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

**Norman Thomas HS**

**January 11, 2010**

1 [START 154\_501]

2 MR. SANTIAGO TAVERRAS: ...and welcome to  
3 the Allie Severson [phonetic] campus. My name  
4 is Santiago Taverras [phonetic]. I am the  
5 Deputy Chancellor for Teaching and Learning.  
6 And I would like for everyone on the panel to  
7 introduce themselves before we start. So if you  
8 need to get something to get comfortable, please  
9 find a seat. Thank you.

10 MS. CHANTEL PATTERSON: Hello. I'm Chantel  
11 [phonetic] Patterson, the Chairperson for SCRL  
12 and SLT.

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

17 [applause]

18 SUPERINTENDENT ELAINA PAPALOVARIOS: Elaina  
19 Papalovarios [phonetic], Superintendent Bronx  
20 High Schools.

21 MS. DENISE SULLIVAN: Good evening. My name  
22 is Denise Sullivan. I'm the City-Wide  
23 Representative for the City-Wide Council,  
24 Council for High Schools. Thank you.

25 MR. TAVERRAS: We may be joined by other

1 members of the Community Education Council 8.  
2 And if they come in, we will introduce them at  
3 that time. Buenos noches. Good evening. Thank  
4 you for coming tonight to join the public  
5 evening for the proposed phase-out and eventual  
6 closure of the School for Community Research and  
7 Learning, SCRL.

8 I am Santiago Taveras, Deputy Chancellor  
9 for Teaching and Learning. I am joined by Matt  
10 Ellis, School Leadership Team, and Chantel  
11 Patterson, School Leadership Team for SCRL. I'm  
12 also joined by the Bronx High School  
13 Superintendent, Elaina Papalovarios, and also by  
14 Denise Sullivan, representing the City-Wide  
15 Council on High Schools. We may be joined later  
16 on by Nortema Mendez Truz [phonetic] from CEC 8,  
17 and one other person that may join us later.

18 The purpose of this hearing for you to  
19 provide comments about the proposals. All those  
20 who wish to speak must sign in, um, must sign in  
21 to speak in the area located outside the  
22 auditorium. Um, since we are starting five  
23 minutes late, we will close the sign-in area at  
24 6:20.

25 This proposal is something that the

1 Department takes very seriously, and has  
2 considered in a comprehensive manner. For the  
3 past six years, the Department of Education has  
4 phased out over 90 schools and opened 335 new  
5 schools that have demonstrated remarkable  
6 success in helping students excel. For example,  
7 our new high schools have achieved an average 4-  
8 year graduation rate of 20, of 75%, well above  
9 the city-wide average of 60% even though these  
10 schools serve some of the highest needs student  
11 in the city. This proposal will continue that  
12 important work.

13 The Department is not blaming anyone or any  
14 individual for this situation. But we have  
15 determined it is important to give students the  
16 best possible opportunity for long-term success.  
17 We know that there are a lot of people working  
18 incredibly hard every day to support students at  
19 the school. But we simply cannot continue doing  
20 the same things and expect that we will get  
21 different results.

22 The school's graduation rate is both low and  
23 declining. In 2009, the school graduated just  
24 fewer than 44% of their students. That is down  
25 from 47% in 2008. Simply put, a graduation rate

1 of 44% of the students does not meet any  
2 standard of success.

3 At this school, students fall behind early  
4 in their education, making it difficult to  
5 catch, catch, catch up and get back on track.  
6 As it is evidenced by the school's extremely low  
7 graduation rate. Only 53% of the students are  
8 accumulating ten credits or more their first  
9 year. Students need to earn 44 credits in order  
10 to meet graduation requirements. That means  
11 that they should be accumulating an average of  
12 11 credits per year. First year credit  
13 accumulation is an important predictor of  
14 graduation rates. And having only 53% of  
15 students earn ten or more credits in their first  
16 year does not indicate adequate preparation of  
17 students for college and careers.

18 Additionally, the demand for the school has  
19 increased slightly, but remains extremely low.  
20 The School for Community Research and Learning  
21 received only 3.3 applications per seat in  
22 September 2009. The school is designed to serve  
23 432 students, but only enrolled 364 students in  
24 the 2008-2009 school year.

25 The bottom line is the, this school is

1 trending downward in a performance and demand.  
2 Performance in the 8th percentile of all high  
3 schools city-wide and is in need of improvement  
4 according to the state standards. Again, when  
5 considering them comprehensively, these factors  
6 demonstrate that the school is not serving our  
7 students well.

8         Some have argued that a high percentage of  
9 Special Education students and English Language  
10 Learners have contributed to the school's  
11 academic challenges. However, other small  
12 schools in the Bronx have high percentages of  
13 Special Education students. Such as Morris  
14 Academy for Collaborative Studies and Bronx  
15 Engineering and Technology Academy have  
16 graduation rates over 70% and a Special  
17 Education population over 20%. In short, SCRL  
18 graduates 25% less students despite similar  
19 populations as these other successful schools.

20         Let me be clear about the consequences of  
21 this proposal. All students currently enrolled  
22 in the school will have the opportunity to  
23 graduate from SCRL. We will continue to support  
24 the school during the 3-year phase-out process.  
25 The new school is proposed to open in September

1 2010 with a 9th grade, and will eventually  
2 serve grades 9 through 12.

3 Thank you. I look forward to hearing your  
4 comments and questions. In order that we, that  
5 all people who signed up to speak are given the  
6 opportunity, we will limit comments to two  
7 minutes. At the one minute and thirty seconds,  
8 there will be a warning bell. In this case, um,  
9 where is Barbara? She will show that there are  
10 30 seconds left. And when the final second  
11 ticks down, she'll show that the time is up. It  
12 is really important that we adhere to this so  
13 that we give every single person the opportunity  
14 to speak that has come out here tonight to do  
15 so.

16 Before that, we're going to have the School  
17 Leadership Team do a presentation. So is that  
18 you, Matt, who's going to lead that or Ophilla  
19 [phonetic]? So let's have those folks come up  
20 now and do that.

21 I also want to, um, say that if you have not  
22 signed up, please sign up at the back. You  
23 still have another 7 or so minutes to do so.  
24 And at that time, we will start calling, after  
25 this presentation, people to speak. But also,

1 if there is anyone from any of the elected  
2 offices, whether City Council, Borough  
3 President, that would like to speak, um, please  
4 let us know so that you can do that before the  
5 comments start. Um, Matt, who's, uh,  
6 presenting? And what's your name?

7 JAKE: Jake.

8 MR. TAVERRAS: Jake - - .

9 MALE VOICE: ...so much. Appreciate your  
10 help. This is a presentation about the Bronx.  
11 It's a presentation about our school, and it's  
12 about the Bronx getting interrupted in our  
13 education.

14 [applause]

15 MALE VOICE 1: This is called Bronx  
16 Interrupted, the Closing of SCRL. What we're  
17 going to show you right now is we're going to  
18 show you some numbers. These are really  
19 important numbers. The Department of Education  
20 spent a lot of time putting these numbers  
21 together, um, so we need to talk about them.  
22 Um, we have, um, uh, some important graduation  
23 rates, some, some things that people need to  
24 see. And, and I'm just going to go real quick  
25 over those because, um, uh, the Deputy

1 Chancellor was nice enough to, to talk about  
2 most of them.

3 So last year we got a B. Right? We got a B  
4 last year. B's not that bad. This year we got  
5 a C. We went down. We definitely went down.  
6 Our score actually went up. It went from a 43.5  
7 to a 44.1. We went up a little bit, but the  
8 metrics changed one way or the other. We wound  
9 up with a C this year. Okay? Um, we're a C  
10 school.

11 Last year we got a Proficient on our Quality  
12 Review, which had some really nice things,  
13 Department of Education had some really nice  
14 things to say about the school when they  
15 evaluated our school. They gave us a Proficient  
16 on it.

17 Um, this year, because of our Proficient, we  
18 didn't have to have another Quality Review.  
19 They were so happy with us last year, we didn't  
20 have to have a Quality Review this year. Our  
21 accountability status has stayed in good  
22 standing, federal and state. This year we've  
23 become a Sinny [phonetic] School, where  
24 improvement needed, comprehensive improvement.  
25 That means we need both the Math and the English

1 improved. Okay?

2 We're going to talk to you today about  
3 numbers, 'cause this is partly a debate about  
4 numbers. But it's also about some other stuff,  
5 too.

6 Our gradu-, excuse me, our attendance rate  
7 in 2008 was 80%. It fell to 77.7%, a couple of  
8 points. Graduation rate dropped 47.3% to 43.9%.  
9 What these numbers aren't saying, what these  
10 numbers aren't saying, they're not talking about  
11 community. Okay? And they're not talking about  
12 the challenges we face. And they're not talking  
13 about the challenges we've overcome. And  
14 they're not talking about the hard lessons that  
15 we've learned. That's what we're going to talk  
16 about today. Next slide, please. Give it to  
17 us.

