

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

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

1 [START 154_538]

2 MR. JOHN WHITE: For those of you in the
3 back we do have some seats in the front. If
4 you're looking for a seat in the back we do have
5 seats in the front.

6 I would just ask--we're going to wait until,
7 until all participants are seated; if you could
8 please be seated.

9 Is that better? Great. If you could please
10 be seated in the back we're going to wait until
11 participants are seated but if you could find a
12 seat we'll start our meeting. Thank you.

13 Good evening and thank you very much for
14 your presence here this evening at this Hearing
15 regarding the proposal of the phase out of
16 Metropolitan Corporate Academy and the
17 replacement over time of the school with a new
18 school organization in the building.

19 My name is John White. I'm a Deputy
20 Chancellor and thank you very much. Is that
21 better? Good. Thank you.

22 We're on a little bit of a, of a different
23 mike this evening. Thank you very much for
24 coming.

25 We have asked that three--there should be

1 two different councils participate in this
2 Hearing jointly with the Department of
3 Education; the Citywide Council on High Schools
4 and the School Leadership Team here at
5 Metropolitan Corporate Academy.

6 Representing the School Leadership Team that
7 will make a presentation after I walk through a
8 brief presentation of the proposal are Ms.
9 Pacheco, Ms. Simon, and Ms. Gibson from my right
10 to my left.

11 Representing the Citywide Council on High
12 Schools to my left is Mr. Bellow. In front of
13 me is Ms. Armstrong-Barrows and to my right is
14 Brooklyn High School Superintendant Linda Waite.

15 This Hearing is being recorded. Following
16 the Hearing a transcript of this evening's
17 comments will be sent to each of the councils
18 that is joining me on the panel. It will also
19 be sent--excuse me posted on the Department of
20 Education's website under the Panel for
21 Educational Policy section. So again everything
22 that is said here this evening is being recorded
23 and will be posted as part of the public record.

24 The purpose of this evening's Hearing is for
25 the public to submit comment about the proposal.

1 The purpose of that is so the Panel on
2 Educational Policy which ultimately is going to
3 vote on the proposal can use the comment this
4 evening as evidence that will help them to make
5 their decision.

6 I want to talk a little bit about this
7 evening's proceedings. We do have multiple
8 speakers and in order to ensure that everybody
9 speaks which is the objective, I want to go
10 through a little bit about how this evening will
11 proceed before I describe the proposal and then
12 before we ask the School Leadership Team and
13 then the Citywide Council on High Schools for
14 their presentation.

15 There is a sign-up list to speak in the
16 outside of this meeting room. If you wish to
17 speak please sign up. Please do so by 6:15 p.m.
18 in which case we will stop taking sign-up for
19 this evening's comment.

20 Each speaker has two minutes in which to, to
21 provide comment. After 1 minute and 30 seconds
22 so that you can keep track, you will see a sign
23 that indicates, as this sign indicates, that you
24 have 30 seconds left. And when your two minutes
25 are up you will see a sign saying that time is

1 up.

2 We ask that at that point you pass the
3 microphone off so that we can continue with this
4 evening and make sure that all speakers can be
5 heard.

6 If you wish to submit your comments in
7 writing you can also do this either this evening
8 by passing them to the front or by providing
9 them on the website of the Department of
10 Education under the section titled Panel for
11 Educational Policy. You can submit written
12 comment. Again, all comment is being recorded
13 so that it can be used by the Panel on
14 Educational Policy for their vote January 26th of
15 2010.

16 I'm now going to describe the proposal in
17 brief. I'm going to describe some of the
18 rationale behind the proposal in brief then I'll
19 pass it to the School Leadership Team for their
20 presentation this evening.

21 This is a proposal to transform an
22 institution from one where the majority of
23 students are not graduating to one where the
24 majority of students are.

25 I'm sorry. Before I go forward I want to

1 introduce translation services.

2 FEMALE VOICE: [Speaking Spanish]

3 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Thank you very much.
4 Thank you very much.

5 To the gentleman's point and I would ask for
6 the rest of the evening the speakers please
7 speak in turn but thank you for the point.

8 The four-year graduation rate of this school
9 is 47%. That is one of many factors; some of
10 them are statistics, some of them not that led
11 to the school receiving a D on its Progress
12 Report this year.

13 Some of those factors that aren't statistics
14 are issues of how the school is organized and
15 its processes and those processes were assessed
16 and that assessment by educators led to an
17 underdeveloped with proficient features which is
18 a low rating on this year's Quality Review.

19 The school received similar ratings the year
20 before.

21 Also looked at were questions of student
22 safety. Only 51% of students ranked the school
23 as a place where they feel safe which is a very
24 low ranking when you compare it with schools
25 citywide.

1 Given all of this we tend to see that not
2 many students apply to the school and that that
3 is part of the rationale for this evening's
4 proposal.

5 I want to emphasize that there is not an
6 individual in this room or elsewhere, there is
7 not a group of individuals in this room or
8 elsewhere who are specifically responsible for
9 some of the facts that I described but it is the
10 view of those of us who proposed this transition
11 this evening that when you have the facts that
12 we have in front of us and when you know that
13 you can do better that you have to say its time
14 to change and the proposal to receive public
15 comment this evening is a proposal to change.

16 I want to be clear about a couple of the
17 facts this evening because I know that some of
18 the consequences of the proposal would impact
19 many people in the room and so I want to be very
20 clear about some of the consequences.

21 Number one this is not a proposal to send
22 any of the students in this school building
23 currently to another school. Every student who
24 currently attends this school can stay at
25 Metropolitan Corporate Academy and graduate from

1 Metropolitan Corporate Academy.

2 Number two this is not a proposal to shut
3 the doors of this school building and to use
4 this school building for another purpose such as
5 residential apartments or anything else. This
6 is a proposal to change the organizational use
7 of this school building.

8 And finally number three a new Department of
9 Education School in this building as has been
10 proposed would serve special need youngsters, it
11 would serve overage and under-credited
12 youngsters and any new school in this building
13 must hire at least 50% of the qualified staff
14 who are currently in this school who wish to
15 work in that school.

16 We look forward very much to hearing the
17 comments and proposals of the councils
18 represented on this evening's panel. We look
19 forward very much to hearing your comment. We
20 know this is a difficult proposal and we
21 appreciate very much your taking the time to be
22 here this evening.

23 I'll now pass the microphone to the School
24 Leadership Team for their presentation and
25 absolutely if everyone would say their names

1 that would be great. Thank you.

2 MS. ADELA GIBSON: Good evening everyone.
3 My name is Adela Gibson. Okay can you hear me
4 now?

5 Okay my name is Adela Gibson. I am co-chair
6 of the school's leadership team here at MCA. Is
7 this better? Okay thank you.

8 I'd like to thank the Deputy Chancellor John
9 White and everyone on the panel for being here
10 and thank all of you also for coming out this
11 evening to show your support. Thank you very
12 much.

13 The Deputy Chancellor mentioned that the
14 school percentage is low and that's one of the
15 reasons the graduation percentage is low and
16 that is why MCA is qualified; however there are
17 a lot of factors affecting the statistics that
18 have been put in front of the Chancellor and the
19 Deputy Chancellor.

20 MCA has been a transitional school. It was
21 started as an alternative school and has become
22 now an academic school. That's--and we're still
23 in a transitional period.

24 In 2006 the school did a lot better but the
25 statistics only show a four-year period. I

1 don't know if that was intentional but it
2 doesn't really give the full picture. It
3 doesn't show that MCA is a school that really
4 serves the community. Our students participate
5 in community affairs and are a viable part of
6 the community which is much needed here.

7 The--we have a debate team that is number--I
8 don't know but it's one of the top; number one
9 is it? Okay. Thank you, thank you.

10 See we have people here to let us know that
11 that debate team is number one. Okay. That
12 stands for something. You cannot be number one
13 unless you have analytical and research skills.
14 Where do they get that from? MCA. Okay?

15 At MCA we say yes we can. And our students
16 can. What is not shown is the way the
17 statistics are slanted. It's slanted to give a
18 different view so you're not getting the full
19 picture of what MCA can do and that's important
20 that you do.

21 I provided everyone on the panel with some
22 information about some of the statistics that
23 are proposed and I'm asking that they please
24 read that carefully because those numbers need
25 to--they need to be reevaluated.

1 This school should not be closed. We're a
2 small school. It's about 400 students in here.
3 You can't take a yardstick for and measure a
4 school of 400 students and use that same--put it
5 on the same page with a school of a thousand,
6 2,000? You can't do that. It's not fair.

7 So I just want the panel to appreciate that
8 you know the evaluation needs to be made level.
9 The playing field has to be level okay? It
10 can't be uphill for some and downhill for others
11 and for us it's a downhill slant and that's
12 totally unacceptable.

