

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

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Chairperson

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Carmen Farina
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Class Size Matters

Alicea Flynn
Far Rockaway Title One, DPAC Chair 27

Jim Short
Education at American Museum of Natural History

Marnie Rackmill
Urban Advantage Queens Botanical Garden

Mark Doorman
Manhattan Comprehensive Night and Day School

Barbara Harris
Granny Peace Brigade

David Garcia-Rosen
Small Schools Athletic League

Liz Accles
Community Resource Center

Lisa Levy
New York Coalition Against Hunger

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Good

morning everyone and welcome to this Education Committee hearing. My name is Daniel Dromm and I'm Chair of the Education Committee. I'd like to start off this morning by thanking my staff for preparing me and for preparing our remarks this morning. I want to thank Asia Schamburg [phonetic] my counsel to the committee, Jan Atwell [phonetic], our policy analyst, Regina Perida-Ryan [phonetic], the Deputy Director of the Finance Division part of this, Christina Paradi [phonetic], the Legislative Financial Analyst, and Miquela Daniel [phonetic] in the policy position of the City Council. So thank you very much for all your hard work. It would not be possible without you and I really deeply appreciate your efforts. Good morning and welcome to the City Council hearing on the Department of Education's fiscal year 2015 preliminary budget, expense budget and the fiscal year 2014, preliminary Mayor's management report. Today, we will be hearing testimony from the Department of Education, followed by testimony from Unions, parents,

advocates and others who wish to speak in front of this Council. I'd like to welcome Chancellor Carmen Farina to her first budget hearing as Chancellor, and I hope that we have an informative and productive discussion today. The DOE's preliminary budget projection is 20.5 billion dollars for fiscal 2015. It is more than a quarter of the city's entire expense budget and that doesn't even factor in the 5.2 billion in pension and debt service not included in the DOE's budget. The increase is 614 million dollars as compared to the fiscal 2014 adopted budget and 340 million dollars of this increase is for citywide expansion of full-day universal pre-kindergarten. Another 154 million dollars is growth and funding for charter schools this year, which doesn't even take into account the cost of the new charter schools that were open in the fall. Spending for fringe benefits is expected to increase by 89 million dollars. Discounting growth in these program areas, that leaves the DOE with a 31 million dollar year over year increase in its expense budget. School budgets would

essentially remain flat and funding for general education would actually decrease by about 30 million dollars. Flat school budgets year after year, while cost and enrollment are growing inevitably lead to larger class sizes. The elimination of arts and music programs and fewer social workers and guidance counselors. As a former teacher, I know firsthand the difference class size makes in being able to manage and educate students, and we all know the importance of art, music, gym and other non-core classes to a student's education and development. Without more funding, principals will have to continue to cut programs and services that directly impact our students. I fully support the expansion of full day pre-k and I applaud the Mayor for recognizing the importance of high quality full day early childhood education programs for our children. But these students must continue to get high quality education in kindergarten through high school in order for them to succeed in college and in a career. Today, I would like to discuss how the DOE can find additional funds in it's

20 billion dollar budget to prioritize funding for schools. Let's take a look at networks. The DOE's budget includes 237 million dollars for centrally managed school support. While I realize some principals and teachers may like the networks, I have heard much negative feedback about their effectiveness and efficiency. Maybe we should look at changing the entire school's support structure including networks, superintendents and central administration offices to make it more efficient and effective for our schools. And how about professional development? Professional development is important for teachers, principals and other school staff to become experts and to keep up with changes in their fields, but with a 100 million dollar budget for professional development and 601 contracts, we need to make sure all individual programs and services are effective and efficient and that they are worth what the DOE spends on them. I am also curious to know how much money is spent on substitute teachers to cover classes while teachers are in these

professional development workshops. A significant portion of the DOE's budget is spent on mandated programs such as contract schools and pupil transportation. I understand that for the first time the DOE expects to claim 7.6 million dollars in Medicaid revenue for students in more than 200 contract schools this year. This is a start and the DOE needs to continue to think outside of the box to bring in revenue and reduce spending to help offset some of these mandated costs, so that more funding can be allocated to school budgets. Of course, charging rent to charter schools and public school buildings that can afford to pay one is one example. There are many important topics my colleagues and I hope to discuss today, so I will leave it at that. I'd like to thank Chancellor Carmen Farina, Deputy Chancellor Kathleen Grimm, and Chief Financial Officer Michael Tragale for--did I say it right? Tragale, close I'm sorry--for coming to testify today and I would like to thank all the parents, students and advocates who are here to participate and listen. And with that, I'm

going to turn it--oh, our Public Advocate has arrived, and I'd like to give her an opportunity to make an opening statement. Thank you, Public Advocate Tish James.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have an opening statement, but I do have some questions and I would hope that you would allow me to ask a few questions, but I again want to wish good morning to the Chancellor and to your staff. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. We've also been joined by Council Members Mark Treyger, Council Member Mark Weprin, Council Member Mark Levine, all the Marks in a row, all good Marks, and Council Member Margaret Chin as well. Thank you all for being here. I'm sure we'll be joined by other members of the committee as we move along today, and so with that, I'd like to turn it over to the Chancellor to begin her testimony.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Okay. Oh, I thought I had to be sworn in.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: You do. Thank you for reminding me.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: We're in a democracy, I think that's part of the plan.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much. Please raise your right hand. All of the--Mark also. Yes. Michael, sorry. Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth--solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee and to respond honestly to Council Member questions?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: I do.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Okay. Good morning Chair Dromm and all the members of the City Council Education Committee here today. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss Mayor de Blasio's proposed fiscal year 2015 preliminary budget as it relates to Department of Education and our public schools. Sitting with me are Kathleen Grimm, Deputy Chancellor for Operations and Michael Tragale, DOE's Chief Financial Officer. The Mayor's 2015

preliminary budget includes an allocation of approximately 20.5 billion of operating funds, and another 5.2 billion of education related pension and debt service funds. This represents a 1.2 billion increase in total funds from 2014, 774 million for operating funds and 426 million for pension and debt services. Our funding is a combination of city, state, and federal dollars with city tax levy dollars making the largest share at 56 percent, state dollars of 37 percent and federal dollars at seven percent. As you know, a top priority for Mayor de Blasio is providing all of our kids with access to high quality full day pre-k and expanding after school and extended learning time for middle school students, and for very good reason. We know the significant growth in speech, language and brain development occurs before kindergarten. By getting children into language rich environments as early as possible, pre-k serves as a foundation for academic success. Since the enrollment period for public school programs opened we have been out in communities across the city, phone

banking, leafleting and spreading the word. Through our borough based enrollment sessions, we are encouraging parents to sign up and helping them find programs that are right for them. So far, we've received enormous demand, not only from providers to offer full day services, but also from parents. Our pre-k application numbers for public school programs are up 27 percent over the same time last year. You've heard me talk frequently about the significance of middle school grades. As I visited over 25 schools so far, I am more convinced that these are the very crucial years to ensure higher high school graduation rates. Waiting until 9th grade in high school is way too late. High school is too late to talk about graduation. The focus and discussion needs to start in middle school, particularly in 7th grade. It is a critical time when students develop academic habits and behaviors. As we played renewed emphasis on improving classroom instruction during the school day, our after school programs have the potential to be a support system academically and

emotionally. Not only do they help improve academic performance, they foster a sense of community at a critical time in child's development. We will be adding more crucial programs such as Summer Quest to ensure that our adolescents do not regress over summer vacation. Our pilot in the Bronx has been successful and we need to replicate these types of programs and other high need districts throughout the city. We have also reinstituted our guidance department under Lisa Anseloni [phonetic] to ensure that high quality support is available to all, but most especially our fragile adolescents. Anyone who has a teenager at home knows that it one of the most difficult periods in a child's life, but also the parents. The more support we can give them, the more productive they will be. You know how I feel about pre-k and middle school. They're vital to the success of our school system. We appreciate that both the State Assembly and Senate have recently proposed a funding stream to support our expansion of universal pre-k and after school programs, but since budgets are

about shared investments, and this is an opportunity to tell you about how I personally plan to invest myself in our shared priority of moving our schools forward. Throughout my time in the school system, four core pillars have guided me, and they will constitute the crux of everything we do going forward. First, teachers, principals and school staff need to be honored because respect for professional staff is key. For us to move schools forward, educators doing the extraordinarily hard on the ground work must be valued, thanked, and supported. For too long, teachers have voiced real concerns. They--be they about the dearth of professional development opportunities, curricula matters or otherwise. The result? They often felt overlooked. Educators have clamored for more support and sought ways to hone their craft, and we're going to deliver for them. This is a profession that commands society respect and our teachers deserve to be celebrated. To that end, we have brought Anna Comitonti [phonetic] to head our citywide curriculum and oversee our professional

development work. Our team provides educators with the structural support which empowers them to make certain that all of our students can meet the high bar of the common core learning standards. Anna and her team have already begun and will continue to conduct targeted professional development forums in math and literacy content seminars with coaches, which do not have to cover classes to address issues with Common Core implementation and the citywide conference with first to third year principals which will be held on a Saturday where experienced principals will present workshops on best practices among other training events. Her team will include Linda Curtis Bay [phonetic] to work on our stem curriculum and Doctor Esther Friedman who will ensure that interventions that have proven successful for our struggling students are available throughout the city. There will be training on all these strategies over the next few months and into the summer to ensure that level one and two students have the tools they need to be successful students. As a former

teacher, let me point some of this out by telling you a story. A few weeks ago, we hosted a principal's conference in--I'm getting ahead of myself. Number one, the pillar on respect. I have distributed to the panel principal's notes. After my first couple of weeks on the job, one of the things that principals had said to me is that were not-- there was not enough communication between the Department of Education and school based personnel. So I started principals notes which actually has several features that are constant. We're going into our fourth issue, and first of all, they have a message for me stating what's on my mind and what's relevant at the moment. There's always a book of the month that explains something that really helps principals get the message across to their staff, but most importantly, in every principal's notes is a little blurb about all the schools I have visited at that time that celebrates those schools and lets the principals know that they can call each other if there's something they need help with. It

also encourages the sharing of good ideas and many principals after they receive these notes send me an email. You know, in my school we're doing such and such. In my school parents are involved in this specific way and we're beginning to accumulate all those little notes so that we are able to celebrate schools on a wider way, but also letting teachers know that we're really noticing the small details. We're really also asking after the first issue, which we talked about, I Believe in Miracles, asking principals and teachers to feed us back what are some of the things they see happening in their schools that really have miracles. This has been an unbelievably well received piece of paper, but it also more than anything else says that the DOE believe in two-way communication. We are not about mandating everything. We're about hearing from the community about what works and what we need to work harder on. So that's my story about principal's notes. My second pillar is we need to focus on student achievement. Common Core will move us in this direction and demystifying it's components and

strategies is crucial to our efforts. We need to increase graduation rates, drive proficiency up and ensure more students are ready for college. By just sticking to the graduation rate we seem to forget that once they're in college, they have to be able to have critical thinking skills that allow them to stay, produce and graduate from college as well. But I also know that preparing for life is living it. When visiting schools and listening to educators, I often hear stories about how real teaching, engaging projects, and exciting trips are put aside, in some cases just to accommodate test prep. To improve student achievement we need to remember that our job is to develop the whole person and to help all students. We must place more focus on our children who need additional supports, including our students with disabilities and our English Language Learners. We must look to expand effective programs to better serve these populations. We know what works, we just need to build on good practices. While Doctor Esther Friedman will be developing curriculum

intervention models for our struggling students, we will also be looking at how we better support our schools that are most in need. Sharon Rencher [phonetic] has joined my leadership team to make sure we are working closely with the State assisting our struggling schools. We can no longer just call them our struggling schools. They are our priority schools. She has already developed a plan for school visits to which every Deputy Chancellor is committed to follow. Let me tell you another story. A few weeks ago, over 1,000 principals attended a workshop and just keynoting presentation at Brooklyn Tech. We asked these principals to list areas that they feel they need more assistance in. We put posters all over Brooklyn Tech and principals filled in the things that they feel they have not received enough assistance in. We compiled all their requests, and this Saturday, for the first time we will be hosting a conference that principals were invited to volunteer for. It's not mandated. We have over three--and we asked mostly first, second and third year principals

1 to volunteer and we have over 300 principals
2 who signed up. The most unique feature of these
3 workshops is that other experienced principals
4 will be running the workshops. I will be doing
5 the keynote, and the most important thing is
6 that this came from things that they requested
7 help in rather than us deciding what they
8 needed. And they will all be differentiated
9 according to principals who come from
10 elementary schools, middle schools and high
11 schools. So no one has to listen to something
12 that may not be particularly relevant to them.
13 So I'm really looking forward to the Saturday
14 [phonetic] and that will be the kind of
15 prototype we will do moving on. We will not be
16 asking people to come to workshops unless it's
17 something they feel they need help in. My third
18 pillar is family engagement. We want to engage
19 with all of those who want to work with us.
20 Schools are often like second homes. Grade
21 schools foster emotional connections with
22 students and their families. They're successful
23 when parents feel ownership, when they are
24 welcomed, when they buy into the efforts of our
25

1 school. It's our goal not just to develop
2 parent-friendly system. We know we have a long
3 way to go. But also to develop partners. This
4 is not about telling parents what they need to
5 do or just come to do fundraising, or, you
6 know, and other things to come to PTA meetings,
7 many of which are very cut and dry, but from
8 now on until the end of the school year, the
9 DOE will host a number of citywide parent and
10 family oriented conferences, workshops and town
11 hall meetings to help parents understand the
12 parent leadership structures at the school
13 district, the city levels, and seek their
14 assistance in moving the DOE forward. In April,
15 we are hosting a conference for families,
16 students with disabilities and over the next
17 few months we will host borough wide
18 conferences for parents of English language
19 learners. Additionally, we will offer parent
20 academy workshops to provide families, parent
21 leaders and staff with information and
22 resources to support them in helping their
23 students learn and achieve. The more we empower
24 our stake holders with information on our
25

educational policy, the better the results for our kids. To that end, and by the request of many of you, we held a training session for elected officials, community education members and paneled for education policy. The aim, to demystify the Common Core learning standards. As part of my meetings around the city with legislative leaders, many people expressed concerns about some of the Common Core, and I think even with parents, many people think it's a curriculum when it's really a set of strategies, and I think having workshops such as that, and we expect to offer more to elected officials on topics of interest to them is a great way to make partners really smart about the work. Over 50 attendees and some of you were there or sent representatives. These are workshops that we will continue, and not only because their sheer experience represented change and tone. The more educated our communities are about the inner workings about our schools, the more invested they will be about fixing them. As Deputy Chancellor Grimm discussed with you on Tuesday, we have also

established a working group to provide a practical and honest reflection of space and building utilization in our schools. This bluebook working group named after a space planning guide for our school buildings is a result of my sincere belief that as a tool, the blue book should be made more transparent, more accurate and easier to understand. The first blue book working committee was held just two weeks ago and my staff and I are very excited about its potential. As I've gone around the city, this is my tell me a story based on family engagement. As I go around the city and I have another CEC meeting tonight, the one comment that I hear most frequently is that they are very excited about the tone we are setting in listening to parents. We take notes about their questions. We get back to them with the questions that we cannot answer on the spot, and one of the biggest compliments I have received, which is something that I find extremely strange, is that people are grateful that I'm not on my Blackberry while they're talking to us, and that I'm actually taking

notes and writing people's names and making sure that someone on my team gets back to them the next day to whatever questions they have raised. And I appreciate that, but I also feel it's the least I can do, to respect people who come out at night to have their concerns heard. And for the fourth and last pillar, we need to innovate and partner. I recently made my 28th visit as a Chancellor, and I was struck by one single truth. Successful schools have productive partnerships. Wonderful things are happening in our schools and by identifying and sharing best practices, we can improve the quality of schools across the city through collaboration and partnership. I will soon be meeting with many CBO's and nonprofits to discuss how we may all collaborate to improve student outcomes. As this budget helps move our school system forward, there are pillars that will guide me in the weak department. We are-- we have a renewed emphasis on improving instructional practice and enhancing professional development for educators which will help improve student outcomes. We're

changing the way we make decisions so that all our stakeholders feel included in the process, and that would help us innovate and develop even more partnerships. Let me tell you a story about how I expect innovation to take place.

One of the things that I'm committed to is that I think people learn best about good practices by actually seeing them in place. So we have started what we call demonstration sites. They will be in operation in about two weeks, and these are schools that I think have something very special to offer the system as a whole.

These are schools that we have chosen and we're working to make sure that they have certain uniform practices, but these are schools that are breaking the mold. These are schools that have dedicated teachers, in many cases students that are somewhat struggling, but most importantly, they have found a way to make student's success inevitable, and this came as a result of visiting the school last year where I saw the most phenomenal teachers working under very unusual circumstances, and having these demonstration sites we're going to make

it available to principals from all over the city to choose which school serves a population similar to them, the demographics. One of the schools we're choosing is actually in Brooklyn, has a very large English language learner population and is doing unbelievable stuff with these students. So having principals choose to visit these sites and then replicate some of the practices and then follow up by having their staffers at these schools, we expect this to be a really good way to going forward, and by next year we hope to have many more demonstration sites throughout the city. We have an outstanding team of leaders and educators to implement these pillars. In January, Doctor Teresa [phonetic] Gibson assumed the role of Senior Deputy Chancellor and my second in command. In this new and expanded role, she will oversee all aspects of school support. Bill Wineburg [phonetic], a 28 year veteran of our schools will oversee a recently reinstated division of teaching and learning. That title is very, very important. Teaching and learning is what we are all about.

1 This will include professional development,
2 instructional support, Common Core and college
3 readiness initiatives in our effort to develop
4 model schools to share best practices. Kathleen
5 Grimm, sitting next to me, who spoke to you on
6 Tuesday will remain in her current role as
7 Deputy Chancellor for operations, and her goal
8 will be to create and foster school
9 environments conducive to learning both inside
10 and outside the classroom. Karen Rello-incelmi
11 [phonetic] will be the Deputy Chancellor for
12 specialized instruction and student support
13 where she will oversee office of English
14 language learners and the office of special
15 education and continue to spearhead initiatives
16 to enhance academic support and strengthen
17 family engagement to ensure that our most
18 vulnerable students have access to rigorous
19 academic curriculum that prepares them for
20 college and careers. We have an excellent group
21 of leaders. We have people who really are
22 committed to this work. Many positive changes
23 for our students are already underway, but we
24 need the resources to accomplish our goals. We
25

are well aware that in 2007, the New York State legislature and governor acted on a Campaign for fiscal equity court ruling. States obligation to ensure every students' constitutional right to a sound education should have ended the unfair distribution of state aid to local school districts, and yet, since 2009, the state has not met the court ordered obligation to our city and other school districts elsewhere in the state. I would like to take this opportunity to thank speaker Melissa Viverito, Chair Dromm, and many other city council members for reminding the Governor in a March 11th letter of the state's obligation to this commitment. In fiscal year 2015 alone there is a shortfall of 2.7 billion of the outstanding additional foundation aid to New York City schools, eliminating the short fall will go a long way in moving our schools forward, and without these fiscal remedies, principals will be forced to make decisions they should not have to about cuts to necessary programs, about sacrifices due to inadequate funding. Our students deserve better. They

deserve what is rightfully and constitutionally theirs. We ask that the state make good on their obligation to our students. One last note before I close. My staff and I have met many of you in the past few weeks and discussed your priorities and concerns. It is clear to me that you are committed to being our partners toward the shared goal, ensuring that New York City students have access to the best education as possible as early as possible with the supports in place that will follow them every stage of their academic careers. It is my goal to make New York premier educational system not just in this country but in the world. We are a world class city with world class offerings, museums, parks, monuments and so many other attractions. We need to create a world class school system. That means our dollars, our energy, needs to be focused on improving each and every classroom. With your help, we're going to get there. Our guiding principles will be equity for all, collaboration with everyone, and capacity building to ensure success for our stakeholders. Thank you for this opportunity to

1
2 testify. I will now answer any questions that
3 you have.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, thank you
5 very much, Chancellor, for your testimony here
6 today. I have to tell you much of what you
7 said is very pleasing to hear. I'm very happy
8 to see that you are moving quickly to repair
9 some of the damage that was done in the prior
10 Administration, especially in regard to teacher
11 morale and the emphasis on the good work that
12 teachers are doing in our school system. That
13 is very pleasing to me, and the fact that you
14 put it as your first priority as an educator is
15 something that's really something that I
16 welcome to see. Our teachers are--they're
17 practitioners and they're out there in the
18 field performing every day miracles in our
19 schools and that's why I'm very glad to see
20 that in your statement, and all of your pillars
21 as you're calling them are very interesting and
22 it's certainly a change from the past
23 Administration. I was--I had read your
24 Chancellor's memo in the Principal's Weekly
25 regarding test prep and the use and the

encouragement of going out and doing field trips and bringing arts into the classroom as well as another thing that as a former educator I really appreciate as well. As a social studies teacher, the best way to teach fourth grade social studies is get the kids to see what happens right here in New York city at the places in which and where it happens. So that also is a very welcomed change. I also want to thank you before we go any further about your Principal's Weekly as well on the last hearing that you attended here for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender students and I see that you reiterated it again in your Principal's notes of March 14 asking principals and teachers to get back to you with ideas of lessons that work about the teaching of tolerance of all of the diverse communities that exist within our school system, and I also want to applaud you on that. I think it's good that we have reinstated the division of teaching and learning and it just goes along with the emphasis again on what teachers do in our classrooms, and in terms of all of these

1 new initiatives, the only question I have in
2 terms of that aspect of your testimony is if
3 things do not work, have you included in going
4 back and reviewing one of the things that as a
5 teacher we would say there was never a program
6 that they didn't bring into the schools that
7 wasn't wonderful, and it was always wonderful
8 until it disappeared and then it wasn't so
9 wonderful anymore. So how are you going to
10 evaluate those things and then restructure them
11 if need be moving forward?

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, first of
14 all, part of teaching and learning is
15 assessment, and you always go back and evaluate
16 what's working and what's not, and the first
17 way to check if something is working is student
18 achievement improving. I think also most of the
19 initiatives that we're putting in place now are
20 really to support existing programs. We're not
21 bringing in any new programs that we're buying
22 from anywhere, but more responding to the cry
23 in the field, that how can we align some of the
24 programs that might have been there in the past
25 to Common Core, because a lot of that had not

been done. So bringing people to the table to really understand what is it that they already have, but that maybe they don't understand fully. So that's only what the principals have asked for and I'm assuming teachers the same thing. I think the other big change is that I believe very much in guidance counselors and there's been a substantial drop in them over the last few years, and I think student support. But as a former principal, I know that my guidance counselor supported me, and the guidance counselor also supported brand new teachers. You know, we need to also retain our teachers, and many of our new teachers come into the system expecting to do all kinds of wonderful things and within the first two weeks they hit a roadblock of some kind, and I believe guidance counselors that are well trained can also help the new teachers survive their first, second, and third year, which is really the crucial years. So I think most of the things that were intervention for example, was in place when I left as Deputy Chancellor, and that was the tool kit that we use for our

1
2 level one and two kids, and we had a trained
3 teacher in every school in the city that could
4 help struggling kids, not when they hit the
5 third grade test, but as early as kindergarten
6 and first grade. We know speech teachers, for
7 example, are some of the people who can best
8 phonemic awareness and phonics. So using them
9 to train teachers on how to work with early
10 childhood kids is really an important thing. So
11 it's about taking the stuff we already have and
12 realigning it to some way and making it more
13 meaningful and making principals aware of how
14 they can use all these services.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Is there a cost
16 factor related to these--the new emphasis that
17 you're placing on with these four pillars?

18 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I would say as of
19 right now, we have--we shuffled things that
20 might be in one place to move it to another. So
21 it's not a major change in that respect.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And in your
23 testimony you also mentioned about summer quest
24 and that that was a successful pilot program
25

1
2 that you'd like to expand it. Is that
3 expansion included in the budget?

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: The answer is
5 yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And how much is
7 that?

8 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We're looking to--
9 -yeah, we're looking to see what is--right now
10 we have it only in the Bronx and there are two
11 other areas of the city want to move it to. SO
12 we're looking to expand it to several other
13 districts, but I can get back to you on the
14 exact figure. I did attend a workshop--Summer
15 Quest, just so you know, is not only with
16 schools with high needs students, but it's also
17 combination of CBO's such as good shepherd,
18 partnership with children, many others. So it's
19 a real effort to work together and it's an
20 effort to also use summer time as a learning,
21 but also an emotionally productive--and it
22 includes parent, parent education.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So would that be
24 for this year, for this summer coming up?

25 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: It's already in place. It's been in place for three years.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: But the expansion would be for this summer.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: That's right.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good. I want to not take up too much time, but I do have a few more questions and then I want to turn it over to my colleagues. So I want to jump to networks. I think it's estimated that each school spends maybe between 50 to 70,000 dollars or somewhere in that range for networks. The funding and the headcount for the DOE's networks are included in units of appropriation 401 and 402, general education instruction and school leadership. The preliminary budget includes 237 million for centrally managed support or networks in fiscal year 2015. As I mentioned in my testimony, some principals are happy, but many report back to me that they're not. And the City Council has heard some negative feedback on that. For me, it was always a question as well of who does

1
2 the supervision in the schools, because the
3 networks often times would be telling the
4 principals to do one thing and then the
5 superintendent who is the rating officer would
6 be telling them to do another. Well, actually,
7 not even really having that influence in the
8 school, but never the less, with the rating
9 officers. Do you have a plan to either work
10 that out, or how's that going to look going
11 forward, and then I have some questions also
12 just around networks themselves, and if there's
13 any cost saving factors there?

14 CHANCELLOR FARINA: That is certainly
15 something that we are thinking about and we
16 have people working on it, and at the moment,
17 our major goal is to listen to lots of
18 different constituencies around this topic and
19 expect to be able to make some decisions within
20 the coming months.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So is all of the
22 funding in the centrally managed school support
23 for networks?

24 CHANCELLOR FARINA: No.
25

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Can you break that down for me a little bit more?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Yeah.

MICHAEL TRAGALE: In terms of the number that you're looking at, I believe that's a combination of a lot different services. In terms of the networks, the network cost is 100 million and then there's this cluster oversight support which is an additional 54 million. So, the total network cluster is 154 million. So I believe you're looking at some other borough based support services, as well as possibly centrally based services. Thank you.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: And that's the whole thing that's being looked at to review.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: All of those will be looked at for review. Okay. And on the same thing, on the school networks again, which is a question that has been raised here in this committee in the past, is how and by whom are the networks evaluated? That has been a big question that we've had and I think we need some accountability in that area as well. Is

that something that you're going to look at moving forward?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It brings to mind this issue of the principal who didn't show in the Rockaways and the role of the network there and the role of other networks as well, and that's why I'm asking this question. Is that part of your thinking?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: It's a much more complicated thing than that because, you know, networks are cho--principals get to choose to some degree what networks they're part of, so it's a wide range of differences among them, but everything about the structure is being looked at very carefully, and also, again listening to a lot of different people's opinions including yours.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, a question I have, which is also a bit of an opinion that I have, is how the relationship between allowing a principal to pick their network and what the network is telling the principal to do, when in fact, the network relies on the support of the

principal to be selected again for the following year, it seems to me that there would be some issues there.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think you're thinking the right way.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Is that something you're looking at as well?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: We're looking at everything.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Let me go to another issue which is charter schools. The charter school budget is projected to be 1.2 billion dollars in fiscal year 2015. That's 153.8 million increase over the fiscal year. An increase, okay? However, this growth does not take into account new charter schools that were opened in the fall. How many charter schools do you expect will open in the fall?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: At the moment, it's 14 scheduled based on the location 49 that we just approved.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And how much do you expect the charter school budget to

1
2 increase and the executive budget when these
3 new charter schools are factored in?

