears. Speaker Number Two. James Knox.

7 MR. JAMES KNOX: Good evening. My name is
8 James Knox, and I teach English as a Second
9 Language here at the FDA Middle School. There
10 are several points I'd like to make about the
11 proposed closing of our middle school.

12 First, let me talk about attendance and
13 enrollment at the FDA III Middle School. The
14 retention rate from FDA III's 8th grade going on
15 to FDA III's 9th grade is well above 80%. Over
16 40 of FDA III's middle school students enrolled
17 up into FDA III's high school--very contrary to
18 the numbers that this Superintendent had brought
19 out earlier.

20 Our 6th grade enrollment this year is up
21 164%. Our community has said what they think
22 about our middle school--164% increase in
23 enrollment, the 6th grade.

24 Our actual student attendant is now,
25 attendance is now above 90%--third straight year

1 of attendance increases.

2 And as to the Board of Education using the
3 progress report to close the school. It's just
4 like the DOE. They're trying to expel our
5 middle school because we got a C in one class.
6 That's just wrong.

7 Let's look at some specifics. At our most
8 recent progress report, FDA III received a B in
9 School Environment category, with a 22% increase
10 in that score. FDA III also received an A in
11 Student Performance category--a 23% increase.

12 [applause]

13 Yeah. That's right. An A in Student
14 Performance. Over 50% of the middle school
15 students are at or above proficiency in ELA, and
16 over 68% above proficiency in math.

17 [applause]

18 And the progress scores improved over 200%
19 from last year. The progress we're talking
20 about--over 200%. Very strong and compelling
21 numbers. They cannot be overlooked.

22 [applause]

23 One of the important reasons for these
24 improvements and for the strength of our middle
25 school--we've got the International

1 Baccalaureate Program, our world-renown
2 program for our middle school scholars. We have
3 the - - Program, an interdisciplinary middle
4 school curriculum co-sponsored by the American
5 Museum of Natural History; and Thurgood
6 Marshall, Jr., Mock Trial Program, city-wide,
7 competitive pre-law program. These are just a
8 few.

9 [applause]

10 Thank you. Yeah, these are just a few of
11 the programs we have here. So DOE's argument
12 for closing our middle school is incredibly
13 flawed. And the FDA III school community is
14 incredibly strong. Remember...

15 [applause]

16 We're FDA and we don't play. Our middle
17 school is here to stay. Thank you very much.

18 [cheers and applause]

19 SUPERINTENDENT: Next speaker.

20 MR. TOM NEWTON: My name is Tom Newton. I'm
21 a Special Education teacher, Alfred H. Smith,
22 uh, CTE High School. I'm here to add my voice
23 to those who object to the closing of, uh,
24 Douglass in this particular manner. I'm also
25 here to object to the closing of the other

1 schools on the target list of DOE at this
2 point.

3 I'm appalled, and frankly baffled by the
4 breakneck speed that, uh, DOE has approached
5 these closings without making sufficient, uh,
6 use of, doing something to correct problems that
7 have been indicated. There has not--uh, you
8 don't kill a flea with an atomic bomb. You've
9 got to do something to give us a chance to make
10 changes, and we will do so. The way I see it,
11 the DOE is ignoring the needs of this special
12 Bronx community.

13 And one thing--DOE's own reports have
14 stressed the importance of things like, uh, CTE,
15 vocational training as something we need to
16 increase. At the same time, they're targeting
17 schools like mine that offer CTE programs. Not
18 every student can go to college.

19 And I deal with 236 Special Ed students.
20 Where are they going to go? How are they going
21 to be lost if you close my type of school where
22 they can get a certification in automotive and
23 other positive areas? You are losing them. And
24 if you, if they go elsewhere, they may just drop
25 out. We don't need that continued problem.

1 Closing the schools the way DOE is
2 planning is wrong. It is ill-conceived and it
3 is improper. So thank you.

4 [cheers and applause]

5 SUPERINTENDENT: Next speaker.

6 MS. JUANITA VASS: Good evening. My name is
7 Juanita Vass, and I'm a High School Director
8 representing the Council of School Supervisors
9 and Administrators.

10 I have a brief statement to make on behalf
11 of CSA and a full written statement to leave
12 with you when I'm done.

13 The DOE has announced the closing of 20
14 schools, some of them with new principals, some
15 of them just beginning to turn around, and a
16 full eight of them that were open not very long
17 ago by the head of DOE himself, Chancellor, Joel
18 Klein.

19 In the case of several of these proposed
20 closures, we must ask if some of the schools are
21 being held accountable while the apparatus that
22 supports them is not. In those cases, we must
23 inquire if the schools...

24 [applause]

25 ...were really failing and by what measures

1 they were failing. We must ask if the
2 Chancellor truly put each of these schools
3 through a thorough process to ascertain whether
4 they had been provided adequate supports and
5 guidance by their superintendents and SSOs, and
6 if the Office of Student Enrollment had leveled
7 the playing field.

8 CSA is asking the DOE to lay bare the
9 process by which they determined that each of
10 these schools be closed. In the case of each
11 school, we want to know what the superintendent
12 did besides visiting the schools to announce
13 their closings.

14 [applause]

15 We need to know how thorough superintendent
16 was in the process of helping these schools to
17 succeed over the last few years. The DOE should
18 also include an analysis of the role of the
19 appropriate support organizations, since each
20 school pays an SSO to advise them or a student
21 achievement hold principals [background noise]
22 and perform many other support [background
23 noise] what sort of service that each of these
24 20 schools get for their money.

