

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**

**The Re-Siting of Mather
High School to M625
Hearing at M625 and Re-Siting
of UA High School for Emergency
Management to M520**

**9/30/13
5:30 p.m.**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MS. MARISOL BRADBURY: Okay. Good evening
3 everyone. Can everybody hear me? Yes? Thank
4 you. This is a joint public hearing of the
5 Department of Education Community Education
6 Council Two and school leadership teams for the
7 proposed re-siting of Steven T. Mather building
8 arts and craftsmanship high school into this
9 building and the proposed re-siting of the Urban
10 Assembly School for Emergency Management. I'm
11 Marisol Bradbury, superintendent of district two
12 high schools and the chancellor's designee for
13 this hearing. We have asked the district two
14 community education counsel and the school
15 leadership teams of the involved schools to
16 participate in this joint public hearing. I am
17 joined tonight by our CCHS representative Paola
18 Dekock and our principal Rudy Elizondo
19 [phonetic]. For the purpose of this process
20 this hearing is being recorded. The purpose of
21 this hearing--and I'll remind you one more time--
22 -is for you to provide comments about the
23 proposals to re-site Urban Assembly Emergency
24 Management and Mather. Before I describe the
25 two re-siting proposals, I want to make sure one

1 more time that you are aware of the opportunity
2 to provide your input. All those who wish to
3 speak must sign up in the speaker sign-up area
4 located just outside the auditorium. Speakers
5 will be given the floor and the order that they
6 signed up. All comments are limited to two
7 minutes. There may be elected officials who
8 arrive at different times throughout the
9 meeting. If they wish to speak, we will do our
10 best to accommodate them at the first opportune
11 moment. Those who are here at the start of the
12 public comment segment will be asked to speak
13 first. All comments will be mentioned in the
14 analysis of public comment to be published and
15 provided to the panel for educational policy the
16 evening before the panel votes. That vote is
17 scheduled for October 15th, 2013. In addition,
18 we welcome any comments and feedback you may
19 have at any time before the panel votes on this
20 proposal. The email address and the phone
21 number where comments may be made are
22 dzerotwoproposals@schools.nyc.gov and the
23 telephone number is 212-374-3466. The telephone
24 number again is 212-374-3466. You got it?
25 Good. Okay. I will proceed with the proposal

1 summary. The New York City Department of
2 Education is proposing to re-site Steven T.
3 Mather building arts and craftsmanship high
4 school to this building M625. Beginning in the
5 2014-2015 school year. A re-siting means
6 students will attend classes in a different
7 building then the one they attended the previous
8 year. The Department of Education is
9 simultaneously proposing to re-site the Urban
10 Assembly School for Emergency Management out of
11 this building, M625, beginning in the same year
12 2014/2015. Currently, Mather is housed in
13 building M520 located at 411 Carl Street,
14 Manhattan also in district two. In Urban
15 Assembly School for Emergency Management is
16 housed in this building, building M625. If the
17 two re-siting proposals are approved prior to
18 the beginning of the 2014/2015 school year,
19 Mather and Urban Assembly Emergency Management
20 will swap spaces in these respective buildings.
21 Mather students will no longer attend classes in
22 M520. Instead, they will attend classes in M625
23 where Mather will be co-located with the High
24 School of Graphic Communication Arts, Business
25 of Sports school, Urban Assembly Gateway School

1 for Technology, and Success Academy charter
2 school, Hell's Kitchen. In addition, Success
3 Academy charter school, Manhattan Middle School,
4 will open in building M625 beginning in the
5 2015/2016 school year. Urban Assembly Emergency
6 Management students will attend classes in M520
7 where the school would be co-located with Mary
8 Bertram High School for Business Careers and a
9 proposed Success Academy charter school. After
10 facility assessments that occurred after the
11 Panel for Educational Policy vote approving
12 Mather siting in M520, Mather's industry
13 partner, the United States National Park
14 Service, and the Department of Education
15 determined that the M520 building could not
16 accommodate the specialized lab structures that
17 Mather's curriculum requires. This building,
18 building M625, on the other hand, is able to
19 offer Mather the required lab structures.
20 Building M520 is able to offer Urban Assembly
21 Emergency Management the required lab structures
22 as well. The Department of Education is
23 therefore proposing to re-site Mather to M625
24 and to Urban Assembly Emergency Management to
25 M520 for the 2014/2015 school year. Re-siting

1 Urban Assembly Emergency Management to M520 and
2 re-siting Mather to M625 will ensure that both
3 schools are located in facilities that can
4 support their respective instructional needs.
5 Thank you. The next presenter will be the
6 representative of the CEC high school, Paola
7 Dekock.

