

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 - DIVISION OF  
PORTFOLIO PLANNING  
J.H.S. 166 George Gershwin - 2/21/13**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 FACILITATOR: Good evening. My name is  
3 Olivia Ellis and I will be the facilitator for the  
4 joint public hearing.

5 This is the joint public hearing of the  
6 Department of Education, Community Education  
7 Council, and the School Leadership Team to  
8 discuss the proposed phase out of Junior High  
9 School 166 George Gershwin, 19K166, beginning in  
10 2013 to 2014.

11 The proposed opening and co-location of a  
12 new middle school, 19K654, with existing  
13 schools, Junior High School 166, George  
14 Gershwin, 19K166, the UFT Charter School 84K359,  
15 and a proposed charter high school Achievement  
16 First Charter High School Two in building of  
17 K166 beginning in 2013/2014.

18 The proposed reciting and co-location of the  
19 sixth through eighth grades of UFT Charter  
20 School 84K359 in building K292 with the existing  
21 schools Junior High School 292, Margaret S.  
22 Douglas, 19K292 beginning in 2013 to 2014 school  
23 year.

24 The proposed opening and co-location of  
25 Achievement First Charter High School Two with

1 existing schools, Junior High School 166 George  
2 Gershwin, 16K166. Make a correction. That's  
3 19K166. The UFT Charter School 84K359 and a new  
4 middle school, 19K654, in building K166  
5 beginning in 2013/2014.

6 Tonight's proceedings will be recorded and  
7 transcribed. Before we begin the hearing we ask  
8 that anyone who wishes to speak during the  
9 public comment portion of the evening please  
10 sign in at the table at the back. Signup will  
11 end at 6:15.

12 If you have a question that you want to be  
13 addressed during the question and answer portion  
14 of the agenda please write that question on the  
15 index cards provided at the back and submit them  
16 to the volunteer at the tables. Only people who  
17 have signed up to speak will be able to  
18 participate in the public comment.

19 All panel participants were asked to be here  
20 no later than 5:30. Now that we have started,  
21 if a panel participant arrives late he or she  
22 will be given a time to speak at the first  
23 opportune moment. We want to be respectful of  
24 everyone's time.

25 There will be elected officials who arrive

1 at different times throughout the evening. If  
2 they wish to speak we will do our best to  
3 accommodate them at the first opportune moment.  
4 Those who are here at the start of the public  
5 comment section will be asked to speak first.

6 As you will see, you will have a full agenda  
7 described in posters around the room - - for  
8 tonight's joint public hearing will include a  
9 presentation of the proposal and presentations  
10 by - - participants, followed by public comment.  
11 Speakers should have already signed up at the  
12 signup table in the lobby. Public comments can  
13 be no longer than two minutes each. The time  
14 will be strictly followed and speakers will be  
15 informed when the designated time has ended.

16 There will be a question-and-answer queue.  
17 Members of the audience, if you have a question  
18 please write the question on the index cards  
19 that have been supplied at the sign-in table  
20 when you arrived this evening.

21 While the public comments are taking place  
22 staff members will organize the questions into  
23 categories and get them ready for the Q&A  
24 period. Some questions will be asked directly  
25 from the index cards and others will be matched

1 with other headings in order to avoid  
2 repetitiveness.

3 Even though all individual questions will  
4 not be addressed in form tonight, answers to the  
5 questions will be posted on the DOE website  
6 prior to the panel meeting. If at the end of  
7 the hearing you still have questions we  
8 encourage you to direct them to us by calling  
9 the phone number on the bottom of the fax sheet  
10 or sending them to us via email to the email  
11 address provided on the fax sheets.

12 I will now like to introduce the panel,  
13 which has been assembled for this evening's  
14 joint public hearing. Deputy Chancellor David  
15 Weiner, Community Superintendent Joyce  
16 Stallings-Harte. Representative from the  
17 Network Gerry Bernie. The Principal - - 166  
18 Maria Ortega.

19 MS. MARIA ORTEGA: Junior High School 166.

20 FACILITATOR: I'm sorry. Junior High School  
21 166. Representative from the School Leadership  
22 Team Gregory Grant. And also from SUNY Charter  
23 Institution Liz Genco.

24 I will now turn the program over to Liz  
25 Genco.

1 MS. LIZ GENCO: Hello. How are you? My  
2 name is Elizabeth Genco and I'm the director of  
3 Charter School Information at the SUNY Charter  
4 School's Institute. I'm here tonight to hold a  
5 public hearing on behalf of the Board of  
6 Trustees of the State University of New York, or  
7 SUNY.

8 SUNY is the authorizer of the Achievement  
9 First Bushwick Charter School, which we are  
10 discussing tonight. That means that SUNY  
11 trustees approve the adaptation to create the  
12 school. And my organization, the SUNY Charter  
13 School's Institute, will visit the school and  
14 report on its progress to parents. As the  
15 school gets older we will also make  
16 recommendations to the SUNY trustees about  
17 whether or not the school has earned the right  
18 to stay open.

19 Tonight our focus is on where the students  
20 will be located. Education - - hired SUNY to  
21 hold a public hearing any time one of the  
22 schools it authorizes might open in an existing  
23 public school building. I'm here tonight  
24 specifically to listen to your comments about  
25 the proposal to locate grades nine to eleven of

1 Achievement First Bushwick, an existing charter  
2 school and part of building K166 located at 800  
3 Van Siclen Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, 12207 in  
4 Community School District 19 beginning in the  
5 fall of 2013.

6 SUNY is holding the hearing now at the same  
7 time that the - - hearing so that we don't have  
8 to ask parents and community members to attend  
9 two different hearings on the same topic. We  
10 want to make sure that we have the opportunity  
11 to hear from as many parents, teachers, school  
12 leaders, and members of the community that we  
13 can.

14 I do want to note that SUNY must make its  
15 own decision regarding the school using the  
16 proposed space. I will be taking notes on the  
17 comments made this evening, and in addition you  
18 can give me comments that you may have written  
19 at the end of the hearing.

