

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
KAPPA II**

January 11, 2010

1 [START 503 A.mp3]

2 MS. KATHLEEN GRIMM: ...phase out and closure
3 of Kappa II. My name is Kathleen Grimm. I am
4 Deputy Chancellor of the Department for
5 Infrastructure and Portfolio Planning.

6 Tonight we have with us as part of this
7 hearing District 5 CEC. We did invite the
8 school's school leadership team to participate
9 and did have some confirmations um, but they are
10 not yet here.

11 Um, I'd like to ask everyone at--here at the
12 table with me to introduce themselves, and we
13 will interrupt of the SLT members come here and
14 we'll introduce them.

15 First, I want to turn to our distinguished
16 superintendent on our right.

17 MS. GALE REEVES: Good evening, everyone.
18 My name is Gale Reeves. I am the Community
19 Superintendent for District 5.

20 MS. GRIMM: Thank you, Gail. And on my left
21 our distinguished representative from the CEC.

22 MS. TATI SHIRICE: Good evening, everyone.
23 My name is Tati Shirice. I am the Community
24 Educational Council District 5 Vice President.

25 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much.

1 This hearing is being recorded tonight.
2 And after the hearing a transcription of the
3 proceedings will be sent to all the members of
4 the participants on the panel, and it will also
5 be made available to the general public on the
6 Department's website.

7 Do we have a translator present? Yes.
8 Could you advise everyone what to do with these?

9 [foreign audio]

10 MS. GRIMM: Okay, thank you. Gracias.

11 Uh, the purpose of this hearing, as you
12 probably all know, is to provide comments
13 regarding the Department's proposal. Before I
14 describe the proposal, I want to make sure that
15 you are all aware of the opportunity to provide
16 your input. All those who wish to speak must
17 sign up in the speaker sign up area, which is
18 located right outside here down the hall. Um,
19 the sign up list will remain open for 15 more
20 minutes. Speakers will be given the floor in
21 the order in which they signed up.

22 We're going--all comments will be limited to
23 two minutes. In addition, we welcome any
24 comments and feedback you may have at any time
25 before the panel for Educational Policy vote on

1 this proposal, uh, at its meeting next Tuesday,
2 January 26th. The e-mail address and phone
3 number where comments may be made can be found
4 on the Departments website under the panel
5 section. And that website is Schools.NYC.gov.

6 This proposal is something that the
7 Department takes very seriously and has
8 considered in a comprehensive manner. Over the
9 past six years, the Department of Education has
10 phased out over 90 schools and we have opened
11 335 new schools that have demonstrated
12 remarkable success in helping students excel.

13 For example, our new high schools have
14 achieved an average four-year graduation rate of
15 75%, well above the city-wide average of 60%,
16 even though those schools serve some of the
17 city's highest needs students. This proposal
18 will continue that important work.

19 I want to make very clear that the
20 Department is not blaming any individual or
21 group for this situation, but we have determined
22 that it is important to give students the best
23 possible opportunity for long-term success. We
24 know that there are a lot of people working
25 incredibly hard every day to support students at

1 this school, but we simply cannot continue
2 doing the same things and expect that we will
3 get different results.

4 Kappa II has demonstrated consistently poor
5 performance since it was opened in 2004. Yet,
6 despite intensive network support that provided
7 weekly targeted professional development to
8 teachers and advised leadership on budget,
9 school safety, and organizational changes,
10 student achievement has continued to
11 deteriorate. We find little evidence to suggest
12 that these conditions are likely to change
13 significantly in the near term. Unsurprisingly,
14 demand for seats at this school is also low,
15 indicating that families are seeking and finding
16 better options for their children.

17 In 2008-2009, the school made negative
18 progress on annual state math exams in a year
19 when large gains were recorded at a majority of
20 city schools.

21 The school has received a declining grade on
22 its progress report over each of the last three
23 years, earning a D in 2008-09, a C in 2007-08,
24 and a B in 2006-07. This year the school also
25 earned an F on the environment subsection of the

1 school's annual learning environment survey,
2 reflecting widespread dissatisfaction among
3 parents, teachers, and students alike.

4 The school was found to be under-developed
5 on its 2008 quality review and under-developed
6 with some proficient features on its 2009
7 quality review, suggesting that the school is
8 not well positioned to reverse its steady
9 pattern of decline.

10 Parent engagement in the school is weak,
11 with only 14% of parents completing the learning
12 environment survey, compared to 45% of parents
13 city-wide.

14 Demand for the school is low and declining.
15 In 2008-09, 193 students were enrolled in the
16 school. This year, projected enrollment was 236
17 students. But unaudited register data show only
18 142 students currently enrolled, including only
19 24 sixth graders.

20 Based on a persistent pattern of declining
21 performance, an unfortunate school culture, and
22 low demand, we propose that Kappa II be phased
23 out beginning next fall. We believe that
24 District 5 students will be far better served by
25 other local middle schools and given available

1 seats in the District, there is no need to
2 replace Kappa II with another middle school at
3 this time.