18 So this is SCRL. To me, this is SCRL. To  
19 Department of Education, it's those numbers,  
20 it's what we're looking at. Okay? To us, SCRL  
21 is Takira [phonetic] Fox and Astasio Casio  
22 [phonetic]. It's Mr. Molquine [phonetic] and  
23 it's Mr. Ellis in the classroom.

24 [applause]

25 SCRL is, is Serena and Najabird [phonetic]

1 and Jalisa [phonetic]. And SCRL is Kathy and  
2 Michael. And SCRL is Miss Bono. And SCRL is  
3 our basketball team. And it's Lewis. And SCRL  
4 is some students in a classroom working. SCRL  
5 is about a community; and this is our community.  
6 This is what we're going to talk to you about  
7 today. Give me the next slide.

8 This is a Peer Index score. Most people  
9 aren't sure about the Peer Index Score so I'm  
10 going to take a second to talk about it.  
11 Schools are rated based on their Peer Index.  
12 Okay? There are 483 schools across New York  
13 City. Okay? Every single one of those schools  
14 is given a Peer Index Score. Give me the next  
15 slide.

16 There are three pieces of it. The first is  
17 the Math and ELA levels before you get into high  
18 school. The second is the percentage of Special  
19 Education students. The third is the percentage  
20 of over-age students. Give me the next.

21 The lower your Peer Index Score, the higher  
22 your population. Take a look at a good school.  
23 Styveson [phonetic] High School, a 4.05; Bronx  
24 has a 3.92. Now we get a couple of other  
25 schools around here in the Bronx. Millennium,

1 Gateway, good schools. Bronx Gill [phonetic],  
2 good schools. SCRL--Hit the next slide--is a  
3 1.86, is a 1.86. Hit the next slide.

4 SCRL is the 380 students. It's 25% Special  
5 Education students with IEPs. It's 15% English  
6 Language Learners. People have come over here  
7 from the Dominican Republic. People have come  
8 over here from the Puerto Rico. And need to  
9 learn, deserve an opportunity learn. Need the  
10 resources to learn. That's what we're here to  
11 provide for them.

12 [applause]

13 But it's not easy, it's not easy. That's  
14 what we need to show you.

15 We're a universal school. More than 85% of  
16 our school gets free lunches. Give me the next  
17 slide.

18 There are 800, 483 schools in New York.  
19 SCRL is the 17th highest needs school in New  
20 York City. New York City has 483 schools. We  
21 need the resources. We need your help. We need  
22 the help of the Department of Education. We  
23 need everybody's help. It's not easy. It's a  
24 struggle. That's something we've got to know.  
25 Give me the next slide.

1           What we have is we have four, we have four  
2 different, um, pieces of accountability. Okay?  
3 These are the ways that you can get shut down  
4 according to the Department of Education.  
5 First, you can get an F on your report card. We  
6 didn't get an F on our progress report. We got  
7 a C. Hit it.

8           Then you get a D on your progress report.  
9 We didn't get a D on our progress report. We  
10 got a C. Hit it.

11           Then you can get Below Proficient on a  
12 Quality Review. We didn't get Below Proficient  
13 on a Quality Review. We got Proficient. Hit  
14 it.

15           Then you get a C for three consecutive  
16 years. We didn't do it. We had a B and then we  
17 had a C. Finally, according to the Chancellor,  
18 school can lack the necessary proficiency to  
19 improve student performance. Everything Mr.  
20 Santiago's going to tell you tonight, everything  
21 he's talked about, is going to be around that  
22 point. Okay? It's going to be around us  
23 lacking necessary proficiency to improve our  
24 students. Hit the next slide.

25           What are they talking about? Well, this is

1 what they're talking about. First of all, we  
2 got a D on our Student Progress. Okay? And we  
3 got a D on our Student Performance. Those are  
4 two parts of the grade. That C we got, two  
5 parts of the grades were Ds. There's another  
6 part, School Environment. We got a B on that.  
7 That's pretty good. Means we've got respect for  
8 our students. Means we've got respect for our  
9 teachers. Means we've got respect for our  
10 community. We got a B for that. But we did get  
11 two Ds. That's true. That's part of it.  
12 That's what we got, we got to deal with that.  
13 That's on us.

14 We had a 43% graduation rate. That's not  
15 good enough. I'm a Math teacher. I cannot  
16 stand in front of a classroom and tell 43% of my  
17 kids, You're going to graduate. And I cannot  
18 stand in front of a classroom and tell 57% of my  
19 kids, You are not going to graduate. I can't do  
20 that. It's not good enough. It's not good  
21 enough. But there's more to the story than a  
22 44% graduation rate. Hit the next slide.

23 School closing announced on December 3,  
24 2009. Hit the next slide. Did we get a chance?  
25 Okay. December 3rd. It's January 5th. It's

1 January 5th tonight. That's one month and two  
2 days when they announced the school closing.  
3 Give us the next slide.

4 Our student progress was a D. That got  
5 released in November 10th. November 10th  
6 compared to December 3rd. We got our report  
7 card 21 days before the closing of the school.  
8 Everything that this school is, uh, this school  
9 closing is based on--our Ds, our low graduation  
10 rate--that all came from a report in November.  
11 December 3rd they announce the closing. We want  
12 to know, and we have a right to ask: Did we get  
13 some time? Was the, was the proper attention  
14 paid? Did we go through the right steps? Give  
15 me the next slide.

16 How does this community respond? Okay.  
17 This is a really important slide, and I'm going  
18 to turn this one over to our community right  
19 here. We got a D on Student Performance. Hit  
20 it. What we decided to do was we brought some  
21 targeted summer school. And I'm going to turn  
22 this over now to, to Miss Dellby [phonetic].  
23 This is an English teacher of ours. She's going  
24 to talk to you guys.

25 [cheers and applause]

1 MS. DELLBY: Good evening, everybody. So  
2 we didn't need outsiders to let us know that we  
3 weren't at 100%. We knew that, and we were  
4 working on it already. So some, some of the  
5 interventions that we put into place was a  
6 targeted summer school this year, um, to help  
7 juniors and seniors get on track, um, for  
8 Regents preparation and for credit accumulation.  
9 We had the largest summer school we've ever had  
10 in SCRL history with 75 students in attendance.

11 Senior interventions that are going on right  
12 now, and some of my seniors know that 'cause  
13 they were with me yesterday afternoon. So to  
14 get them on target for January Regents, we have  
15 tutoring going on in the morning at 7:30 with  
16 our principal teaching U.S. History and after  
17 school every day. Okay? So this is in addition  
18 to the programs that Good Shepherd has been  
19 giving us since Year 2.

20 Afterschool Credit Recovery. That's where,  
21 um, Good Shepherd has been an excellent partner  
22 for us. All those dance classes you love to go  
23 to, um, art history, music, right across the  
24 board, um, that's always been available for our  
25 students, um, actually since Year 2.

1           Scantron [phonetic] Testing. That's  
2 something that the English Department put into  
3 place, and the Math Department joined us with  
4 that. So we can get a better, um, picture of  
5 our incoming students and our current students,  
6 and what their literacy and math rates are. So  
7 when we're planning our lessons--and my husband  
8 can attest what I did over the summer was look  
9 at all my incoming students' rates so I can plan  
10 my lessons accordingly. And that's one thing  
11 we're good at--differentiating instruction.

12           College Planning, um, through Good Shepherd  
13 and Trio. So Good Shepherd, our great community  
14 partner, comes up again. And Trio was a  
15 partnership through Lehman College. So, of  
16 course, like as Mr. Mulcan [phonetic] has always  
17 said, our kids may choose not to go to college,  
18 but we want them college ready. So when they  
19 decide to go, we'll know that we were right  
20 about that, um, they're prepared to go.

21           So in helping us do that, we have, uh,  
22 school trips outside where they actually get to  
23 visit the campuses. They've actually got to  
24 visit Pace University a few years, and Pace has  
25 helped support us that. And now Trio is

1 continuing that tradition, and taking groups  
2 of students to campuses all over New York City.

3 In addition to that, we have classroom, um,  
4 college experiences that are happening right  
5 here on campus. You don't even have to leave or  
6 take off your coat. So as part of the English  
7 curriculum, colleges are coming to visit the  
8 kids right in the classrooms. In Careers in  
9 junior year, they're coming right into the  
10 Careers classes to get the kids curious, give  
11 them information. Even our 9th graders go to  
12 Lehman College every year.

13 One of the interventions that we've been  
14 lucky enough to get, because the state did  
15 consider us a school in need of improvement and  
16 offered us some help, was, um, through our  
17 Principal reaching out for an online credit  
18 recovery program. Um, trying something new,  
19 they have a very extensive program that offers  
20 our students a lot of variety. We try to, um,  
21 really apply to all the differentiated learners  
22 we have and the multiple intelligences they  
23 have. And we think this is going to be a really  
24 good program. Student rosters are already being  
25 filled. And this program is going to launch in

1 the spring.