4 KATHLEEN GRIMM: That's what we're
5 looking at now. Obviously, until the Chancellor
6 made decisions on what was going forward, it
7 couldn't be incorporated into the preliminary
8 budget, so we'll have those numbers as we move
9 toward the exec.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So 153.8 plus
11 whatever it's going to cost moving forward
12 seems to me like a large sum of money and an
13 investment in these charter schools. It's
14 interesting how the discussion around the
15 charter schools has been framed, when in fact
16 they're getting this type of an increase. In
17 April we're going to have a hearing on the
18 charter schools and the amount of
19 accountability that the charter schools have to
20 abide by, especially when you're talking about
21 1.2 billion dollar budget. I believe that these
22 charter schools do have a responsibility to
23 report back to the public how they're spending
24 city dollars, and that's soemthign that we want
25 to look at going forward, but for now, I'd like

1
2 to know what oversight does the department have
3 on those charter schools in terms of the
4 spending of that money?

5 KATHLEEN GRIMM: As you know, most of
6 the charter schools, all of the charter schools
7 are now chartered by agencies other than the
8 city itself. We do have some charter schools
9 that are still re-chartered and we do monitor
10 them closely. We have in--

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing]
12 Chancellor, Deputy Chancellor, who monitors
13 them?

14 KATHLEEN GRIMM: The chart--

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing]
16 Within the Department.

17 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Our charter office.
18 And--

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] And
20 when you say monitored, does that include
21 audits? Do that include oversight over their
22 spending? Does it include oversight over
23 their--the additional funding that they're able
24 to raise on the side?

1
2 KATHLEEN GRIMM: No, they are
3 independent organizations, remember, but we do
4 have a responsibility both in terms of their
5 academic performance as well as their
6 governance, and with respect to even the ones
7 that we have not chartered, the state and SUNY
8 [phonetic] of course, also looked to us for
9 input on their evaluations. But in terms of
10 audits, as you know, recently the state
11 Comptroller was told he could not audit them.
12 So that's sort of an open question at this
13 point.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, has an audit
15 ever been done to check their attendance
16 records, for example?

17 KATHLEEN GRIMM: I don't believe so,
18 but we can check.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So we're taking
20 at face value the fact that these schools are
21 reporting back to us accurately what their
22 attendance numbers are? Because it's based on
23 the attendance?

24 KATHLEEN GRIMM: The funding is based
25 on New York State's statutory formula,

basically, and what we do verify is that their enrollment matches what we are funding so that we know it is a per capita funding so we are assuring ourselves that we're--we have the right number that we're funding.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So that number is taken on October 31st?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: That would be our audited number. I would assume it would also be there's. We can double check that.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Where will you find the funds to cover the additional expenses for the charter schools?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: That we will come out of our budget and it will come out of discussions with OMB.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So the DOE provides free space in public school buildings to charter schools. How many charter schools are located in public school buildings?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: I believe it's 144.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: If the DOE charged market-rate rent to charter schools in

public school buildings, how much annual revenue would result?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: We do not have those analysis. We are--the entire issue of rent and charter schools is under discussion with the Administration.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So perhaps in the executive budget when we come in again in May we'll have those numbers?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: Perhaps.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Hopefully?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: We'll see.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, 'cause I'm going to really be asking a lot of those questions again moving forward and I'm going to be asking those questions in April, and hopefully in May we can get a solid number on that as well. And then finally, is the only measure of the success of charter schools the reading scores and the math scores?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think like in any school to some degree that is what's more visible, what people latch themselves onto. I would also look at things

1
2 like retention of teachers, some degree parent
3 satisfaction and graduating the students that
4 you registered that fulfill the time spent in
5 the school.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. I have so
7 many questions about charter schools, that I'm
8 saving it for a separate hearing, but I wanted
9 to have in terms of the budget today just to
10 get a feel for it, and I don't want to
11 completely dominate the hearing on these
12 questions. But I have other questions to ask
13 you as well, if our--if my colleagues don't get
14 to them and I'll come back to them later. I
15 want to now ask my colleague, Public Advocate
16 Tish James to ask her questions. Thank you.

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you,
18 Mr. Chair. So I want to first focus on the
19 school's food services. School breakfast is
20 served at every school before school starts and
21 it's free and available to every student. Lunch
22 is served in all schools and is priced
23 according to family income. The city council
24 was successful in beating back an increase for
25 school lunches under the previous

Administration, and it's now at \$1.75 but at some point it's my understanding that that would increase. As you know, last week or the week before, my office announced proposal for universal free lunch in all of our public schools. It's my understanding that the Mayor is supportive of it. My question is, the cost to the city would be an additional 20 million dollars. Any ideas on how we would pay for that initiative and what are your thoughts on that proposal?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: As you know, when you issued your statement we applauded it.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you.

KATHLEEN GRIMM: We do serve universal free breakfast. We did do a small increase in the lunch for this year, but at the same time, we also eliminated the reduce lunch charge. So those children now eat for free, and there is a monetary consideration in terms of whether we can move to a totally free lunch program. We are working with the federal government because pursuant to a program they have, we might be able to achieve it, but it

1
2 would depend on unleashing or uncoupling the
3 title one from the food forms. And that's a
4 conversation that's ongoing because if we just
5 instituted that, we would have toward impact on
6 some of our schools, which would not make any
7 of us happy.

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So I would
9 love to work with you and the federal
10 government to make this a reality in the City
11 of New York. I know school advocates, school
12 food advocates all throughout the city of New
13 York support this proposal and again, to remove
14 the stigma of poverty and to provide a
15 nutritious lunch to all children. I think it's
16 a win/win for everyone. In staying with school
17 food services, there was a report recently that
18 came out that the Comptroller of the City of
19 New York Scott Stinger basically alleged that
20 some contracts for school milk, there was some
21 collusion involved with the milk contracts and
22 some additional contracts have been brought
23 into my attention just last week with respect
24 to some collusion in other contracts. We are
25 reviewing that. And so, first respond to the

report by the Comptroller of the City of New York with respect to collusion in the school contracts, school milk contracts.

KATHLEEN GRIMM: The allegations that the City Comptroller made had to do with collusion within the industry itself, not involving the department. The recommendations the comptroller made, but the Department, I think we have all--we have met, and in addition, I think now those contracts are over. I think we've moved on beyond them. So I'm pretty comfortable where we are on that. I'm not sure what you're alluding to.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I'll bring-- we're reviewing the information that was been brought to our attention. Until we do a complete and full investigation we'll report our findings to you.

KATHLEEN GRIMM: We'll appreciate that.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. Moving onto, I think I want to congratulate the Chancellor. She invited me to an event where we focused on arts and culture. I see that we are--

1
2 -I'm joining you in supporting the Chancellor
3 and her emphasis on STEM, science, technology,
4 engineering and mathematics. We have changed
5 that acronym now to STEAM, science, technology,
6 engineering, arts and mathematics. So hopefully
7 we could focus on all of those programs and I
8 look forward to joining you with that. I want
9 to now turn my attention to--turn my
10 questioning to the trailers which will be
11 dismantled, I understand as part of your five
12 year capital plan. And so the question is, what
13 is the cost to dismantle these trailers, and
14 how do we ensure that students will have seats
15 in their zone schools?

16 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Very good questions.
17 What we have allocated in the capital plan that
18 we talked about on Tuesday, 490 million dollars
19 I believe. That is a sufficient funding amount
20 to remove every single one of the so-called
21 trailers, TCU's. Now we have a multi
22 divisional committee in the department right
23 now taking a look across the whole city of all
24 of them. We anticipate for example in the first
25 year there will be some number, x, where we can

1
2 say let's go in and just remove these. There
3 are no problems connected with them. At the
4 same time we are going to begin planning for
5 how to address those that are more complicated
6 because they have children in them, and what
7 are we going to do with the children to make
8 sure we absorb them into main buildings or
9 zoned schools or whatever we have to do. So
10 it's going to be a multi-year process, and
11 we'll be happy as that committee reaches
12 conclusions to share with the city council and
13 your office what our specific plans are.

14 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: How many co-
15 located schools have trailers?

16 KATHLEEN GRIMM: How many?

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Co-located
18 schools have trailers?

19 KATHLEEN GRIMM: I don't have that
20 number. We can get it for you.

21 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And how many
22 charter schools are in trailers?

23 KATHLEEN GRIMM: We would have to get
24 that number for you also.
25

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And so of the newly--when you get back to me, the question that I have is how many of the newly approved co-located schools are also in buildings with trailers? It's my understanding which the chancellor knows is part of my litigation that we have filed that a number of the proposed co-locations are in buildings with trailers and the buildings were deemed under capacity because they did not take into consideration public school children who are in trailers. And I would love to get that information because my office is also reviewing the number of traditional public school children who continue to--continue to be educated in trailers notwithstanding the fact that their buildings are being considered or being proposed for co-locations with charter schools, which I would argue is unacceptable, which is the subject of the litigation that I filed. Moving onto DOE's plan to address the failure to apply for Medicaid reimbursement for special education services. According to the budget, it's my understanding that there is an increase in

1
2 special education services for children with
3 special needs, and the question is what are we
4 doing to address the failure to apply for
5 Medicaid reimbursement from the previous
6 administration going forward? I believe it
7 totaled about 500 million dollars. And that
8 would clearly be enough money to pay for lunch.

9 MICHAEL TRAGALE: In terms of the
10 Medicaid, we've had a number of challenges,
11 some of which related to the fact that certain
12 Medicaid streams we've been able to get off the
13 ground. For instance, the speech, that would be
14 the bulk of our Medicaid funding, but
15 unfortunately, it requires the--having a
16 service provider who has a speech language
17 pathologist license, and although we have many
18 of those, it's not a requirement of their
19 employment with the department. It's been an
20 issue where we've tried to work with the union
21 to try and, you know, get them to allow those
22 SLPs to help us get more revenue. It's
23 something that we're still working on. In terms
24 of actual Medicaid streams, occupational
25 therapy and physical therapy is an area that we

can do. We've kind of started to get the forces flowing on that, and I could actually give some numbers on that. So far we've had 11.2 million on claims paid to the New York City to date for occupational therapy and physical therapy.

Currently, we have a pending expected payment of an additional 2.2 million and as well as an upcoming eight million dollar claim which is pending. It's actually going through compliance review internally at the department. And you know, that's through the end of February, so that's one stream we've gotten off the ground successfully. There were certain delays in getting payment because Medicaid had to actually review our compliance guidelines.

They had to give us the green light to actually be allowed to bill for Medicaid. That came really at the beginning of this school year. So that's one area we've had some success. The easy track system is another way, and I know Councilman Dromm mentioned in his opening where we're actually looking to claim for, you know, nonpublic special ed. contract schools. It's something we rolled out this year. Training was

1 done over the summer. We're hopeful that we're
2 going to be looking at potentially a 7.6
3 million claim there. Now, that's a stream that
4 we've actually never tapped into. Even back in
5 the days when the department was unfortunately
6 was getting money, but you know, wasn't
7 documented. So we're looking forward to trying
8 to get the speech situation taken care of,
9 increasing the easy track, and I think we'll be
10 on our way to a sustainable revenue moving
11 forward. Thank you.

13 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: As a member
14 of the City Council and as the former Chair of
15 Contracts, one of the systems that I was
16 examining was the Special Education Student
17 Information System, which costs 80 million
18 dollars and the question is, how successful has
19 that been in addressing the back log? That was
20 a contract that I was studying before I was
21 transferred to Sanitation, but that's another
22 issue. But how successful has that system been
23 in addressing the backlog?

24 KATHLEEN GRIMM: It has--in terms of
25 the Medicaid?

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yes.

KATHLEEN GRIMM: Is that--

MICHAEL TRAGALE: [interposing]

Basically, it allows us to get the encounters, which is the documentation that a service has been provided to a child or related services has been provided. So that is essential to the claiming process, but there are other aspects of ceases related to IEP, individual with education plans, that's mandated by the state. So, you know, it does cover more than just Medicaid. It is--it was an expensive contract and the good news there is it's something that we're actually in-housing, so we're not going to be spending more with an external vendor on that. That's something that moving we'll be taking care of the maintenance of that as well as any enhancements internally.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So it is functioning according to its specs? Are you successful with the system as a whole?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think we're reviewing the aspects of the system that people are concerned about, but the fact that we now

are doing it in house, I think will make a major difference.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So that's another 80 million dollars that could pay for lunch?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: No, no. The 80 million, that was a one time.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I'm just trying to help you here.

KATHLEEN GRIMM: I understand.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So I thank you both, thank you for your questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much, Madam Public Advocate. And I just want to remind my colleagues that we're going to ask you to limit your questions to five minutes each. I'm going to put the clock on, and also that this is a hearing on expense items, not capital. So I'll ask you to keep your questions to expense. And I do want to announce my colleagues who are here. Pardon me for doing that. We have Council Member Helen Rosenthal. We have Council Member Antonio Reynoso, Council

Member Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member Alan Maisel, Council Member Donovan Richards, and Council Member Debbie Rose who has joined us. And first up for questioning is Council Member Weprin.

COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Chancellor, good to see you again. I'd like to--I'm happy to report I had a meeting with District 26 parents the other day. I also had a meeting with a number of my principals the other day, and you know, it was always a source of a lot of frustration, the adversarial relationship we often had with the old Administration. Really, for me it wasn't personal and it always was frustrating to me because I always felt like, you know, they felt like it was personal. It was always just me trying to advocate for my community. Both those meetings, they seemed enormously pleased with everything you've been saying as far as parent involvement. The principals are delighted to have someone who actually understands what it's like to be a principals and so you know, it's a good start. I'm sure they'll find lots of

1 reasons to complain later on, but right now--so
2 I'm really happy about that, and I'm really
3 happy that we can work together 'cause we all
4 have the same goal in mind here, and that's to
5 educate our students to make sure they learn
6 and so I'm very happy about that. Let me ask
7 this question, what role do you see district
8 superintendents having in your administration?

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, first of
11 all, they have legislative responsibilities.
12 Their job is to evaluate the principals and to
13 the degree that they are going to be using the
14 quality review as it goes forward as one of the
15 tools to do that. I think it's important. I
16 think having a better tool for the evaluation
17 of principals, we're looking at the quality
18 review as we're looking at everything. How do
19 we improve it? How do we change it? How do we
20 look at it in a way that makes more sense? I
21 think also one of the things we asked all the
22 superintendents to do is to look at the schools
23 in their particular districts that seem to be
24 struggling, and struggling in every district
25 may be something different, and instead of just

1
2 going in to do an evaluation, but to go in to
3 support. So we're going to be actually
4 evaluating our superintendents not based just
5 so much on, you know, how much paperwork they
6 get done, but how much they can prove they've
7 been in the school on the ground and helping
8 principals improve whatever they need to
9 improve in their individual schools.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: One of the, I
11 thought, negative impacts of networks was that
12 a lot of the family relationship of a school
13 district was killed by that where principals
14 weren't necessarily meeting with each other and
15 seeing each other from the same communities.
16 Will there be an effort to try to do that, to
17 try to foster those school districts to be more
18 united and working together?

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Of course there's
20 going to be more of an effort to do more of
21 community building. But you should know also
22 that most of the communities including yours,
23 district 26, my former, have annual or even
24 three or four times a year reunions. I've been
25 invited to a lot of the time--those principals

1 still stay in touch. It's still the pick up
2 the phone, you know, I need to talk to you kind
3 of thing. So I think, you know, building
4 leaders, our community builders by their very
5 nature and many of them talk to each other for
6 any--not only elementary school principals have
7 to talk to the middle school principals.

8 There's a feeder pattern in most of the
9 districts. So the answer is yes, we expect to
10 be able to continue relationships, and I think
11 it's crucial also that parents know who they
12 have to go to when they need an answer to a
13 specific question. So that's all part of our
14 thinking.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: We have--I
16 have lots of questions, but I won't get into
17 that. One topic I wanted to get into, you know,
18 following the tragic death of Avonte Oquendo,
19 there's been a lot of talk in my district from
20 my special ed. parents but also just citizens
21 about what's being done to address the issue of
22 security in schools, special ed. schools. I
23 know Council Member Cornegy has a bill to put
24 an alarm system in. I don't know what your
25

1 feelings on that is. I wanted to just ask,
2 throw it all out there, and then you could
3 answer. I also was working on legislation--
4 we've had complaints from parents who are in
5 private schools, but being paid for by the DOE
6 who are in separate special ed. schools that
7 don't have security on that campus, and
8 following Avonte, they got all nervous. Is
9 there--do we have any mandated security on
10 those schools that have DOE paid students who
11 are in private schools?
12

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, those are
14 state contract schools and they're covered a
15 little differently, but the reality is if you
16 have any specific information of schools that
17 we should be look into, I'm happy to take it. I
18 think one of the things you should also know
19 because it ties in not just to budget, I had
20 been meeting with people from the NYPD and
21 Commissioner of Community Affairs. We met
22 yesterday with Judge Judy Kay. There's lots of
23 ways to look at this. So it's not just putting
24 more people in places, but are we putting the
25 right people in places. Is there a way to

1
2 upgrade the training of school safety officers,
3 for example, and that's one of the things we
4 have on our plate because certainly with this
5 Administration one of the emphasis has been as
6 more interagency cooperation, and we need to
7 start looking at, you know, is that just that,
8 you know, you have five people sitting on the
9 front door, or is that people are being
10 deployed in ways that makes more sense given
11 whatever the situation in the specific schools.
12 So that's something we're looking at.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Okay.

14 Alright, thank you. We'll talk more. Thank
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, now we'll
17 have Council Member Rodriguez followed by
18 Council Member Levine.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,
20 Chairman. Morning, Chancellor. As we said
21 before, you know, we're so lucky to have a
22 educator in front of us. It's also one that can
23 understand our issue and someone that's been a
24 former teacher for 13 year and a co-founder of
25 two schools, Luperno High School and the

1 Washington Hub Academy [sic] and also living
2 and representing District six where we will
3 have the opportunity to have you this evening.
4 You know, bring a lot of concern about how will
5 this money in this coming fiscal year will be
6 different when it comes to money coming to the
7 classroom in 2015 compared to 2014. So for me,
8 like, that's my first question. When we look
9 at this coming budget, what is different in a
10 sac [phonetic] figure on how much money did we
11 invest in the classroom 2014 compared to how
12 much will we invest this year?

14 KATHLEEN GRIMM: We can certainly
15 give you those numbers from the January plan,
16 but I think they might be a little premature,
17 because what we will be doing over the coming
18 months and coming back to you with the
19 executive plan are the final numbers for '15.
20 And I, you know, and of course OMB should speak
21 to this not I, but the January plan, the state
22 budget is not finished yet, and until we have
23 the state budget number--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ:
25 [interposing] But what is your projection?

Will we see a big difference of money coming to the classroom in this coming year compared to 2014?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: The preliminary numbers?

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

KATHLEEN GRIMM: Do we have that?

MICHAEL TRAGALE: As Kathleen's indicating, it's just premature in terms of the fact that the Governor's budget hasn't settled out yet. Based on the Governor's proposed budget, once again, we'd be looking at a very flat situation going into '15. We're expecting that the legislature will provide addbacks based on, you know, the recent assembly and senate proposals. So to the extent that we get more money there and whether or not they're going to make a down payment on CFE, then we would see more money to schools.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Our hope is always to increase support to classrooms. It certainly would be one of the goals in terms of all the other things we're looking at, and I think, you know, one particular concern of

1
2 yours that I would certainly raise is that
3 we're looking to rather than start new schools
4 with a lot more administrative, starting--like,
5 for example, do language programs within
6 existing schools, CTE programs within existing
7 schools. So our goal is to make sure that some
8 money goes back into the schools.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: And that,
10 you know, you have to understand the level of
11 frustration that we at the city, you know,
12 especially someone like me has. In a sense
13 about I trust your leadership as a Chancellor
14 and I trust the leadership of the Mayor, but I
15 also know that you heard a lot of things from
16 the previous Administration, and it was only
17 about a lot of talk. There was communities such
18 as mine that has a larger population for ELL
19 students that need more intervention services,
20 and it was not provided. Neat and clean, to see
21 at 2015 we had clear difference of how much
22 money is going to the classroom in this coming
23 year compared to how much money did we invest
24 in 2014. We would not have the trailers,
25 great. Would that mean that we will have money

1 to provide basic education so every single
2 student so that we fight adversity in our
3 schools? Will we have more money for art and
4 music? We deserve to have a clear number. If I
5 would be a principal right now in March, I
6 would be planning my budget knowing how many
7 staff will I have. They would not be waiting
8 for the state. They need to know now. Will
9 they have more money to hire more teachers?
10 Would they more money to be sure that they have
11 art and music in the working class community.
12 This is a model social class. You know, this
13 issue that we talk about it doesn't affect all
14 New Yorkers. Like there's a number of schools
15 in New York City that departments know what it
16 is to provide art, music and all those
17 programs. So, you know, I hope that we get a
18 clear information on number, money, how much
19 will we invest from September on on the
20 classroom compared on how much money we invest
21 in the previous year, because I am tired. On
22 the previous hearing that we had all the
23 information, all the good programs, however, we
24 have the same problem. And my last question is
25

College Now, how much money is the DOE investing on College Now?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: I didn't hear. What was the last question council?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Oh, college now.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: College Now, which is a program that have been proven to make a big difference.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: CUNY, yes. Yeah. Actually--

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ:
[interposing] Will we see more money in this coming fiscal year from the DOE in the partnership with the CUNY compared to how much money we invest in 2014?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: It's not final yet, but one of the things that if you've noticed that we've increased is the P-Tech [phonetic] relationships and those are all relationships with CUNY which actually fit in that direction. The other thing, just as a former principal, if I got my budget in May, I was ecstatic, 'cause we used to get it in August, which was too late. So our goal is to

1
2 get it sooner rather than later, but in terms
3 of arts programs, that is certainly something
4 we're encouraging everyone to do, and what
5 we're looking is to make sure that a lot of our
6 arts organizations come to the table to some
7 degree in our highest need neighborhoods with
8 programs that they can help us support, and
9 that's certainly a message. A lot of decisions
10 on arts programs were school based and
11 principals may have decided to do two periods
12 of something versus than art. We're giving the
13 message out as we did in the principals notes,
14 that that's one of the ways that they will be
15 evaluated. We put into the quality review, one
16 of the things that says, you know, what are the
17 arts programs in your school and how do you--so
18 that we're saying to people, "This is something
19 you need to keep on your mind when you're
20 scheduling your school and using your budget."

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. I have
22 to concur somewhat with my colleague Council
23 Member Rodriguez as well. From what I'm seeing
24 in the budget it appears to me that there's a
25 decrease of about 49 million dollars and if it

1 weren't for the UPK money that's coming into
2 the system, we might even be in worse shape
3 regarding that. So this battle over getting the
4 additional funding from the state is huge in
5 terms of making up that difference. You know,
6 we had a press conference about a week or so
7 ago asking for 1.9 billion dollars, but that's
8 not even really what the state owes us, and so
9 I just want to reiterate that we need that
10 money down here to just make those ends meet.
11 But as a follow-up to him and before I go to my
12 colleague, is there any intention to have a
13 reduction in the number of teachers or school
14 aids or general education positions next year,
15 or are we going to remain at the same staffing
16 levels?

18 KATHLEEN GRIMM: We have an increase
19 in pedagogical outcome planned.

20 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We actually
21 expect to have more pedigogs because we expect
22 certainly the UPK to bring that up.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Excluding the
24 UPK.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, we expect to see certainly more teachers of intervention which is what will help us ultimately. So I do not see a reduction coming down.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Council Member Levine followed by Council Member Levin.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you Chancellor for being here and for your openness in communicating with the Council in your early part of your tenure. It's very much appreciated. As you may know, there's a record number of former DOE teachers in the City Council now, including I believe six on this committee, including our Chair, Chair Dromm, and so this committee as a whole and actually the entire council I think has a profound understanding for just how tough being a frontline classroom teacher is, and just how critical having a good teacher is to the educational outcomes of kids. And I was very heartened to hear that your first pillar in your remarks touched upon professional development. The rhetorical change that you've already shown compared to the previous

Administration is dramatic. Previously, teachers were often demonized and frankly there was more of a punitive approach, and so I want to thank you for making an effort to treat teachers with respect. I would believe it already has impacted morale positively. As important as rhetoric is ultimately professional development is about resources. It's expensive. Am I correct that you're budgeting 100 million dollars for professional development and does that include the cost of substitute teachers to cover classes when teachers are in PD?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: It is about 100 million dollars. Most of that money is in the schools.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Yeah, most of the money's in the schools. When you look at professional development and you look at positions like coaches and things that are going to support the schools, one major initiative that we are undertaking is that we're going to try to do as much professional development in house without bringing outside

1
2 consultants. As a former teacher, as you know,
3 sometimes you have people who come with a
4 message from, you know, another state or
5 another--or a company, and they don't fit
6 necessarily the climate or the culture of the
7 school that they're working in. So our hope is
8 to be able to do a lot more things like summer
9 institutes and things like that where we're
10 having a two day training for middle school
11 teachers of literacy, and we're doing most of
12 that in house, looking for the best people who
13 already know how to do this, and the teacher to
14 teacher conversations which we think are
15 crucial, rather than the experts to teachers
16 conversations which often doesn't lead to any
17 real practice.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So I think that
19 that's an area we should really look at in
20 terms of substitute teachers that are used for
21 professional development purposes. When I was
22 in--when I still was in teaching we usually had
23 ten or 12 teachers almost on a daily basis
24 lined up to cover the classes for the
25

professional development and I do think that's an area where savings could be had.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Yeah, I think you're right, but I think also that a lot of the training that we're doing we're doing for people who are not covering classrooms, so that to the degree that we can work with coaches who then go back and work with the teachers, and also we're looking at very alternative methods to develop professional development that are not presently in place. Stay tuned.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Okay, so can you assess whether that will be an increase in the resources devoted to professional development in the new budget?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: It's all-- everything's under review at the present time.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: How many days on average is a teacher currently pulled out for professional development and do you see that number increasing?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think it depends on this--this to some degree is based on individual schools. If schools have

contracts with certain staff development companies, they make that decision. So it's really pretty much school to school. We have made a conscious effort not to pull people out since January. That are classroom based.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Some of the best schools I've seen develop an entire staff person to coaching at professional development, sometimes more than one. What portion of schools have at least one person dedicated full time to professional development?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: I'd have to check, but the majority of schools that have coaches are in elementary schools. Middle schools are a little different. We have teacher leaders in many of schools. Teacher leaders are people who have been recognized as having, you know, good classroom management as well as good classroom practices, and many of our principals, and I really encourage this, are using teacher to teacher training. So for example, I was just in a middle school where the teacher leader teaches one period less a week than the cohort and then other teachers

1
2 are invited, encouraged to go into her
3 classroom to see her do her practices. I think
4 this is a great model and I think also it works
5 particularly well because the more we respect
6 teachers who are doing a great job, the longer
7 they tend to stay in the field. So I believe
8 that certainly that model will be something
9 we'll be encouraging more schools to embrace.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: I realize
11 we're at the early stage in the budget, but
12 perhaps at a future hearing you could give us a
13 concrete analysis of what I hope will be an
14 increase in resources devoted to professional
15 development. Perhaps just in terms of the time
16 teachers are involved or the staff devoted to
17 it. We're about to hire, I believe the number
18 is 2,000 new early childhood educators. If you
19 could speak about the professional development
20 resources for that and whether we should fear
21 that it would draw off pedia [phonetic]
22 resources from the broader teaching force?

