

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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March 25, 2015  
Start: 10:17 a.m.  
Recess: 6:06 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Daniel Dromm  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Vincent J. Gentile  
Daniel R. Garodnick  
Margaret S. Chin  
Stephen T. Levin  
Deborah L. Rose  
Mark S. Weprin  
Jumaane D. Williams  
Ben Kallos  
Andy L. King  
Inez D. Barron  
Chaim M. Deutsch  
Mark Levine  
Alan N. Maisel  
Antonio Reynoso  
Mark Treyger

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

Carmen Farina

Department of Education Chancellor

Ray Orlando

Department of Education Chief Financial Officer

Sophia Pappas

Department of Education Division of Early  
Childhood Education

Lorraine Grillo

President of School Construction Authority

Elizabeth Rose

Deputy Chancellor Division of Operations at  
Department of Education

Ling Tan

Executive Director for Capital and Reimbursable  
Program for Department of Education

Evelyn DeJesus

Vice President for Education Policy at United  
Federation of Teachers

Jeremy Hoffman

United Federation of Teachers

Liz Accles

Community Food Advocates

Roshley Roy

Bushwick Food Council

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

Felicite Dambras

Bushwick Food Council

Simone Springer

Bushwick Food Council

Nafestia Caleb

Bushwick Food Council

Aminata Abudugarama [sp?]

Bushwick Food Council

Jannay Yaskins [sp?]

Citywide Council on High Schools

Christina Fernandez

Pediatrician

Alleyne Hughley

President of Citywide Council on High Schools

Maggie Moroff

Arise Coalition

Randi Levine

Advocates for Children

Jane Heaphy

Learning Leaders

Maria Bautista

Alliance for Quality Education

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

Felicia Alexander  
Coalition for Educational Justice

Natasha Capers  
Coalition for Educational Justice

Erin George  
New York Lawyers for Public Interest

Alexis Henry  
Citizens Committee for Children

Lisa Levy  
NYC Coalition Against Hunger

Janet Poppendieck  
New York City Food Policy

Barbara Harris  
Granny Peace Brigade

Sarah Fajardo  
Coalition for Asian American Children and  
Families

Ariana Jenkins  
Union Settlement

Diamond Rivera  
Union Settlement

Nina Dastur

Director of Policy and Advocacy at Union  
Settlement

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

Randi Herman  
Council for Supervisors and Administrators

Donald Nesbit  
Local 372

Casey Foster  
Urban Youth Collaborative

Matthew Evans  
Urban Youth Collaborative

Onyx Walker  
Urban Youth Collaborative

Latrell Stone  
Urban Youth Collaborative

Miltyana Holdib [sp?]  
Urban Youth Collaborative

Julian Thompson  
Urban Youth Collaborative

Wendy Chapman  
Build Schools Now

Max Ahmed  
New York Immigration Coalition

Eric Pryor  
Center for Arts and Education

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

Beth Broderick  
Center for Court Innovation

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: That was a fun start  
3 of the day, right?

4 UNIDENTIFIED: Ladies and gentleman, at  
5 this time, make sure all electronic devices are set  
6 to vibrate. If you wish to testify, see the Sergeant  
7 at Arms and fill out a witness slip. Thank you for  
8 your cooperation.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [gavel] Good morning.  
10 My name is Council Member Daniel Dromm and I'm Chair  
11 of the Education Committee, and let me just start off  
12 by saying a little something. I don't really  
13 appreciate when students are used in an inappropriate  
14 manner, whether it's done here in the City Council or  
15 whether it's done in Albany, and there are ways for  
16 people to address issues of concern, and that is by  
17 filling out a form and handing it into the Sergeant  
18 at Arms or holding a press conference before this  
19 hearing, but this hearing is being held so that  
20 everybody can have an opportunity to say what they  
21 feel about certain issues, and I feel that the way  
22 that it was done prior to the opening of the hearing  
23 today was just totally inappropriate. So, I'm going  
24 to start off on that note. But anyway, good morning  
25 and welcome to Fiscal 2016 Preliminary Budget Hearing

1 on the Department of Education in Fiscal Year 2015,  
2 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report. Today, we'll  
3 be hearing from the DOE's Chancellor, Chancellor  
4 Carmen Farina, followed by testimony from unions,  
5 parents, advocates, students and others who wish to  
6 testify in front of the Council. The Department of  
7 Education's Fiscal 2016 Preliminary Budget totals  
8 21.59 billion dollars which represents nearly 30  
9 percent of the city's 77.7 billion dollar budget.  
10 This year's budget is 839 million more than Fiscal  
11 2015 adopted budget. The increase is largely due to  
12 collective bargaining costs, charter school tuition  
13 payments, the Renewal Schools Initiative, UPK, and  
14 annual incremental increases. Collective bargaining  
15 totals 506.4 million dollars in Fiscal 2016 according  
16 to the Administration. The DOE is 98 percent complete  
17 with the union agreement. Another 144 million is  
18 growth and funding for charter schools next year,  
19 which does not take into account potential costs of  
20 new charter schools that will open this fall. The  
21 Administration's laudable Renewal School's Initiative  
22 increases the DOE's budget by 30.7 million in Fiscal  
23 2015 with the expectation the Executive Budget will  
24 contain further increases for Fiscal 2016 and in the  
25

1 out years. Finally, UPK continues to be a priority  
2 of this city, and the budget show the additional  
3 funding from the state for UPK. While the overall  
4 budget of the DOE continues to grow, there is concern  
5 that this funding is not trickling down to the  
6 classrooms. How are students gaining from these  
7 increases? Are their classes smaller? Is there  
8 additional funding for supplies and new innovative  
9 technological advances in the classroom? Do they  
10 have the fields and gyms they're entitled to so they  
11 can become high achievers? As a former educator, I  
12 know the value of class size and what it can mean for  
13 a child's educational attainment. The Council has  
14 stood firm with the Mayor in our demand for funding  
15 from the state as it is legally obligated to provide  
16 as based on the campaign for fiscal equity. We will  
17 continue to relentlessly fight for our funding,  
18 because I like other educators know, our students  
19 deserve it. We hope the DOE will continue the fight  
20 to gain equity in our schools as well. This leads me  
21 to my next hope for today, that we can have an honest  
22 conversation about equity for our students. Every  
23 student, regardless of neighborhood, family income,  
24 race, gender identity, and learning abilities should  
25

1  
2 have access to a sound education. The disparities in  
3 grade advancement, reading and math proficiencies and  
4 graduation rates must end. The Education Committee  
5 has held oversight hearings on diversity in  
6 enrollment, English language learners and soon on  
7 school discipline in an effort to ensure that as a  
8 city we are preparing our students and giving them  
9 the opportunity to become successful adults. We  
10 cannot wait on the State to get us there. We have to  
11 find creative ways to generate more revenue and be as  
12 efficient as possible. Today, we want to examine the  
13 DOE's budget in areas like the Fair Student Funding  
14 Formula, Medicaid revenue and technology spending to  
15 further clarify our areas of concern. While we  
16 applaud the Chancellor on all the efforts toward  
17 creating more equitable schools with the shift in  
18 superintendent control and borough field support  
19 officers, the Council also wants to make sure the  
20 community and the Council are involved in every step  
21 of the way. There should be real and tangible  
22 parental engagement for all communities, dedicated  
23 staff to support our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and  
24 transgender student population, and a true investment  
25 in language access services so all New Yorkers can be

1 engaged in their child's education. Before I will  
2 conclude, I'd like to thank the staff of my committee  
3 who have worked tirelessly on this hearing, and I  
4 think we have done five education hearings in the  
5 last six weeks. I'm very proud of the work that this  
6 committee has done, and I'd like to thank Nora Yaya  
7 [sp?], Medina Nitsamitine [sp?], Asia Schamburg  
8 [sp?], Jan Atwell, Joan Povolmi [sp?], and Regina  
9 Pereta-Ryan [sp?] for the work that they have done in  
10 preparation for this hearing. I'd also like to  
11 introduce my colleagues who have joined us this  
12 morning, and I want to thank everyone again as we  
13 welcome the Chancellor's testimony. So to my right  
14 we have Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez from  
15 Manhattan, Council Member Mark Weprin from Queens,  
16 Council Member Mark Treyger from Brooklyn, and I know  
17 that we will be joined by other Council Members as  
18 well, and I'd also like to announce that we've been  
19 joined by a special guest, Comptroller John Lieu who  
20 is here today in his role as a professor with CUNY  
21 Finance students. So let's give them a little bit of  
22 a round of applause and welcome them as well.

24 [applause]

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Comptroller  
3 for being here. It's good to see you as always. And  
4 I guess with that I'm going to swear in our  
5 Chancellor and Mr. Orlando. Would you raise your  
6 right hand, please? Do you solemnly swear or affirm  
7 to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but  
8 the truth and to answer Council Member questions  
9 honestly? Thank you. And Chancellor, would you  
10 begin? I think the mic is not on. Let me just--

11 CHANCELLOR FARINA: That always helps.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: There you go.

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Good morning, Chair  
14 Dromm and all members of the City Council Education  
15 Committee here today. Thank you for the opportunity  
16 to discuss Mayor de Blasio's proposed Fiscal Year  
17 2016 Preliminary Expense Budget as it relates to the  
18 New York City DOE and our public schools. I am  
19 joined by Ray Orlando, DOE's Chief Financial Officer.  
20 I would like to begin by thanking Speaker Melissa  
21 Mark-Viverito, Education Committee Chair Danny Dromm  
22 and all members of the City Council for your strong  
23 partnership and support over this past year.  
24 Together, we have truly made a difference in the  
25 lives of our school communities. With your support,

1 we have already advanced several key initiatives,  
2 including the historic implementation of Pre-K for  
3 All and after school programs for middle school  
4 students. With the 294 million dollars invested this  
5 year, our youngest learners are getting an early  
6 start developing language and number skills that will  
7 serve as a strong foundation for academic success,  
8 approximately 1,700 New York City public schools.  
9 Early Childhood Centers in charter schools, next  
10 September, in the second year of our Pre-K for All  
11 Expansion, we will provide a seat for every four year  
12 old in the city. Families are excited about this  
13 opportunity, and as of this past Monday during the  
14 first week of enrollment, more than 37,000 families  
15 signed up for Pre-K for All. I will tell you that  
16 one of my favorite things as Chancellor is visiting  
17 these Pre-K sites both in public schools and in the  
18 community based organizations, and they have been a  
19 total wonder to me in terms of now the vocabulary  
20 development spreading, and in terms the joy that the  
21 kids express in class. Similarly, this year, the city  
22 embarked on the largest ever expansion of after  
23 school offerings for middle school students. We are  
24 providing enriching programming for over 90,000  
25

1 middle school students in traditional school settings  
2 and community based centers across the city. Our  
3 after schools not only help improve academic  
4 performance, they foster a sense of community at a  
5 critical time in the child's development. I was in a  
6 middle school recently where they have a band that  
7 practices five days a week after school, and then now  
8 is in a national competition. Those are the kinds of  
9 things we want to see in all our schools. Over the  
10 past 15 months we have been working to transform the  
11 school system. We have implemented a number of  
12 reforms to improve instruction, streamline school  
13 support and accountability and provide students with  
14 both the academic and the non-academic supports to  
15 help them succeed. I would like to highlight some of  
16 our accomplishments. Last year, we introduced the  
17 framework for great schools, a bold innovative  
18 research based capacity framework for guiding and  
19 measuring school quality. This framework identifies  
20 six essential elements for continual school  
21 improvement, rigorous instruction, a supportive  
22 environment, collaborative teachers, effective  
23 leadership, strong family community ties, which I  
24 know is a major emphasis of the Council, and a  
25

1 culture of continuous learning and trust. To ensure  
2 that schools are receiving support that are better  
3 aligned to the framework for great schools, last fall  
4 we announced structural changes to the way we will  
5 align support and supervision for our schools,  
6 beginning in the 2015/2016 year. We are streamlining  
7 the school's support system to create equity and more  
8 efficient lines of communication between our city  
9 schools and families. In our new geographically  
10 based support structure, there are four core  
11 components, superintendents, borough field support  
12 centers, central division, and affinity groups.  
13 Under this structure, superintendents will supervise,  
14 support and advocate for schools in their district to  
15 ensure student achievement goals are met and will  
16 work with the local community to support family  
17 engagement and in the learning process. I have to be  
18 honest and say that to me, this is one of the most  
19 important things we've done. To have superintendents  
20 that understand their communities and are held  
21 accountable for the success of those schools is quite  
22 different than what's been happening in the last few  
23 years, and people now also know the name of the  
24 people they can call if they have a question or any  
25

1 kind of concerns. To facilitate these reforms, all  
2 district and high school superintendents had to  
3 reapply for their positions this summer in accordance  
4 with new criteria to ensure that all new  
5 superintendents have at least 10 years of pedagogical  
6 experience, including these three as a principle.