13 If you look around the school just the fact
14 that the students come here each day, the ones
15 that are able to come because we do have some
16 students at MCA that really just don't come and
17 they have been absent possibly incarcerated,
18 it's unfair that they're considered in the
19 statistics.

20 Those students are considered so there's
21 about 12 graduates from last year that have
22 really brought down the numbers for the school.
23 Now if you take those off I think we'd have a
24 passing grade and that's important and that's
25 what I mean by the playing field has to be

1 leveled. It's totally unfair.

2 The other point that I did want to make.
3 I'm sorry. Bear with me please. Oh yeah I did
4 mention about the cafeteria, there's a lack of
5 facilities here. If you want to close the
6 school and, and put it someplace better with the
7 same staff I think maybe we could go for that.

8 We need a place that the students can be
9 proud of and not to say they're not because here
10 they're accepted, they're encouraged, they're
11 motivated and they do quite well on the numbers
12 as I said don't show, don't accommodate what
13 really happens here. It's totally unfair.

14 The playing field needs to be level. It
15 cannot be judged against other schools that are
16 four times our size. Look, look. Everyone's
17 here. Its 400 students and you probably have
18 some that are still trying to get here because
19 people work. And you know everybody doesn't
20 have--some people work at night. We have a lot
21 of parents that work at night 'cause this
22 happens quite often.

23 But the point is that people care, people
24 are concerned and the playing field needs to be
25 leveled okay? Thank you.

1 MS. INGRID PACHECO: Good afternoon
2 everyone. My name is Ingrid Pacheco. What I
3 would like to say is my son hasn't been coming
4 here for too long but since he's been at MCA
5 I've observed MCA for the last couple of years.
6 I have a family member that graduated from here
7 as a salutatorian, full scholarship and is doing
8 very well. So I chose to bring my son here and
9 what I noticed is the teachers care a lot.

10 What about the students who are not allowed
11 to go to a large school? They are lost in the
12 large school. I'll just use an example like
13 Edward Murrow. You have to be disciplined to go
14 there. The students here you come, you come--
15 you can talk to the teachers. It's like you're
16 home. The teachers try to help during their
17 lunch hour, after school, where do you get that?

18 What about the students who can't function
19 in a large school. Where would they go?
20 They'll be lost. If we give up on our kids, if
21 we as parents give up on our kids whose to look
22 after them? So the teachers here come like
23 they're next home so what I looked at is it's a
24 small school, and we have students who are doing
25 very well here. Just like any other large

1 school we have students who are doing very
2 poor at Brooklyn Tech. It's a large school,
3 it's a well-known school but we have students
4 here who could compare with them doing just as
5 well; passing the regents and going forward.

6 But the main thing here is to help the
7 students get--the teachers look out, you are
8 failing you can come to them. Here it is, come
9 on your lunch hour, come after school, we'll
10 help you. In a large school you're lost. Where
11 we going to put the students who do not have
12 anywhere to go? We don't have any smaller
13 schools.

14 Everything is a charter school now. Older
15 kids, there are no charter schools for the high
16 school kids so we need--some students may need
17 more than four years to graduate but they will
18 graduate. And this is what we are looking for.

19 Not everyone is on the same page. So you
20 know to close MCA to me would be very unfair
21 because not everyone can move along in the same--
22 -with the same speed. We all have different
23 strides. You know I mean some people go to
24 college four years, some can do it in three,
25 some need five so it's the same thing.

1 With a school you may need five but they
2 will graduate. That's what we're looking for.
3 Not failure, we want success and not everyone
4 can succeed at the same pace so please give us a
5 chance. Thank you.

6 MS. YVETTE SIMON: I'm Yvette Simon I'm on
7 the Executive Board for the PTA here. Sorry.
8 I'm Yvette. Sorry.

9 I think there's an inherent danger in giving
10 a single story. I mean when my daughter first
11 started here from junior high school her grades
12 were mediocre. But when she came here I'm
13 telling you every marking period she made, she
14 made Honor Roll and I give credit, total credit
15 to the principal, to the teachers. She comes
16 home and she talks about the teachers every
17 single day, even to 10th Grade she still talks
18 about it.

19 Even now, every day mom, mom I got my--her
20 flute and someone's teaching her how to play the
21 flute and someone else is teaching her to do her
22 math better. I mean she started out a little
23 bit slow with the math this year but she's done
24 so much better I swear. It's like a song she
25 sings every single day about this school.

1 Also I'd like to say that when we set a
2 standard for the child and we set it here and we
3 know the reality is right here and we cut
4 progress in half or we take away progress we do
5 not know what the child can potentially do.

6 You don't know that. What is the difference
7 between tearing apart a school and making a new
8 school? You do not know what is going to happen
9 and that is a danger because you do not know if
10 that child in the new school is going to do
11 better or worse. You do not know that.

12 It doesn't speak to the child's emotional
13 stability or the emotional from the ages of 14
14 to 18 the child is looking to be accepted and he
15 already feels accepted here amongst his fellow
16 students.

17 When I walk through the halls of this school
18 I mean what I see are happy children; children
19 who are interacting so well with each other,
20 with their teachers, with their principal. I
21 mean it's just like I mean when you stay outside
22 in the cut you don't know what's going on but
23 when you get involved, involved you see it. And
24 I'm just so happy to be a part and to see that
25 every child here that I know you know is doing

1 well. They look very happy to me. You know
2 they're involved in so many activities.

3 I saw the dance class here, I saw many times
4 they look so happy. And I see so many children,
5 so many children on the Honor Roll you know. I
6 mean I'm a little bit nervous right now and I
7 can't say exactly, exactly but when I speak
8 about the stan--I want to speak again because in
9 terms of progress that the children have been
10 making how are you going to know where the child
11 is going to keep going if you stop the progress?

12 If you cut progress and keep cutting it I
13 mean think of it like this; the children are
14 placed under enough pressure, I mean to make a
15 grade. Under a system that pressures them
16 already. So in that light and I have to be
17 honest is the child failing the system or is the
18 system failing the child? And I'm done.

19 I want to say thank you everyone for
20 listening.

21 MR. WHITE: Thank you Ms. Simon. I will now
22 pass it to Mr. Bellow of the Citywide Council on
23 High Schools and Ms. Armstrong-Barrow of the
24 Citywide Council on High Schools.

25 MR. BELLOW: Thank you Deputy Chancellor.

1 Good evening parents. My name is Abeal don
2 Bellow [phonetic] and I want to thank the
3 parents for electing me. I represent you on
4 CCHS. My president is here, Valerie Armstrong.

5 I want to let you know I was discussing this
6 issue with my daughter last night; she's a 12th
7 Grader at James Madison High School. We have a
8 very long conversation of this issue. I just
9 let you know that I have--I'm a proud father of--
10 -I have two children in New York City public
11 schools. My son is in the elementary school and
12 my daughter is in high school.

13 This is a very emotional issue for me to
14 talk about closing schools. I came to this
15 country about 20 years ago and one of the
16 reasons I came here is to have my children to
17 have a better future and I do know that that
18 future is the education that is the only key.

19 My father had 16 children and I could see
20 that the difference between myself and my other
21 brothers and sisters is education. It's very
22 paramount to me education is the key. Looking
23 at yesterday also I was going through a lot of
24 research and I find something very interesting.
25 My comment is that that's one of our civil

1 liberties is that education is our passport to
2 the future for tomorrow belongs to the people
3 who will be - - today.

4 I want to thank the parents that were here
5 for doing that for your children because you're
6 preparing them for tomorrow because without
7 education there is no tomorrow.

8 We can look at any civilizations that
9 dominate the playing field is education; not
10 only education but getting a quality education
11 which is a most important thing and that's what
12 we're discussing here tonight. Can we give
13 these kids good, quality education and that's
14 why we're going to hold the DOE for that our
15 children should have a good quality education.
16 Not only going to school, have a good quality
17 education.

18 Having said that what I want to enjoin
19 everybody here tonight to help me what I'm doing
20 a yearly goal the DOE will now offer this
21 hearing. They would just close the school
22 without any public hearing. The parents turned
23 out, we - - to have this Hearing taking place.

24 What I want you to do after tonight is talk
25 to elected officials, go back to them, let's

1 have more hearings about this issue. The
2 process is not working in New York City that's
3 what we've got to be discussing. We have to go
4 back to our elected officials. I'm going to
5 call my--I was talking to Adela already, we
6 think that we would call our elected officials
7 that this is not what we want because they are
8 the ones that actually have the power to do
9 that.

10 So I want to enjoin all of you tonight.
11 When you leave tonight let's call our elected
12 officials and see what we can do about it
13 because we're talking about the future of our
14 education and actually for me as an African
15 American I look at the population of the school
16 is mostly minorities. So we have to take that
17 very seriously. We need a good quality
18 education for our children so we should start
19 doing that tonight.