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Come to the mic,
24 and just state your name for the record. Right
25 there, I actually have to swear you in as well.

Could you raise your right hand? State your name.

SOPHIA PAPPAS: Sophia Pappas.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth and to answer Council Member questions honestly?

SOPHIA PAPPAS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.

SOPHIA PAPPAS: Hi, thank you for having me today. The issue first of the number of teachers, we expect up to 1,000 new classrooms starting this September and so that would be the maximum for the teaching staff that you're talking about. In term--and the second question was--

CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] The training.

SOPHIA PAPPAS: the training. So we've built a number of pieces about training into the plan. It's, we think, teacher quality is pivotal to making the pre-k plan successful and so for example for the teachers we'll have for the first time ever a summer institute.

1
2 We're actually currently in the process of
3 planning that. We have a working group with
4 representatives from the English Language
5 office as well as the Special Ed. office. We're
6 also increasing the number of instructional
7 coaches. We already have a cadre of 40. We're
8 going to increase that so that they have a more
9 manageable case load, so they'll be supporting
10 40 to 45 classroom each instead of 60 to 65 to
11 get that targeted support.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member
14 Levin followed by Council Member Treyger.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you,
16 Chairman. Thank you, Chancellor. I appreciate
17 you being here today and for the leadership
18 that you've already shown at the Department. I
19 want to focus my first couple of questions on
20 the charter budget. First off, a concern that
21 I have with the big picture is that the charter
22 budget, year over year for the last five years
23 or so has increased at a rate of around 20
24 percent a year, and I know that there is a--
25 that the budget right now in the preliminary

1 budget is look--slated to increase 150 million
2 dollars from last year's adopted budget, and
3 that's going to go up with the 14 new charter
4 schools that are going to be cited this year.
5 My question is, has the Department of Education
6 done an analysis of the five or ten year out
7 year build out of all the charter schools to
8 see what the year over year increase is going
9 to be projected moving forward and with
10 different scenarios? So you could say with the
11 current baseline of no more charter schools
12 being cited, with 50 new charter schools being
13 cited over five years, with 100 new charter
14 schools being cited over five years to get a
15 sense of what the budget is going to be,
16 because right now we're looking at a charter
17 budget of 1.2 billion in the preliminary plan.
18 That's going to go up probably another, my
19 guess, another 75 million dollars when we get
20 to the executive, because 14 schools. Last
21 year there were 24. It went up 140 million
22 dollars, this year 14, somewhere about half of
23 that. So we're going to be looking at a charter
24 budget of over 1.2 billion dollars this year.
25

1
2 That's going to continue to grow, because
3 charters, when they're cited, they're cited
4 with a single grade or two grades, and the
5 schools themselves grow. Are we--have we done
6 an analysis of what our charter budget is going
7 to look like in five years and in ten years?

8 KATHLEEN GRIMM: No, I don't think we
9 have that, and it doesn't mean we can't do it.
10 Certainly we could do an analysis of the
11 current, as you say, the current charters, what
12 they are authorized to grow to what number
13 they're authorized to grow. And we could do
14 that. We could do a projection. Going forward,
15 it would be very iffy because it's going to
16 depend a great deal on what the Chancellor
17 decides to do and going forward--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]
19 Right.

20 KATHLEEN GRIMM: with our program
21 with charters.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But it would
23 be helpful--

24 KATHLEEN GRIMM: [interposing] we
25 could do that analysis.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: With the different scenarios, with the current baseline, you know, how ever many schools to be cited. Another issue about charters, the--apparently the state senate has put in their budget bill that pre-k charter seats are to be funded at the same rate as other charter seats, other grade level charter seats which is 15,000 dollars--is it 13,000 dollars, 15,000 dollars a year?

MICHAEL TRAGALE: 13,527.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: 13,527 a year. And pre-k seats in public schools as the Mayor has laid out is a little more than 10,000. So are charter pre-k seats going to be funded at a higher level than non-charter pre-k seats? According to the senate bill that's what they're looking to do.

KATHLEEN GRIMM: I never predict what Albany is going to do, Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right. How would the--

CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]
This is in the hands of the state.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Than it is in our hands.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right, right.

But I would--well, I would caution in the state senate that if we're going to have equity, we should have equity across the board, and we shouldn't be funding any kids at a higher level than others throughout the system. So, let that be a message then to the state senate. I wanted to ask very quickly about musical instruments.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So in the past, we've greatly decreased our funding for musical instruments and we've relied on not for profit and other providers, VH1 Save the Music to provide musical instruments for our kids, and the funding went down in the previous Administration by 80 or 90 percent. Are we looking to recommit public dollars for musical instruments for our kids?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think--are you aware of the NPR program that's actually, I don't know if it's just been

announced, because I'm not sure what 'cause I've been in so many meetings, I'm not sure what the due date is.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I'm not, no.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: But okay, well the--I've been meeting with a lot of arts organizations and also trying to see how many ways we can fund things without paying for them.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: And one of the things NPR is going to do, they're going to put out a statement and we're going to do some ads asking for up to 1,000 musical instruments to be donated and then we're going to bundle them according to the instruments. So if people are donating violins and they are--and Sam Ash [phonetic] is actually going to repair them. Because we also know that many schools have instruments sitting in closets, and they're not using them. Either they dropped their music teacher or they're not working anymore. So Sam Ash has committed to repairing all the musical instruments that we give them. I think the

1 campaign is starting within a couple weeks. So
2 stay tuned, and I urge everyone who has an
3 instrument, you know, specifically if you had
4 child who took lessons, you know, can't bear to
5 hear them playing anymore, to donate the
6 instruments for a worthy cause. And we're
7 hoping that this particular program that bands
8 and other particular programs in schools that
9 are missing these things will actually have
10 them. I was at Barkley's two weeks ago for the
11 PSAL, and one of the things that really
12 impressed me was the Bryant School band and
13 they were phenomenal and one of the things I
14 asked that particular band leader is, you know,
15 what can we do to help. What do we do? And we
16 need to also when you guys have events, invite
17 your local schools to perform and because the
18 more we celebrate this kind of work, the more
19 people will be committed to helping us.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. Thank
22 you very much, Chancellor. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Council
24 Member Treyger followed by Council Member
25 Maisel.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you, Chair Dromm and welcome Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor again. At Tuesday's hearing we heard about over 400 million dollars in damage done to our schools as a result of super storm Sandy, and I believe that that has an impact on instruction. In schools in Coney Island we're still seeing temporary boilers. PS 90 still running on a fire alarm watch because their fire alarm system is broken. So I just would like to just urge the DOE to please make sure that those capital needs are met as fast as possible so we can return to a sense of normalcy and safety for our children, and to get them the quality instruction which they deserve. I'd like just to first comment and ask a question to the Chancellor about over-- according to the testimony, according to the data here, over 200 million dollars has been spent on central or support for schools, if I'm not mistaken, and if you hear the cries of educators and school leaders for the past decade or years that they feel alone. Can we try to comment on that disconnect between close

1
2 to a quarter of a billion dollars spent on
3 support services, but yet educators feel alone?
4 I just want to hear your thoughts on that,
5 Chancellor.

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, that's
7 certainly one of the reasons that I've been
8 going around the city listening and talking to
9 people and I think also for the first time in a
10 long time, teachers feel perfectly comfortable
11 sending me letters and giving me
12 recommendations. I certainly urge that. Also,
13 since I've become chancellor, I meet once a
14 month with the head of the UFT, Michael Mulgra
15 [phonetic] we have breakfast. I do the same
16 thing with Ernie Logan. We're not adversaries.
17 We're here to help, and to the degree that they
18 inform me of things that their constituents are
19 saying and we try to follow up. I visit schools
20 not only because I want to learn what's going
21 on there, but when I go to schools I also talk
22 to teachers about what are their major
23 concerns. So I think the sense of having silos
24 is lessening, but you can't change the world in
25 seven weeks. And it's only been on a very fast

1 track. I've been going out, you know, 24/7,
2 Saturdays, Sundays, whatever it takes, wherever
3 there are people who want me to hear their
4 concerns, I'm there, but I do think this is not
5 something you're going to fix. It took a number
6 of years for some of this stuff to happen. It's
7 going to take more than a couple weeks for some
8 of this stuff to be repaired.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you.

11 And I definitely agree, it is a breath of fresh
12 air to have someone who understands these
13 problems and just to just make light of the
14 fact that there is that disconnect that existed
15 for many years. On the topic of--speaking of
16 support, teacher evaluations, when do educators
17 have time to process support and when do
18 leaders have time to provide support when
19 they're in a constant state of proving what I
20 call artificial growth?

21 CHANCELLOR FARINA: This is one of
22 the many things that we're rethinking. So
23 when I come back to speak to you at our next
24 meeting, I'll be happy to go into this with
25 more detail, 'cause certainly as a former

teacher and principal, I have very strong opinions on this topic.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Yes, because I, you know, I appreciate your stories in between your testimony. I could share with you one very quickly, have some time. Last year, a year ago, former Deputy Chancellor visited a school Grady high school in South Brooklyn, where the former principal showed him a room where kids--and Grady is a school about 700 kids.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: I know it well.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Most have IEP's, and they were building a house with their hands, literally working together with staff building a home, foundation and all, and the Deputy Chancellor at that time called that ineffective and I would love to have seen him build a house with his hands, and have loved to see the former Chancellor build a house with his hands and call that ineffective. So to me, how we measure growth, I think we have to look at growth through many different lenses because

our kids have many different abilities and we have to measure that as well.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, that's one of the reasons why you see that one of the programs that we're increasing is our CTE schools, because you know, I'm the daughter of a carpenter, and I think being a master carpenter tops a lot of things. I'm also the daughter-in-law of a plumber. I think there are many careers that you can have in life, and many of those careers actually earn more money today than some of the people who have no jobs. So I do think that we have to look at what value we add to society and we can add value many different ways.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I thank you, and I know your commitment to CTE programs in schools and I truly appreciate that. There was some talk about doing away with the school report cards or those letter grades. Is there a number of how much savings that would provide the DOE if they were to do away with those evaluations and those progress reports or grades?

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2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Like I said, if
3 you give me an opportunity to come back next
4 time and inform you, because like I said
5 everything you've asked is something that's in
6 process.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Gotcha.

8 CHANCELLOR FARINA: So.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And I thank
10 you and I definitely look forward to that. And
11 guidance counselors, as a former educator I
12 completely agree with you 100 percent that they
13 have an enormous role to play in our schools,
14 but many of them have been relegated to simply
15 doing programming because they have enormous
16 amounts of caseloads to deal with and they
17 really don't have the time and the structure to
18 support, to provide guidance counseling, and so
19 I would greatly urge that we need to expand the
20 number of guidance counselors in our schools,
21 particularly when a lot of the issues we deal
22 with in schools are social/emotional learning
23 needs in addition to academics. So I would love
24 to have further discussions on that,
25 Chancellor, and I--

CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]

Well, I think you missed the conv--in the beginning I mentioned that the Department that we reinstituting is the Guidance Department. It's going to have its own head.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Excellent.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: And it's also going to be involved in recruiting more guidance counselors, but also looking to see how the ones that are already in place can get more support.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Excellent.

And just a last thing about support. I think it's just crucial that we have a clear definition of what support is, because sometimes in the past they would have consultants visit schools and they would just give you a book and say, "Have a nice day." They would give you a paper and say, "Please read this." I think we have to be very clear on what type of support we need. We have children sometimes with high needs and the staff needs to adjust to meet those needs. And so simply giving someone a book or a piece of paper and

1
2 saying have a nice day to me is not adequate so
3 I think we need to really examine what that
4 support looks like, Chancellor, and I thank you
5 for your commitment for making that happen.

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think that the
7 one thing that you should know, and it's very
8 evident starting this Saturday, that we're
9 asking the people who were supporting what
10 support they need. We're not mandating this is
11 the support you're going to get, but what is it
12 that you need and then how do we make sure you
13 get it.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I have a little
15 story, too. I one time I asked a teacher
16 college trainer actually a question. I forget
17 exactly what the issue was and they turned the
18 question on me and they said, "Well, how would
19 you deal with that situation?" and I said,
20 "Well, that's what you're here for is to help."
21 So, and I can tell you that's--

22 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] I
23 should try that here today, and just--

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: That's happened a
25 number of times. Thank you Council Member

1
2 Treyger. I want to say we've been joined by
3 Council Member Chaim Deutsch, who's also Chair
4 of our Non-Public School Education Committee,
5 Council Member Inez Barron, Council Member Brad
6 Lander I saw, Council Member Vinnie Gentile,
7 Council Member Andy King and Council Member
8 Williams who was here, Council Member Wills is
9 here as well. Okay, and now we're going to go
10 to Council Member Maisel followed by Council
11 Member Rosenthal.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: Good morning,
13 Chancellor. I've long been curious about this
14 question. Do you have statistics on the pupil
15 mobility in the charter schools?

16 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Not at--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: [interposing]
18 How many enter the charter schools, how many
19 leave during the course of the year?

20 CHANCELLOR FARINA: No.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: The reason
22 why I think that's significant is that when the
23 child comes in the charter school he comes with
24 public funds. When he leaves the charter
25 school, I think the public funds don't leave

1
2 with him, even if he goes back to a public
3 school. So there's probably no way to recapture
4 those public monies, even if he's in the
5 charter school for a day. Am I correct about
6 that?

7 CHANCELLOR FARINA: That's monitored.
8 The child travels--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: [interposing]
10 but I don't think the funds go back. I think
11 once the funds--I know one of the problems in
12 some of the school districts for example the
13 Albany school district, they get a charter
14 school student, the funds go to the charter
15 school and then when the child leaves the
16 charter school keeps the money.

17 MICHAEL TRAGALE: There is a
18 register reconciliation which occurs through
19 the payment process. So it's not necessarily
20 accurate to say that that money doesn't come
21 back.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: How long does
23 it take for it to come back?

24 MICHAEL TRAGALE: Depending upon the
25 situation over time.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: Okay. My
3 second question has to do with in the olden
4 days, maybe 12 years ago we used to have an
5 office of curriculum. There was a science
6 office, a math office. They developed
7 curriculum which I always thought they did a
8 tremendous job. Is there anybody writing
9 curriculum now?

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: As of a month
11 ago, and as of this week we have now a Head of
12 Science who's also head of Math. So that will
13 be happening, and one of my goals is to make
14 sure there's a new curricula, there's a new
15 mandate coming down from the state, for
16 example, in the social studies, and our hope is
17 that we will not have to purchase an outside
18 source, but to try to do as much of it as
19 possible in house. So the answer is yes, and
20 that will also help us make sure that it's
21 adjusted for what we need in New York City.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: Alright.
23 Thank you very much, Chancellor.
24
25

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Council Member Rosenthal followed by Council Member Rose.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL:

Chancellor, Deputy Chancellor, it's great to see all of you today. You are truly a breath of fresh air and my questions are going to sort of speak to that. You've inherited a system-- oh, and by the way, thank you for saying yes to Mayor de Blasio. We know you thought about it for a while, but wonderful you said yes.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: He didn't prepare me for the rest of the job.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I'm so glad you're here. So I'm here today with my hat as both member of the finance committee and Chair of the Contracts Committee and what you've inherited is a central office and many systems that have been contracts, no big contracts, and I'm wondering what your thoughts are about how to approach that, whether or not you would consider hiring maybe a IT czar who could oversee what's going on. Who it is internally that's thinking about it. I mean,

1
2 there was one year where there was a 200
3 million dollar bump in the budget. I think it
4 was fiscal year '12 or '13 and it was all one
5 time contracts. Can you speak sort of what are
6 your thoughts about that?

7 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I'm going
8 to let Kathleen answer most of it, but I will
9 tell you that since I've come on board we have
10 started looking at contracts with a fine-tooth
11 comb, to the point that--

12 KATHLEEN GRIMM: [interposing] Yes.

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Urselina
14 [phonetic] I think stays beyond hours just to
15 look at them. We have pulled one or two
16 already and we plan on going forward and
17 looking at these very, very carefully.
18 Absolutely. DO you want to say something?

19 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Yes, I just wanted
20 to say we can easily provide to you the no bid
21 contracts are very, very minimal unlike many
22 years ago. A very minimal percentage of our
23 contracts, and we'll get that data to you.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Can you
25 just say that one more time?

2 KATHLEEN GRIMM: You referenced that
3 we have many no bid contracts.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

5 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Most of our
6 contracts are bid.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Wow, okay.
8 Well, that--

9 [cross-talk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: as a start
11 would be very interesting.

12 KATHLEEN GRIMM: We actually--Mike
13 has the numbers right here.

14 MICHAEL TRAGALE: I actually have
15 some statistics for--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL:
17 [interposing] Great.

18 MICHAEL TRAGALE: for '14. There was
19 43.2 million or 1.4 percent of our OTPS spend,
20 which was over three billion. Fifty-one,
21 approximately 51 percent was for extensions of
22 competitive awards. Forty-seven percent was
23 for one time contracts, 0.7 were for contracts
24 under 100,000, which is done through a special
25

committee, internal committee we have that reviews those.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So--

MICHAEL TRAGALE: [interposing] So it's really not as bad as it sounds.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I'm interested in looking at the specifics of that, 'cause of course, you can't take it as a percentage of OTPS. You have to take it as a percentage of your contracts. You have over 100 million dollars worth of contracts in central office alone. So you have to--I'd look to look at the details to make sure that the statistics that are being reported out are a fair representation.

MICHAEL TRAGALE: Be happy to share that.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah? Is that hard information to pull together?

MICHAEL TRAGALE: No.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Or something that someone can just--

KATHLEEN GRIMM: [interposing] It's not hard at all.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: shoot
over?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: We're happy to share
it.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I'd really
love to see that, and I actually, if it would
be alright, I'd love to have a hearing about
this to explore details. Chancellor, you don't
need to be there. You have way more important
things to do, but if this is something that
your staff would be willing to meet with us
about, I'd really appreciate it. I mean, one of
the ones in particular, the Vanguard contract
for K Connect.

KATHLEEN GRIMM: Under review.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Good. Do
you have a sense of timing of when you'd like
to have that review wrapped up and when you
could--maybe we could time the hearing, the
Contracts hearing even around that so we could
hear about your findings?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: We can work with
you. That's good.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: We'll work with you.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay, and similarly, the Eros [phonetic] Contract.

KATHLEEN GRIMM: Of course.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And SEIS, which we've already talked about here. That would be helpful. And do you, in that just sort of one quick just to make sure, the monitoring of those contracts, do you look at-- only because I'm not sure OMB, how involved OMB is on this, that when there are cost over-runs, who it is in your shop that works on that?

MICHAEL TRAGALE: Actually, a couple of years ago we implemented contract management training in which we shared an internal memo with staff as well did training, which was attended as well by SEI, that actually offered some support around the type of contract management that should be undertaken and, you know, being aware of, you know, attempts at fraud and things like that. In terms of system implementation, we implemented a number of features in our accounting system where we

1
2 could actually track a contract when it hits 80
3 percent, it kind of sends a flag up, and our
4 central administrator's able to take a look at
5 that. So these are certain things that we took,
6 as I mentioned, we put these in place a couple
7 years ago, and it was in reference to an SEI
8 investigation that helped us, you know,
9 basically got this off the ground.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I would
11 love to learn more about that in detail. That's
12 something probably the rest of the city could
13 use as well.

14 MICHAEL TRAGALE: We'd be happy to
15 share that.

16 KATHLEEN GRIMM: You might actually
17 maybe want a process briefing which we'd be
18 able--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL:
20 [interposing] Sure.

21 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Because all of our
22 contracts not only go through a very internal,
23 intensive internal review including the
24 Chancellor's, but then go to our panel for
25

1
2 approval. They go to cooperation counsel. They
3 go to OMB.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Great.

5 KATHLEEN GRIMM: And they go to the
6 City Comptroller. So we'd love to walk you
7 through all of it.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Oh wow.
9 Okay, we have this on record. You've been sworn
10 in. I'll take you up on all of it.

11 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I just want to
12 add something to this. One of the major changes
13 we've made just in the last six or seven weeks,
14 we have offered workshops to people on anything
15 they want to know more about. So I offer to you
16 as well the fact that the PEP [phonetic]
17 doesn't go and meet for the first time the
18 night that they meet. We have been meeting with
19 them in smaller groups, big groups, to answer
20 individual questions, but also to make sure
21 that anything they're going to vote on, they
22 get a really full sense of everything, and that
23 may not be something that existed in the past.
24 So to the degree that, you know, elected
25 officials said they wanted Common Core, you

1
2 tell us what you want to know more about and to
3 the degree that we can provide that, we're more
4 than happy to do so.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL:

6 Chancellor, as I said, breath of fresh air.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.

8 Council Member Rose followed by Richards,
9 Wills, and King and Barron.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you so
11 much, Chair, and almost good afternoon,
12 Chancellor. I was pleased to see that in your
13 statement you said high school is too late to
14 start talking about graduation. As someone
15 who's worked the last 20 years with dropout
16 prevention, you stated that after school
17 programs have the potential to be a support
18 system academically and emotionally. So could
19 you tell me what amount is being attributed to
20 the after school programs?

21 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Let me put it in.

22 KATHLEEN GRIMM: It's 90 million, the
23 new afterschool program [off mic].

24 CHANCELLOR FARINA: The new--the
25 addition to what's already there is 190

1 million, but I think it's not the--I think
2 rather than just focusing on the money, we
3 should focus on what's going to happen at that
4 time, and one of the major differences for
5 middle school in particular is that most of
6 them are going to be partnerships so that
7 students are not just getting what
8 traditionally sometimes in after school was
9 homework help, but they're going to get very
10 robust programs that are in partnership with
11 CBO such as, you know, Good Shepherd,
12 Partnership with Children. There's a whole
13 slew of CBO's that are coming forward to saying
14 these are some of the things they want to work
15 on. So we're going to make sure that the after
16 school program has a rich arts component that
17 has an academic component. One of things I
18 wanted to personally see that is that they all
19 have independent reading time as part of the
20 after school program and that it means that the
21 adolescent is also going to have some
22 approaches that are, you know, just hanging out
23 with each other so that they're not only
24

learning, but they're also learning in a very safe haven kind of atmosphere.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you. You answered my other two questions--

CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] Oh, good.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: in that one statement. Are the ATR's a part of the fulltime pedagogical headcount?

MICHAEL TRAGALE: Yes.

KATHLEEN GRIMM: Yes.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Yes. I'm sorry.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay, yes. And are there plans to use them, to put them back into the classrooms?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: There will be no forced placement.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Excuse me?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: There will be no forced placement of staff.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: No forced. So that means they could still remain in the ATR pool, or they would--

CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]

This is one of the things when I come back in a couple weeks we'll be happy to discuss.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay. In terms of the headcount realignment in previous fiscal plans, the budgeted headcount didn't match the actual headcount. What efforts are being made to reconcile that disparity?

MICHAEL TRAGALE: It's very difficult to perfectly align, especially within the school units of appropriation, the headcount because, you know, our schools are able to make modifications on the go. We don't prevent the school from moving money around to the extent that they can. If they traded a position, they could move that to OTPS. So there's always going to be some basically misalignment there. To some extent, it's really through plan adjustments and realignments that we try to keep that close. But you know, we are within pretty close tolerances, certainly more than we have been in the past, you know, in the past many years ago.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So that alignment doesn't affect class size does it?

MICHAEL TRAGALE: No, no. I mean, it's really in terms of what affects schools, it's really about the budgets that we put out to schools, the Fair Student Funding Budgets they get that we roll out typically in May of a given year. It's also based on the fact as to whether or not that's school's experiencing register growth or decline. Obviously if they're adding kids they're getting more resources to fund the teachers that are required to serve those children. You know, you may have a school that's lost register over a few years where we also, we offer a lot of supports to try and help them. But gradually we do expect schools to right size their budgets, you know, if they don't have the kids because obviously that funds our ability to give money to the schools gaining kids.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And so the at--

CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] The other thing is just to keep in mind, again, I'm using my principal's hat now, that we're--you

know, it's great if you get your budget to me.

If we got it in June we would consider ourselves lucky, but you also get money over the course of the year, as there are other things that happen with the state or special grants. You get it over a course of time. So for a lot of principals, what they couldn't afford in September, they might be able to afford in January. So it's an ongoing budget process. It's not this is what you have and that's what you have to do for the year.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And the average class size that we see now is?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: It depends on the grade.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: The grade.
Okay. I have--can I ask one last--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing]
Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you.
Community schools in the finance briefing report, I see was allocated 150,000 for community schools, is DOE going to invest in the community school program given that the

1
2 Mayor has said we need 100 new sites, and is
3 150,000 sufficient for 100 new sites? And have
4 you toured the existing 16 community schools
5 that are currently in the system?

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, first of
7 all, I did visit one in particular that I
8 thought was outstanding and I'm actually just
9 met this week with Deputy Mayor Richard Buery
10 to visit some more together. I know this is
11 also one of the priorities of the Speaker, so
12 one of the things that we agreed is that we
13 would also be working together. I think in
14 terms of how the money is allocated, I'm going
15 to let Kathleen speak to it, but I think people
16 are not quite aware what community schools are,
17 that it's a fully inclusive program of wrap
18 around services. The school I visited in the
19 Bronx was amazing in terms of they have dental
20 care. They have nutrition. They have mental
21 health clinic. They have food. They have a
22 dietitian. It's a full service agency that
23 really allows families to kind of from birth to
24 whatever get all the support they need. It also
25 means kids in these particular schools come to

1
2 school prepared to learn. They're not, you
3 know--so I think that's important, but I'm
4 going to let Kathleen talk about the money.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I think they're
6 wonderful and I'm just concerned that only
7 150,000 is being allocated.

8 KATHLEEN GRIMM: That's a one--that's
9 a single line item allocation from the Council
10 to the UFT, and we are working in partnership
11 with UFT to develop, I believe it's two
12 community schools. We have many more across the
13 city with other partners, so that's not the
14 only money being spent on community schools and
15 we can get you a fuller list.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you.
17 Thank you, Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.
19 Council Member Richards followed by Council
20 Member Wills.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Good
22 morning or afternoon. Thank you. It's great to
23 see you again, and I just want to thank you
24 once again from coming out to the Rockaways a
25 few weeks ago. So Chancellor, I just had a few

1 question on--so my colleague Council Member
2 Treyger, and I know Council Member Rose were
3 affected by Sandy, and the first question I
4 have is what additional staff services, staff
5 resources are you giving to schools who were
6 affected by the storm? And I also--so I'll
7 start with that question, but then my second
8 question is, you guys I see that compared to FY
9 14 there's a 17.7 million dollar reduction in
10 the custodial budget, and my concerns with that
11 is that, you know, obviously we have schools
12 that are still on temporary boilers and, you
13 know, still may have points where there are
14 mold in some of these schools, and I'm curious
15 to know if you're going to take resources away
16 from these particular areas when we're at a
17 time when we need them the most.