25 Finally, the DOE should assess how fairly

1 the Office of Student Enrollment minimized
2 challenges in schools that face so many other
3 challenges. It is important to know if these
4 schools were sent an unusually large proportion
5 of ELL students and children with special needs
6 without providing financial means for these
7 students to receive adequate services to ensure
8 their achievement.

9 When every question is asked and answered,
10 we are likely to discover that many of these
11 schools can remain open and thrive with adequate
12 superintendents, and support networks, and fair
13 enrollment practices.

14 [applause]

15 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you.

16 CHRISTOPHER: Hi. My name is Christopher.
17 And, um, I am part of the International
18 Baccalaureate Program. And, um, what I wanted
19 to say was that FDA is already a III and IV
20 school. So if you have a III and IV school,
21 it's harder to make more progress than if you
22 had a II and I school. So--I don't know how to
23 say it. It's, if you have, if you have a school
24 that's made up of all IIs and Is, it's, it'll be
25 more progress if they become IIIs and IVs. But

1 if you already have a good school, it's harder
2 to make it, um, even better.

3 [applause]

4 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you very much. Next
5 speaker, please.

6 MISS PATRICIA GROSSMAN: Uh, good evening.
7 I am Patricia Grossman, and I am currently a
8 senior. Having attended FDA since I was in 6th
9 grade has made it a second home. Not only a
10 place in which work was provided, but also
11 friendships were created and character was
12 built. What a shame it would be to lose such a
13 school.

14 I recall how, at one point, I would complain
15 of how tedious the work was only to see how all
16 the work completed has not only resulted in good
17 grades, but also in great work ethics, and the
18 desire to - - amazing things. It was what I
19 learned in middle school that has helped me
20 obtain the second highest average of my
21 graduating class, and has also resulted in my
22 desire to learn. Desire that was satisfied with
23 diverse classes and clubs.

24 Why do prior students have such an
25 experience? Why do - - in FDA III? This is my

1 seventh year at FDA III. I am - - my last - -
2 setting for I will be soon finding myself in
3 college, a part of me will always be an FDA III
4 scholar. Please do not close our school. Thank
5 you.

6 [applause]

7 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you. The next three
8 sets of speakers, please, um, from 6 to 11, and
9 from 6 to 14.

10 MISS PORTIA LAISONETTE: Hello. My name is
11 Portia Laisnette [phonetic] and I'm an FDA
12 cheerleader. I'm a 12th, I'm in 12th grade.
13 Excuse my attire. I, I just skipped
14 cheerleading to come. Um, and I was a transfer
15 student two years ago. And before I came, I
16 acted really poorly in school. And when I came
17 here, I learned how to do a lot more things, and
18 watch other people grow.

19 And so if you close out the middle school, I
20 don't think it would give the other kids a
21 chance to grow like how I did. And I think
22 we've all grown as a family from 6th through
23 12th. Thank you.

24 [applause]

25 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you.

1 MS. LILAVILLA TIPTON: Hello. My name is
2 Lilavilla [phonetic] Tipton, and I'm a 6th grade
3 Special Education and English or English
4 Language Arts teacher here at Frederick Douglass
5 Academy III. I've been a part of this learning
6 community for two years, and part of the New
7 York City Department of Education for three
8 years.

9 The learning community at Frederick Douglass
10 Academy III has diligently worked to create a
11 middle school culture of respect and high
12 expectations, which is the foundation of
13 academic success in middle schools. We not only
14 strive to provide rigorous, data-driven
15 instruction to support the diverse learning
16 needs of the scholars in our classrooms, but we
17 diligently work to create active citizens.

18 As teachers, we forge meaningful
19 relationships with our scholars, their families,
20 and our community. Similarly, we've, we
21 facilitate learning experiences in which our
22 middle school scholars are able to interact with
23 our high school students in order to better
24 prepare them for high school and their futures.
25 These relationships foster a greater sense of

1 community, safety, and security, thus
2 providing a more enriching learning environment
3 and school culture for our middle schools
4 scholars.

5 Since I've been a member of this learning
6 community, we worked incredibly hard to improve,
7 to challenge, and to make this a safe, engaging
8 place to learn. Within the last two years, this
9 school has initiated even more clubs, sports
10 teams, enrichment activities, and experiences
11 for our scholars. The students perform well on
12 tests. They've improved attendance. And they
13 become, and they have become a part of this
14 community.

15 In a neighborhood with high crime rates, our
16 scholar attendance remains over 90%, and has
17 shown continued improvement in the last three
18 years. Scholars travel significant distances to
19 come to school at FDA III. This information
20 shows that both scholars and families are
21 committed to FDA III, and have truly saved our
22 scholars - - here.

23 [applause]

24 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you.

25 MR. WILSON GARDNER: Hello. My name is

1 Wilson Gardner [phonetic]. I'm a junior at
2 Frederick Douglass, and my brother who now
3 attends the University of Buffalo after FDA
4 Middle School.

5 [applause]

6 [background noise] education through the
7 middle school, I would have never considered
8 applying to this wonderful high school. Were it
9 not for the FDA middle school, I would not be
10 standing in this auditorium proud Honor Roll
11 Scholar and Student Body President. But here I
12 am thanks to the FDA middle school.

13 I am told that the roots of this very school
14 are being severed by the DOE, those that - - to
15 enrich them. That they will claim the scholars'
16 best interest in mind - - to remove the
17 institution that is now making our future
18 doctors, lawyers, senators, presidents.