7 This rigorous process required them to have a  
8 demonstrability to raise student achievement as well  
9 as engage families. We recently announced our seven  
10 new borough directors. Each director will manage a  
11 team of deputies who will collectively provide a set  
12 of integrated services to schools based on their  
13 individual needs. Teaching and Learning will be one  
14 department. Finance and Human Resources will be  
15 another department. Operations will be a department.  
16 Student Services, Special Education and English  
17 Language Learners will be their own department, each  
18 under a Borough Superintendent. Our goal is to  
19 provide differentiation at every level in order to  
20 create strong support for schools. The allocation of  
21 staff across each borough office will be done  
22 according to school needs to ensure equity across all  
23 geographic areas, not according to specific schools.  
24 For example, the Bronx may have more English language  
25

1 learner specialists than another center in order to  
2 best serve its population. Brooklyn and Queens will  
3 have two borough centers due to the higher number of  
4 students in each of these boroughs. These structural  
5 changes will give us the tools we need to drive  
6 improvement across the system and ultimately help  
7 each child fulfill his or her potential as an active  
8 member of our city. We're also targeting  
9 unprecedented resources to support our most  
10 challenged schools. We have created 128 new  
11 community schools, including all of them in renewal  
12 schools. As part of this Administration's commitment  
13 to ensure that all our students receive a quality  
14 education regardless of the background, family income  
15 or zip code. We recently identified 94 city schools  
16 as Renewal Schools. We are investing 150 million  
17 dollars in the School Renewal Program, a multiyear  
18 initiative to turn around struggling schools. Over  
19 the next three years we will work intensely with each  
20 Renewal School's community to establish clear goals,  
21 provide a core set of interventions and hold them  
22 accountable for rapid improvement. To oversee this  
23 effort, I have appointed Aimee Horowitz as Executive  
24 Superintendent for the School Renewal Program. Aimee  
25

1  
2 brings to this role tremendous experience and a  
3 record of success in turning around struggling  
4 schools and raising student achievement. Most  
5 recently she served as superintendent for Staten  
6 Island high schools and 14 Renewal Schools. With  
7 Aimee's support and the support of her team, borough  
8 based directors of Renewal Schools, these schools  
9 will provide an extra hour each day of extended  
10 instruction and could offer additional after school  
11 weekend and summer learning opportunities as needed.  
12 Moreover, each will receive additional resources for  
13 academic intervention and professional development to  
14 create better learning environment for students.  
15 Each Renewal School will also transform into a  
16 community school, knitting together new services that  
17 support both students and their families. In  
18 addition, each Renewal School will perform a needs  
19 assessment across all six elements of the framework  
20 for grade schools to identify key areas for  
21 additional resources and develop a school renewal  
22 plan. Each school must meet the concrete milestones  
23 defined in their respective school renewal plan as  
24 well as progress on targeted elements of the  
25 framework for grade schools. Just yesterday I

1 visited two Renewal Schools and I will tell you that  
2 those principals are doing an unbelievable amount of  
3 efforts in just a very short period of time. Every  
4 member of my leadership team is visiting two to three  
5 Renewal Schools per week and we expect to have a  
6 really good focus on these schools as we go forward.  
7 The arts have a power to transform the academic  
8 social and emotional lives our students so we  
9 invested 23 million to expand arts education. All  
10 students should have access to robust instruction in  
11 dance, drama, music, and the visual arts. This  
12 funding is being used to support certified arts  
13 teachers in low arts middle and high schools and arts  
14 programs providing collaboration with cultural  
15 institution in arts education organizations. These  
16 includes arts partnership programs for English  
17 language learners and students with disability,  
18 professional development resources for art teachers  
19 and workshops for families among other initiatives.  
20 We also lifted the hiring freeze, which has resulted  
21 in additional 300 certified arts educators working in  
22 our schools this year. To address the need of our  
23 ELLs, we will open 40 new dual language and 10  
24 transitional bilingual education programs throughout  
25

1 the city next year. Similarly, we are commitment to  
2 expanding bilingual program options for ELLs. We  
3 will continue to support schools in offering new  
4 programs and strengthening existing programs across  
5 elementary, middle and high school grades to meet the  
6 needs of each students and school community. As part  
7 of our goal to ensure that New York City students are  
8 prepared for careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy, we  
9 continue to strengthen our existing career and  
10 technical education in workforce readiness programs  
11 to provide more work based learning and paid  
12 internship opportunities for students. On Monday we  
13 announced that 3.2 million dollar grants from the  
14 General Electric Foundation that will support an  
15 innovative CTE pilot program designed to strengthen  
16 teaching and learning practices at 10 schools. It  
17 will also support STEM training for 200 schools  
18 through brand new multiday STEM institutes as well as  
19 STEM inventory project to identify and share strong  
20 STEM practices across DOE schools. One hundred  
21 schools will attend the first STEM institute this  
22 spring. I invite any of you who wish to attend. I  
23 will give you the dates. Including six Renewal  
24 Schools that can leverage this experience to help  
25

1 drive improvement in teaching and student outcomes.  
2  
3 In know Speaker Mark-Viverito and the Council share  
4 our commitment to this work, and I look forward to  
5 partnering with you to provide our students with even  
6 more opportunities. With generous funding from the  
7 City Council this year, we have been able to provide  
8 additional restorative justice program in our schools  
9 and create approximately 100 new sports teams in  
10 small schools, which historically have not had many  
11 teams. City Council funding has also enabled us to  
12 expand the Universal Lunch Program to all 291 middle  
13 schools serving grades six to eight. The goals of the  
14 programs are to improve the overall atmosphere and  
15 experience for students in our cafeterias, reduce the  
16 stigma of qualifying for free lunch and encourage  
17 more students to each healthy and nutritious meals in  
18 our school. As part of this initiative, seven  
19 schools were selected to serve as pilots to continue  
20 to develop best practices to be models for the rest  
21 of the city. There has been a 6.4 percent increase  
22 in the lunch participation rate in the middle  
23 schools. We are taking this year to encourage  
24 students to each school food prepared meals and we  
25 are currently studying the cost implications of

1 expanding the program. The Mayor's Fiscal 2016  
2 Preliminary Budget includes an allocation of  
3 approximately 21.6 billion in operating funds,  
4 another 5.5 billion for education related pension and  
5 debt service funds. Our funding is a combination of  
6 city, state and federal dollars with city tax levy  
7 dollars making up the largest share at 56 percent,  
8 state dollars at 38 percent and federal dollars at  
9 six percent. The Mayor's proposed budget continues  
10 to make unprecedented investments in education. The  
11 Preliminary Budget includes funding for the School  
12 Renewal Program, literacy intervention teams,  
13 language access services for limited English speaking  
14 parents, and the installation of door alarms to help  
15 keep our youngest and most vulnerable students safe.  
16 It is critical that we build student's literacy  
17 skills in the early grades and provide them with a  
18 strong literacy foundation to have successful  
19 academic careers. DOE's Division of Specialized  
20 Instruction and Student Support in collaboration with  
21 our Division of Teaching and Learning is developing a  
22 new Literacy Intervention Program to improve  
23 collaboration between classroom teachers, reading  
24 specialists, school leadership in next year in the  
25

1  
2 borough offices. We recognize that families are key  
3 partners in achieving academic excellence for their  
4 children, and parent engagement continues to be a  
5 critical element embedded in all our reforms. As you  
6 are aware, community education council elections are  
7 now underway. This year we increased the number of  
8 applicants to serve on CEC's by 561 for a total of  
9 1,290, and I hope you will encourage all eligible  
10 parents to vote in the upcoming elections. Data from  
11 the Mayor's Preliminary Management Report show that  
12 parent-teacher conference attendance increased by 42  
13 percent this year and phone consultations increased  
14 by eight percent compared to the same period last  
15 year. A lot of this also has to do with our emphasis  
16 on Tuesdays being committed for teachers to work with  
17 parents. Its part of the contract that we signed,  
18 and also, part of this is that we have asked many  
19 schools to do student lead conferences where the  
20 students take part in sharing their information with  
21 their parents. As you aware, since 2009, the State  
22 has not met its court ordered obligations under the  
23 Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit. This year alone  
24 New York City public school students will be  
25 shortchanged some 2.6 billion in state education

1  
2 funds. While we have been able to make critical  
3 investments in the school system with adequate  
4 funding from the state, we'd be able to reduce class  
5 size as well as hire more arts teachers and guidance  
6 counselors. While we are pleased with our progress,  
7 we know we have a lot of hard work ahead. I look  
8 forward to my continued work with the City Council on  
9 behalf of our 1.1 million students and their  
10 families. Only through collaboration can we create a  
11 world class education system in which every student  
12 has the opportunity to succeed. Thank you for the  
13 opportunity to testify before you. We are happy to  
14 answer any questions you may have.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,  
16 Chancellor. I just, before we go to questioning,  
17 want to announce that we've been joined by Council  
18 Member Debbie Rose, Council Member Margaret Chin,  
19 Council Member Mark Levine, Council Member Alan  
20 Maisel was here, Council Member Crowley, and I think  
21 that's it as far as people who have joined us. So let  
22 me just go to some questioning. I noticed that in  
23 your testimony, Chancellor, you mentioned that state  
24 dollars are 38 percent of the overall budget and that  
25 federal dollars are approximately six percent. The

1  
2 state--the Governor has proposed I think somewhere in  
3 the area of about 348 million dollars in additional  
4 funding. If the packages that he's tied to the  
5 budget in terms of other issues are not also passed  
6 along with the budget and would we be able to count  
7 on that 38 percent if the state is only giving us the  
8 348 million dollars or do we actually need a lot more  
9 than that to meet that 38 percent?

10 RAY ORLANDO: Hi, is this on? Can you  
11 guys hear me?

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah. And just  
13 identify yourself, too, so--

14 RAY ORLANDO: [interposing] Sure. Hi, I'm  
15 Ray Orlando. I'm the Chief Financial Officer of the  
16 New York City Department of Education. Good morning.  
17 The Preliminary Budget published by the city is the  
18 basis of those calculations. So, in the event that  
19 nothing else changes and state aid increased, that  
20 percentage would increase, if you see what I'm  
21 saying.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: The percentage would  
23 increase?

24 RAY ORLANDO: Yeah, if the--if we--  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] If we  
3 got more.

4 RAY ORLANDO: If we got more state aid  
5 and nothing else changed, then the percentage of  
6 state aid would in our total budget would increase.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So you're saying the  
8 348 million that the Governor has proposed would  
9 increase?

10 RAY ORLANDO: Would be in addition to  
11 what's in the Preliminary Budget, which is the basis  
12 of the calculation.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, and if there was  
14 an additional increase above the 348 million, if it  
15 was raised to what the Assembly is talking about, for  
16 example, 1.8, I think, billion, it would--

17 RAY ORLANDO: [interposing] That would--

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: increase by that much  
19 as well.

20 RAY ORLANDO: also change.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So that just shows, I  
22 think in my opinion, how desperately needed that  
23 funding is to support our budget down here at this  
24 level as well. And then in terms of the six percent  
25 with the federal dollars, I know that we have, or I

1  
2 think we have seen a little bit of a drop in the  
3 number of Title One students in the system. Does  
4 that six percent reflect that drop, and is there  
5 anything we can do about that, and how is that figure  
6 gotten at?

7 RAY ORLANDO: Sure. The six percent  
8 doesn't actually reflect the decrease that we're  
9 forecasting for the upcoming year, because those  
10 percentages are based on the current year, if you see  
11 what I'm saying. So, the fact that Title One dollars  
12 are falling to New York City is largely due to the  
13 fact that the economy locally in New York City is  
14 stronger than the economy in the state of New York.  
15 If you see--we in the city are sort of economically  
16 doing better. So given that the pot itself is fixed  
17 or shrinking, we're getting less of the pie because  
18 it's distributed based on how you're doing basically.  
19 And we're doing a--

20 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] And  
21 gentrification is hitting certain parts of the city  
22 in a very high way, so that as schools who had a  
23 majority of free lunch students now are moving away  
24 from that, it's really effecting those numbers quite  
25 seriously in some places.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do you know the figure  
3 from last year in terms of the percentage of federal  
4 dollars that came in. Is there a difference in that  
5 percentage?

6 RAY ORLANDO: Yeah, at this time of year,  
7 there's typically a slight difference. We've been  
8 hovering I'd say at about eight or nine percent of  
9 our total budget funded by federal dollars, and what  
10 happens is during the year as the year progresses a  
11 lot of federal aid that comes to us for grants and  
12 other things that occur during the year, and we wait  
13 until that money shows up to move it into the budget.  
14 SO I expect by the end of this year, we'll probably  
15 be in a similar eight or nine percentage place as  
16 opposed to the six we're kind of at as we move more  
17 money in over the next few months.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: That does concern us-

19 -

20 RAY ORLANDO: [interposing] But it's  
21 certainly not growing.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Right. Is there a  
23 way also because much of the federal dollars is based  
24 on student lunch applications that we can increase

1  
2 those applications coming in to accurately reflect  
3 the students that we're serving?

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We have done a very,  
5 very good job of collecting the student lunch forms.  
6 The reality is that in terms of the eligibility for  
7 that, it's actually lessening as we go into different  
8 schools.

9 RAY ORLANDO: As the Chancellor  
10 mentioned, it becomes a distributional issue, which  
11 is school A in a gentrifying neighborhood might not  
12 be collecting the forms and school B may, and it's  
13 sort of effects how the distribution of the funds  
14 once we actually get the total funds and redistribute  
15 them amongst the schools. There's also, you know,  
16 issues that arise from the distribution of the funds  
17 to each individual school. So, if there were to be  
18 more Title One money, that would be helpful, but  
19 giving the fixed and shrinking nature of Title One  
20 funds sort of nationally and to us specifically, it  
21 becomes--the distributional problems get exacerbated,  
22 because more people are fighting over less money, if  
23 you pardon the analogy.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, adequate  
25 constitutionally guaranteed funding for our students

1  
2 is obviously of mutual concern to both this committee  
3 and to the department, and that's something that we  
4 look forward to continuing to fight with you together  
5 on on both the state and the federal level as we move  
6 forward. And there may be other questions on that as  
7 well, but I have some other questions in other areas  
8 that I want to go to at this point. I know that  
9 recently some references were made to looking at some  
10 of the challenging schools in a similar way to  
11 CompStat has being used in the Police Department.  
12 Have you actually come up with a system to do that?  
13 Are you using that? What does that actually look  
14 like?

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I want to very  
16 clear that there is a difference between, you know,  
17 incidents and when you're developing school plans.  
18 SO what we're really doing is on a weekly basis  
19 reviewing things such as student attendance, which we  
20 know is actually one of the single biggest things  
21 that we have across every Renewal School, lack of  
22 good attendance. So, certainly we're monitoring  
23 attendance on a weekly basis. We're monitoring the  
24 improvement. We're monitoring what principals are  
25 doing to ensure that parents understand the

1  
2 seriousness of that. That's one of the things that  
3 we're looking on weekly basis. Another thing that  
4 we're looking at a weekly basis is what is the amount  
5 of time that principals are spending on professional  
6 development for teachers? What are the programs that  
7 are being put in? What are the after school programs  
8 that are being put in in each of the Renewal Schools  
9 that we feel will improve the academics? For  
10 example, yesterday in one of the schools I went to  
11 visit, I suggested to the principal that she bring in  
12 an academic intervention service that she wasn't  
13 aware of. So the kind of looking that we're looking  
14 on a week to week basis is what is every school--what  
15 should every school have? After school, aside of the  
16 academies, more parent involvement, and that's the  
17 kind of educational CompStat that we're looking at.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So is that being done  
19 now in the 94 Renewal Schools or is that being done  
20 across the board in many of the schools throughout  
21 the system?

22 CHANCELLOR FARINA: It's being done in  
23 the 94 Renewal Schools, but in terms of student  
24 attendance, we're asking all principals across the  
25 city to keep a much closer eye on attendance as one

1 of the overall things that makes the school  
2 successful. The other things that we're asking  
3 everybody to do is to make sure that they have  
4 functioning SLT's. In every school, the parent  
5 involvement is not just who comes to a PTA, but how  
6 involved the parents are making school specific  
7 decisions. So for example, before a community  
8 partner is elected, when we have community schools,  
9 the SLT has to vote along with the principal for that  
10 particular CBO to come into the school. So there are  
11 certain things we're doing citywide, but those are  
12 two that we're doing very specifically. And also one  
13 of the things we're asking principals to look at is  
14 what are the percentage of ineffective teachers that  
15 they have in their schools, obviously with an  
16 emphasis on Renewal Schools, but across the board.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So let me go, since  
19 you brought it up, to the piece on parental  
20 engagement as well. What are the future plans for  
21 the DOE in terms of increasing parental engagement?  
22 I use that word rather than even parental  
23 involvement, because I think engagement is different  
24 than involvement in the sense that engagement means  
25 true input into the operations of a school versus--

1  
2 which we appreciate, you know, selling candy and  
3 making dresses for shows and things like that. So  
4 what is your vision for that and how does that fit  
5 into your new structure for the superintendents and  
6 what type of responsibilities would the  
7 superintendents have to--for additional parental  
8 engagement?