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, let me
20 answer one question. Then I'm going to let them
21 answer the budgetary piece of this. I think one
22 of the major supports we gave to schools with
23 Sandy is certainly more supports and guidance
24 and support service to teachers and parents who
25 were suffering. And I think--I certainly have

1
2 a school near me that was one of the schools
3 that was hardest hit and they received a lot of
4 support in that way, and I think that that's
5 something we will continue until they tell us
6 it's not necessary. But in terms of the
7 structural stuff--

8 KATHLEEN GRIMM: The custodial
9 budget's not final as of yet. I would only say,
10 however, that we are so terribly, terribly
11 proud of our custodial staff and the reaction
12 they had to Sandy in terms of getting our
13 schools open and getting them back and still as
14 you point out with temporary boilers during a
15 very, very cold winter. We had very, very few
16 problems. They've just done a terrific job for
17 the children.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay, thank
19 you.

20 MICHAEL TRAGALE: I could actually
21 add on to that as well. In terms of additional
22 staffing, when the hurricane first hit, in
23 terms of the budget process, we actually
24 allocated additional dollars to schools that
25 actually took children that were displaced as a

1 result of the hurricane and as well as the
2 actual sites that were impacted. We actually
3 provided them register relief for register hold
4 homeless [phonetic], so that even though they
5 lost children, we ensured that their budgets
6 weren't effected by that. So that actually
7 allowed them to retain staffing at a higher
8 level than they would otherwise. Thank you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Just a few
11 more questions. I hope I don't get put in
12 detention for this, Council Member Dromm, but
13 this is a capital question. So I know you're
14 aware of the issues at PS 106 in the Rockaways,
15 and the school is obviously--we lost an annex
16 there which housed formerly 300 children and
17 staff members, and my question is what are we
18 going to do to expand the school? And it's a
19 question I raised earlier in the week with the
20 Deputy Chancellor here. What are we going to do
21 to ensure that that school expands or either we
22 build a new school there? I know all the
23 children are cooped in one building now, cooped
24 up in one building now, but clearly the area's
25 in need, the school is in need of an expansion.

1 We have a 1,000 more units of housing coming
2 across the street possibly, which we possibly
3 can break ground on later this year or early
4 next year, and you know, my community and the
5 children and the parents of that school are
6 very concerned about, you know, what's going to
7 happen with that school, and looking at the
8 additional capacity seats that you guys were
9 putting in, we've seen no additional seats in
10 the report earlier this week from SCA on
11 additional seats for the Rockaway. So it's an
12 area of concern and then just two last points
13 and I'll let you answer, I know we spoke of
14 contracts and I'm interested to know how much
15 MWBE's con---how many MWBE's are getting
16 contracts. And then lastly, I just want to
17 speak of one co-location in one of my schools
18 which I raised with your staff. PS 42 in the
19 Rockaways is now slated to get a District 75
20 school in, and the school has the space, so I'm
21 not arguing that there's no space. You guys did
22 a wonderful job expanding the school, but I
23 want to--I'm interested to known this is a
24 school that's struggling, what additional
25

resources are being put into the school that's been there before you put a district 75 school in, which would create more of a challenge for that school when we already have challenges there.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Okay. Let me take one at a time. I went to visit 106 myself this week. I met with staff. They raised some of the concerns they have. We're going back actually to help with one of the specific issues. There is other--there is some space in that building that might be rethought, for them to meet the needs of the kids that they presently serve. So, I think that's certainly one thing we're going to be looking at. In terms of district 75 I want to be very clear that these are our kids and they need to be welcomed into any building they go into. And that most district 75, all District 75 go with extra support services. They have an administrator on duty, so one of the things that Kathleen and I have been talking about that in many of the co-locations we're changing the practices, as a matter of fact, within the

1
2 next two weeks. We're going to have a meet and
3 greet committee, which I'm actually going to
4 meet and greet first before we send them out to
5 the field, and this is like almost like campus
6 squad. They're going to sit with whoever is in
7 that building and make some determinations,
8 who's going to get what space, how are they
9 going to share the space, what are the areas
10 like lunch rooms and gyms that are going to be
11 shared in a way that's equitable for all. So I
12 do think going forward that some of the issues
13 that might have happened in the past are going
14 to be resolved. And also, you know, looking at
15 what I know services that District 7 [phonetic]
16 brings to the building to the degree that there
17 can be some shared resources, it's a win/win.
18 So that to me is the short answer, but hold us
19 accountable another two months after we've done
20 some of these meet and greet and you'll see a
21 longer answer.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay, so I
23 would just--like I'm very happy to hear that
24 there's going to be shared resources. I'm just
25 interested in knowing what does that mean, you

1
2 know, later on as you guys develop and like I
3 said, the school has the space and we welcome
4 District 75 students, you know, with open arms
5 certainly in the Rockaways. And then the last
6 question was just on the MWBE's and the
7 contracts.

8 MICHAEL TRAGALE: In terms of the
9 MWBE's we have 334 contracts totaling over 21
10 million dollars at this point, and I just want
11 to be clear that if an MWBE failed to certify
12 with the state, the city or state, they may not
13 be reflected on our account. So this is an area
14 that we're working on. We're also looking to
15 see whether or not we could try and break down
16 some of our larger procurements to make it, I
17 guess, more easier--basically easier for the
18 smaller vendors to be able to apply through our
19 RFP processes. So it is something that a lot of
20 time is being spent on.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: I will urge
22 you, can you guys--I would suggest more
23 outreach on that, and you know, because 220
24 million compared to what you guys have in your
25 budget is a minuscule amount.

MICHAEL TRAGALE: It is something we're working on.

COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay, great. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you. Before we go to Council Member Wills, let me just jump back to something that Council Member Richards began to touch on, which is school facilities. The preliminary budget includes a 17.7 million dollar reduction in custodial allowances compared to fiscal 2015. When you compare 2015 to 2014 in adoption, what will the impact of the overall budget reductions on custodians and facilities mean for us, and what is the impact of the council's custodian restoration in fiscal year 2014?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: Well, as I say, the custodial budget is not yet final, and whatever number we come up with as a final number is going to be a number that we are convinced will have no impact on our services to our schools. I think our schools today are in better shape than they have been in decades and we're going

1
2 to keep it that way. With regard to the
3 restorations, Mike can you--

4 MICHAEL TRAGALE: [interposing] Yeah,
5 and in terms of the plan, it's really based on
6 a prior year action that has caused this blip
7 in the plan. So we are expecting that to be
8 resolved going into exec, and we'll have more
9 information at that time.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. So a lot of
11 questions have been answered today by moving
12 forward into exec, we're going to follow up
13 with some questions prior to exec as well as in
14 terms of writing letters to you about these
15 questions, and then hopefully at exec, we'll
16 get the more exact numbers on these questions
17 as well. Alright so now let's go to Council
18 Member Wills.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Thank you,
20 Mr. Chair. Good afternoon, Chancellor and
21 Deputy Chancellor, sir. My first question
22 would be page 10, we have a council initiative,
23 the anti-gun violence initiative. We have
24 providers that are a part of this Cure Violence
25 initiative that put a lot of work into these

1 communities. My community alone went 300 and
2 like 60 days without shootings. One of the main
3 schools, August Martin high school, we're going
4 to go into August Martin, that this group
5 actually put a lot of time into, had no more
6 incidents. We had two gun incidents there prior
7 to that as a--it's a scanning school. They took
8 a year and a half to get their payment and
9 their payment was a contract of something small
10 like 35,000 for wrap around service to the DOE.
11 Now that year and half, of course, the
12 Chancellor wasn't there, but what are we doing
13 to fix that going forward, because we already
14 have a program that is tested, but these
15 groups, fi they don't get their payments or
16 their funding before a year and half--the same
17 thing happened with Bloomberg, I think when he
18 first came in. The first three years it was a
19 gang pilot, and a lot of those CBO's went out
20 of business. So we need to know what can we do
21 to have that fixed. Is there going to be a
22 meeting with all of these providers? 'Cause
23 we're thinking about trying to expand it. We
24 can't expand something that doesn't work apart.
25

1
2 KATHLEEN GRIMM: I'd like to reach
3 out to you offline so I can get the specifics.
4 I can't respond because I don't know the
5 specific answer.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Well, I didn't
7 think you--I just wanted to put it out there so
8 you could respond. I mean, because going into
9 budgets we want to make sure that if the
10 Council and the Mayor who has agreed to help
11 expand this program, it's done. These
12 providers are taking care of going forward.

13 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Late payments are
14 not acceptable. So if that is happening I want
15 to know about it and we will certainly address
16 it.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Okay. On table
18 seven, we already mentioned the headcount. I
19 don't understand how the headcount does not
20 deal with class sized. I have middle school 72
21 in my district that is slated for a co-
22 location, which to me makes no sense, but that
23 principal actually brought more teachers on to
24 lower her class sizes, to which we are supposed
25 to be doing, and she actually--her budget, she

blew a hole in her budget. So how does the headcount in the DOE not affect the budget for class sizes?

MICHAEL TRAGALE: I mean, there is an indirect relationship obviously between what the funds were given to schools and the units of appropriation which cover schools.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: So--

MICHAEL TRAGALE: [interposing] But basically, just if I could talk about the last--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: [interposing] Sure.

MICHAEL TRAGALE: two years. For fiscal year '13 and '14, the budgets were effectively flat. That doesn't mean that schools had a lot of extra money and they were certainly a loss of some purchasing power. It's really about that register. Did the school face any register changes? Did any grant funding expire, which may have effected it? So you know, we really have to look at all of the moving parts in a particular school, but the tax levy budget, if the register was the same,

the tax levy budget should have been relatively flat, but it's certainly something we can certainly take a look at.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: But I don't--I mean, when are we going to take a look at it? On page 14, table eight speaks of these class sizes that you have from FY 11, 12, and 13--

MICHAEL TRAGALE: [interposing] Well--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: [interposing] Wait a minute, let me finish. I'm not--I don't mean to be smart, I'm just saying let me just get this thought out. Thank you.

MICHAEL TRAGALE: No, no--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: [interposing] And the class sizes from grade one to eight are 22.9 and 27. None of the schools that I'm speaking about had these class sizes. The school I just spoke about, the class sizes were 33, and if she doesn't have a budget to make sure these class sizes are brought down, which evidently this is the city's average and I challenge you. I don't believe in minority communities this is a city average. But if

that is the case, how is the budget being put into focus to positively impact these children?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: First of all, allocation to schools is based on a certain amount of students per class in the middle school, which is what this is. That is pretty much the average in terms of how the budget's given. So it's not about how the--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: [interposing] Explain that to me, Chancellor. It's given by how many children are--

CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] In other words, you are given your budget in your school according to what is the projected class size--in other words, by UFT contract there is a size that is allocated. Your money is allocated by that size. So it's not about more or less. It's about you can have less children, or a principal could choose to have a larger class which are teachers, or to use the over-registers to get a music teacher and have more kids. There's a lot of ways you can play with the numbers, but the money to a school is given

based on what the projected allotment is for--
elementary schools is one allotment.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Right.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Middle schools is
another and high school's another.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: So if it's
being done by a UFT contract, which class sizes
in the schools that I would love to send you
are way over, and these schools have gotten
grievances, two or three in the last two years
from UFT. How are we then saying that it is
okay because we have space in the schools to
co-locate those schools when we know that these
schools are over class size? For instance, MS
226 they forced a co-location in there last
year, Dahortree [phonetic] Middle School, and
this is another part of the budget. Dahortree
Middle School has 65 children in the middle
school. There was no need or no asking from
this for this school in the district. Right?
The co-location was forced in. They have a
principal of AP teachers and administrative
staff for 65 children. I was there on opening
day, and I can give you a list of 15 parents

1
2 that did not know that their children were
3 going to the Dohortree school because they
4 thought they were still going to 226. So if
5 that is the case and it is mandated by the UFT
6 rules, how then do we co-locate a school that
7 the new school has 22 kids in the classroom and
8 the older school has 33 if it's supposed to be
9 the budget's supposed to be tied to that
10 mandate?

11 KATHLEEN GRIMM: We can look at that.

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I can certainly
13 look at that, and anybody who has other
14 situations like this. Every school really is
15 different because the SLT along with the
16 principal makes decisions on how some of the
17 money is spent. So I'd have to go back and look
18 at it. I can't answer that question without
19 getting more information about specifics.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: So, are you
21 really going to help and look at this,
22 Chancellor? I know that you--

23 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]
24 Absolutely.
25

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Listen, I know that you have an overwhelming job, and I appreciate that, but I don't want to sit here and say the Chancellor gave me a guarantee that she's going to look at it, and then when we call your office we can't get in touch with you directly.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I can't imagine anybody who can't get in touch with me directly.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: I haven't been able to get in touch with you directly.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Really? Just email.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Yes, yes. I haven't been able to.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: I answer every email, so just email.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Okay.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: but the one thing I will say as far as this is concerned, one of the--part of when we looked at, you know, schools, that when we said no school under 250, because we don't feel it's feasible

1
2 economically and many other ways. So we now
3 have a new protocol which we've had--never had
4 before on how we are going to look at schools
5 as we move forward. But this specific school, I
6 don't want to answer 'cause I don't know, but I
7 will certainly look into it.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Okay. And my
9 last question--

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] But
11 now that was PS 226?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Yeah, I didn't
13 hear the beep.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes, we've been
15 generous.

16 CHANCELLOR FARINA: 226?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Yes, MS 226,
18 which is the Virgil Grissom School. And my
19 last question is, how do we look at the budget
20 in regards to positively impacting our children
21 with capital programs being in PS 40? That
22 school is not--their class sizes are perfect,
23 right? So they've done a great job in PS 40,
24 but the co-location scheduled for PS 40 now
25 takes PS 40's utilization to 105 percent, and

1
2 that's not counting the money that is already
3 there, the reso money that I gave PS 40 for
4 dance studios, telecommunication, broadcast
5 studios, and different things that minority
6 students don't typically have. So if we have
7 five rooms plus a science lab that they're
8 supposed to get, so if we have five rooms there
9 that have already been slated for capital
10 programs that directly impact or enrich the
11 children's educational experience, how then can
12 we stuff more, another school into that school?
13 You don't have to answer that now. This is
14 just--please, I'm just giving you something to
15 please get back to me on.

16 KATHLEEN GRIMM: And what is the
17 number of this school?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: That's PS 40,
19 Samuel Huntington. That's the school I came
20 out of, that's why I'm so passionate for it,
21 yeah, and it's in the poverty pocket. It's in
22 Jamaica Queens. It's right--it services South
23 Jamaica Houses. So we've given a lot of money
24 to try to give a science lab, two science labs,
25 two computer labs. I don't want to misquote.

1
2 Science lab and other program, but we cannot do
3 that now because of the threat of a co-
4 location. So all of these children that would
5 never have these programs or the benefit of
6 these programs because their parents can't
7 afford to go to dance studio and different
8 things, they're now being take--and these
9 things were already slated, and it's been in
10 the news. So, thank you very much. Mr. Chair,
11 I'm sorry for going over my time.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Thank you.
13 Council Member King followed by Barron and then
14 Deutsch.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Good
16 afternoon, Chancellor. And thank you for your
17 time. It's good to have a conversation with a
18 educator as opposed to someone who is just
19 filling in the Chair. So I am glad that you're
20 here. I'm looking forward to the great things
21 that we're going to be able to get
22 accomplished. I generally have one question for
23 you today and its regard to the budget and the
24 structure in the school system. In my district
25 I have a number of schools that have been co-

located, a number of schools when we're building new charter schools, and one of the concerns that students and parents have brought to me is the debate and the fight, which system is better. How do we co-exist in the same buildings? How do we not fight for parents against parents, children against children? How do we, you know, financially be responsible when we have four or five different schools in the building and how top heavy is administrative costs as opposed to putting it back into our children's education? So my question is, is there any thought or any conversation of how do we make sense of these two systems and merging them into one, that you're overseeing one system with proper finances that you can govern and keep hold one conversation, because at the end of the day, all our students have to take the same Regent's [phonetic]. They have to take the same SAT's. They have to pass the same comprehensive test to move on and be better adults. Is there any thought or any conversation of how do we make

sense of the systems that merge into one and be a little bit more financially responsible?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think there's many things. First and foremost, starting within the next two weeks, the first protocol that we're putting in place is that schools will not be fighting each other in the building, that we are sending in a squad that's going to make the decisions that cause the most controversy. So, you know, who gets what room on what floor and what that room is used for is going to be part of the committee that Kathleen is putting together, and it's not going to be one person going, but it's going to be a team. So we're looking at that space between someone who's looking at the academic thing versus someone who's looking at the space thing. I think as we revise the Blue Book, that's also going to give us a lot of guideline for how do we go into building so it's not about pointing fingers, but this is what it is. These are the guidelines that we're going to follow. I think the other thing is that, you know, I have visited, you know, a lot of schools that can

1 add value, and there's a lot of discussion
2 about where we share resources. I really feel
3 that for too long there had been silos and
4 there's one school in the building that's--I
5 mean, I'm looking particularly at co-locations
6 of high schools. There's a lot of value if
7 there's more than one high school in building
8 if they agree to share AP courses, for example.
9 A lot of our new small high schools do not have
10 enough capacity to do an AP course by
11 themselves, but if they could take students
12 across the three or four schools, then we're--
13 there's one particular campus where we're going
14 to be encouraging that. It makes a lot more
15 sense. The same thing that one of the shortage
16 areas, particularly in some middle schools is
17 foreign language teachers, but if you had
18 several schools in the building, they could
19 share foreign language teachers if they do the
20 parallel scheduling where that would work.
21 There are other resources if you have--for
22 example, if you have a theater program coming
23 into your building, why can't you as a good
24 host invite other schools to--the other schools

1
2 in the building to come and partake in that. So
3 I think we have to create a culture of
4 collaboration and share it which has not been
5 the culture. It's otherwise this is mine, I
6 keep it rather this is ours, let's share it. So
7 I think that's partially some of the things
8 we're going to be looking at.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Well, I thank
10 you for that, and if you can, send the mandate
11 down because I work with a number of my schools
12 that have four and five different principals in
13 the building and time to time they can't seem
14 to get on the same page. I mean, they come
15 territorial, but at the end of the day when you
16 have brothers and sisters who are going in the
17 same building at different schools and can't
18 communicate because of the divide and conquer
19 structure that principals complain about, I'm
20 asking you to lead that conversation so the
21 principals can realize that they still have to
22 service that same community in that building.

23 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think the ones
24 that we know about, I just had a situation
25 about two weeks ago where it was brought to my

1
2 attention a particular shared space and we
3 actually sent a team and actually I heard back
4 that because there it was a neutral team that
5 went in, that a lot of the issues had been
6 resolved. So, later on if you want to give me
7 the names of the schools you're particularly
8 concerned about we'll follow--we'll send a team
9 to that. We call them the campus squad.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Campus squad, I
11 like that. Well, I'll be reaching out to you
12 and I'm looking forward to a more open
13 dialogue. Thank you again so much.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you,
15 Council Member King. Wow, collaboration rather
16 than competition, something that I as an
17 educator am very glad to hear. You know, when
18 I was teaching and they would talk about merit
19 pay scams and things like that I always thought
20 to myself, why would I want to share my ideas
21 with another teacher if in fact that other
22 teacher was going to get paid more for doing
23 something better than I? So I'm very here--glad
24 to hear the word collaboration. Thank you,
25 Madam Chancellor. Council Member Barron?

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you,
3 Mr. Chair. I want thank the panel for coming. I
4 just have some questions generated in part by
5 some of my colleague's questions. When we talk
6 about the MWBE 41 million dollars, what percent
7 does that represent?

8 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Very small. It is
9 very small percentage, Councilwoman. It's 2.57.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So as I agree
11 with you.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: We're going to
13 just take a five minute break.

14 CHANCELLOR FARINA: thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. We've been
16 here for a long period of time and we'll take a
17 five minute break and then return to Council
18 Member Barron in a moment. Don't forget to take
19 the pass. Back into order, and Council Member
20 Barron, you had questions.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, thank
22 you Mr. Chair. So you said it's about 2.5
23 percent, and what is some of the approaches
24 that you can implement to increase the number,
25 to increase that percentage?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: Well, the first thing is I expect the City Council to hold our feet to the fire on this one, which will be very good for us. We have really just recently embarked on this program. It has its challenges because some of our contracts are very huge and as Mike indicated a little earlier, we're trying to look at contracts to see if we can break them down into smaller segments so that various minorities might have better opportunities to bid on them. I think we're also clueing in a lot of bidders in terms of trying to help people understand how to go through the process, which is not always easy.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

KATHLEEN GRIMM: But we have made a firm commitment to try to do a much better job in this area.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

KATHLEEN GRIMM: Mike, do you want to add anything?

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: That's good, because I know my time is running. In terms of I heard mention of--and I apologize I wasn't

here earlier. I heard mention of guidance counselors. What is the allocation for guidance counselors on the different levels, elementary, junior high, high school?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, primarily--

KATHLEEN GRIMM: [interposing] Push your button.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Many of the guidance counselors are in schools from mandated services. So if a child has an IEP that says they must see a guidance counselor, a certain percentage of guidance counselors in schools are to fill that need. Our hope is to make sure that there are more guidance counselors for non IEP students so that they can perform a bigger service. Like for example, in middle schools guidance counselors are the ones who help the kids apply and get ready for high school. In high school they're the ones who get kids ready to apply to college. But we also need guidance counselors and I say particularly middle schools, but across the city who run groups for students in crisis so that, you know, students who for example might

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2 have depression or other issues that--and I
3 would put social workers in the same category
4 as guidance counselor. We want to make sure
5 that there's an increase for student support
6 services to help with parents and actually to
7 help with staff. A lot of staff members in
8 certain schools certainly could use the support
9 of a guidance counselor.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And in
11 addition to the students with the requirement
12 for the guidance counselors, I know--I have a
13 friend who was principal of a school that had a
14 very large homeless student population, and I
15 would think that that would be a population
16 that would be in need of additional services.
17 So I would like for you to consider that. In
18 terms of the table eight which talks about
19 class size, and this is wonderful in terms of
20 looking at the numbers, but isn't it true that
21 the class size is calculated based on the
22 entire teaching staff so that if I have ten
23 classroom teachers and a librarian and a
24 technology teacher and a music teacher that the
25

entire staff is used in calculating the class size?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: No. You get a certain number of teachers and it's different for K, one, two.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Three, four and five has a different number, but you get the cluster, what we call the cluster teachers, the extra teachers according to the number of teachers, 'cause every teacher has five preps a week and you have to cover all their preps. So the amount of enrichment teachers that you have are based on that.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. So then I would like to know what the average class size is, perhaps if I could get the information by district because as I go into the classes in my school, I don't see 23 children in grade three. So I would like to know what it is--

CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]
Well, 23 is not a number that I would--you know, it's not a formula number. The number's a

1
2 little higher. So I--certainly we can get that
3 to you by--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]

5 Okay, I appreciate that. A few other
6 questions. When we talked about co-locations on
7 Monday or Tuesday, Tuesday, we were told that
8 classes were not taken from the host school in
9 order to accommodate the co-located school, and
10 I know that I had heard of instances where
11 there were in fact classrooms that were taken,
12 what we were told. We were told that programs
13 were continued but classes were not taken, and
14 I just want to say that there are several
15 schools in my district where classrooms were
16 lost. Multipurpose room was forced to go into
17 a classroom. A gymnasium was lost, and if you
18 would like to get those particulars I would
19 like to share them with you because my
20 understanding from Tuesday is that it hasn't
21 happened in the past, and going forward we will
22 continue to make sure that it doesn't happen.
23 So I want that to be clear that I have
24 instances that I would like to share with you
25 where classes--

1
2 KATHLEEN GRIMM: [interposing] If you
3 want to share them with me, we will review
4 them, but I just want to be very clear about
5 what I said on Tuesday.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes.

7 KATHLEEN GRIMM: What I said on
8 Tuesday is that no school ever lost a program.
9 It doesn't mean if we had a building where
10 there was a school that say was at 65 percent
11 occupancy, that school--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]
13 I beg to differ, but what I heard perhaps it
14 was corrected later on, but what I heard was
15 that no schools lost classrooms.

16 KATHLEEN GRIMM: No, I respectfully
17 never said that, because when we do space
18 allocation there can be reshuffling of the
19 spaces, so we try to have the most rational
20 space for the two schools.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. So then
22 just to be accurate, schools may have in fact
23 and did in fact lose classroom space--

24 KATHLEEN GRIMM: [interposing] Over,
25 if they were over--

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]
because of co-location.

KATHLEEN GRIMM: their footprints.
If they were over their footprint.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think if you
gave us the schools you're particularly
concerned about, because every school is so
different that it really varies, so give us
that and we'll look into it.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.
And then--may I, Mr. Chair, one more? The
protocols for removing the TCU's or portables,
on Tuesday we were told it's very complex and
complicated. How can it be simplified so that
we can know when they will be removed, what the
time table is, the timeline for that, and
expect to know that they will be gone?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: Well, as I said, we
have a interdepartmental committee looking at
it. We will have within the coming months a--we
will have identified the ones that are easily
removed. They're empty, they're not being used.
We will have a longer term plan for the ones
that are more complicated because there are

1
2 children in them and we have to have a plan for
3 those children. We will share these time tables
4 with you as soon as we have them.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. And, if
6 I can pursue? One additional question
7 regarding that. So as the portables are going
8 to be removed, the children will be placed
9 where?

10 KATHLEEN GRIMM: That's the planning
11 we're doing. Whether we have room in a building
12 for them, whether there's building coming
13 online for them, whether we might even be
14 discussing with the CEC some rezoning, each
15 situation is going to be different.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Do you have
17 any ideas of how many portables will be gone by
18 June of 2015?

19 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Not yet, but we will
20 have that number shortly.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And your plan
22 is to have them all removed within five years.

23 KATHLEEN GRIMM: In five years,
24 that's the plan.
25

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Quick, quick.

In terms of the curriculum, we know that the Common Core is not a curriculum, they are standards that we want--

CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] Oh, you were listening at the workshop.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And yes, I think in 36 years to add it, it helps to get a understanding. How's the staff development presented so that we can have teachers who are qualified to teach what they're teaching? 'Cause we know that there are technology teachers who haven't been trained and who have the title and that's what they're doing, but they haven't been trained. So how are we going to ensure that the staff that's teaching, especially the STEM classes are trained and competent so that the students will get the results we want?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, the person who's going to lead the STEAM, I like that word better than STEM. I think we'll use STEAM.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: okay.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Just came on board yesterday, and that's Linda Curtis Bay who is really an expert in this area. So we've asked her to really develop a full program of how this is going to be rolled out. The other thing is that we have just in the last three weeks started applying for a lot of grants, both federal and state grants that were available that haven't necessarily been used in the past. That will help us do this work without incurring additional charges. SO I think--and also we're going to be doing surveys of teachers. We started doing it. What is it you need more support in, and that's going to be done, you know, from the DOE.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Thank you very much, Council Member Barron. Council Member Deutsch and then I have some follow-up questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon, Chancellor. I always make an exception for my colleague Council

1
2 Member Barron to cut into my time, but it's any
3 time. We're talking about resources to our
4 school children. We're talking about millions
5 of dollars of resources, but when we talk about
6 our children that are not in school, truancy
7 problem, I haven't heard a word about that. And
8 I know that one in every four children may be
9 absent and it could lead up to probably close
10 to a month per child not being in school. So
11 what type of resources are we putting in to
12 adequate space, safe locations? And also we
13 have to also consider the surrounding areas
14 where we put in truancy centers. In addition to
15 mentoring programs and school safety offices, I
16 haven't heard of anything about our school
17 children that are not in schools. I'd like to
18 know what your plans are in the budget.