2 Mr. Stafford, you're smiling. Um, our  
3 interdisciplinary grade teams have been in  
4 effect. They've taken a change this year  
5 because of our change in schedule. But it's  
6 something that's a core of what we do. So our  
7 departments meet, our grade teams meet so  
8 teachers from all the disciplines can talk about  
9 the student concerns, things that are going on  
10 in their classroom, reach out with our  
11 attendance team, with our guidance people to  
12 make sure that we're all on the same page on  
13 what our students need and how we're going to  
14 get it done.

15 Some data that's missing from the DOE on  
16 statistics. And I'm not a math teacher, but  
17 this is equally important, is the progress our  
18 students have made in the AP program. We are  
19 one of the only schools in the building right  
20 now that offer AP courses. Last year Millennium  
21 Art had some of their students at SCRL taking  
22 classes, 'cause we were the only ones doing it.

23 And not only are we offering the courses,  
24 our students are doing well. Our students have  
25 scored 5s, the highest score in AP Spanish.

1 They have scored 4s in AP Calculus. They have  
2 scored 3s in AP Bio, and last year in AP English  
3 Literature. So those scores have been going up  
4 every year. And that's some, you know, Math  
5 would like to be added in because we have  
6 exceptional children on both, um, sides of the  
7 spectrum. Right? So it's about all the kids.

8 And Mr. Ellis is going to pick it up on the  
9 campus graduation rate.

10 [cheers and applause]

11 MR. ELLIS: Thank you. So we just, um, we  
12 already heard our graduation rate referred to  
13 today. And, yeah, it is, um, it is pretty poor.  
14 And it is unacceptable. Um, but actually we  
15 just--I was looking at the data. We found some  
16 interesting facts about the schools on this  
17 campus in general. And we're not doing this to  
18 point fingers at other schools by no means or  
19 for whatever. But we'll raise some questions  
20 after we look at this data.

21 Uh, SCRL, we have dropped from two years  
22 ago. We were at 50% and we dropped below 50%  
23 this year. Another school on this campus two  
24 years ago was above 70%. And over the past two  
25 years, they also dropped to about below 50%.

1 One other school two years ago was down around  
2 50%. They went up last year, but, again,  
3 dropped this year to about 50%. Another school  
4 fell, um, pretty drastically from above 85% down  
5 to about 57% this year. And one other school  
6 went from about an 82% to a 57%.

7 So when you look at these numbers, um,  
8 again, one school had a 22% drop. Another  
9 school went up 2%. One school had a 20% drop,  
10 another school a 30% drop. And we went down 7%.  
11 So, again, why am I bringing this up? Um, it's  
12 basically to ask the question. We see all over  
13 the place about the improvements in graduation  
14 rates in this city. And it's good that it has  
15 been. But I guess something different is  
16 happening in this part of the Bronx.

17 So the question is, um: What does reform  
18 mean? What is the city's role when they see  
19 this entire neighborhood that is struggling to  
20 graduate their students? And maybe this is the  
21 answer. Maybe they said, We take the lowest  
22 graduation rate from the school. We close them  
23 down. Make them an example for others. And  
24 then hope that the rest improves.

25 But really, I don't even know. What should

1 the city's role be when they see so many  
2 schools struggling? I'm not sure what help that  
3 we got from the city. I'm not sure, uh, what  
4 support. Someone came into my classroom and  
5 said, You're teaching this way wrong; you're  
6 teaching that way wrong. I don't remember  
7 seeing that. Um, and I do know where I  
8 struggle. And I'm pretty sure that every single  
9 teacher in this building can say where we  
10 struggle more specifically than the Impact  
11 Statement can. We can be much more specific and  
12 say where we struggle, and we could also say  
13 exactly where we want to improve.

14 And we're standing here right now saying,  
15 We're ready to work at it. And the answer  
16 coming from over there is that it's time to  
17 quit, and you don't have a chance.

18 Finally, one more important thing that I  
19 think is very important on the Impact Statement.  
20 There's a whole section called Community  
21 Ramifications. It says that, um, approximately  
22 385 high school seats will be eliminated by the  
23 phase-out of SCRL. However, these seats will be  
24 recovered through the phase-in of 08X432, and  
25 X450, and other new high schools throughout the

1 city.

2           So this is another question. What is the  
3 connection between a school and a community?  
4 And when you think about educational reform,  
5 maybe you've got to rethink that whole idea.  
6 Because I'm pretty sure a school and a community  
7 is more than just a number of seats. And you  
8 guys might disagree, but I'm looking right now  
9 at an SCRL community that is more than just  
10 seats.

11           [cheers and applause]

12           And I hope that each of you could say what  
13 does SCRL do for the community. And you  
14 probably have your own ideas. But these are  
15 some of the ways that we think the community  
16 will be impacted by the closing of our school.

17           We have community fair and health fair,  
18 blood drives. We started intramural basketball  
19 and softball leagues within this building.  
20 Community service projects. This year we're  
21 talking a Habitat for Humanity trip. Work  
22 study, cross-age tutoring, college and career  
23 fair, Bronx interconnection, Toys for Tots, food  
24 drive, and the penny harvest.

25           And I'm being rushed off the stage. But

1 just two more things. To summarize, they gave  
2 their facts in the Impact Statement which you  
3 can read in the back of the, uh, you can pick it  
4 up in the back of the auditorium and read it.  
5 But this is our, this is our, um, this is our  
6 response. And we feel that the Department of  
7 Education has not provided a case for closing  
8 our school.

9 [applause]

10 Again, we know where we struggle more, and  
11 we can tell them where we struggle more. We  
12 don't think this is right. And we'll end with a  
13 quote from a SCRL alumni, someone who graduated  
14 last year. She said, "I believe that SCRL is  
15 worth fighting for because the teachers  
16 themselves have shown that we are worth fighting  
17 for."

18 [cheers and applause]

19 And I just want to say that I understand  
20 when the Deputy Chancellor said that if the  
21 students are not succeeding at a school, or if  
22 the students can't succeed at a school, then,  
23 yeah, something needs to be done. But I think  
24 another way of seeing this whole idea right now  
25 is that they are kind of saying that we do not

1 believe that you students can any longer  
2 succeed at this school. And I think that's a  
3 horrible message to tell the kids. And that's  
4 why we're up here today--to tell you guys, the  
5 students, the parents, the community that we  
6 think you can succeed. And we're willing to  
7 work to make you succeed. Thank you.

8 [cheers and applause]

9 MR. TAVERRAS: Thank you, School Leadership  
10 Team. Um, right now I also want to acknowledge  
11 that Jeffrey Lauford [phonetic] from the - -  
12 City Council Member District 18 is here with us.  
13 Um, Jeffrey Lauford, thank you for joining us.  
14 Any other elected officials that may want to say  
15 a word before the public comments?

16 So I want to remind everyone that we have  
17 now a number of folks that have signed up to  
18 speak. Every single person that signed up to  
19 speak will get two minutes to express their  
20 reason why, one way or another, why, about this  
21 proposal that the Department of Education is  
22 putting forth. You have been given a number of  
23 the order that you will be speaking in. Uh, we  
24 would like for you to come up to these two  
25 ladies here in the front. Um, if we could have

1 the first five so that we can move quickly  
2 from one to the other. Just come and stand  
3 right behind Chris.

4 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: So we're lining up  
5 number one through five, only numbers one  
6 through five. I'm going to start the first one  
7 is Iris Rodriguez.

8 [applause]

9 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Hm? No, that's fine.  
10 Do you have your number?

11 MS. IRIS RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

12 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Como esta.

13 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Mm hm.

14 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Okay.

15 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Good evening. My name is  
16 Iris Rodriguez. And in the past, I was the PA  
17 President of SRL. I was the PA President of  
18 Stevenson High School. And I was the PA  
19 President of South Bronx High School. And I'm a  
20 community member.

21 Two reasons why this school, SCRL, shouldn't  
22 be closed is this school was created for the  
23 community. We are the community. Our children  
24 are the community, and they need a school like  
25 SCRL.

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

8           One reason that--another reason for not  
9 closing this school. If this school is so bad,  
10 why did one of the students, Jonathan Roman,  
11 graduated and went to Cornell? Can any of the  
12 schools say that?

13           [cheers and applause]

14           This, after all, the students are human  
15 beings. And we cannot go by, by, um, looking at  
16 numbers. We are not numbers; we are human  
17 beings.

18           And we have our faults, but the staff of  
19 SCRL has always stood behind their students.  
20 They care for them, and they work for them. And  
21 they help them achieve the goal that they, that  
22 they want. Not the goal that DOA, DOE's maybe  
23 set up. But not all of us can do that. Thank  
24 you very much.

25           [cheers and applause]

1           SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Next speaker is  
2 Number Two, Dr. David Fletcher.

3           DR. DAVID FLETCHER: Hi.

4           [cheers and applause]

5           When we opened our doors in 2003, the  
6 ceilings were falling in, uh, the region was  
7 changed and the DOE was changing, there was much  
8 change going on. And as a colleague at New  
9 Visions and I agree, uh, being a small school in  
10 those days was like being a, a small boat in a  
11 large ocean. You're battered around, direction,  
12 uh, may or may not come. And so we did the best  
13 that we could do to begin a school, and to begin  
14 educating a group of students from the Bronx.