9 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, every  
10 superintendent has what we call a district family  
11 advocate under their direct supervision. What we're  
12 asking the district family advocates to do, and  
13 there'll be a family engagement person also at the  
14 borough office, but what we're asking for them to do  
15 is to make sure that there are parent academy  
16 workshops that are not one-shot deals but over a  
17 period of time. We've started surveying parents what  
18 do they want more of, and it's very interesting to  
19 me. This week I think I did my 24<sup>th</sup> town hall  
20 meeting with parents, and I always ask what do you  
21 want more of, and one of the things that's coming up  
22 is they want more workshops for them. They want to  
23 learn more things for themselves. For example, we're  
24 going to be increasing workshops for parents on how  
25 to use technology. If you have a child, particularly

1  
2 in a Renewal School who's coming to Saturday  
3 academies, why not also use the school on Saturdays  
4 for parents to have workshops. Parents have asked  
5 for more workshops and to have book clubs, to have  
6 writing classes. So, there's a lot of things, but  
7 it's got to be school by school what parents want.  
8 We're also looking at parent mentoring. We have  
9 parents in a school that have older kids. Mentor new  
10 parents coming in, particularly with the multiple  
11 languages that we have in New York City and also many  
12 parents who are coming from cultures that may be very  
13 different than what they're experiencing in New York  
14 City. Having parents of similar cultures become  
15 mentors to parents in the same building, and share  
16 things like, you know, this is how they do it here.  
17 This is what the homework policy is in this school.  
18 This is how you talk to a teacher. I just did a  
19 workshop of a group of parents, and I said, you know,  
20 always start with a compliment. Don't say, "My kid  
21 doesn't like coming to school." Say, "Oh, you know,  
22 she loves the way you dress or how you do this." And  
23 then figure out what to do. So, I think parent  
24 involvement to me and engagement is anything that  
25 parents want that school to be able to do. In some

1 schools parents have asked for cooking classes, and  
2 we've now made it possible to use school kitchens  
3 for, you know, supervised classes for that. So, I  
4 think there's no limit to what parents can do, but  
5 it's got to be in a school by school basis, and also  
6 this year we did a major retraining of school  
7 leadership teams, and also I think the fact that you  
8 see how many people signed up to stay on CEC's I  
9 think the word is out there that, you know, play an  
10 important role, because people are going to be  
11 listening to you.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Is there any  
14 additional funding going to be put into parental  
15 engagement?

16 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Specifically, as  
17 that, no. I think one of the things that we ask for  
18 is more--they want more access. And remember, under  
19 a superintendent there's a DFA and a liaison. So  
20 there's already in every district in the city a  
21 specific person just for parent issues. And then we  
22 have a whole parent engagement here at the tweed  
23 [sic] level, and then there will be something that's  
24 also going to be done under Mariano Gusman [sp?] who  
25 is going to supervise the boroughs.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And what about parent  
3 coordinators? I know that there's still many schools  
4 without parent coordinators. What is the--what are  
5 you looking at toward doing in regard to that?

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, this year--

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] In the  
8 future.

9 CHANCELLOR FARINA: we re-instituted  
10 professional development for parent coordinators.  
11 They hadn't been had any training at all, many, many  
12 years. And what we did is we selected what they  
13 wanted to know more of. So, for example, we took them  
14 to cultural institutions and actually exposed them to  
15 what kind of trips could be held at a cultural  
16 institution that they could then take groups of  
17 parents too by themselves. The Hall of Science in  
18 Queens, for example, gave everybody who attended over  
19 100, close to 200, parent coordinators three tickets  
20 so that they could come back with groups of parents.  
21 We want to do a lot more of this this year going  
22 forward. Also, parent coordinators had an all day  
23 workshop on STEM, how to use technology that they  
24 could then train parents in. We spent more money on  
25 training parent coordinators to do a better job.

1  
2 Parent coordinators in most schools, they do have  
3 them. I think what we're looking for for next year is  
4 to make their training more consistent so they're  
5 used more effectively across all schools versus just  
6 what an individual school wants to do with their  
7 specific parent coordinator.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: What about in the high  
9 schools, because I think that's where we have the  
10 shortage of the parent coordinators? Is there any--

11 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] Well,  
12 that's--

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: plans for the future  
14 to hire more?

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Because in high  
16 schools is where the principals were given exemptions  
17 in the past not to hire parent coordinators. And you  
18 know, I still feel it has to be a principal decision,  
19 but I think particularly in high school, we meet with  
20 the High School Council. Some of their concerns are  
21 more specifically on more guidance services in the  
22 high schools, particularly guidance towards college  
23 or course readiness. So, I think it's, you know, if  
24 there's limited funding, particularly in a lot of our  
25

1  
2 small high schools, where do you put the money more  
3 effectively?

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, when I was a  
5 teacher, I would say to parents it's nice when they  
6 come to conferences when they're young, but you have  
7 to follow them through all the way through their  
8 school career, and I think having parent coordinators  
9 in the high school level is also a very important  
10 issues, and I would urge you to continue to look at  
11 that and possible avenues for funding for that moving  
12 forward. Charter schools, and then I'm going to turn  
13 it over to my colleagues. It's projected that it's  
14 going to cost 1.4 billion dollars in 2016 and that's  
15 144 million dollar increase over the current Fiscal  
16 Year. This growth, however, does not take into  
17 effect, into account that the number of charter  
18 school that will open in the fall. Do you have an  
19 estimate on what the cost for that would be? And  
20 also on the cost for rent moving forward. I have  
21 worked with some people on a very informal basis who  
22 said that the cost for rental of private space could  
23 reach as much as almost 200 million dollars a year if  
24 the existing charter schools were to either expand or  
25

1  
2 other ones were to open under the additional 25  
3 allowable charters that are still available.

4 RAY ORLANDO: Hi. There are about  
5 approximately 200 charter schools currently, and it  
6 looks like there will be approximately 10 additional  
7 charter schools in the upcoming school year opening,  
8 and that doesn't include charter schools that are  
9 adding grades. Those are just new schools. So the  
10 increase that is in the budget currently for Fiscal  
11 Year 16 over Fiscal Year 15 includes both new  
12 expected schools and tuition growth. The number  
13 tends to fluctuate. It'll likely be updated for the  
14 executive budget in May as it becomes clearer over  
15 time. As you know, as you get closer to the date,  
16 certain--you get more information. So, sometimes a  
17 school you think is going to open decides to take a  
18 planning year instead, so the number kind of  
19 fluctuates. It sort of lands around this time of  
20 year, you know, just before the executive budget  
21 comes out, presumably late April, early May. So  
22 there'll be an updated figure then, and that will  
23 take into account all the best information we have.  
24 When we project looking forward what the enrollment's  
25 going to be, we use the most currently available data

1 we have, and that's going to be the--we pay charter  
2 schools every--six times a year, so we use the fifth  
3 payment that we make, because that's the most, that's  
4 the closest to when we have to make the decision, and  
5 that's the best information we have at this time.  
6 But I don't know what that's the best information we  
7 have at this time. But I don't know what that's  
8 going to look like yet. I'll know better when we  
9 publish the executive budget.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Is there a set rate  
12 at which we allow charter schools to rent private  
13 space, a square footage rate for payments for rent?

14 RAY ORLANDO: Under the recently passed  
15 law from last year, it doesn't take the rate into  
16 account. There's a whole process as where charter  
17 schools ask for space and we have to make a decision  
18 about whether there's space available and such. It's  
19 just we follow the law basically, but no, the law  
20 doesn't include a specific like rate.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So that's a very  
22 interesting fact that they don't take that into  
23 consideration because that could vary widely in terms  
24 of what type of facility these schools are using or  
25 renting or even who they're renting from, and I would

1  
2 think that there could be a huge potential for taking  
3 advantage of the varying rates or amounts that would  
4 be willing to be paid for this space. Is that--

5 RAY ORLANDO: [interposing] There's a--

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] There's  
7 a process.

8 RAY ORLANDO: Yes, there's a--there is a  
9 limit on what we would paid. There isn't a limit on  
10 the rate per say, so the--in the event that a charter  
11 school decide to lease a private space, we can  
12 provide them with up to I believe the law says 20  
13 percent of the tuition rate. So there's a limit on  
14 that. That's the limit, but that's independent of  
15 what they may choose to--

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] To  
17 actually pay.

18 RAY ORLANDO: If you see what I'm saying.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Basically--

20 RAY ORLANDO: [interposing]

21 [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: a foundation--

23 RAY ORLANDO: [interposing] If somebody--  
24 exactly. Yeah, exactly.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Pay that. But the  
3 money that we do spend would be money that we could  
4 spend otherwise on our public school buildings am I  
5 right?

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Theoretically.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Theoretically. But  
8 importantly so because it technically could be used  
9 for that purpose. Alright, I've gone on. I want to  
10 give my colleagues an opportunity to ask some  
11 questions, and the first one, unless I have to  
12 announce anybody--yeah, we've been joined by  
13 Councilman Vincent Gentile from Brooklyn as well,  
14 Council Member Ben Kallos, and I think Council Member  
15 Andy King as well. I think I got everybody. Okay,  
16 good, alright. So we're going to hear questions now  
17 from Council Member Weprin followed by Council Member  
18 Rodriguez and then Treyger.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Thank you, Mr.  
20 Chair.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Oh, and Council  
22 Member Dan Garodnick as well.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Chancellor, good  
24 morning. Just I have a few questions on some minor  
25 subjects. They talked about lunch and free lunches

1 and people eligible for a free lunch. A couple of  
2 years ago there was an issue where students who were  
3 not eligible for free lunch but weren't paying had  
4 built up tabs, very large. They were in arrears for a  
5 number of meals and DOE was serving meals. You know,  
6 they weren't denying a child a meal if the parents  
7 hadn't paid for a meal, and a couple years ago there  
8 was an effort to get the principals to try to recoup  
9 the people who are in arrears, and it caused a lot of  
10 headaches for the principals because they were told  
11 that if we don't recoup them, it's coming out of your  
12 budget. Now that was stopped, but it did make me  
13 wonder, like there are a lot of parents out there who  
14 are not eligible for free meals who could probably  
15 afford the \$1.50, whatever it is for a meal, but  
16 there wasn't a good way of them--sometimes out of  
17 laziness or other things. I know that I am on my  
18 lunchmoney.com, so it automatically subtracts so my  
19 daughter can have hot lunch when she wants, but it  
20 was frustrating for me that there were people who  
21 weren't paying at all, and they weren't even going to  
22 be forced to pay at the end. Is there an effort  
23 under way? I know we would like to see free lunches  
24 for everyone, or there's an effort, but in the  
25

1  
2 meantime, is there an effort you know of to make sure  
3 we collect from the parents who--and that so the kids  
4 aren't getting a free lunch who don't deserve it?

5 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I totally agree with  
6 you, and you know, it just--it's not something I  
7 thought of, but I certainly will go in and look into  
8 it, because it seems to me that it's just common  
9 sense, and it's not a topic that's come out from  
10 principals, so I don't think people are in arrears. I  
11 certainly don't feel they should pay it out of school  
12 budgets.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: It was something I  
14 was unaware of until that one policy that was for a  
15 very brief time was talked about and I was getting  
16 calls from my principals saying, "You know, I got  
17 other things to do here than call every parent and  
18 say, hey, you owe 16 bucks in lunches."

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: No, absolutely. I'll  
20 get back to you on this.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Some owed a lot  
22 more than that. Alright. I just was curious. I  
23 hadn't heard anything about that, and that's probably  
24 because they haven't been forced to do it, but it  
25 would be a shame if the parents were not paying for

1  
2 something they should be paying for. The other  
3 question as far as budget goes, another thing that  
4 came up around that same period of time was  
5 principals who had--I don't know what we call those  
6 budgets where they have money that's expendable to  
7 buy things in the school--

8 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] Right.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: that particular  
10 year, and I think it was the same chancellor  
11 actually, the one that was here very briefly, who had  
12 this policy where if a principal didn't spend their  
13 money they lose it for that particular year. And so  
14 principals were going on spending sprees to make sure  
15 they use their money so they didn't lose it, and it  
16 used to be you could roll over some of that money and  
17 have more to spend when you might need it later. Has  
18 that policy been changed?

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Oh, yes. You know, I  
20 was a former principal. I believe roll over money is  
21 something you do as a savings. So, for example, if I  
22 as a principal wanted to have summer school and there  
23 was money I had in my budget that I could save to  
24 have a special program over the summer, I would want  
25 to have the ability to roll over. So it'd definitely

1  
2 not taking excess, whatever's left away from  
3 principals, because--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: [interposing]

5 Good.

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: if they've done it to  
7 save for a rainy day, it just makes sense.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Yeah, that's what  
9 I said. You know, I'm frustrated. I'm--I don't  
10 know. The happy me is not nearly as much fun as the  
11 angry me. I don't understand. I'm trying to find  
12 these things.

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I like you happy, so  
14 let's try to keep it that way.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: We're very--it's  
16 great that you're a former  
17 educator/principal/teacher/parent, all those things,  
18 because it really does make such a difference. Let  
19 me ask another question on community education  
20 councils. You talked about them briefly. One of the  
21 frustrations we had in the past too was that  
22 Community Education Council truly was not something  
23 that the former Administration even wanted in the  
24 first place. It was part of a negotiated deal with  
25 Albany when they got mayoral control. And because of

1  
2 that, I think their role I always thought was  
3 belittled a little bit, and it's one of the reasons  
4 we had a very difficult time getting people to it's  
5 on those boards is they really didn't have a lot to  
6 do, and they didn't have much of a role to play, and  
7 I was encouraged that--I know I got an automated  
8 voicemail message on my machine asking if I want to  
9 run for CEC and try to encourage people to run. Do  
10 you also anticipate increasing the role they play in  
11 the district?

