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**NEW YORK CITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION -
OFFICE OF PORTFOLIO PLANNING
W.H. Maxwell CTE HS
January 12, 2010**

1 [START MZ000001]

2 [background conversations]

3 MR. JOHN WHITE: If I could have, uh, if I
4 could have your attention, please. If I could
5 also ask that, uh, those translators who are
6 providing translation services, if you could
7 please come to the microphone and introduce
8 yourselves and so the people can identify
9 themselves.

10 MALE VOICE 1: [foreign language]

11 MALE VOICE 2: [foreign language]

12 [background conversations]

13 MR. WHITE: Good evening. Our hearing is,
14 uh, now going to begin now. The translators
15 have introduced themselves. Thank you for
16 coming tonight to the joint public hearing on
17 the proposed phase-out and replacement of W.H.
18 Maxwell Career and Technical Education High
19 School.

20 I'm John White, Deputy Chancellor. We have
21 asked the City-Wide Council on High Schools, the
22 District 19 Community Education Council, and the
23 Maxwell School Leadership Team to participate in
24 this joint public hearing. I am joined tonight
25 by my, on my left, by Valerie Armstrong Barrows

1 of the City-Wide Council on High School, and by
2 Cober Chowdri [phonetic] of the District 19
3 Community Education Council. I will be joined
4 by Audrey Jackson--where is Ms. Jackson?--of the
5 School Leadership Team at Maxwell.

6 [cheers and applause]

7 And immediately to my right is Brooklyn High
8 School Superintendent, Ainseil Cumberbatch.

9 This event is being recorded. I'm going to go
10 through, uh, the procedures for this evening. I
11 want to ask you to pay close attention as it
12 will impact this evening's events significantly.

13 Following the hearing, a transcript of the
14 proceedings will be sent to all, to members of
15 all of the councils that are represented on the
16 podium this evening. And they will also be made
17 available on the Department of Education's
18 website.

19 The purpose of this evening's hearing is for
20 the public to provide comments about the
21 proposal. Before I describe the proposal, I
22 want to make sure that you're aware of the
23 opportunity for you to provide input. All those
24 who wish to speak this evening must sign up on
25 the list that is posted outside of the

1 auditorium by 6, 6:15 p.m. We will hear a
2 comment from all speakers, uh, this evening.

3 Speakers will be given the floor in the
4 order, uh, in which they have signed up. We
5 will call them, uh, odd numbers will be called
6 to my right. Even numbers will be called to my
7 left, the right side of the auditorium. And we
8 will call multiple speakers at one time so that
9 we can proceed with this evening's speakers
10 quickly.

11 Each speaker will be given two minutes.
12 After one minute and thirty seconds of speaking,
13 you will see a sign that says that you have
14 thirty seconds remaining. At the conclusion of
15 two minutes, you will see a sign that says
16 time's up. As we do have many speakers this
17 evening, as we have parents, teachers, students,
18 and others in the room, we would ask that you
19 wrap your comments up at two minutes so that we
20 can proceed with this evening and make sure that
21 everyone is heard.

22 Now I'm going to describe the proposal in
23 brief. And then I'm going to ask our School
24 Leadership Team, the City-Wide Council on High
25 Schools, and our Community Education Council to

1 give brief comments or presentations. We then
2 will be hearing comments from elected officials
3 and their representatives. And will then be
4 commencing the public comment portion of this
5 evening's meeting.

6 This is a proposal to - - to transform an
7 institution from one that is not graduating a
8 majority of its students to one that is. In
9 2000, uh, 2008 school, excuse me, 2007 to 2008
10 school year, the four-year graduation rate at
11 Maxwell was 43%. Last year, the rate was also
12 43%. If only Regents diplomas counted toward
13 graduation, Maxwell would have a graduation rate
14 of roughly 20%.

15 The school regrettably earned an F on its
16 2006 and report card. In 2007-2008, that was a
17 D grade. And the most recent year, the school
18 received a grade of D.

19 There are some indicators that would show
20 that these struggles exist in other areas. Last
21 year's attendance was 72%, which is among the
22 lowest in the city. And only 62% of students
23 indicated on our Learning Environment Survey
24 that they feel safe in the school. Enrollment
25 has dropped to 1,000 students from 1,600.

1 Our proposal to transform the school would
2 start by Maxwell not taking a 9th grade next
3 year. There would be a 10th grade here; there
4 would be 11th grade; there would be 12th grade
5 here. But Maxwell would not take a 9th grade.
6 Instead, it would be replaced over time,
7 initially by one school and then by two schools
8 that would take a 9th grade. And over time,
9 those schools would grow.

10 This is not a proposal to close the school
11 building. It is not a proposal to remove
12 students from this school building and send them
13 elsewhere. It is a proposal to reorganize the
14 way that this school building is being used.
15 And we are here this evening, on the panel, to
16 consult with you about that proposal.

17 I want to be clear that there is not one
18 person, there is not one group of people who is
19 responsible for some of the situations I've
20 described. But it's important that when we know
21 that we can change things for the better, that
22 we know we can give students the best
23 opportunity for long-term success in life, that
24 we do make a change.

25 We know there are a lot of people, and

1 Principal Bedette [phonetic] and his team are
2 among them, who are working incredibly hard for
3 the students here in Maxwell. But we can't
4 expect to do the same thing year after year, and
5 get a different result.

6 I'm going to wrap up my comments by saying
7 three things I hope you will pay close attention
8 to about the impact of this proposal if it does
9 go through to fruition.

10 One, all students currently enrolled at
11 Maxwell will have the opportunity to graduate
12 from Maxwell High School.

13 [applause]

14 Two, any new Department of Education school
15 that is ultimately in this facility is required
16 to hire at least 50% of the qualified staff for
17 that school.

18 And three, any school in this building, like
19 Maxwell, will serve English Language Learners,
20 children with Special Education needs, and we
21 will try to focus on students that are over age
22 and are under their credit - - .

23 This proposal will be voted on January 26th,
24 2010, by the Panel on Educational Policy. None
25 of the members on this panel this evening are

1 members of the Panel on Educational Policy.
2 But all of the comment received this evening
3 will be submitted to the Panel on Educational
4 Policy for their consideration.

5 We look forward to hearing your comments and
6 questions. I would now ask that, uh, my
7 colleagues from the councils represented,
8 starting with Ms. Jackson from the Maxwell
9 School Leadership Team, give their presentations
10 this evening.

11 [applause]

12 MS. AUDREY JACKSON: Good afternoon. Good
13 evening, ladies and gentlemen. Uh, again, my
14 name is Audrey Jackson, and I am the Chairperson
15 for the School Leadership Team, and I am the
16 Coordinator of Student Affairs here at Maxwell.

17 The responsibilities of the School
18 Leadership Team are to develop and review the
19 school's comprehensive educational plan,
20 including annual goals and objectives, and to
21 consult with the principal in developing a
22 school-based budget and staffing plan aligned
23 with the CEP. The School Leadership Team is not
24 responsible for hiring or firing school staff.

25 As, uh, the COSA, Coordinator of Student

1 Affairs, I am the liaison between the students
2 and administration, and then again the liaison
3 between the building and the community. Uh,
4 what I would like to read to us now is a
5 resolution to oppose the closure of William H.
6 Maxwell CTE High School.

7 Whereas William H. Maxwell CTE High School
8 has served the East New York community since
9 1951 preparing generations of students for
10 citizenship in our democratic society, providing
11 students with an education in career-oriented
12 fields, and teaching the skills which are
13 necessary for being successful within today's
14 work force, and

15 Whereas the New York City Department of
16 Education has announced its proposed plans to
17 close William H. Maxwell CTE High School
18 beginning September of 2010, and

19 Whereas the Department of Education has a
20 moral and legal obligation to assist schools in
21 need of academic improvement to raise their
22 education performance and not close schools
23 which have been essential for the community, and

24 Whereas at the great expense of time and
25 money, the Department of Education has created

1 progress reports, quality reviews, and
2 standards based on those accountability tools in
3 order to determine which schools are candidates
4 for closing, and

5 Whereas the DOE has changed the standards
6 for evaluating schools for the entire
7 educational system after the progress reports
8 and quality reviews had been completed, and

9 Whereas even though William H. Maxwell CTE
10 High School graduation rate has risen
11 substantially, it has not met DOE's undisclosed
12 graduation rate, which is the only criterion
13 used for closing the school, and

14 Whereas the DOE has not taken into
15 consideration the academic level of Maxwell
16 students, and according to the New York State
17 Department of Education, a five-year graduation
18 rate is an acceptable criterion for evaluating a
19 school's academics progress, and

20 Whereas in announcing the proposed plan to
21 close William H. Maxwell CTE High School, the
22 New York City Department of Education has
23 ignored its own standards for closure, and

24 Whereas William H. Maxwell CTE High School
25 has shown progress in several areas of annual

1 progress reports. School Environment,
2 mentioned before, went from 3.7 in '06-'07 to
3 6.3 in '08-'09, a 70.2% improvement. School
4 Performance went from 5.2 in '06-'07 to 8.3 in
5 '08-'09, a 59.6% improvement. School Progress
6 went from 13.8 in '06-'07 to 28.1 in '08-'09, a
7 103.6% improvement. Overall Progress went from
8 22.8 in '06-'07 to 42.7 in '08-'09, an 87.3%
9 improvement, and

10 Whereas Maxwell has a student population of
11 22% Special Education students and 5% ELL
12 students, and out of 975 students, 613 of them
13 perform in the lowest third of all New York City
14 schools, U.S.A. students, excuse me, and

15 Whereas William H. Maxwell CTE High School
16 four-year - - to diploma wait, rate went from a
17 45% in '07 to 72% in '09,

18 Whereas Maxwell's academic scholarship
19 progress has improved substantially, where
20 English has increased from 42% to 58%, Math from
21 45% to 67%, Social Studies from 36% to 57%,
22 Science from 29% to 45%, and Foreign Language
23 from 45% to 72%, and

24 Whereas Maxwell's Regents exam scores have
25 steadily increased over four years. Our ELA

1 scores have risen from 48% to 81%, which is a
2 59% increase. In Living Environment, our scores
3 have risen from 81% to 88%, a 9% increase. And
4 in Physics, our scores have risen from 37% to
5 100%, which is a 63% increase, and

6 Whereas for the last three years, based on
7 three separate independent reviewers who have
8 conducted an intensive two-day review, rated
9 William H. Maxwell CTE High School proficient,
10 and

11 Whereas from the DOE's own progress report,
12 Maxwell has shown an overall progress report
13 rating increase from 22.8% to 42.7%, which
14 equates to an 87.2% improvement in two years,
15 and

16 Whereas the New York City Department of
17 Education has slated William H., excuse me, H.
18 Maxwell CTE High School for closure despite the
19 fact that it has awarded its school-wide bonuses
20 for academic achievement two years in a row, and

21 Whereas the entire community of East New
22 York, as well as the school community of William
23 H. Maxwell CTE High School, students, their
24 families, graduates, and the staff have been
25 outspoken in their opposition to its closure,

1 Be it therefore resolved that the East New
2 York community, including the School Leadership
3 Team, oppose the closure of William H. Maxwell
4 CTE High School, and calls upon the New York
5 City Department of Education, Chancellor Joel
6 Klein, and the Mayor Michael Bloomberg to
7 retract the plans for closing New York City
8 schools and provide them with the necessary
9 resources for academic success.