20 And I want to enjoin all of these children
21 who are here also. Call your elected officials
22 about this issue and everybody - - on the 26th.
23 I want to thank you. If the struggle continues
24 it's not going to stop. We have to continue
25 doing that and I want to thank all the parents

1 tonight that this is a good fight. Your
2 children's education is a good fight. There is
3 no better fight than to fight for good quality
4 education for your children.

5 I will do that with you, I've been doing
6 that for the past 16 years. I do that for my
7 children where they study. I study as a PTA
8 president of your school because I do know that
9 for kids to advance they need good quality
10 education. I want to thank you.

11 Oh then Valerie Armstrong. She is the
12 President of the CCHS.

13 MS. VALERIE ARMSTRONG-BARROWS: Good
14 evening. My name is Valerie Armstrong-Barrows
15 I'm the President of Citywide Council of High
16 Schools. We are a council of representative
17 parents who have parents in high schools and
18 myself and Mr. Bellow we represent Brooklyn.

19 I have been to every single public hearing
20 in Brooklyn and the same exists throughout.
21 I've heard DOE say one thing and I've heard from
22 the parents, the alumni, the administration say
23 something totally different.

24 My concern is this: where was the DOE for
25 years that they're saying the school was

1 failing? What were they doing that they're
2 going to do different when a new school comes
3 in? Because of that I rise in opposition to the
4 closing of the school.

5 Our council last night took the first steps
6 of passing a resolution and the resolution
7 reads: Whereas New York City Department of
8 Education has announced plans to phase out and
9 eventually close 14 high schools beginning
10 September 2010; and whereas the New York City
11 DOE failed to deal with all relevant issues. Be
12 it therefore resolved that the Citywide Council
13 for High Schools urges that a moratorium be
14 instituted on all high school closings.

15 We are asking the DOE to step back and give
16 us the real reasons and the real issues;
17 statements that we heard tonight from Mr. John
18 White and I have respect for the individuals
19 standing before you. I've worked with them in
20 other capacities; however in this capacity they
21 are wrong.

22 The statements we heard was that there is a
23 47% graduation rate; now that's the four-year
24 graduation rate? What about in five years? How
25 many students graduated in five years? How many

1 students graduated in six years? The school
2 they want to have come in that will be phased in
3 that's being proposed; it's been said by Mr.
4 White, will deal with students who are special
5 needs, underage, over credited students, however
6 that is the population of MCA right now so if
7 that is the current population what is going to
8 be the difference?

9 How and using what criteria will this new
10 school be evaluated on? If we're taking a
11 school with 400 and something students with the
12 exact same population that's being proposed and
13 is going to have 500 students and the building
14 is going to remain the same we only can keep 50%
15 or 51% of the teachers then how are we going to
16 guarantee success for those students?

17 Will we then say we're going to judge
18 success based on the five-year graduation rate
19 because we already see from statistics and the
20 state has already determined that four years is
21 not really a realistic determination of how to
22 graduate students from those particular
23 backgrounds; our special need students, our
24 students coming in from middle schools on a one
25 and two who have to be taught the proper way to

1 write and to address the questions on regents
2 being asked to pass regents in order to
3 graduate? If they come in not able to read how
4 are they going to pass regents? There must be a
5 different criteria used for judging our various
6 different students.

7 Our city is made up of many individuals as
8 our mayor is very often heard to say. We cannot
9 use the same ruler to measure every student so
10 we can't use the same rules to measure every
11 school. There has to be a change.

12 Understand that you must be very active in
13 this fight. If you do not it will go through
14 and the new schools will be phased in and it
15 will continue next year and the year after that
16 and the year after that. You cannot do it just
17 coming to the public hearing and then show up
18 for the PEP where the mayor's seven people will
19 vote because they have the majority. You have
20 to do more. Throughout the city there are going
21 to be other meetings all throughout the city.
22 You have to be vocal, you have to be present,
23 you have to tell someone and bring someone else
24 with you. Now the students here; you're not
25 allowed to bring your cell phones into school

1 however y'all have them other places. You
2 have them; you're texting all over the place.
3 You need to leave here and text everybody in
4 your phone and tell them where to go and where
5 they need to be.

6 The students alone can get us couple of
7 thousand people out in location. If you care
8 about your school get your whole school out to
9 these locations. Believe me if they have a PEP
10 meeting where - - get into the doors, they can't
11 get onto the block, they will have to think
12 about what they're doing.

13 Make sure the newspapers are there. Call
14 them up let them know what's happening. Be
15 vocal. Thank you.

16 MR. WHITE: Thank you Ms. Armstrong-Barrows.
17 We're going to begin the public comment portion
18 of this evening's meeting. There is a
19 microphone at the front. I'm going to call the
20 speaker who is the person who is to deliver a
21 comment at that moment and I'm going to also
22 call the second number behind that person.

23 When you come up if you've signed up to
24 speak you've been given a number. If you could-
25 -I'll also call the number in case I'm unable to

1 read your name and we'll--if you could pass
2 the number when you come up front to the woman
3 who is here at the front as well when you come
4 down.

5 We ask that you adhere to the two minutes
6 and again we'll be giving you a heads-up as well
7 as you present comments. So I would ask speaker
8 number one and speaker number two to please come
9 up front.

10 MS. HERNANDEZ: Alright. Sorry. My name is
11 Miss Hernandez and I'm a parent of a child that
12 attends this school. He came in as a transfer
13 student from John J High School which houses
14 four high schools in one building.

15 He was failing every class, every semester,
16 every year. He transferred in here because it
17 was closer 'cause we live in the community. I
18 work in the community; this is the only school
19 that he could apply to to be close to home.

20 Can you believe I look at his grades now and
21 he passes every single class? That boy was
22 mainstream from special ed; what you consider
23 special needs you're going to transfer in here.
24 That boy was that. They had told me oh he's not
25 going to make it; he might be that statistic to

1 drop out.

2 This school changed that real fast. And it
3 wasn't just the school; it was him putting the
4 effort, that was the teachers, that was the
5 principal, that was the counselor, that was them
6 talking to me and I could come in and my son
7 said mommy what a difference it is to have a
8 small classroom one on one with the teachers and
9 I'm not lost. I know where I have to go, I know
10 how to get to my class and I know the work. I
11 understand and I can relate. They're getting
12 through to me.

13 So if you close this school you're taking
14 something away from the community that we need.
15 My son now is mainstream and he's about to
16 graduate. He makes up his credits, he
17 graduates. But I still say the community, as a
18 parent, needs this school because all other
19 schools in the area they're selective in letting
20 their children in. So where are the kids from
21 this community going to go? Thank you and have
22 a good night.

23 MR. WHITE: Thank you Ms. Hernandez.
24 Speaker number two is William Meehan. I'm also
25 going to ask after Mr. Meehan speaks that the

1 representative from Council Member Levin's
2 office joins us to speak as well.

3 MR. WILLIAM MEEHAN: Good evening my name is
4 Bill Meehan an Assistant Field Director for the
5 Council of School Supervisors and
6 Administrators, the CSA.

7 We are the union that represents principals
8 and assistant principals in the New York City
9 public school system. The DOE has announced the
10 closing of 20 schools; some of them with new
11 principals, some of them just beginning to turn
12 around and a full 8 of them that were opened not
13 very long ago by the head of the DOE himself,
14 Chancellor Kline.

15 CSA embraces accountability and believes
16 that schools should be closed if they have
17 failed over a period of three or more years
18 despite receiving full support from the DOE. We
19 won't tolerate the propagation of failure.

20 But in the case of several of these proposed
21 closures we must ask if some of the schools are
22 being held accountable while the apparatus that
23 supports them is not. In those cases we must
24 inquire if the schools were really failing and
25 by what measures they were failing. We must ask

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

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

13 DOE should include an analysis of the role
14 of the appropriate school support organizations
15 since each school pays the SSO to advise them.
16 What sort of service did each of these 20
17 schools get for their money?

18 Finally when every question is asked and
19 answered we are likely to discover that some of
20 these schools can't be saved. We are also
21 likely to discover that many of them can remain
22 open and thrive with adequate support from
23 superintendent's networks and include fair
24 enrollment practices. Thank you.

25 MR. WHITE: Thank you Mr. Meehan. Your next

1 speaker is Council Member Levin representative
2 Ramy Metal and the third speaker that is Mr.
3 Charles Friedman.

4 MR. RAMY METAL: My name is Ramy Metal
5 [phonetic] I'm here representing Councilmember
6 Steven Levin. Councilmember Levin came into
7 office about two weeks ago. We found out about
8 this fairly recently. But he's apologized that
9 he can't be here. He was called away at the
10 last minute but was going to work with the
11 community, the school community, the principals,
12 with UFT, and with the students and with the
13 parents in the weeks and days to come.