19 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Well, there are
20 several things that we've done and the
21 Chancellor will want to sum it up. With regard
22 to truancy we have had a program that has been
23 focusing on absentees, which isn't always
24 necessarily the same thing as truism, but it's
25 one path of a--one way to approach truancy, and

1
2 we have partnered with many CBO's across the
3 city. We have put mentors. We have had parent
4 meetings. We do calls in the morning to the
5 children to come to school. In addition,
6 another approach is we work very closely with
7 the DA's offices, with the New York City Police
8 Department. In terms of running centers where
9 if children are picked up they can be brought
10 to that day where we can process them and we
11 can try to monitor them as well.

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think also one
13 of the things that have been encouraging but
14 obviously we'll do more in the future, that
15 someone needs to own these consistently truant
16 kids, and by that I mean if each--and I was at
17 a school in Staten Island where the principal
18 has actually given every administrator and
19 other teachers three students who are
20 consistently late or truant and they call them
21 in the morning, remind them that it's time to
22 go to school; this is a middle school, and make
23 sure that when they walk in the building they
24 personally greet them, and when they leave at
25 three o'clock, that they--so I think teachers

investing in these kids who for whatever the reason are not self-starters, I would say that's one of the things. Also when we met with the new head of Community Affairs, one of the thing we talked about is having a more--going back a little bit to the days of the cease of coth--the Community police officer who kind of--it's not a negative approach, it's a positive approach to the kids. And also trying to understand 'cause this seems to be coming up a lot more with my elementary school principals that, you know, absenteeism, what we call it is that you're not in school. There is a whole group of kids who are not in school because parents take them to other countries for a month or six weeks at a time, and we have to kind of start having some discussions on the impact of that, and we know that there are certain neighborhoods that seem to have more of that than others. So we're trying to figure out is there a way to start having parent workshops around those issues, you know, your kids miss six weeks of school and it's like two weeks before standardized test. There's a real

1
2 impact. So I do think it's a bigger issue, but
3 it's certainly something that's on our table
4 even if not in the report.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Well, I know
6 in my district there is a truancy center that
7 the children are basically stuffed in a room
8 because there's no adequate space and the one
9 issue is is that the self-esteem. Being stuffed
10 in a room is not good for the children. Number
11 two, is that when they leave there's no
12 supervision, and number three is that when you
13 have a person that skips school they encourage
14 others, because sometimes it's more fun not to
15 be in school than to be in school, especially
16 maybe when we put in the 500 million dollars in
17 the bathrooms, maybe then you know, it's a nice
18 place to hang out in those bathrooms. But that
19 something else. I think we need to focus more
20 on truancy because if we reduce and we help
21 those children we'll have less children who are
22 going to skip school. So, I'll appreciate
23 anything you can do.

24 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Thank you.
25

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, very good. Thank you, Council Member Deutsch. So I have three areas that I want to just follow up on and then we should be done for the morning, or for the afternoon, now. Respect for All, what's in the budget for Respect for All?

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I know I'm going to the even tomorrow to the finale and I'm very curious to talk to them about what are the aspects that fit in. So we're going to be looking at all parts of that.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Can you tell me the money, the amount of money that's in the budget?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: Do we know the exact amount, Mike? If we don't, we can certainly get it for you. Much of the money, of course, is embedded in schools which we might not be able to identify, but we can give you the central spend.

MICHAEL TRAGALE: In terms of this year, it's 420,000.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: How much?

MICHAEL TRAGALE: 420,000.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Thank you for that. I want to talk about an issue that's been brought to my attention about inequity in the schools, and it's in the sports system. The Office of School Support Services oversees the public school athletic leagues spending of approximately 23 million dollars at 410 high school for 2,756 teams annually. Principals that want access to this funding have to request it directly from PSAL. According to data collected by the Small Schools Athletic League, disproportionate amounts of this 23 million are being spent on high schools with the lowest rates of poverty, students of color and English language learners. At the 24 schools with 30 or more teams, the percentage of white students is 27.6 percent. At the 70 schools with zero teams, the percentage of white students is 5.6 percent. At schools with 30 or more teams, the percentage of free or reduced lunch is 47.6 percent. At schools with no teams it's 69.6 percent. These trends are consistent even when comparing schools of similar size. In addition, per student PSAL

1 funding in Staten Island is nearly double that
2 of the Bronx and Manhattan. Can you explain
3 how the PSAL decisions are made regarding which
4 schools to provide the funding for and what
5 factors are taken into consideration when
6 allocating those funds?
7

8 KATHLEEN GRIMM: There are many
9 things that go into that decision-making. We
10 are very limited often by facilities. Staten
11 Island has a lot of facilities. For example,
12 fields and that sort of thing. The Bronx
13 doesn't. What we have done, especially over
14 the last few years is try to create new sports
15 that don't require say a football field or a
16 soccer field or a basketball court. We have
17 been very successful for example with our
18 cricket program because we have so many
19 children from the islands where cricket is a
20 very, very popular sport. We also have other
21 considerations, not just in terms of these
22 statistics you cite, but also in terms of
23 gender, because traditionally sports programs
24 have been very male focused and that is not
25 acceptable to us or to the federal government,

1
2 so over the last couple of years we've been
3 very focused on increasing opportunities for
4 our young girls in our programs. The selections
5 of the schools themselves depend on those kinds
6 of central considerations, but also the
7 interest level at the school in terms of being
8 able to support the team and uniforms and
9 things like that and to have adequate coaches
10 and what have you. We have met. I have met
11 myself with this group and they--we have had
12 conversations with them. They have a program,
13 which is not exactly on the same level as the
14 PSAL because the PSAL has very firm academic
15 rules which we pride ourselves on, that to play
16 in PSAL you're not only a good athlete, you are
17 a good scholar. So we are in discussions with
18 this group about perhaps making them a subset,
19 the PSAL which wouldn't have as stringent set
20 of rules, but it would offer more opportunities
21 to the children represented here.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So the group that
23 you're in discussion with is the Small Schools
24 Athletic League?

25 KATHLEEN GRIMM: yes, it is.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: That correct?

This is an issue of major important to me as Chair of the Education Committee and to many of the Council Members as well, particularly as it effects communities of color and particularly as it effects these small schools where a lot of students who need extra time to graduate are going to these smaller schools. I can tell you that Jamie Diamond [phonetic], I can tell you that any successful business executive always recalls their sports teams in the high schools and I really deeply believe that our students need access to those sports activities as much as anybody else in the system.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Can I just add to this?

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: You know, I went to my first PSAL tournament two weeks ago, and I was blown away by several things. And one first and foremost, where in high schools with their shared space, this is the one area where people did collaborate. The Thomas Jefferson team was from all the schools at the Thomas

1
2 Jefferson campus and they went out there and
3 played as one, and that was really, really--
4 same thing with Southshore, and having spoken
5 to some of the kids after they played the game,
6 it was very clear to me that for many of these
7 kids, it is what brought them to school. So we
8 are committed to expanding this and make it
9 work, because I do see that it makes a
10 difference in the kid's lives. So there's no
11 doubt about it.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So when you're
13 talking about the collaboration, it's the
14 collaboration between the small schools, not
15 with the PSAL?

16 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, the small
17 schools that then those kids go to PSAL. They
18 work across the school campus.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And but sometimes
20 they can't because of the age requirement that
21 PSAL imposes. They don't take the kids past 18.
22 Many of our students stay in until they're 21
23 in the alternative are the smaller schools. So
24 that comes up as a constant issue. Actually,
25 I'm probably going to do a hearing on this

1 matter moving forward once we get passed the
2 budget because this is such an important issue.
3 Let me just go here. The small schools athletic
4 league currently facilitates interscholastic
5 sports for nearly 100 teams at 40 high schools,
6 but has an unsustainable funding model of each
7 participating principal using the school's
8 budget to pay for the teams. Is there a plan
9 for fiscal 2015 to provide centralized funding
10 to maintain and expand the small school
11 athletic league?
12

13 KATHLEEN GRIMM: We have, as I say,
14 we are in conversations with this group, and we
15 have offered to take them in to the PSAL, not
16 but as a separate subgroup because we don't
17 want to impose the age limitations, the
18 academic limitations. We want a loser
19 confederation given the needs of these
20 students, and I hope we will be responded to.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright. So
22 there are concerns with this committee in terms
23 of the structure of the PSAL and we don't want
24 to lose what the small schools athletic league
25 has to offer, so if we're talking about putting

these together or working with them together,
you want to make sure that's what's offered in
the small school athletic league is to
continued to be offered to these schools, not
that we collapse it into the PSAL.

KATHLEEN GRIMM: That is exactly what
we are talking about. It would come under the
umbrella of the PSAL because there we have the
central expertise to make sure we're running
adequate programs, but we would keep the
criteria different from the PSAL because this
group needs a different set--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] So
under that umbrella then, how do you address
these disparities that seem to exist in terms
of the distribution of funding and then the
number of students that are involved and the
type of students, the racial breakdown of the
students?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: That is the work in
progress that we are trying to achieve with
this group right now.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. I have a
lot more questions. I'm going to save that.

1
2 Okay, Council Member Barron has a follow-up on
3 that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, thank
5 you. What's the budget that we're talking about
6 as we compare funds in the PSAL with the Small
7 Schools Athletic League?

8 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Well, right now the
9 PSAL budget is roughly 23 million dollars. That
10 doesn't include what schools spend on their own
11 teams.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Correct.

13 KATHLEEN GRIMM: I don't know exactly
14 what the Small School League has now. They have
15 not been centrally funded. They are asking for
16 two million dollars. They think that is what
17 they need to continue and that's what we're
18 reviewing, and we'll cooperate with them in
19 terms of maintaining their programs.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So can we agree
21 to ensure the continuation of the Small Schools
22 Athletic League moving forward past June?

23 KATHLEEN GRIMM: That is our goal.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.
25

1
2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: And I think to
3 the degree that the Council will help us find
4 more sponsorships, because I know most of the
5 teams have, you know, business or other
6 organizations and I think, you know, having
7 sponsorships for a lot of these teams would
8 help us.

9 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Yes, always.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. We'll come
11 back to that like I said to explore that a
12 little more in depth later on. I want to now
13 just go to school food and school lunches. So,
14 school lunches, school lunch costs are
15 primarily paid for by the federal and state
16 governments. The city covers the difference
17 between the federal and state reimbursement and
18 the cost of providing the meal. According to
19 advocates, a 20 percent increase in
20 participation or a 120,000 extra meals per day
21 would bring an additional 59 million dollars in
22 federal and state funds into New York City, and
23 would require an additional investment of 20
24 million in city funds or 20 dollars per student
25

per year. Does the DOE first agree with those numbers?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: Do you know, Mike? We'd have to take a look at them.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, so can we get a clarification on--

KATHLEEN GRIMM: [interposing]
Although we work very closely with the advocates, so I assume maybe we've seen them. I just don't know.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. So we definitely need to get those numbers moving forward, and when if--when or if will the DOE start free lunches for all? Is there any plan for that moving forward?

KATHLEEN GRIMM: Right now, we are working both with the advocates and many elected officials talking to Washington to see if we can't move to a free lunch program for everyone which is decoupled from the title one allocations tied into the school lunch forms. That, the analysis we have done shows that that will have an tarred impact on many schools,

1
2 which is going to be fair to those schools. So
3 we are working on that right now.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So what would be
5 the negative impact on those schools?

6 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Schools that were
7 getting money would no longer get money.

8 CHANCELLOR FARINA: And that's a big-
9 -

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] The
11 title one schools?

12 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Exactly.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. I know you
14 have to leave and you hard time of leaving at
15 one o'clock, so I want to respect that. But we
16 do have a number of questions. We had hoped to
17 get some more numbers and figures from you
18 today. We're going to follow up with letters to
19 you on that, and hopefully when we come back
20 for the executive budget hearings, we can get
21 those, you know, more definitively.

22 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We're happy to
23 respond to any questions you have, even of
24 people who aren't here.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, thank you very much for your time. I appreciate you coming in, and with that we're going to now move to our next panel. Thank you very much. And our next panel will be Doctor Randi Herman from the Council of Supervisors and Administrators, Santos Crespos from Local 372, DC 37, the President, and James Hedge from ATU 1181. Okay. Good to see you, Santos. Do you want to start? Let me raise--raise your right hand please. Everybody? Yep, thank you. I'll do it all once, get over it with. Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee, and to respond honestly to Council Member questions?

SANTOS CRESPOS: I do.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.
Santos?

SANTOS CRESPOS: Yes. Well, good afternoon, Chairman Dromm and members of the Committee and on behalf of the nearly 25,000 non-teaching employees of New York City public school system, I want to thank you for this

1 opportunity to sit here today. I've had the--
2 I've had many opportunities to address this
3 committee, to discuss the issues that are
4 important to our schools, our children, our
5 communities, our union and its members, but I
6 want you to know that never before have I
7 entered a budget hearing with such grand
8 enthusiasm as I have today. Members of Local
9 372 joined with all New Yorkers in welcoming
10 the Mayor's universal pre-k initiative. The
11 evidence is undeniable. Children who have had
12 the benefit of early learning are not only
13 better prepared for the first grade, but they
14 perform better as they progress throughout
15 their educational career. Universal pre-k will
16 at least level the playing field for all of our
17 children. No child should have to start their
18 education already behind the curve. Local 372
19 also fully supports the Public Advocate's call
20 for free lunch for all of our students. I am
21 also proud to say that Local 372 had been
22 pressing for this program for many, many years,
23 and again, it is no secret that a child who has
24 had the benefit of a healthy, well-balanced
25

meal is better prepared for the rigors and challenges in the classroom. Our school lunch workers are men and women who receive, prepare and feed our public school kids. We personally know that the students, and unfortunately we know those that do go hungry because their parents are either undocumented and afraid to sign the necessary official paperwork for fear of being identified and deported. We also know that there are parents who are too proud or too embarrassed to ask for help for their children's meals and the end result is a hungry, angry and underperforming student. And yes, it is time to abolish the two lines of school's cafeteria where you have those that pay and those that don't pay. They are entitled. There's no reason why a child in the city of New York, let alone in the country should go without food, particularly while they're in school. Dallas, if we take a program--a look at some of the programs like in Dallas and Chicago and Boston that have already decided on that issue. All of the children receive free meals regardless of their ability

1 to pay. I think that our children deserve equal
2 treatment and nothing less. And while it is
3 excited to discuss the expansion of the early
4 education program and the prospect of ensuring
5 all of our children are properly fed, issues
6 with bullying and drugs and alcohol abuse in
7 our school must also be addressed. Over the
8 course of the past several years we have seen a
9 rise in bullying and the use of abuse of
10 alcohol and prescription and other drugs, and
11 the Department of Education has reduced the
12 number of our substance abuse
13 prevention/intervention specialists throughout
14 the school year. Since 2008, the DOE has
15 eliminated over 200 substance abuse prevention
16 positions, leaving more than 100, I'm sorry,
17 1,400 schools with just below 300 SAPIS
18 professionals to serve the 1.1 million students
19 in the City of New York. We have requested
20 additional 15 million in funding from the
21 legislator, but it is a request that might not
22 happen, and so we now turn to the City Council
23 in the hope that we can proceed or provide
24 rather at least 100 additional SAPIS
25

professionals. On the subject of safety I'd also like to make note many of our schools are operating with fewer school aids. Members have been reduced by 2,000 in the past several years, and though I am very glad to say that in the last two years with the help of the City Council, we were able to avert any additional layoffs in those areas. But the drop has risen serious concerns of student safety, particularly in the hallways and the lunchrooms and in the school yards, and also within the high schools. I think that an additional 30 million is needed to bring staffing back to pre-2012 levels to ensure better safety, and while they come under the jurisdiction of the NYPD, I would be remiss if I did not mention our school crossing guards. While they play a vital role on the streets surrounding our schools, I've said that school crossing guards are funded by NYPD. What we do need is for certain is that the positions that are vacant in that title are properly funded. So we ask that the Committee work with Public Safety Committee to support additional crossing guards

1
2 to provide safety crossings and reduce the
3 traffic-related incidents, particularly under
4 the Vision Zero Plan. We must ensure that our
5 school crossing guards are available to safely
6 see that our children are crossed the streets
7 and into our schools. And on behalf, again, of
8 our school health aids and school aid, SAPIS
9 professionals, school lunch employees and
10 school crossing guards, parent coordinators and
11 community coordinators and Local 372 as a
12 whole, we stand ready to support and assist in
13 bringing these great initiatives into a
14 reality. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Randi?

16 RANDI HERMAN: Good afternoon. My
17 name is Randi Herman. I'm the First Vice
18 President at the Council of School Supervisors
19 and Administrators representing the New York
20 City School Principals, Assistant Principals,
21 education administrators, supervisors of
22 directors and assistant directors of city
23 funded daycare centers. It's a pleasure, and
24 thank you for having this hearing. You've heard
25 a lot about universal pre-k today. I'm not

going to belabor the point. We all agree it's something that is absolutely necessary for our children. But what we haven't talked about is the funding. Assuming that everything goes forward and universal pre-k becomes a reality here in the City, universal pre-k, the funding model is going to be very important. At the present time it's important to note that universal pre-k and kindergarten are not completely funded in the city of New York. The State does send a lump sum for each child. However, given the fact that there are unions here for teachers and principals and Santos, his folks as well, we have to account for those costs in the cost of universal pre-k. So for example, a teacher teaches 22 periods. That lump sum that the state provides does not also support the coverage. They get instructional lunch. That's not included in the lump sum either. If you calculate it out, it's not fair student funding formula. It's simply the state's lump sum formula that is passed through the Department of education and then allocated to the schools. So, if I'm a principal and I

say I want four classes of universal pre-k, I'm not getting full funding for those four classes I have to find the additional funding within my own budget. So, that does put principals at a disadvantage and it does take away from the school's budget. So what I ask is that as this develops we take a look at the school budgets and how they reflect the budget for universal pre-k, and while we're doing that, we should also look at kindergarten which is funded the same way. It's a flat rate per child, and doesn't cover what the UFT contract would require for a teacher. The rest of that money has to come from the budget. Now, principals want universal pre-k in their schools. They want kindergarten in their schools, but can they afford to have it? That should never be a decision that a principal has to make. Okay. Moving on. Overcrowding and co-location, nobody ever and urban planner particular, nobody ever would intentionally decide to overcrowd a school, but overcrowding happens. There are demographic shifts, there are population shifts, and that's something that needs to be

1 looked at. Once you throw co-locations into the
2 mix, it complicates things. So, I've heard
3 testimony here today that speaks to looking at
4 that very critically. Now, I will tell you that
5 principals have made an extraordinary effort to
6 work this out within their buildings as best
7 they can. Sometimes the spirit of cooperation
8 is wonderful and it has good results. Other
9 times, no matter how much you cooperate, if the
10 space isn't there, the space isn't there. And
11 even though they've appealed to the Department
12 of Education in the past, the space has not
13 been made available for students who need gym,
14 for students who need access to a cafeteria,
15 for students who need a library, art rooms,
16 science rooms. You know the story, you've heard
17 it before. I have faith that you will continue
18 to examine this. Superintendents as you know,
19 are the rating officers for principals. They're
20 also accountable for the success or failure of
21 the schools under their supervision. During the
22 past decade or so that accountability has not
23 been enforced. It hasn't been addressed because
24 the superintendents haven't had the resources
25

1 to do that job. I bring this up today because
2 CSA is very in favor of having the
3 superintendent reinstated to the authority in
4 the office that they have by title, in fact.
5 Professional development. As educators, we're
6 all about professional development. In fact,
7 CSA has a wonderful professional development
8 arm, the Executive Leadership Institute which
9 the City Council has very generously
10 contributed to funding year after year.
11 Particularly now that we have so many new
12 initiatives, the special ed. initiative, the
13 universal pre-k initiative, now more than ever
14 professional development is necessary for
15 principals and assistant principals to be able
16 to do the work that they need to do
17 successfully. As things change, we have to keep
18 current. So, I urge you once again to look
19 kindly on the Executive Leadership Institute
20 this year. You've heard about universal meal
21 and Doctor Grimm very eloquently explained how
22 they're trying very hard in Washington to make
23 this a reality. We echo their efforts. We
24 support them every way that we can, but no
25

child should ever make the choice between being embarrassed and going hungry. We know that a well-nourished child is a child who will achieve better, and principals despite the fact that they have to pay the bill sooner or later, make sure every child does have a meal. You have heard in the past about the grab and go breakfast. You've heard about universal breakfast. You're well aware of those initiatives. We try the best we can to make sure every child eats during the day, because it's not like they can go out for breakfast or lunch. There our responsibility once they come into that building. So we make sure that they are well-nourished and taken care of. Final thoughts, thank you again for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of CSA and our members. We've expressed our concerns to you in the past. We will continue to keep you informed of the concerns that our members bring to us, and we know that you'll be looking at everything from universal pre-k to the special ed. initiative to transportation, just to make sure that everything that contributes to the

well-being of children in our care is addressed. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Mr. Hedge?

JAMES HEDGE: Thank you, Chairman Dromm and members of the Committee for giving me the opportunity to submit testimony for your consideration while you begin your negotiations for the fiscal year 2015. I'm an Executive Board Member and delegate with Local 1181 of the ATU. We represent school bus drivers, matrons, and mechanics in the school bus industry in New York City, and we have been doing so for over 60 years. We transport about 160,000 students to school. Because of the Bloomberg Administration's decision during the 2012/2013 school year to eliminate the decade old provision for the employee protection provision, the EPP, from its contracts with the school bus contractors that employ 1181 members, the 60 year history is under assault. The entire school bus industry has been destabilized. The havoc that was wreaked on the school bus children, their families, the

1 drivers, the matrons and the mechanic all stem
2 from the former Administration's belief that
3 make the working men and women do not deserve
4 fair wages or job security. The membership of
5 Local 1181 which numbered approximately 15,000
6 two years ago has been devastated. Last year,
7 2,000 members lost their jobs. This June, if
8 plans go forward under the Bloomberg bid,
9 approximately 2,800 more members will lose
10 their jobs, and the bid that's supposed to go
11 out to 2015 would cost an additional 3,000
12 members their jobs. This drastic change to the
13 school bus industry, which operated for more
14 than a half a century has driven Local 1181
15 membership into poverty. Advancing this myopic
16 policy initiative despite mandate--despite the
17 mandate of competitive bidding the laws the
18 agency--and have the agency achieve the best
19 possible service for the lowest possible
20 course. The former Administration focused
21 solely on the cost of the transportation
22 service while ignoring completely the
23 opportunity to give quality service to the
24 children of New York City. The Bloomberg

Administration offered severed rationales for its elimination of the EPPs from its contracts, only one concerns today's hearing. In attempting to justify the removal of the EPP, the former Mayor and former Chancellor claimed that competitive bidding process can and did achieve cost savings. That of course, is a non-sequitor. Although competitive bidding may result in savings, it does not follow that the cost savings were achieved only by removing the EPP. As Local 1181 has said time and time again, this argument fails to acknowledge that competitive bidding can still be undertaken while including the EPPs in the contracts. In fact, the more reasonable method of bidding since savings were not produced on the backs of the men and women despite being offered lower wages by their employers, but rather on the efficiencies and operations of the Administration of the school bus contractors. When this very issue was raised by Council Member Cabrera on June 4th, 2013 at a joint meeting of the Finance Committee, the then Chancellor Walcott became indignant and refused

1 to give a substantive answer. Despite claiming
2 that a rationale for not including EPP in the
3 bidding process was a desire for cost savings.
4 The then Council Member Cabrera asked if
5 savings could still be achieved while
6 maintaining the EPP, the Chancellor's response
7 was, "We made the decision that we made and
8 we're sticking to it, and that's the process."
9 In the response to subsequent Freedom of
10 Information Law requests, 1181 has asked for
11 what studies they used to determine that
12 removing the EPPs would result in savings. The
13 only study that they supplied us with was a
14 1994 study completed by KPM and G, which
15 indisputably made no conclusion that removing
16 it would save money. The Department of
17 Education during the Bloomberg Administration
18 according to its projected savings expected to
19 achieve 100 million dollars in savings over
20 five years. This number was projected on saving
21 of 20 million dollars in the first fiscal year
22 and expects to recur each of five years of the
23 contract. What methodology did Department of
24 Education use to calculate this number? Your
25

guess is as good as mine. When the Department of Education announced they projected a 95 million dollar savings in the pre-kindergarten industry, then City Comptroller John Leiu, according to his testimony submitted on February 8th, 2013, was unable to verify that figure. I sit before you today some 15 months after the Bloomberg Administration announced its intention to eliminate the EPP from school bus contracts, and yet, there is nothing to indicate that any real cost savings were achieved. What we have learned, though, is that low bids heralded by the previous Administration were only low because labor costs consistent with wages were barely above minimum wage, minimum health coverage and no pension coverage. To call the payment of substantive level wages to the workforce that cares for our most vulnerable children cost savings deliberately ignores the external costs associated with such level of wage forces, workforces. It has been determined in numerous studies of low wage workforces when workers cannot earn a living wage to support their

1 families, they are reliant on social services.
2 Utilization of such social services are non-
3 cost neutral to the city. Even if they are off
4 the Department of Education's balance sheet,
5 food stamps, government subsidized healthcare,
6 subsidized housing all cost the city money.
7 Such low level wages will not offer career
8 opportunities for people in the industry,
9 leading to high turnover as new workers
10 constantly join the industry to replace
11 departing workers, the Department of Education
12 or its school bus contractors will have to
13 constantly try to retain workers, a costly
14 endeavor. Then of course, there are the
15 considerations of labor peace. While with the
16 inclusion of the EPP--

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Mr.
19 Hedge, if I could just ask you to wrap it up a
20 little bit.

21 JAMES HEDGE: Okay. With EPPs and
22 the contracts for the last 37 years, there have
23 been no labor unrest, no strikes. Without the
24 EPPs in the contracts and trying to organize
25 new companies, strikes are a real issue.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. And I want to say this is an issue of major importance to me. I was here at those hearings when the whole issue was raised about the EEP, and in fact, the reason why I swear in witnesses today is because of we didn't feel that we got the whole truth and nothing but the truth. We got half truths, let me put it that way, and so when I became chair of this committee I didn't want to have that happen here and that's why we actually swear in everybody who comes from--that comes in to give testimony. We're going to have an upcoming hearing on this, I believe in the Civil Service Committee and Labor Committee, I believe next week if I'm not mistaken, next Thursday, March 27th. I'm on that committee also. So we're going to explore this a little bit more in depth there, because I believe that it deserves that hearing just in and of by itself. So it's a very important issue to me.