10 [cheers and applause]

11 MALE VOICE 3: I'd like to second that
12 resolution for Maxwell to stay open.

13 [cheers and applause]

14 FEMALE VOICE: [background noise]

15 MALE VOICE 3: Can we take a vote, at least
16 vote?

17 MR. WHITE: Thank you, Ms. Jackson. Uh, I
18 would now pass to, uh, my colleague on the City-
19 Wide Council on High Schools, Valerie Armstrong
20 Barrows.

21 MS. VALERIE ARMSTRONG BARROWS: Good
22 evening. My name is Valerie Armstrong Barrows,
23 and I'm the President of City-Wide Council on
24 High Schools. I'm also the Brooklyn
25 Representative for the high schools. I'm an

1 elected Parent Official voted on by the
2 President, Vice President, and Treasurers of all
3 the high schools in Brooklyn.

4 Our Council would like to rise in opposition
5 to the closing of Maxwell High School.

6 [cheers and applause]

7 CCHS was not consulted in opposing these,
8 the proposed close-out, phase-outs. And as our
9 Council has been ordered to participate in the
10 closings, we are very concerned about the fact
11 that we have 14 high schools throughout the city
12 being proposed to close.

13 We are also upset, predominantly speaking,
14 that these high schools in the proposed phase-
15 out are in minority neighborhoods.

16 [cheers and applause]

17 We are also very concerned to find out what
18 steps had been taken as we hear the reports of
19 these proposals. We want to know what steps
20 have been taken at each of the high schools
21 beforehand. Because they list statistics for
22 three years in a row, however, I want to know
23 what has happened in each of these high schools
24 in Year 1 that there was a problem, in Year 2
25 that there was a problem, in Year 3 there was a

1 problem. What has been offered to the schools
2 to, to deal with those problems that the schools
3 have had?

4 We know there have been budget cuts across
5 the city. Predominantly speaking, our minority
6 high schools have suffered greatly from those
7 budget cuts. We know that teachers have been
8 lost. We know that programs have been lost. In
9 using the numbers of students who have been
10 enrolled in as a determining factor as to
11 determine whether or not the school should
12 close, we want to also pay attention to the fact
13 that DOE makes the decision as to how many
14 students are sent to each school.

15 Additionally, we want to know if we have
16 schools where we have a large percentage of
17 students coming in, reading on a 1 and 2 reading
18 level, where we have a high percentage of the
19 Special Ed students, where we have a high
20 percentage of students who have English as a
21 Second Language. We believe that different list
22 of standards should be used to determine how
23 they should arrive at it.

24 [cheers and applause]

25 We know that it's impossible to graduate all

1 of these students in four years. Because
2 we've, - - failed the middle schools have failed
3 to put them prepared adequately for high school.
4 The high school is then left to try and
5 adequately prepare them for college and careers
6 after that. It can't always been done in four
7 years. That alone should not be a determining
8 factor for closing the schools.

9 [cheers and applause]

10 We would ask that you become very vocal and
11 start out at the grass roots movement, and by
12 combining with all the other schools around the
13 city where these proposals are being put, and
14 meet beforehand so that you can plan the
15 strategy as how you would address the PEP vote.
16 As you know, the Mayor has seven people on that
17 panel. You have to make it very obvious to
18 everyone, to the media, to the community, to
19 everyone that you can speak to, the politicians,
20 everyone. So that when your school's closed,
21 they hear your voice and know that there's
22 something else behind it. CCHS supports you.

23 [cheers and applause]

24 MR. WHITE: Thank you very much. Community
25 Education Council 19 Representative Kober

1 Chowdri.

2 MR. COBER CHOWDRI: Good evening, everyone.
3 My name is, uh, Cober Chowdri. I represent, uh,
4 Community Education Council District 19.

5 I wasn't supposed to be here because I was
6 told, uh, initially, that this is not, um, our
7 jurisdiction. But I'm here, and I was going to
8 be here anyway. Because we in District 19, and
9 even though - - school and anywhere we leave and
10 send our kids, uh, to, to, uh, make better out
11 of their lives.

12 I believe none of the schools should be
13 closed because before you close a school, you
14 must have done a tons of wrong things. You may
15 have not allocated the, the proper funds, but it
16 did not get the attention it deserved. So I
17 believe before we have come to a conclusion
18 without, uh, informing the community, informing
19 the, the, the student and faculty of the
20 building, and bring it to that stage, we should
21 have been more informed.

22 And I'm going to share a little story of my
23 experience when I went to a school construction
24 meeting in, in the city. We were told that, I
25 was there, I was there representative of

1 District 19. And in, in between the question
2 we were told if, if there was a school
3 construction problem for a specific school in
4 Brooklyn, that - - an individual school, it's
5 the, the borough is what they look at.

6 So at school, a particular school, and it
7 could have been the Maxwell, which had had an
8 issue with, with specific, uh, area that was not
9 looked at specifically that could have led to
10 their plan where it is today. So in my opinion,
11 why the, why the District 19? Why, why are we
12 the, the target of, of all the, the, the worst
13 possible thing that happens to any schools?
14 Without extending anything else, I'd just like
15 to say that let's give them a good fight. Let's
16 make sure we're not, we are presented properly.
17 And make sure we are given the rights that we
18 deserve for the District 19. Thank you very
19 much.

20 [cheers and applause]

21 MR. WHITE: Thank you. I want to call
22 elected officials and then representatives of
23 elected officials. The first, uh, elected
24 official is Council Member Charles Barron.

25 [cheers and applause]

1 MR. CHARLES BARRON: Uh, first let me say
2 that I'm glad that we are all out. And one of
3 the things that I've noticed right away--and
4 this is what we must fight before I make my
5 official comments--it's about control. See how
6 Mr. White started off the meeting, You'll speak
7 for two minutes. Then the 30-second sign will
8 come up. And you'll be silent after that.

9 [laughter]

10 Let me tell you something, Mr. White. I
11 don't care if they put a 30-second or 50-second,
12 I'm going to speak as long as I feel like
13 speaking [background noise].

14 [cheers and applause]

15 And I don't care if I'm on the odd side or
16 the even side.

17 [laughter]

18 It's all about control. And that's what I'm
19 here to say. This hearing is just something so
20 Mr. White is going to hear what you have to say
21 and going to do what he wants to do any way.
22 But just for the record, because legally you
23 have to have a hearing before this stuff
24 happens, so he's going to have us come. We're
25 going to shout at him, scream at him, tell him

1 he's out of his mind, not in our backyard, it
2 ain't going to happen. He's going to go to this
3 bogus board that's already pre-planned to do
4 what the Mayor has told them to do. And they're
5 going to try and go ahead with their plan.

6 We have to get more militant. We have to
7 make sure business can't go on as usual when
8 they do this to us. Look at the panel up there.
9 These two sisters and my brother, they were
10 brilliant. Give them a big hand clap. And they
11 [background noise].

12 [cheers and applause]

13 And I don't know where Mr. White gets his
14 Bernie Madoff math from, but the statistics are
15 totally different. You've been making progress.
16 You are not a failure. You've been a success.
17 Your teachers, only 50% of them will be around
18 maybe. If these other schools come in... Are
19 there charter schools coming in? Are there
20 charter schools coming in? Let me tell you
21 what's going on. This is Bloomberg and his
22 colleagues using the public school system and
23 its money to incrementally privatize public
24 education and...

25 [cheers and applause]

1 ...they want to call them public charter
2 schools. Yet when you look at the opportunity
3 and look at the progress, look at what our
4 graduation--that's why he said four years
5 instead of five years. 'Cause your number would
6 have been higher.

7 So - - gave the statistics, but we're not
8 here to play. This is our lifeline. Education
9 is our lifeline. So you have the support of
10 this City Council member and you also have the
11 support of the Assemblywoman whose
12 representative is here, Mr. Faulkner [phonetic],
13 my wife, Assemblyman [background noise]...

14 [applause]

15 ...but you would think School Leadership
16 Team said no. The Council said no. District 19
17 said no. The Council member said no. The
18 Assembly member says no. Educators. My wife
19 has been an educator for 36 years. She knows,
20 she was a principal, assistant to a
21 superintendent. She knows what's going on. She
22 says no. All of us are saying no, but Mr. White
23 comes. Thus saith Mr. White. Mr. White, Mr.
24 Very White.

25 [laughter]

1 Thus saith Mr. White. And now we have to
2 phase out our schools. And it's just a phase-
3 out. And by the way, they're not shutting it
4 down. They're phasing it out. And you know
5 something else wonderful? You'll be able to
6 graduate. You know, they did the same thing to
7 Thomas Jefferson.

8 The bottom line, you know what makes schools
9 work? Smaller class sizes.

10 [cheers and applause]

11 You know what makes schools work? When all
12 the schools have enough modern equipment in a
13 science lab. You know what makes a school work?
14 When they have libraries that have state-of-the-
15 art equipment and books in it. You know what
16 makes schools work? When you have a relevant
17 cultural curriculum that's made up by the
18 teachers, and the principal, and the parents of
19 that community that's relevant to the students
20 that are in that community. You know what
21 schools work? When you have teachers that get
22 paid enough. Where there are teachers that want
23 to teach, that are committed to you, quality
24 teachers. You know what makes schools work?
25 When the - - Board sees that you need something,

1 and they don't sit there, and watch you for
2 three years, and not give you that support of
3 service. You know what makes schools work?
4 Afterschool programs.

5 [cheers and applause]

6 That makes schools work. You know what
7 makes schools work? Having more
8 paraprofessionals in the classroom to help the
9 teachers with their teaching. Those are the
10 things that make schools work. There's nothing
11 magic in the word charter. There's nothing
12 magic in the word private. And there's nothing
13 magic in the word public. It's those
14 ingredients that makes a school work.

15 So what are you going to do in those four
16 schools that you can't do in Maxwell now? What
17 are you going to do in those schools? But
18 they're saying this is a better opportunity.
19 This is going to make education better. Then
20 what is it that they're going to do in these
21 schools that they can't do right here in Maxwell
22 with the caring teachers we have, with the
23 caring students we have, with the caring parents
24 we have, and with the caring elected officials
25 we have? If you can do it in all four schools,

1 then do it at Maxwell.

2 [cheers and applause]

3 But don't shut it down.

4 Finally, finally, we should, we should act
5 up in here. Let's make them call the cops.

6 [laughter]

7 You know, what they're doing in, you can't
8 let them sit up there all nice and telling you
9 what to do. Anyway, I've got to go so don't act
10 up when I leave. Only act up when I'm here. I
11 want to get in trouble with you.

12 But we should join the city-wide rally.
13 We've got to let the Mayor know, You make us
14 uncomfortable in our home, we're coming to your
15 home, Mayor. So make sure that you all attend
16 the city-wide rally Thursday, January 21st, from
17 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. We'll be in front of
18 Bloomberg's home on 17 East 79th Street. Make
19 sure you all get a flyer.

20 I'm going to be there myself, even though I
21 can talk to the Mayor any time I want inside
22 City Hall. I'm going to be outside his home.
23 And if he gets on my last nerve, I'm going
24 inside the home to look for the Mayor. And I'm
25 going to make a citizen's arrest for him

1 damaging us education wise.