19 [applause]

20 If you cannot accept this, we will not
21 accept this. Our futures are determined by our
22 past, but how can we know where we are going if
23 we do not know where we came from?

24 [applause]

25 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you.

1 MS. ALICE LINGERSON: Good evening. My
2 name is Alice Lingserson [phonetic]. I'm a Life
3 Skills Counselor here at MS-219, and I'm also a
4 parent of a senior in the FDA - - in 12th grade.

5 [applause]

6 [background noise] did my job every day to
7 come to work and teach these children life
8 skills. And as a part of life skills, they have
9 to learn how to get through whatever life has
10 challenged. And I'd like to say that at this
11 particular time, with all of these school
12 closings, it's a shame that these students, who
13 already are in a, in an area where they have the
14 difficulties of dealing with the surroundings,
15 whatever life has to offer them, they have this
16 particular opportunity to get, an opportunity to
17 be in a school, FDA, and further themselves,
18 getting to the high school where they can
19 benefit and move on to colleges that they
20 probably didn't even think of at all.

21 I'm not only a student, or at least a, a
22 Life Skills Counselor here, but I was also a
23 product of District 9. Went to the elementary
24 school, graduated from a junior high school, and
25 furthered my education. And I've given back to

1 my community. And I would like for this
2 school, FDA, the middle school, to remain open
3 because it is needed in this area. Thank you.

4 [applause]

5 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you. [background
6 noise] speakers from 14 to 24 on one side, and
7 from 13 to 23 on the other side, please.

8 MR. JARED FOX: Good evening. My name is
9 Jared Fox. I'm a 9th grade science teacher at
10 the FDA III. Two things were said earlier today
11 that I'd like to briefly address. And those two
12 things were: 1) that the Board of Ed's closing
13 our school because they wanted to focus on the
14 successes of our high school; and 2) that our
15 middle schools, our 8th graders, only make up
16 30% of our 9th grade.

17 Um, as a 9th grade teacher, I can't tell you
18 how important it is for 9th graders to
19 transition from the middle school years into the
20 high school years. Those students that are not
21 successful in the 9th grade have a very
22 difficult time making up the credits that they
23 need to be successful in the rest of their high
24 school years.

25 Getting back to the two points about the 30%

1 and focusing on the high school's success. It
2 happens that as a 9th grade teacher, I see that
3 those 30% that make up our 9th grade outperform
4 in the first marking period students that come
5 from other middle schools. Those 30% in my
6 science class over the past two, three years,
7 I've gone back and looked into my grade book--
8 they outperform students from other middle
9 schools by 14 points in the first marking
10 period.

11 Not only do they outperform these students
12 academically [applause], but they're also our
13 social leaders. We focus on creating scholars
14 at FDA III. Our 9th graders that came to us
15 after being in our middle school, are already
16 scholars, and they set the example for the rest
17 of the incoming 9th grade. So without our
18 middle school, our high school will not be as
19 successful as it is today. Thank you.

20 [applause]

21 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you. Sir,
22 [background noise].

23 MR. LEONARD BARTON: Yes. My name is
24 Leonard Barton. I'm from Clairmont [phonetic]
25 Neighborhood Center. I'm the After-School

1 Coordinator, also the Educational Coordinator
2 at Clairmont Neighborhood Center.

3 In dealing with the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade
4 students, um, in coming over here with my - - as
5 part of 219, I often walked up to 219--I often
6 walked up to FDA and all I saw when I walked
7 into school was respect. All I saw when I
8 walked into school were children that were
9 learning. A lot of the students that we have,
10 for the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students now
11 they make up a part of our After-School Program.
12 They make up a part of our educational program.
13 They make up a part of our evening program.
14 And, and - - the program - - program and, and
15 together we offer skills, activities, and things
16 for the youth to do.

17 So in the 6th, 7th, 8th grade, I think that
18 is the basics at starting with the 6th, 7th, and
19 8th graders, as my daughter. She started school
20 in the 6th grade. And I think we can have a 6th
21 grade - - and when you start escalating, you
22 have something that you can look up to. You
23 have someone that you can look up to. You have
24 the 9th grade that you can look forward to. And
25 it's like a family that grows together. So, as

1 I said, don't close the school. Work with
2 them. Try to motivate them, try to help them to
3 be a better school.

4 [applause]

5 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you, sir.

6 MR. ABRAHAM JONES: Good afternoon. Uh, my
7 name is, uh, Abraham Jones. I'm Executive
8 Director of Clairmont Neighborhood Center. And
9 I would like to just, uh, uh, I would like just
10 to defer to - - , my time for a second and have,
11 uh, one of our, uh, interns who attends here,
12 uh, at, uh, - - FDA, Frederick Douglass Academy
13 Number III. Who, I mean, because FDA, you know,
14 I, I have a problem with that. It's Frederick
15 Douglass Academy, that's our home - - .
16 Frederick Douglass was a wonderful person, uh, a
17 historic figure. And I think we do him a
18 disservice by just throwing out FDA.

19 But now I, I would like to have Takara
20 [phonetic] Robinson, who's one of our interns
21 who attends here, who, who is, you know,
22 reading this literature, talk about the culture
23 of learning, and, uh, she has contributed to our
24 After-School Program. And it's, it's ironic
25 that you'd be closing a 6th grade, because right

1 now she works in our After-School Program and
2 she has for several years. And that's the grade
3 in which she has done a, a fantastic job in
4 terms of being a mentor and tutor and working
5 with our After-School Program. Takara... And
6 she's also an Honors Student here.