20 You can email them to [Charters@SUNY.edu](mailto:Charters@SUNY.edu).  
21 You can mail comments to our main office at 41  
22 State Street, Suite 700, Albany, New York,  
23 12207. Or fax comments to (518) 427-6510. And  
24 if you missed any of that I have extra copies of  
25 our notices, which have all of our contact

1 information on them.

2 We will accept comments. SUNY will accept  
3 comments through March 18th. We set this  
4 deadline for five business days after the  
5 meeting for the panel on education policy where  
6 this co-location will be discussed. That way if  
7 there's information that we get that's a part of  
8 the PET meeting that you'd like to share with  
9 us, you have time to do so. SUNY will make a  
10 decision on the location after the close of the  
11 comments periods.

12 In advance I'd like to thank you all for  
13 coming this evening. I appreciate all of the  
14 comments that you have to share with us and with  
15 the trustees. We appreciate your time.

16 FACILITATOR: I'd also like to welcome Erica  
17 Perez from the CEC. I would now like to turn  
18 the evening over to Deputy Chancellor David  
19 Weiner.

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR DAVID WEINER: Thank you,  
21 Olivia. Thank you, Liz. Evening ladies and  
22 gentlemen. Thank you for being here tonight.

23 This joint public hearing was convened to  
24 discuss the following proposals. The phase out  
25 and replacement of Junior High School 166,

1 George Gershwin, - - reciting grades sixth  
2 through eighth of the UFT Charter School, and  
3 the proposed co-location of Achievement First  
4 High School Two.

5 For this hearing I will refer to Junior High  
6 School 166 George Gershwin as 166 from this  
7 point forward. The decision to phase out 166 is  
8 a difficult one and we do not make these  
9 decisions lightly. We examine many factors in  
10 data before there is a course of action. We  
11 engage families and community members in a  
12 discussion about what is and what is not working  
13 at this school before determining whether a  
14 phase out is appropriate.

15 All of us count on our schools to provide a  
16 high quality education to students, and we must  
17 hold all schools to the same standard of  
18 excellence because every child in this city  
19 deserves the best possible education. When a  
20 school isn't serving its students well we have  
21 to take action to ensure current students don't  
22 fall even further behind and that future  
23 students - - school have been prepared for  
24 success in college and the workplace.

25 I want to acknowledge the students and

1 families who are here who feel that they are  
2 being well-served by 166. Tonight we'll be  
3 hearing about some of those success stories and  
4 we honor those stories. But we also need to  
5 consider the other students for whom this school  
6 is not serving - - and who have not experienced  
7 the same success. These students deserve  
8 better.

9 As I mentioned earlier, tonight we'll be  
10 discussing the new proposed phase out and  
11 replacement of 166 with one new district middle  
12 school. We will also be discussing proposals to  
13 recite grade sixth through eighth of the UFT  
14 Charter School and - - Achievement First High  
15 School Two.

16 166 is located in the school building K166  
17 at 800 Van Siclen Avenue in Brooklyn. It  
18 currently serves students in grades sixth  
19 through eighth and admits students from District  
20 19 Middle School Choice Process. 166 is  
21 currently located with grades six through  
22 twelfth at the UFT Charter school, an existing  
23 public charter school that currently serves  
24 students in kindergarten through twelfth grade  
25 in two separate sites.

1           On January 17th, 2013, New York City DOE  
2 published proposals to phase out and - - 166  
3 based on its performance struggles. On February  
4 5th, 2013 the DOE published an amendment  
5 proposal that provided updated information  
6 regarding the availability of the school  
7 improvement grant. These proposals discussed  
8 the track record of 166 and why the DOE believes  
9 that a phase out replacement is the best option  
10 for the 166 community.

11           The 166 performance data indicate the school  
12 has struggled and confirmed the DOE's assessment  
13 that the school is not meeting the needs of all  
14 its students. For example, the overwhelming  
15 majority of 166 students remain below grade  
16 level in ELA and math. Last year only 11% of  
17 students were performing at or above grade level  
18 in ELA putting the school at the bottom 3% of  
19 middle schools citywide. On 25% of the students  
20 were performing at or above grade level in math,  
21 putting the school in the bottom 10% of middle  
22 schools citywide.

23           In both those subject areas 166 ranks at the  
24 bottom of District 19 middle schools. 166 was  
25 also identified by the New York State Education

1 Department as a priority school, labeling it  
2 as one of the bottom 5% of schools in the state.

3 Given the school's poor performance the DOE  
4 believes that only the most serious  
5 intervention, the gradual phase out, and  
6 eventual replacement of 166 will address its  
7 struggles and allow for a new school option to  
8 develop in this building that will better serve  
9 future students in the broader community.

10 In the separate EIS the DOE has proposed to  
11 open a co-location for new district middle  
12 school in this building, which would serve  
13 students in grades sixth through eighth when it  
14 reaches full scale in the 2015/16 school year.  
15 The new middle school will admit students from  
16 the District 19 middle school of choice process,  
17 offering priority to students residing in the  
18 166 zone.

19 In another EIS the DOE has also proposed to  
20 recite grades sixth through eighth of the UFT  
21 Charter School from this building to building  
22 K292 where the elementary school of the UFT  
23 Charter School are currently located.

24 Finally, in an additional EIS the DOE is  
25 also proposing to use this space vacated by the

1 reciting of the UFT Charter School to co-  
2 locate a new school, Achievement First Charter  
3 High School Two, in this building. If approved,  
4 Achievement First Charter High School Two will  
5 open with grade nine and add one grade each year  
6 until it grows to completion serving grades  
7 ninth through twelfth in 2016/17 school year.