2 On a very serious note, we've got to fight
3 this. We've got to fight this, and not just the
4 traditional ways that you fight when you go to
5 the public hearing. This is infamy. We've got
6 to have our meetings. We've got to bring it
7 down to the Tweed Building. You know there are
8 thousands of us in this city. 'Cause it's
9 happening all across the city. And we shouldn't
10 wait till it visits [phonetic] another school.
11 But if we say that this city is not going to
12 function as long as you're not treating us
13 right, if we go down to the Tweed Building with
14 a thousand or two and do it regularly because
15 all these good recommendations that you're going
16 to give to Mr. White tonight is going to mean
17 absolutely nothing because they plan on shutting
18 this down. This is just for the records.

19 But, hopefully, we can send a strong message
20 that we're not the people that you can keep
21 messing with. There's a \$22 billion school
22 budget. \$22 billion. Some states don't have
23 that kind of money. Some countries don't have
24 that kind of money. What do you do with \$22
25 billion, and you can't have an educational

1 system that educates all the educable children
2 that goes with? Then you need to be fired. You
3 need to be fired. \$22 billion.

4 So this is about a business man, Bloomberg,
5 who is clueless about education. This is about
6 Joel Klein, who is unqualified, literally
7 unqualified to teach in a classroom,
8 nevertheless, run a \$1.1 million system of 1.1
9 million children and 75% to 85% of them being
10 us, Blacks and Latinos and Asians.

11 So we need to say to New York City--he may
12 have mayoral control, but he ain't controlling
13 us. And we're not going to let him get away
14 with this. So let's keep organizing, because
15 sometimes they think we can't win. They thought
16 Barack Obama was going to lose, and he's the
17 President of the United States of America.
18 Anything can happen. So let's get through this
19 hearing, and give them whatever your
20 recommendations are.

21 As a matter of fact, when we start--your
22 report? That is enough to keep this school
23 open. That was enough to keep this school open.

24 [applause]

25 I don't know [background noise] contracts

1 and statistics. So you all keep fighting.

2 And I'm proud of every student in here, because
3 you are fighting for your education. You're
4 fighting for your life.

5 [cheers and applause]

6 And for that, you already won. God bless
7 you. [background noise]

8 MR. WHITE: Mr. Melvin Faulkner,
9 representing Assemblywoman Inez Burns.

10 MR. MELVIN FAULKNER: My name is Melvin
11 Faulkner, and I do represent Assemblywoman Inez
12 Burns of the 40th Assembly District.

13 We have 141,000 people, believe it or not,
14 in that district. So we're speaking tonight on
15 behalf of 141,000, even though many of them
16 didn't vote for her, she represents you. She's
17 in Albany and fighting there now. But I'm here
18 tonight to fight the battle that she would love
19 to be here to fight.

20 Now, her husband Charles said more than
21 enough. This school will not be closed. There
22 is no reason to pick on Black and Spanish
23 communities [background noise].

24 [applause]

25 I don't [background noise]. I don't bow

1 down to anybody. And when the Mayor said a
2 while back he was going to close senior
3 centers... [sound system feedback] That's
4 strategy on their part.

5 [laughter]

6 When you get too noisy and you start hitting
7 issues below the belt, they don't want you to
8 speak loudly. So project, and - - a microphone
9 - - .

10 [laughter]

11 I didn't say anything.

12 MALE VOICE 4: Give your cell phone, give
13 your cell phone to somebody else. Even if it's
14 turned off.

15 MR. FAULKNER: Cell phone is off.

16 MALE VOICE 4: Yeah. - - .

17 MR. FAULKNER: At any rate, we would like
18 to...

19 [laughter]

20 No cell phone, now. We would like to send a
21 message to the Mayor, to the Chancellor, and to
22 the Chancellors represented here tonight. When
23 you think you've got us and you don't know that
24 you're in a dogfight, look out for us to find
25 our way out.

1 They said they were going to close about
2 six senior centers in our community. We took
3 250 seniors to City Hall, and caught the Mayor
4 coming out from lunch. Said you're not going to
5 close any centers. You know how many centers
6 closed?

7 [applause]

8 Well, now I'm speaking on behalf of the
9 Assembly, the State of New York, the 40th
10 Assembly Division tonight. I want you to know
11 I'm here to represent the homeowners of East New
12 York. Now, the homeowners are voters. I want
13 you to understand one thing people know and the
14 Mayor in particular knows, how voters go.

15 As the trends go, so do their positions.
16 We're not only representing the homeowners,
17 we're representing United Church for Worldwide
18 Action. So we have a powerhouse in the place
19 tonight. And we're not going to allow them to
20 close Maxwell. So send it back to the Mayor,
21 send it back to the Chancellor. It's not going
22 to close.

23 One thing. When we start marching on City
24 Hall, you'll notice that things will suddenly
25 get better for Maxwell and the students there.

1 Students, hang in there. Learn, get your
2 education at Maxwell. Graduate from Maxwell.
3 And go on to college from there. And I assure
4 you one thing.

5 [applause]

6 Maxwell will be [background noise] name in
7 the future as well. Thank you.

8 [cheers and applause]

9 MR. WHITE: Representing, representing
10 Borough President Marty Marco is Carlos
11 [background noise].

12 CARLOS: Good evening, everyone. Uh, the
13 Borough President wished he could be here, but
14 he had another thing, uh, to go to. But let me
15 tell you something very clearly. Everybody
16 knows that nobody loves Brooklyn the way Marty
17 does. And no one is going to fight for this
18 school harder than Marty does. And that's a
19 message that is very clear.

20 One of the things that's going on in the
21 city... And first of all, let me just say one
22 thing. John White is a good man. I know him
23 personally. He is working very hard every day
24 at the Department of Ed. But, John, on this
25 one, we disagree. This school will not close.

1 [cheers and applause]

2 We will do everything in our power to see
3 that this school stays open.

4 I want to, let me just say one thing. East
5 New York, if anyone read The Times and some of
6 the statistics a couple of weeks ago, what is
7 the neighborhood in New York City with the
8 highest unemployment rate in New York City?
9 It's East New York. It's over 27. We have a
10 great school here that can train children to do
11 the jobs that we need in this city. Why are we
12 phasing it out? Why are we closing it? What
13 are we doing here? It makes no sense. Makes no
14 sense.

15 Let me give you a couple of more statistics.
16 First of all, the teachers in this building are
17 great. They want to teach.

18 [cheers and applause]

19 They want to teach. The students want to
20 learn. The parents want to be involved. The
21 administration wants to work hard. The
22 community wants to be a part of this school. It
23 makes no sense.

24 So what are we going to do? We're not going
25 to close it. What we need to do is let's look

1 at the building. Let's integrate it more.

2 Let's see what's working. Let's see what's not
3 working. And we know that Maxwell has already
4 taken steps. Maxwell is working very hard.

5 They require more credits than other high school
6 because of everything that they're learning
7 here. They have majors that include medical
8 careers, cosmetology--

9 [cheers and applause]

10 --fashion, graphic design. Now, now, I know
11 you're probably going to boo me when I say this.
12 But don't. Don't do it. But we have to commend
13 the Mayor and the Chancellor for saying one
14 thing. That education is the number one
15 priority in New York City. And we agree with
16 that. We agree with that.

17 But we don't agree--if education's the
18 number one priority, if we want to be
19 innovative, if we want career and technical
20 schools... And by the way, the Mayor has said
21 it's a priority of his to have these career and
22 technical and innovative schools. Well, you've
23 got one right here in Maxwell. Why would you
24 want to shut it down?

25 [cheers and applause]

1 Why would you want to phase it?

2 The other thing. And this is something very
3 important. The DOP very oftentimes, um, will
4 provide inconsistent and sometimes an erratic
5 process for evaluating current schools. And
6 that's what's happening here. So one school you
7 may close because of the graduation rates. But
8 then another school will have the same
9 graduation rates, but you're not going to close
10 it. Then one school you'll say, Well, it had
11 this issue. But the other school has the same
12 issue, but it's not going to close. Makes no
13 sense.

14 We say, Shelve the process. Give it some
15 time. Look at this school. Look at this
16 community. Look at the children here. Look at
17 what it would mean to phase out this building.

18 We don't want to minimize that there may be
19 some problems. We understand it. But the
20 answer is not to close Maxwell. The answer is:
21 DOE, go back to the drawing board. Look at this
22 building. Re-, redo your way of phasing out and
23 closing. Look at the community. And remember,
24 we need career and technical schools, and you've
25 got one right here in Maxwell.

1 [cheers and applause]

2 And the Borough President is with all of
3 you. We will fight to keep your school open.
4 Thank you.

5 MR. WHITE: Thank you. We want to begin the
6 public comment portion of this evening's, uh,
7 event. I will call up a number, uh, that you
8 were given when you were called to speak.
9 Again, I'm going to call odd numbers on your
10 left side of the auditorium, my right. Even
11 numbers on my left side of the auditorium over
12 here. Please give the number, again, to the
13 gentleman, the two gentlemen who are at the
14 front, uh, when, when you come down. And then
15 you will have two minutes to speak.

16 Uh, Number 1 is Christopher Petrillo
17 [phonetic]. Uh, we're going to pick Number 4,
18 Mr. John Malone. And would also, please Number
19 3, uh, Ms. Lena Bedley [phonetic], and Number 6,
20 Ursula Cougler [phonetic], please come down and
21 wait your turn as well. Our first speaker, Mr.
22 Petrillo.

23 [applause]

24 MR. CHRISTOPHER PETRILLO: Hi. I'm Chris
25 Petrillo, and I'm from Beach Town High School.

1 And I see a lot of people here that are
2 willing to save a school that they don't even go
3 to. They're alumni of it. I see a lot of these
4 yellow shirts, and they say Graduate. And you
5 have to say that you're proud of graduating from
6 this school.

7 I'm also going to be proud of graduating
8 from Beach Town at the end of this year.
9 Besides that, I want to align all these schools
10 together so it makes it harder for them to close
11 us.

12 [applause]

13 If they are deciding to close any of these
14 schools, it should be the charter schools that
15 they open that have - - grades now.

16 [applause]

17 [background noise] the DOE that's telling
18 us. In the case of not, in the case of not
19 giving us what we need. I've been at so many
20 meetings, I'm run ragged. I am really tired.
21 And I've seen Mr. John White for like three, for
22 the past three times that I've been to a
23 meeting. He's an awesome guy. He's not a
24 person that you aim comments at, like saying
25 that--you don't say that much about him. He's

1 actually a pretty good guy.

2 But in the case of the DOE and Chancellor
3 Klein, I have personal experience that actually
4 leads me to a biased decision here. Chancellor
5 Klein does not care about these schools. He
6 only cares about the charter schools that will
7 come in.

8 [cheers and applause]

9 And this machine, when he had a meeting with
10 me on December 23rd, and he wind up sending me
11 out. And at that time, I know I have my time's
12 up. But in closing here, just align with - -
13 the rest of the schools here. I want to talk to
14 every student leader here. And we want to make
15 this a really hard fight if we're going to
16 fight.

17 [cheers and applause]

18 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Speaker Number 4,
19 John Malone. Next speaker is Number 3, Lena
20 Bedley.