7 [applause]

8 MISS TAKARA ROBINSON: Hi. My name is
9 Takara Robinson. I'm an 11th grader, and I
10 attend Frederick Douglass Academy III. I also
11 attended the middle school as well.

12 I'm a part of the - - . I have reached many
13 achievements because of the work at - - FDA III.
14 We have many enrichment programs such as Give
15 and - - . Give is also a college-bound program,
16 as well as FDA III. We can make sure that the
17 homework gets done and it's well understood. We
18 also have programs such as National Honor
19 Societies, Student Council, Big Brother Big
20 Sister Programs that deals with the 6th and 12th
21 graders when they first enter. And then we have
22 other programs like the Ivy Program which is
23 known as, of course, The Globe. It's not just
24 the--it's - - and - - placement programs.

25 And then personally, I made it to 11th

1 grade, and I'm at the top of my, I'm 6th at
2 the top of my grade. And I'm going to India
3 [phonetic] because of what I've learned in 6th
4 grade and how I, like, I, I, I like the good,
5 good grades that I'm supposed to get. So I do
6 the work that I'm supposed to do. So... And I
7 have made it to a member of National Honor
8 Society.

9 And the students and I believe that the
10 middle school should not be closed because it
11 has given us opportunities to go to college-
12 bound programs, teach us about colleges. So
13 they - - with academic programs, experience so
14 many great and different activities. And so
15 remember that we are FDA, and we - - it. Our
16 school is here to stay. Thank you.

17 [cheers and applause]

18 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you. Next speaker.

19 MR. JONES: [background noise]

20 SUPERINTENDENT: Your time is up, sir.

21 Thank you.

22 MR. JONES: Although the [crosstalk].

23 MS. ROSANNE GONZALES: Hi. I am speaking on
24 behalf of the PTA President Rosia Gonzales. I
25 am a parent at FDA III. I'm sorry my name is

1 Rosanne Gonzalez, and I'm a parent as well and
2 PTA President FDA III.

3 [applause]

4 I have been involved [background noise] FDA
5 III for four years. As a parent at FDA, I have
6 - - great experiences. My son has exceeded at
7 FDA III. He has an excellent Honor Roll
8 student, as well as a member of the Honor
9 Society. He hasn't seen, he hadn't seen any - -
10 about - - and experiences things that FDA III
11 that I could not have got anywhere else. He
12 went through the middle school. His
13 transactions to - - was a breeze. Phasing out
14 the middle school will be a great injustice to
15 our kids and this community. Thank you.

16 [applause]

17 SUPERINTENDENT: Next speaker.

18 MR. OLSHANE MOORE: Good evening, ladies and
19 gentlemen. My name's Olshane [phonetic] Moore
20 and I'm a proud graduate of Frederick Douglass
21 Academy III class of 2003.

22 [applause]

23 My time at FDA was the most valued
24 experience of my life to date. The lessons I've
25 learned here are important lessons that I

1 cherish and use in my daily life. Our
2 principal, Ms. Haman [phonetic], has always
3 instilled in us the importance of being
4 scholars, respectful ladies, and proper
5 gentlemen.

6 FDA's faculty has tried their best to
7 provide us with quality education and guidance.
8 They've shown us the importance of teamwork,
9 communication, and ambition. It is true,
10 though, that the middle school has
11 underperformed in the past, but is improving
12 every day.

13 To unfairly phase out our middle school in
14 the middle of its prime would only lower our
15 high school's morale, and decrease our current
16 great performance.

17 [applause]

18 I plead, I plead to you to keep our middle
19 school open. I ask you to take Frederick
20 Douglass motto into consideration: Without
21 struggle, there can be no progress.

22 [applause]

23 It's not perfect, but we are trying. So
24 please give us a fair chance to try. Thank you.

25 [applause]

1 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you.

2 MR. RICH FARKUS: Good evening. My name is
3 Rich Farkus [phonetic]. I'm a, uh, Vice
4 President of the UFP for Middle Schools. First
5 of all, I want to thank the, uh, parents and
6 teachers, and most of all the students for
7 coming out here today. Um, if the Chancellor
8 was here and he saw the students speak, then
9 there's no way he could close the school. And
10 that's why he's not here today. Because his
11 agenda is to close the school.

12 [applause]

13 We went through this last year at a school
14 in District 7, uh, MS399. And that was another
15 school that should not be closed, and they
16 closed it anyway. Because they had another
17 agenda. And if you live by the test scores,
18 you're going to die by the test scores. And who
19 holds the Chancellor responsible when he says
20 97% of our schools in New York City receive A or
21 B? Those schools aren't any better than, than
22 this school. But when they look at the national
23 tests, the national tests as compared to the
24 state tests, which he holds so dear, show that
25 New York City has not made the progress that the

1 Mayor and the Chancellor has claimed.

2 So who's holding the Chancellor responsible
3 for [applause]? Has anyone from the Department-
4 -and I guess the answer is no--has anyone from
5 the Department come here and talked to the
6 students, and talked to the teachers, and talked
7 to the parents, and seen a culture that's gang-
8 free, drug-free, and a culture of mutual respect
9 for everyone?

10 Now, what is the real motivation here? The
11 Mayor himself has said that by next year he
12 wants 100,000 kids in New York City to be in
13 charter schools. So they have to close as many
14 schools as possible to create space for those
15 charter schools. And this school is being used
16 as a scapegoat to create space for charter
17 schools.