8 Before we move to the public comments  
9 section of this meeting I would like to discuss  
10 the impact of the phase out proposal on current  
11 166 students. If the phase out proposal is  
12 approved, 166 will no longer admit new sixth  
13 grade students after the conclusion of this  
14 school year. 166 will continue to phase out one  
15 grade at a time until June 2015 when it will  
16 close. Current sixth and seventh grade students  
17 will be supported in 166 - - towards the  
18 completion of middle school and transition to  
19 high school. Students may also apply to any  
20 school elsewhere. Students at 166 will get an  
21 opportunity to apply for transfer to another  
22 middle school as part of our public school  
23 choice process.

24 Thanks in advance for sharing feedback on  
25 these proposals tonight. We look forward to

1 hearing your comments and questions.

2 FACILITATOR: Thank you. Our next presenter  
3 will be Gregory Grant, Representative of the  
4 School Leadership Team and the - - Association.

5 MR. GREGORY GRANT: Good evening, everyone.  
6 Thanks for coming out. - - was speaking about  
7 the phase out of Junior High School 166 and  
8 talking about where we rank - - middle schools  
9 indication. They failed to inform you of the  
10 kids that - - get into this school. We don't  
11 have a choice around who we take right now.  
12 Most of the middle schools - - history - - their  
13 children.

14 We take students in from our - - schools.  
15 They're coming here on one below two and they  
16 give us six months to turn that around. If  
17 there are any other - - schools to begin with  
18 they haven't done that or up their grades from  
19 three to four years, how are we supposed to turn  
20 that around in just six months time?

21 Every year we're faced with this same  
22 problem and the DOE - - or anyone else doesn't  
23 do anything to help us. We always have to - -  
24 private school and it affects our improvement  
25 and the great students that we get in here.

1 That affects the teachers because if I'm  
2 somewhere and my job is always talked about  
3 being in jeopardy I have to look out for my  
4 family first, and sometimes we lose a lot of  
5 good qualified teachers that could help out and  
6 have been in this school for 25 or 30 years.  
7 They either move on or they retire because the  
8 school is always in jeopardy of being closed.

9 I'm asking if you give us a fair shot and we  
10 can't do our jobs and get these kids to move  
11 along then I'll - - phasing us out or closing  
12 us, but at least give us a chance. Let us start  
13 with an even playing field. Don't stack the  
14 deck against us and give us six months to work  
15 around it. It's just not possible.

16 We have a runway - - challenge. We're still  
17 working and we're going to continue to work  
18 through all the new locations, through all the  
19 little halls phasing out, through all the early  
20 engagement. We're still here. We're still  
21 trying. And we're going to continue to be here.  
22 It's not over yet. We're just asking the  
23 community to get behind us, have faith in us,  
24 and keep working with us, 'cause we will make it  
25 through this yet again.

1           FACILITATOR: Thank you. Our next  
2 presenter will be a representative from  
3 Community Education Council 19 and President's  
4 Council, Erica Perez.

5           MS. ERICA PEREZ: Good evening. It's really  
6 sad to sit here and see something that-a school  
7 that affects the entire community once again  
8 being attacked. While we look at the data,  
9 let's take a look at the statistics. When you  
10 look at the data, out of 395 students 265 are  
11 over age. How is that a fair statistic towards  
12 the children that are - - to stay tested? You  
13 have these children that are frustrated, that  
14 they know they don't belong in junior high  
15 school anymore, but they cannot pass this test.  
16 So they become frustrated and we're dealing with  
17 all the fallouts. We don't want to keep having  
18 a school to - - pipeline. We want this to stop.

19           Now let's focus on a couple of other  
20 demographics. Regarding the regions testing  
21 here at the school, they have a percentage of  
22 95% passing in a failing school and a school  
23 that the DOE deems as a failure. They were able  
24 to obtain, with 28% special needs. The  
25 demographics of it only being 395 students. You

1 have your 28% special needs. That's a big  
2 percentage of the building. No one is taking  
3 into account that these children don't have  
4 anywhere else to go.

5 When you're looking at the statistics keep  
6 in mind 265 students speaks louder than anything  
7 else. What do you propose to put these  
8 children? Because the charter schools are not  
9 going to take them because they're over age.  
10 They are not going to place a 16, 17, 18 year  
11 old in with 10 and 11-year-olds, but that's what  
12 we're facing in the school. This is one of the  
13 only safe havens for these children to go to.  
14 So I propose to the DOE instead of just trying  
15 to smooth over this problem like it doesn't  
16 exist, let's find a real solution.

17 Let's build a District 79 school at junior  
18 high school level. Let's have it pertain to all  
19 these children that are in and out of the penal  
20 system so that they're in a more structured  
21 environment. Because within District 19, you're  
22 going to see these over age numbers across the  
23 board and that's what's hurting our public  
24 schools. You asked why are they not passing,  
25 why the children are failing. It's not the

1 children that are failing. It's the system  
2 that's not identifying the real problems. Thank  
3 you.

4 FACILITATOR: Thank you. And our next  
5 speaker will be the principal of Junior High  
6 School 166, Maria Ortega.

7 MS. MARIA ORTEGA: Thank you. Good evening.  
8 My name is Maria Ortega. I'm the principal of  
9 Junior High School 166. I've been at this  
10 school for nine years. I began here in 2004.  
11 The school was corrected actually in two. I was  
12 trained by the Leadership Academy to come into  
13 this school to turn it around. For many years  
14 we had new programs to - -. We have huge  
15 problems on the street in terms of the community  
16 they live in, the drugs, the gangs, the  
17 violence. Although things - - to pass - - last  
18 passing nine years.

19 We have got 395 students at our school and  
20 we're considered a type one school program.  
21 We're currently working on - - improvements.  
22 And our demographics present us with challenges.  
23 As we have 28% of our students that have - -.  
24 Usually the state doesn't - - close at 15% in  
25 one school. So we're a little higher than

1 others. As well that we have a community that  
2 has a low socioeconomic status. So with that  
3 also comes a lot of challenges so that you  
4 acquire skills that they need - -.