21 MR. JOHN MALONE: Good evening. This is
22 more for everyone out here than it is for the
23 panel. My name is John Malone. I'm a social
24 worker and a counselor here at Maxwell, having
25 previously worked in a new high school within

1 one of the newly-formed campuses here in
2 Brooklyn. I was blessed to obtain a job here at
3 Maxwell - - . I was fortunate to come to an
4 established four-year school with a traditional
5 format of departments, department heads, and a
6 full administrative body.

7 The new campus system, uh, possesses
8 numerous issues that fail to be reported by the
9 Mayor, Chancellor and media regarding the DOE's
10 - - reform of the school system. Here are a few
11 of the major issues that affect students and
12 staff alike in the new campuses.

13 Safety issues minimally. Not knowing
14 students from other schools who may violate
15 staff or students in one or more of the other
16 schools within the building.

17 Two, new schools are understaffed and
18 personnel are over-burdened to perform basic
19 duties and mandates. For example, secretaries
20 were made to do the jobs of four secretaries.
21 And typically, no assistant principal or other
22 administrator is on the campus for the first two
23 years or so, if ever. And this is at the
24 discretion of the principal.

25 Three, discipline issues. New schools

1 typically don't have deans or save room, uh,
2 to save money relying on the larger campus to
3 provide that type of support if and when
4 available.

5 Four, new teachers are often hired over
6 veteran teachers purposely despite hiring
7 committees. This allows for new workers who
8 don't know the contract, and don't feel
9 comfortable, uh, filing grievances to be
10 overworked, exploited, and to accomplish extra
11 duties outside of the contract.

12 Five, and one of the biggest problems are
13 the gross Special Ed and ESL violations. New
14 schools don't have ample Special Education
15 classes. - - too low. Principals often
16 pressure as well certain staff to change student
17 IDPs to recommend collaborative team teaching as
18 the student's Special Ed placement as
19 collaborative team teaching class is the only
20 Special Ed classes available in new schools.
21 And then parents are, uh, they'll ask the staff
22 to persuade a parent to accept these unlawful
23 changes. Why don't staff decline this illegal
24 practice? Because the Mayor and Chancellor give
25 a principal ultimate accountability, thus

1 ultimate power so anyone who refuses can be
2 charged with insubordination.

3 A question that needs to be asked is whether
4 school - - should have a business man and a
5 lawyer dictate education policy and reform.
6 Would you go to a lawyer to have your car fixed?
7 Would you have your taxes prepared by a
8 mechanic? Despite the reports the school system
9 reforms are working, the people in the front
10 lines know that they're not.

11 Additionally, the Mayor and Chancellor
12 continue to cite graduation rates as a major
13 factor in phasing out some of our traditional
14 four-year high schools. If graduation rates
15 were an absolute indication of academic success,
16 then why is - - consistently stating that New
17 York City high school graduates are, on average,
18 grossly deficient in basic ELA and math skills?
19 The students of the proposed - - house schools
20 minimally deserve the research and full
21 understanding of these issues on the part of the
22 board members and the chancellor's underlings--

23 MR. WHITE: [interposing] Please bring your
24 comments--

25 MR. MALONE: [interposing] before these

1 important, uh, decisions are made. Thanks for
2 your time.

3 [cheers and applause]

4 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Speaker 3
5 [background noise] Speaker 5, Soom Balk
6 [phonetic] is on deck.

7 MS. URSULA COUGLER: My name is Ursula
8 Cougler, and I'm an English teacher here at
9 Maxwell. I began my New York City teaching
10 career at this school, left, but then chose to
11 return because I missed the challenges of
12 working in this community.

13 Even though Maxwell has faced a variety of
14 challenges, uh, we still have managed to make,
15 to, to meet our goal of 75%. In view of the
16 population we serve and the ever-present need
17 for vocational training, I believe that not only
18 should our school remain open, but that our
19 vocational training program should be extended.

20 Maxwell has made and continues to make
21 significant progress. Under the leadership of
22 our Principal, Mr. Bedette, our overall school
23 performance has improved over 11%. In four
24 years, our English Language Arts Regents scores
25 have increased from 48% to 81%, and that is an

1 increase of 59%.

2 Our academic scholarship progress in English
3 has increased from 42% to 58%. Maxwell has
4 shown an overall progress report, report rating
5 increase from 22% to 42%. This equates to a
6 78.2% improvement in two years.

7 The faculty and administration are committed
8 to helping our students and this community to
9 develop the knowledge and skills that will
10 enable them to have a better future. Much has
11 been done. We have more to do. And we are
12 fired up, and ready to deliver.

13 You acknowledge our progress by awarding us
14 bonuses for two years in a row. Tonight I am
15 asking you to acknowledge the hard work of our
16 students, and the commitment of our teachers and
17 administrators by allowing our school to remain
18 open, and by providing us with the additional
19 resources we need so that Maxwell can better
20 serve this community. Thank you.

21 [cheers and applause]

22 MR. WHITE: Thank you, Ms. Cougler.

23 [background noise] Speaker Number 8, Charles
24 Turner, is next.

25 MR. CHARLES TURNER: So hello, Maxwell High

1 School. Um, the main argument that Mr. White
2 is making and the DOE is claiming is that our
3 four-year graduation rate is like 43%. Let me
4 tell you why that's a ridiculous and random
5 standard.

6 Do you know how many four-year college
7 graduates graduate college in four years? Fifty
8 percent of all college graduates cannot graduate
9 in six years. USA Today said 53% of college
10 graduates graduate six years. Does that mean,
11 Mr. White, that we close, start closing
12 universities and colleges? I don't think so.

13 [applause]

14 Now, here's another statistic. How many
15 people actually have college degrees? Only one
16 in four Americans. You know what that means?
17 The majority of us, okay--those people who have
18 nice houses in Long Island--most of them, okay,
19 three-fourths of the people are carpenters, are
20 police officers, are fire fighters, are
21 cosmetologists, are small business owners. And
22 guess what the Mayor's - - say to us. That
23 we're all losers. But we're not losers.

24 [applause]

25 The [background noise] we know that is

1 because you want to bring charter schools in.
2 We know what he's trying to do in state
3 legislature, and try, uh, to get rid of the cap.
4 Okay. And charter schools basically are--
5 basically, he's putting millions of dollars in
6 charter schools, uh, while, uh, the last two
7 years they cut our budget by 10%. Right now,
8 he's, he's building a \$25 million brand new
9 building in, in Brooklyn for charter schools.
10 And students could not pay for next year's metro
11 cards.

12 [cheers and applause]

13 Okay. The problem is that Mr. White,
14 indeed, isn't going to make the decision
15 tonight. The people who are going to make the
16 decision are 12 people on the PEP panel at
17 Brooklyn Tech High School on January 26th.
18 Seven of those people, unfortunately, are the
19 Mayor's appointees. And they are his buddies.
20 They are his old real estate buddies, who got
21 millions of dollars of contracts before.

22 So this is what we can do. On January 21st,
23 we need to show up at the Mayor's house. All of
24 us, all 22 schools. And we need to show New
25 York that we, the - - , the ones he supposedly

1 are helping, are not happy.

2 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Thank you very much.

3 [cheers and applause]

4 MR. WHITE: [background noise]

5 MR. CHARLES TURNER: Good evening. My name
6 is Charles Turner, and I've been a teacher at
7 Maxwell for 27 years.

8 [cheers and applause]

9 I'm also the [background noise]
10 representative of Brooklyn High School since
11 before Mr. [background noise].

12 I'm here to tell you that a fish begins to
13 stink from the head down. When I say that, I'm
14 referring to Chancellor Klein and - - Tweed.
15 Because they're responsible for Maxwell's
16 situation. They created the system, they run
17 the system, and they're responsible for
18 overcrowding the school. And they're blaming
19 everyone else. Uh, and the students, who they
20 did not support, can't graduate in four years.

21 This is nothing new. Maxwell High School is
22 the latest victim in a - - fisted closing of the
23 Brooklyn high schools that began seven years
24 ago, and can only be characterized as flagrant
25 mismanagement.

1 From the beginning, there was simply no
2 forethought in the process where all the
3 incoming 9th grade students would go - - in
4 schools like Erasmus [phonetic], Prospect
5 Heights, and Wingate High School were closed.
6 There just simply was not enough room for all
7 the 9th grade students. So hundreds of them
8 were deflected to other schools in the district.
9 Okay?

10 And as a result of this mismanagement, a
11 domino effect of overcrowding existed in
12 Brooklyn high schools. In fact, during this
13 time, Maxwell High School became so overcrowded
14 that they referred to it as Sardine High. Okay?

15 High school--now, the students and staff
16 were placed on three sessions that ran from
17 sunrise to sunset, and there was no time or no
18 room to schedule any tutoring or extra help
19 'cause there was just no time. Okay. And DOE's
20 policy of exempting new small schools from
21 taking Special Ed and ELL students further
22 exacerbated the situation. And schools like
23 Maxwell experienced an influx of these high-need
24 students. And no one at Tweed would listen to
25 the principal and the superintendent when they

1 told him, Don't send any more students. OCEPO
2 [phonetic] kept sending more and more students.

3 Now, once school reaches a critical level of
4 high-need students without additional support,
5 measures like an absolute four-year graduation
6 rate and AYP become impossibilities. The
7 population at Maxwell High School is mobile and
8 vulnerable. The Chancellor should be supporting
9 the school, not crushing these people.

10 [cheers and applause]

11 MR. WHITE: [background noise]

12 MR. TURNER: You know what's going to happen
13 when this school closes? The students left
14 behind from the phase-out of this school will
15 get a bare-bone education, because there's going
16 to be reduced budget each year. So these high-
17 need students, who are - - at Maxwell, will
18 receive less and less every year. Tweed claims
19 to put children first. But that's not putting
20 these children first. Thank you.

21 [cheers and applause]

22 MR. WHITE: [background noise] the next
23 speaker I believe [background noise].

24 LEAH: Good evening. I am Leah - - from
25 CSA. The Department of Education has announced

1 the closing of 20 schools, some of them with
2 new principals, some of them just beginning to
3 turn around, and - - eight of them they were
4 opened not very long ago by the head of the
5 Department of Education himself, the Chancellor,
6 Mr. Klein.

7 CSA embraces accountability, and believes
8 the schools should be closed if they have failed
9 over a period of three or more years despite
10 receiving full support from the Department of
11 Education. We won't tolerate the propagation of
12 failure.

13 But in the case of some of these proposed
14 closures, we must ask if some of these schools
15 are being held accountable while the apparatus
16 that supports them is not. In those cases, we
17 must inquire if the schools were really failing,
18 and by what measures they were failing. We must
19 ask of the Chancellor, Could we put each of
20 these schools through a thorough process to
21 ascertain whether or not they have been provided
22 adequate support and guidance by their support
23 people. The SSOs and the Office of Student
24 Enrollment, whether or not it had leveled the
25 playing field.

1 CSA is asking the DOE to lay bare the
2 process by which they determined which one of
3 these schools should be closed. We are also
4 asking that they document the assistance that
5 the DOE provided for the schools prior to
6 announcing that they were going to be closed.