18 Where's the responsibility of the
19 Chancellor? Where's the responsibility of the
20 DOE [applause] for its mismanagement and its
21 abdication of that responsibility? Shame on
22 them. Keep up the fight.

23 [applause]

24 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you.

25 MR. KADEEM MAXWELL: My name is Kadeem

1 Maxwell. I'm a junior at FDA III high school.
2 I attended the middle school since 6th grade.
3 The middle school has helped me to become the
4 person I am today. If the middle school is
5 closed, it will be a part of my life that will
6 disappear, and the history of all FDA III
7 students that attended - - middle school would
8 be erased.

9 The middle school helped me prepare for high
10 school. It made me open up to those around me
11 and trust those who looked out for me. I was
12 comfortable in the high school because most of
13 my friends attended the middle school, and came
14 along to high school with all of us. The middle
15 school helped raise me from a young child into a
16 hard-working, respectful young man. Thank you.

17 [applause]

18 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you. [background
19 noise] gentleman, who I understand also signed
20 with the young lady, can finish up.

21 MR. JONES: Thank you. Thank you very much.
22 Finally, I would just like to say that, um, if
23 Frederick Douglass Academy does not meet the
24 standards for school closure, don't close the
25 school. And that whatever consultation process

1 should have been, there should have been some
2 transparency. You know, it should have been
3 visible for all to see and examine. And, you
4 know, often, once again, we're sort of now stuck
5 with the one-size-fits-all. And our communities
6 are so diverse and what it's taught, and, and
7 the various schools and academies is so
8 meticulous and there's diversity of culture and
9 language, there is not one size that fits all.
10 And, once again, we're stuck with that.

11 And, and, and I got out of the way so you
12 could hear from Takara. I hold in my, I hold in
13 my pocket a check for \$500 from her brother, who
14 is a student and a graduate who attends a
15 college on Long Island, who's a graduate, and
16 came here from the 6th grade on through and
17 graduated last year. And he became involved in
18 Clairmont Neighborhood Center. Takara has been
19 such a, a great recruiter in terms of letting
20 young people know here in the school that
21 there's, there's other, uh, support systems
22 available in the community.

23 You know, you have heard so much. And my
24 prayer, my prayer for you, Madam Superintendent,
25 is that you're able to capture the language and

1 the passion, and the vision, uh, that you
2 heard here tonight, and that you're able to just
3 transcribe and translate that so that whoever it
4 is that needs to hear it can not only hear it,
5 but be touched by what has occurred tonight.
6 Because what has occurred tonight has been
7 fantastic. And I'm sitting here thinking about,
8 uh, us as African Americans having an African-
9 American President, and whether or not, a, a, a
10 decision has ever been reversed or not. But
11 yes, we can. Yes, we can. Yes, we can.

12 [applause]

13 [background noise] to something that is
14 really, really wonderful whereby you can get
15 these young people to come out and fight and
16 advocate for what they believe in and what they
17 receive. Thank you very much.

18 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you. Next.

19 MS. CAROL HARRISON: Hello. Good evening,
20 everyone. My name is Carol Harrison, and I'm
21 the UFT District Rep for District 9.

22 [applause]

23 I stand here before you this evening to
24 point out that we have another victim of the
25 Department of Education's mismanagement.

1 Frederick Douglass Academy received an A on
2 Student Performance which shows that the
3 students in the middle school is achieving, they
4 are achieving. Yes, middle schools have their
5 weaknesses. And the expectation would be to get
6 support from the Department of Ed. However, all
7 that was offered was ineffective or nonexistent.
8 So the solution here is to close or truncate the
9 middle school of Frederick Douglass Academy.

10 If the DOE's goal is to guarantee quality
11 education to all students, why are we taking
12 such extreme measures? Thank you.

13 [applause]

14 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you. I would like to
15 just, um, - - so to, um, introduce to the
16 audience, um, the Co-President of the Bronx
17 Federation of Parents. Nellie's here with us.
18 Nellie - - .

19 [applause]

20 And would you like to introduce yourself - -
21 ? Go ahead, please.

22 MS. ANNA SANTOS: Well, my name is Anna
23 Santos, and I'm the Bronx Representative to the
24 Parent Education Policy [applause]. And I, I am
25 appointed by the Bronx - - President, Reuben

1 Diaz. [applause]

2 Today I wanted to come out and speak, uh, to
3 this great dear issue to our community. Um,
4 first I wanted to mention that at December's
5 panel meeting, the - - did submit a letter to
6 the panel, raising concerns over the school
7 closure process, which I actually have a letter,
8 a copy of that letter for you guys.

9 [applause]

10 And I also have more copies of that letter
11 if anyone here would like to have a copy of it.
12 Um, additionally, under the current closure
13 proposals, there are inconsistencies within the
14 Department's own measurement standards that we
15 believe require review by the Department of
16 Education and the Policy Panel, which I am a
17 member of.

18 Um, and according to the Educational Impact
19 Statement released on the proposed closures,
20 four of the seven Bronx schools should not be
21 closed based on the DOE's own standards. Those
22 schools are: Columbus High School, the School
23 for Community Research and Learning, Global
24 Enterprise High School, and Frederick Douglass
25 Academy III.

1 [applause]

2 The Educational Impact Statements for these
3 schools state that while the overall scores on
4 the DOE's accountability tool did not meet
5 standard criteria for closure, the schools have
6 shown a lack of capacity to improve student
7 performance in sufficient and consistent ways,
8 and after consultation with the internal
9 stakeholders, determined that the act - -
10 mentioned for schools have not made sufficient
11 progress to remain open.