8 MS. PAOLA DEKOCK: Good evening. My name is
9 Paola Dekock and I'm the public advocate
10 appointee to the Citywide Council on High
11 Schools. I'm also its president. I'm
12 delivering these comments on behalf of myself
13 and the Manhattan representative to the Citywide
14 Council on High Schools, Stanley Eng [phonetic].
15 This is my third time here in this building.
16 The High School of Graphic Communications or in
17 DOE-speak, M625, since DOE likes to de-
18 personalize these proposals so that you can
19 pretend that you're just talking about buildings
20 and not people who are being shuffled around.
21 Anyway, by now this auditorium has become kind
22 of familiar, which is depressing because it
23 means that we have yet another attempt--another
24 DOE proposal to shuffle the deck in an attempt
25 to convince us that this administration has a

1 better plan for high schools. If you've been
2 paying any attention over the last few years,
3 you know that's not really so. Even conceding
4 that the only remedy for persistently low
5 performance is closing schools, it doesn't
6 necessarily follow that the schools that replace
7 a failing school will on the whole do any better
8 providing when comparing apples and apples. In
9 other words, similar populations and resources.
10 But strictly speaking, we're not here to talk
11 about school closures although it's clear that
12 we're dealing with a little side drama in what
13 will become the eventual closure of Mary Bertram
14 unless of course there is a change in the
15 administration. Strictly speaking, if you read
16 the educational impact statement without
17 thinking of the real-life human beings that are
18 being subjected to this treatment, this is more
19 like a farce. As the educational impact
20 statement informs us, moving Mather High School
21 into the graphics building and Emergency
22 Management into the Mary Bertram building, which
23 I've started to call it the grand switcheroo.
24 Quote, ensure that both schools are located in
25 facilities that can support their respective

1 instructional needs. Well, wait a minute.
2 These are new schools. They were supposedly
3 painstakingly planned over a whole year at
4 least--at a minimum--and were approved by the
5 PEP [phonetic] on the strength of an educational
6 impact statement reviewed at a joint public
7 hearing much like what we're doing here today.
8 Why weren't both schools located in facilities
9 that could support their instructional needs in
10 the first place? Why will students and staff
11 have to move a mere 4.3 miles--they say--and in
12 any case no inconvenience because both schools
13 are close to central transportation hubs. Why
14 will Mather students have a, quote, modified
15 curriculum for the 2012-14 school year to place
16 more emphasis on coursework that does not
17 require lab space? Here the folks at the office
18 of portfolio management who write this stuff get
19 downright coy. Quote, as a result of facility
20 assessments that occurred after the PEP approved
21 Mather siting in M520, the United States
22 National Park Service, Mather's industry
23 partner, and the DOE determined that M520 is an
24 appropriate site for Mather because the building
25 cannot accommodate the lab space that this

1 specialized curriculum requires. Wow. What
2 planning they did. Just think about that and
3 think of the really nice blame first putting for
4 the National Park Service. Who writes
5 curriculum? Who proposes the school? Who is
6 responsible? The DOE, but now we're blaming the
7 National Park Service. Amazingly, it looks like
8 no one from portfolio management actually
9 visited the building and talked to anyone at the
10 school. Either it would have revealed the
11 absence of suitable workshops--workshop space--
12 and this is not surprising since Mary Bertram
13 was built as a high school for business careers.
14 Of course it doesn't have a woodworking shop or
15 any other kind of workshop that the city school
16 specializing in the building trades would need.
17 I think that the office of portfolio management
18 should be renamed the office of portfolio
19 mismanagement. And even if the folks at
20 portfolio management were too busy--what with
21 all the closures and co-locations they're
22 dealing with--to notice that this absence of
23 suitable workshop facilities at Mary Bertram,
24 that very absence was mentioned at the joint
25 public hearing that was held at Mary Bertram on

1 February 28th, 2013. I was there and that was
2 my testimony. Evidently, no one was listening.
3 What more proof could there be that these
4 hearings such as we're having tonight and the
5 procedures established by law to provide public
6 input into decision-making are but a sham. But
7 it gets worse in the case of Mather High School.
8 The lack of planning is evident in the changing
9 description of the school's program and the role
10 of the, quote, industry partner--the U.S. Park
11 Service. Initially, the school was billed as
12 offering a, quote, rigorous academic program.
13 I'm now reading from the initial educational
14 impact statement. A rigorous academic program
15 with a city component and programming in the
16 following career pathways, carpentry, masonry,
17 landscaping, and decorative finishes. When the
18 proposes principal was quizzed at CCHS about
19 this overly ambitious assemblage of trades--
20 given that we're only talking about 500 students
21 altogether--just think how the numbers would
22 shake out with those four trades--and the
23 workshop space needed for all of them. As well
24 as the location far from any green space in
25 which you can practice landscaping or far from--