5 As students come to our school every day we  
6 do know that we have these different challenges,  
7 our staff is very dedicated and very determined  
8 to create learning of all kinds of students. We  
9 don't like - - we don't get to pick and choose  
10 the students that come to this school. We are a  
11 zoned school. So basically those who do not get  
12 into their middle school choice, they are sent  
13 to 166. But with that being said, someone does  
14 need to support these children from our school  
15 community. The children of color, the same  
16 color as we are, and we have to make sure that  
17 they are getting the same opportunity. And  
18 that's where I came in.

19 So I came to the building with the intention  
20 of turning the school around with the support  
21 that you need when you come to a challenging  
22 environment. So this year, as we were given the  
23 funding, I made sure that the teachers were able  
24 to get the professional development that they  
25 needed in order to assist the students to lead

1 up to the common four shifts that are  
2 happening right now for our students and the  
3 test that's coming down very shortly in about 37  
4 days. We'll be having the ELA and math exams.

5 So we want to prepare our students for the  
6 21st century and we have worked harder than ever  
7 this year in order to get our kids to see  
8 clearly, examine new concepts and new ideas. As  
9 a principal I spend about 50% of my time in  
10 classrooms. And I look at the student learning.  
11 I collect the data to give the teacher the  
12 feedback. We've done about, last year we did  
13 over 200 observations just so that our teachers  
14 are ready for the challenges that are placed  
15 before them every day.

16 With that said, what I see in the classrooms  
17 are that a lot of the students and the teachers,  
18 they are supporting the vision that we have  
19 setup for our school by creating the learning  
20 that are going to be responsible, the ones that  
21 are going to be giving back to our society, the  
22 students that are going to be successful and  
23 independent thinkers and learners, and all of  
24 these different types of skills that they need  
25 for the 21st century. So school is not just

1 about taking a test. It's about preparing a  
2 person for life, and that's something that we do  
3 very well at the Junior High School 166.

4 We also have increased our performing arts  
5 program. So last year we were going into  
6 foreclosure and the DOE did a proposal, they  
7 wanted it to become a performing arts school.  
8 So when we returned in September I made sure  
9 that we gave the DOE, the Department of  
10 Education, what they wanted. And this year we  
11 offer, during our instructional day, and that's  
12 very difficult because most schools do not have  
13 funding to have the arts, the performing arts in  
14 the regular school day.

15 So we were able to add on this year chorus.  
16 We have encouraged glee club. We have a dance  
17 program. We have instruments in class where  
18 students are learning how to play the guitar,  
19 the horn, keyboards, as well as the drama  
20 theater program. We take the kids swimming  
21 across the street at - - Academy. And we also  
22 offer martial arts through discipline.

23 Our afterschool programs we offer a  
24 recording studio, state of the art recording  
25 studio, as well as a marching band. We have a

1 horn section, a dance program, basketball,  
2 cheerleading. We also offer an integrated  
3 algebra regions program, an accelerated writing  
4 program for - -, and many other programs through  
5 our - - and our other partners in our community  
6 like - -. So we have the opportunity to give  
7 the kids what they need in the community.

8 Our academics include 100 minutes of  
9 intervention services. We build that into the  
10 student programs. We give the teachers  
11 additional 100 minutes of professional  
12 development to make sure that they're keeping up  
13 with the - - and preparing the students for the  
14 new exam that's coming.

15 We - - by 45% this year and we've created a  
16 cosmic behavior intervention system that  
17 includes winning Gershwin Bucks and there's a  
18 store where the kids go shopping on Fridays  
19 during their lunch period. So we're getting a  
20 better response from our students and they're  
21 learning that there's other ways of - -.  
22 Facebook and all those kinds of things that kids  
23 do at this age. And that's something I can see  
24 all over the city.

25 I could really go on and on and on to

1 explain all of the changes that have occurred  
2 in our building this year and in years past, but  
3 I really want to highlight right now all the  
4 challenges that we have faced within the last  
5 two or three years.

6 One of the challenges that we faced was we  
7 had an influx of level one students. For  
8 instance, this year we have 83 students that  
9 came to us who were in the sixth grade and out  
10 of those 83 kids 37 of them have a level one.  
11 They - - them from elementary school to level  
12 one. Like Mr. Grant was saying, now we've had  
13 our six months. They expect me to make them  
14 into eleventh grade. That's very difficult to  
15 do. It takes time to build students to be able  
16 to take the state exams and work on strategies.

17 Another issue that we had in our school - -  
18 special education rate of students coming over  
19 to - -. When I first came there was maybe about  
20 16 or 17%. Now the school is up to 28%. So  
21 when you have only 395 students and 120 of them  
22 have IEPs you have to spend a lot of time doing  
23 individualized instruction for the students.

24 As well as the - - as was mentioned, they're  
25 not accepted in a lot of our other choices in

1 New York City, so they usually stop at - -  
2 they drop them off there. At any time you have  
3 a sixth grader entering your school for the  
4 first time at the age of 14 or 15 we have  
5 attendance issues because there has been some  
6 issues with the full fare and the half fare.  
7 Some of the students live 19 blocks away but  
8 they only take the other half there. When it's  
9 raining and snowing it's really impossible to  
10 get there on time and some - - they don't show  
11 up at all.

12 We have also for the last couple of years  
13 had a lot of real targets, changing of the New  
14 York State exams. And then in September 2011 we  
15 became a restart school, and then in January  
16 2012 we became a turnaround school. And then we  
17 closed in June 2012 and now we're facing now - -  
18 phasing out 2013.

19 I know that if we were given a chance that  
20 our vision of George Gershwin School of  
21 Performing Arts will come to pass. But what we  
22 would need is the support of the Department of  
23 Education. And as we focus more on supporting  
24 the school as opposed to - - different changes  
25 that we've been through in the last couple of

1 years - -. I think that would be - - be able  
2 to move forward. As with all other changes, we  
3 don't even know what status we are anymore - -  
4 'cause there's been so many changes in the past.