7 DOE should include an analysis of the role
8 of the appropriate school support organizations.
9 Since each school pays an SSO to advise them on
10 student achievement, to coach principals on
11 school improvement, and to perform many other
12 support functions, what sort of service did each
13 of these 20 schools get for their money?

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

21 When every question is asked and answered,
22 we are likely to discover that some of these
23 schools can't be saved. We are also likely to
24 discover that many of these schools, such as
25 Maxwell, with appropriate support from the

1 entire system, the networks, and fair
2 enrollment practices, can be saved.

3 [applause]

4 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Next speaker
5 [background noise] Julisa Kunalarja [phonetic].

6 MS. AGGIE ADAMS: Good afternoon, teachers.
7 I - - the principal of Maxwell High School, the
8 students, and the teachers, and the staff. My
9 name is Aggie [phonetic] Adams. I'm on the PTA
10 Board.

11 Since Thomas Jefferson has been closed, it
12 has been redesigned twice--first into three
13 schools, now into four schools. - - further
14 displacing the students and the staff. And my
15 question: If they close Maxwell, where will our
16 children, where will - - with our children?

17 [cheers and applause]

18 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Uh, our next speaker
19 on this side is Jared Luxie [phonetic].

20 MS. JULISA KUNALARJA: Um, evening,
21 everyone. My name is Julisa Kunalarja. I have
22 been a teacher for 16 years. Fifteen of those
23 years have been here at Maxwell High School.

24 I look out and I see many young
25 professionals, young professionals that I have

1 had the privilege to teach. Young
2 professionals that have counted in your numbers,
3 but many more, unfortunately, do not count in
4 your numbers.

5 I have been an ESL teacher, an English
6 teacher, and am presently the ESL Coordinator at
7 Maxwell High School. And I can speak with ESL
8 students. And, yes, I am proud of all my
9 English babies. Yes. But I want to speak on
10 behalf of my ESL students. Okay?

11 It isn't fair that because they graduate in
12 four and a half, five years that somehow that
13 doesn't matter in your statistics. It does,
14 because I have been with them every step of the
15 way. I have seen my ESL students be
16 valedictorians, salutatorians, go on to college,
17 and make me quite proud. They are lawyers.
18 They are medical assistants. They are police
19 officers. They have joined the armed forces. I
20 am incredibly proud of who they are.

21 And I know Maxwell helped them be who they
22 are. And I know as a staff, we have helped
23 them. So you cannot tell me that my role within
24 these walls is somehow diminished because my
25 students don't graduate in a four-year window.

1 Not everything is that neat. Okay.

2 [cheers and applause]

3 Currently, we have 45 ESL students. Twenty
4 of those are also Special Education. How will
5 they graduate on time? They have three period
6 blocks of ESL, two period blocks of ESL in
7 addition to, obviously, learning disabilities or
8 perhaps needing speech therapy, having emotional
9 problems. Okay? They cannot, they cannot
10 graduate in that amount of time. All right?

11 But I know something. I know that I will be
12 there for as long as I am allowed to be there to
13 help them get to where I know they are going,
14 which is to be like many of my young faces here,
15 successful young professionals that I had
16 something to do with.

17 [applause]

18 But more importantly... I know my time is
19 almost up. But more importantly, I want to
20 bring it to light a case, um, one of my boys,
21 Andy. He has been in the country six months.
22 He needs a bilingual education program, and he
23 needs speech therapy. But the placement office
24 sent him here, where we do not have a bilingual
25 education program, where we do have speech

1 therapy in ESL. And so he was given to us
2 because no one else would take him. Okay? So I
3 don't know where he would have gone if Maxwell
4 were to close. That's all.

5 [cheers and applause]

6 MR. WHITE: [background noise]

7 MALE VOICE 5: Ladies and gentlemen, good
8 evening. Uh, to the young man from - - ,
9 unfortunately, son, I beg to differ, disagree
10 with you. Mr. White is definitely on the other
11 side of the fence. He's no good. He's not here
12 to save Maxwell nor - - . He's here to make
13 sure that we are dissected and we further fail.

14 The statistics he presented to you earlier
15 were - - and dishonest and deceptive. He failed
16 to recognize or acknowledge that we have a
17 disproportionate number of Level 1s and Level 2
18 students, students that no other schools wanted.
19 But we take them in. We nurture them, and we
20 groom them, as you can see--

21 [cheers and applause]

22 --into fine young men and women of these
23 United States. As - - they've gone to NYU stone
24 broke, - - , you name it, they have been there.
25 They are lawyers, police officers. They are

1 nurses. They are here. They're teachers,
2 many of which have returned to Maxwell and
3 served us well.

4 Now, you see the Bloomberg administration
5 has embarked on a policy of closing vocational
6 programs. Young men and women do not - - our
7 classes. But you take them away, ensuring that
8 these very kids wind up in the penitentiary
9 upstate to provide - - .

10 [applause]

11 Maxwell should stay open because we're an
12 institution that serves its community. And you
13 have the audacity to tell me that I have two
14 minutes to speak--

15 [laughter]

16 --after serving this institution for 20
17 years? These kids, I have been here only that
18 long time. But I have taught people whose
19 children have returned. I have taught kids from
20 the same family--three, four cousins. Why?
21 They embrace us an institution, because we have
22 provided for them where others have refused.

23 To close us is to close a noble institution.
24 You're wrong. Keep it down. These kids need
25 us. Many of our teachers have been nominated as

1 Who's Who Among Teachers. We are capable. We
2 are caring. We love our jobs, and we love our
3 kids. And we serve them well. Maxwell, by far,
4 on most occasions is the safest place these
5 children have, the safest place they could be.
6 And when you take that away from them, you might
7 as well do something even crueler. This is one
8 of the cruelest things you could do [crosstalk]

9 MR. WHITE: Thank you for your comments,
10 sir. Please - - close.

11 MALE VOICE 5: Mr. White, you're on the
12 wrong side of the fence.

13 [laughter]

14 MR. WHITE: Thank you.

15 [cheers and applause]

16 MR. WHITE: [background noise]

17 MALE VOICE 6: [background noise] Maxwell. -
18 - four years - - passing - - 14%.

19 MALE VOICE 4: Closer.

20 MALE VOICE 6: What you don't say is that
21 the following year, close to 65% of those who
22 failed the - - passed. If you combine those
23 stats, you - - 45% that would pass, we're closer
24 to a 70% passing grade. This being accomplished
25 with one of the largest populations of Special

1 Ed, special needs - - 23%, which is a
2 fantastic accomplishment both for the staff and
3 the students.

4 What I would also like to say is I'd like to
5 thank you for this fair impartial open hearing.
6 Now, I'd like to thank you. But I don't think
7 it's really fair, impartial and open. Because
8 from information I've received, which I think
9 everybody should know, is that \$35 million in
10 federal funds have already been allocated to
11 demolish this building and build a new high
12 school in 2016 probably named after some fat cat
13 politician.

14 [cheers and applause]

15 [background noise] we already have a
16 showcase high school. And we don't need to do
17 that. So if you're trying to present it for - -
18 , I don't think we're going to want to let that
19 happen. And then some - - words I say - - .

20 [cheers and applause]

21 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Our next speaker on
22 this side, [background noise] on this side, uh,
23 following Mr. Jeffrey Bergstrom [phonetic].
24 Speaker Number 14. Okay. We'll move to then,
25 uh, Jeffrey Bergstrom.

1 MALE VOICE 7: Hold on. My number's right
2 here. I'm right here. But I'm referring my - -
3 to someone else instead.

4 MALE VOICE 8: Good evening, everyone.
5 Everyone's here for the formality, but let me
6 just give it to you straight, as straight as I
7 can give it to you.

8 What you are witnessing today here, but not
9 just here, but city-wide, is basically
10 persistently, a persistently failed management
11 of the Department of Education. But there's a
12 big question that comes with that. When they
13 fail, what do they do? When they - - ? When
14 they are persistently failing at what they need
15 to do...

16 For example, when you've got students with
17 special needs, but yet you don't provide the
18 resources necessary to provide them with the
19 best possible education, what do they do? Blame
20 you. Persistently fail - - . When you get a
21 bonus, not only do you get a bonus, they still
22 find a way to what? Blame you. And the first
23 thing they do is talk about all the statistics
24 as though we don't realized that in this area
25 it's some of the most economically disadvantaged

1 individuals in the City of New York. But what
2 do they do? Blame you. Persistently failed - -
3 .

4 Ladies and gentlemen, now is the time. Each
5 and every one of us has to stand up. Not just
6 to this committee, but on the 26th when they
7 vote to blame you and to shut you down. That is
8 going to be opportunity for each and every one
9 of you to stand up and say, No, not right now.
10 So, ladies and gentlemen, I will see each and
11 every one of you at Brooklyn Tech on January
12 26th for that vote.

13 You need to come out in force. You need to
14 let your voices be heard because at the end of
15 the day, even when they close you down, what
16 they will do is blame you.

17 [cheers and applause]

18 MR. WHITE: [background noise] Thank you.
19 Speaker Number 11, Jeffrey Bernstein. The next
20 speaker is Speaker Number 16, Alice Frazier
21 [phonetic].

22 MR. JEFFREY BERNSTEIN: - - saying was said,
23 but I know - - . Um, first of all, we are four
24 small schools. I know that last year, um,
25 superintendency wasn't - - . We had a new

1 principal. And there was no support. But
2 despite that, our scores went up.

3 My name is Jeffrey Bernstein. I am a
4 Cosmetology teacher here at Maxwell [background
5 noise].

6 [cheers and applause]

7 I am also the Chaplain, and have been here
8 since 2001. Since we been slaving for a phase-
9 out, I have been doing some in-depth research of
10 the data. Some of the schools that we are
11 considered to be school peers with, like J.
12 Adams [phonetic], Boys and Girls, Ralph McKee,
13 and 17 others, do not have the same demographics
14 that we do.

15 I do not feel that we are equal peers to
16 this group of schools. Maxwell has a total of
17 943 students. Six hundred and eight of them are
18 amongst the city's lowest third. Two hundred
19 and seventy-one of them are in the lowest third
20 in this building. And they have IDPs. Despite
21 that, our scores keep steadily rising.

22 Despite the challenges in our - - place at
23 Maxwell, we have embraced our children. We have
24 embraced our students to continue enriching
25 them, build a solid foundation, and to prepare

1 them for the world of work. Not only do our
2 students to take certification exams, - - . Not
3 only do they have to take a state licensing in
4 cosmetology, but they need five Regents as well.

5 You heard our scores before. It went from
6 48 to 81 in ELA in four years. It went from 37
7 to 107 in [background noise].

8 [applause]

9 For the last three years, Maxwell has
10 steadily been making progress in all three areas
11 of the school report. School Environment went
12 from 3.7 to 6.3; School Performance, 5.2 to 8.3.
13 So we went from 13.8 to 28.8 overall
14 performance.

15 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Please bring your
16 comments to a close.

17 MR. BERNSTEIN: Well, in lieu of all this
18 information, you still seem to want to close
19 Maxwell down. Your stats and our stats don't
20 match up. I think there's a design plan that
21 you need to redesign.