JAMES HEDGE: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And I don't need to cut you off, but--

JAMES HEDGE: [interposing] No, no I appreciate--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] limited in terms of the time constraints. I do want to go to Santos and to Randi's testimony as well. And Santos, if I'm not mistaken, you started as a SAPIS educator, am I right?

SANTOS CRESPOS: Yes, I did. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And in a school near mine.

SANTOS CRESPOS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And I know very well of your work and SAPIS worker's work as well and how vitally important it is. Let me ask you just something. What is the total number of SAPIS workers now?

SANTOS CRESPOS: We currently have below 300. At one point in the history of that title we were up at about 14-15,000. We have SAPISS now that have to actually where they used to be able to dedicate the whole entire week to a particular school. They now have to divide that time servicing other schools within

the week. SO you may get a SAPIS one day out of the week at a particular and there they got to go to the other schools.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So when you're talking 300 SAPIS educators now, it's maybe they're not even in schools full time.

SANTOS CRESPOS: Yeah, it's yeah.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, they get it once a week, maybe twice a week if they're really lucky.

SANTOS CRESPOS: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And that's the extent of it. So these schools--and we have what, 1,700 schools at this point, 1,500?

SANTOS CRESPOS: Yeah, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Something like that. So many schools are left out of this equation and it's sad to see.

SANTOS CRESPOS: Yeah, well, they also have to service the schools that are in co-locations as well, and so the whole idea of a school building being identified as the school is no longer applicable. You can have, as you know, four schools in one building and

they're still obligated to service those four schools.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And what's the funding level now?

SANTOS CRESPOS: The funding right now, it's about state--with the state it's about 14--about a little over 14 mil.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And you're asking for an additional 30?

SANTOS CRESPOS: Actually, if I can--if I can get a SAPIs in every school, I'd be dancing, but I think we were asking somewhere between 35 to 45 million.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Okay, good. So we have a little knowledge moving down the road on this.

SANTOS CRESPOS: Yeah. I also need to point out that years ago the city used to make a contribution into that effort between five to six million, and under the prior administration, they did away with that.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I remember those discussions and that's why I'm asking you these

1
2 questions as well, so we can begin to think
3 about what we can do moving forward on it.

4 SANTOS CRESPOS: Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: To Doctor Herman
6 as well, the issue of superintendents, I began
7 to address it a little bit in the hearing.
8 What's your feelings on these networks also?

9 RANDI HERMAN: Well, as you said,
10 some people like them, some people not so much.
11 You can't throw out the baby with the bath
12 water clearly, but any decisions that are made
13 on how to structure things so that can services
14 and supports to schools are more streamlined
15 and effective would be welcomed. Very often,
16 the structure doesn't support a quick response,
17 because of the way they're spread out. In
18 certain instances, the way assignments were
19 made was not geographically based so the
20 connections for staffing were convoluted at
21 best. Those in many cases have since been
22 realigned and the DOE has seen that it made
23 more sense to restructure so that supervisors
24 were district based and not network based. So
25 those things have gotten a little bit better.

1
2 But in terms of a model to use to make it
3 better, I don't know. I can only tell you that
4 there are folks who are happy with the network
5 service that they get, and then there are those
6 who think that the networks are a nightmare for
7 them.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Are network
9 leaders in CSA?

10 RANDI HERMAN: Network leaders? No.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Are the--

12 RANDI HERMAN: [interposing] The
13 education administrators who work in the
14 networks, yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do network
16 leaders remain as DOE employees?

17 RANDI HERMAN: That's a good
18 question. We've asked for management pay plan.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: In terms of the
20 superintendents, from what I've seen they're
21 stuffed into a small office in a school that
22 may or may not even have room to push them
23 into. Is that what basically has happened
24 around the city?

RANDI HERMAN: As far as we can tell, yes, that's been the case. The model that they've used is to give the superintendent a family advocate, the district family advocate, and that is the staff.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Two people? And it used to be the whole district would know where the superintendent is, who to go to, what to speak to if there was an issue.

RANDI HERMAN: The superintendent was the go to person in the district if you had a problem at the school.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: If there are union grievances that require a superintendent response, does the superintendent still--are they still the person to go to at a superintendents level grievance?

RANDI HERMAN: The grievances are generally handled by Council, not so much by superintendents. There are grievance in arbitration protocols.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So they used to be in the old--

1
2 SANTOS CRESPOS: Yeah, if I may, in
3 our contract, the superintendent is actually
4 the staffed too in the process. But what does
5 happen as a result of what my colleague just
6 indicated is that a lot of superintendents
7 can't handle the calendar in that way, so they
8 move it onto the next step automatically, or if
9 they don't, we would automatically move it to
10 the next step. So they never really addressed,
11 you know, those labor issues and concerns.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Would it be cost
13 effective to address those issues on the
14 superintendent level?

15 SANTOS CRESPOS: Yeah, 'cause you
16 wind up saving money on arbitration from both
17 sides, and you're able to resolve the problem a
18 lot, you know, a lot. To get on a calendar on
19 arbitration, it could take you up to year.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Up to a year,
21 wow. Yeah, I--that's something I'm really
22 curious about. I want to look much further into
23 as well. The executive leadership institute,
24 you're asking for 620,000. I think we funded it
25 at 300 last year, or was it more?

RANDI HERMAN: It was more.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. You don't know the figure off top?

RANDI HERMAN: Off the top of my head no.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

RANDI HERMAN: But we'll get--do you have it?

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: 300.

RANDI HERMAN: 300.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It was 300, so it's a little steep, but let's talk and we'll see what we can do moving forward. I visited the literature institute, I find it to be very effective and a good support for principals, and I think principals need that support moving forward. So, I want to thank you all, unless there's any questions. Council Member Barron? Yes, I'm sorry. Yeah, she has some comments.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, panel for presenting your testimony. I just--a comment or two about how important these so-called auxiliary personnel are in terms of having a fully functioning

1 effective school. As many of you know, I was a
2 principal and there was a child who came to
3 school and by about the second day of his being
4 there--he had been known to us before, 'cause
5 was very, an outstanding student in many ways.
6 And the aid noticed that he wasn't his usual
7 perky self. Teacher just felt, oh, good you
8 know he's calming down. He's going to be, you
9 know, much more involved in learning, but the
10 aid noticed that he wasn't his usual perky
11 self. So she sat next to him in the cafeteria
12 and spoke with him, and we realized that he was
13 suffering from a very severe physical
14 condition, call the parent, the parent came and
15 he had to be hospitalized for a number of days
16 afterwards. And the teacher was doing her job,
17 doing instructional piece, but it was the aid
18 who came from the neighborhood and had a
19 connection with the children and noticed a
20 difference in their behavior that caught that.
21 So we know that the personnel outside of the
22 instructional staff is very important to doing
23 that work. And in terms of funding for full day
24 pre-k, that's very costly as you're saying and
25

1 I hope that we take note of this that as the
2 funding comes, it's not sufficient to cover the
3 costs and that is the reason why many schools
4 don't have full day pre-kindergarten programs.
5 When I came to the position of principal, I
6 understood the benefit of that, and I said,
7 "Listen, we're going to have a full day pre-k."
8 And I was able to get support from the district
9 because that's when we still had
10 superintendents and was very supported by the
11 district superintendent to get the additional
12 funds that were needed. So as we talk about the
13 functions of superintendents, and as we talk
14 about the additional cost, many principals are
15 going to have to face that reality, that
16 they're going to have to find money for the
17 additional costs of what it's going to be to
18 operate pre-k. So thank you once again for your
19 testimony.
20

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. And thank
22 you everybody for coming in today. Moira
23 Flavin from Citizens' Committee for Children,
24 Rebecca Alvy [phonetic] from A Plus New York,
25 Leonie Haimsen from Class Size Matters and

Alicia Flynn from Far Rockaway Title One DPAC
[phonetic] Chair 27. [off mic]

MOIRA FLAVIN: Good afternoon. My
name is Moira Flavin and I am the policy
associate for Early Childhood Education,
Education and youth services at Citizens'
Committee for Children of New York.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Excuse me. I
have to swear you all in before you start.
Would you raise your right hand, please? Do
you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole
truth and nothing but the truth and to answer
Council Member questions honestly? Thank you.

MOIRA FLAVIN: Good afternoon. As I
said, my name is Moira Flavin from CCC. CCC is
a 70 year old independent child advocacy
organization dedicated to ensuring that every
New York City child is healthy, housed,
educated and safe. We thank the council for
holding today's hearing. We are extremely
grateful that millions of dollars for early
childhood education, youth services and health
and mental health services for children have
been base lined, and that this preliminary

budget takes important steps to begin the expansion of critical services for children. As we've said before, we are in full support of the city's plan to expand UPK and afterschool. We are also very pleased that the Mayor's FY 15 preliminary budget restores and base lines funding for training opportunities for parent volunteers, funds for professional development for teachers and funds to pay teachers for their work after school and during vacations. On the other hand, we were disappointed that none of the City Council initiatives in the Department of Education's budget were base lined. These include Champs, Chesson [phonetic] Schools, the Child Mind Institute, Drop-our prevention and intervention, the UFT's community schools initiative, the middle school expanded learning time pilot, urban advantage, science education and teacher's choice. CCC will be urging the Administration to restore and base line these programs in the executive budget and we respectfully request that the Council do the same. Moving forward, CCC urges you pay specific attention to key strategies

and programs to address child wellbeing and therefore positively impact children's educational outcomes. These include school's efforts to identify struggling students and intervene, schools meal programs, physical education and school based health and mental health. Our written testimony contains recommendations from our recent issue brief, keeping middle school students on track for success. In short, we are asking the DOE work with principals and schools to better identify struggling students and intervene to keep them on track. We are also urging the Administration to implement universal lunch and breakfast after the bell citywide to ensure that students have access to free and healthy meals essential for their health and academic development. We are also asking the Administration and the city council to work together to ensure that all schools have the resources they need to be in compliance with state physical education requirements, since many of them are currently out of compliance. We hope that the Administration and City

Council can work together to expand school based health and mental health services as well. In conclusion, we are committed to working with the Administration and the city council to ensure that New York City's students benefit from full day UPK, enter school prepared to learn, receive a quality k through 12 education and graduate prepared for college and career. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

Leonie?

LEONIE HAIMSON: My name is Leonie Haimson, I'm the head of the an organization called Class Size Matters, a citywide advocacy and research organization devoted to reducing class sizes in the city schools. Class sizes have gone up every year for the last six years. Part of that has been because of a lack of funding, but part of it is because of a lack of priorities on the part of the Department of Education. In the fall of 2007, the state approved a class for--a plan for New York City to reduce class sizes in all grades as part of the settlement for the CFE lawsuit and we

1 received cumulatively more than three billion
2 dollars since that day. And it's true that we
3 have never received our full funding, but even
4 when the funding was going up in the first few
5 years, class sizes were going up in New York
6 City at the same time, and I want to explain a
7 few of the reasons why class sizes have gone up
8 over the last six years, because there are many
9 things, factors that play into it. As I
10 mentioned, we have never received our fair
11 share of the CFE funding and our foundation aid
12 remains 2.2 billion dollars.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Leonie, did you
15 bring written testimony?

16 LEONIE HAIMSON: Yes, I did. Many
17 copies.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, can I get
19 it from the Sergeant.

20 LEONIE HAIMSON: Plus a powerpoint.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I'd like to be
22 able to follow. Sergeant, can I have the
23 testimony for Class Size Matters?

24 LEONIE HAIMSON: Thank you. But
25 despite all these funds, DOE has never

allocated a single penny of its C3 funds through their district-wide or targeted programs for class size specifically, even though that was the one requirement in the law, that they actually reduce class sizes. Since 2007, the DOE has cut school budgets 14 percent, which we believe contradicts the C For E prohibition against supplanting. In 2010, they eliminated the early grade class size funding for k through three despite a promise to the state in their C for E plan to keep it. In 2011, they decided no longer to cap class sizes in first through third grades at 28, which they had capped for many, many years even before I started on the issues. So the many, many classes have now gone up to 32 in these grades. In fact, they are tripled the number classes in grades first through third with class sizes of 32. In 2012, DOE told principals to accommodate special needs students in their--up to the contractual class size maximum in general add in inclusion classes, which is 32 students per class in grades one through five, 31 in six through eight, and 43 in high school.

1 And even though inclusion is a great concept,
2 it cannot work with class sizes that large. DOE
3 has never aligned its capital plan to the goals
4 in this class size plan, even though that was
5 also required by state law. The rush to create
6 new schools and co-locations has further
7 overcrowded schools, taken more funding and
8 space away from the system as a whole and
9 created a vast increase in in bureaucracy and
10 administrative position as opposed to teaching
11 positions which have steadily fallen, while the
12 city has lost about 5,000 teachers since 2007
13 they have increased the number of bureaucrats
14 and out of class room positions. And in 2012
15 there were the fewest DOE pedagogues employed
16 since 2003, the largest number of non-
17 pedagogues since at least 1980 and the largest
18 percentage of non-pedagogues to pedagogues
19 since 1993. And I just want to make a point
20 about the networks which have expanded,
21 something that the City Council really needs to
22 keep their eyes on is that the race to the top
23 money runs out this year, and a lot of those
24 network positions are being paid for out of
25

1 race to the top money. So you have to keep your
2 eye to make sure that they're not put over on
3 the city budget, because a lot of them are
4 extraneous and schools don't need those
5 positions. And then there are a couple of other
6 things. They've removed all mention of class
7 size standards from their instructional
8 footprint in 2009, meaning that class sizes
9 have grown where schools, they want to co-
10 locate schools. Many principals, especially
11 those in middle schools and high schools have
12 reported to us that if they allocate funds to
13 reduce class size, DOE simply sends them more
14 kids making all their efforts pointless. And
15 Fair Student funding is a system also which has
16 been very deleterious making schools basically
17 choose between having experienced teachers in
18 smaller classes and the formula now underfunds
19 94 percent of schools. The enrollment has
20 increased throughout the city making efforts
21 much more difficult. Now, in 2009, DOE
22 estimated that it would cost about 358 million
23 per year to achieve its average C for E class
24 size goals across the system, and each year,

New York city receives more than 500 million C
for E funds, but we do know that there have
been cuts in other areas. I am not hopeful
looking forward in terms of class size
reduction. I am sad to say when we look at
periods when class sizes have been
significantly reduced in the charts you have,
as in the periods between 1998 and 2003, this
happened because of three factors, falling
enrollment, dedicated funding spent
specifically on hiring more teachers to reduce
class size and a determination on the part of
the Administration to use those funds
appropriately. None of those three factors seem
to be at play today, despite the Mayor's pledge
during his campaign to achieve smaller classes
by the end of his first term. We have
countervailing forces that will probably push
class sizes in the other direction, increased
enrollment, a focus on rapid pre-k expansion
which will take more space in our already
overcrowded schools and a teacher contract long
overdue. Meanwhile, our education budget looks
relatively flat. There is a new lawsuit

1 launched by Michael Ruebel [phonetic], an
2 organization called New Yorkers for Student
3 Educational Rights. We are one of the many
4 plaintiffs to try to ensure that the state
5 provides New York City its fair share of funds.
6 Other groups also are contemplating taking
7 legal action to try to get the city to comply
8 with the state law when it comes to class size,
9 'cause they are grievously violating the law,
10 but without a determined effort on the part of
11 this city and this city council to increase
12 education funding and make sure that it's
13 allocated appropriately to reduce class size, I
14 expect rising class sizes to continue in the
15 future. Thank you very much.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Next?

18 ALICEA FLYNN: Good afternoon. My
19 name is Alicea Flynn, and I am an elected Title
20 One Parent Mandated Leader in District 27. I'm
21 the Chair of the DPAC there, and my Council
22 Member already came and spoke about the co-
23 location that's happening at PSMS 42Q. I'm a
24 long time parent leader there, but I came to
25 speak on behalf of a school that is being

phased out. That's 215. It has another school inside of it called Wave Prep, and I came to talk about the renovations. They're doing amazing job with the renovations to the auditorium, and I also wanted to speak upon the Far Rockaway Campus. The auditorium there is being renovated as well. It is beautiful. It is amazing. It's unbelievable to the site, but when you think about it, there is no central air system. So we know that that space, once it starts getting hot, graduation, events, it's going to be very humid. So I--we were just looking at the wiring, how to create a system to keep some kind of air in that area. The piping, maybe even--I'm so sorry. I found out yesterday that this meeting was going on. So I just happened to be one of the people that got the email and just said, okay, we're going to go. But I'm not going to speak about public school 42. We are--we have a meeting coming up April 1st, which is going to be like a open forum for all of the community members to come and voice their opinion. We believe that co-locations come with resources. So that's how

1
2 we're looking at it. Our SLT is mandated, the
3 School Leadership Team that talks about the
4 comprehensive educational plan. We're going to
5 be using one of our meetings to focus on being
6 there and just listening to, you know,
7 basically how we're going to support one
8 another. So this--we're looking at this
9 positively, but we really wanted to look at
10 that Far Rockaway campus school and finding out
11 what money can be used to help create a central
12 air system, something so that we don't look at
13 the beautiful place but can't stand being in
14 it. So that's basically all I came to share.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I just to--I
16 totally relate. They went and put a beautiful
17 new auditorium--

18 ALICEA FLYNN: [interposing]
19 Amazing.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: PS 199, four or
21 five years ago, no air conditioning. It's just
22 amazing.

23 ALICEA FLYNN: Right. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, thank
25 you.

REBECCA ALVY: Hi, my name is Rebecca Alvy and I'm here in support of the Small Schools Athletic League. I'm the Executive Director of A Plus New York. Our mission is to build on the successes of SSAL by using sports as a vehicle to provide educational resources and character development necessary for students to succeed in life. Both of my parents are educators. They taught in international schools all over the world and in the US for over 30 years. My mother was a school counselor, my father was a national distinguished principal. I personally attended schools in Washington State, Israel, Singapore and South Africa. In every school I attended, both public and private, sports were a part of the culture, even in some of the townships of South Africa. The world recognizes the power of sport. In 2004 Nelson Mandela said, "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair."

Access to sports should not be at the hand of individuals, the PSAL or even at the hands of a budget discussion like this. However, here we are. We have the opportunity to make a change that will at its core strengthen the system of education in this city. We know from decades of research that sport improves grades, attendance and behavior of students. Only some of the students who attend NYC public high schools get the opportunity to reap those benefits. Those students attend schools with more white students, lower percentages of students with free and reduced lunch and lower populations of English language learners. The tale of two cities, Mayor de Blasio has spoken about could not be more real and obvious. I think I'm speaking to the choir, but I'll continue. It's a tragedy when young people don't have access to resources to truly allow them to become the best version of themselves. Education is supposed to provide opportunity and act as a vehicle to freedom, the freedom to explore who you are, what you're good at and what you love. I say that to remind people that this is not an

1
2 issue about finding the next Lebron James, it's
3 really an education issue. The SSAL is an
4 opportunity to provide sports programs that
5 reach our most at-risk students, rewards
6 improvement and does not punish struggle,
7 provides all students enrolled in high school
8 the opportunity to play, builds public private
9 partnerships that fund mentoring, tutoring and
10 college readiness, training for our student
11 athletes, provides 12 months of programing and
12 finally brings equitable access to sports for
13 all students in New York City. Thank you for
14 your time.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Thank you.
16 Ms. Alvy, did you say you were with Small
17 Schools Athletic League?

18 REBECCA ALVY: I work in the same
19 office as them, but I am starting a 501 C3 that
20 will be working with them.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And that's A Plus
22 New York?

23 REBECCA ALVY: Yes.
24
25

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And so just refresh my memory on the two things that are going on there.

REBECCA ALVY: Sure. A Plus started in Seattle. It's an organization that uses sport as a vehicle, right? I was looking for the right partner in the last six months.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I see. Okay.

REBECCA ALVY: And SSAL seems to be the right place to be.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. So are you included in on these discussions with the Deputy Chancellor that she mentioned in her testimony?

REBECCA ALVY: No.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Are you familiar with the discussion that's going on with Small Schools Athletic League?

REBECCA ALVY: yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: But are they taking the lead on that? Is there any discussion on that?

REBECCA ALVY: I know David Garcia Rosen is here today. I think he would be the better person to ask that question.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. So he'll be in the next panel. Okay. And Leonie, I don't know really what to say in terms of class sizes. You know, it's been a very important issue to me having taught in probably the most overcrowded school district for 25 years, except that the lawsuit is probably the only thing that's going to push them in this direction at this point. Of course, we can do that, some of that here. We've been unsuccessful in the past with the prior Administrations in doing that. In fact, many of times I found them to be very arrogant in the way that they answered a number of the questions that we used to have on those things, and so I look forward to that happening, and I appreciate your numbers as well. And it's just very eye opening to see it. And I think that-- did you want to say something?

LEONIE HAIMSON: I just wanted to say that I think this is a new Administration, so

1 we have a new start here, and I think the
2 pressure has to be kept on this Administration
3 to do what's right for kids, and not to simply
4 displace all the responsibility onto the state
5 and winning that lawsuit, which could be years,
6 again, to achieve. And the reality is that
7 there is a lot of spending going on. I mean,
8 the entire small schools initiative created a
9 huge number of out of classroom positions,
10 expensive principal positions, etcetera,
11 etcetera, at the cost of investment in
12 classroom conditions, and we have to realize
13 that this has to stop. The creation of small
14 schools is not serving kids needs, whether it's
15 sports teams, AP course, any of the rest and
16 they--it is very expensive in terms of space
17 and funding and so whether it's trying to push
18 them to eliminate the networks, trying to push
19 them to even reverse some of the small schools
20 and the co-locations that have gone on, and
21 keep the pressure on to put the maximum amount
22 of money not just in the education budget in
23 general, but invested in the programs that we
24 know work for kids and class size is number one
25

1 among them. And with the pre-k implementation,
2 I didn't speak about this at the last hearing,
3 but it is incredibly important that they not
4 push class sizes upwards even larger in the--
5 especially in the early grades when they are
6 trying to create more space for pre-k. Early
7 education means pre-k to third grade, and
8 unfortunately it seems to becoming meaning just
9 pre-k, and if you push these class sizes
10 upwards even more in the early grades, you will
11 lose many if not all the benefits of pre-
12 kindergarten. And one of the reasons pre-
13 kindergarten is so successful is because of the
14 strict class size limit of 18, and that's what
15 we should be looking for for all our class
16 sizes as well.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Absolutely, I
19 agree 100 percent. And then finally, to Moira
20 Flavin, we're going to look at all of those
21 initiatives moving forward to try to support
22 them. I know it didn't come up too much in
23 today's hearings, but they are important
24 initiatives. I'm familiar with them all in the
25 budget, particularly with teacher's choice,

1 because I think last year it was funded at
2 about four million down from about ten the year
3 before, which is down from even a higher
4 number, but prior to me coming into the
5 Council. And I think it worked out to be like
6 35 dollars a teacher or something like that, if
7 it was even that much, which is nothing. So,
8 you know, having that support for teachers for
9 supplies in the classrooms is something of
10 major importance to me as well.

12 MOIRA FLAVIN: And also, just linked
13 to the point that I made about physical
14 education, we're hearing anecdotally that
15 teachers are buying their own physical
16 education equipment in addition to all the
17 other equipment they need for their classes. So
18 those funds are really critically important.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, it's
20 amazing what teachers will do, you know, to
21 provide them education. And they deserve to be
22 commended for that, but it shouldn't be their
23 responsibility, absolutely. Thank you. Thank
24 you to--Yes, did you want to say something?

ALICEA HAIMSON: Yes, I just wanted to say something. It's going to be brief. I am a title one parent leader. I work with the Title One one percent funding that goes to the parents for professional development. We are using our tiny itty bitty one percent to train and do workshops and create strategies to work with our parents who then support the children. So what I'm saying to this is you'll be amazed at what you can do when you really love what you're doing and when you're supported in what you're doing. So I just wanted to throw that out there, you know, just for people to really understand that when you--when we're dealing with individual children and then you're dealing with individual parents, once we start creating support mechanism that allow us to then become conducive. Like you're sitting here. I know nothing about you and your service, and we're sitting here, we're separate, but we're still fighting for the same thing which is making sure that our children develop and grow up in a society where they're supported and then become the reason why the

community is doing so well. So I just wanted to put that in the hearts and the minds of the people who are here, and in the hearts and the minds of the Council. And I just want to say thank you so very much for giving me this opportunity. This is one of my weaknesses, being able to speak in front of people, but I do it all the time. But I just wanted to say to the young people also who are in the audience, the sky is the limit. Just wanted to let you know, from a stranger to a stranger. The sky is the limit. Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, thank you. You don't seem nervous or shy at all.

ALICEA FLYNN: Oh, it's--trust me. Trust me.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And I agree with you about parents 100 percent.

ALICEA FLYNN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member Barron has a question.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to thank the panel for their presentation and the budget outlook on table

1
2 eight talks about class size, and that was a
3 question, one of the questions that I posed to
4 the previous panel. And it specifically says
5 that in grade three for fiscal year 13 and 14
6 you will find 25 students in a class on
7 average. How do they get that? They keep
8 telling me, "Well, yes, that's because we take
9 the number of students and we divide it by the
10 number of staff persons." But that's not the
11 reality. How do we get other input? How do we
12 get other information to correct this?

13 LEONIE HAIMSON: So, there's a lot of
14 problems with the class size reporting, which
15 I've gone to the DOE and I've asked the city
16 Comptroller to do audits. The most unreliable
17 data is at the high school level and the middle
18 school level. I actually think that--but even
19 in the early grades we know they're classes in
20 Queens right now of 40 in kindergarten, and
21 yet, they're reported by the DOE at 20. So
22 there's a lot of issues there and I think we do
23 need an audit and we do need better data, but
24 the other thing you have to realize is that
25 there's huge variations across the system. So

1 these are average numbers, but there are many,
2 many classrooms where class sizes in grades
3 three are 30 and above, and that's balanced out
4 by much smaller classes elsewhere. So across
5 the system from district to district there are
6 big differences, and even within districts
7 there are big differences in class sizes. So
8 I'd be happy to come and brief you on what the
9 class sizes are in your district, because we do
10 have those figures, and we can even look at
11 individual schools in your district and see how
12 some are much larger than others, but even
13 then, it's not going to be 100 percent reliable
14 because the DOE has still to this day not been
15 able to provide us with fully accurate figures,
16 and in fact, the state figures on class size
17 for New York City show classes much larger than
18 the city's reporting on this, and I think we do
19 need better numbers and I'm--if you can give us
20 any help in pushing this city comptroller to do
21 an audit of this it would be much appreciated.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I think
24 that's something that we certainly need to look
25 at and have the comptroller examine how he can

1
2 make that happen, and I'd also love to sit with
3 you and see what the stats are and to make a
4 determination as to the student population, how
5 it's reflected. I'm looking to see where the
6 disparity is. I know it exists. This is the
7 average, but I want to highlight what the
8 disparity is in terms of students in low income
9 areas, even within a district, how their class
10 size is so much larger. And the impact that it
11 has on the results that we get on these tests
12 that we're imposing on these young children. So
13 I'd certainly look to--

14 LEONIE HAIMSON: [interposing] Well,
15 one thing we know for sure is that New York
16 City average class sizes are the largest in the
17 state, and yet--and they've been that way for,
18 you know, at least 20 years and yet our kids
19 are expected to pass the same test at the same
20 rates as districts elsewhere, and the average
21 class sizes in the rest of the state in all
22 grades is about 20. So it's a huge difference
23 between New York City and New York State and
24 the state's highest court did say in the CFE
25 lawsuit that New York City children were

1
2 deprived of their constitutional right to an
3 adequate education because class sizes here
4 were too large, and since then class sizes have
5 actually gone up.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: As you may
7 know, I was a loud voice in Albany telling my
8 colleagues that we need to push and bring a
9 lawsuit so that the settlement terms of CFE are
10 enforced. I'm glad to know that a lawsuit has
11 been brought. The work that has been done is
12 well documented, and we look forward to getting
13 the results and getting the settlement
14 implemented, because certainly it's about three
15 billion dollars that New York City has been
16 shortchanged, and we've got to force the
17 governor to do that because as recently as two
18 years ago when he was questioned about CFE he
19 said, "CFE is done." So he doesn't have the
20 mind--yes, it's quoted and that's his comment.
21 So he doesn't have the mindset to in fact abide
22 by what the contract settlement, by what the
23 settlement said, nor to make the finances
24 available so that children can, in fact, have a
25 sound basic education.