5 So all we're really requesting right now is  
6 that we look forward to working together to  
7 making our vision a reality. I think that the  
8 Department of Education can help do that. Thank  
9 you.

10 FACILITATOR: Thank you. We have now  
11 concluded the formal presentations. We're going  
12 to have people come up with public comment  
13 followed by question-and-answer. When you  
14 walked in if you had a question you were given  
15 an index card. If you have an index card and  
16 you have questions please raise your hands.  
17 Someone will come collect the cards at this  
18 time.

19 You are reminded that public comment must be  
20 limited to two minutes per speaker. Time will  
21 be kept and you will be signaled when you have  
22 30 seconds remaining. But before we start that  
23 I'd like to introduce - - council member,  
24 Charles Barron.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER CHARLES BARRON: You all

1 don't want to speak to me, right? First of  
2 all let me thank everybody for coming out. We  
3 are going to be in a battle, a struggle because  
4 this school has made progress. We are a C  
5 school. There are F schools that are off the  
6 list. There are D schools still running around  
7 here. So if we at least had a C and had a  
8 principal who worked hard to bring us to this  
9 point it doesn't make sense to shut down the  
10 school saying that that's how you're going to  
11 improve it. How could you improve something by  
12 phasing it out?

13 So we're saying to the mayor and the  
14 chancellor we have a vision for this school. We  
15 have plans for this school. And at least we  
16 should get a hearing from the chancellor. We're  
17 working on that now, to show them plans, 'cause  
18 we know what it takes to educate our children  
19 and people need the support of the Department of  
20 Education to make that happen. So we're not  
21 going to sit here and let people just phase  
22 schools out. It doesn't make sense to say that  
23 you're going to improve education by phasing  
24 schools out and bringing in other schools that  
25 don't even have the same kind of a support that

1 we should be given in this school.

2 We know what it takes to make schools work.  
3 Make sure every school has some science labs.  
4 Make sure every school has smart boards and  
5 computer labs. Make sure every school has  
6 afterschool programs that are supported for the  
7 children. Make sure every school has an updated  
8 library. And make sure every school has  
9 teachers that want to teach and know how to  
10 teach. And make sure every school has a  
11 principal that can manage. And every school has  
12 that.

13 We are in a situation where the mayor is  
14 trying to privatize public education, trying to  
15 use public space for charter schools. If the  
16 charter schools are so great and they have  
17 charter schools all over the place, and we're  
18 not anti-charter school, you have a choice to  
19 have your child go wherever you want your child  
20 to go. But what they're doing is they're  
21 manipulating the charter school parents into  
22 going against public school parents and using  
23 public school space.

24 Well if the charter schools want to do that  
25 then fine. Go find charter school space. Don't

1 take the space from public schools that are  
2 trying to educate their children. Don't do  
3 that. And don't have us fighting with each  
4 other. We are all the same people. And we want  
5 your children to succeed, but don't let the  
6 mayor manipulate you.

7 And don't let someone like Eva Moskowitz  
8 who's making \$600,000 to \$700,000 and she's  
9 going to come into our neighborhood as part of  
10 our - -. They cautioned them. They put the  
11 shirts on. - - looking like - - and they bust  
12 you in and then - - and all that stuff. That's  
13 not how you educate children. You come into the  
14 neighborhood. You meet with the public school  
15 parent. You meet with the administration. You  
16 discuss the needs of this building. It doesn't  
17 make sense to have four schools in the building  
18 that was designed for one.

19 So if you have four different administrative  
20 offices you're going to have less classroom  
21 space, so you will have oversized, over crowded  
22 classrooms because you have four. Then you have  
23 to have children eating lunch at 10:00 instead  
24 of 12:00 because you've got to share the  
25 lunchroom. You've got to share the restroom.

1 You've got to share the gymnasium. It wasn't  
2 designed for that.

3 So I think what we should do is say to the  
4 chancellor, sit down. We got a plan for this  
5 building, and don't let them just bring in  
6 schools and have us fighting each other. Then  
7 we have these exercises of futility. They'll  
8 let us come and tell them off and we'll boo them  
9 and all of that stuff. Then they're going to  
10 have to make their plans and make their decision  
11 and just pass whatever they're going to pass.

12 We are not going to let that happen this  
13 time. We're saying that this school belongs to  
14 us. It's a public school. It belongs to our  
15 community. - -.

16 So I want to urge you with telling  
17 Chancellor Walcott, we need to sit down with  
18 you. We have a plan for this school. We saved  
19 the school before 114 with a plan and we can  
20 save this school too because this school has all  
21 of the essentials, the qualities that we need to  
22 be successful. You can't give us the most  
23 challenging students, the most challenging  
24 students. We get the majority of them. And  
25 then don't give us all that we need to help them

1 grow, and then when it doesn't happen at the  
2 pace or rate that you think it should happen,  
3 then you talk about your phasing us out. See we  
4 cannot allow to let that happen.

5 So I wanted to come by today to say, they  
6 can say what they want tonight but we need to  
7 meet with Chancellor Walcott and let Chancellor  
8 Walcott see our plan. I think when he sees the  
9 plan that we're going to be able to save our  
10 school. We should not allow anybody to get us  
11 in the middle of this private battle. And when  
12 they say public charters, public charters so  
13 that they can make you think it's just like a  
14 public school, well it isn't.

15 There are a lot of students that are going  
16 to charter schools, the cream of the crop was  
17 taken from some of the public schools. And  
18 they're evaluated differently. They want to get  
19 rid of your child. It's easy for them to do  
20 that because they do that very easily. We think  
21 that we should stick together as a people.  
22 Instead of letting others manipulating, we  
23 should come together and talk and don't let them  
24 just tell you I want choice, I want choice, I  
25 want choice. You can have all the choice you

1 want, but you can't choose the building that  
2 our taxpaying dollars go to and kick our schools  
3 out and bring other schools in. That's not  
4 choice. That's the dictatorship of a mayor and  
5 that's the dictatorship of - -.