15          When I look around the room, I see students  
16 who are still at SCRL, uh, students who have  
17 graduated, um, students who will be graduating.  
18 I see staff members, who are committed to the  
19 students here. I see secretaries, who give it  
20 their all. I see school counselors, who meet  
21 with parents on an ongoing basis. I see a  
22 principal, who extends his own credit card when  
23 the budget runs short. Uh, I see teachers of  
24 ESL students, who work with students who come  
25 into ESL reading at the 2nd grade reading level.

1 I see teachers, who work with students.

2 For example, OSEPO [phonetic] has had a  
3 constant policy for assigning SCRL students who,  
4 for example, this past, uh, September, one  
5 student was assigned to the 2010 Cohort,  
6 supposed to graduate, and has no credits. Came  
7 to SCRL, 18 years of age with no credits, but  
8 yet is supposed to graduate June 2010.

9 Another student came with a spattering of,  
10 of, uh, credits. Not had, and supposed to  
11 graduate in June, has not passed a single test.  
12 This is a policy that OSEPO and the DOE has, uh,  
13 as an albatross around SCRL's neck. However,  
14 SCRL has never turned students away. That is  
15 not our policy, and that is not what we do.

16 [cheers and applause]

17 So even though, even though the odds were  
18 against us--

19 MR. TAVERRAS: [Interposing] Dr. Fletcher,  
20 your time is up.

21 DR. FLETCHER: --we did not turn them away.  
22 Thank you.

23 MR. TAVERRAS: Thank you.

24 [cheers and applause]

25 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Jonathan Roman.

1 MR. JONATHAN ROMAN: - - got a watch. My  
2 name is Jonathan Roman, class of 2007, SCRL,  
3 class of 2011, Cornell University, currently  
4 cadet E6 of the U.S. Army future lieutenant.

5 [cheers and applause]

6 So why I came here today is to say that, um,  
7 you can never step in the same river twice.  
8 That was a quote that was taught to me by a  
9 professor, uh, professor--one of my teachers,  
10 Mr. Romero, freshman year. So I wrote it down.

11 Education changes your life, but not as much  
12 as where you get it. See, education is  
13 something you can get anywhere. But where you  
14 go makes a difference. That's why rich people  
15 put their children in the best private schools  
16 they can afford. That's why parents will  
17 interview schools to find the best pre-Ks for  
18 their kids. That's why seniors in high school,  
19 um, our parents and our ourselves, do our  
20 research on countless, uh, colleges and  
21 universities. And that's the same reason why  
22 that, as 8th graders, we attend all these high  
23 school fairs.

24 Little did I know that choosing this school  
25 would change me. Example 1: While I was

1 naturally inclined to do my work, I was also  
2 naturally inclined to be lazy. To, uh, this  
3 came out once when I had to do a presentation on  
4 learning. I put together a lackluster  
5 presentation. And when I gave it, I  
6 disappointed two people, who not only cared  
7 about me, but those opinions, but whose opinions  
8 I valued, Miss Lavisk [phonetic] and Miss  
9 Mitchell.

10 [cheers and applause]

11 I, in turn, was disappointed in myself after  
12 letting them down. Regardless of the  
13 presentation being a B, I didn't expect the  
14 teachers to care as much.

15 Part 1. Point 1. Teachers at SCRL care a  
16 lot when you haven't had the nurturing or  
17 encouragement at home. It means something.  
18 Fortunately, I was relatively an easy student to  
19 deal with. But without the bond that's fostered  
20 between students and teachers here, I wouldn't  
21 have done as well. Nobody who comes to SCRL can  
22 slip through the cracks. But teachers can't be  
23 expected to run, uh, people's lives either.

24 Teachers can make kids sit through classes,  
25 but the student's mentality that will decide

1       whether he or she - - actively listens.  If  
2       you believe the problems at school, you can't be  
3       more wrong.  Please.  Still the school does  
4       everything it can.  And with that, it had to  
5       change, to change the mentality of the students,  
6       uh, towards education.

7               After-school programs, careers, - - and - -  
8       guidance counseling, it's all paid attention.  I  
9       can go on, but you know what?  This school  
10      taught me to aim higher.  And it's no wonder  
11      that I'm at Cornell today.  It's no wonder that  
12      I am the scholar that I am.  And it's because of  
13      SCRL.

14             [cheers and applause]

15             MR. TAVERRAS:  Thank you, Mr. Romero.  Thank  
16      you.

17             SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS:  Myra Perez Hill, Number  
18      Four.

19             MS. MYRA PEREZ HILL:  Hi.  My name is Myra  
20      Perez Hill.  This is my daughter, - - Perez.  
21      She is an honor student, not only by SCRL, but  
22      nationally.  I just don't want to squeak, that's  
23      why.  And I want you to acknowledge that there's  
24      not a lot of us.  You could give us like maybe  
25      extra minute, you know.

1           Um, I wasn't going to try to come out this  
2 way, but I'm going to say it this way. When  
3 SCRL called me, I answered. When there were  
4 students that needed to be seen, I came. If I  
5 had to come meet with them or see them, I showed  
6 up. It's pretty relevant there's not 365  
7 parents here. And this is what parent-teachers  
8 like for them. So I think that we need to  
9 acknowledge that it's a team effort. They're  
10 not alone. Where are the parents? This is what  
11 they go through, you know. Excuse my voice  
12 'cause I don't have my pump and my chest is a  
13 little tight.

14           Um, please give them the benefit of the  
15 doubt and please acknowledge that because some  
16 of these high schools, they kind of bully the  
17 parents and students out. That's why they have  
18 such a high graduation rate. If you go to  
19 Lehman High School, you see the big signs up.  
20 They don't do that, they stick it out with their  
21 students and they try to make the difference.  
22 Acknowledge that as well, please because she's  
23 doing phenomenal. And I have to thank them for  
24 that. And she didn't do it alone; and I didn't  
25 do it alone. But they needed me, too.

1           And that's why I'm here today, and  
2           acknowledge the fact that they don't have the  
3           support that they need from all the parents.  
4           And I'm not talking to you that are here,  
5           because it's pretty relevant we care. I'm  
6           talking about the ones that aren't here, and  
7           this is what they go through. They need help.

8           High school is a trying time. Kids are  
9           making it or breaking it. These kids are like  
10          dropping out if the parent is not on them.  
11          That's the not school's fault.

12          I asked for an extra minute - - .

13          [applause]

14          SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Thank you. Number 5,  
15          James Marley.

16          MR. TAVERRAS: Next five, please come and  
17          line up, um, six through ten. Thank you.

18          MR. JAMES MARLEY: Uh, good evening. My  
19          name is Jim Marley. I'm with Good Shepherd.  
20          We've been at SCRL from the beginning, and the  
21          thought of its closing is, uh, very sad. Uh,  
22          SCRL is an experiment. We don't say that it's a  
23          perfect experiment, but it's a critical  
24          experiment to serve students who nobody else is  
25          serving. It opens its doors to everyone. Some

1       come with issues of poor attendance. Some  
2       come not knowing what they want to do with their  
3       future. All are welcome.

4             And in a city that has so many students who  
5       can't find a high school, SCRL is an important  
6       asset. The over-the-counter families who come  
7       here. We have made ourselves an open school.  
8       We take chances on students, and we accept the  
9       risk of students. As you heard tonight from  
10      testimonials and will hear, this is a school  
11      that's made a difference in many students'  
12      lives.

13            At the end of the day, we need to find  
14      better ways to educate our children. And SCRL  
15      has been part of that process. We don't need  
16      less experiments; we need more experiments. And  
17      sometimes that involves trial and error. But  
18      there are too many students who have no place to  
19      go, no educational prospects, and need people  
20      who will fight for them. And this school has  
21      fought for those students.

22            Closing SCRL takes one experiment off the  
23      table. But we will not have really a successful  
24      education system or city until we multiply the  
25      experiments, make more of them, and live with

1 the trial and error. This is the work that  
2 brought Good Shepherd here. It's why we'll stay  
3 in this building. This has also been the  
4 mission and the, really the vision of SCRL.  
5 We're making it to that mission and to that  
6 vision. And we very much honor the blood, the  
7 sweat, and the tears that so many parents,  
8 students, and teachers have put into serving  
9 children and changing their lives. Thank you.

10 [cheers and applause]

11 MR. TAVERRAS: I just want to acknowledge  
12 that Ms. Barry from CC8 has joined us. So thank  
13 you, Ms. Barry.

14 [applause]

15 FEMALE VOICE 1: Hi, everyone. Um, I'm a  
16 senior here. And I just want to say that my  
17 years in SCRL, I met a lot of great people,  
18 like, fantastic people. But I'm not just  
19 talking about my friends. I'm talking about  
20 everyone--the staff, the teachers. They've done  
21 a lot for us, and they made a really big impact  
22 in our lives. And I just want to say thank you.  
23 You know, whether the school closes or not, they  
24 did a lot for us, and they made really big  
25 impact. And that's why closing down this school

1 has such a big impact on us. So I just want  
2 to say thank you.