4 The bottom line is this: The school has a
5 long-standing record of academic failure and is
6 no longer a school that students want to attend.

7 I want to very clear about what the
8 consequences of this proposal will be. It is
9 important to be clear about them.

10 Number 1. All students currently enrolled
11 in this school will have the opportunity to
12 graduate from Kappa II. We will continue to
13 support the school during the three-year phase
14 out process.

15 Second, new schools are obligated to hire at
16 least 50% of the qualified staff from the school
17 who apply.

18 Thirdly, new schools will serve a variety of
19 students, including special education students
20 and English language learners and will also
21 provide a broad array of programs.

22 I want to thank you. We look forward to
23 hearing your comments and questions. In order
24 to insure that all people who have signed up, we
25 will ask everyone to limit their remarks to two

1 minutes. There will be a--there is a gentleman
2 in the front row who will signal when there are
3 30 seconds left and then when the time is up.

4 Um, would you like to make a presentation?
5 Would you?

6 I am going to ask my colleague from the CEC
7 to make a brief statement.

8 MS. SHIRICE: Good evening, everyone. Like
9 I said, my name is Tati Shirice. I am a CEC
10 representative for this school for District 5.

11 I can only speak to you from a parent's
12 perspective, and as a CEC representative when I
13 did come to the school to do a school visit with
14 Principal Dunning [phonetic]. Um, I do think
15 that, unfortunately, he was not given or given
16 the opportune or adequate time to turn around a
17 school. When I did speak to the principal, he
18 spoke of using his own personal resources.

19 Um, also, when I came to visit at the time,
20 he was speaking actually with students and was
21 very open and friendly, um, as far as speaking
22 to me. He just thought I was a parent just
23 coming in to the building.

24 Um,. additionally, I am aware that there are
25 a lot of, uh, new teachers that came on board as

1 well, um, with Principal Dunning, which I think
2 that gives it, um, a new environment, so to
3 speak.

4 I know also, too, that there was a new PTA
5 board. So it may have taken some time to have
6 those components mesh or come together in unity.

7 Um, I can't speak of for the past or what
8 the, uh, statistics, as far as to the grades
9 we're talking about, but I do know that the
10 students learned different foreign languages. I
11 do know that the students seem to be very
12 interested, um, as they're going through the
13 academic process.

14 I was also informed, too, that not just
15 students from the community but from other
16 communities also come in, um, to attend this
17 school. So I can't speak about that aspect.

18 But overall, I do not believe that the
19 school as well as Principal Dunning and a new
20 staff was given adequate opportunity to show
21 what they can do to turn around a school. And
22 it's unfortunate that it seems like for each
23 succession of school terms, there have been new
24 administrations. So I don't know what was done
25 on that aspect to support the school whenever

1 you're going through the new transition of new
2 administration. So that, I can speak to that
3 aspect of speaking with Principal Dunning and
4 some of the parents and also even speaking with
5 the parent coordinator. Thank you.

6 MS. GRIMM: Thank you very much.

7 We're now going to open--we don't have any
8 elected officials here do we?

9 We're now going to open the floor for public
10 comment. Please refer to the number you were
11 given when you signed up. We have a microphone
12 right here, um, where you can come up and speak
13 as you are called.

14 Um, do you want to call out the names? Um,
15 let me just see if we--okay.

16 Ms. Shirice, will you call the first
17 speaker?

18 MS. SHIRICE: Our first speaker will be
19 Rich, I think it says Frank [phonetic] from UFT.

20 MR. RICH FRANK: Uh, I'll waive my time
21 since no one from the school leadership team is
22 here in support of the school, so we'll refrain
23 from commenting at this time. Thank you.

24 MS. SHIRICE: Our next speaker will be Daisy
25 O'Gorman [phonetic] from CSA.

1 DR. DAISY O'GORMAN: Okay. Good evening
2 ladies and gentleman. I am Dr. Daisy O'Gorman.
3 I represent the Council of--I don't want to give
4 my back to anyone.

5 I represent the Council of School
6 Supervisors and Administrators. I am the
7 Director for the Borough of Manhattan and, uh,
8 here with me is Mr. Ray Gregory [phonetic], who
9 is my assistant. And, uh, Mr. George Young
10 [phonetic], who is the chairperson, uh, for
11 District 5 for CSA.

12 Now as you know, Chancellor Klein
13 [phonetic], head of the Department of Education,
14 has announced the closing of Kappa II. I like
15 you to know that CSA does not tolerate the
16 propagations of failure. We embrace
17 accountability. However, we also know that it
18 takes three years or more to turn around a
19 failing school. I know this personally. I was
20 a principal. I am a retired principal. And I
21 took over a school that had failed. It took me
22 very much more than two years to take--to turn
23 the school over, and I was given the proper
24 resources, support, no pressure, and time to do
25 the job.

1 So--okay. It is, uh, very important to
2 know that in the case in Kappa II, we must ask
3 if the school has been given the, um, has been--
4 is accountable when the resources and time
5 needed to turn the school around, I think they
6 were not sufficient. CSA is asking the
7 Department of Education to clarify the details
8 of the process that led the Department of
9 Education to conclude that Kappa II should be
10 closed.