14 So I just want to leave my contact
15 information. Mention that you should reach out
16 to your elected officials, absolutely. Let me
17 give you my information. Our phone number is
18 718-875-5200. I'll say it again. Its 718-875-
19 5200 and you can email us at slevin, L-E-V-I-N
20 at council.nyc.gov and we look forward to
21 hearing from you in the coming days and weeks
22 and working with the schools. Thank you.

23 MR. WHITE: Thank you Mr. Metal. Number
24 three Charles Friedman. The next speaker will
25 be number four, Noel Forshaw.

1 MR. CHARLES FRIEDMAN: Good evening. My
2 name is Charles Friedman I'm a High School
3 District Representative for the United
4 Federation of Teachers. But I first would like
5 to say that many of us feel our thoughts,
6 prayers, and hopefully your dollars are with the
7 brave people of Haiti.

8 Now you heard Mr. White say something that
9 no one is responsible. Well I'd like to know
10 when you look around here you see the peeling
11 paint and plaster. Who's responsible for this
12 state-of-the-art 21st century DOE cafeteria?

13 Okay now. One of the teachers I believe it
14 was Chris when he showed me the science labs he
15 says I knew they were going to close this school
16 as soon as they put those science labs in here
17 'cause those science labs are not for our kids,
18 they're for the next school that's going to come
19 in here.

20 Now you all remember the days when we had an
21 Education Chancellor. What did an Education
22 Chancellor do with a school, a struggling school
23 like MCA? He would reach out to them and say
24 you are my responsibility I am taking you into
25 the Chancellor's District; I am going to be

1 personally responsible for your success.
2 You're going to get more help, extra money,
3 whatever it takes. Whatever it takes and it was
4 successful.

5 Well what do we have now? We have a
6 Corporate Chancellor who if you want to say the
7 struggling to schools are like a homeless person
8 on the street and he says help, help me and the
9 person walks right by without even making eye
10 contact. That's what we have now.

11 So while you hear many things about how, how
12 what he is - - for the students the truth is in
13 my opinion, the Chancellor is really an enemy of
14 the people. And I would say to Mr. White if he
15 really wants to help the students, if he doesn't
16 have already, get a teaching license, come out
17 and when the hiring freeze is lifted get a job.

18 And everybody else as was said before by
19 Valerie, you get out there at Brooklyn Tech on
20 January 26th for the pep rally. Thank you very
21 much.

22 MR. WHITE: Thank you Mr. Friedman. I'll
23 show you my license after the meeting. Number
24 four, Noel Forshaw [phonetic]. Number five,
25 speaker Jean Louis [phonetic].

1 MS. NOEL FORSHAW: Hi. Okay so I wrote
2 something 'cause I didn't know off my head but
3 here I go. Closing schools seems to be more
4 important in the improvement of our youth. The
5 more schools close the more presence opens. Our
6 school is not only a school, it's a family. We
7 have some of the most outstanding staff members
8 ever and without them I doubt any of us would be
9 going as far as we are.

10 Taking away our school is like taking a
11 person off life support. You are cutting off a
12 lifeline many students will not be able to go on
13 without this building. Of course we aren't the
14 greatest school out there but closing us will
15 only heighten the problem. A child's education
16 is something very precious and only MCA can do
17 so for many of these students. Passionate staff
18 members push us further and further daily
19 towards our goals. And our determination to
20 fight this injustice that you're trying to do
21 will out rule anything that anybody has to say.

22 Suddenly attention has been put on our
23 building but for the past couple of years we've
24 been ignored and haven't gotten any support. So
25 basically it's like you can't expect a

1 masterpiece without any art supplies. That's
2 all I have to say.

3 MR. WHITE: Thank you very much. Speaker
4 number five is up. Speaker number six Stefan
5 Adams is next.

6 MR. JEAN LOUIS: Ladies and gentlemen the
7 question I present to you tonight in light of
8 these events is the following:

9 When are we really going to address the
10 needs of our students? The students and
11 teachers at Metropolitan need help from parents,
12 administrators, these city officials, most of
13 whose faces we are seeing for the very first
14 time ever. We have been seeking it for a long
15 time now but their response is we're shutting
16 you down because you're not measuring up.

17 However how can we possibly equate success
18 without addressing the cycle of social needs of
19 our students? Time and time again it has become
20 apparent that this institution is the drop off
21 point for juvenile delinquents of the system.
22 Nevertheless I have witnessed teachers here that
23 sincerely work with these students who come to
24 school despite the issues that they have at
25 home. Issues that they harbor mentally and

1 emotionally and these teachers have fought for
2 these students and made well with what they
3 have.

4 I have attended the school. The schools
5 which you claim are better than us where this
6 sort of attention is where when students--when
7 faced with these similar issues at home they are
8 suggested that they transfer out as if that
9 would help them in any capacity.

10 I am an alumnus of this school and I'm
11 living proof that this school can and has done
12 better than what you portray tonight. I came
13 out of a family that has always sustained
14 emotional damage from all sides but despite the
15 heartbreak that I endured at home I came to this
16 school for a dream and a passion and it was well
17 fed and I was given an adequate education.

18 I graduated in 2007 with honors and
19 scholarships from prestigious organizations such
20 as Financial Communication Society, Goldman
21 Sachs; I was helped by the State of New York,
22 other factions. I was helped by Marty Macris
23 [phonetic] and the Chancellor himself, the very
24 same person that recommended this school
25 closure.

1 I currently am a junior at Virginia
2 Commonwealth University. I'm majoring in
3 English and Political Science. I have a 3.6
4 GPA. And I'm going to Columbia for graduate
5 school.

6 And believe it or not I started right here
7 at this very school that you condemn tonight.
8 But it's not all about test scores. If it were
9 not for teachers like Alex Jones, [phonetic]
10 Chris Renault, [phonetic] if it were not for
11 invaluable staff like Jeannette Oaks [phonetic]
12 and Mr. Lonall George [phonetic] right here all
13 the other people here at MCA who provide a
14 community of support and encouragement for
15 students that need more than just a book in
16 their face, a pencil in hand and a slap on the
17 back saying pass this test or fail in life.

18 This school would warrant the criticism they
19 have received if not for these wonderful people
20 right here. I'm just going to close off my time
21 is up. I'm just going to say where does it
22 really stop; I mean the sweeping of dirt under
23 the rug? What do we really want from our
24 students tonight? Do we want them to succeed or
25 look like they succeeded?

1 There is not only one key to success;
2 there is a chain of keys and each must be used
3 in a specific order to unlock these students'
4 futures. We need to address the emotional needs
5 in conjunction with providing a motivational
6 atmosphere for our students like this has school
7 has so desperately been attempting to accomplish
8 without the necessary resources that you have
9 failed to provide to them because academics is
10 not the only key to success.

11 I honestly do not foresee another school
12 accomplishing the great feat of turning students
13 who believe that they do not have much at stake
14 in life and changing their lives around for the
15 better. I do not see another school coming out
16 of this.

17 MR. WHITE: Thank you Mr. Jean Louis.
18 Number six, Stefan Adams.

19 MR. STEFAN ADAMS: Yeah good night
20 everybody. I'm going to be timing this and yeah
21 so I know I have two minutes. So yeah my name
22 is Stefan Adams. I'm currently a junior at this
23 school and I'm on the debate team and basically
24 yeah--and basically I just wanted to say that
25 like personally this school has really changed

1 my life. Like coming into this school I
2 didn't know where I was going to go and like I
3 was lost basically. And when I came to this
4 school I was, I seen the school. I was like
5 okay it's a small school and like as I joined it
6 was like personally as I joined the debate team
7 like debate like in the school has like gave me
8 a voice because before that I was considered a
9 statistic. Like I wasn't going to make it or
10 something and like through debate I can express
11 my voice and this school has really shown me how
12 to you know express my voice as a person. And
13 you know I improve through my grades and
14 everything and I just wanted to like you know
15 spit like a rap if anybody.

16 Alright so it's called Philosophy of My
17 Community. It's a rap that I made up myself.
18 It goes yo it's my local eulogy, take you where
19 I live, here I'm preaching my community. Eye
20 for eye, black on black crimes, no unity, blood,
21 crip, gang members there ain't nothing new to
22 me. Yeah walk the streets, drug down on it,
23 show you where I live, you'll find people
24 stealing, always gunshots that will have your
25 knees kneeling, turn, turned on the news you

1 will have mass killings. This misconception
2 needs chillin' the place where I live so I
3 understand the feeling only I can know, only I
4 can know - - 'cause I live here. This is what
5 I've been seein'. Okay education wise chillin
6 if the board of ed don't care for my school or -
7 - lack of funds, lack of funds, every day repeat
8 and they don't care for minority students, no
9 appealing and I'm going to leave you with a
10 question and I'm will just yeah basically I say
11 times up.