3 [cheers and applause]

4 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Number 7. Janette.

5 JANETTE: Yeah.

6 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Do you have your  
7 number?

8 JANETTE: Yes.

9 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Thank you.

10 JANETTE: Exactly one year ago today, at  
11 about this time, I was waking up from back  
12 surgery. And there were two thoughts on my mind  
13 as the reality of the post-surgery pain filled  
14 my brain. One, I wish I wasn't me right now.  
15 And two, how soon can I get back to my students?

16 The next morning, morning, I looked scary  
17 enough to make the physical therapist say, It's  
18 okay, sweetie, I'll come back tomorrow. But I  
19 quickly replied, I have to get back to my  
20 students. I'm getting out of this bed. And I  
21 did, and I'm here.

22 The lesson I can reflect upon on this  
23 anniversary night is that it has been, always  
24 will be, is today about the kids. Where they  
25 are, what they need, and where they want to go.

1 So here's another reality more challenging  
2 than any surgery. Education is not only  
3 science, it's mostly art. There is magic  
4 involved in building a real relationship of  
5 trust and respect between an adult and a  
6 teenager be it a principal, a teacher, or a  
7 staff member. And believe me, each adult at  
8 SCRL has their own special way of making that  
9 connection.

10 And our teens show up on our steps with  
11 heavy life issues weighing upon them. When  
12 those burdens overwhelm them, the art of our  
13 work shines through. So don't fall prey to the  
14 science of data because the numbers.

15 Our numbers do not tell you the full story  
16 of the work that goes on at SCRL, of the  
17 successes we have achieved, of the lives we have  
18 changed. Of course, we want to do it all  
19 better. We will not be satisfied until 100% of  
20 every 12th grade student graduates. Anything  
21 else, even one, means that a student has not  
22 reached their goal, realized their dream,  
23 fulfilled their promise.

24 On January 1st, Mayor Bloomberg, our boss,  
25 your boss, promised that his third term would be

1 based upon listening then leading. Tonight  
2 more than ever before, we ask, no, we implore  
3 you to listen. Listen to our students, our  
4 families, and our friends. And then lead us,  
5 talk to us, work with us so we can better the  
6 lives of even more students in the community.

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

14 [cheers and applause]

15 [background conversation]

16 Uh, I just want to start by thanking, uh,  
17 Mr. Diveras [phonetic] and Elaina again for  
18 coming down and listening so respectfully to all  
19 the stuff we have to say. We know you guys got  
20 a lot of these to go to, and we really  
21 appreciate you guys being down here.

22 Um, I want to yield my time right now to,  
23 um, a math teacher. She's coming here from  
24 Global Enterprise, um, another school that's  
25 being shut down. And she has just a couple of

1 words to say in solidarity.

2 MS. ANGELINE JUSTIN: Thank you. I'm  
3 Angeline Justin [phonetic]. As he said, I'm a  
4 math and business teacher. We also have  
5 individuals from Christopher Columbus High  
6 School, who also has the same fate as us. And  
7 our hearing is on Thursday.

8 I just wanted to say that for, I know for at  
9 least for GEA as well as SCRL, we don't meet the  
10 criteria for closure. And I really, I want to  
11 ask the DOE: If you're going to make criteria,  
12 then why not stick to it? 'Cause right now, we  
13 don't know which school's safe. We got a B, we  
14 got 2 Cs. We don't meet the criteria and  
15 neither do they.

16 Also, um, SCRL is number 17 out of all high  
17 schools for high need. I also found out  
18 recently from our data tech that Christopher  
19 Columbus is number one for self-contained  
20 populations in the District 11 in the Bronx.  
21 And Global Enterprise is number three for that  
22 self-contained population.

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

1       them from their home, from their schools? A  
2       place that they have established a rapport with  
3       the teachers over four years, and then have them  
4       have to leave. Also, where will these children  
5       go in general if they're not going to the top  
6       needs schools that already exist?

7               Finally, I'm kind of of the opinion you  
8       don't throw the baby out with the bath water.  
9       If something's improving, you let it keep  
10      improving. Global, I know, has improved by over  
11      ten points from last year to this year. I saw  
12      that SCRL is in the same situation. We, they  
13      improved. Yes, the criteria changed, as it  
14      seems it's changed again. But we're improving.  
15      So we don't know what the graduation rate of the  
16      new school coming in Kappa has proposed. We  
17      don't know for sure if it's happening, but we  
18      don't know for sure if they're going to have a  
19      good graduation rate as they only have grades 9  
20      through 11. What's their graduation rate? Who  
21      knows?

22              I also heard that SCRL had, if the proposed  
23      school to come in is brand new. So why is it  
24      throwing out school--why are we throwing out  
25      schools that are showing improvement for schools

1 that we don't even know what they will have?

2 [cheers and applause]

3 Thank you.

4 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Number 9, Joanne Frank.

5 MS. JOANNE FRANK: Good evening. I'm here  
6 on behalf of the Council of School Supervisors  
7 and Administrators.

8 I would like to begin by saying that the  
9 Council of School Supervisors and Administrators  
10 supports accountability at all levels. Having  
11 said that, I have to ask the question: Why has  
12 the Department of Education consistently  
13 redesigned itself many times over the past eight  
14 years? As the kids would say, What's up with  
15 that?

16 [cheers and applause]

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

24 [applause]

25 In the case of this school, we would like to

1 know precisely what the Superintendent has  
2 done to support the school. Has the  
3 Superintendent walked the halls, visited  
4 classes, made appropriate suggestions to improve  
5 the outcomes for our students?

6 We also would like to know what the school  
7 support organization that supports this school  
8 has done to ensure that this school soars.  
9 These are answers that we would like for our  
10 children.

11 I would also like to point out that we  
12 believe on faith, and we're taking it on faith,  
13 that there is not an ulterior motive or an  
14 agenda for the closing of any school. But we  
15 really don't know that. We would really be very  
16 grateful, um, to know what the Superintendent,  
17 the School Support Organization, the Office of  
18 Student Enrollment, and the DOE has done to  
19 ensure that this school soars. We don't have an  
20 answer. As I said, CSA embraces accountability  
21 for all. Thank you.

22 [cheers and applause]

23 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Number 10.

24 MR. TAVERRAS: The next five, numbers 11  
25 through 15, please come and line up on the side,

1 please. Thank you.

2 FEMALE VOICE 2: Hi, everybody. Good  
3 evening. Uh, my name is - - . I graduated with  
4 the class of 2007. Um, we were the first  
5 graduating class. And I'm very proud of that.  
6 I tell everybody that wherever I go. I'm very  
7 proud of that.

8 Um, I'm not going to take up much of your  
9 time. Unfortunately, I don't have a speech. I  
10 guess everybody else is like very prepared for  
11 it. I am here, though, to speak about it  
12 because I, it really, really bothers me that  
13 this school is closing because we worked so hard  
14 for it.

15 Like Dr. Fletcher said, we came in 2003,  
16 there was no ceilings. I sat on a chair, I sat  
17 on a chair. And before this, I, I can tell you  
18 I didn't even know where I was going. But I  
19 came to SCRL ready for something new, because I  
20 wanted a second chance. And I came here, I sat  
21 on a chair with no desk. Half of us didn't even  
22 have desks; half of us sat together sharing  
23 desks. But we listened, and we learned, and we  
24 grew. And that shows something. And that that  
25 shows something I want everybody to remember

1 that.

2 I also want to talk about the fact that what  
3 was most important to me was that SCRL, and  
4 especially Mr. Moclene [phonetic], he made sure  
5 that I knew that I had the potential to be a  
6 leader. And that potential is what I see in  
7 every single student that I was with when I was  
8 here, and every student past, past my  
9 graduation. That's extremely important. That  
10 is extremely, extremely important. And I take  
11 that, that confidence that he had in me, I took  
12 that my, my senior year, I graduated President  
13 of this school, which I never would have  
14 expected and nobody would ever have expected  
15 from me. I graduated President. I graduated at  
16 the top percentile of my graduation class. I  
17 was accepted to Penn State.

18 I took the cross-age tutoring program we had  
19 here--we started the cross-age tutoring,  
20 Jonathan as well, we started the cross-age  
21 tutoring program my freshman year here. We  
22 started that program, and by, at the time I  
23 graduated, I think we had about three schools.  
24 And there was I don't even know how many  
25 students. You know, Ms. - - , I don't know how

1 many students were spread across the city, I  
2 mean, um, in the Bronx. And I took that, that  
3 experience, that helped me get a feature in Teen  
4 Vogue magazine. This is what I'm talking about.  
5 SCRL has changed my life forever.

6 And I'm forever grateful, no matter what  
7 happens. I just want to say this. I know my  
8 time is up. But no matter what happens, no  
9 matter what happens, I will forever be grateful.