1 or without any workshops in which you can
2 practice the other trades. We were assured that
3 the program could be carried out thanks to a
4 partnership with the U.S. Park Service and lots
5 of field trips, particularly to Ellis Island,
6 which the Park Service is charged with
7 maintaining. Ellis Island figured very large in
8 this plan. Now while this move in the abstract
9 seems to make sense, that's only because the
10 original siting was so clearly cockamamie. If
11 you look at the EIS closely, however--this one
12 now--you'll notice that there are differences
13 between the original, which talk about specific
14 programs, namely carpentry, masonry,
15 landscaping, and decorative finishes and this
16 one that only speaks in generalities about the
17 kinds of programs to be offered at Mather and
18 the facilities needed to implement them. Mathew
19 will now offer, quote, a program in the
20 architectural interest area and require, quote,
21 lab space. Well, that's not carpentry, masonry,
22 landscaping and decorative finishes and it's not
23 workshops. And we know that DOE--for lab space
24 for DOE can mean almost anything. I'm not going
25 to bore you with all the permutations of lab

1 space that we've seen in educational impact
2 statements. In other words, the EIS addresses
3 only in vague generalities what the students
4 will actually be learning. And, of course, if
5 fails to mention that no work is going on at
6 Ellis Island for the foreseeable futures because
7 of Sandy-related damage. And not to mention the
8 possibility of budget cuts in the sequester with
9 which the Park Service has been especially hard
10 hit. So where are we? Oh, and it also doesn't
11 mention that fact that 49th Street is not
12 exactly convenient to Ellis Island either. Is
13 it? Well, you can't just make this stuff up.
14 On the office of portfolio mismanagement can.
15 Thank you.

16 MS. BRADBURY: Thank you. Okay. So I would
17 like to welcome and introduce Elzora Cleveland,
18 our Community Education Council representative.

19 MS. ELZORA CLEVELAND: Good evening ladies
20 and gentlemen. I'm glad you could make it to
21 this hearing. I'm just going to be really,
22 really brief and say that CEC D2 also expressed
23 the same types of concerns Paola expressed from
24 CCHS and we want to thank you for reading that
25 into--are we being recorded?

1 MS. BRADBURY: Yes.

2 MS. CLEVELAND: Fantastic.

3 MS. BRADBURY: That's why - - .

4 MS. CLEVELAND: That's right. Wonderful.

5 We're happy that you read that and we just want
6 to say that CEC D2 also wants to express great
7 concern about the planning of placing these
8 schools and now the uprooting and switching of
9 their locations. CEC2 does however feel that
10 there is a need to obviously make this move with
11 the air quality from using wood in a basement
12 going up into the air ducts in that school and
13 spreading around. We need to have them in a
14 better location for the quality of the air.
15 We're not sure what other types of chemicals
16 will be used for the masonry class, botany, but
17 this is definitely something that CEC D2 says
18 it's a no brainer. Elzora, please show up at
19 the hearing. Again, thank you Paola for talking
20 about planning. Planning was very important.
21 Thank you.

22 MS. BRADBURY: Thank you Elzora. Once again
23 I...

24 MS. DEKOCK: I just wanted to make sure
25 that--we're not--nobody at CCHS is opposed to

1 this move. We're just opposed to the planning
2 that necessitated this move in the first place.

3 MS. BRADBURY: Thank you for clarifying
4 that. Once again I would like to thank our CC
5 CC High School representatives, Elzora Cleveland
6 and Paola Dekock and Principal Rudy Elizondo,
7 their principal of the Urban Assembly Emergency
8 Management High School. We have now concluded
9 the formal presentations and we open the floor
10 for public comments. Is there anyone? We are
11 getting out signing sheet. Okay. So we're
12 collecting our sign-up sheet. Just bear with
13 us. Thank you. Is Luz Rodriguez--would you
14 like to speak? Would you like to come up or...