12 MR. WHITE: Thank you Mr. Adams. Number
13 seven Devante Escarfori [phonetic] and speaker
14 number eight afterward is Deborah Barnes
15 [phonetic].

16 MR. DEVANTE: ESCARFORI: Alright good night
17 everyone so again my name is Devante Escarfori
18 and like my partner just said, that's my debate
19 partner right there Stefan. I'm on the debate
20 team. So just to show you this is some of our
21 trophies we won on the debate team. This is
22 MCA. This is from the Brooklyn/Queens Catholic
23 Forensic League. This is first place in '08 and
24 '09. So alright so basically this is a team
25 award, this an overall for the whole year so we

1 took first place out of so many teams.

2 So first I just wanted to say that from MCA
3 and just coming here I learned that - - to
4 expand our minds and also to enjoy time. So
5 basically I'm saying that because in MCA we
6 actually learn. We're being educated and also
7 we enjoy ourselves. We have dance programs and
8 also debate. Through debate we go to so many
9 places. We went to Wisconsin in my freshman
10 year so we travel. We get to learn so many new
11 things. You increase your roll cap so basically
12 another thing we started at a deficit before
13 like at that beginning of this year so imagine
14 next year if our school is phased out we're
15 going to have less money so people everyone
16 experienced budget cuts and stuff like that so
17 we're going to have less money so coming into
18 the school.

19 So I'm basically saying that if we're phased
20 out its going to be a lack because basically
21 it's like this; how are you going to achieve
22 perfection if you have neglection? So basically
23 I'm saying that because if we've neglected for
24 so long we don't have the resources like
25 everyone is saying before how are we going to

1 achieve? We've still been achieving to
2 increase the graduation rates. We have to have
3 the resources here. If we don't have the
4 resources how are we going to be able to even
5 get better grades and stuff like that so
6 basically we have to have the resources in this
7 school.

8 So if you phase out our school and you're
9 going to put in the same type of school how do
10 you guarantee to have the resources to increase
11 or increase the quality of our school like what
12 the--before when we said look at the condition
13 of our school and matter of fact we still love
14 our school; our school is the community. Its
15 unity, it's a family like everyone's been
16 saying. These teachers here, not to shout out
17 any teachers but every teacher here, there you
18 have one on one just like we been saying before
19 so we have to keep this school open. We have
20 our programs here that even without the
21 resources we still achieve so good night thank
22 you.

23 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Speaker number eight
24 is Deborah Barnes. The next speaker is number
25 nine Frank Bessom [phonetic].

1 MS. DEBORAH BARNES: Hello. My name is
2 Deborah Barnes and I'm a former parent
3 coordinator and former teacher and concerned
4 community member and what I fail to understand
5 is how the DOE could not complete its contract
6 for excellence which is a legally binding
7 contract; an agreement to reduce class size but
8 have the audacity to come in and criticize
9 schools saying that they are failing and tell
10 their children and their parents and the
11 community that they're failing but not account
12 for 243 million dollars?. No reports, no
13 audits, no expenditures.

14 The corrective action plan created but not
15 followed, supplanting of monies but no answers
16 as to where that money went, what it was spent
17 on, where the resources are. It undermines the
18 whole academic success of our children.

19 Then there is monies being spent on
20 initiatives where Harvard professionals come in
21 and they create initiatives using cell phones
22 which is something that the DOE ruled out and
23 said students could not bring into the school or
24 could not be on their cell phones but yet they
25 give these as initiatives. It's a total

1 conflict of interest.

2 Then when they do not address the
3 achievement gap of our young people they send
4 them out of state. And in these out of state
5 facilities there were abuses, atrocities and all
6 kinds of things going on but yet these things go
7 un--they go unaddressed and ignored.

8 They allocated--the city allocated 1 billion
9 dollars to prison construction in the Bronx.
10 Took 1 billion dollars in school cuts and 6,700
11 classes are oversized classes throughout the
12 city but yet you still say the schools are
13 failing.

14 My answer or my question--I have an answer
15 and a question. The schools aren't failing, the
16 DOE is failing and you all need to get it right.
17 We've been waiting many, many, many years for
18 adequate resources. The building looks the way
19 it does because there have not been adequate
20 resources over a long periods of time and my
21 questions to you is how long do you expect to
22 utilize our children's resources to pay your
23 friends and private in private contract on the
24 backs of our children while their future's hang
25 in the balance?

1 MR. WHITE: Thank you very much.

2 MS. BARNES: Thank you.

3 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Speaker number nine,
4 Frank Besson. Speaker number ten who is next is
5 Kevin Tyrone James.

6 MR. FRANCE BESSON: Hello. Good afternoon
7 ladies and gentlemen. My name is France Besson.
8 I'm a junior at MCA High School. Before you
9 stated you said we ain't getting no more
10 students applying for MCA. How could apply for
11 MCA if we still in the building that we're in
12 right now. Who wants to come to this school
13 that's paint, who wants to do things like that?
14 Come on. I feel insulting 'cause like this
15 year, next year, I'm a junior right now right?
16 We could say that we're honor rolls going
17 straight down. We--our graduating rate will
18 improve in the future. You can't just base it
19 on four years. Base it on six years, come six
20 years later see what happens. I feel I'm
21 number--our school is number one in debate
22 tournaments. I'm a debate--I debate in school
23 right. I didn't know what I wanted to be until
24 right now. I wanted to become a lawyer so
25 that's why I joined debate. Debate helps me do

1 that. I'll go out of state, I'll go see
2 places and learn things. Come on, isn't that
3 worth something? I'm not done. I'm not done.
4 I'm not done. How could you want to phase our
5 school out? We come to school every day, do you
6 come to our school every day? Do you see where
7 we go through? Now they don't do that. So - -
8 we make our school fun. Our school didn't have
9 nothing so we try--we try to bring a basketball
10 team but we have no place to go. Isn't--doesn't
11 kids and 8th grade look at things like that?
12 Where do you give us things to do? We don't
13 have sports, we don't have nothing. We paint
14 the best - - . If you'll--if you phase out our
15 school no money next year for debate so where
16 are we going to be right now? So I - - fulfill
17 my dream? How does that make me feel?

18 MR. WHITE: Thank you very much. Speaker
19 number ten Kevin Tyrone James. Speaker number
20 11 is Deasia Oliver [phonetic].

21 MR. KEVIN JAMES: Hello everyone. My name's
22 Kevin James and I'm actually a former--I'm
23 actually an alumni of Metropolitan Corporate
24 Academy High School and I'm also a proud--I'm
25 also a proud member of the St. John's University

1 community as well.

2 I'd like to point out a couple of things
3 very quickly and that's looking at this proposal
4 for example. The first thing was that when they
5 talked about the Progress Reports; the Progress
6 Reports came in in 2007, the year that our class
7 left and I graduated and so is my friend CJ who
8 has graduated. The problem is if you look at
9 these reports and look at every year the grade
10 that we get it doesn't also reflect the time
11 before that.

12 Things were a lot worse and more importantly
13 when Lonall George came in and if things
14 improved--things improved a lot more. And right
15 now we hit a point right now where right now as
16 students right now especially those who are
17 currently still standing here today who is here
18 tonight that they want to see the school survive
19 as well.

20 I also would like to say that for example
21 that right now like for example I'm also a
22 member--I was also Captain of the Metropolitan
23 Corporate Academy Debate Team as well and more
24 importantly that has helped me to expand myself.
25 I've now also become a member of the Institute

1 for Response Citizenship which is an institute
2 for African American male--the top African
3 American males from all across the nation.

4 And more importantly I'd just like to say
5 one last thing about who I am and what I want to
6 do with my future and why MCA is so important to
7 me right now.

8 Right now I'm studying government and
9 politics because of the injustice I saw here at
10 MCA. One reason why I am who I am is because of
11 MCA. MCA taught me that one thing we can't
12 allow is injustice to survive in our
13 communities. And more importantly right now
14 these are the reflection of the injustice that
15 we see here today so as we all stand here
16 togeth--I don't want us to also remember that we
17 are victims of this but we can't just stay
18 victims. We have to keep fighting as long as
19 possible. We know there are more rallies coming
20 up; we attend those rallies we keep fighting we
21 don't stop. We make sure our voices are heard
22 and more importantly and this is why I'm here
23 today.