6 I wanted to come by and you're going to love  
7 me or not. You're going to be in for the fight  
8 of your life. We are making sure that we're not  
9 manipulated and divided as a people. Let's  
10 stick together and sit down and see how we can  
11 work this out so that our children can succeed.  
12 Because if they don't succeed here the next stop  
13 is jail, is prison, is gangs, and maybe that's  
14 what some people want, but that's unacceptable  
15 for us. Thank you.

16 FACILITATOR: Thank you. Alright. So you  
17 are reminded that public comment must be limited  
18 to two minutes. At this time I'd like to call  
19 Numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 to please come to the mic  
20 and please state your name. Numbers 1, 2, 3,  
21 and 4.

22 SUBJECT 2: Good evening. My name is  
23 Heather Turner. I'm Achievement First - -  
24 parent. My children are in kindergarten and  
25 third grade. I am here tonight because I'm also

1 an Eastern New York community member. I live  
2 three blocks from this school and I wanted to  
3 come and stress the fact that I believe that AF  
4 High School will be a good partner here. Not  
5 only have I seen co-location personally, but I  
6 know that it works. We - - every instincts of  
7 successful - - as possible.

8 So I wanted to come here tonight to debunk  
9 the myth that co-location doesn't work 'cause  
10 both my children are private and there are  
11 public children in the school that is co-located  
12 with us - -. So please support AF High School  
13 tonight and allow them to open here in this  
14 building because I believe that it would be in  
15 the best choice not only for my children but my  
16 baby's children too, and we all deserve to have  
17 the best education possible for all of our  
18 children, especially here in District 19. Thank  
19 you. Have a good night.

20 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

21 SUBJECT 3: Hi. Good evening, panel. My  
22 name is Jose Herrera. I am a parent of two boys  
23 who attend a co-located school. I just would  
24 like to say that my son came into a charter  
25 school because the school that he came from just

1 was not providing quality education for him.  
2 He came in three years under grade level, under  
3 reading level. He had an IEP. When I got him  
4 into this school he was just basically suffering  
5 academically. Within a year he is not only just  
6 meeting standards but he's exceeding standards  
7 in every way. He's now declassified for his  
8 IEP.

9 And I can't just thank his school for  
10 providing that, but I have to thank all the  
11 schools that provided a home for my child  
12 because co-location is not something that's a  
13 charter school issue. Only 8% of schools in New  
14 York City are charter schools. Only 8% of the  
15 co-locations are charter schools.

16 So 58% of schools in New York City are co-  
17 located. The only time that we see this issue  
18 come up is not when UFT comes to co-locate - -  
19 school or not when traditionally public schools  
20 co-locate but when charter schools co-locate.  
21 It's no different. We all come from the same  
22 community. I am a taxpaying citizen. I pay my  
23 taxes for public schools. The charter schools  
24 pay the - - public school students. The school  
25 belongs to the community. It doesn't belong to

1 a certain individual. It belongs to all of  
2 us.

3 I'm here to say that we have always been  
4 good neighbors to the schools we co-locate and I  
5 have seen co-locations work. I have seen them  
6 build the playgrounds. I've seen them succeed.  
7 My son is co-locating two schools and the  
8 traditional public schools high school is a B  
9 school, the traditional middle school is an A  
10 school and my son's charter school is an A  
11 school. It works. All you have to do is give  
12 us a chance. I'd like to thank you for your  
13 time tonight.

14 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

15 SUBJECT 3: My name is Mary Davis and I'm a  
16 parent. I'm a parent of three beautiful young  
17 men. They - - co-located schools. I'm here to  
18 support the Achievement First High School.  
19 They're an excellent school. They are great  
20 neighbors. They work well and function well in  
21 shared space. And because we believe in  
22 building a strong community for all of the  
23 children I believe this partnership would be an  
24 excellent one. I think you should give it a  
25 chance. Always the choice is always there.

1 That's why we - - .

2 I want to thank you for your time and for  
3 listening - - .

4 FACILITATOR: Thank you. Numbers 5, 6, 7,  
5 and 8.

6 SUBJECT 5: Good evening. My name is - - .  
7 I am in support of co-location of Achievement  
8 First High School. I am actually here on two  
9 scholars of Achievement First. I made my  
10 children. We make - - . I am beyond thrilled to  
11 be given an opportunity to have my children  
12 further their education in District 19.

13 Achievement First has been working as a  
14 great partner in the community, especially with  
15 being - - as my son. My son was born two months  
16 early with behavior and socialization problems,  
17 issues that he's been diagnosed with. He sits  
18 on top of his class academically. The school  
19 offers a lot of extracurricular activities to  
20 support his special needs.

21 I look forward to the opportunity of working  
22 with you guys as partners in the community.

23 Thank you.

24 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

25 SUBJECT 6: Good afternoon, everyone. My

1 name is - - and I am a parent of a charter  
2 school child. And I stand here today to say yes  
3 to Achievement First co-locating here. Why? -  
4 - one, we come here not to take away but to add.  
5 We're coming here to joint a partnership, a  
6 partnership in a great place. Great - - for  
7 children that like to achieve, to reach their  
8 highest. We are here to instill value to our  
9 children and value to our community. We are  
10 here to work together as one, not separated.

11 Co-location is nothing new to this building.  
12 So I don't understand why it's a caution of  
13 coming in here. Is it because we're a charter  
14 school? Because we need to be - - because what  
15 we can do is to teach our children about loving  
16 one another, teaching one another, being strong,  
17 and going the right way. And if we stand here  
18 today and don't as parents and as teachers the  
19 first thing we tell our children when they're  
20 young, share your toys with your neighbor, share  
21 with your friends.