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Yes, there are several  
13 things we've done differently with the CEC's this  
14 year. First of all, we meet with the CEC presidents,  
15 which was not part of what we had to do. You know,  
16 on Saturdays, we do it on purpose. It's almost a two  
17 hour meeting. We meet every other month with them so  
18 that we can have more deeper discussions, and we  
19 bring to the table members of my team. I think Ray,  
20 you met with them on budget. I want them to  
21 understand what the budget process is. We brought  
22 the facilities people to them. We brought the people  
23 who helped work on the blueprint. We want their  
24 input, and one of the things they've done this year  
25 is anytime we've had facilities issues, they have

1 walked the buildings with us. The other thing is  
2 that we're asking them when we're thinking about  
3 making any changes and actually, we just worked with  
4 Council Member Rodriguez on one of these with CEC on  
5 an idea that he had about one of his schools, and we  
6 brought the CEC president to the table who is very  
7 excited about it. So, the answer is yes. We want the  
8 CEC presidents to be part of the decision making. We  
9 also want to hear from them what are the issues that--  
10 -you know, every district has a different issue.  
11 Wherever I go in the city, certain things, the  
12 uniform, but you can always count on one thing that  
13 you weren't expecting. So, I do listen to them. In  
14 fact, we met with them last night again with the  
15 CPAC's [sic] because we want to hear from both of  
16 them, and particularly at this time of year when  
17 we're talking about the state budget, we want them to  
18 be the advocates for the kinds of things that we're  
19 talking about today. So I believe, and again, we're  
20 asking them what they want more information on and  
21 what they want--last night their input was, and what  
22 we think what they think is missing at the borough  
23 office level. And we're going to be looking into  
24 that.  
25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Great. And then  
3 the last thing I just want to bring up is a local  
4 concern. I'm not sure if it's a budget issue  
5 directly, but it's still out there, is Middle School  
6 172 in Bellerose [sp?], which is in District 26, is  
7 got to be the top school in the whole city of New  
8 York is kids who don't match in the first round of  
9 high schools. Again, we had 30 something this year  
10 again, and I get a lot of these calls from parents  
11 freaking out. It's based in part because the way they  
12 try to do their choices. They want to stay local  
13 because it's hard to get around, and you know, apply  
14 to the same schools. I could talk about it. We need  
15 an intervention, and I'd like to figure out. I know  
16 there's talk about building new high schools out  
17 there in Eastern Queens, but we need intervention to  
18 try to figure out what would make these parents happy  
19 and maybe having someone come in and explain to them  
20 the best way to apply for schools and give them other  
21 options that they might be able to get to in unique  
22 ways, because 30 something parents, and they're all--  
23 you know, you always feel terrible if that happens to  
24 you.

1  
2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I'll be honest with  
3 you, this is something we have done. We have sent  
4 people out--and I can stress enough that parents have  
5 to make choices, not on where their child's best  
6 friend is going, but what might be the best school  
7 for their child. And somehow or other, we can't  
8 always convince parents of that. And also, you know,  
9 picking a school that's not where 100 percent of the  
10 other people are going to apply just makes sense. I  
11 think Queens has some phenomenal choices on high  
12 schools. I do agree. We're thinking of more. But  
13 the reality is I've gone to visit some high schools,  
14 and I'm going to give a shout out to Jamaica or  
15 Gateway for Sciences, that I would put my kid in that  
16 school in a minute, and yet their enrollment doesn't,  
17 you know. SO I think one of the things we have to do  
18 is also celebrate schools that are doing a great job  
19 that may be under the radar. So you're right, we can  
20 do more to celebrate those schools.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Maybe offline I  
22 can meet with a member of your staff again--

23 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] Yeah.  
24  
25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: to go over like--I  
3 know what the problem is and but the solution needs  
4 to be discussed.

5 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Right. Okay.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you very  
8 much. I just want to remind my colleagues we're on a  
9 five minute clock. Before I go to my next colleague,  
10 I just wanted to go back to ask a question about the  
11 capital plan amendment. We haven't gotten that,  
12 Chancellor. That was due on February 1<sup>st</sup>. It's  
13 almost two months late now. Can you explain to us  
14 why we have not received that? That's part of, an  
15 important part of our oversight here, and without  
16 that, it's difficult to do that.

17 RAY ORLANDO: Yes. I can tell you that  
18 as you all know, one of the vestibule [sic] parts  
19 from the change dating back many years is that the  
20 Department has its own five year capital plan that's  
21 off cycle from the city's capital planning process.  
22 This year is the city's ten year capital strategy  
23 year. The city updates its ten year capital strategy  
24 every other year as you guys know. So, in light of  
25 the work that the city is doing on the ten year

1  
2 capital strategy, I think working with OMB and the  
3 Mayor's office and all agencies to address some of  
4 the issues around the ten year capital strategy,  
5 we've been working with them on that so that it all  
6 comes out together, and that's the source of the  
7 delay.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So how long will it  
9 take--

10 RAY ORLANDO: [interposing] Basically  
11 [sic].

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: before we get that?  
13 Because its two months already.

14 RAY ORLANDO: I would expect that they  
15 would be done with the ten year capital strategy  
16 planning process, probably in connection with the  
17 executive budget expected to come out next month.  
18 So, I would say shortly is the expectation.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. that is  
20 problematic for me, because I am charged with the  
21 responsibility of that oversight, and without that I  
22 just can't do the job that I feel I need to do with  
23 that, and I'm going to be bringing it up with  
24 Lorraine Grillo [sp?] when she comes in later on as  
25 well, because it just makes my job much more

1  
2 difficult to be able to do. Okay, with that, we'll  
3 ask Council Member Rodriguez followed by Tregyer and  
4 then Levine.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,  
6 Chairman. Chancellor, thank you for being there for  
7 us. I want to say that it makes it a nice thing at  
8 the beginning when we got the great news that you  
9 will be our Chancellor. I say that it makes a  
10 difference when you have an experienced educator  
11 leading our system. I want to thank you for your  
12 sense of urgency and responsiveness. Shortly after  
13 we met around the education of circumstance [sic] in  
14 District Six, I have seen strategy moves made by you  
15 and your team to improve the education circumstances  
16 of the children in my district who have been left  
17 behind for far too long, and as a result of that, as  
18 you know, 80 percent of students in District Six are  
19 level one and two from third grade to eighth grade,  
20 and that number is even worse for the ELL's student  
21 with 98 percent being level one and two. And I know  
22 that with the new vision of the mayor, you as an  
23 educator, there's a commitment in action to change  
24 that number that you inherit. I want to say gracias  
25 [sic] for all your projects you have in mind to do

1 with aggressive intent as many [sic] at Amedas [sic].

2 I appreciate your immediate reaction to others in

3 need and the general care for the issues of our

4 district. Know that you have an ally, not only

5 myself but all the stakeholders for the fifth

6 community, not for profit and leaders in northern

7 Manhattan that want to see that reality changing

8 there. Thank you for recognizing the role of the

9 ELL's population. As someone that still today

10 Spanish is my native language, I see a person in

11 touch with that group, and I can tell you that

12 appointing Milady Baez as a Deputy Chancellor send

13 the message loud and clear that we need to do better

14 for that population, that especially among the Latino

15 student, when we make that large percent but only

16 seven percent of those students they are enrolled in

17 Math and Science. We need to change it, and we know

18 that you are committed to change it and we will be

19 there to work with you. I have just one question,

20 which is what are you doing, what is the changes that

21 we should expect to see when it comes to those

22 schools that they receive a large number of students

23 after the budget is approved?

1  
2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Okay, I'm looking  
3 into what happens after October 31<sup>st</sup>, and one of the  
4 things we're looking at, because I know it's a  
5 particular issue in District Six, but there are two  
6 or three other districts in the city where kids come  
7 into the school throughout the whole year. Now, if  
8 you have five extra children it's no big deal, but if  
9 you have 60 extra children, you're not getting the  
10 money for those 60 extra children after October 31<sup>st</sup>.  
11 So this is a discussion that Ray and I have already  
12 been engaged in. We have to find the right number,  
13 because in many of the schools where you get a lot of  
14 extra children, you also have kids leaving. We have  
15 to see where is the balance between the kids who come  
16 in and stay versus the ones that leave, but it  
17 actually came up at a meeting that I had with  
18 principals from District Six. It's also true in  
19 certain parts of Queens. Wherever you have a large  
20 immigrant population, they come in but sometimes they  
21 leave in January, you know, like right after the  
22 holidays, but we're committed to next year giving a  
23 floating money to schools that get a large percentage  
24 of kids after October 31<sup>st</sup>.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: The last  
3 question is on preparing the students who get this to  
4 take the test of a specialized school. I know that  
5 you are very committed to do, to bring some changes,  
6 and we know that we had a great school at Stuyvesant,  
7 Brooklyn Tech and Bronx Science, and you know, we  
8 congratulate every children who get into those  
9 schools. Our question is how can we work to provide  
10 more preparedness for our student so that they are  
11 starting also being prepared to take those tests?  
12 So, what should we--what are you doing? What should  
13 we expect to see to provide that opportunity to  
14 students throughout the city so that they can get  
15 that opportunity to be prepared to get there? In my  
16 district I know that they're saying it's not for  
17 profit, that they've been doing that for years  
18 already with great results.

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, there are two  
20 specific programs. One is called the Dream Program,  
21 which takes students in middle school, particularly  
22 in seventh grade who have a lot of potential, and we  
23 help them in after school programs, summer and  
24 weekends. And what we're doing is we're working with  
25 each of the specialized high schools to see if a lot

1  
2 of these programs can take place in their sites with  
3 their teachers so that these students will be  
4 prepared to get the extra test prep, if you want to  
5 call it that, to work through. And also, it shows  
6 that these students have a commitment to working  
7 hard. So it's not just having the potential, but you  
8 have a commitment to make that work hard. So, that's  
9 number one. Number two, we're increasing, because we  
10 did some research as to why do more kids from this  
11 school versus this school get higher marks on the  
12 entrance test, and one of the things that we found is  
13 that the teaching of algebra in middle school is  
14 crucial. So, last year, and we're going to do it  
15 again this year, we're increasing the number of  
16 training for teachers to ensure that they will start-  
17 -we'll have more algebra teachers in middle school,  
18 because in many schools there aren't any or they're  
19 not teaching that until they get to high school. So  
20 those are some of the things we're looking at. Also,  
21 increased vocabulary development. One of the things  
22 that we did with middle school after school programs,  
23 we asked all the CBO's who are working in after  
24 school to have a piece of it academic, and academic  
25 can be something like the Kaplan [sp?] Review, the

1  
2 Princeton Review, the programs that we know will  
3 enhance test prep. So, we're looking at this from  
4 many different ways, but certainly an increase--a  
5 boot camp approach over the summer. One of the  
6 reasons I think we were so successful in getting so  
7 many students into many of our high schools,  
8 specialized high schools in the arts, is that we have  
9 a summer boot camp in the arts for kids who might not  
10 ordinarily have tutoring on developing a portfolio.  
11 We're going to do the same things in academics.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,  
13 again. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Council  
15 Member, we've been joined by Council Member Helen  
16 Rosenthal, and I believe Council Member Levine will  
17 be next followed by Council Member Crowley.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you,  
19 Chairman Dromm. Chancellor, it's wonderful to see  
20 you this morning. I've been so thrilled by the  
21 statements you've made about the importance of  
22 foreign language education. I know this played a  
23 role in your life as someone who's bilingual, and I  
24 think I've heard you say that every kid in New York  
25 City should be even tri-lingual in an ideal world.

1  
2 This is after all the most linguistically diverse  
3 city in the world, and you know how important  
4 language skills are for career opportunities.  
5 Really, they open up the whole world for children who  
6 can learn additional languages. Often in New York  
7 City because we've been so focused, rightly, on  
8 helping ELL's learn English, we haven't always  
9 focused so much on having English speaking kids learn  
10 other languages. Tell us if you will a little about  
11 your plans for getting us to the goal of an ideal  
12 world in which every child is multilingual?

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well first of all,  
14 we're increasing our dual language programs next year  
15 by 40 new programs. We want to be very clear that if  
16 you look at New York City right now for I would say  
17 up to about three years ago, dual language programs  
18 were not very popular, and if they were popular, they  
19 were popular with a very small amount of people, but  
20 I know that in my own community, the dual language  
21 programs now are overly registered. I have a school  
22 near me that's a French dual language that people are  
23 actually moving in from Canada to live in that  
24 community so they can register the kids in that  
25 school. So they went from one class on a grade to

1 three classes on a grade. So, I believe that having  
2 a dual language program does many things. It  
3 encourages parents who speak that language to seek  
4 out public schools. We also know that because the  
5 dual language programs have become so popular in our  
6 elementary schools, that this year for the first time  
7 we're increasing almost double the size of dual  
8 languages in middle school. The problem here is, and  
9 it's a really complicated problem, is that many  
10 people who speak a second language do not speak the  
11 second language in academic language. So it's one  
12 thing to teach, you know, Spanish conversation or  
13 French, but not to teach a math class in French or  
14 Science. We are now starting this year, and this was  
15 by parent request, I had a group of parents who came  
16 to see me. They wanted to start a Japanese dual  
17 language program in Williamsburg, and I said the  
18 biggest challenge we have is finding teachers. So  
19 they went out and did their research and they found  
20 some teachers. We have met with the deans of  
21 education around the city asking them to put a bigger  
22 emphasis on graduating teachers who are able to teach  
23 dual language. ESL, dual language and bilingual are  
24 three different approaches. They're not the same.  
25

1  
2 And yet, people still put them all in one piece.  
3 This year, for the first time, we're opening a dual  
4 language on a high school, Long Island City High  
5 School is going to open a dual language program. SO  
6 we want to see the dual language actually become a K  
7 to 12. We're also saying to principals, "Invest in  
8 dual language if you're under enrolled." If you're a  
9 middle school that's looking for a catch for parents,  
10 dual language and the arts are the two biggest draws  
11 for parents who are looking for middle schools. The  
12 other thing is I just got a request from a school in  
13 Queens also where they want foreign language  
14 introduced not as a dual language program but as a  
15 foreign language. Foreign language, really in order  
16 to do well has to be at least a minimum in my opinion  
17 of three days a week. You're not going to do it one  
18 day a week. So we suggested who might be people who  
19 teach a second language might be parent volunteers  
20 that are going to be doing it consistently. But I do  
21 think that you're going to see in the city--we  
22 started an Arabic dual language program. We have a  
23 Hebrew dual language program. We will start a dual  
24 language program where there's a request and where we  
25 know that we have the right, the trained people.

1  
2 We're actually even talking right now with other  
3 countries about teacher exchanges in terms of dual  
4 language. We have more requests now for Mandarin  
5 Chinese than we have for other language. So, it's--  
6 and you're right, its workforce ready, college ready  
7 and being able to be global citizens. So I'm--this  
8 is definitely something that will push and I will  
9 continue to figure how to get it done.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: That's wonderful  
11 news and great to hear your passion about this. So,  
12 today, how many of our students of our 1.1 million  
13 students, how many English-speaking students are  
14 taking foreign language classes?