24 And for end time now I'd just like to say
25 thank you all for coming out tonight.

1 MR. WHITE: Thank you Mr. James. Number
2 11, Deasia Oliver. Number 12, Shaquana N.
3 [phonetic].

4 MS. DEASIA OLIVER: Good evening everybody.
5 My name is Deasia Oliver. I'm currently a
6 junior at Metropolitan Corporate Academy.
7 There's been a lot of issues that's been
8 addressed here and I totally agree with
9 everybody that's on our side because the
10 statistics don't know us. The statistics are
11 just numbers; they just represent what you think
12 you know. So something that really stood out to
13 me when this meeting first started is you said
14 you were concerned for our safety.

15 Our teachers ensure our safety. They will
16 run; they could be on the toilet they will run
17 with their pants down to come save us if we're
18 in danger. They spend time with us through
19 their lunch breaks, holidays, any time we need
20 them. If we call them at 3:00 in the morning
21 'cause we need something, 'cause we need them
22 they will answer the phone and they will make
23 sure that we have what we need.

24 They spend extra time with us after school
25 to tutor us students that have 55's. I failed

1 two classes last marking period. Please
2 believe that I got 90's in both of those classes
3 because my teachers took the time to tutor me in
4 those subjects; Miss Denham [phonetic], Alex,
5 Chris, Mr. George. All of these people that
6 worked, Miss Persephone, all these teachers that
7 work in our school they actually care about us
8 and you, you don't understand like--this is very
9 emotional. You don't understand. You don't
10 understand like the impact that it would have if
11 you was to shut our school down. Even though
12 I'm graduating next year you're saying that we
13 rule that the students that go here will be able
14 to finish their school year efficiently, its not
15 going to be the same because the students--we
16 have alumni that come back--that come back every
17 day. It's not one day that I don't see a older-
18 -that I don't see somebody that graduated from
19 here to come back every day of the year that we
20 come to school they come back.

21 I just want to say I love this school. We
22 have award winning debate teams, a excellent
23 dance team, Goldman Sachs, anything that you
24 could possibly think of even though you cut our
25 resources we've made a way. Thank you.

1 MR. WHITE: Thank you Ms. Oliver. Speaker
2 number 12 is up. The next speaker will be
3 speaker number 13 Kayla Costin [phonetic].

4 MS. SHAQUANA NORMAN: Hi my name is Shaquana
5 Norman and I'm a junior at MCA. MCA is not just
6 a school; the staff and students are my family.
7 Every day I have different issues going on in my
8 life but I look forward to coming here 8:20
9 every morning to spend the day with my family
10 'cause they truly understand me.

11 When I first came to MCA I didn't always
12 have the best attitude. This school taught me a
13 lot. They taught me to go for what I want
14 'cause what I want will not be handed to me.
15 And I want--and what I want is for my school,
16 MCA, to stay open so more students can
17 experience what I have experienced for the last
18 three years.

19 It's my understanding that this school has
20 been chosen to be closed because you think we
21 didn't make enough progress and the students are
22 failing. In fact the Department of Education
23 has failed us but how are we expected to succeed
24 without a library, no gym, no cafeteria or
25 auditorium. How do you give this school a grade

1 and compare us with other schools that you
2 will say is just like us when on the outside we
3 seem similar in the numbers but on the inside we
4 are not.

5 We don't have enough seats for us to sit in
6 class; we don't have textbooks to study with,
7 not enough resources for Level I and II
8 students. Even though we don't have these
9 things which I named above, we still manage to
10 succeed our goals the best way we can.

11 All I'm asking is for you to keep--help us
12 and keep our school open.

13 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Speaker number 13.
14 Speaker number 14 is next; Alex Jones.

15 MS. KAYLA COSTIN: Yeah good evening to the
16 Board, parents, everybody else in respectful - -
17 . Yeah like for one thing that you said Deputy
18 Chancellor earlier you said that--I have a bad
19 memory but--okay I'm going to address that one
20 later. But anyway I would like to say that I'm
21 on the debate team in this school and when I
22 came I was looking--oh yeah you said that--that
23 kids in middle school that you said that not a
24 lot of people come to this school, they don't
25 pick this for their choice but when you're in

1 middle school the teachers in middle school
2 make, make, make you choose - - and Brooklyn
3 Tech as your first choices. They make you put
4 the last--they see that the top schools that
5 they think Brooklyn - - and they make you choose
6 that first so you cannot just base that on your
7 statistics 'cause we in middle school all they
8 do is push for you to take the specialized test
9 and for you to get into those schools first.

10 And secondly on my debate team I'm a debater
11 and I love debating 'cause I love to argue. I
12 really do. I love debate 'cause it allows me to
13 express what I feel and it allows me to--I want
14 to be in the law enforcement when I grow up and
15 its either a lawyer or whatever but I know when
16 I had the--I got the skills I needed right here
17 in this school. And we go against schools like
18 Brooklyn Tech who we beat every year - - we beat
19 every year like. Thank you. That you cannot be
20 basing on that like you, you compare us to them
21 but actually we are much better than them. I, I
22 see a lot of--I know a lot of kids in Brooklyn
23 Tech their average is like 70. All in 70s
24 you'll see in this school you have like 6
25 students that's on the 90s and more than 10 more

1 than 15 students on their 80s in the Honor
2 Roll so don't--so don't please don't compare us
3 to them and second of all that--and second of
4 all again I love this school.

5 This school is like--for real this is like
6 one of the best schools I've ever been to in my
7 life. Like the teachers they actually are about
8 you. I mean--I'm getting emotional I'm about to
9 cry. But like Mr. Graham, like Alex, Chris and
10 oh my god, Chris is such a sweetheart that he is
11 like the best ever. And like Mr. George I, I
12 thank god for Mr. George 'cause he's truly the
13 best principal I ever had. Any--I need I come--
14 I don't have a printer in my house, but I come
15 to school and I need it for my grade 'cause I
16 have a D from my teacher and she doesn't - - and
17 I'll come to Mr. George in the morning and he
18 allows me to print my work.

19 Like when I was in middle school - - of
20 course I had good grades but I didn't have good
21 grades. I just had enough to make it to high
22 school and I came to this school like I had a 90
23 average at the end of my 9th Grade--at the end of
24 my 9th Grade semester. I have not had a 85 or
25 below average since I stepped foot in this

1 school and if I need anything--and if I need
2 anything like I could--they are here before
3 school starts.

4 They are here during school, during their
5 lunch time, excuse me sir I know you see the
6 sign but you understand you don't be in this
7 school every single day when I come to this
8 school. Like when I step foot in this school
9 and it's such a community. It's such love in
10 this school that you don't understand like you
11 come to school like you don't see and four years
12 ago like Ms. Walker our earth science teacher
13 she said, it got so bad you had to lock your
14 doors. The teachers had to lock their doors
15 when you came to this school 'cause the school--
16 'cause the kids are so and the school was just
17 so bad but now you have your--maybe they--they
18 leave their doors open. You could go in there
19 and wait for your teacher leave it open and it's
20 like they have such love for the students and
21 trust the students so much they that they didn't
22 have that four years ago and it's no offense but
23 you look at the schools like you look at this
24 school for four years ago and - - because this
25 school is so much better and you want to close

1 it when it gets better are you serious? Like
2 that's not even right. Like I'm sorry but - - .

3 MR. WHITE: Please bring your comments to a
4 close.

5 MS. COSTIN: Last, my final thought is that
6 if you want to close it for what's happening now
7 'cause what's happening now is that we are, we
8 are, we are, success in this school and if you
9 don't see that then I don't know what's wrong
10 with you.

11 MR. WHITE: Thank you very much. Number 14
12 Alex Jones. The next speaker is number 15
13 Harold Butler.

14 MR. ALEX JONES: Who's timing me? You? I'm
15 Alex Jones I'm the U.S. History teacher and
16 Debate Coach here. I want to tell two stories
17 about this high school. The first story is the
18 story that has already been told. It is the
19 Chancellor's story that talks about the failures
20 of this school; that talks about how bad this
21 mike is.

22 The Chancellor's story talks about how this
23 school is struggling. The Chancellor's school
24 picks and chooses arbitrary statistics that talk
25 about how our students aren't making it, our

1 staff is not successful.

2 The problem with this is that you can make a
3 different story. You can tell the story about
4 how 70% of the students who took the U.S.
5 History regents passed last year with a 65 or
6 above. You could tell that story but the
7 Chancellor instead chooses to choose a different
8 set of statistics.

9 You could tell the story about how our
10 weighted regents performance in math is better
11 than selective high schools like Brooklyn Tech
12 or Baccalaureate; however the Chancellor's story
13 is to pick the statistics that make this school
14 look poorer.

15 I have to take issue with the Chancellor's
16 decisions to close that process, to not make
17 that public in advance and to hold schools
18 accountable when they don't understand or are
19 not informed of how those will--they will be
20 regarded.