LEONIE HAIMSON: Right, and one of the things he said is that funding doesn't matter, and yet he wants to push for much more funding and space for charter schools, because for those kids, apparently funding matters, but not for kids in the public schools.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you so much. Thank you for your testimony, and while the Chair has stepped away for a moment, I've been asked to call the next panel. So we will now hear from the next panel, Jim Short, who's a Director at the Gottesman Center, The American Museum of Natural History, Marnie Rackmill from the Urban Advantage Queens Botanic Gardens, Mark R. Doorman, from Manhattan Comprehensive Night School high school--Night/Day high school, Barbara Harris from the Granny Peace Brigade and other social justice organizations, and David Garcia-Rosen from Small Schools Athletic League, which we talked about a little earlier. So all of those persons whose names I called would come forward please. All the panel members present? Okay. Thank you. If you would all raise your right

hand please? Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee, and to respond honestly to Council Member questions? Thank you. And we'll begin. Please identify yourself and give your testimony.

JIM SHORT: My name is Jim Short. I'm the Director in the Education department at the American Museum of Natural History. On behalf of the Urban Advantage Partners, I'd like to thank Chairman Dromm and the members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today about the Urban Advantage Middle School Science initiative. The American Museum of Natural History which is a partner in Urban Advantage and Marnie Rackmill, the professional development coordinator from Queens Botanical Garden, which is another partner in the Urban Advantage program. Urban Advantage is the largest formalized middle school science education partnership program in the city of New York, as well as the country. Urban Advantage was launched in December of 2004 through the leadership of the City Council and

has annually received funding from the City Council through a citywide initiative and the New York City Department of Education. With this support and working with the New York City Department of Education, Urban Advantage has built an unprecedented partnership between eight of the city's science rich cultural institutions, the New York Hall of Science, the Queens Botanical Garden, The American Museum of Natural History, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the New York Botanical Garden, the Staten Island Zoo, the Bronx Zoo, and the New York Aquarium. This is a partnership that has led to a model science education program that connects New York City public schools, science teachers, school administrators, middle school students and their families with opportunities to engage in authentic science experiences that contribute to college and career readiness as middle school students prepare for high school. Furthermore, eighth grade science assessment data indicate that students in urban advantage schools do better on the state science assessment than students in non-urban advantage

schools. Working with the Department of Education, the Urban Advantage framework supports science education in middle schools in a variety of ways, which include providing lab equipment and curriculum materials, greater access to the urban advantage partners resources, up to 40 hours of high quality in depth professional development for educators across the five boroughs, provide professional development for parent coordinators at every Urban Advantage school, organizing family science events at each institutions and at the Urban Advantage schools. We also provide Urban Advantage family guides outlining the advantages of the program for their child which is translated in 10 different languages. Since its inception, Urban Advantage has served 1,148 teachers and over 185,000 students in 323 middle schools across the city. Thanks to the City Council citywide initiative support of 2.5 million in fiscal 14, this current school year, the Urban Advantage is in 177 schools serving 517 teachers and over 51,000 students across the city. There is an Urban Advantage program

in every city council district. Thirty-two percent of all New York city middle schools participate in Urban Advantage and 85 percent of the students in the program are African-American, Latino and Asian, while 50 percent are female. Recent evaluations from the Institute for Education and Social Policy at NYU show that students in Urban Advantage schools out perform students in non-Urban Advantage schools on the eighth grade New York State Science Assessment. Students who attend an Urban Advantage school are more likely to pass the living environment or earth science Regents, than those in non-UA schools. Urban Advantage teachers report that Urban Advantage has been especially important for helping them implement in their classrooms Common Core standards in literacy and mathematics. Urban Advantage plans to continue to strengthen these accomplishments. To do this, we seek the City Council's continued support and request that the council allocate 2.5 million in expense funding to the Urban Advantage Science Education citywide initiative in FY 15. The

Council's funding and support is critical to our ability to continue to reach and the level of service currently provided by Urban Advantage partner institutions. The programs accomplishments would not have been possible without your support over the years. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

Next panelist, please identify yourself.

: Good morning, or good afternoon, and thank you so much for listening to my testimony. I'm here looking at the budget and considering elimination or redirection of monies. The current major--I'm sorry. The current Mayor's expense budget includes an approximately 1.5 million dollar tax levy for the Junior Reserve Officer Training Core called the JROTC program. Along with about 15 other member organizations we ask that in its response to the mayor's budget, city council members vote to eliminate or reassign this allocation of tax payer's funds that will be used to support the JROTC program in 18 public schools. In light of current educational financial concerns, the 2014 budget will result

1 in cuts to after school programs, activities,
2 fewer guidance counselors and needed support
3 for special education programs. And I'm really
4 glad I sat at this meeting during the day, and
5 I know that Congress Member Barron spoke about
6 guidance counselors, and since I'm involved in
7 the high schools and not many people really
8 spoke about funding for high school kids and
9 guidance counselors, and I meet with these
10 young students and they tell me they don't get
11 guidance. Unless you're the cream of the crop
12 in the school you'll get attention. Unless you
13 need some problem you go to the guidance
14 counselor, but when it comes to being preparing
15 for college or career opportunities, they're
16 handed a piece of paper, say fill it out, go
17 online and look for some more information. The
18 lack of guidance for high school students is
19 really draconian, because they get lost. They
20 drop out. They're in the streets and they could
21 have been given information for financial aid
22 and more assistance. I went to Evander Child's
23 [phonetic] high school and if it weren't for
24 sports, the other thing that was mentioned here
25

1 today, I would have been a lost young girl, but
2 sports made a great big difference and one very
3 dedicated teacher. Guidance counselors weren't
4 there for me either, but going to Hunter
5 College changed my life and she encouraged me
6 to do that. And we need guidance in that area.
7 So I just want to talk a little bit about this
8 JROTC program for which the tax payer has a
9 contributing 1.5 million dollars, which sounds
10 like a nothing here. The last group talked
11 about three billion or million dollars, but it
12 is something because it's 83,000 dollar for
13 each of those 18 high schools, which perhaps
14 could be used in a much better way in the
15 school, and I was very interested in the Small
16 Schools Athletic League, which I knew nothing
17 about, 'cause I know how that changes a child's
18 life. So, quickly I'll point out what's wrong
19 with JROTC. It's a federal program, pays half
20 of the cost to the schools and the reason it
21 pays half is that the 40 ROTC teachers have to
22 receive their fringe benefits. They are not
23 employees of the New York City Department of
24 Education, but employees of federal government.
25

1 We believe this is a dangerous precedent of
2 having individuals who do not possess the
3 requisite qualifications to be a teacher, nor
4 are members of the UFT to be engaging in
5 teaching. Currently the city funds used to
6 cover the instructor's salaries and all
7 employment taxes and benefits that cover
8 regular teachers. The JROTC is taught by
9 retired military personnel. These instructors
10 require a minimum of 60 hours which may have
11 been acquired with online courses. They don't
12 have the kind of training we had. I was a
13 teacher, and they don't go through the testing
14 to become a teacher. The curriculum is
15 developed by the military and presents a
16 partisan pro-military view of politics and
17 moral issues.

18
19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Just to--

20 : [interposing] I know I have one
21 minute--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: please wrap
23 up your testimony? Can you summarize the rest
24 of your testimony for us?
25

1
2 : Summarize it? Okay. Well just
3 the general, the Secretary General William Cone
4 [phonetic] describe ROTC as one of the best
5 recording--recruiting services they have. This
6 is the one thing I'll focus on, because there
7 are more and you can look at it, but the
8 student programs give uniforms and facsimile
9 guns which are used in drills, parades, and
10 assemblies. So the students are able to walk
11 through assemblies carrying a mock rifle in the
12 school system and we know there's zero
13 tolerance for guns in high schools. Whereas,
14 they're wearing a uniform, carrying a gun. They
15 are admired by all the other kids and we have
16 zero tolerance and if any other kid walked in
17 with a little fake gun, they'd be under a, you
18 know, surveillance. They'd be in the
19 principal's office. How can we justify this in
20 18 high schools and in all the parades, and in
21 all the football games? That's a highlight for
22 me. It's one of the most troubling, besides the
23 program that's designed. Nobody's looked at the
24 curriculum. Nothing is transparent. It's very
25 hard to get any information. I have some

1 reports from university professors who see
2 there's no better discipline. There's no better
3 drop out rates. All the things that they say
4 will happen does not happen, and they--it's
5 very hard. I remember I worked with Speaker
6 Melissa Mark-Viverito. She tried to get more
7 information. It is the toughest thing to get
8 from the military. They--and someone mentioned
9 crowding, 'cause supervisor--superintendents in
10 schools, well I called you at Clinton high
11 school and I got the general of the JROTC in
12 his office at that school. So, also that I--
13 we're in the streets talking to people about
14 it. you know, we're in Brooklyn, and just
15 mentioned that, you know, some of your tax
16 payer money's going to a JROTC program and what
17 happens there, and they are outraged for the
18 most part. They don't want their money going
19 there. They want it to go to an afterschool
20 program, to sports, to music, to--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]

23 Yes.

24 : everything else. I know. So I
25 will just wrap up, and hope you have an

initiative to look at this funding. I have the charts how each school gets.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

: And why we would pay that.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Do you have written testimony?

: Yes, I do.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Have you given that? Okay. If you could make sure that we have it.

: I know. Thank you so much.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: The Chairman has returned, so I'm going to give the mic back to the Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you very much, Council Member Barron for covering me while I went to the facilities. I took my pass with me. So, I'm back. David, you're next?

DAVID GARCIA-ROSEN: Council Member Barron, Council Member Dromm, thank you. My name is David Garcia-Rosen. I'm the Director and founder of the Small Schools Athletic League and I've been an employee of the

Department of Education for the past 16 years.

I'm here because we're at a moment in time where not only do we have a moral obligation to bring equitable access to sports, but also an opportunity to shift the paradigms of sports programming in New York City. Mayor de Blasio spoke about the tale of two cities and received 73 percent of the votes. This tale of two cities exists right here in the Department of Education's interscholastic PSAL sports programming. The unique part about this aspect of this tale of two cities is that we have an opportunity to solve it with fiscal year 2015 DOE budget. Over 64,000 students attend a New York City Department of Education High school with no interscholastic sports at some point during the year for boys and or girls. And more than 20,000 students attend a high school where there's no sports opportunities at all. Some high schools received 250,000 dollars for sports programming from the DOE while other received nothing. In fiscal year 2014, many of the high schools that already were receiving the most funding actually received more. Staten

1 Island, which receives nearly double the per
2 student funding for sports than the Bronx got
3 funding for 11 more teams. We don't know need
4 to look at the plethora of scholastic research
5 to know that sports improves attendance,
6 academics, and behavior, and decreases drug
7 use, juvenile crime, obesity and teen
8 pregnancy. All we need to do is speak to any
9 student, teacher, principal and ask them the
10 impact high school sports is having on the
11 lives of their students and their school
12 community. I created the Small Schools Athletic
13 League in 2011 because I cannot stand to see
14 one more student drop out of a high school when
15 I know sports would have kept them engaged. We
16 have built a league that now serves over 40
17 high schools, 1,700 student athletes in
18 baseball, softball, soccer and volleyball. We
19 have done this with limited to no institutional
20 and financial support from the DOE. In fact,
21 for the first two years of our league it was
22 entirely funded by the principals at the
23 expense of other school needs. Why would these
24 principals do it? Because they say it is the
25

one program that is having the most impact on the graduation and drop out rates of their most at-risk students. It's time for us to work together to expand on the successes of this paradigm shifting league. We are failing our students if we continue to make excuses about why we cannot provide access to sports for all of them. We are failing our students when one school receives funding for 41 teams while 70 receive nothing. We are failing our students when one school receives more than a quarter million dollars annually for sports, while others receive nothing. We are failing our students when schools with the highest rates of poverty receive the least sports funding from the Department of Education. We are failing our students when the schools with the highest rates of students of color, English language learners and special education students receive the least sports funding from the Department of Education. We are failing our students when paradigm shifting programs like the Small Schools Athletic League are left to exist on the unsustainable model of principal funding.

The SSAL is an opportunity to build a sports program that reaches our most at risk students, rewards improvement and does not punish struggle, provides all students enrolled in high school the opportunity to play, builds private public partnerships that fund mentoring, tutoring, college and career readiness training for our student athletes, provides 12 months of sports programming and finally, brings equitable access to sports for all students. The SSAL is at the forefront of changing the paradigms of interscholastic sports and deserves the full financial and institutional support of the Department of Education. I've brought a list of recommendations which I've shared with the Deputy Chancellor for fiscal year 2015 as well as copies of the research which we've also shared with the Deputy Chancellor, with Chancellor Farina, starting a year ago we shared this research with the DOE leadership. In addition, we provided evidence that the PSAL is exacerbating the problem by giving more

1
2 funding to the schools that already have the
3 most funding. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Next?

5 MARK DOORMAN: I'm Mark Doorman. I'm
6 here to put a face on Mr. Rosen's research.
7 I've been in the business of educating young
8 people for over 25 years as a teacher, coach
9 and administrator. A lot of my work has been
10 Upstate in various areas of the state and more
11 recently here in New York City. I'm here today,
12 as I said, to put a face on Mr. Rosen's
13 research. I would hope that the Council
14 carefully considers this work because I have
15 seen and I currently work in a small school
16 that has no sports teams, and more recently I
17 requested that with the PSAL that our school
18 join the table tennis league and badminton
19 league. The response I got from them was
20 disturbing and it reinforced, I think, Mr.
21 Rosen's work and his research. Transfer
22 schools are not allowed. Transfer schools,
23 those kids are there for a reason. There's no
24 funding, and I think more disturbing was the
25 response that these students don't deserve to

1 play sports. When I asked what schools were
2 included in this newly formed badminton and
3 table tennis league, Stuyvant [phonetic] High
4 school came up with 41 athletic teams. They
5 just added this year, Spring boys and girls,
6 you guessed it, table tennis and badminton. I
7 had a long conversation with the Commissioner
8 on this and debated and it was clear to me, and
9 I've been in this business a long time. It
10 various levels. It was clear to me that I was
11 done. Mr. Rosen's Small School League offers
12 our school, and that's why when he reached out
13 to us that we can offer this, I invited him to
14 the school and we had a long discussion. That
15 discussion after I read what all of you have
16 read, I was startled and stunned and aghast
17 that these kids that we have are excluded from
18 important, important, the important process of
19 participating in athletics. While students of
20 these selected schools enjoy the benefits of
21 participating in athletic teams including
22 scholarship potential. Hundreds and thousands
23 of our students attending these schools that
24 are on the wrong side of the tale of two cities
25

1
2 are denied these changing opportunities. As a
3 physical education health teacher, I struggle
4 with our kids to make sure that they get those
5 scholarship potentials. Our kids are coming
6 from all over the world. They're incredible
7 soccer players, badminton, table tennis
8 players. These are incredible athletes that
9 have no opportunities, and I will conclude.
10 The Mayor and I share a common thread. His
11 daughter and my son went to the same public
12 high school, the Beacon School. I witnessed my
13 son's ability and his joy of participating in
14 an athletic team. Our kids were lucky. They
15 were on the right side of the tale of two
16 cities. I would urge Council to correct the
17 inequitable distribution of athletic funds and
18 provide all of our students with equal access
19 to athletic opportunities and programs. Thank
20 you.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Next?
22 Everybody's done? Marnie Rackmill? Okay, very
23 good. I'm sorry I had to step out for using the
24 facilities so to speak, and I do appreciate all
25 of your presence here today. First, you know, I

1 was very glad to see that the Chancellor's
2 emphasis on taking trips to support our social
3 studies education in particular. It's become a
4 renewed priority in this Administration, and I
5 think that's a very good thing moving forward.
6 I want to say I did not get to questions on
7 Urban Advantage today as much as I would like
8 to have. I actually didn't get to any of them
9 today, but we will follow up with the
10 Chancellor on that as well, because we view
11 that as a very successful program and one that
12 we're glad to be able to fund in the city
13 council. ROTC, thank you for being here. We
14 should talk. I also do not like the presence of
15 the JROTC in our schools and I want to work
16 with you on that issue. So thank you. So and
17 then I want to go to Small Schools Athletic
18 League. So the Chancellor, or Deputy
19 Chancellor, I guess, Grimm, said that the
20 reason why Staten Island has more athletics
21 available is because there are more fields
22 there. Do you buy that?

24 DAVID GARCIA-ROSEN: So, in our
25 entire league, 42 schools, not one school has a

1
2 soccer field, not one school has a baseball
3 field, all of our competitions are in public
4 parks. If you look at the PSAL schedule, you'll
5 see that the vast majority of games are played
6 on public parks. One of the recommendations
7 that we've given the Deputy Chancellor and the
8 Chancellor is to make better use of the DOE
9 facilities, such as the soccer fields and the
10 baseball field. Right now, if you're at a high
11 school campus that has a soccer field, it's
12 under the control of the principal. What we've
13 recommended is that there be a central
14 permitting system so that all schools in the
15 community can have access to those fields. So
16 facilities is not at all a challenge that we
17 can't solve.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So they also said
19 that they were moving forward on making sure
20 that there's more cooperation, because as you
21 know we've previously since I've become
22 education chair. Has that begun to change?

23 DAVID GARCIA-ROSEN: So, as of now,
24 no. The only, not an official offer, but there
25 was some insinuation that, as they mentioned,

that the PSAL would some how be an umbrella over the SSAL.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And what's your opinion on that?

DAVID GARCIA-ROSEN: So the PSAL is in school support services, right, food, transportation, sports. It's a logistical operation. Our league is an educational operation. We really feel that our league should be managed by youth and school development. We don't have the same mission and vision as the PSAL. So that offer doesn't feel like they really understand their mission and vision, and they've made no offer to fully fund the league as it exists, and the league as it exists doesn't bring equity. It's a much larger conversation that needs to happen if we're going to bring equitable access. We're really more of a bridge 'til the institutional change happens to make sure all students have access to sports.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So I do question the Chancellor on whether she thought that the needs of the students involved in PSAL versus

1
2 SSAL are the same or that they could be met
3 under PSAL. I guess I would think that you
4 don't think that they can be met under PSAL?

5 DAVID GARCIA-ROSEN: Our vision of
6 what a sport's program looks like is very
7 different than the PSAL. One major example is
8 student athlete eligibility. So the PSAL model
9 is really a model that's designed for the
10 student who's doing everything right as a
11 reward program. We really view sports as a
12 program that's for the most at risk student
13 who's struggling the most. So we do biweekly
14 student athlete eligibility review. So every
15 two weeks our student athletes have to get
16 signatures from all their teachers. We review
17 their attendance, their lateness. If there's
18 any issues we set up metrics that they have to
19 meet to get back on the field. A lot of people
20 ask why principals have funded the Small School
21 Athletic League and spend so much money on
22 this. It has a lot to do with the fact that our
23 program is designed for the most at-risk
24 students. So we have schools in our league that
25 have PSAL funded teams, and I used to think

1
2 that when they get a PSAL team that they would
3 leave our league, but in fact what happened is
4 they stayed with our league because the
5 students that needed sports the most in their
6 school couldn't play PSAL sports. So we have
7 numerous teams in our league that exist also in
8 the PSAL. So again, our mission and vision is
9 totally different as to what sports is. We view
10 it as an educational program whereas the PSAL
11 is really designed, kind of modeled after the
12 NCAA. It was established in 1903. It's not an
13 educational program. We view our program as an
14 educational program.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It also seems to
16 me that there are limitations on PSAL in terms
17 of age requirements etcetera, can you explain
18 that a little bit to me?

19 DAVID GARCIA-ROSEN: Yeah. So, in the
20 PSAL, once you turn 19, the exact date I
21 believe is July, you cannot play. So as someone
22 who teaches in an international high school,
23 many of our students start their freshman year
24 at the age of 15 or 16, reading at second grade
25 level in their native language. It takes them

1 five years to graduate, sometime six by no
2 fault of their own. In that fifth and sixth
3 year, where they're most at risk of dropping
4 out, when they're at 19 and 20 when they're
5 most at risk of dropping out they cannot play
6 PSAL sports. In our league, if you're eligible
7 to step into a high school, you're eligible to
8 play sports. Sports should not exist in a
9 bubble where if you're 20 you can do math,
10 yoga, dance, chess, English. You could do
11 everything, but the one thing that we know is
12 going to keep in the building you can't do. So
13 please come back to our school in September,
14 you can do everything but you can't play
15 basketball or you can't play soccer. That is
16 the program that's getting kids back into our
17 school. My principal even said to me this
18 morning when she was wishing me good luck
19 coming here, she said, "Remember that you're
20 doing is keeping in our building that we've
21 never been able to keep in the building
22 before." And again, that is the paradigm
23 shifting model that we're putting forward. The
24 PSAL, again, does not share our mission and
25

1 vision. We really don't see this existing under
2 the PSAL.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So to me, it's
5 absolutely amazing that this issue has not been
6 addressed before, that these disparities exist
7 within the public school system, and that you
8 may soon run short of funding. What is your
9 immediate need moving forward and how do you
10 see this potentially working out in the future?

11 DAVID GARCIA-ROSEN: So we have zero
12 dollars granted to us for the DOE for fiscal
13 year 2015. The league as it stands right now is
14 a principal-funded model will not continue
15 because it's unfair to the schools that have
16 the highest rates of poverty that they should
17 have to fund their sports program out of their
18 own budgets. To fully fund the league as it
19 stands right now and include other principal-
20 funded sports leagues, like the Charter School
21 Athletic Association, like the Boston Road
22 Alliance for Small Schools that are also doing
23 this work on principal's budgets would be three
24 million dollars for fiscal year 2015, and
25 again, that's a start. That does not bring

1 equity. That does not bring access to
2 everyone. There needs to be major institutional
3 paradigm shifting solutions put in place, but
4 for us to continue to serve 42 high schools,
5 the 90 or so teams, the 1,700 student athletes
6 next year, as of today we will not be able to
7 provide them anything in September unless the
8 Department of Education comes up with answers
9 of yes to what we feel are very rational
10 recommendations.
11

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So these
13 discussions that you're having with the
14 Chancellor's office, they're moving forward?
15 DO you have plans for another meeting soon?
16 How is that going?

17 DAVID GARCIA-ROSEN: So I sent my
18 recommendations to the Chancellor to Deputy
19 Chancellor Kathleen Grimm earlier in the week,
20 maybe even last week. The only response I've
21 received is from the Chancellor saying she
22 fully supports whatever decision Deputy
23 Chancellor Kathleen Grimm makes. We've met with
24 Kathleen, Deputy Chancellor Kathleen Grimm last
25 year of May 2013 at which point she looked at

1 all this research and said there was really
2 nothing that the DOE could do at that time. I'm
3 somewhat optimistic after today in the support
4 of, you know, your support, Council Member
5 Dromm that something is going to change, but I
6 have not been invited to any meeting, to any
7 negotiation. I haven't received any response to
8 our recommendations. The discussion with the
9 DOE has been something that we've constantly
10 had a claw and fight for every meeting for
11 every email. We really tried really had to have
12 an internal solution. I taught in the DOE. I
13 continued to work in the DOE for 16 years. My
14 parents were lifelong educators in the DOE,
15 were from Brooklyn. I live in the Bronx. I
16 really thought that this was a no-brainer. I
17 just really thought that we were going to bring
18 it to the DOE, PSAL. They were going to look at
19 it. They were going to be like, "Yeah, this is
20 a problem, let's fix it." That just hasn't
21 happened yet.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It's a good thing
24 you have tenure, first of all. Second thing,
25 that's very seriously.

DAVID GARCIA-ROSEN: Nope, that's a good point.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Very seriously. It's a reason why we still need to ensure tenure is granted to our teachers, because I think exposing these types of issues is really important. It's very, very important to this committee. We do have a board of Ed representative here, and I'm going to ask that Board of Ed representative to make sure that these meetings occur as soon as humanly possible, and I will tell you that we will have a hearing on this topic moving forward, and I would hope at the time of the hearing that much of the--many of the questions that I have asked today will be resolved so that moving into the next school year we can assure that these small school athletic league participants have the funding that's necessary. I want to thank you for coming, and--

DAVID GARCIA-ROSEN: [interposing]
Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much. And thank you to the whole panel. Thank

you very much. Okay, Urban Advantage, we had one more question for you.

MARNIE RACKMILL: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: How many schools that applied were denied funding?

MARNIE RACKMILL: I don't have that--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Or denied programing due to limited funding?

MARNIE RACKMILL: Yeah, last year there were probably--so each year schools have to reapply. So even the schools that are in the program this year are not automatically in the program next year. So each year schools apply. The last several years there's been probably somewhere in the neighborhood of 20 to 30 schools that have applied that have not been accepted. Last year was exceptionally large. It was probably closer to 40 something. The other thing I would say, as an addition to the success the Urban Advantage program's having in New York City, Denver Public Schools is actually also implementing an Urban Advantage program in their fourth year of a five year grant they have from the National Science

1
2 Foundation, and in a few days, I'm leaving to
3 go to Jerusalem to meet with some museums over
4 there who are also interested in the model. So
5 in our tenth year of implementing the program
6 we're getting national and now international
7 recognition.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, very
9 good. Thank you.

10 MARNIE RACKMILL: Thanks.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Our next
12 panel Liz Accles from the Community Resource
13 Center, Lisa Levy from the New York Coalition
14 Against Hunger, Rick Santana [phonetic] from
15 Make the Road New York, Kristina Erskine from
16 Food Station--from--am I saying that right?
17 EcoStation, I'm sorry. Eco Station New York.
18 And Iminata Lolavali [phonetic] from EcoStation
19 as well. Okay. I would like to swear you in. So
20 I'm going to ask you to raise your right hand,
21 please. Do you solemnly swear to tell the
22 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
23 truth and to answer Council Member questions
24 honestly? Okay, very good. Liz, do you want to
25 start?

LIZ ACCLES: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah, just press the red button.

LIZ ACCLES: Thank you, Mr.