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Oh, I don't know that  
16 number but I can get it for you. I would say, which  
17 what is very interesting is that they star--the major  
18 difference is that in the past, we started foreign  
19 languages in middle school and that's absolutely the  
20 wrong place to do it. These are the kids who tend to  
21 not want to do anything anyway, but we're now  
22 starting it in pre-k and kindergarten, and these kids  
23 are absorbing it. They're--and you know, if you go  
24 to a private school, I have a neighbor who has this--  
25 he's paying 45,000 dollars a year for his student,

1 his children to speak Spanish and Mandarin Chinese.  
2 They have cycle semesters. We're going to do it for  
3 free, because we believe that this is what has to be  
4 done, and doing it in elementary school I think is  
5 really going to be--and then by the time you get to  
6 fifth grade, you can't help but do it in middle  
7 school, because they want to continue it.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Alright, thank  
10 you.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Council  
12 Member Crowley followed by Kallos and then Rose.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Good morning,  
14 Chancellor. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm a public  
15 school parent in addition to being Council Member.  
16 My older son just graduated from high school last  
17 year. My younger son is in line to graduate and his  
18 high school is at 186 percent capacity. The district  
19 I represent is the most overcrowded school district  
20 in the city. Since you've become Chancellor back  
21 almost a year ago, I've been reaching out to your  
22 office. I have email chains almost monthly, and we  
23 have not gotten a meeting yet. I want to talk to you  
24 about requests that I've put into the School  
25 Construction Authority and how they have continuously

1 not met requests to take properties and purchase them  
2 and develop them into schools. I've been able to  
3 have one high school built in my district since  
4 getting elected. That high school is having its  
5 first graduating class this year. Thirty of the  
6 students have already graduated from Masbuth [sp?]  
7 High School, and they're in line to have higher than  
8 a 95 percent graduation rate. It's a high school  
9 that takes from a lottery, any student in district  
10 24. It's got an incredible record, and we need to  
11 have more high schools like that for the kids in  
12 school district 24. I invite you to come out to my  
13 district. We cannot wait any longer. It's not fair  
14 to the students in the schools to be starting at 7:00  
15 a.m. and finishing before noon if they're high school  
16 students. We know that that leaves too much of the  
17 day where they're not--where it's too free and idle,  
18 and they shouldn't have to be put in situations like  
19 that. They should be in the school at normal hours  
20 and we need to make sure that these classrooms aren't  
21 overburdened. You know how bad it is. We got to  
22 work together. Can I have your commitment that you  
23 will meet with me?  
24

1  
2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Absolutely. But the  
3 reality is--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]  
5 Well, look, when we--

6 [cross-talk]

7 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Council Member  
8 Crowley--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]  
10 Democratic Caucus, I--

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Council  
12 Member Crowley? Council Member Crowley, may I just  
13 interrupt you also?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Yeah.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: This is the expense  
16 portion of the hearing, and so the capital portion is  
17 when President Lorraine Grillo [sp?] comes at one  
18 o'clock--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]  
20 Right, but--

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And I--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]  
23 Chancellor--

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just a minute,  
25 Council Member Crowley.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: School  
3 Construction Authority as well.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member  
5 Crowley?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I apologize.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member  
8 Crowley?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I do have an  
10 expense question. I'm sorry.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Council Member  
12 Crowley, I agree with you because I taught in  
13 District 24 for many years, and I understand the  
14 problem and the situation, but to be fair, this is  
15 the expense portion of the budget.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I know.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So let's go with those  
18 questions.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I apologize, Mr.  
20 Chair. Recently I introduced a bill in the City  
21 Council that would monitor the amount of physical  
22 education that happens in schools. I wanted to know  
23 if you support this measure, and if we have an  
24 expense that would be attributed to calculating that.  
25 Many schools according to some independent studies

1  
2 have not been following the state guidelines and  
3 there would be an expense in terms of making sure we  
4 have enough physical education teachers in every  
5 school. Unfortunately, obesity rates in our city are  
6 much greater than most of the rest of the country,  
7 and a lot of that has to do with the lack of a  
8 physical activity. Our kids are in school from six  
9 to eight hours a day. Would this be a priority, and  
10 can we be assured that every school in the City of  
11 New York has a certified physical education teacher  
12 and that each school is meeting the standards that  
13 the state sets? And would there be an expense to  
14 make it sure that we could comply with the state  
15 regulation?

16 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Anything that is  
17 going to be across the board is always going to take  
18 time and extra money. We have been working on this.  
19 I do believe in physical education. One of the  
20 things that we've also been doing with physical  
21 education is expanding the notion of physical  
22 education and actually even training more classroom  
23 teachers on some of the things. We have a terrific  
24 program under Elizabeth Rose where we're now training  
25 more people in things like yoga and other things that

1  
2 we can do with--in schools that have limited space.  
3 The other thing I will say is that we also just asked  
4 custodians, for example, because we had a very bad  
5 winter to make sure that the yard is, you know,  
6 cleared out so we can use the school yards more  
7 easily for physical activities. But I definitely  
8 agree with you that we need more physical activities  
9 for students and that's one of the reasons also that  
10 we're looking at the kinds of programs that will be  
11 in elementary schools and even increasing sports  
12 program middle schools. But in terms--we have a  
13 specific amount. You want to--

14 RAY ORLANDO: Sure. We devote over 330  
15 million dollars to physical education currently and  
16 we know--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing] Do  
18 you know if you have--

19 RAY ORLANDO: [interposing] we can do  
20 better.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Do you know if  
22 you have physical education teachers at every school  
23 that kids are meeting physical education standards?  
24  
25

1  
2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think in terms of  
3 certified physical education teachers, it's going to  
4 take a long time to get to that point, because they--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]  
6 Fair enough. I think we'll have a hearing on this  
7 bill shortly.

8 CHANCELLOR FARINA: That's fine.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Just lastly,  
10 because it is an expense hearing, a lot of the  
11 expense that schools are incurring has to do with  
12 food and lunch, and in terms of contracting out to  
13 small businesses to provider services, are you  
14 looking at the number of women or minority owned  
15 businesses that are getting these contracts, and is  
16 there a priority that we're looking to local  
17 businesses for food? Is that part of the plan? And  
18 how could we--

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] Let's--  
20 yeah.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: You know, can  
22 the Department of Education monitor itself similar to  
23 what the Department of Cultural Affairs is doing in  
24 looking at the companies it contracts with to make  
25

1  
2 sure that their companies that have a good  
3 representation of diversity of the city?

4 RAY ORLANDO: Yes, of course. We are  
5 committed to improving our contract services. We  
6 work with the Department of Small Business Services  
7 and a variety of initiatives to both expand the  
8 number of minority and women business enterprises  
9 that we do business with as well as identify. They  
10 help us with our training and seminars and technical  
11 assistance to expand the pool. In addition, we are  
12 looking to unbundle the services that we purchase so  
13 that the contracts themselves are smaller and not  
14 citywide and borough-wide in certain areas. We've  
15 had some successes in areas like heating and plumbing  
16 and H-Vac, that kind of stuff, and food is certainly  
17 another area we can look at for sure.

18 CHANCELLOR FARINA: And I'd like to also  
19 say that one of the things we're encouraging schools  
20 to do and we've seen a big rise on that this year, is  
21 do more farm to table, more gardens in schools. We  
22 have a record number of schools now having rooftop  
23 gardens, gardens within their own, you know, schools  
24 so that the students will actually grow the food that  
25 they're going to eat, and there are many schools in

1  
2 the city that we're now using as part of our showcase  
3 schools. So people can go visit and see how that's  
4 done, because I think kids will eat healthier food if  
5 they are actually involved in the growing of that  
6 food in the beginning.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. We'll have  
8 Council Member Rose followed by Council Member Chin.  
9 If Council Member Kallos comes back, then we'll let  
10 him insert himself there.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you, Chair,  
12 and good morning, Madam Chancellor. The tone of  
13 these hearings have taken a decidedly wonderful turn  
14 and that is because I believe your leadership. I'm  
15 really excited about the fact that you have given the  
16 superintendents more teeth and that they are now  
17 really able to advocate, support and in fact have  
18 oversight and accountability for the districts. So  
19 I'd like to thank you for that. Also, DOE should be  
20 applauded for the success of the universal pre-k  
21 program, and my first question is in regard to that  
22 program. What are the qualifications for acceptance  
23 into the Universal Pre-k?

24 CHANCELLOR FARINA: The students?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Yes.

1  
2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: They need to be four  
3 years old.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: and are there any  
5 income criteria?

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Absolutely not.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So what would  
8 precipitate denial into a universal pre-k program?

9 CHANCELLOR FARINA: This is our pre-k  
10 expert, Sophia Pappas.

11 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Hi. Do I have to be  
12 sworn in? Okay.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Actually, you're  
14 right, I do have to swear you in.

15 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Can you raise your  
17 right hand, please? Do you solemnly swear or affirm  
18 to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but  
19 the truth and to answer Council Member questions  
20 honestly?

21 SOPHIA PAPPAS: I do.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Sophia, thank you.

23 SOPHIA PAPPAS: And I just first want to  
24 thank the Council for everything you've done to  
25 support the pre-k expansion.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And Sophia, if you can  
3 state your name on the record.

4 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Oh, I'm sorry. Sophia  
5 Pappas. I just first want to thank you all, because  
6 Council has been incredibly helpful in helping us  
7 find applicants, find space, and spread the word to  
8 communities across the city. We're going to Council  
9 Member Treyger's meeting tonight to convene some more  
10 potential providers. I think, Chair Dromm, we have a  
11 meeting scheduled with you as well. So we really  
12 appreciate your partnership as we work to meet this  
13 very ambitious but important goal. And Council  
14 Member, in response to your question about what would  
15 be the basis of a denial, as Chancellor Farina said,  
16 we are committed to having a pre-k seat available to  
17 all children and to maximizing participation. As we  
18 work towards that with enrollment, we are taking into  
19 account parent preferences in applications as well as  
20 where children fall in different priority groups,  
21 similar to how kindergarten admissions works. So, as  
22 that process unfolds, children will be matched to  
23 programs in the coming months. So, based on that--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing] So are  
25 you saying--

1  
2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] They're  
3 not rejected. In other words, they may not get the  
4 preference they want, but they're not being rejected  
5 from a placement. It's a parent making a choice. So  
6 if a parent puts six choices and got their fifth  
7 choice and that's not what they want, it's the parent  
8 not accepting the seat, not us not accepting the  
9 child.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: because my district  
11 office has gotten several complaints about denials of  
12 a placement--

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] If you  
14 let us know what they are, we'll take care of it  
15 right away.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay. And they  
17 felt that there was no place for the parent to get  
18 information about what, why the denial. So, I--

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] Well,  
20 Debbie, I can tell you that I get emails all the  
21 time. So all you need to do is to have them send it  
22 to us. I'll send it to Sophia, and someone will get  
23 back to them. I have to tell you that we have really  
24 an army of people working on pre-k, and there's  
25 absolutely no reason why they would not get a call

1  
2 back. So like I said, the only issues I have heard  
3 are parents who are really stuck on one specific  
4 place they want their child, so they call it a denial  
5 when in reality, it's just that these are the other  
6 choices that you have and this is where you should  
7 go. But if you give us the information, we'll get  
8 back to them right away.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay. Thank you so  
10 much. And I was wondering in terms of the special  
11 education population, DOE had quite a backlog of  
12 outstanding Medicaid reimbursements for the therapy  
13 related services for students. Where are we with  
14 that? Have we been able to recoup any of those  
15 outstanding, you know, monies for it, and did we put  
16 a different system in place or something so that we  
17 wouldn't lose or not have the availability of those  
18 reimbursement funds?

19 RAY ORLANDO: Hi. The Medicaid  
20 reimbursement that we receive is for children who  
21 receive related services like occupational therapy or  
22 physical therapy from our providers and the children  
23 are eligible for Medicaid, and we can then bill for  
24 the services provided to them. We have actually  
25 instituted a very exciting program this year, which

1  
2 we just completed the roll out of after piloting it  
3 over the summer, which involved providing the  
4 providers with occupational therapy and physical  
5 therapy, so the occupational therapist and physical  
6 therapist. We provided them with Chrome Books [sic],  
7 which are computers that just connect to the  
8 internet, which allows them to actually log in and--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing] Bill  
10 the hours?

11 RAY ORLANDO: log their encounters  
12 actually, and put in their session notes and document  
13 the time and the child served and put all the  
14 information we need to claim for Medicaid in at any  
15 wireless location. They can do it at any school.  
16 One of the problems that providers have had in the  
17 past is not all schools have, you know, extensive  
18 technology. So perhaps it was hard to get on a  
19 computer, to log the notes, so that got delayed or  
20 not done at all. And so this effort has actually  
21 been incredibly successful and we're delighted that  
22 the occupational therapist and physical therapist  
23 have really done a good job in improving on the data,  
24 that collection that we require to collect the money  
25 from the Medicaid program.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So we actually  
3 recoup that, those funds that were outstanding. It  
4 was a substantial amount of money that was  
5 outstanding.

6 RAY ORLANDO: We can only bill the  
7 Medicaid program for services that were provided 12  
8 months prior, so there's a time limit on the claiming  
9 on Medicaid revenue. So if you--so I'm not really  
10 sure. I think that in past years there had been very  
11 high estimates of what could be collected from the  
12 Medicaid program, but if you don't collect it you  
13 don't collect it, if you see what I'm saying.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So that was around  
15 500 million, am I correct?

16 RAY ORLANDO: I know that some people  
17 have claimed that there could have been as much as  
18 that, but that estimate's wildly too high at this  
19 point based on various--

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] What did  
21 you collect so far?

22 RAY ORLANDO: We probably collected--gee  
23 [sic], I think--it's not in my head, I'm sorry. I  
24 want to say 10 to 15 million dollars this year and  
25 hoping to get more throughout, for the rest of the

1  
2 year. one of the big services that we provide that  
3 we don't currently collect Medicaid revenue for is  
4 speech therapy, and we're hoping to be able to find a  
5 way to collect for speech services going forward,  
6 because that would be a big boost to what we can  
7 collect.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And you still have a  
9 staff person dedicated to dealing with the Medicaid  
10 reimbursement?

11 RAY ORLANDO: I doubled the size of the  
12 office. I hired someone to join him. So, yes, we  
13 have two people who work on it full time, yes. Yeah.  
14 I am committed to collecting Medicaid revenue as the  
15 Chief Financial Officer. Let me assure you, no one  
16 in this room is more interested in collecting more  
17 money from Medicaid than I am.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, very good. I'm  
19 sorry, Council Member Rose.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: No, thank you very  
21 much for drilling down. That's what I was trying to  
22 get to. Thank you. And in regard to the Title One  
23 funds and the 51 million dollar reduction, how are we  
24 planning to make up for that loss so that the Title  
25

1  
2 One schools don't suffer from that reduction in  
3 funds?

4 RAY ORLANDO: Hi. So the reduction in  
5 Title One funding is unhelpful, obviously.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Yeah.

7 RAY ORLANDO: We would really like to see  
8 more federal funds coming our way.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Especially since  
10 we're not getting this--

11 RAY ORLANDO: [interposing] Not less.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: the CFE money  
13 either.

14 RAY ORLANDO: We'd certainly love to see  
15 more state money coming as well. I don't think that  
16 we're in a position to replace reductions in federal  
17 funding with other funding at this time. We don't  
18 have funds available to do that with. And so, it is--  
19 -you know, unless there is a change in, you know, the  
20 availability of Title One funding, there will be less  
21 Title One funding provided to schools in the upcoming  
22 school year than there was last year.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So how will that  
24 impact them? Will it increase class size? Are we  
25 talking about a loss of support services?

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RAY ORLANDO: Well--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing] What--  
where will we make those cuts?