22 I'm asking you today, share this building  
23 with Achievement First and work together for one  
24 - -. Thank you.

25 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

1           SUBJECT 7: Good evening, panel. Good  
2 evening, parents. Good evening, students and  
3 anybody else who's here tonight. My name is - -  
4 . I have two little boys that attend  
5 Achievement First Apollo Charter School here in  
6 District 19 that is co-located with IS302.

7           As a parent of two beautiful children that  
8 attend a District 19 publically funded charter  
9 school, which is why we call it a public charter  
10 school, my children have been able to get an  
11 amazing education. But here's my thing. Every  
12 child wants to get that amazing education.

13          And so say standing here today and saying  
14 yes and saying we need this high school here,  
15 let this high school be here is a way of saying  
16 yes, we want more great charter schools in our  
17 community. They are great schools that are  
18 going to continue to provide an amazing  
19 education to our children. District 19 needs  
20 that. I grew up in District 19. I've lived  
21 here for over 30 years, and so I went to school  
22 here and I know what the schools here are like  
23 and I know what they can be like. Our district  
24 has potential. Let's let this school come in  
25 and continue to build on that potential that our

1 students have.

2 If we allow a great school to come in and if  
3 we continue to allow it-co-location is something  
4 that's going on. It's happening all over New  
5 York City. It's here. So we can say that four  
6 schools being in one building-well, you know, it  
7 might have been back in the day that it was  
8 meant to be one school in one building, but  
9 that's not the reality that we're in today.  
10 When the schools are built that is a reality.  
11 It's possible to have that. Now we have the  
12 option of being able to give our children  
13 multiple choices of what school they go to; a  
14 performing arts school, a charter school, a  
15 traditional school.

16 Whatever - - we need to be able to have that  
17 available to our children to parents like me  
18 that are improving a greater education for more  
19 - - education for their children. Thank you.

20 FACILITATOR: Thank you. At this time I'd  
21 like to introduce Tony Dansey [phonetic] who is  
22 member of the SLT who's just joining - -.

23 MR. TONY: Good evening, everybody. I'm  
24 here to speak on behalf of IS166. Yes, I'm  
25 biased 'cause I've been here for three years.

1 My daughter is a senior and she'll be  
2 graduating in June. Thank you.

3 Like Councilman Barron was just saying, it  
4 doesn't help for us to try to be separated from  
5 each other because you all are separated and I'm  
6 not intimidated but you all are making me feel  
7 like you all happy with us because you all can't  
8 - -. It's just you all, when it's supposed to  
9 be all of us together getting this space  
10 together. You understand? How many of you are  
11 going into a charter school? - - public school.  
12 That's what I know. That's what my kids know  
13 and that's the way it should be.

14 Now there's things going on that we don't  
15 know about. The New York City schools have been  
16 getting de-funded for the last 20 years and that  
17 case is still going on in the courts. So until  
18 we make sure we're getting our correct money  
19 making things to be correct. You all understand  
20 what I'm trying to say? They don't talk about  
21 it. I mean he gave us a lot of negative points.  
22 I don't - - sound but they are - - going on here  
23 at IS166. I just think if we all come together  
24 and work with the parents, the teachers, and the  
25 staff 'cause they are excellent staff. I've

1       seen that - -. I've seen it. And that's all  
2       I wanted to say. Thank you.

3               FACILITATOR: Thank you. Now to call  
4       Numbers 9 and 10.

5               SUBJECT 9: Hello. My name is Lisa - - and  
6       I have been in this neighborhood all my life.  
7       My brothers went here. Their friends went here.  
8       My friends went here. I could have went there  
9       but I wish I had. My son goes here. And I  
10       can't really understand why this is happening.  
11       Because this is a good school. It has good  
12       teachers, good staff. They - - they are - -  
13       because these teachers treat your kids like as  
14       if they were they own. And I can't understand  
15       why they always picking them for space if they  
16       were so-if you could give the money that you're  
17       supposed to give so - -. Then we wouldn't be  
18       here today. Thank you.

19               FACILITATOR: Thank you.

20               SUBJECT 10: Good evening, everyone. I'm -  
21       - and next Tuesday I'll celebrate my 21st year  
22       teaching in District 19. Now, I find myself in  
23       a real - - here because frankly I do value  
24       educators from all different backgrounds. As we  
25       speak today I have students that I taught in

1 another - - high school which I fortunately,  
2 my year - - schedule - - anniversary. So next  
3 week should be a big day of celebration for me  
4 is a daily thing which I will have said and do  
5 the same thing I'm doing here, but my - - 166 to  
6 ask the mayor please to reconsider what he's  
7 doing.

8 The reality is as I stand I have students  
9 that I've taught at public school who are now  
10 teaching at charter schools and I also have  
11 students that I taught that are now assistant  
12 principals in public schools. So I'm not going  
13 to get into this education war because it's too  
14 much like religion. It's really like religion.  
15 Everybody believes that their path is the only  
16 path and one way.

17 Here's what I'm upset about my friends. As  
18 an educator I saw District 19 being treated like  
19 a stepchild by this - - for the last six years.  
20 In six years my friends, in six years we have  
21 had five different superintendents. That's  
22 almost like bouncing my children from foster  
23 home to foster home. I am quite sure the mayor  
24 is a decent man and he has good intentions, but  
25 my friends, we really need somebody that will

1 focus on education a long time ago. The time  
2 we waste - - and all those other people that - -  
3 . - - education, those were the times wasted.

4 I stand here to let you know that the  
5 youngest - - assembled man and you - - it's my  
6 students. It was - -. Sure there are a few  
7 guess around, but I will tell you I'm more proud  
8 of the ones that have gone on to college. If  
9 you give us a chance, give us some discipline in  
10 the public schools like they have in charter  
11 schools. I can assure you, another 12 years we  
12 can turn things around. Thank you.