12 Now, the Educational Impact Statements
13 mention a conversation with internal
14 stakeholders, but nowhere in those statements
15 are those stakeholders identified, nor is the
16 content of their conversation described.

17 [applause]

18 But furthermore, it seems that it was these
19 conversations that led to the decision to
20 propose this closure for these four schools that
21 did not meet the Department's own criteria for
22 such an action. Now, for Columbus High School,
23 the School for Community Research and Learning,
24 Frederick Douglass Academy III, and Global
25 Enterprise High School, we want to identify at

1 each of those schools, who were the internal
2 stakeholders referred in the Educational Impact
3 Statement?

4 [cheers and applause]

5 We want to know what they discussed and how
6 they came to recommendation for closure.

7 [applause] This, this is very critical
8 information for all to have, to have since the
9 Department's own criteria for these schools
10 should not be facing closure.

11 And to try to conclude this quickly, um, in
12 addition, there are many incidences about the
13 schools slated for closure that seems to be
14 that, there seems to be a disconnect between the
15 quality views of some of these schools and
16 which, versus the recommendation for closure.

17 Now, the example with Frederick Douglass - -
18 . Frederick Douglass Academy III. In 2006 to
19 2007, the school scored a Proficient rating on
20 its Quality Review. Okay. And in 2007 to 2008,
21 the school scored a Well-Developed grading on
22 its quality. [applause] And for 2008 to 2008,
23 the school scored a Proficient rating on its
24 Quality Review.

25 Now, our question is that if the school's

1 all in all Quality Review ratings do not
2 coincide with the recommendation for closure,
3 one must ask: Is, is it that the Quality Review
4 process itself flawed? Or is it the process for
5 the recommendation on school closures flawed?

6 I thank you so much for this opportunity to
7 be able to speak to you today. And I really
8 look forward to the Department's response to the
9 concerns raised prior to my vote on the 26th.

10 [applause]

11 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you for your
12 feedback. Next one.

13 MS. AMANDA HUMILOUS: Hello. My name is
14 Amanda Humilous [phonetic], and I am a teacher
15 at Frederick Douglass Academy III. This is my
16 fourth year teaching at the school.

17 As we've heard the school has been evaluated
18 by the DOE, using a progress report. And in
19 2007-2008, we received an overall score of a D.
20 But in the '08-'09 school year, we received an
21 overall score of a C. Our scores for School
22 Environment, Student Performance, and Student
23 Progress all improved, with the Student
24 Progress, our lowest category, jumping 210%.

25 [applause]

1 The Educational Impact Statement states:
2 "While the overall scores on the DOE's
3 accountability tools do not meet standard
4 criteria for closure, FDA III has shown a lack
5 of capacity to improve student performance in
6 significant and consistent ways." How are you
7 judging our capacity for improvement if you're
8 not - - accountability tools? If the tools you
9 are using say you do not meet criteria for
10 closure, how exactly are you evaluating us? If
11 your tools you are using are not enough, then
12 why - - for evaluating schools developed or
13 used?

14 If I gave a student a task with the - -
15 explaining the requirement and expectations and
16 this student met the requirements and passed, I
17 think it would be really unfair and wrong to
18 turn around and say, Well, I also evaluated you
19 using a different method and so you are going to
20 fail.

21 [cheers and applause]

22 We are here to support and educate our
23 children. I don't think that shutting down an
24 effective school where younger siblings, family
25 members, and neighbors had hoped to attend is

1 the right way to go. Community support and
2 experienced teaching make a school an effective
3 place to learn. Why cause instability when you
4 don't have to? I thought we were all here to
5 provide safe, effective communities for
6 learning. Providing support and resources to a
7 school that is establishing good practices and
8 improving along the way would be a more
9 practical and effective way of meeting our goal
10 than closing us down. Thank you.

11 [cheers and applause]

12 SUPERINTENDENT: Have all the speakers--have
13 all the numbers come up? I think - - . Your
14 number, please.

15 FEMALE VOICE: 23.

16 SUPERINTENDENT: 23. Ms. Perez, could you
17 go ahead?

18 MS. SUSAN PEREZ: I'd like to... Susan
19 Perez. I'd like to slate my time over to Jason
20 Lowe.

21 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you.

22 [applause]

23 MR. LOWE: At the end of this hearing, what
24 we would like to do is put forth a resolution
25 for the panel to vote on. This is a resolution

1 to oppose the closing of Frederick Douglass
2 Academy III Middle School.

3 States: Whereas FDA III is a great South
4 Bronx middle school loved by its community and
5 committed to giving a first-class education to
6 its students,

7 Whereas a great expense of time and money
8 the DOE has created in progress reports and
9 quality reviews that have also created a
10 standard face on those accountability tools in
11 order to discern why, which schools might be
12 candidates for closing,

13 Whereas DOE's created standards, standard
14 says that schools that may be considered for
15 closing are those that "receive an overall grade
16 of D or F on the progress report, and a school
17 of Below Proficient on the Quality Review,"

18 Whereas the DOE asserts in its Educational
19 Impact Statement FDA scores do not meet the
20 standard criteria for closing since FDA III
21 received a C on its most recent progress report
22 and it's been rated - - Proficient or Well-
23 Developed on each of its Quality Reviews,

24 Whereas DOE has no power under its own
25 guidelines to close this school, and yet it's

1 determined nonetheless to assert its power,
2 and is therefore determined to close the school
3 anyway by creating an arbitrary standard
4 especially designed for this school, and