RAY ORLANDO: As you know, lots of things  
change. Some things go up and some things go down,  
right? So, if Title One funding were to go down,  
maybe other funding goes up. For example, if we're  
successful at the state level in getting more state  
resources available to us, right, then there might be  
more resources available to cover something like  
that. Some things, you know, all the--the revenue  
streams all go up and down. It is unhelpful when  
they go down, but sometimes they're offsetting ops.  
At the end of the day, though, we work very hard with  
schools in the initial year. Schools that actually  
lose Title One funding entirely, Title One  
eligibility, we try to protect. Schools that who  
have a reduction in the Title One amount of money  
they have just have less money, less Title One  
funding available to them. And you know, again,  
without two and a half--without the 2.6 billion  
dollars of campaign for fiscal equity funds, our  
options are limited.

CHANCELLOR FARINA: But let me also add--

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing] So--

3 CHANCELLOR FARINA: that I think to some  
4 degree, one of the things we're trying to do is make  
5 principals smarter about how they use their budgets.  
6 Because I think over the past few years there's been  
7 a little bit of anybody can do whatever they want  
8 with their monies, and we're looking at things. You  
9 know, is your school perhaps have too much of an  
10 overhead? Is there another way to use the money more  
11 wisely? And also, indirectly, there's some things  
12 that were taken off the principal's budget. For  
13 example, in the past, if you had all day pre-k you  
14 had to pay for the afternoon with school funds. Now  
15 that we're paying for the all-day pre-k, that could  
16 be money that could be spent. So, I do think that--  
17 and I know this past year and hopefully going  
18 forward, no school is going to suffer tremendous  
19 amount when they get their new budgets. So we're  
20 really looking very carefully at that so that  
21 everyone can pretty much assume that what they've had  
22 they will continue to have, but the one thing we have  
23 no control over is when a school gets a much less  
24 enrollment, because the money is following the child.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So, I just want to  
3 make sure that there's no direct, no negative impact  
4 to direct student services and what I think I'm  
5 hearing is that you're going to look for other ways  
6 to absorb sort of that deficit.

7 CHANCELLOR FARINA: That's correct.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So it doesn't  
9 impact direct services.

10 RAY ORLANDO: We will try, yes.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay, thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member Chin  
13 followed by Kallos and then Levin.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair.  
15 Good morning, Chancellor. It's great to see you, and  
16 it's really a different tone in these budget  
17 hearings, and I just want to let you know that I'm  
18 one of those middle school students when I was  
19 younger that started to learn Spanish in the seventh  
20 grade, and that was the best class I had, in the  
21 seventh, eighth, and ninth grade. So, give those  
22 middle school students a chance.

23 CHANCELLOR FARINA: You are a unique  
24 seventh grader then.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So give them a  
3 chance, an opportunity to learn a second language  
4 whenever there is a chance. And also, follow up with  
5 one of my colleague's question earlier. For the  
6 school that wants to start a dual language program,  
7 one of the middle school in my district is doing  
8 that. Are you providing extra support? Because for  
9 them to create a whole new program, are there going  
10 to be extra funding, extra support for these schools?

11 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Actually, yes,  
12 because this came out of a special grant that we  
13 received. So many things, first of all, before a  
14 school can start particularly a dual language program  
15 there's a school visit that's done by Deputy  
16 Chancellor Baez to ensure that there are a, enough  
17 students. You know, the difficulty with a dual  
18 language separate from foreign language is that you  
19 need 50 percent of the children who speak the native  
20 language versus the other 50 who only speak English.  
21 So we need to make sure that that school's population  
22 fits the right criteria for the program. Second  
23 thing is that we've asked principals to confirm that  
24 they will send teachers for mandated professional  
25 development, because this is not just about any

1  
2 teacher teaching a subject simply in another  
3 language. So we already started professional  
4 development about four months ago, and they will  
5 also, many of them, be expected to go for more  
6 training over the summer. And then we have looked for  
7 the materials that we think are most appropriate for  
8 these programs, and we actually had publishers come  
9 in and share what they have, and we are doing the  
10 professional development for the schools to say this  
11 is what you should be using. So, there's a  
12 tremendous amount of preliminary work before these  
13 programs start in September, and the principals who  
14 got these, because it was almost a competition, had  
15 to show that they were committed to this process and  
16 would be willing to put the time and energy into  
17 them.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay, that's good.  
19 In the preliminary budget you have included about  
20 68,000 dollars for language access campaign to do  
21 public awareness to promote the language learner.  
22 You're putting some more funding, close to 50,000 to  
23 help support the language line. Why is that just a  
24 one year funding? Maybe you can explain a little bit  
25

1  
2 more about what is this campaigns going to include  
3 and why is it only for one year?

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: That might have been  
5 for the CEC elections. You know, part of what has  
6 happened--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing]  
8 That's not for the language access campaign, to  
9 promote the language lines?

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We'll get back to you.  
11 Okay.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I mean, there are  
13 so many languages you have to cover. You have to  
14 cover, what, 80 languages on the phone line? Maybe  
15 while he's looking at that, what about also--

16 RAY ORLANDO: [interposing] Sorry for the  
17 delay.

18 CHANCELLOR FARINA: It's a language  
19 access so that parents have responses to their rights  
20 under guidelines, for students particularly who need  
21 bilingual services or--

22 RAY ORLANDO: [interposing] Yeah, so this  
23 campaign is designed to alert parents to the parent  
24 bill of rights and responsibilities which provides  
25 them with their rights and responsibilities regarding

1 translation and interpretation services if they're  
2 not proficient in English. So this campaign is  
3 designed to raise the awareness and alert parents to  
4 what their rights and responsibilities are. Could--  
5 and that funding is available in Fiscal Year 16.  
6 What I expect we will do is evaluate the success of  
7 that campaign once it's been run to determine whether  
8 we need to run it again in subsequent years.

9  
10 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So you going to do  
11 ads, or it's just individual schools?

12 RAY ORLANDO: Let's see. Yeah, there's  
13 a--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing] Are  
15 you going to involve like the ethnic media, the  
16 community involvement?

17 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We actually have done  
18 a very good job--

19 RAY ORLANDO: [interposing] Yes, I believe  
20 we're going to do all of those things. I can get  
21 back to you with the details of the actual program,  
22 but I don't have them handy right now.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay.

24 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Actually our press  
25 office meets with the ethic media once every two

1 weeks, two months, and we've been--every time there's  
2 a new campaign we bring them to the table, and  
3 certainly with the CEC elections. We asked them to do  
4 articles on them. We've made a lot more information  
5 and as new issues come up, we actually invite them to  
6 more meetings so they can do follow ups in their  
7 newspapers and in their radio spots.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And the other issue  
10 is translators in the school, especially for parents  
11 who need to know about IEP issues or parents who are  
12 in school where there's not a large number of  
13 students with that same language abilities that they  
14 need some, you know, extra help in translation.

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think--yeah.  
16 Particularly with the IEP's this year, we asked all  
17 principals around the city to make a big emphasis  
18 September and October of this past year to have IEP  
19 meetings on Tuesdays, you know, the Tuesdays that we  
20 added 40 minutes for parent involvement. We asked to  
21 be strictly in schools where they had a lot of IEPs  
22 to that be the focus, and to whatever they needed to  
23 do, whether they had to bring in translators or had  
24 the kids be prepared to help their parents. We made  
25 a big emphasis. We have gotten almost no issues this

1  
2 year about IEP translations, and we have put a lot of  
3 extra effort to make sure that parents have gotten  
4 one on one meetings to understand what their students  
5 are entitled to.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So if a principal  
7 needs translator, they can request--

8 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]  
9 Absolutely.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: directly to come  
11 in.

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And you have set a  
14 time for that. Okay, thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing] Oh,  
17 Chair, just one last point I just forgot.  
18 Chancellor, I just--it's relating to budget, and I  
19 really just urge you to work with us to include lunar  
20 [sic] New Year in the school calendar. We were not  
21 involved in the discussion. We were involved last  
22 year. So, I think we can work it out and to make  
23 sure that students still have the 180 day  
24 requirement. So, that's my request. Thank you.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I'll get a pitch in  
3 for Diwali too while we're at it. So we urge you to  
4 do that as well. Council Member Kallos followed by  
5 Council Member Levin and Rosenthal and King.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you, Chair  
7 Dromm. We in the Council and the city are lucky to  
8 have you as the Education Chair. I'd like to first  
9 thank our Chancellor for facilitating my visit of  
10 every school in my district. So far I'm up to 18 of  
11 the public schools in my district, which is amazing,  
12 and I hope that other folks follow suit all the way  
13 up to the Governor. We should be visiting our  
14 schools and really visiting and knowing what's going  
15 on. I also want to thank you for your assistance with  
16 high school voter registration. I've been working  
17 with DOE over the past couple of years to register  
18 high school seniors. This year we did a pilot. I  
19 was curious whether or not we--now that we've done a  
20 pilot if we are ready to now roll it out as something  
21 that can be done programmatically through the  
22 schools. And I have a number of questions to the  
23 extent we can go back and forth quickly. I'd like to  
24 address food issues as well as women's equity issues  
25 as well.

1  
2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Okay. What's the  
3 question?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Can we bring high  
5 school senior voter registration in as a programmatic  
6 ongoing program versus just doing it as a pilot on a  
7 catch as catch can basis?

8 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, we've been  
9 doing a lot more of the senior voting registration,  
10 but why don't you and I meet to discuss what it would  
11 take to move it from the pilots.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Prefect. The  
13 next sad reality is I believe New York State is now  
14 49<sup>th</sup> out of 50<sup>th</sup> states in terms of voter turnout, and  
15 so one question with regard to behavior is what would  
16 happen if 1.1 million children every year from when  
17 they started with their schools until they graduated  
18 voted on election day or the day before in their  
19 schools, and they got in the habit of doing it every  
20 single year, and did it 12 times before they turned  
21 18? How likely would they be to vote once they  
22 turned 18, and what would our voting demographic look  
23 like 12 years from now when 1.1 million children had  
24 grown up voting?

1  
2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I totally agree with  
3 you. I think it's an embarrassment our voters turn  
4 out, not just in the city but in this country. There  
5 are many countries that hold their voting days on  
6 Sundays, and I was in Turkey when they were voting,  
7 and one of the things that's there, you don't vote,  
8 you lose a day's pay, because that can be your  
9 protest vote, but you lose a day's pay. So I do  
10 think this is something we absolutely have to work  
11 on.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I would love to  
13 work with you on bringing mock voting into the  
14 schools. With regard to hunger, the sad reality is  
15 that in the wealthiest nation in the world hunger is  
16 still rampant, and especially in this city. One of  
17 the things we can do about this is Lunch for  
18 Learning, which is providing free lunch to all of our  
19 1.1 million. I really appreciate that we've done it  
20 for the middle schools. Is there a chance to expand  
21 it into upper schools where peer pressure is really  
22 what dissuades kids from using the free or reduced  
23 vouchers? And then in your testimony you mentioned  
24 that it costs the city funding, but it's my  
25 understanding that we did receive USDA reimbursement.

1  
2 So is there a plan to expand? What are the real  
3 costs to the city versus the federal government?

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, first of all,  
5 it doesn't cover the cost of what we've done. And I  
6 want to be clear that with middle school lunch, we  
7 did more than provide free lunch. We changed the  
8 environments in many of the schools. That's why we  
9 have the seven model schools. I invite you to visit  
10 any of the seven. In one of the schools we put in a  
11 jukebox. We put in booths. We put in a deli type  
12 feeding counter. We painted the cafeteria so it's  
13 more exciting, and because with that age group, it's  
14 not just about eating, it's about relaxing, sitting  
15 down. We have--we put in board games. We did a lot  
16 of things. One of the other model sites has now where  
17 the students choose and develop their own menu every  
18 six weeks based on the ethnicities in that particular  
19 school. So we really need, if we're going to  
20 eventually start spreading the lunch, to really  
21 figure out where the money's going to come from. I  
22 would certainly, given this pilot, be willing to  
23 rethink that, but you know, I think we need to very  
24 careful in terms of where is the money going to come  
25 from, and every time you put money in something it

1  
2 comes out of something else. I do think the middle  
3 school lunch program has turned out very well.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I like to take my  
5 money from the federal government, especially--

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] You and  
7 me both.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So, how much  
9 funding can we count on for the free lunch program as  
10 well as Breakfast after the Bell, which is fully  
11 federally funded, can we roll that out to all 1.1  
12 million children?

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think this requires  
14 a more extensive conversation than just answering  
15 here.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Perfect. My  
17 final question is with regard to--I serve on the  
18 Women's Issues Committee, and I know I'm going over  
19 my time, but I'd like to at least lodge it and if you  
20 can answer it now or answer in writing to the  
21 committee later. The Fiscal 2016 preliminary budget  
22 includes 214,000 dollars for varsity girl's teams in  
23 effort to comply with Title Nine. According to the US  
24 Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the  
25 City would have to add 3,862 more sports

1  
2 opportunities to comply. The funding added in Fiscal  
3 Year 16 only adds 12 teams. What further plans if any  
4 does DOE have to comply with Title Nine and so that  
5 we can offer all the women who attend our schools the  
6 same opportunities as the men with regards to  
7 athletics? And to the Chair, would you prefer the  
8 answer now or just later?

9 CHANCELLOR FARINA: No, that's okay we  
10 can--

11 RAY ORLANDO: It's 12 next year and it's  
12 an additional 12 over the next four years, year after  
13 year. So it's 12, 24, 36, 48. So it is only 12  
14 initially. And of course we would--we are committed  
15 to expanding this to the extent possible, but again,  
16 without additional funding it's very difficult to do  
17 everything we want to do.

18 CHANCELLOR FARINA: But this also goes to  
19 the fact that we've asked the community based  
20 organizations and community schools, which there'll  
21 be an additional 128, that part of what they should  
22 be doing in after school is providing more physical  
23 activities as one of the things they do. We have  
24 asked for more mental health activities, more  
25

1  
2 physical activities and more arts activities to be  
3 part of the services that they provide.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you. Thank  
5 you to the Chair and the members of this committee.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Council  
7 Member Kallos. Just in regard to some of the feeding  
8 programs, there will be some related cost if we were  
9 to increase the Breakfast after the Bill and  
10 additional middle school and/or free lunches as well.  
11 So I just kind of wanted to point that out. I've had  
12 some conversations with some of the workers actually  
13 involved. Do you have an idea of an estimate of  
14 those costs at this point of what it would entail?