11 We at CSA are aware that our school
12 supervisors in Harlem face many challenges.
13 Therefore, the Department of Education should
14 carefully assess how thoroughly the Office of
15 School Accountability minimized the challenges
16 when placing students of special needs in our
17 schools.

18 It is also important to ask if Kappa II was
19 given the human resources and the fiscal
20 resources needed to meet the challenges of
21 students with special needs.

22 After questions are answered and details
23 clarified, we are certain that the Department of
24 Education will find out that, given the time and
25 resources needed, Kappa II to remain open and

1 allowed to thrive. Thank you, ladies and
2 gentlemen.

3 MS. SHIRICE: Our next speaker will be Glenn
4 M. Simmons [phonetic].

5 MR. GLENN M. SIMMONS: I'd like to say good
6 evening to the people - - , parents, community
7 leaders.

8 I'm a parent--a new parent with a child that
9 came to this school. And I heard the Deputy
10 Chancellor say that children don't want to come
11 here. That's not true. I chose this school, it
12 didn't choose me. I chose it because the
13 environment is likability in my--in respects to
14 me, my wife and my son, and it's also accessible
15 to parents like myself who are handicapped.
16 Like, I'm home a lot of times by myself with
17 Trequon [phonetic] and he may have trouble at
18 school. It's easier for me to come two blocks
19 or three blocks away, than it is for to get
20 dressed, get on the bus, and by that time,
21 something could very really happen to him.

22 I'm also very hands-on parent when it comes
23 to my child's education. I speak to most of the
24 teachers in this school every day. Not just on
25 the phone yesterday. But every day.

1 I don't--I also feel like, uh, the
2 principal wasn't given enough time to use his
3 education and his experience to turn this school
4 around. Like, we all know Rome wasn't built in
5 a day, okay.

6 And a school is like a child. You have to
7 raise the child from the bottom up, but it takes
8 adults to do that, and I believe that if
9 everyone in the community will get together like
10 they are now, Kappa II will be more success than
11 some schools here. Okay, because of it's--the
12 way it's structured. And I like the energy of
13 the teachers and I really appreciate the
14 parents.

15 I'm, um, former vice president CEC District
16 32. I think that's where I may know Ms.
17 O'Gorman from, in Brooklyn. And also for
18 District--District 12. And I've been around
19 children a long time, and I realize that we have
20 to help them. The only way to help them is keep
21 Kappa II open in our community. And I'll do
22 everything that I can to see that it happens.

23 Thank you very much, and have a nice
24 evening.

25 MS. SHIRICE: Our next speaker will be Anton

1 Bogart [phonetic].

2 MR. BOGART: Good evening everybody.

3 Uh, I stand here, uh, to oppose firmly the
4 closing or phasing out of this public school in
5 this community, uh, Kappa II by the DOE, which
6 is becoming known in this community as the
7 Department of Evildoers.

8 The school belongs to the students and the
9 people in this community, not to the den of
10 evildoers at the DOE. The bureaucrats at the
11 DOE are playing with numbers, statistics but are
12 out of touch with the real thing, real life at
13 the school.

14 The schools need support. They need help.
15 The DOE does not know how to support and help
16 our schools because it is being leg mostly by
17 people who have no deep educational background
18 or neoconservatives.

19 How can you ever pretend to make decisions
20 that are in the best interest of students and
21 families when you are out of touch with them?
22 Do you think that because we are poor, black or
23 Latino, we can't think? This is white
24 supremacy's arrogance and paternalism in action
25 here.

1 It seems to me that what desperately needs
2 to be closed or phased out is this DOE or den of
3 evildoers. All they are concerned about is
4 privatize public education, creating a new class
5 of greedy private operators of charter schools
6 in our communities. We want our public schools
7 to remain open. We want a real people-oriented
8 education system to support our public schools
9 in terms of resources, training, organizational
10 framework, curriculum, and school design. DOE's
11 not going to do any of that because the main
12 intent is to outsource education to greedy
13 private operators of charter schools and try to
14 break up the teacher's union.

15 We invite the community to come to two
16 rallies. On January 21st at 79th Street and 5th
17 Avenue at 4:30, and on January 26 at Brooking
18 [phonetic] Technical High School, 294 Greenplace
19 [phonetic], at 4:30. Thank you.

20 MS. GRIMM: That--that is the entire list of
21 people who signed up to speak. Does the UFT
22 representative want to talk now?

23 Okay. Thank you. That, therefore,
24 concludes this hearing. I want to, again, thank
25 all of you for coming. I urge you to, um, think

1 about what was said here tonight, and if you
2 have further comments, please reach out to us
3 either by telephone or e-mail, uh, through the
4 website. Thank you very much, and thank all of
5 you who accompanied us tonight.

6 [END 503 A.mp3]

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

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 Marianne Uthe_____

Date January 12, 2010_____