22 [cheers and applause]

23 MR. WHITE: [background] Karen Scott,
24 Speaker Number 13 - - .

25 MS. ALICE FRAZIER: My name is Alice

1 Frazier. [phonetic] I'm a parent. My
2 daughter goes to this school. And the reason
3 that we selected this school is because it has a
4 CTU program. She wants to study the fashion
5 business - - . And she's telling me, Mommy,
6 what's going to happen, you know. She doesn't
7 want to be the last one to graduate from this
8 school.

9 But not only fashion, but look at all the
10 programs that it offers, which is so important
11 for our students. This is not a trial and error
12 program. We searched so many schools in the
13 Brooklyn area before we decided to come to
14 Maxwell. And she told me, Listen, I don't want
15 to go to Manhattan; I want to stay in Brooklyn.
16 And this is the only school that has that
17 program for her. So why should we now leave
18 this school and go to Manhattan, when the
19 students need it here?

20 So not only fashion, they have internships
21 that they can provide the students and leaders.
22 They have other programs like fashion, vision,
23 uh, medical billing, you name it. All right?
24 And like one of the other, uh, teachers said
25 they want to - - that to bring more programs

1 into the school so students can learn a
2 specific field, and be good at it, and excel it.

3 So why would you want to close this school?
4 It has so much to offer students. And I tell
5 you. Even though she's the first - - here, she
6 doesn't want to leave. So why close the school?
7 There's so much opportunity out there for kids,
8 and you need to be able to help them to succeed,
9 and...

10 [cheers and applause]

11 MR. WHITE: Thank you. [background noise]
12 Scott, Number 13, and the, uh, next speaker is
13 Mildred - - .

14 MS. KAREN SCOTT: Good afternoon. Good
15 afternoon. [background noise] Okay? My name is
16 Ms. Scott, I'm a Parent Coordinator at my, my -
17 - high school. I am here as a Parent
18 Coordinator, also as a parent. My daughter - -
19 started here, that's why I am here at Maxwell.
20 I became the PTA President here, now I work for
21 the school.

22 And our school is a wonderful, wonderful
23 school. Our school - - school. It's been in
24 existence since 1951. It was the first
25 superintendent high school. It was the first

1 vocational high school in the city. My son
2 has two - - . The first - - vocational training
3 school in the public school. We have continued
4 to uphold the standard and educational
5 philosophy.

6 Maxwell has been a safe haven for all our
7 children here, all our students here at Maxwell.
8 And has continually exposed to the - - . They
9 have been continually exposed to gang fighting,
10 abuse, unstable families in the neighborhood and
11 homes. We have students here who are in
12 shelters. We have students here who are
13 physically disabled. We have students here who
14 are in foster care. There are students who live
15 with their parents who are not even their own
16 parents. We love all the students here. And if
17 you take our, this building away, where will our
18 students be?

19 We are here to help our students. We are
20 here to guide our students. We are here because
21 we love our students, we love Maxwell. There's
22 no other school in Brooklyn but Maxwell.
23 Maxwell is our home. Maxwell is a home to our
24 students. Maxwell is a - - our teachers, and a
25 good environment.

1 So let me tell you something. Our
2 students - - it's not going to phase out because
3 we are here to stay.

4 [cheers and applause]

5 We are here to stay. What I would like you
6 all to [background noise] one good day and see
7 what goes on in our school. See what is being
8 taught in our school. You have to experience
9 what goes on here before you can make a decision
10 as to what [background noise]

11 [cheers and applause]

12 MR. WHITE: Thank you, ma'am. Mildred
13 [background noise]. Next speaker, Number 15,
14 Sharon Carrington [phonetic].

15 MILDRED: Good evening. For the record, I
16 would like to say that I'm - - , and I'll tell
17 you why. I remember my years at Maxwell with
18 great fondness and pride. I received a first-
19 rate public education, which laid out the
20 foundation for my life.

21 I graduated from Maxwell in 2000 with honors
22 and a Regents diploma. Thanks to the dedication
23 and guidance I received at Maxwell, I was
24 accepted at the University of Buffalo, where I
25 graduated in 2004 with a B.A. in Health and

1 Human Services.

2 [cheers and applause]

3 Today I continue to achieve excellence in my
4 education. I was recently accepted at Columbia
5 University to be doing [background noise].

6 [cheers and applause]

7 Maxwell also provided me with opportunity to
8 establish lifetime friendships. Many of my
9 former classmates are extremely successful. And
10 we all feel an exceptional amount of gratitude
11 to all our former teachers at Maxwell, many whom
12 still teach today.

13 [cheers and applause]

14 I am deeply saddened to know that Maxwell
15 and its teachers would no longer have the
16 opportunity to reach future generations and
17 encourage them to strive for excellence in
18 education. Maxwell's commitment to excellence
19 provides an atmosphere where the school - - a
20 sense of accomplishment and self confidence.
21 Students encourage each other to do better and
22 help each other to grow as individuals.

23 Institutions of this nature should not be
24 closed down, but - - and used as an example for
25 other schools.

1 The people of William H. Maxwell will
2 always be part of my extended family.
3 Therefore, the love and support they have shown
4 me compels me to do the same in return. Do not
5 stop my family from helping so many young
6 students in their pursuit of academic excellence
7 and meaningful success.

8 Please take this opportunity to reconsider
9 the decision to close down William H. Maxwell
10 High School. Future generations will suffer as
11 a result of this shortsightedness. Our
12 community's - - to Maxwell. Thank you very
13 much.

14 [cheers and applause]

15 MR. WHITE: Thank you. [background noise]
16 Speaker Number 15, Sharon Carrington. Speaker
17 after that, Speaker Number 20, Debra Bonds.

18 Good evening to everyone. My name is Sharon
19 Carrington. I'm - - at Maxwell High School.

20 CTE schools are mandated to take five Regent
21 examinations in addition to students having to
22 take the NLCTI [phonetic] exam. And accomplish-
23 -cosmetology students are required to get a
24 state licensing before they can work. This is a
25 true example of academic rigor.

1 My problem with the CTE--what I love about
2 CTE's school is it gives children a plan to - -
3 . Not every student is ready for college as
4 soon as they graduate high school. I don't care
5 if it takes them four, five years or six years.
6 Students need a way to take care of themselves
7 and the families they may have. Okay? You
8 don't want to give them any way to take care of
9 themselves. But you encourage them by putting
10 day cares in school.

11 If you close CTE schools that give these
12 children a skill to take care of these children,
13 you already provide day care for. Okay? You
14 already provide day care, so give them a skill
15 to be able to take care of these children that
16 you are encouraging them, so to speak, to have.
17 Okay? Seriously, give them a Plan B. Don't
18 take their Plan B away from them.

19 'Cause yes, we want, everybody here wants
20 their child to go to college. But I also want
21 my child to be able to eat and have - - over
22 their head as well. So with that, I thank you
23 very much.

24 In addition, this flyer is in the back. On
25 January, Saturday, January 16th, there's a

1 rally. Get a flyer on your way out. As well
2 as the Panel for Educational Policy meeting on
3 January 26th. There's directions on the flyer.
4 So everyone, when you leave, please take this.
5 And the 26th meeting is when the decision will
6 be made whether or not to close the school. So
7 on your way out, please be sure to get a flyer.

8 [applause]

9 MR. WHITE: Thank you very much. Speaker
10 Number 20, Debra Bonds. Speaker Number 17, - -
11 Adams is next.

12 MS. DEBRA BONDS: Hello. Um, parents,
13 students at Maxwell. Thank you. Um, and
14 teachers and administrators. Um, I would just
15 like to point out that the contract for
16 excellence has not been met. Until that
17 contract is fully completed and fulfilled, not
18 one school should close.

19 It is extremely important - - for our
20 children to have smaller class size and for the
21 resources to be allocated. And after ten years
22 of fighting, the contract for fiscal excellence
23 was put in place. Why is that Bloomberg and the
24 DOE has not fulfilled their obligation?
25 Instead, class sizes have risen. And yet you

1 turn to the same parents with a smack in the
2 face, and say, I'm going to close your schools.

3 I think this warrants your blatant disregard
4 for parent, for students, for their work. What
5 have you done? And before we, we need to
6 investigate what have you done. And we also
7 need an audit on the DOE to see where is that
8 money. The \$243 million that was set aside and
9 fought for with blood, sweat, and tears for
10 these children to get a quality education.

11 [applause]

12 So it is horrific for you to come today or
13 any other day to these very schools, and tell
14 them that you want to close their schools.
15 Where's the money?

16 [cheers and applause]

17 MR. WHITE: [background noise] And the next
18 speaker is Number 22, Madeline Jones.

19 MS. ADAMS: Good evening, everybody. Good
20 evening, panel, parents, students, teachers, the
21 principal. Um, the Department of Education is
22 creating a situation where the lowest performing
23 students are being neglected. Where will they
24 go? Who's going to support them?

25 Our lowest third population - - shuffled

1 around the system. You all have a saying - -
2 , you all have a saying in the school system,
3 No child left behind. What are you going to do
4 with these kids that take four and five and six
5 years to get a high school diploma? You going
6 to leave them behind? How are you going to tell
7 us that no child is left behind, but you say
8 you're closing our schools?

9 [applause]

10 [background noise] a, a run around on the
11 students. Why this is not working. Why this is
12 not no more. But have you been in these schools
13 to see what they go through every day? Have you
14 walked these streets to see what these kids go
15 through? This is a safe haven for some of them.
16 They don't have another place to go.

17 A lot of these students don't have parents
18 that can sit here and afford to send their child
19 to a charter school or a private school. How
20 dare you all come here and ask us to neglect our
21 kids. - - first one - - ACS - - performance.

22 [cheers and applause]

23 That [background noise] our children are not
24 our future. Our children can be sitting where
25 you are today. You give our children a future

1 and a voice they need to be educated, to be a
2 politician, to be a lawyer, to be a doctor. You
3 give them that opportunity. You don't take that
4 away from them. These children, our children
5 didn't ask to be brought here just like we
6 didn't ask to be bring here. But - - gave us
7 the opportunity to be productive citizens. So
8 you wanted to take that from our children? But
9 your parent gave it to you. So why shouldn't we
10 give it to ours?

11 [cheers and applause]

12 Who are you to come to our house, to come
13 into Maxwell, and tell us you're closing us
14 down. Well, if you want to close us down, you
15 better be ready for the fight of your life.
16 'Cause I'm going to bring it to you.

17 [cheers and applause]

18 MR. WHITE: [background noise] and the next
19 speaker will be Number 19, Jentreel [phonetic]
20 Thomas.

21 MS. NATALIE JONAS: Good evening to the
22 panel and to the community. My name is Natalie
23 Jonas. I don't work at this school; I don't
24 have a child at this school. I'm just a college
25 recruiter that gets to visit this school.

1 [applause]

2 I get to see the education that these
3 children are given, and the magic that takes
4 place in the classroom. It is something that is
5 very special. And while there are certainly
6 challenges that face every classroom and every
7 school in this city, it is inherent only because
8 this is the largest public school system in the
9 United States of America.

10 There are many things that are special about
11 it because of those very challenges. Our
12 children are afforded the chance to go where
13 they want and earn an education that suits their
14 needs. I work for a creative school. These are
15 the students I'm looking for. And while
16 academics certainly play a huge role, I need
17 people who can make a difference in the lives of
18 others every single day. And I see that magic
19 when I'm fortunate enough to visit this school.
20 I thank you for your time.