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think one of  
16 the things that, you know, with breakfast, it's not  
17 just the food. It's that requires a different shift  
18 and the use of cafeteria workers and custodians,  
19 principals, and we have 300 schools right now who are  
20 getting it. SO, I would say right now to keep  
21 looking at how we expand it under the present way in  
22 terms of principals requesting it, and being done in  
23 agreement where there's the highest need. Because we  
24 do provide breakfast free in every school. It's just  
25 not in the classroom. So, I think it's also our

1 schools taking advantage of what's being offered now,  
2 and to what degree do we take the ones where it's  
3 being offered and take it to another step? But it's  
4 actually an extremely expensive proposition.  
5

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So I'm supportive of  
7 both of the programs, obviously, as I believe the  
8 Administration is as well, but having been a teacher  
9 in a public school for as long as I was there, even  
10 when we would order lunches for kids that were going  
11 on trips, it took additional time for the cafeteria  
12 workers to be able to prepare those lunches so that  
13 you could just grab it and run with them and go on  
14 trips. So, I would like to see if we could talk  
15 maybe at another point about what the cost involved  
16 would be, because I think we both support the  
17 objective. It's just how do we get there? Council  
18 Member--no? Okay. Council Member Rosenthal followed  
19 by King, Lander and Williams, and we've been joined  
20 by Council Member Williams.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Great. Thank  
22 you so much, Chair Dromm. Thank you so much,  
23 Chancellor. You're so patient as always, and totally  
24 impressed. And I really want to start by thanking  
25 you for reconsidering the CCS contract and pulling

1 that back. You know, it's so interesting. We may,  
2 of course, end up with a more expensive budget at the  
3 end of the day, but I think what we'll end up with is  
4 a more accurate read. So when we're doing our  
5 budgeting we'll really know what the number is. But  
6 along those lines, I'm wondering if you're at a point  
7 where you can share any changes in the contracting  
8 process that you're contemplating.

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: No, I think right now  
11 we have a review team that's going through all this  
12 and also trying to understand the complexities of the  
13 federal government as to why in some places they say  
14 yes and some places say no, but I'm happy to bring  
15 you up to date as long--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]  
17 Sure.

18 CHANCELLOR FARINA: when we have it to a  
19 better place.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Absolutely.  
21 Thank you. I just didn't understand your last  
22 sentence. Why--

23 CHANCELLOR FARINA:[interposing] No, in  
24 other words that, you know, this particular contract  
25 in some places--

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [interposing]  
3 You mean with D [sic] rate [sic]?

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Sorry, thank you.  
5 Oh, okay. That would be great because that was my  
6 second question. I was wondering why the 23, what  
7 the route to the 23 or the 25 million dollar number  
8 feels exceedingly low, and I was wondering what the  
9 route was and sort of the history of that. So I look  
10 forward--

11 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Yeah, so we'll follow  
12 up with you in terms of what we've done so far.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so  
14 much. I really appreciate it. And lastly, just sort  
15 of transparency in general, are there any steps that  
16 have happened under your tenure with transparency and  
17 the budget either for parents or for the general  
18 public in general that you've been proud of or want  
19 to talk about.

20 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I would say one of the  
21 things is that we have gone back and reinforced  
22 something that was on the books but maybe was not  
23 being done is that SLT's in respective schools have  
24 the right to review the budget. Although that was  
25 always on the books, it was always--it wasn't honored

1 as much as it should be. So we made very clear to  
2 principals and to superintendents that parents have  
3 the right to revise or look at the budgets. And  
4 again, it comes with some cost, because, you know, a  
5 principal may think I'm going to do this, and some  
6 parents say, "Well, we would rather do that."  
7 Particularly it comes to arts programs and other  
8 things. So, I think that has been a big step  
9 forward. I think the other thing that is extremely  
10 transparent is if you look at our PEP meetings, that  
11 the PEP members are actually voting after lots and  
12 lots of discussion and not always agreeing with what  
13 we think might be the best idea in the world. And I  
14 think we have contract meetings before PEP meetings  
15 that last for hours and hours. And so we're not  
16 giving lip service to people who say I'm going to  
17 serve, but actually say you have a real role to play  
18 here and we really want your opinion. So I think  
19 those are very transparent issues, and to the degree  
20 that we put more and more things online so people can  
21 see what we're doing, I think that makes a lot more  
22 sense.  
23

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: For the SLT  
25 budget review, that's news to me, but I haven't been

1  
2 spending as much time in the schools. That's great  
3 to know. I can think of a whole bunch of SLT's that  
4 have been asking for that. Did that get communicated  
5 through--how did that get communicated?

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I guess  
7 communicated A, in Principals Weekly, which I put out  
8 once a week. It also gets communicated through the  
9 superintendents. These new superintendents were very  
10 clearly instructed that this is one of our, you know,  
11 preliminary and important decisions that we want  
12 parents involved, and also, SLT's have to sign off on  
13 the budgets.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Oh, wow.

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: There is a part in  
16 the budget where they sign off on it. So, I think all  
17 that allows for greater transparency and involvement,  
18 and it's a real role that parents can play in their  
19 schools.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Wow, I'm going  
21 to help get the word out. Thank you so much.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And just to add, I  
23 think Chancellor, if I'm correct, it's the main  
24 responsibility of the SLT to review that budget.

25 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Yeah.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: That's primarily  
3 their responsibility.

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: And the CEP.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, exactly.

6 Alright, Council Member King followed by Lander and  
7 then Williams. We've also been joined by Council  
8 Member Chaim Deutsch. And let me just take this  
9 opportunity also to express my condolences to the  
10 family of the seven children who died in that tragic  
11 fire in your district and to commend you for the job  
12 that you've done in bringing back some peace and  
13 comfort to that family and to the other members of  
14 your district. Thank you for your work, Council  
15 Member Deutsch. Thank you. Council Member King?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Thank you, Mr.  
17 Chair, and too I express the sentiments of the Chair  
18 to you, Council Member. Stay strong. Thank you.  
19 Madam Chancellor, thank you. It's always a delight  
20 to be in the room with you, and I think I can share  
21 the sentiments of everyone that our conversations we  
22 feel a whole lot better with a educator leading the  
23 ship when it comes to the DOE. So, thank you again.  
24 My question's short, but I understand, you know, we  
25 saw something happen here earlier before we even

1 started today's hearing, and I know as ex-high school  
2 basketball player many, many moons ago what sports  
3 did for me. You know? How it helped me discipline,  
4 learn the value of teamwork and comradery, and helped  
5 me know that I needed to maintain my grades if I  
6 wanted to actually participate in something that was  
7 greater than me. So, I know last year we've had this  
8 conversation in regards to the PSAL, how the small  
9 schools are able to get proper funding so the  
10 students who attend those schools can participate in  
11 sports. As you know, your office of school supports  
12 oversees the 27 million that is allocated to the PSAL  
13 and but according to Let Them Play, which they have  
14 inundated my emails with emails and my Twitter feed  
15 about there's still some injustice of how this money  
16 is being spent or has been allocated. Clearly, I'd  
17 like to know from you what systems are in place, how  
18 this money has been divvied up. Why do the students  
19 still need to feel that they have a need that they  
20 have to come into the chambers and fight for some  
21 fairness or inclusion or participation to have those  
22 funding's so they can participate in athletic sports  
23 in high school?  
24

1  
2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We can give you  
3 specifics, but I want to answer this one directly.  
4 One of the things that we have been asking  
5 particularly with small schools that are co-located  
6 in buildings, that they bring, that they come  
7 together to have a team across the whole building so  
8 that they can actually get better use of the space.  
9 We also have, and I have agreed to meet with some of  
10 the students this afternoon, which is why sometimes  
11 you wait your turn to get a discussion rather than  
12 yelling, and being in school is not a bad thing. But  
13 I do think that this is something we're definitely  
14 working on. We're never going to get where everybody  
15 wants to be on all issues, but we are committed,  
16 because I do agree with you and I see--you know, I  
17 went to the PSAL last year, and when I saw the  
18 students at South Shore, which made one campus,  
19 although they are like six different schools that  
20 came together and, you know, they lost so they cried.  
21 But the importance for many of these kids is it also  
22 gives them motivation to want to go to college and do  
23 other things. So I absolutely agree with you. It's  
24 a matter of how we take funds and make sure we spread  
25 them out as much as we can. So we're committed to

1  
2 working with small schools, but we're also committed  
3 to having small schools work with each other.

4 RAY ORLANDO: Hi. So the 27 million  
5 dollars is--twenty and a half million of it primarily  
6 pays for coaches, the salaries of the coaches  
7 themselves. So, another three and a half million  
8 goes for the officials who officiate at the games. We  
9 just spent 23 and a half of the 27. There's also  
10 money for the rentals of the venues themselves,  
11 insurance, transportation, bringing people to the  
12 games. So that's kind of the whole--that's what the  
13 27 is going for. It's actually going for services to  
14 folks.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay.

16 CHANCELLOR FARINA: This year we got a  
17 million dollars to provide helmets for the football  
18 teams. So, we are looking for outside funders to  
19 help us to increase more sports, and we certainly  
20 have some great teams in New York. It'd be great if  
21 some of them gave us fund [sic] to have more sports  
22 in our schools.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: I agree with that.  
24 It's definitely a great approach. My next question,  
25 last year we did allocate 825,000 to make sure that

1  
2 the SAL stayed operational. Is that money going to  
3 be baseline as of this year? Is there--and as far as  
4 this money or any additional monies, how are  
5 definitely being more inclusive of the SAL schools,  
6 because they have different criteria than the PSAL?  
7 How did this transition effectively be effective for  
8 the students who want to play sports?

9 RAY ORLANDO: That money isn't base lined.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Oh.

11 RAY ORLANDO: Okay. And there are--I'm  
12 sorry. I have statistics on how many folks. You  
13 know, there's 3,000, over 3,000 teams at 255 schools.  
14 You know, we've hired essentially, you know, a  
15 webmaster to keep track of the scheduling and  
16 executive director for the PSAL. I mean, we're  
17 trying to provide the support necessary to expand the  
18 services as available, including the addition of the  
19 girl's team for Title Nine compliance and such.  
20 We're very much--this is very much on our radar  
21 screen.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay. Well, I  
23 thank you, and I thank you for your commitment to sit  
24 down with the students and figure this all out so  
25

1  
2 they don't have to be here. Thank you, Chancellor.  
3 Thank you, Mr. Chair, I appreciate it.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.  
5 Council Member Lander followed by Williams.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you, very  
7 much, Mr. Chairman. Chancellor, as always, wonderful  
8 to see you in District 15 especially, but all  
9 throughout the city we really are thrilled with so  
10 much of what you reported on and what's taking place,  
11 and I'm encouraged especially that UPK we weren't  
12 able last year to see a lot of expansion on thanks to  
13 Sophia and Josh and your great team and Jessica.  
14 We're really seeing expansions, and so much so that I  
15 really have sort of started beating the drum to get  
16 people to apply this year in a way that I thought was  
17 a little risky last year. So that is all great.  
18 Encouraged also by the framework for great schools  
19 work that you talk about in your testimony. When will  
20 see the first reports on that, the things that the  
21 public will be able to kind of understand what that  
22 is and look at our schools based on that new  
23 framework?

24 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, we've actually  
25 been sharing it with the CEC's partially, and we've

1  
2 also been sharing it with CPAC's [sic]. We're happy  
3 to do a presentation for the City Council if you'd  
4 like it. I think that would be great. We are also  
5 beginning our snapshot that is going out, our school  
6 survey that's going out. It's based on that, and  
7 tomorrow we're meeting with all the superintendents  
8 and the borough directors to go over what it's going  
9 to look like in their work. So it's already in  
10 writing, in print, and we are more than happy to do  
11 presentations on it, but we've already started  
12 sharing that information citywide.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Super. I think  
14 that'll be great to get the council--

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]  
16 Absolutely.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: more up to speed  
18 on it. I'm looking forward to having dialogues with  
19 parents based on that much richer set of information  
20 about our schools. It really shows that those goals  
21 of accountability, but also thinking in a more  
22 genuine and comprehensive way about what our schools--  
23 -

24 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]  
25 Absolutely.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: are doing is  
3 entirely achievable. Good to see in your testimony  
4 that parent/teacher conferences, which I made a habit  
5 of asking about in the prior Administration at the  
6 budget hearing is up. I wonder if you kind of have  
7 some ability to start getting beneath those--get a  
8 little more data there and understand how many of  
9 those are happening in different languages. What can  
10 we do to be really pushing a goal that I know you  
11 have and that we share really getting that in--

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] Well, I  
13 think the one thing that was really different this  
14 year is that parent/teacher conferences took place  
15 over a whole month, not over one afternoon and one  
16 evening. We asked principals to use the 40 minutes  
17 as they saw fit over the period of a month so that we  
18 not only made sure that parents had appointments for  
19 parent/teacher conference. You know, some districts  
20 in the city used to do this as a matter of norm, but  
21 it was not the citywide norm. So, there was a  
22 respect for parents so that if you knew you were  
23 coming at four o'clock that you had your--you didn't  
24 have to wait on a long line and listen to everybody  
25 else's conversation. So we said we wanted to be set

1  
2 by appointment. We want it to be over the space of a  
3 month. We want there to be support for parents as  
4 they come in, whether it be translators or for  
5 example if you had a child with an IEP and you needed  
6 the speech teacher there or the OT teacher there,  
7 that was the principal's responsibility to provide.  
8 So we made a big effort and we also asked all the  
9 superintendents to do the follow-up work on how much-  
10 -how many more parents came versus in the past. And  
11 the percentage, I think, was it 54 or 64 percent  
12 higher parent/teacher conferences this year than in  
13 the past. That's a big percentage jump. We also  
14 said that it's not okay because your child is in  
15 middle school or high school not to show up for  
16 parent/teacher conferences. So a lot of phone calls.  
17 We asked parent coordinators and teachers to make  
18 phone calls to say, "I'm expecting you on such and  
19 such a day to come." So I think we made a big effort  
20 on that. We also asked principals to do follow-ups.  
21 We had a lot of schools. I went to one school in  
22 particular where they had 100 percent reaction, you  
23 know, visiting parents, and they also decided with  
24 the parent/teacher conferences the day they were  
25 doing the parent survey, and no parent could leave

1  
2 the building without filling out a parent survey. So  
3 we're really trying to get the feedback from parents  
4 about how their schools are serving them, and what  
5 are the next steps, because once you talk to a  
6 teacher, we also ask principals to say these are the  
7 things you can follow up at home.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: That's great.  
9 Thank you. And I think the scenario where it'd be  
10 great to, you know, figure out how we can kind of see  
11 and feel that growing richness [sic] to 42 percent is  
12 a good number, but understanding what--I think, you  
13 know, knowing from just talking to lots of families  
14 what it means--

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] No, 42  
16 percent improvement over last year.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Yes.

18 CHANCELLOR FARINA: The 42--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: [interposing] No,  
20 no, that's what I mean. It's a great big number, but  
21 it'll also be great to get a little better sense of,  
22 you know, some of the things you're talking about.