5 Whereas DOE claims that it has conducted an
6 assessment quote unquote of the school in
7 determining that it should close, and yet the
8 school community is unaware of any such
9 assessment, and in any case, a secret assessment
10 should not override the findings of in-depth
11 two-day Quality Reviews in which three different
12 reviewers in three different years found the
13 school to be Proficient in its performance,

14 Whereas DOE also names the school's - -
15 progress a sub-grade of the progress reports as
16 its reason for closing the school, which is an
17 abuse of power, and which is like saying that
18 students ought to be expelled if they fail one
19 subject,

20 Whereas those schools should absolutely not
21 be closed based on the sub-grade, and point out
22 that an analysis of F on the progress report
23 strongly suggests that our F resulted from a DOE
24 miscalculation in progress weights and it gives
25 schools for Special Education, that it gives

1 schools for Special Education, so that between
2 broken tests and poor formulas, FDA III was
3 disadvantaged,

4 Whereas for these reasons, that it is
5 unconscionable and hardly credible that the
6 data-driven DOE should attempt to shut an entire
7 school based on a single data point, which may
8 very well likely be flawed, and

9 Whereas FDA III has worked hard to create a
10 middle school culture of respect and high
11 expectations, which is the foundation for
12 academic success in middle school,

13 Whereas FDA III's success in creating a
14 great school culture is reflected in the DOE's
15 Learning Environment Survey on which parents and
16 students give the school high marks above the
17 city average in all areas,

18 Whereas student service, in particular,
19 reflect the school that values respect for self
20 and others and that students gave the school
21 high scores for being drug-free, gang-free, and
22 cultivating a culture of mutual respect, and

23 Whereas the school community of FDA III, the
24 students, their families, and staff have been
25 outspoken in their opposition to its closure,

1 Be it resolved that this Community
2 Education Council District Leadership Team and
3 School Leadership Team opposes the closure of
4 FDA III Middle School, and calls upon the New
5 York City Department of Education and Chancellor
6 Joel Klein to retract their plans for closure
7 and provide the proposed schools with the
8 necessary resources for academic success.

9 [cheers and applause]

10 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you very much.

11 MR. LOWE: [background noise] I support this
12 resolution.

13 [applause]

14 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you. Next speaker,
15 Number 22. Miss Wallace.

16 MS. VANESSA WALLACE: All right. Good
17 evening, - - , the CEC Chairperson, DOE
18 personnel, parents, and community advocates. My
19 name is Vanessa Wallace, and I'm the Chairperson
20 for the Education Committee at Bronx Community
21 Board III.

22 [applause]

23 And I'm also asking for at least an extra
24 two minutes, and I'll tell you why. The DOE
25 proposal for - - at FDA III is - - with unclear

1 and cloudy statements. The language is
2 ambiguous and contradicts the very policies DOE
3 established to ensure accountability for all
4 schools. The DOE notice established on December
5 3rd offered Kim Wong to be knowledgeable and
6 from whom information could be obtained. Mr.
7 Wong is not responding to my email inquiry
8 regarding questions that include: What support
9 and what supervision was provided by the
10 Superintendent for fiscal year '07-'08?
11 Describe the tracking system and measurement
12 tools utilized to capture student progress.
13 What interventions or trainings were put in
14 place by the network - - ? How many SOT
15 meetings - - the network attend as per A,
16 Chancellor's regulation A655?

17 [applause]

18 According to those regulations, replications
19 are supposed to appear with the School
20 Leadership Team at least once a year. Now, I
21 went to the last School Leadership Team meeting
22 and I inquired. And I was told by Mr. Lowe and
23 the rest of the team that replications has never
24 come to the school. This is an atrocity.

25 [cheers and applause]

1 What high school do middle school
2 graduates attend? I was told as an officer - -
3 meeting that, um, that only 30% of FDA graduates
4 move to the high school. I was told by the
5 School Leadership Team that it's 80% of the
6 graduates. So which figure is correct? Where
7 is DOE getting their information from?

8 Um, how can a middle school be measured by
9 the Quality Review, the Progress Note, the
10 Learning Environment Survey without - - middle
11 school supervision and representation. Ms. - -
12 , with all due respect, you came to the school,
13 and you are representative of the high school.
14 Where was the middle school component included
15 in this process? I mean, that's a question I
16 know that you can't respond to now. But I've
17 been waiting for Mr. Wong to respond. And I, I
18 had a chance to speak to him today, and he just
19 avoided the issue. He told me that - -
20 Portfolio Planning would be here tonight to
21 answer questions. And I had to tell him this is
22 not a question and answer period. So if we're
23 reaching out and we're following protocol, why
24 isn't DOE following - - protocol?

25 [cheers and applause]

1 Also, my question included what is the
2 role of OPA and the CEC in this process? I was
3 informed, and I told the meeting of the Office
4 of Public Affairs that the CEC would have a vote
5 on this. Is this something that's going to
6 happen in the next school year? Or is this
7 something that's supposed to happen now? If it
8 is, we want the CEC to vote no.

9 [cheers and applause]

10 [audience chanting "No"]

11 My last question to Mr. Wong was that I - -
12 a nice memo to Bronx elected officials and
13 community leaders - - I remember Rebecca Mill
14 [phonetic] and Andrew Ruiz mentioned only - -
15 new school needs and rezoning. The community
16 had no clue to possible phase-outs. Please
17 clarify.

18 So I guess I'm looking for, to hear a
19 response from Mr. Wong. And knowing that there
20 are people here from OFIA [phonetic] and people
21 from the Office of...