21 [cheers and applause]

22 MR. WHITE: Thank you, Ms. Jonas. Jentreel
23 Thomas is our next speaker. And the speaker
24 after that will be Rick Pender [phonetic].

25 MS. JENTREEL THOMAS: Good evening,

1 everyone. My name is Jentreel Thomas. I am
2 the SL, I - - here at Maxwell. I'm also the - -
3 cheerleader.

4 Um, let me start by saying, Mr. Bedette, our
5 principal, has been here for only one year, one
6 year. And in that one year, the performance of
7 this school has improved by 11%, 11%, you all.
8 He has also instituted uniforms, something that
9 Maxwell hadn't had before. And he has support,
10 he supports classes - - the student's
11 achievement.

12 Maxwell has the largest IDP population in
13 all city. Over 23% of its students are in
14 Special Education program. New school tends to
15 not, tends to not accept or serve a large high,
16 a large high-need population. The question once
17 again to ask is: Where, where will our students
18 go?

19 Our students have a right to be in school
20 until the age of 21, which means if it takes
21 five years for them to graduate, they have that
22 right and they should be allowed to use it.

23 [applause]

24 [background noise] when they're 18, 20.

25 They have a right to be in school until they're

1 21 years old. Please give them a chance.

2 [applause]

3 MR. WHITE: Thank you very much. Next
4 speaker, Number 20, - - Pender. The speaker
5 after that, Number 21, Karen Koch [phonetic]

6 MR. RICK PENDER: Good evening, good
7 evening. Uh, my name is Rick Pender. I'm, uh,
8 not a college professional - - here, but I'm a
9 concerned citizen, a confused and a paranoid
10 grandparent.

11 Now, you guys are going through all of this.
12 What are my granddaughters going to go through?
13 My question to all of you educators and you
14 future educators is: If this is the policy, uh,
15 is recidivism equal to education or is education
16 equal to recidivism? I'm, I'm very, uh,
17 confused. Uh, eliminating the bus passes,
18 they're closing schools. Hm.

19 [laughter and applause]

20 MR. WHITE: [background noise] and the
21 speaker to follow, Speaker Number 26, Emily
22 Perez.

23 [cheers and applause]

24 MS. KAREN KOCH: My name is Karen Koch, and
25 this is my 17th year at Maxwell High School. I

1 have seen many changes in this school and in
2 the system.

3 About seven years ago, seven CTE schools
4 became a part of a new initiative, smaller
5 learning communities. Smaller learning
6 communities, also known as SLCs, has the same
7 premise as small schools without physical
8 restructure and, of course, the expense and
9 displacement of students. Instead, it is more
10 of a reorganization of the structure within the
11 school.

12 These SLTs were formed here based on CTE
13 pathways. And even the non-CTE teachers chose
14 which SLT they wanted to work in. Each SLT is
15 different not only because of its CTE major, but
16 because of the approach and strategies of
17 meeting our school-wide goals that Maxwell has
18 set.

19 The members of each SLT meet several times
20 each week during what we call - - Prep. During
21 that time, we case conference about students, we
22 plan assemblies and trips, we perform data
23 analysis, we share best practices, and we
24 turnkey information received from outside
25 professional development. Each SLT has its own

1 professional learning community within its
2 large school.

3 We are supported by an organization called
4 SREP that was founded in 1948, and is America's
5 first interstate contact for education. Today
6 it is the only regional education contact that
7 works directly with state leaders, school,
8 educators to improve the level of teaching and
9 student achievement on every level.

10 Because of our restructuring to small
11 learning communities, we better know our
12 students. We know our culture. We know our
13 communities in and out of the building. This
14 knowing took us years to learn. How can a new
15 school offer the same to their incoming
16 freshmen?

17 There are many benefits from a - - structure
18 like Maxwell has adopted. Here at Maxwell,
19 there is a feeling of the small school setting,
20 but in a larger high school. We can offer so
21 much more than a small new starting school.

22 A larger high school gives us a budget to
23 allow for afterschool activities, as well as
24 services needed for Special Ed and at-risk
25 students. These students at Maxwell need these

1 afterschool activities to help develop self-
2 esteem, teamwork, leadership, and leadership
3 skills. I'm sorry. These activities also help
4 keep our kids off the street.

5 Um, I can't go any further. I just want to
6 say--

7 [audience comments]

8 MR. WHITE: Ms. Koch, please bring your
9 comments to a close.

10 MS. KOCH: Okay. Not very many people will
11 remember, but I remember when Maxwell was full
12 of jewels on Pennsylvania Avenue. Jewels are
13 something considered precious, something that is
14 taken out and polished, and something that is
15 certainly not thrown away.

16 [cheers and applause]

17 MR. WHITE: [background noise] Number 26,
18 Emily Perez. The next speaker is Number 23,
19 Danisha Williams. Number 26 and Number 23. Uh,
20 Number 27.

21 FEMALE VOICE 1: Here's 23.

22 MR. WHITE: Thank you. And the next speaker
23 is Number 27, Angela Garner.

24 MS. EMILY PEREZ: Good evening. My name is
25 Emily Perez, and I graduated valedictorian the

1 class of 2007.

2 [cheers and applause]

3 I don't know much about the statistics, but
4 I would like to share what I got from my
5 experience at Maxwell, the four years I was
6 here.

7 Um, I was - - and it was - - time when I
8 came to this school that I learned about the
9 field of graphic design. And ironically, that
10 is what I am doing now in college.

11 Um, what I would like to say is that
12 Maxwell's special not only because it, um, it
13 prepares students for careers who possibly are
14 not going to take - - college education, but
15 because it inspires, um, students to do things
16 that they thought they would never do.

17 Um, before coming to Maxwell, I thought I'd
18 become a businessperson some, I mean, somehow.
19 And work in an office of some sort. But right
20 now I'm an artist. I'm a graphic designer. I
21 am part of a magazine at my school. I come back
22 here and work in a magazine that the school is
23 doing now in Maxwell. And I'm proud to have
24 come here.

25 [cheers and applause]

1 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Number 23, Danisha
2 Williams. And the next speaker, uh, Number 27,
3 Angela Garner.

4 MS. DANISHA WILLIAMS: Okay. I am Danisha
5 Williams, a junior at Maxwell High School.

6 [cheers and applause]

7 And I did have, have a good speech, but I
8 got here and I forgot it.

9 [laughter]

10 So, basically, what I want to say is:
11 Leaders of tomorrow. But what are you teaching
12 the leaders of tomorrow if you're quitting on
13 us? Like you're teaching us to quit, to give
14 up, to phase out.

15 Anyway, uh, well, I've been at Maxwell for
16 three years. I came to Maxwell with only three
17 credits, and not yet have one of the staff
18 members given up on me, especially Ms. Jackson.
19 She's been there since day one, when I gave up -
20 - . You probably never seen me. But Ms.
21 Jackson's like, You can do it, you're strong.
22 And Mr. Bedette, he's been there. I know I'm
23 not supposed to be calling out names, but
24 they've been there for me.

25 And now, basically, what's happening is I

1 can't come back to this school after I
2 graduate and say, I went to Maxwell, and these
3 are the teachers, these are the staff members
4 who helped me, who made me who I am today. I
5 want--when I graduate, I'll graduate with
6 practical experiences that regular academic high
7 schools do not offer, unless, you know, one of
8 the students go out, pay for those classes. But
9 why would we do that? We can get it free here
10 at Maxwell.

11 [applause]

12 I came to Maxwell, wanting to be a doctor.
13 And I could go medical billing or I could even
14 help--and I see a lot of people here with
15 glasses on. Do I not? And those charts right
16 there, are they not, uh, graphic arts made from
17 a certified teacher at Maxwell?

18 And, uh, shirts and pants and a lot of the
19 students in Maxwell boutique products - - .
20 That's called our future designers who graduated
21 from Maxwell.

22 [applause]

23 Thank you for your time and for listening.

24 [cheers and applause]

25 MR. WHITE: Thank you. The next speaker,

1 Angela Garner. After Angela Garner is Shakia
2 Slade [phonetic].

3 MS. ANGELA GARNER: Good evening, everyone.
4 Before I begin, begin, uh, my statement, I would
5 like to make a motion to vote on Maxwell's
6 resolution.

7 [audience responds: I second.]

8 All those in favor say aye.

9 [audience responds: Aye.]

10 All those opposed.

11 [audience comments]

12 Thank you.

13 All right. My name's Angela Garner, and I
14 am the Lead Guidance Counselor here. I have
15 been at Maxwell for 27 years. All right. A
16 long time, and I'm here not because this is a
17 job, but it's a career.

18 I would like to read a statement made by our
19 former lead principal, Ms. Steiner [phonetic].
20 She was unable to read this statement because,
21 as I'm reading it, she's on a plane to Israel.
22 Now to the point I'm at.

23 Maxwell has been an academic and vocational
24 anchor in the East New York community for more
25 than 50 years. Whether referred to as Maxwell

1 Vocational High School or Maxwell Career and
2 Technical Education High School, we at Maxwell
3 have been successfully educating and preparing
4 our students for college and the world of work.

5 As a math teacher, dean, guidance counselor,
6 assistant principal, and lead principal, I was a
7 member of the Maxwell community for over 30
8 years. As staff member, I had the privilege of
9 witnessing the evolution of our school as we
10 launched new and challenging career and
11 technical courses of studies, and set higher
12 standards and goals for our students.

13 As we all know and believe, all students can
14 be educated. However, many disadvantaged
15 students require more than the arbitrary four
16 years to complete the process of meeting the
17 mandated graduation requirements.

18 Maxwell always had a critical mass of
19 entering students with a history of attendance
20 difficulties, and who were not yet academically
21 high school ready, therefore, requiring a great
22 deal of academic and emotional support.

23 Being - - the location of the school or due
24 to the fact that the school has a reputation of
25 being safe and nurturing, a large percent of our

1 students consist of Level 1, Level 2, Special
2 Ed and over-age and under-credit students.
3 These factors made it statistically impossible
4 for us, at the school, to meet the NYP and
5 graduation standard as set by the DOE and New
6 York State.

7 MR. WHITE: Please bring your comments to a
8 close.

9 MS. GARNER: And in conclusion, by breaking
10 down and fragmenting Maxwell, this community
11 anchor will be but a fond memory. Please
12 remember that we at Maxwell have been making
13 steady, positive progress. We truly believe and
14 prove daily that all students can and do learn
15 given the hard work of Maxwell staff, the
16 support of the - - network, LSO, and help from
17 the Office of Enrollment, Maxwell will have the
18 power to become a school in good standing, and
19 continue to educate all students, and prepare
20 them for economic success.

21 Finally, - - Principal, retired June 2008.
22 Thank you.

23 [cheers and applause]

24 MR. WHITE: [background noise] Shakia Slade.
25 Next speaker, Number 28, is - - Ubarito

1 [phonetic].

2 MS. SHAKIA SLADE: Good evening, everybody.
3 All right. I just want to talk to everybody and
4 let you know that I was a graduate of Maxwell
5 High School in the year 2007, the year that this
6 school was called Sardine High. This school was
7 very overcrowded and we didn't have all of our
8 necessary, you know, things, the computer labs.
9 We didn't even have space. We had classes in
10 the auditorium, classes in our teachers'
11 cafeteria. So thank you for all of your
12 support.