21 The school that we have here is struggling
22 and everybody has talked about how that is in
23 part because of the DOE's failure to supply them
24 with what they need. I think I would choose
25 instead to look at the successes that the school

1 has engendered and the community that it has
2 fostered and to choose to disregard that and to
3 look at failure. It's exactly the kind of
4 corporatization and negativism that is going to
5 kill public education.

6 MR. WHITE: Thank you Mr. Jones. Speaker
7 number 15 is Harold Butler. Speaker number 16
8 is the next speaker is Alicia Cohen.

9 MR. HAROLD BUTLER: Good evening. I'd like
10 to piggyback on what Alex just said for one
11 point. Despite everything Alex just pointed out
12 the positive spin, the positive story that could
13 be made for this school. Despite the fact and I
14 keep harping on it but it's so true; we're
15 compared to schools in the city who have a full
16 set of sports programs for girls and boys.

17 They have every--they have every resource
18 available to them. They have the basics,
19 lockers, so that students don't have to carry
20 their coats and hats in the hallways. They have
21 water fountains so that when students are
22 thirsty they can get a drink. They have
23 cafeterias where the students can get their food
24 and eat their food in the same place. They have
25 hallways that have cameras up. They have staff

1 members of over 200, 300.

2 Despite those things our students still
3 provided Alex with enough information to give a
4 positive story. Our school is ten times better
5 than it was before. You made mention earlier on
6 about safety and I'm sorry I didn't address you
7 all. Good evening to you.

8 You made mention about safety. I'm also the
9 Dean here or one of the Deans here. When I
10 first started here at the school you know I took
11 on the job as Dean. I was at the District
12 Office, at the Hearing Office every other week.
13 Last year I can count with three fingers the
14 times, the number of times I went to the Hearing
15 Office at all.

16 They hadn't seen me. They said how are you
17 I haven't seen you all year. That is an
18 indication to the situation in this school; the
19 environment in this school. It is totally
20 changed.

21 I start hearing students now angry in the
22 hallway arguing over the fact that they missed
23 the Honor Roll by two points and, and that,
24 that's a discourse that takes place in these
25 hallways that I haven't heard before.

1 That's what's happening now four years
2 later. We talk about six years, eight years,
3 out. The progress in this school has not been
4 sharp it's been gradual. But those gradual
5 improvements have increased every year. You
6 know when Lonall came here, Lonall came into a
7 program and, and really had to turn things
8 around.

9 Debbie's been in the school since the school
10 started. Shelly has been in the school for the
11 longest period of time. Rabina's been in this
12 school. We have--we have staff members here who
13 understand the students, who when the students
14 call on the phone they can talk to them. These
15 people have been here and this is a family. And
16 it's--I didn't try to prepare anything because
17 it's--this, this building is a family and that's
18 what's being taken apart and the progress in
19 this school can't be measured and it shouldn't
20 be ignored and it cannot be directly compared to
21 any of the other schools we're talking about.

22 So I'm asking you sincerely to take the
23 information that you hear--that you've heard
24 thus far and that you will hear the remainder of
25 the evening. Take that back and give a serious

1 consideration for this school, not just for
2 every school--for every school yes but I'm
3 speaking specifically for this school because
4 the students here are incredible.

5 Yes there's a lot of work that needs to be
6 done. The staff here is incredible, we need the
7 resources. So we need the new school resources
8 and the new school funding for an existing
9 school and if that's the case things will be a
10 lot better. I sincerely hope you take that
11 information and, and really own it; own that
12 information. Thank you.

13 MR. WHITE: Thank you Mr. Butler. Speaker
14 number 16 is Alicia Cohen. Speaker number 17 is
15 Chris Renault.

16 MS. ALICIA COHEN: Hi good afternoon. My
17 name is Alicia Cohen and I was a former student
18 here at MCA. These are just some of the
19 colleges that MCA had--students are going to.
20 Virginia Commonwealth University, Howard
21 University, St. John's University, Temple
22 University, Lincoln University, Cornell
23 University, sorry, Columbia University,
24 University of Miami. These are just some of the
25 few selected schools that students from MCA are

1 going to right now.

2 A lot of other high schools they're so big
3 and popular but you don't hear them having kids
4 going to all these big colleges. Their name
5 doesn't match with their students. This is a
6 school that I appreciate. I can come back every
7 day any time and I'll also feel welcome here.
8 Even though I don't go here anymore the staff
9 here make you feel like you're loved. Even if
10 you leave your home and you come here, you still
11 feel loved. You might be having problems at
12 home you can go to Mr. Chris Renault; you can go to
13 Mr. Lonall. Some teachers or principals you
14 have to make appointments to see them. Here you
15 can go right into the classroom or right into
16 Mr. Lonall's office and you can talk to him.
17 He's a man that's very welcoming. He has a very
18 nice heart. You talk to him he's very loving.

19 MALE VOICE: I'm sorry to jump back in there
20 as well but I just want to also present the
21 Deputy Chancellor with actually a few of the
22 petitions that the students have been writing.
23 In many cases each of the students here have
24 been giving up their time during their classroom
25 activities to actually make sure that they make

1 their plea directly to them. So at this time
2 right now we'd like to give these directly to
3 the Deputy Chancellor.

4 MR. WHITE: Thank you very much. Speaker
5 number 17 Chris Renault and the next speaker is
6 speaker number 18 Demali Jones [phonetic].

7 MR. CHRIS RENAULT: Yeah so thank you very
8 much for coming and hearing our plea tonight. I
9 hope you can use this information to make a
10 decision over the next couple of weeks. That's
11 what I have to say.

12 But I just want to say something to the
13 students and staff of this school especially to
14 the students. No matter what they decide and
15 they have the authority to make decisions, no
16 matter what they decide none of you are
17 failures. Nothing about you is fail. Okay?
18 Nothing. That's all. Have a good night.

19 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Speaker number 18
20 Demali Jones. Speaker number 19 Anessa Richards
21 [phonetic] is the next speaker.

22 MS. DEMALI JONES: Okay hi. My name is
23 Demali Jones. I'm a current junior here. Since
24 I've been here for three years this school it's
25 really been good and what I can say is y'all are

1 not shutting this school down that's number
2 one. Y'all are not shutting it down.

3 Since I've been here a lot of these teachers
4 they have discovered a lot of talents we have
5 like the music, dancing, debate. Many--a lot of
6 people didn't know what they wanted to be until
7 we have Chris, Alex and Miss Persephone. Ever
8 since Mr. George been the principal here the
9 grades have been--the grades did improve. It
10 takes more than four years--for some people it
11 takes more than four years to graduate.
12 Everybody doesn't study the same way. Everybody
13 doesn't learn at the same speed.

14 Yeah and for the safety I believe everybody
15 in here is safe in this school. You--nobody
16 gets chased home, there's not fights in here,
17 nobody gets suspended. Who's unsafe in here?
18 Like seriously like nobody's--I don't think
19 anybody's unsafe like it takes some people more
20 time to, to learn and them big schools with all
21 the resources all they do is throw the books
22 around. We don't have that much resources but
23 we'll be--but the things that we do have we try
24 to, we try to use what we got.

25 We have to beg teachers to take the books

1 home. The teachers come out of their pockets
2 to help the school so the school isn't shutting
3 down. Like grades went up, graduation rates
4 went up so--no but seriously.

5 MR. WHITE: Thank you very much. Speaker
6 number 19 Anessa Richards. The next speaker is
7 speaker number 20 Lisa North.

8 MS. ANESSA RICHARDS: I'm an alumni, I
9 graduated just in the recent year. And you know
10 this is really sad like. I know, I know I'm - -
11 stop me from talking.

12 It's really sad like this school should--.

13 MR. WHITE: Thank you Ms. Richards. And if
14 you'd like your time back you're--you're welcome
15 to your time. Speaker number 20 is Lisa North
16 and the next speaker is speaker number 21 Tony
17 Lambridias [phonetic].

18 MS. LISA NORTH: Hi I'm Lisa North and I'm a
19 teacher for over 20 years and a parent in the
20 system for many years.

21 If the Department--you have to really think
22 about what's going on with all these school
23 closings and you have to ask yourself the
24 Department of Education says it's because they
25 care about the students but if they really cared

1 about the students they would give the schools
2 the resources that they need to provide the
3 services and education our students need.

4 So their solution is basically close schools
5 so instead of giving the resources to the
6 schools their solution is close the schools and
7 shuffle the kids around. And as we know when
8 you just--when you just shuffle kids around
9 you're not giving them the resources and the
10 kinds of education and connections with the
11 school communities that they're able to have in
12 schools like this.

13 So a lot--I've gone to a couple of the other
14 school closing hearings and you hear the same
15 thing over and over again about how some schools
16 are closed and because those schools--large
17 schools are closed then the other schools
18 receive a lot of the students that are--have
19 special ed or ELL or lower level students and so
20 then those school's data looks bad and then
21 those schools are closed and then you reshuffle
22 the kids around again.