10 And to everybody else, whether they close  
11 the school or not, every student that's in SCRL  
12 right now, look at this as motivation.  
13 Graduate. Make sure you better yourself no  
14 matter what happens, whether they give up on you  
15 or not. This can either be a second chance or  
16 that's it. But take this as motivation.  
17 Graduate, please.

18 MR. TAVERRAS: Thank you.

19 FEMALE VOICE 2: Better yourself. Thanks.

20 MR. TAVERRAS: Thank you. I just...

21 FEMALE VOICE 3: Hello.

22 MR. TAVERRAS: I would like to remind the  
23 speakers that please be respectful of your  
24 peer's time. Every single one of you came here  
25 to speak, and we would like for every single one

1 of you to have the opportunity to have the  
2 same and equal amount of time to speak. So once  
3 that Barbara shows you that time's up, please  
4 wrap it up. We really would appreciate that.  
5 Thank you.

6 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Next. Katherine  
7 McCarter [phonetic], Number 11.

8 MS. KATHERINE MCCARTER: Oh man, oh man.  
9 Hi, everybody. This is Kathy, obviously. Well,  
10 I made a little essay 'cause, you know, SCRL is  
11 my home and, you know, I don't like this.

12 What is a definition of school? It's a  
13 place where you sit and learn things that help  
14 you in life. But a definition for it? It's a  
15 boring place. Right? Well, you might not know  
16 it, but school and SCRL has two different  
17 definitions.

18 You can walk up to any student in the school  
19 and ask them, Why are you wasting your time and  
20 stopping the phase? Why do you even care? I  
21 will swear to you they will all say, What if  
22 your mom needed money? Wouldn't you help? What  
23 if your family's being torn apart? Wouldn't you  
24 go crazy to save them? Exactly what we're  
25 doing.

1           SCRL is our home. We are family here.  
2 Friends are siblings; teachers are parents.  
3 This school's smaller and everyone knows each  
4 other. And the bond between us is very strong.  
5 You might not believe me, but each student  
6 improves because of their friends.

7           At SCRL, we love each other. Even though we  
8 do bad things, our classmate won't hesitate us  
9 to calm down. They school's a choice, so why  
10 don't you please just hear our voice? SCRL is a  
11 great place. And nobody cared, we wouldn't be  
12 making such a fuss about it. SCRL is about  
13 love, caring, and we are family. Each family  
14 has their bad times, and our bad time is now.  
15 All of our students are working together and  
16 fighting for what we love.

17           SCRL is our school, and we would hate it if  
18 it were closed down. We all have our best  
19 memories and our worst. It's not fair that you  
20 can take our child, that you can take your child  
21 to your school and go back and visit, but we  
22 can't. All because you feel we did bad and you  
23 want to phase our school.

24           What you're doing is unfair. Only, it's not  
25 only for us, but our kids and the other student.

1 Because no one see, nobody sees all the things  
2 we've done. We had community volunteer, we had  
3 volunteer community service. We helped  
4 communities, but you don't see that. Also,  
5 nobody would enjoy having fun.

6 And the awesome teachers. This school has a  
7 bond that even the teachers is friends. Just  
8 like we have lunch time and laugh at each other  
9 and just chill, like the teachers do the same  
10 thing. Why would you destroy a bond like that?

11 Please don't close down SCRL. Everyone  
12 deserves a chance to learn. Why stop ours?

13 [cheers and applause]

14 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Next.

15 MR. DIORIO: Uh, thank you for the  
16 opportunity to speak. Uh, my name is Mr. Diorio  
17 [phonetic].

18 [cheers and applause]

19 Thanks. I've been a proud SCRL teacher for  
20 3 1/2 years. And in that time, I've seen  
21 nothing but unquestioned and unrelenting  
22 dedication to the academic success and growth of  
23 our students. Now, maybe I'm wrong, 'cause I'm  
24 just a teacher. But we're talking about  
25 education here. We're talking about standards.

1 And just like us teachers, we never give up on  
2 a struggling student. While that would be  
3 expeditious and painless, certainly, we would  
4 never do that. We never have done that 'cause  
5 that would be like a doctor giving up on a  
6 patient 'cause he's too sick. Or a lawyer  
7 giving up on a client 'cause the evidence is  
8 against him.

9 Now, that standard is held to, we're held to  
10 that accountability. I would assume that the  
11 Department of Education would hold itself to  
12 that same standard. You're giving up on us.  
13 Why? Because we're struggling. That's why  
14 you're giving up on us. You're not helping us,  
15 you're not offering solutions. You're simply  
16 giving up on us.

17 [cheers and applause]

18 You're asking us not to give up, but you're  
19 giving up on us. So I suggest that you strongly  
20 reconsider. I'm going to yield the rest of my  
21 time to Vivian.

22 [cheers and applause]

23 MR. VIVIAN ROBERTS: Good morning, ladies  
24 and gentlemen. Uh, my name is Vivian Roberts  
25 and, um, I am the current President of SCRL.

1           And coming into this school, I wouldn't,  
2 I, I just never expected to be President in my  
3 junior year, at any time. Um, I never planned  
4 on being in any student government team or  
5 anything like that, SLT, none of that. And  
6 these teachers took their time out of their  
7 daily lives to come and look at me. Or they can  
8 look at any of us and say, You have the  
9 potential to be whatever you want to be. You  
10 could be a leader in this school, and we will  
11 support you.

12           So my point is that if a teacher could take  
13 time out of their lives to look at a student to  
14 see that they are more than just somebody who  
15 comes to school to look at the board and just do  
16 work, there's nothing better than that. And  
17 closing our school down won't make anything  
18 better. It just makes everything worse.

19           And if I want to come back to a school that  
20 when I, in the next twenty years, should I say  
21 come back here and want to see these teachers  
22 and what they have done, I'll be so happy. So  
23 please keep our school open. Thank you.

24           [cheers and applause]

25           SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Number 13, Antony.

1           ANTONY: Hello. Good evening.

2           [cheers and applause]

3           Never before have I known how it felt to be  
4 just a number. I mean, growing up, my mom, my  
5 pop, my brothers and sisters--I'm one of five--  
6 were always there to support them in any way,  
7 shape or form.

8           My high school principal told me in the 10th  
9 grade, If you ever want a job, come see me.  
10 You'd be a great teacher. I mean, he never once  
11 said, Number 13--which I am today--you have 120  
12 seconds to save your school. I just, until  
13 today, I just don't understand the fairness of  
14 it. A fair shot is not too much to ask for.

15          To believe in kids, I don't know any numbers  
16 in the room. I see Lashmi [phonetic]; I haven't  
17 seen her in awhile. I see Gervaine [phonetic].  
18 I don't see any numbers when I look across the--  
19 look at these seniors. That's the number I see.  
20 Twelve. You guys are doing it. Give yourselves  
21 a round of applause, and everybody in this room  
22 who's up here fighting for a chance just to  
23 deserve the right to not be a number. And you  
24 guys look at them and say, Here's a couple of  
25 seconds, I have a couple of things to say, a

1 couple of people to welcome. It's just not  
2 fair. And it just goes to show you how far the  
3 DOE loves our child, our children.

4 I love my job. I love doing what I do.  
5 I'll continue to do it, but never have I came  
6 and said, Okay, 1 of 34, come up to the board  
7 and answer questions 1 through 4. It's just not  
8 the way education's meant to be done. And it's  
9 not why I got into this business. And I don't  
10 think it's fair, to be honest. I hope I didn't  
11 waste too much time. Number 13. Good night,  
12 everyone.

13 [cheers and applause]

14 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: 14, Jonathan. Do you  
15 have your number?

16 JONATHAN: All right, everybody. I'm  
17 Jonathan. You all know me. All right. Um,  
18 10th grade rep, President runner up, but I'm  
19 glad I lost to such a good Pres so he's still  
20 here. So I'm glad about that. But anyway.

21 Um, I'm not going to talk about now, but I  
22 want to talk about our future for SCRL. Right  
23 now, we've got 8th graders in middle school.  
24 They're going to be graduating soon, 2010. And,  
25 um, we had a high school fair. Our name are in

1 the high school book that they looked at. All  
2 right? And a lot of 8th graders are going to be  
3 wanting to put their name in that book. We had  
4 a lot of names on those lists that we had kids  
5 filling out themselves. All right? A lot of  
6 those kids came by themselves, too. Not a lot  
7 of kids were with parents. So that was kind of  
8 cool. All right?

9 And then another thing is, all right, we are  
10 doing bad, but we have been asking for help.  
11 All right? Now, separately from the DOE, we  
12 went to--me and Grumpsy [phonetic] went to go  
13 talk to the City Council. We've asked for funds  
14 to help raise our school's technologies, but we  
15 didn't get them. But we have been trying to get  
16 help. All right? We need help. We do need  
17 help. I'm not going to lie. All right? But  
18 where are we going to get our help from? All  
19 right?

20 I'm one kid. There's many kids in this  
21 room. There's many parents in this room. All  
22 right? And, honestly, I'm speaking for all the  
23 kids right now--I feel that I have a voice. All  
24 right? And I'm talking right now. And this is  
25 the only time I've been asked. All right?