13 FACILITATOR: Thank you.

14 SUBJECT: Good evening. My name is Joseph -  
15 -. I am a retired principal. I was in - -  
16 renamed DOE for 37 years before I retired. And  
17 after that I started working for the Council of  
18 School Supervisors and Administrators. And I'm  
19 here to represent CSN. Before I say something  
20 about the prepared speech I sat here listening  
21 and I am just very concerned about what I am  
22 hearing. I also want you to know that I lived  
23 in this neighborhood. Some of you might - -. I  
24 lived in this neighborhood in 1971 and I have  
25 stayed here. So I have watched 166 up, down,

1 up, down. I have also represented back  
2 several years ago when they had other  
3 principals.

4 I don't know Ms. Ortega personally but I  
5 know what she has accomplished here. And  
6 sitting here listening to what she was saying -  
7 - that does not sound like a school that needs  
8 to be decimated, closed, and - -. I really  
9 don't think so. I just came from another public  
10 hearing last night where the school was a paid  
11 grade school. They'd been truncated and - -  
12 since '08. And then they closed it. And then  
13 they opened up a new school in the same place.  
14 And five years later I represent the school that  
15 they're closing again with a proposal to open up  
16 another middle school.

17 Sometimes we have to stop and think. I'm  
18 not saying you're - - that made me close them.  
19 But I'm saying that doing this on the - - is not  
20 a solution. If you keep doing the same thing  
21 and expecting different results you're not going  
22 to get it. You're going to get the same  
23 results. That's my personal opinion. Now - -  
24 response.

25 Once again, the DOE has scheduled for the

1 two dozen school foreclosure. The latest one  
2 - - back to back are destined for the scrap meat  
3 and it doesn't fit into any particular pattern.  
4 Several have new principals who were told that  
5 they would have a turnaround time for the school  
6 and they have received - - ratings from the  
7 state. Several have efficient quality reviews.  
8 One actually has a principal who exceeds  
9 expectations. Quality - - rate of well  
10 development. The DOE seeks to take aim at  
11 schools as if it's playing a game of Russian  
12 roulette.

13 I'm not going to get into that charter  
14 school business, but I do know that that's an  
15 underlying thing. The DOE - - often devastates  
16 children and families. The DOE takes aim at  
17 students who have already suffered setbacks and  
18 humiliations from previous school closings.  
19 Many of them have been turned away from the  
20 city's new schools for reasons of poor academic  
21 performance or for - - families without - - .  
22 Then the youngsters are warehoused in other low  
23 performing schools that are likely to be closed  
24 too. This is a failing strategy for turning  
25 schools around.

1           As I said, this school, I've been in  
2 personal - - who have nothing to do with this.  
3 I've been an educator since 1965 and I think I  
4 know something about schools. I think this  
5 school should remain open.

6           FACILITATOR: Thank you. We will now begin  
7 the question-and-answer period. Remember there  
8 will be some individual questions and others  
9 that have been bucketed into a category. Any  
10 questions that are not answered here tonight  
11 will be answered on the website. If you have  
12 additional questions at the conclusion of  
13 tonight's proceeding we ask that you direct them  
14 to us via the phone number or the email address  
15 on the back of the packet.

16           I will now turn it over to David.

17           DEPUTY CHANCELLOR DAVID WEINER: There were  
18 two questions going around. I want to get to  
19 the two questions. The first question was  
20 referenced by the ASLT member. What about the  
21 appealing of the courts around equity funding  
22 the city's schools? As some of you may have  
23 read in the newspaper there was actually a court  
24 case that was filed a couple of weeks ago by the  
25 DOE - - \$250 million from the state. The state

1 has - - money away.

2 But they actually happened to announce when  
3 I was actually coming here tonight a judge filed  
4 the injunction to say that the city does not have  
5 the ability to remove this \$250 million and has  
6 ordered the governor and the - - of - - to  
7 provide the \$250 million to the city of New  
8 York. So that's actually extremely good news.  
9 Definitely unexpected. We just heard about it  
10 on the way here. I'm sure it'll be reported in  
11 the newspaper tomorrow. Hopefully we will have  
12 some kind of relief to this and be able to get  
13 this money to be able to put more money directly  
14 in the schools and in our classrooms. So that's  
15 actually very good news.

16 The other question I got or two questions  
17 that basically ask the same question, I will  
18 read you the question. It says in case you  
19 haven't heard, how does the DOE now that the  
20 mutual perform better and serve the sixth  
21 graders well. We've actually opened quite a few  
22 new schools in the last decade or so. And what  
23 we've seen in the data is actually that the new  
24 schools significantly out perform schools that  
25 are replaced in both ELA and math. ELA new

1 schools actually score about 14 percentage  
2 points higher in efficiency than phase out  
3 schools and in math they score about 23  
4 percentage points higher. We have had a lot of  
5 evidence yesterday that the new schools that are  
6 coming in out perform the schools that are being  
7 phased out.

8 Those are actually the only two questions I  
9 got tonight. So I wanted to thank everyone who  
10 showed. I appreciate the stories from a lot of  
11 the parents who spoke about how their children  
12 were having success at different schools here in  
13 the city. We thank everyone for coming and  
14 speaking and talking about this proposal.

15 FACILITATOR: Thank you. We have heard many  
16 significant comments this evening. We  
17 appreciate your feedback and contributions to  
18 this hearing. Information will be - - at the  
19 panel of educational policy, which will have a  
20 hearing to vote on this proposal on March 11th,  
21 2013 at - - Technical High School 2943 Place,  
22 Brooklyn, New York.

23 Public comments can be submitted via email  
24 or phone until March 10th at 12 a.m. You may  
25 submit feedback via phone or call the phone

1 number (212) 374-0208 or write an email  
2 D19proposal@schools.nyc.edu. This information  
3 was also at the bottom of the package.

4 Thank you all for coming. This joint public  
5 hearing will be adjourned. Have a great  
6 evening.

7 [END RECORDING]

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Payne", is written over a light green rectangular highlight. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line that serves as a separator for the signature field.

Date February 26, 2013