15 MS. LUZ RODRIGUEZ: Um...

16 MS. BRADBURY: Or not. If you're
17 comfortable there you can speak from your speak.

18 MR. RODRIGUEZ: - - can hear me.

19 MS. BRADBURY: I can hear you. Can you hear
20 her? Yep.

21 MS. RODRIGUEZ: I think one of my principal
22 concerns was that the kids here at - - you know,
23 a lot of them have worked in our community,
24 going downtown a minimum of 30 minutes - - which
25 is going to be very typical for a lot of kids

1 who already have difficulty - - . Beside the
2 fact that they're, you know, getting settled in,
3 that they're happy, you know, with the new and
4 now they have to think are they going to be able
5 to go now to the school that it's an hour and a
6 half away. So that's one of my basic concerns.
7 One of the things that attracted me personally
8 to the school was the location in midtown
9 Manhattan. I personally am not a big fan of the
10 downtown area - - happened years ago. That's a
11 big concern for me even though we have the
12 police, you know, department right across the
13 street, you're constantly having motorcades
14 going by. It's a large distraction. So that
15 would be a concern for me. Another concern is
16 the possible closing Mary Bertram has been a
17 topic of discussion, a lot of fights in the
18 school, a lot of activity going on there--
19 negative activity, and now you're going to
20 bring, you know, this really good group of kids
21 into this environment, which I don't think is
22 going to conducive - - comfortable. They're
23 going to be worried about their safety. The
24 school does not have - - so I'm going to be
25 worried is my kid going to be safe and this here

1 - - kids are not bring weapons to the school.
2 Who's to say they're not doing that down there?
3 The other thing is with graphics being phased
4 out, why wasn't that thought of, you know,
5 moving the kids who are already getting phased
6 out and not moving the school and - - that space
7 for the existing kids that are there, you know,
8 like I said, Mary Bertram is in danger of
9 closing - - if they move there does that mean
10 that the next year when Mary Bertram, you know,
11 isn't a success now they're going to close down
12 the school because that's happening then what
13 happens to our kids? Do they now have to move
14 again - - again. So those were a few of the
15 concerns that I have.

16 MS. BRADBURY: Thank you, Ms. Rodriguez.

17 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

18 MS. BRADBURY: Do we have any other
19 speakers?

20 MS. NAOMI KROLL: Is it too late to sign up
21 to speak?

22 MS. BRADBURY: No, you may sign up to speak
23 right now. And your name is?

24 MS. KROLL: It's Naomi Kroll. I'm with the
25 National Park Service.

1 MS. BRADBURY: Great. So our second
2 speaker is Naomi Kroll from the National Park
3 Service.

4 MS. KROLL: I am the partnership coordinator
5 with the National Park Service for Mather High
6 School meaning we're involved with - - in
7 setting up the CTE [phonetic] curriculum both
8 ourselves and with a group of industry
9 professionals and - - time. I've worked with
10 the National Park Service for 15 years - - I'm
11 now involved in overseeing the CTE component of
12 the school working with the teachers and with
13 the administration to make sure that is
14 realized. We were told that we would have shop
15 speaks [phonetic] to teach our trade classes and
16 we presented our specifications to the Office of
17 Portfolio Management and we were surprised as
18 anybody when we were allowed to tour the school
19 and found that there were classrooms and not
20 shop spaces. And that the space requirements I
21 think were calculated for academic classes for
22 sitting at a desk as opposed to bench work,
23 which is what's necessary. So we have a very
24 rigorous curriculum in place for the five trades
25 over four years, and we will not be able to

1 realize that curriculum in the current
2 facilities. We're making due for this first
3 year, but in order to make the provision of the
4 school and the National Park Service a reality,
5 we're going to need another, uh, maintain proper
6 facilities to do that with ventilation as has
7 been noted. I can address the - - Ellis Island
8 but I don't think that that's relevant to this
9 particular discussion, but in any case we do
10 have Ellis--the work at Ellis not happening this
11 year. We do have a crew in place on Governor's
12 Island and - - ready to receive students. So
13 that's still very much part of the curriculum.
14 And we're still very much--as long as we can get
15 the space that we need to teach kids trades,
16 we're still very much committed partner. If
17 that doesn't happen, I can't speak to our
18 continued involvement with the school. Thank
19 you.

20 MS. BRADBURY: Thank you Ms. Kroll. Do we
21 have any more speakers to add to our list? So
22 again our list is now exhausted and we welcome
23 any comments and feedback you may have at any
24 time before the Panel for Educational Policy
25 votes on this proposal at its October 15th

1 meeting. Once again the email address and
2 phone number where comments may be made are
3 dzerotwoproposals@schools.nyc.gov and the
4 telephone number is 212-374-3466. Thank you so
5 very much for taking the time and for your
6 participation. This joint public hearing is now
7 closed.

8 [END RECORDING]

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 

Date 10/1/13