1 That's it.

2 [applause]

3 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Thank you. Number 15.

4 MR. TAVERRAS: Speakers numbers 16 through  
5 20, please line up on the side here. Thank you.  
6 Right here.

7 CHRISTIAN: All right. My name is  
8 Christian. I'm a sophomore here at SCRL.

9 [applause]

10 When, when I first came to this school last  
11 year, I was lost. And Mr. Ellis over there, he  
12 helped me. I was like a lost person in the  
13 hallways, searching for a way to like to go  
14 around. And he helped me out. That shows that  
15 the teachers care. Also, you being here today  
16 shows that you care about us even though you  
17 probably don't want to show it.

18 Um, yeah, so right now our school, we're  
19 struggling right now. So we're, like, crawling,  
20 but by you closing us, phasing us out, you're  
21 basically kicking us down. And none of us likes  
22 that. None of us here likes that. So I ask  
23 you, Please don't close us down. Yeah.

24 [applause]

25 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Okay. Next. Do you

1 have...?

2 CLARISSA: Good afternoon, good evening,  
3 everybody. My name is Clarissa. I'm from the  
4 second graduating class at SCRL.

5 [cheers and applause]

6 All right. Overall, I would actually say  
7 that SCRL, they were never picky. They never  
8 gave entrance exams. They took everybody in  
9 'cause they believed that each and every one of  
10 us were equal.

11 SCRL has given each and every student a  
12 voice to express themselves. I can honestly say  
13 that because I was here for, since the beginning  
14 of SCRL. Every day we were asked for help.  
15 Every day we would get up, set time apart to  
16 make SCRL blossom into a school that we know  
17 that even though it hasn't reached its time yet,  
18 it can get there. It's getting there.

19 Closing SCRL down just goes to show that you  
20 all give up very easy. DOE gives up very easy  
21 on us, the students, those, the staffs, the  
22 teachers, and everybody else that want to come  
23 in. Where are they going to go? Where are they  
24 going to go?

25 Ten years from now, I want to say SCRL is

1 still standing on the Adlai E. Stevenson  
2 campus. I still want to see that sign with the  
3 eagles, the buffalos, the bears. I want to see  
4 each and every sign there. Come on, you all.

5 [cheers and applause]

6 You know what we're talking about. All  
7 right? Come on.

8 I love this school. I graduated from this  
9 school. I've seen the school grow. I've seen  
10 the school progress. And I think that SCRL  
11 shouldn't be shut down. Please.

12 [applause]

13 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Thank you. Number 17.  
14 17?

15 MS. SHARON THOMAS: Sorry. Hi. Good  
16 evening. My name is Sharon Thomas. I am a  
17 Parent Advocate for the Committee on Special  
18 Ed. This is my daughter, Euniquea [phonetic]  
19 Thomas. Oh, as well, I'm a Title 1 Rep for the  
20 School for Community Research and Learning.  
21 This is my daughter, Euniquea Thomas, who's  
22 currently in the 9th grade, who's in Special Ed.

23 So what you're telling these kids that's in  
24 Special Ed that they might as well give up on  
25 society, 'cause you're giving up on them by

1 shutting their school down. Okay? Why give  
2 us parents choices to go pick high schools, and  
3 once we pick the high schools, you want to close  
4 them down? You can't do that.

5 This school works hard, and I know they  
6 working hard for mine. 'Cause first marking  
7 quarter, she wasn't doing good in Social  
8 Studies. Second marking quarter, she blossomed.  
9 Because you know why? Because the principal  
10 found he could help her pick up her Social  
11 Studies. When she was lacking, they helped her  
12 pick that skill up. Don't close the school.  
13 Help the school. Thank you.

14 [cheers and applause]

15 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Number 18.

16 MS. SONYA LOPEZ: Good evening. I'm the  
17 proud parent of Jonathan Roman. My name is  
18 Sonya Lopez.

19 [applause]

20 Um, this is a big mistake to shut down this  
21 school. My son was one of the first students in  
22 this school. When I came here, I didn't have  
23 anything. But Mr. Moclene was so determined to  
24 make this happen along with his great teachers.  
25 This is a family. This is not a school where

1 the kids are numbers. This, every student in  
2 here matters. They matter to all of them. They  
3 sacrifice. They put in their own time in the  
4 morning, after school, they help them. They  
5 give them every advantage that they need to be  
6 able to excel. It's, they need help. Help  
7 them. Don't shut them down. Don't turn your  
8 backs on them.

9 This is for the, this is for this community.  
10 They do great, great work. And it's touching,  
11 and it's saddened to hear that you're going to  
12 turn your backs and close the school down. Give  
13 them a chance. They can do it.

14 Mr. Moclene is the king, the chief of this  
15 school, and he's determined. He never gave up.  
16 He stood on the top. And he always said we  
17 could do it, you could do it. Help them to do  
18 it. Don't shut the school down. It's a big  
19 mistake.

20 [cheers and applause]

21 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: 19. Yes.

22 MS. MELA SANTOREZ: I wasn't going to speak  
23 today 'cause I'm always talking, and  
24 sometimes... Um, SCRL is a school that works  
25 very hard for its students. The DOE agrees with

1 this statement. Excuse me?

2 Uh, my name is Mela Santorez [phonetic]. I  
3 am an English teacher at SCRL.

4 Um, SCRL is a school that works very hard  
5 for its students. And the DOE agrees with this  
6 statement. The DOE states that we can't keep  
7 doing the same thing. I agree. And each year  
8 that I've worked as a teacher, I reevaluate  
9 units and lessons, and implement new ways to  
10 provide students with an education. This year,  
11 my 9th graders have been collectively reading  
12 130 books as of today.

13 [cheers and applause]

14 This is a way that I'm providing students  
15 with variety, rigor, and differentiated  
16 instruction. The DOE has not provided me, as a  
17 teacher, with any support to change what I do in  
18 the classroom. I have done this through the  
19 support of my colleagues, and through my own  
20 interest in finding the ways that I can help my  
21 students. And I teach my students, not 33  
22 seats.

23 [cheers and applause]

24 The DOE says that it will be offering  
25 support to the school as it implements its

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

6 [cheers and applause]

7 MR. TAVERRAS: Speakers 21 through speaker  
8 25, please come to the side.

9 [background conversation]

10 LASHMI: Hi. My name is Lashmi, and I'm a  
11 sophomore...

12 [cheers and applause]

13 ...from SCRL. And before I say my speech,  
14 um, I would like to read a letter from a, a SCRL  
15 alumni. His name is Arthur Sanders. And this  
16 is what he has to say.

17 "To the Department of Education, I came to  
18 SCRL from the juvenile justice system and the  
19 foster care system. I did not want to be there,  
20 but the support at the school, and especially  
21 the principal, Mr. Moclene, I was able to earn  
22 the credits I needed to graduate on time in the  
23 first graduating class of 2007. Thanks to the  
24 support of SCRL, I am now a successful college  
25 student enrolled in Westchester Community

1 College. I am the first in my family to  
2 graduate from high school and enter college. I  
3 will be transferring to a four-year college  
4 soon. Hopefully, Lehman College in the Bronx.  
5 My goal is to offer the same support to students  
6 who are in the same situation I was in, and need  
7 a little extra help to make it. There are not  
8 many schools that offer the support I received,  
9 and don't give up on the students. That is why  
10 SCRL must not close down."

11 And for my speech, okay. I have a dream  
12 that one day our school system would not be  
13 corrupted. I wish there was a better system in  
14 which DOE would support us in any way they can  
15 instead, instead of following their greed for  
16 money. Please don't close our home down.

17 You have not provided a valid reason to  
18 close it down. Therefore, your actions would be  
19 unconstitutional. I love my home.

20 [cheers and applause]

21 I love my home. So do the right thing and  
22 don't take it away. Thank you.

23 [cheers and applause]

24 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Thank you. Number 21.

25 MS. BARBARA GAVEY: Hi. My name is Barbara

1 Gavey [phonetic]. I'm the SL teacher at the  
2 School for Community Research and Learning.

3 I want to mention some of the things that I  
4 like about SCRL that I haven't seen in other  
5 schools. I like that the teachers get together,  
6 that the teachers help each other rather than  
7 try and hoard everything for themselves. I like  
8 the way they work together, and try to work  
9 through problems that they have. If I have a  
10 problem student, I know that I can go to Ms.  
11 Devallea [phonetic]. I can go to Mr. Ellis. I  
12 can go to Mr. Diorio. And I can get input as to  
13 how I might be able to reach that student, what  
14 I might be doing wrong, what I might be able to  
15 do better.

16 I like the way the students know each other.  
17 Students in our school like each other. They  
18 like to do things together. They like to help  
19 each other, too. I have students who want to do  
20 peer tutoring. I have students that want to be  
21 tutored by their peers.

22 I like that I know all of the students in  
23 this school. I don't want to go to a new  
24 school. I don't want to go to a new school  
25 that's going to have different students with the

1 same problems. I want to be able to help the  
2 students that are here get through the problems  
3 that they have. And I want to be able to get  
4 through any problems that I, as a teacher, may  
5 have. And I want to do it here. Thank you.