13 Now, myself and many other students managed
14 to actually graduate from this Sardine High
15 thanks to our remarkable staff and all the love
16 and support that they'd given us. But thank you
17 for the budget cuts, and your lack of support.

18 Now, - - numbers - - and let's just remember
19 that these numbers were all increases in our
20 progress. Over the past few years, these
21 progressive changes have been made, but we still
22 have more budget cuts, and still no support from
23 the Department of Education.

24 Now, like, um, the statement from the woman
25 from the CCHS had said, we have to take a look

1 at those students that come to Maxwell High
2 School. We have students that come in high
3 school still reading and barely making it from
4 junior high school levels academically. We have
5 students from our neighborhood that need help in
6 English as their second language. We have to
7 take the time to help these students before we
8 just throw them out the window.

9 Now, I'm going to let you know I graduated
10 from here 2007, Sardine High, but I graduated,
11 graduated, excuse me, with an 86 average with so
12 many things under my belt. Let's see. I was
13 the editor of the newspaper. I was on the
14 softball team, the volleyball team, and the
15 dance team. Now I'm at St. Francis College.
16 I'm a junior. I graduate in one year.

17 [applause]

18 I'm on the track team, and the swim team.
19 And I also [background noise] I'm graduating
20 with a degree in social work. And I also wanted
21 to come back to Maxwell to help. So, hopefully,
22 you guys won't make the wrong decision and close
23 it.

24 [cheers and applause]

25 MR. WHITE: Thank you very much.

1 [background noise] and Number 29, Louise Mary,
2 uh, Sedan [phonetic].

3 Good afternoon, Maxwell supporters and
4 panel. My name is Jamahn [phonetic]. I
5 graduated six years ago with - - diploma. Like,
6 I, from other schools, I was an IDP student. I
7 didn't graduate in four years. It took me five
8 and a half years. I'm not ashamed. 'Cause you
9 know what? I - - today from a writer. I have
10 two books coming out. I'm also, I'm also--

11 [applause]

12 --in the Art Institute. [background noise]
13 students. I am an A plus student today. I have
14 a 4.0 GPA. If I didn't have these teachers
15 here, like Ms. Booth, Ms. Cummins, - - , Ms.
16 Garner and more, I wouldn't be the person I am
17 today.

18 I wanted to kill myself before I got here.
19 When I had the love and support and the - - and
20 their understanding, they made me aware, they
21 made look... They told me, Look, hey, you're
22 messed up. Stand tall. And with, with
23 greatness I would succeed.

24 For you to take this away, they won't have
25 that. These students won't get what I've had.

1 If you take the school away, all these
2 teachers are going to be gone and the students
3 are going to have who to deal with? You don't
4 know who you put in this school. You don't know
5 what they'd be doing. And - - change schools
6 and you'll have to shut it down again.

7 I came here before. I cursed - - . I'm
8 sorry about the emotion. I - - give you the
9 educated side of the - - . I stand tall and I'm
10 so upset because you're taking my history.
11 You're taking my heritage away from me.

12 Maxwell is a family, and we are family. I
13 see old faces and new faces, but we're going to
14 stand together and fight. I came today with my
15 armor on ready for a battle. Because we're
16 going to--

17 [applause]

18 [background noise] Thank you.

19 MR. WHITE: Thank you very much. Speaker
20 Number 29 will be followed by Speaker Number 30,
21 Lisa North [phonetic].

22 FEMALE VOICE 2: Ladies and gentlemen, my
23 graduates, could you stand up, please?

24 [cheers and applause]

25 Members of the Board, I'd like you to take

1 it back to Mr. Klein and Mr. Mayor Bloomberg.
2 You said our best wasn't good enough. There
3 they are.

4 [cheers and applause]

5 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Speaker Number 30,
6 Lisa North. Speaker Number 31 is...

7 MS. TAKILA ERVIN : Okay. Um, let me - - ,
8 ladies and gentlemen. Um, they gave me this - -
9 . My name is Takila Ervin [phonetic]. I have
10 spoke, I spoke at the last, um, meeting that you
11 all had. I'm going to make it brief.

12 Um, my son came, he graduated in, um, 2008.
13 Um, he took a course into - - Communications.
14 So, therefore, for - - Communications, he took
15 it to the Army. And he would have loved to have
16 been here. I was telling him that they was
17 trying to phase out the school. And he wanted
18 to know why. Because every time he comes home,
19 he comes here and he visits his teachers. He
20 visits everybody in here. And he wanted to--he
21 was trying to get home so he could make it to
22 the meeting, but he can't. But I'm hoping that
23 he will be here for - - .

24 I have two other children that come here.
25 One, one, one in Special Ed, and one is regular.

1 And the one in Special Ed, he's going, and
2 he's improved miraculously. You understand what
3 I'm saying? You're talking about phasing out
4 the school. You need to be phasing it in - - .

5 [applause]

6 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Lisa North. And
7 then the next speaker is - - , Number 31.

8 MS. LISA NORTH: Hello, everybody. My name
9 is Lisa North. I'm a teacher, uh, for over 20
10 years. And I taught at - - 43. And I am just
11 amazed and impressed by the, how passionate
12 everybody has spoken, how passionately everybody
13 has spoken tonight in defense of Maxwell High
14 School.

15 Um, I'm here partly to say that, um, we're
16 going to have to move from our individual
17 auditoriums. There are lots of schools closing
18 in this, and are speaking passionately in every
19 one of their auditoriums. But, unfortunately,
20 we knew that Bloomberg has a majority on the
21 PEP, and it's very important for us all to show
22 up there at the PEP on the 26th.

23 But we also have to come together in other
24 ways, um, to show our, and show how we are going
25 to build a movement to fight this. Because, as

1 we know, it's not really about the education
2 of the students in New York City. Because if it
3 was, they would give us the resources that we
4 need to educate the students of New York City.

5 So it's about privatization, it's about - -
6 contracts that are being given out to lots of
7 businesses. And closing schools and shuffling
8 kids from place to place is not going to be the
9 answer to of, of helping our students, all of
10 our students. Maybe a few students will be
11 helped here and there, but we're talking about
12 all of the students of New York City. It's
13 going to take the resources that we all, know we
14 need in all of our schools.

15 So it's very important to come out--uh,
16 Charles Barron spoke about it--January 21st. We
17 need to take it. He wants to close our
18 community schools. We're going to come to his,
19 his community. And we're going to tell him--all
20 of the closing schools we hope will be there.
21 And we will send a message to the city that
22 you're not going to close our schools. It's
23 going to take us building this kind of movement
24 to do that.

25 There's also a parent meeting. I know, um,

1 um, on this Saturday at 9:30, the School of
2 the Future. It's a parent organizing, a
3 community organizing meeting. You can look up
4 the School of the Future. It's going to happen.

5 There's also, um, other events going on.
6 There's the, um, even on, um, also on this
7 Saturday at 11:30, of the, of - - on a pink
8 piece of paper. And everybody's gotten that.
9 We really have to come out city-wide. We have
10 to get it out, unfortunately, - - out of our
11 communities and unite.

12 MR. WHITE: Thank you very much.

13 [applause]

14 Speaker Number 31, - - Martez [phonetic].

15 Speaker Number 32, Dr. Wayne Reed.

16 MR. MARTEZ: Uh, okay, Mr. White. I'm not
17 here to attack you or anything like that. I
18 just want to share, uh, what Maxwell means to
19 me.

20 Um, my first year here I had an incident.
21 And I just didn't want anything to do with
22 school. I, um, was failing all my classes. And
23 Miss White--is she here? She can actually vouch
24 for me. She's not here. Anyway, uh, but thanks
25 to Maxwell and, um, the support I had here, I'm

1 an Engineering student right now at NYU.

2 [cheers and applause]

3 Um, it was really upsetting to me that you
4 guys, uh, really want to take Maxwell away from
5 us. Um, my family grew up at Maxwell. My
6 cousin, uh, I have a cousin right here that goes
7 - - . Uh, my brother came here. Uh, I wouldn't
8 have it any other way. Uh, thanks to them, I'm
9 the person I am today.

10 Um, when I first had my interview for NYU,
11 one of the things they were most interested in
12 was the vocational, uh, part that NYU had. Um,
13 and I'm not saying, obviously, okay, - - school
14 and I'm not saying that we don't have our
15 challenges. But we're working on them. And
16 it's just sad that you, the stats say that,
17 like, show that we are making progress. It's
18 only been a couple of years. Why not just give
19 us an extension or something? Um, why close
20 down Maxwell - - ? You know what I mean?
21 That's it.

22 [applause]

23 MR. WHITE: Thank you very much. And the
24 next speaker [background noise] Wayne Reed.

25 DR. WAYNE REED: My name is Wayne Reed, a

1 faculty member at the School of Ed at Brooklyn
2 College. I thank you for the opportunity to
3 share a few remarks in support of Maxwell High
4 School.

5 I've been actively involved in schools and
6 community organizations in East New York for
7 over 15 years. All of us know that education is
8 about empowering youth to become leaders. We
9 also realize the critical connection between
10 high school and college, that it's about
11 finishing high school, but it's also about
12 having college as an option.

13 In the past five years, Maxwell High School
14 has served as the host for one of the most
15 dynamic leadership development programs in the
16 City of New York. Called the East New York Team
17 Summit, since 2004, over 750 students from
18 Maxwell and other East New York high schools
19 have come to Brooklyn College for the East New
20 York Summit.

21 Let me say that again. Over the past five
22 years, over 750 students from Maxwell and other
23 East New York high schools have come to Brooklyn
24 College to participate in the East New York
25 Summit.

1 [applause]

2 The summit is a conference that includes a
3 variety of college preparatory workshops, peer
4 mentoring sessions, and workshops prepared and
5 led by Maxwell and other high school students.
6 In fact, the conference is entirely led by
7 students.

8 From the beginning, Maxwell has served as
9 the lead school for this important event. Under
10 the, with the support of Principal Bedette and
11 the founder of the summit, Audrey Jackson, the,
12 uh, summit has become a critical resource for
13 the training of young leaders in our community.

14 From the beginning, the summit has included
15 young people identified by their counselors,
16 some students who are considered to be at risk
17 of not graduating. This past summer, the summit
18 included an initiative that took high school
19 students on college tours. This collaboration
20 between Maxwell and area high schools and
21 Brooklyn College is now being replicated in
22 other communities in Brooklyn and beyond.

23 I challenge the city and the Department of
24 Education to find another high school in New
25 York who is doing as much for its community and

1 for its youth as Maxwell High School.

2 I challenge the city and the DOE to find
3 another initiative for high school students that
4 is providing an equivalent grass roots
5 leadership development empowerment initiative
6 for high school students that lead them to
7 college. Thank you.

8 [cheers and applause]

9 MR. WHITE: Thank you, Doctor. Uh, this
10 concludes this evening's hearing. I want to say
11 that there will be, as has been mentioned this
12 evening, a vote by the Panel on Educational
13 Policy January 26th, 2010, at Brooklyn Tech.
14 Uh, and this comment will be submitted as part
15 of the record for the panel to consider in
16 advance of this vote. Thank you very much.

17 [cheers and applause]

18 [END MZ000001]

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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 13, 2010