22 SUPERINTENDENT: Portfolio Development

23 MS. WALLACE: ...Portfolio Development and
24 OPA that we need to have answers. Now, with
25 that said, let me get back to my notes.

1 SUPERINTENDENT: You've got 30 seconds.

2 MS. WALLACE: No, I need extra time, because
3 I didn't get any answers to my questions and
4 it's very unfair. Um...

5 [cheers and applause]

6 MS. WALLACE: Okay. The DOE [background
7 noise] statement states the proposal to
8 eliminate the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade
9 specifically because of the progress note. - -
10 2007-2008, 2008 to 2009 was a grade F. However,
11 DOE failed to provide measurement tools accurate
12 to reflect FDA III Science Academics. There is
13 no 8th grade science data to - - because DOE
14 opted out the 8th grade exams so students can
15 take the 9th grade exam to boost the high
16 school's scores.

17 [cheers and applause]

18 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you.

19 MS. WALLACE: FDA is making progress.
20 Student Performance is up. School Environment
21 is up from 7.7 to 9.4%. Additionally, thank
22 you, Anna. The Bronx Borough President has sent
23 written communication to the Chairperson for
24 Education Policy. And I just wanted to read
25 something that Anna didn't have time to read.

1 And it states about FDA III. And this is
2 from the, um, the Quality Review. This is a
3 quote from your Quality Review. "The school
4 makes clear its high expectations for all
5 students to do well and - - to college. Even
6 though many of them enter the school performing
7 below their - - grade level. These high
8 expectations are embodied in the way the
9 students are referred to as scholars and it's a
10 feature of a culture where young people show a
11 high level of commitment to their studies."

12 I'm almost done.

13 SUPERINTENDENT: Ms. Wallace, we need to - -
14 .

15 MS. WALLACE: But my point is to you we
16 don't have but 22 people on the agenda so why we
17 can't we say what we need to say? Why? Just
18 tell us why.

19 [applause]

20 We started this at 6:00. If you let me
21 finish, we can all get out of here. With that
22 said, let's look at the school structure the DOE
23 has encouraged. The school has a 6th through
24 12th grade, but no assistant principal. There's
25 no assistant principal in the school.

1 Replications has failed their obligations
2 under - - . The DOE has not implemented a plan
3 to ensure student progress. FDA houses the Sill
4 Grow Program. And it's the only middle school
5 in the Bronx with this program.

6 Finally, truncation of the 6th through the
7 8th grade will not benefit this community.

8 Please give us two years to combat the
9 challenges that face our brightest students.

10 [cheers and applause]

11 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you. Thank you, Ms.
12 Wallace. I think that certainly--I want to say
13 thank you for all, all of the community that
14 have turned out tonight for this hearing. It is
15 our opportunity to hear this feedback, and
16 certainly to share this with the Department.

17 The speaker list is now exhausted.

18 MALE VOICE 1: Excuse me.

19 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you again for your--

20 MALE VOICE 1: [interposing] Excuse me.

21 SUPERINTENDENT: --participation. You're
22 not on the list, sorry. Uh, thank you for...

23 MALE VOICE 1: [background noise]

24 University. I mean, - - .

25 [crosstalk]

1 MALE VOICE 1: All right. Well first, I'd
2 like to be the first graduating class of Howard
3 University. I entered, I entered FDA in 6th
4 grade. I was the first beginning class. I'm a
5 pioneer at FDA III. [background noise] the 6th
6 grade. When FDA first opened, you had to take a
7 standardized test--everybody had to take, uh,
8 English and a math standardized test to come
9 into this school. And you had to get - - to get
10 in. So past the 8th grade, all of our classes
11 and all of our students was advanced. - - we
12 had to take a specialized test to get in here.
13 I came all the way from Howard University as FDA
14 was graduating students at a good rate. And I
15 got a perfect score on my Math SAT.

16 [cheers and applause]

17 I graduated FDA with the highest SAT score,
18 1700, which is very high for most students in
19 New York. I graduated with honors. Um, all my
20 Regents [phonetics] have graduated, I mean, I
21 graduated with all my Regents grades 75 and
22 above. I never failed any of my Regents tests.
23 All our teachers supported us. We have a very,
24 very, very, very, very good staff. The teaching
25 community is wonderful here. Ain't anyone more

1 supportive in this building. You can march in
2 there anytime about any problem--6:00, 7:00,
3 they're still here in their rooms, in their
4 rooms, talking to us, the students, about our
5 personal lives and things that go on.

6 And a lot of times I, I'm pretty sure most
7 of you probably - - this community or these
8 streets and to grow is something else. I mean,
9 they - - I say it to myself that I am the road
10 they - - from concrete and that nobody's going
11 to stop me. But [background noise]

12 [applause]

13 This school is something you can believe in
14 because all, every student in here is a road
15 that - - from concrete. One of my, one of my
16 fellow scholars--she's actually doing, she's
17 actually in nursing right now. She's taking,
18 um, - - . - - school. One of my brothers, he
19 goes to Moorehouse [phonetic] University. We
20 got top-notch students doing top-notch things
21 with higher grades and higher class than most
22 people in this city.

23 FEMALE VOICE 1: Thank you.

24 SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you very much for
25 your input and congratulations.

1 [cheers and applause]

2 SUPERINTENDENT: [background noise] is now
3 closed. Thank you very much for your
4 participation tonight.

5 [END 154_439]

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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 Melissa Strickland

Date January 8, 2010_____