6 [applause]

7 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Thank you. Number 22.  
8 22. Number 22.

9 MR. ARTHUR WILLIAMS: Good evening,  
10 everyone. I'm going to make this brief. And,  
11 um, 'cause I don't like to speak just to be  
12 heard. I like to be, to speak to be felt. And  
13 I want you guys to feel this.

14 SCRL has made a difference in my son's life.  
15 And I only pray you guys give them the  
16 opportunity to... Excuse me? My name? Arthur  
17 Williams. I'm actually the Treasurer on the  
18 Parents Association.

19 [cheers and applause]

20 Okay. Move on. So the thing is I can speak  
21 for my son. And my son may be able to speak for  
22 the students in this school. But the one thing  
23 I speak for my son, I've noticed a change in my  
24 son. He's been in this school for one year.  
25 He's been in two other schools prior to this.

1 And they have been schools that held him back.  
2 And this is the one school that made a  
3 difference in him. And he has grown. And I  
4 would only hope you guys give him the  
5 opportunity to progress and keep this school  
6 open. Thank you.

7 [applause]

8 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: 23.

9 MS. ALIVO: Good evening. My name is - -  
10 Alivo [phonetic], and I am a hard-working,  
11 single mother of one of the SCRL students.

12 My daughter is an IEP student. My biggest  
13 fear in life was my daughter not being able to  
14 graduate. But I'm proud to say she is now a  
15 senior. I can honestly say this school, this  
16 staff has boosted my daughter's self-esteem and  
17 made her feel that she can achieve the same  
18 academic goals as the students without IEP  
19 status.

20 The SCRL staff has stayed late tutoring my  
21 daughter. Has helped me get one-on-one tutoring  
22 at home. They have taken time to show me  
23 different tactics so that I may be able to help  
24 my child. I see that it is more than just a  
25 paycheck to these teachers and staff at SCRL.

1 They have a sincere love for these kids. But  
2 there is no way your numbers can show that. You  
3 would actually have to be hands-on to see that.

4 You're proposing a new school. But changing  
5 the wrapping on the gift doesn't change what's  
6 inside. By closing the school, I feel you're  
7 showing our children to accept defeat rather  
8 than assess and rectify the situation. Rather  
9 than, excuse me. Rather than proposing to throw  
10 in the towel and basically tell our children  
11 without words they are not worth it and are  
12 hopeless, why not propose new computers,  
13 afterschool programs, better resources? It's  
14 our community, our children. Why not consider  
15 our voices? Thank you.

16 [applause]

17 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: 24.

18 MR. JOHN HERNANDEZ: Hi. I'm John  
19 Hernandez. I've been in this school for four  
20 years.

21 [cheers and applause]

22 All right. I came into the school as a very  
23 lazy person. You know, these school--and, um,  
24 the teachers in this school never, never stopped  
25 to see my potential. They always pushed me. I

1 was lazy, but they always pushed me. They  
2 never stopped. They're the reason that I am  
3 graduating this year. I am a senior of 2010. I  
4 will be going to college, and it's all because  
5 of them.

6 This, the teachers in this school, they,  
7 they love their students, you know. They  
8 really, they really care. And, you know, to see  
9 this school shut down, it really hurts me.  
10 Because this school does nothing but help its  
11 students. This school cares about its students.

12 And I just want to see this school keep on  
13 doing that, keep on, you know, helping lazy  
14 students like myself, you know, progress. And,  
15 you know, that, to me, would be amazing. All  
16 right. So please don't shut down my school.  
17 And that's all I have to say. Thank you.

18 [cheers and applause]

19 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: Number 25.

20 MS. ELEANOR LERRIER: Good evening. I am  
21 Eleanor Lerrier [phonetic], Chief Executive  
22 Officer of the Bronx Community Health Network.

23 You might be wondering why is a health care  
24 organization here in a school. We have been  
25 working with SCRL, uh, Mr. Moclene, Dr.

1 Fletcher, Ms. Rodriguez, uh, Mr. Lee now for  
2 about a year and a half. We, as an  
3 organization, recognize that statistics don't  
4 tell the whole story. They're part of the  
5 story, but they don't tell the story.

6 Our mission is to improve the health of  
7 Bronx residents. We can tell you statistics  
8 upon statistics about the poor health of this  
9 community. Uh, it's to also improve financial  
10 and other program resources so that everyone can  
11 get affordable health care.

12 Uh, our patients that we serve--over 70,000  
13 in the past year--represent and reflect the  
14 ethnicity, the multi-cultural nature of the  
15 Bronx, just as the students at SCRL do.

16 With the, with Mr. Moclene and the other  
17 members of his leadership team and teachers that  
18 I've mentioned before, um, we've worked with  
19 them to develop a plan to help to bring  
20 resources to this school. We are still  
21 marketing that plan for funding. And part of  
22 that plan included mentoring students in health  
23 care and other careers, integrating health  
24 topics into the curriculum, preparing for the  
25 work world with interviewing and presentation

1 skills and developing internships and school-  
2 to-work programs.

3 Again, we recognize that school is one part  
4 of it. The academic, the academics are one  
5 part. But the social environment, in which  
6 children live, are also an important part. We  
7 are aware of the health, education and  
8 employment statistics of the community. And we  
9 know that the students are starting with lots of  
10 deficits. They, their parents, and the teachers  
11 of this school are fighting an uphill battle.

12 They recognize that solid education is part  
13 of the solution. The teachers at SCRL are  
14 committed to the struggle, not only to meet the  
15 academic needs, but trying to ensure that social  
16 and economic needs are also considered.

17 We are impressed by the number of programs  
18 and resources that they've brought to SCRL. And  
19 we are committed to our collaboration and  
20 partnership with SCRL. Please do not close the  
21 school. Thank you.

22 [applause]

23 MR. TAVERRAS: I believe there's one more  
24 speaker. I believe there was, there were 26  
25 people who were--

1 SUPT. PAPALOVARIOS: [Interposing] Number  
2 26, Jesse Mojica [phonetic].

3 MR. TAVERRAS: Number 26, please come up.  
4 How are you doing, Mr. Mojica?

5 MR. JESSE MOJICA: Good evening, ladies and  
6 gentlemen. My name is Jesse Mojica, and I'm the  
7 Director of Education Policy for Bronx Borough  
8 President, Reuben Diaz, Jr. And I'm very, um,  
9 I, I wanted to come here today, obviously, to  
10 talk about this very important issue.

11 One of the issues that we find with, uh,  
12 this proposal for closure is that within your  
13 own criteria you state that SCRL did not meet  
14 the standard for closure. And then in the same  
15 Educational Impact Statement, you state a  
16 conversation with internal stakeholders that led  
17 to this decision. But yet the context of what  
18 that conversation was and the identity of those  
19 stakeholders were not in that Educational Impact  
20 Statement. I think in all fairness to everybody  
21 who works within the school, who attends in this  
22 school, we need clarity and we need  
23 transparency.

24 By your own criteria, this school should not  
25 be closed. Yet in the Educational Impact

1 Statement, it alludes to a conversation, but  
2 there's no specifics as to what that  
3 conversation was, who was in that conversation,  
4 and what was discussed.

5 Also, it mentions stakeholders. I think  
6 that the individuals who work in this school,  
7 and who sacrifice, and who, who work day in and  
8 day out with these children should have been  
9 involved in that conversation. They are the  
10 most important stakeholder.

11 [cheers and applause]

12 With that said, um, in the December Panel  
13 for Educational Policy meeting, the Borough  
14 President wrote a letter stating these concerns  
15 to the members of the panel who will vote on  
16 this on January 26th. We have a representative  
17 on the panel. And we have asked for this  
18 information. If we do not receive this  
19 information, there is no way that we would  
20 support any attempt to close this school or the  
21 four schools that do not meet the criteria.

22 [cheers and applause]

23 Today, we have not received a response from  
24 that letter. I, uh, have reached out and will  
25 reach out to each individual panel member

1 tomorrow to have this conversation. But once  
2 again, I must reiterate--and I think someone had  
3 said it before--is that it is completely unfair  
4 to continually move the target, to continually  
5 move the target. The school did not meet the  
6 criteria, should not be closed. You cannot  
7 continued to move the target. It's not fair for  
8 our students and for our educators who work day  
9 in and day out with these children. Thank you  
10 for the opportunity.

11 [cheers and applause]

12 MR. TAVERRAS: I want to thank, I want to  
13 thank everybody who came out here tonight to  
14 support your school, and to speak tonight. This  
15 information will be given to the Panel for  
16 Educational Policy. And the meeting where the,  
17 they will vote on these proposals will be  
18 January 26th, I believe, at, uh, Brooklyn Tech  
19 High School out in Brooklyn. Have a pleasant  
20 and safe evening. Thank you.

21 [END 154\_501]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature   Melissa Strickland  

Date   January 13, 2010  \_\_\_\_\_