Chairman. My name is Liz Accles, Executive Director of the Community Food Advocates, and I'm here to speak about the Lunch for Learning Campaign for universal free and healthy school meals. It's come up a lot today so I'm not going to belabor the point, but I'm very happy to be joined by students from the Bushwick campus in a food justice program that's collaborative between Make the Road and EcoStation. I just want to actually address, follow-up from the question you raised with the Chancellor and I appreciate all the support. Universal free school has come up many times today. What the most important thing that we are trying to ensure is that the Mayor commit to policy change and put money in the budget for universal free school meals. There's no need for federal, state approval for that. He can just do that immediately. Then maximize the federal incentive programs, provision two, and

1 the community eligibility option which was
2 discussed by the Deputy Chancellor. So we're
3 trying to be very clear that it's a three-step
4 process. First is eliminate fees, and that's
5 where the 20 million dollars of additional city
6 money comes in. That is based on the assumption
7 of 120,000 extra meals that would be served
8 each and every day, 120,000 extra children each
9 day, and then the city fills that gap of 20
10 million. So the real commitment from the
11 Administration needs to be the policy change
12 for universal free for all New York City school
13 students throughout the city, and it has to be
14 citywide, and that what is most directly in the
15 Mayor and Chancellor's hand is the elimination
16 of fees which would make universal immediately,
17 and then maximize the federal reimbursements
18 that both minimize paperwork and increase
19 reimbursements. So I'm going to keep it at that
20 for the moment just to say a third of the
21 students that are eligible for free reduced
22 price lunch in New York City don't eat it, and
23 so that's 250,000 out of 780,000 students don't
24 eat the lunch that they're eligible for, and we
25

1 know that it heavily has to do with stigma and
2 the poverty stigma associated with the program,
3 and that so the numbers go down as kids get
4 older. Eighty percent of elementary school
5 students each school lunch. It drops to 61
6 percent in middle school and it drops to 30
7 percent in high school, and we know that
8 universal free school meals work where we have
9 it in New York City and piloted in provision
10 two. The numbers especially among middle school
11 and high school students go up dramatically and
12 where that option has been withdrawn, the
13 numbers have dropped. So thank you again for
14 your support and leadership on this and I will--
15 -
16

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing]

18 Liz, I just want to ask you something before we
19 move onto the other panelists as well.

20 LIZ ACCLES: Sure.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: The Chancellor
22 made reference to title one schools potentially
23 losing money.

24 LIZ ACCLES: Yes.
25

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I didn't fully understand that. Can you explain what that's about to me?

LIZ ACCLES: Sure. So this new federal incentive program called the Community Eligibility Provision is a wonderful option. It--but it's based on direct certification rather than collection of school lunch form. It actually prohibits the collection of school lunch forms. So the reimbursements are based on direct certifications. So, computer matches with HRA in terms of children whose families are receiving public assistance, food stamps, or in some cases Medicaid. Using that data, shifts title one funding. And we could have a more in depth discussion about that, and that's what they're concerned with. Since the federal law prohibits the use of a school lunch form because the concept is you take the stigma away from the kids, the parents don't have to fill out forms, and the schools don't have to process forms. So it's kind of all around beneficial. So what other places that have implemented community eligibility have done is

basically created the same school lunch form, not call it that, because they're prohibited from it, but collect the same data for title one purposes in a non-school lunch form, so in a family income form. And that's something that DOE has been trying to iron out with the federal government, Federal DOE for some time. So, that is--that's part of the issue, and part of the reason we are approaching this as a three-step process. What the city doesn't need any approval for is just making it free, to stop charging fees, provide lunch to all children free, be done with it. Then maximize provision two which is a longstanding federal incentive program that's a four-year certification period, and then this community eligibility which both eliminates paperwork and also reimburses as a 1.6 multiplier in the reimbursement. So it's a wonderful program, but until they iron out that issue around title one, the city has been hesitant. We're not looking to have unintended consequences on title one either. So, the solution is using a separate form, at least for the moment.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good. Got it.

LIZ ACCLES: You got it?

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, yes.

LIZ ACCLES: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright. Who's next? Okay, why don't you just make sure that mic is closer to you.

LISA LEVY: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah, okay, great.

LISA LEVY: Good. Hi, my name is Lisa Levy. I'm the director of Policy, Advocacy, and Organizing from the New York City Coalition Against Hunger. I'm testifying on behalf of the city's more than 1,200 soup kitchens and food pantries, and the more than 1.4 million New Yorkers who live in households that can't afford food. I want to first thank you, Chair Dromm and the Education Committee for allowing me to testify here today. For the one in five New York City children who live in households that can't afford enough food, school meals are a critical component for

1 fighting child hunger, and I want to thank you
2 for--and many others for reiterating that fact.
3 New York City had made great strides to get
4 children to eat school meals, but we are still
5 behind. The city has a great opportunity to
6 improve nutrition among food insecure and
7 hungry children, decrease childhood obesity
8 receive more revenue from the federal
9 government for the Department of Education. The
10 city can quickly and easily achieve these
11 outcomes by expanding the provision of school
12 breakfast in the first period classroom. Each
13 day, schools across New York City offer free
14 universal school breakfast. They require no
15 paperwork, forms, hassle or cost to the
16 students. Despite the simplicity of this
17 process and the outreach efforts of the DOE's
18 office of school foods to increase
19 participation in the school breakfast program,
20 New York City's participation has significantly
21 lagged. According to a January 2014, by the
22 Food Research and Action Center on school
23 breakfast participation in 63 large urban
24 school districts across the county, New York
25

City ranked last with only 34.8 percent of the students receiving free or reduced prices lunches, also receiving breakfast. Yet, according to FRACS [phonetic] analysis, New York City Department of Education would have collected 53,127,696 dollars in additional federal funds and served an additional 194,518 low income students if it had met a 70 to 100 free or reduced price breakfast to lunch ratio during the 2012/2013 school year. The school breakfast program improves nutritional status of low income students and breakfast in the classroom is the most effective method of delivery with 75 percent of New York City students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch. For children and families who struggle to afford food where many skip eating breakfast entirely, the single most effective health intervention is to provide nutritious school breakfast. Principals must follow a wide variety of DOE mandates on a wide variety of topics. If something is a priority for the city, it's mandated in every school by using this excuse to avoid a breakfast in the

1 classroom mandate, the DOE is losing millions
2 of dollars in federal funds. My mother was a
3 New York City public school teacher for more
4 than 30 years. The school she taught in in
5 Queens provided free breakfast, but sometimes
6 her students arrived late. She would go to the
7 cafeteria and get breakfast for those children
8 and allow them to eat in her classroom because
9 she didn't want them to go hungry. She was
10 chastised and told that it wasn't allowed. No
11 child should go hungry because their parents
12 can't afford it or because they arrive late.
13 Just as hungry adults can't work, hungry
14 children can't learn. We believe that only a
15 progressive, pro-active and effective approach
16 will be successful in expanding in classroom
17 breakfast. We hope we can count on the
18 Education Committee, the entire City Council
19 and Mayor de Blasio's Administration to make
20 breakfast in the bill happen. The 50,000 New
21 York City children struggling against hunger
22 are counting on each of you. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: You must have had
25 a brave mother, because I think I was actually

1 told it was illegal to bring lunch to the
2 classroom. So congratulations to your mother.
3 Thank you for your testimony. Next, who would
4 like to be next?

5 KRISTINA ERSKINE: Hello, my
6 Kristina Erskine. I attend the Academy for
7 Environmental Leadership on Bushwick campus.
8 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.
9 I'm a part of the Food Justice Team at Bushwick
10 campus, which is a project made possible by
11 EcoStation New York and Make the Road New York.
12 I'm here to speak in support for the Lunch for
13 Learning Campaign for universal free school
14 lunch for all New York City public school
15 students. I certainly acknowledge the peace of
16 mind that I get from knowing that my parents
17 don't have to worry about meeting a forms
18 income standards for me to be able to eat,
19 because I'm lucky enough to not depend on
20 school lunch. I'm able to bring my own food
21 each day, but imagine if every student could
22 seek comfort in knowing that they could always
23 count on eating lunch, and why shouldn't they?
24 Eliminating stigmas associated with getting
25

1
2 free lunch, the feeling of classism and having
3 to report a parent's finances would create a
4 sense of unity within the New York city public
5 school students. This program would create a
6 greater sense of food security for the students
7 throughout New York City. Universal free
8 school lunches would mend the empty stomachs
9 and unfocussed minds of today's youth. I'm
10 asking the Mayor and the City Council to make
11 universal free school lunch a priority in the
12 budget. Thank you for your time.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Next?

14 RICKY SANTANA: Hello, my name is
15 Ricky Santana, and I'm a student at Bushwick
16 School for Social Justice. I want to express my
17 support for the Lunch for Learning Campaign for
18 universal free school lunch for all New York
19 City public school students. I believe that
20 those who don't go to bed hungry are wondering
21 about breakfast in the morning should be the
22 ones on the front lines fighting without rest
23 to make sure those who do can have the security
24 of food in the morning or before class. This is
25 because food is one of those things that we as

1 people are entitled to. Whether it be middle
2 school students or high school students, we
3 need to be fully productive in the classroom.
4 We need everyone who fights so hard to keep us
5 in the classroom to feed us before it. I'm
6 asking the Mayor and the City Council to make
7 universal free school lunch a priority in the
8 budget. Thank you for your time.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

11 IMINATA LOLAVALI: Hello, my name is
12 Iminata Lolavali [phonetic] at Sam Butcher high
13 school for Social Justice. My testimony around
14 the issues of free lunch is that all students
15 should have access to free lunch. I have a
16 personal experience having to fill out a lunch
17 form to see if I was qualified for free lunch.
18 I asked my dad to fill out lunch form. He said
19 why does they need my income taxes to decide if
20 my child should eat free lunch or not? One of
21 my friends was not qualified for free lunch.
22 She has seven sisters and her parents were
23 struggling to put food on the table. Once--
24 since I get free lunch she asked me if I could
25 share my lunch with her so she could eat

1 because she wasn't able to eat otherwise. Even
2 though she didn't qualify for free lunch, she
3 couldn't afford to pay \$1.75. If I wasn't able
4 to share my lunch with her, she would go
5 through her days hungry and unfocused. Based on
6 my experience I think that free lunch should be
7 free for everyone. It shouldn't be based on
8 your income taxes. This leads to bullying and
9 name-calling. We are all human. It's hard to
10 learn when you are hungry. Thank you for your
11 support.
12

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, thank you
14 very much to all of the youth advocates. I
15 think your stories in some ways are the most
16 important stories, and I really deeply
17 appreciate hearing directly from you about how
18 it affects our students in New York City public
19 schools. So your testimony is very, very much
20 appreciated. Thank you all for coming today.
21 Thank you. Okay. Our next panel will be Raven
22 de la Cruz [phonetic] from EcoStation as well,
23 Angel Velasco [phonetic], EcoStation, Felicite
24 Dambra [phonetic] from EcoStation, and Anthony
25 Johnson also from EcoStation. Is somebody

1
2 missing? Okay. Okay. I'm going to ask you to
3 raise your right hand please. Do you solemnly
4 swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole
5 truth and nothing but the truth in your
6 testimony before this committee and to respond
7 honestly to council member questions? I do? I
8 do. Thank you. And let's start over here with
9 the gentleman with the white shirt. Just push
10 that light and see the red light come on and
11 state your name and your testimony.

12 MARK VIDAL: My name is Mark Vidal
13 [phonetic]. I'm a student at BSSJ. Thank you
14 for the opportunity to testify today. I am here
15 to speak about the lunch for learning campaign
16 for universal free and healthy school lunch for
17 all NYC public school students. In my school
18 there are students that get teased and labeled.
19 These teasings go on because they categorize
20 you as poor and all of the negative assumption
21 that come with that. This is because you
22 qualify for the free food, your family income
23 is below 3,600 a year. Another reason I don't
24 eat the school lunch is because of the way it
25 tastes and it makes me feel. This past Tuesday

1
2 I ate the food and afterwards in class I felt
3 drowsy, tired, and it was hard to still be
4 active during eighth period. Universal free
5 lunch could create a new sense of equality in
6 public schools, and I hope this can mean we can
7 also work to change the quality and freshness
8 of the food. There should be free lunch for
9 all. I believe in free and healthy school
10 lunches for all students in New York City.
11 Thank you for your time.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: thank you. Next,
13 please?

14 FELICITE DAMBRA: Hi, my name is
15 Felicite and I'm a student at Social Justice.
16 My testimony is that I have a huge problem with
17 the issue of not having universal free lunch. I
18 think all student in New York City should get
19 access to free lunch because not everybody have
20 the ability to pay for lunch every single day.
21 I think a universal free lunch would be a good
22 thing for students, especially the parents,
23 because they don't have to spend on their
24 children every single day so they can nourish
25 themselves and get strength for the rest of the

1 day. And also, lunch plays a good role in a
2 human being body because it help a person
3 concentrate on what they're going to do during
4 the rest of the day. Also, a quality of lunch
5 improve a person concentration in the
6 afternoon. Not being able to get access to free
7 lunch is a big problem because free lunch is
8 provided based on your parents income taxes to
9 see if you are qualified for free lunch or not,
10 which I think isn't fair because even though
11 the parents make middle class income, during
12 the year they might have some issues to provide
13 lunch money to their children because they have
14 to have--they have bills to pay every month and
15 also to help the rest of the family during a
16 situation. A personal experience that I had is
17 that I wasn't qualified for free lunch because
18 of my parents income, so I have to pay \$1.75
19 every single day in order to get access and
20 school food, but if you think another way,
21 \$1.75 in a month would be 35 dollars. So that
22 means I spend all that money in school lunch
23 every month instead of getting free lunch like
24
25

other kids in my school. I feel different.

Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Next
please?

ANGEL VELASCO: Hi--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing]
Just turn that mic on.

ANGEL VELASCO: Hi, my name's Angel
Velasco. I am a student for PS 88 [sic]. Thank
you for the opportunity to testify today. I am
here to speak about the lunch for the near
company [sic] free and healthy school lunch for
New York City public school students, that
lunch from the school is bad because the food
is never hot and the food is very sparse
[phonetic] and not healthy. I think we need to
change the food for my cafeteria to the
universal free lunch so the students can eat.
We have to pay. I plan to go to college in
Virginia immigrant ledger but college is
expensive in my family, trying to save, and
that can affect the 35 dollars among the school
lunch. Lucky [phonetic] I don't have to pay of
the lunch, but many family are much different,

1
2 that many have to. I don't like the food from
3 the school. No support to people and effect the
4 health quality. The students don't eat and that
5 is bad because of the things that will affect
6 the self or the body for one chose to be
7 hungry. That is my testimony. I wanted to
8 change a life for the students of University
9 Free lunch. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very
11 much. Next please?

12 RAVEN DE LA CRUZ: Hello. My name is
13 Raven de la Cruz [phonetic]. I'm a student at
14 Bushwick School for Social Justice. I'm here to
15 talk about the free universal lunch for all
16 students in New York City. The reason I am
17 talking about this is because there's a giant
18 stigma around free lunch right now. Students
19 fear being labeled as the kid who eats free
20 food because they're not rich enough to bring
21 their own or to pay for it. There's also the
22 fact that only 38 percent of all high school
23 students eat the free food even through 68
24 percent of them are labeled for it. This is
25 because students fear being labeled and will go

1 hungry for the rest of the day for the rest of
2 the school day. Students that don't have the
3 energy later in the day, this means that the
4 student's grades are lowered and they can't
5 participate in all activities given to them by
6 the school. Universal free lunch can fix this
7 by providing everyone lunch without having to
8 prove a certain need or document for this. This
9 would get rid of the stigma and allow kids of
10 all incomes to eat without the negative labels
11 that often accompany it. If this passes, most
12 kids would start eating lunch and have more
13 energy during the day, increasing student's
14 grades across NYC and the overall grade levels.
15 Thank you for your time.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well thank you
18 very much to all of you. Is this the first time
19 for all of you at City Hall? First time being
20 in the building? And first time testifying I
21 imagine, right? Nerve racking? I'm not so bad,
22 but you know what, I used to be a teacher. I
23 taught fourth grade for 25 years and I have to
24 tell you, you are very very impressive. So do
25 you really believe that there's a stigma around

1
2 the free lunch? Have you seen kids be teased
3 for it or not want to go for free lunch because
4 they're afraid that other kids will know that
5 they are getting free lunch?

6 RAVEN DE LA CRUZ: I certainly do. It
7 happens each period there's lunch--there's
8 always--they have nicknames. They call it the
9 "free-free now." There's always--everyone gets
10 teased for it, whoever's eating it. There's a
11 giant stigma around it, sir.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So you see it
13 with your own eyes?

14 RAVEN DE LA CRUZ: Yeah, and hear it
15 every day.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good. And
17 all of you agree? Anything else that you want
18 to say? Okay. What country did you come from?
19 Mexico, oh. Habla Espanol? Okay, beinvienido.
20 Thank you for coming and we'll see you again
21 soon, hopefully. Thank you. Our next panel
22 Iashima Harris [phonetic] from EcoStation and
23 Vinnia Adarius [phonetic] from EcoStation. So
24 did you guys all fill out a paper, because we
25 only have two? Alright, good. We need that for

our records. So who wants to start? Okay. Oh, I have to swear you in. Raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and to respond to Council Member questions honestly? Okay. Please state your name for the record and then you may begin.

VINNIA ADARIUS: My name is Vinnia Adarius. I'm a student at the Bushwick School for Social Justice. I believe it's not fair that students spend most of their time in school but cannot afford to eat. School lunch should be available to everyone of every economical status. Often times school lunch is the only meals that students can count on having for the whole day. So many kids are not eating because they are afraid of being labeled. New York City public school lunch is the second largest public school program in the United States, but not enough students are participating. I remember last year my friends and I refused to eat the school lunch because we always saw it arrive in packages. In order to implement these changes in our school, we

had to make school meals available to everyone.

We want to create a safe learning environment and food is the cornerstone of a productive day. So without food, a student cannot concentrate and when they cannot concentrate they fail their tests and they won't be able to move on. Last year, before the day would end I would be so tired that I wasn't able to sit through a 45 minute class. Why? It was not because I wanted to be healthy or anything, it was because I was disgusted by the food they were feeding us and also disgusted at the fact that some of my peers were not eating. We're always trying to encourage kids to eat healthier, but pizzas, hamburgers, and fries are not the food we should incorporate in the student's day to day school life. In order to get healthier school lunch, we need to have a system in place that will not stigmatize students. We need universal free lunch. We need students to focus on school and not what they're going to eat, and we need to give the students and opportunity to learn. Just because a household is making 36,000 per year does not

mean that their children should be disqualified from free lunch. One dollar and 75 cents is not easy to come by. My peers should not go in the school line ashamed or afraid to be humiliated by their peers. We need this to move forward as a city. New York city should lead the way towards a more equitable educational system. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Next?

IMNATA DRAMANA: It's working? Okay.

Good afternoon. My name is Imnata Dramana [phonetic] and I am a student of AUP, Academy of Urban Planning. I want to express my support for the lunch for learning campaign for universal free--for universal free school lunch for all NYC school students. Bullying, name calling, threatening, oppressing and the oppressed, the lunch food--Sorry. The lunch food and those who receive it are the leading causes of bullying at my school. In most schools, kids are often bullied because they eat the food which statewide is nick named free-free. This name is uncomfortable to most people. Just last week, I witnessed a boy

1 getting bullied over getting in line for free-
2 free. The bully was yelling over the entire
3 cafeteria, "You got free-free, yo!" This causes
4 depression and feeling left out and encourages
5 students not to eat lunch even if it is the
6 only meal of the day. More often than not, the
7 school lunch is the thing that determines who
8 gets bullied or not. This abundant--of this
9 abundance controversies with the school lunch,
10 this is one. Another controversy of school
11 lunch includes the portion size, freshness,
12 undercooked food and not enough fresh fruits
13 and vegetables. However, I believe that one
14 important step we can make is to make all
15 school lunches universally free and get rid of
16 the bullying and teasing that occurs because of
17 it. I ask you Mr. Mayor, Councilman and women
18 to make universal free lunch a priority for
19 all. We need to stop the stigma and get better
20 food in our schools. Thank you very much for
21 your time and support. I gladly appreciate it.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Very good. And
23 let's go over here, and then we'll come back to
24 this young man.
25

IASHIMA HARRIS: Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor, Chancellor, and the New York City Council Members. My name is Iashima Harris, and I attend the Academy for Environmental Leadership in Bushwick Brooklyn. As a strong supporter of universal free lunch, I believe making school lunch available to everyone is a great cause because it eliminates hunger and classism within the school environments. I have witnessed students getting bullied just because they would go to the front of the line for a lunch. These are the students who have never missed a day of breakfast nor refused school lunch. One student in particular who attends the same school as myself has to deal with bullying every day for eating free school lunch. Some students will do things just to upset him and make him feel small. Eating school lunch is not a bad thing, nor should one think that way. However, students automatically make assumptions about their peers environments whenever they are seen eating school lunch. Making universal free lunch available would end the stigma. Another key point is that our

parents taxes are contributing the funding of public schools and their food. My questions are, why is that only people of certain economic status are receiving free lunch? Shouldn't this be available to all? What about those who make more than suggested poverty level but who still can't afford to spend the one dollar and 75 cents a day? What happens to them? I, myself, do not eat school lunch, not because I cannot afford to, but because it is not well prepared. Though we are not here addressing quality here today, it is also a key factor in students refusing to engage in school lunch. For the students who cannot afford school lunch, it is not fair for them to sit and watch other kids eat it while their stomach is growling. Some students who have access to free lunch do not take advantage of that resource because of both other people's opinions and the quality of the food. Others collect their lunch, take out the fruits, and dumps the rest without giving it a second thought. Why would they waste something so important that others do not have access to?

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USHON LEIU: Ushon Leiu [phonetic]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Ushon Leiu? And
you're from CACF?

USHON LEIU: Yes. CACF, yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: CACF? And I
need you to raise your right hand to swear you
in. Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth,
the whole truth and nothing but the truth and
to answer Council Member questions honestly?

USHON LEIU: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, and you
may begin.

USHON LEIU: Good afternoon. My name
is Ushon Leiu. I'm the youth leader from the
Asian-American Student Advocacy Project, ASAP,
under the coalition for Asian-American Children
and families CACF. I just took one hour train
to here from school. Maybe I seem a little
breathless, please excuse me. We would like to
thank Chair Jerome and members of the Finance
and Education Committees for holding this
important oversight hearing on the city fiscal
year 2015 preliminary plan. CACF is the nations
only Pan-Asian [phonetic] students advocacy

organization, seeking to improve the health and well-being of Asian-Pacific American, APA student and families in the New York City in three policy areas, education, health, and child welfare. ASAP, a youth leadership project comprises of New York City public high school students from all five boroughs has been a program under the CACF for the past 10 years working to empower young people to make positive changes in education through advocacy.

As a young APA student from a new immigrant family, I feel a sense of responsibility to speak on behalf of my community. I'm here today to represent my fellow ASAP members and to testify and highlight some of the challenges Asian youth face and present some recommendations on a college and career-readiness campaign that ASAP has been working on for the past three years. I would also like to take this opportunity to state that ASAP support the Mayor's current universal pre-k plan as we believe that it will have a long term positive impact on career readiness of our next generations of all the communities in New

York City. As there are certain pervasive notions like other minority that APA students are doing well and do not need any assistance. We are here to provide a clearer understanding on the state of APA community. Currently, 26 percent of APA's live in poverty, the second highest of all racial groups in New York City. And APA's have the highest rate of linguistic isolation at 42 percent. That means 42 percent of APA has no one over the age of 14 speaks English well. In public high school, one of the five Asian-Pacific American students is an English language learner. Currently, one of eight--one of the four 18 high school students do not graduate on time or at all. Many APA youth will come from immigrant families, struggle to get the support they need at home to never get high schools since the parents are either not home, working all the time, or do not understand the school system at all. For myself, I'm from a typical immigrant family. I came to New York last year. My parents cannot speak English, nor do they have clear understanding on American education. I also

1 want to share a personal experience from my
2 fellow Asian member. She's from immigrant
3 family as well. Like me, she's the only one who
4 can speak English in her family, because of the
5 deficiency of family support, the guidance
6 counselor is the only person we can ask for
7 help regarding to academic issues. In her
8 school, there's only one guidance counselor,
9 one social worker, and one college counselor
10 with over 300 immigrant students that come from
11 different countries and require extra support
12 and other assistance in school and deal with
13 the current application process. Due to lack of
14 support, one of her friends even told her he
15 would rather work in a restaurant than waste
16 time in school. This issue is not uncommon for
17 APA students in New York City and it's not
18 surprising that one of the four Asian-Pacific
19 American high school students do not graduate
20 on time or at all. Recognizing that guidance
21 counselors play a crucial role in students
22 pursuing his educational goals, especially who
23 comes from a low income or immigrant household,
24 is that develop a college and career readiness
25

1 campaign called Campaign Bridge to better
2 support youth be post high school ready. In
3 Campaign Bridge we have identified a list of
4 recommendations that focus on reforming current
5 guidance counseling roles to help ensure all
6 students have the guidance they need to be
7 college and career ready such as develop and
8 implement citywide standards that apply to all
9 guidance programs in the New York City school
10 system. This standard should include a road map
11 plan to help students succeed in high school,
12 plan for the future, identify and achieve their
13 post graduation plans, create an independent
14 task force which would include representatives
15 from the school administration, school staff,
16 counselors, students, parents, youth groups and
17 education advocates. They will be allowed to
18 voice their opinions and assist in the
19 development of guidance programs standards and
20 to keep guidance counselors accountable. With
21 our college and career-readiness campaign, we
22 want to make sure that not only all Asian-
23 Pacific American youth, but all youth can have
24 the support and guidance they need to graduate
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1 from high school and succeed in their college
2 and careers. We want to ensure that APA's are
3 not left out or invisible in ongoing
4 discussions on resource allocation and
5 education reform initiatives under this new
6 Administration. We urge committee members to
7 work with fellow members of the Council and the
8 Department of Education toward our
9 recommendations to increase and expand guidance
10 staff with professional development that
11 includes college ready competent training to
12 better serve and engage our diverse community
13 and their educational needs. And last, we will
14 like to commend members of this committee that
15 have been so supportive and invested to ensure
16 that all New York City youth have equal access
17 to a better guidance in schools. Thank you for
18 giving us this opportunity to speak to you
19 today.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well thank you
22 all for coming in. Mr. Leiu, you got a lot in
23 there, including some stuff on Get Us to
24 College, which I do support as well. I have to
25 tell you these last couple of panels have been

1
2 very convincing, and I think you've sold me on
3 the issue, and we will fight for you. And I
4 want to give you a little bit of a homework
5 assignment, being the teacher that I am, and
6 ask you to also make sure that you get this
7 message to the Mayor on the Mayor's side
8 because I heard in testimony today that if the
9 Mayor puts in 20 million dollars we can have
10 moving forward for the next school year every
11 kid get free lunch. So will you write some
12 letters to that site of the hall as well?
13 Alright, I hope that you will. That's a
14 homework assignment. Alright. Well, thank you
15 everybody for coming in. I really appreciate
16 it, and with that, this hearing is adjourned at
17 3:15 p.m.

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is no interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date 04/21/2014