23 So it's what's not working is closing
24 schools and shuffling kids around so then--so
25 what we have to say is well how is this going to

1 stop and what it's going to take is for all of
2 us in this room to get out of our own
3 communities and get out into the city and attend
4 some of the more citywide events that are
5 happening. And that's why I want to tell you
6 about on the 21st; everybody I think has the
7 flier, we have a lot of the closing schools are
8 all going to be there and bringing students and
9 the parents and teachers to be there because we
10 all know we all need to turn out at the PEP but
11 at the PEP the mayor has the control of the
12 majority of the people on there; whatever they
13 want they will do. So we have to turnout and
14 build a movement against these school closures.

15 I just want to also say a lot of you have
16 seen this; Coalition for Educational Justice
17 this Saturday is having an event. You should
18 also try to attend that and there's a emergency
19 citywide parent conference on school closings
20 this Saturday 9:30 to 1 the School of the
21 Future, 127 East 22nd Street. Thanks.

22 MR. WHITE: Thank you very much. The next
23 speaker is Tony Lambridias and the speaker to
24 follow is Joan Haymont [phonetic].

25 MR. TONY LAMBRIDIAS: Good evening

1 everybody. My name is Tony Lambridias and I
2 have the privilege of being a teacher for
3 students with IEPs here at MCA.

4 I'm not so much concerned about us being
5 treated with the same criteria as every other
6 school is as I am with the wrong assumption made
7 by the DOE that the parameters should also be
8 the same as everyone else's. Of course we
9 should be held accountable to our performance.
10 No one disputes the need for performance
11 standards.

12 However assuming that no weight should be
13 placed on our graduation success rate extended
14 beyond the four-year criteria used by the DOE is
15 absurd and fallacious.

16 Should our students who graduate following a
17 five or six year scheme not be allowed to do so?
18 Every single staff member in MCA puts his or her
19 heart, soul and professional attitude toward
20 helping our students graduate in four years.
21 But sometimes based on the unique parameters
22 many of our students possess some additional
23 time may be required.

24 All of us teachers here at MCA know very
25 well the need of differentiating in dealing with

1 our students inside and outside of the
2 classroom. Why then does the DOE not also
3 practice the same degree of differentiation when
4 it comes to dealing with us?

5 Deputy Chancellor you said many scholars
6 don't choose MCA as a school to attend. I offer
7 you and the superintendent a challenge. How
8 about you help us become a school of choice by
9 giving us the resources and programs that we
10 need and we promise that we'll respond
11 accordingly. Thank you for your time.

12 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Joan Haymont number
13 22 is the next speaker. Okay. I know that we
14 did have a student who volunteered to take the
15 time for the speaker who was unable to complete
16 her testimony. Would that speaker--it is
17 Shatima Beeman [phonetic]. Thank you Ms.
18 Beeman. And the speaker after Ms. Beeman will
19 be Linda Bond.

20 MS. JOAN HAYMONT: Good evening. I want to
21 make this quick 'cause I'm really passionate
22 about education and first and foremost I'm a
23 graduate of Metropolitan Corporate Academy from
24 2005. So four years later let me tell you what
25 I'm doing now from coming to this school.

1 I went to Clark and - - University my
2 first year of college. I wanted to come back to
3 start going into my career. I interned for
4 Wendy Williams for a year; interned at Universal
5 Records for the Executive Vice-President of
6 Marketing for two years. I just graduated from
7 Brooklyn College with a bachelor's degree.

8 In the fall I will be attending LIU or
9 either NYU, I'm not sure yet, for my Masters in
10 Social Work; all from coming from Metropolitan
11 Corporate Academy.

12 In the back my friend who is here, my best
13 friend since high school, she just graduated
14 from Cornell University. So next year I will be
15 starting my first non-profit organization for
16 children with incarcerated parents. My father
17 who was in prison for 20 years, he will be
18 getting out in 2012. That was my motivation and
19 I went through that. And I'm a graduate of
20 college now going for my Master's you know so
21 closing this school down it's meant a lot for us
22 and we didn't even know this was going on. We
23 just happened to see the doors open walking
24 past, Shawna goes to - - we had to come in here
25 to speak. So that's why we are here right now.

1 So I see all of my teachers like Chris
2 Renault. We were in programs with him when
3 Chris asked us to stay till 7:00 for anything
4 that's what we did. So I hope that this school
5 can stay open and continue to provide greatness
6 for the students.

7 MR. WHITE: Thank you. Speaker number 23
8 Linda Bond. The speaker after that is Ormond
9 Antigua.

10 MS. LINDA BOND: Hi. First I have to say
11 that I am impressed with that amount of alumni
12 that came out to night to support this school.

13 My daughter went to La Guardia High School
14 of Performing Arts. She has no interest in
15 going back to her school. She has no loyalty to
16 them. She doesn't--you know I mean she
17 graduated with a 98 average and she has no
18 interest in going back okay?

19 These kids come back to this school because
20 of the difference that this school has made in
21 their lives. There may be huge differences in
22 their lives. And I think that's pretty
23 important work that we do here. I really do.
24 You're closing large schools all over the city
25 and opening up small schools within those large

1 schools.

2 That's what we already have here. We
3 already have the kind of schools that you're
4 closing big schools for. We have that school
5 here already. The proposal states that the new
6 schools will serve special needs, overage,
7 under-credited students. That's this school
8 now. That's what we have here now.

9 Our four-year graduation rate yes is 47% but
10 our five year is 62 and our six year is 70.
11 Okay? And 80% of our student body comes into us
12 in the 9th Grade performing at I's and II's;
13 below grade level. Alright we only have 20% of
14 our student body is on grade level and we don't
15 have any level IVs that come into this school.
16 So we make success out of statistics in this
17 school.

18 We graduate students that in other schools
19 would fall through the cracks and it's unfair
20 for you to close the door where these children
21 have an opportunity to make something shine.
22 Okay? To shine in a place where you know I mean
23 we have the paint peeling but they don't care.
24 They're here because we make the difference in
25 their lives. Elsewhere they would probably most

1 likely statistically fall through the cracks.
2 Talk about statistics. Okay. You tell these
3 kids that their future is - - get to stay here
4 but other kids don't get to come here. Where
5 are those kids going to go that would come here
6 next year okay? They're going to be a statistic
7 in big schools and fall through the cracks.

8 Time is up. Thank you for your time and
9 love you MCA.

10 MR. WHITE: Thank you. You're next speaker
11 is Armand Antigua speaker number 24.

12 FEMALE VOICE: The person that - - I'm
13 taking - - .

14 MR. WHITE: Thank you and thank you very
15 much.

16 MS. ANNIE ROYCE: Hi how are you doing
17 today? My name is Annie Royce and I am an
18 alumni of 2005. I am a Cornell Alumni and the
19 only reason why I'm a Cornell Alumni is because
20 of this small setting and the family oriented
21 that this school had brought to me. It was a
22 point in time that my mother had died when I was
23 16 and the only way I got through with it and
24 was able to succeed and go to Cornell that was
25 just like--Cornell, no I'm going to stay here

1 like--but no, they was like no. You're going
2 to a school and you're going to go to a far away
3 school where you need to go and get that college
4 experience.

5 Having that family oriented and having that
6 small setting classroom helped me so much to get
7 where I'm at today and to be a graduate like a
8 lot of people can't say they graduated college
9 in four years and especially an ivy league like
10 that and especially that I'm black and I went to
11 an all white institution.

12 So you can't tell me nothing. This school,
13 this school has been my pride and joy. I
14 learned everything from this school, from the
15 teachers to the staff members they was all--they
16 was my family. That's like my second family so
17 if anything's wrong I know I can come back to
18 them and I know like my sister and my sister was
19 a part of this family also. She graduated in
20 2002. So as multi-generation this is a
21 generation school where you just have - - and
22 then closing our school down.

23 Instead of closing this school down you
24 should provide more resources like more after
25 school programs, more, just more programs

1 instead of you could do more with the tax
2 money than closing schools. I can name a list
3 but I'm not going to go into it tonight. But
4 thank you and everyone have a great night.

5 MR. WHITE: Thank you very much. That is
6 the final speaker slot that signed up this
7 evening. All of the comment that was provided
8 this evening will be recorded and will be
9 presented as soon as it's brought back to the
10 Panel on Educational Policy. As I said earlier
11 to start they will be considering over the
12 course of the weeks to come before the 26th of
13 January when they vote on this proposal.

14 And I know that many of you have work to do
15 at home, have families at home, so I want to
16 thank you for taking the time this evening and
17 that brings our Hearing to a close. Thank you.

18 [END 154_538]

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature: Cynthia Romero

Date: January 19, 2010