23 CHANCELLOR FARINA: And I think the other  
24 thing that's different this year, which I would love  
25 to see even higher, a lot more teacher visits to

1  
2 home, particularly middle schools. All our MSQI  
3 schools did home visits in addition to, you know. So  
4 it's--we're trying to work this many different ways.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I could go on  
6 with many other things that I'm happy and  
7 enthusiastic about. I want to flag two concerns, one  
8 that I really just blame the state for, but one I do  
9 want to push you guys on first. This is the time  
10 when we're supposed to pay attention to class size,  
11 and I just do want to flag that while it's about  
12 level, it hasn't gone up further, it's level at an  
13 amount that is just way too high, and the number of  
14 classrooms that continue to have 30 plus kids. You  
15 know, the cuts that got made in teachers over the  
16 years, we just still haven't been able to replace.  
17 Some of that is crowding and school space, but some  
18 of that is just budget based. We need obviously the  
19 CFE resources from Albany to deal with it, but I  
20 don't want to let this budget hearing pass without  
21 being on record that the resources we're spending to  
22 get class size down broadly are not yet sufficient,  
23 and that's got to continue to be a shared goal. And  
24 then finally, I guess I do want to just push some on  
25 budget transparency and accountability. This is not

1 specifically about the Department of Education,  
2 honestly. This is something that we've continued to  
3 be pushing, you know, the--and Chair Ferreras spoke  
4 about this in the budget hearing with the budget  
5 director, you know, the new units of accountability  
6 that we created. We really need to see those. We  
7 appreciate the apology we don't have them yet, but  
8 that's not as good as having them. And in general  
9 you lead something which is massive and which we need  
10 to be able to have better look at sort of broken down  
11 financials and budget statistics if we are going to  
12 do our oversight jobs. So, I just will ask as we  
13 approach executive, that you work to bring that to us  
14 and provide it in advance so we can do a good job of  
15 providing the oversight and being the partners that  
16 the charter requires of us. Thank you. Thank you,  
17 Mr. Chair.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member  
20 Williams followed by Council Member Levin.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr.  
22 Chair. Thank you, Chancellor. I came a little late  
23 so I didn't get to hear all of your testimony. I  
24 apologize. A few things that I think you did touch  
25 on but I did want to bring back up. One had to do

1 with CompStat. I've been always trying to push  
2 agencies to work together to look at similar data.  
3 One of the things I'm most proud about with the Gun  
4 Violence Taskforce is there's now an entity looking  
5 at the work that's being done in the 15 neighborhoods  
6 together looking at some of the same information and  
7 providing services in those communities. My question  
8 is, and I think you talked about what you're doing  
9 kind of in the DOE's version, is there--are there  
10 plans to work together with NYPD, look at their  
11 CompStat, look at the crime data and use that to  
12 apply particular programs in certain areas or use  
13 that to apply for funds for certain areas? Because  
14 there's a great correlation between education, crime  
15 and those statistics. So are those numbers looked at  
16 jointly by DOE and NYPD?

18 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think our  
19 conversation is really more in terms of what are the  
20 supports that certain parts of the city need more of.  
21 For example, you know, the retraining of our school  
22 safety officers, what we call Safe Corridor  
23 Neighborhoods, neighborhoods in the city where it's  
24 more difficult for kids to get from their homes to  
25 their schools. So, in those kind of areas we do look

1  
2 at NYPD data so that we can ensure that our kid's  
3 safety, but in terms of looking, we already know that  
4 we're targeting several neighborhoods for--more for  
5 the sense of--you know, the rate of homeless has gone  
6 up. We have centers in certain communities that for  
7 kids it's just very, very difficult to love there.  
8 So, that's the kind of data. So we're also working  
9 with, you know, the Commissioner of Health. We're  
10 working with lots of different Commissioners. We  
11 have something called the Children's Cabinet. That  
12 meets on a regular basis to talk and the NYPD sits at  
13 that. So, yes, we're looking to work together,  
14 because there isn't anything that affects children  
15 that isn't also relevant to all the other  
16 Commissioners and all city agencies.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. Do  
18 you have any more--I saw what you wrote about the  
19 Renewal Schools, I didn't know if you had any more  
20 specificity about what the funds would be spent on.

21 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, the funds are  
22 being spent very specifically in an additional hour  
23 of school time, Saturday academies, summer work,  
24 additional staff development for professional  
25 development for teachers, extra support in making

1  
2 sure that teachers get training, for example, in the  
3 lower grades on very specific phonics programs. So,  
4 we do have a whole list and I can certainly give it  
5 to you, but the most important thing is that it's not  
6 the same in every school because every school has  
7 different needs. So, but the after school component,  
8 mental health, and parent, and help for parents. I  
9 mean, the biggest thing like I said before I that we  
10 need to improve attendance at all these schools. So  
11 what are the mechanisms that we need in order to  
12 improve attendance.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. And  
14 obviously, folks who work on historically  
15 disadvantaged communities and their issues really  
16 spend a lot of time and there's a lot of energy  
17 around the police reform, because--and I understand  
18 it's actually the palpable thing when you see it  
19 bubble up, somebody's who's hurt, someone has died,  
20 it happens very quickly, but I feel like the same  
21 thing happens with communities just much slowly, much  
22 more slowly in other venues where there's housing  
23 where there's education. I really want to push fixing  
24 some of those things. And so when it comes to  
25 infrastructure--because one of the things that people

1  
2 say is that these communities ask for more polices,  
3 it's why they get more police. They also ask for  
4 better education and better housing, some reason that  
5 response is not as responded to as well. But  
6 infrastructure, I know we don't have a lot of places  
7 to build, but I found in some of the places that  
8 young people are not succeeding the way we know they  
9 can. The infrastructure is very bad when you go from  
10 one school to the other. It's just not even worth  
11 being taught in the classroom. There's leaks.  
12 There's cracks. The hallways are not kept. Is there  
13 enough funding to bring everything up to the way it  
14 should be right now, or is it that we need more  
15 funding?

16 CHANCELLOR FARINA: That's a leading  
17 question. Of course, there's never enough funding,  
18 but let me be very clear, I have been in education a  
19 very long time, and facilities have never been as  
20 good as they are now. And I say this because I  
21 think, and I give a lot of credit to this to Kathleen  
22 Grimm, when Kathleen Grimm became Deputy Chancellor,  
23 she almost did a school by survey about what needed  
24 to be done. And I have to tell you that any time I  
25 visit a school--I was just in a school two weeks ago

1 where there was a leak in the roof. I was back in  
2 the office 10 minutes. I mentioned it to Elizabeth  
3 Rose and within two days there was somebody doing  
4 that. We are very much aware of where facilities  
5 need to be improved, and I do think this is something  
6 that the Bloomberg Administration did particularly  
7 well and made sure that they invested money on this.  
8 SO, I do think its better. Is it where it needs to  
9 be? Not necessarily, but certainly in most spaces we  
10 immediately go in and do--I haven't seen one building  
11 that I have visited this year that wasn't newly  
12 painted, that didn't have the right access, and if I  
13 see something when I go to school, and all my Deputy  
14 Chancellors know the same thing, if something is not  
15 the way it should be facilities-wise, we immediately  
16 go to Elizabeth Rose and say this needs to be done.  
17 And like I said, I think that was one of the legacies  
18 that Kathleen has left behind that we should be very  
19 proud of.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I'm excited to  
22 hear that. I don't think we are where we should be,  
23 but I do want to just piggyback on what you said,  
24 because my office was in contact with your office and  
25 there was some immediate response. So, I know that's

1  
2 something that's taken seriously. I want to say thank  
3 you for that. I know we'll be following up soon. I  
4 have a couple of other issues. I did want to  
5 piggyback on Council Member Lander on the U of A. I  
6 think we were expecting a lot more transparency and  
7 the U of A just from the Administration in general,  
8 and I think it's a lot easier to say that we're going  
9 to do it as opposed to do it when we get there. So,  
10 we really hope that the U of A's get a little bit  
11 smaller and a little bit more information so we can  
12 understand and do our jobs. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Council  
14 Member Levin followed by Council Member Gibson.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
16 much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Chancellor. I have a  
17 couple of questions. First question about children  
18 that reside in the homeless shelter system. So  
19 there's 24,000 children in New York City shelter  
20 system. According to McKinney Vento [sic] Homeless  
21 Assistance Act and the Chancellor's Reg [sic] A-780,  
22 Title One schools are required to set aside a minimum  
23 of 100 dollars per homeless people. Can you explain  
24 a little bit further what funding is in place to  
25

1 support children that are in the homeless system  
2 outside of Title One funding?  
3

4 RAY ORLANDO: Hi. So, under McKinney  
5 Vento, this year schools received about one and a  
6 half million dollars. They're competitive grants.  
7 Additionally, both the AIDP program in Title One have  
8 set asides for students in temporary housing, and  
9 that total is approximately 14 million dollars from  
10 those two pots as well.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Has DOE considered  
12 including a fair student funding wait for homeless  
13 people needs because the population is so large?

14 RAY ORLANDO: The chancellor and I have  
15 been discussing a complete review of all of the  
16 existing waits to look their accuracy as well as to  
17 look at populations including homeless children who  
18 may indeed be considered for new waits. So that is a  
19 conversation that is beginning, I can tell you, and  
20 so stay tuned and I'd be delighted to keep you  
21 informed as we continue to talk about it.

22 CHANCELLOR FARINA: And the other thing  
23 you should know, Steve, that this is a such a  
24 citywide problem that we're also cooperating with  
25 other agencies because one of the things that I

1  
2 didn't know is that in many of homeless shelters, we  
3 did not have student libraries. So working with  
4 Paula Gavin and Scholastic and a few other people,  
5 we're now able to put libraries, student libraries,  
6 in most of our homeless shelters and we've done that  
7 within the last few months, because there's a whole  
8 bunch of things we need to do because you can't, you  
9 know, if the child has to do homework and other  
10 things, how do we make sure that they have the  
11 facilities? So, we're looking to work on this issues  
12 with all other agencies and also making sure that one  
13 of the things that I think principals really deserve  
14 a lot of credit, that almost every principal I've met  
15 with that has a high percentage of homeless students  
16 really wants those students no matter where they're  
17 located in the city to be able to come back to the  
18 schools. And I've gone to schools, I went to one in  
19 District 23 where the student travels from the Bronx  
20 every day. This is in Ocean Hill Brownsville and to  
21 come from the Bronx, because what's happening in that  
22 school is so spectacular that they don't want to lose  
23 that. So, I think this is an issue that we have to  
24 take on many dimensions.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: In terms of UPK  
3 then, how does--how is DOE looking at the specific  
4 homeless population for three and four year olds  
5 coming into the UPK system?

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I mean, again, they  
7 have--you know, they should be registering. Again,  
8 they register within where they're presently  
9 residing. The problem is that they may be moving, you  
10 know, and that's something that we're committed that  
11 once you're in a building and you're registered in a  
12 building you get to stay in that building. If they  
13 should to move to another, it would be their choice  
14 to register somewhere else.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Do we have data on  
16 the number of children in the UPK system that are  
17 residing in temporary housing?

18 CHANCELLOR FARINA: No.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And last question,  
20 Chancellor, I just want to change the subject here  
21 because I only have a minute left. On Breakfast in  
22 the Classroom, it's been an issue that I've been  
23 championing for a while now. I sponsored two pieces  
24 of legislation last term about it. I know that a  
25 couple of my colleagues have asked about it already.

1  
2 As you know, the cost of the meals themselves are  
3 reimbursed by the federal government, and we heard  
4 earlier from you that there's costs that are  
5 associated, I think, with some of the ramp up costs.  
6 Have you been able to determine exactly what those  
7 costs are? Because right now we're leaving tens of  
8 million dollars, 50 million dollars or so in federal  
9 funding on the table because that's what can pay for  
10 it. And in looking at other, you know, looking at  
11 other big cities across the country, you know, we  
12 rank 61<sup>st</sup> out of 62 big cities in terms of our  
13 enrollment in breakfast, and other cities, large  
14 cities, D.C., Memphis, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Houston  
15 all have above 70 percent enrollment, so 70 percent  
16 of the children that are receiving free or reduced  
17 lunch are eating breakfast at school. We are at a  
18 little over around 35 percent. So there are, you  
19 know, other cities are doing it at 70 percent.  
20 They're large cities. They have large administrative  
21 costs, not as large as ours, but Houston is a big  
22 city. D.C.'s a big city.

23 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Look, we're looking  
24 at it. We have some preliminary figures, but they're  
25 very preliminary, but I want to be clear again,

1  
2 because sometimes there's a misconception. There is  
3 already free breakfast in every single school. As a  
4 principal, I offered it. I encouraged it. I allowed  
5 parents to come in and have breakfast with their  
6 children if they wanted it, and not that many people  
7 took us up on it. So, I just want to be clear, that  
8 it's having it taken to the classroom from the  
9 cafeteria that's a major difference. So--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]

11 Right.

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: This is something we  
13 will look at and certainly we'll get back to you  
14 because this is something that's presently in  
15 discussion.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I mean, I just  
17 wanted to say, I mean, I was talking to my aunt who's  
18 a substitute school nurse in Downbrook, New Jersey at  
19 an elementary school, and they have a grab-n-go cart  
20 there that they just instituted last year. And from  
21 a school nurse perspective, she's seen a huge  
22 difference, and in terms of the number of kids that  
23 are coming in with stomach aches and other headaches  
24 and things like that. And you know, administratively  
25 it works. You know, there's--it's up to each school,

1  
2 but there's definitely a template for large cities to  
3 do it. Chicago has gone through this. LA has gone  
4 through this. As I said, like you know, Houston. I  
5 mean, the models are Detroit and Newark, cities that  
6 are not that well known for their, you know,  
7 exemplary school systems, but they've been able to  
8 get the logistics of it right so that their  
9 enrollment in the school breakfast program is very  
10 high. When you look at a city like Newark or Detroit  
11 they are over 90--yeah, Newark is at 91 percent.  
12 Detroit is at over 80 percent, and so you know,  
13 they've--it's taken some time, but they've been able  
14 to figure it out, and I offer my services in talking  
15 with custodians and trying to figure that part of it  
16 out. I'd very much like to be a part of this because  
17 it's been something I've been very invested for a  
18 long time. Thank you.

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Thank you, we will.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. And  
21 Council Member Levin, we did discuss this a little  
22 bit prior to your return, so there was some  
23 discussion about the cost that would be affiliated  
24 with that, and we'll follow up with you on that as  
25 well. Council Member Vanessa Gibson?

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very  
3 much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate your leadership in all  
4 the work you've done, and good afternoon, Chancellor,  
5 to you and your team. And first, I just want to  
6 thank you for all the work you do. I represent  
7 school District Nine in the great borough of the  
8 Bronx, and we've had many, many conversations. So I  
9 appreciate all the efforts you make in bringing  
10 District Nine to where it should be. I wanted to  
11 just applaud the community school's approach. I think  
12 that's an awesome idea to bring a holistic  
13 perspective when you look at lot of our school  
14 children. I wanted to ask a question. I Chair Public  
15 Safety here at the Council, and I've been a part of  
16 many of the conversations with DOE, with MOCJ and the  
17 NYPD and school safety around restorative justice,  
18 around changing the disciplinary code B21. There's  
19 been a lot of conversation, a lot of talk about it,  
20 the establishment of the school leadership climate  
21 team and the different sub teams that you have of  
22 professionals, educators, and others. So, I just  
23 wanted to ask, has there been an update on that? And  
24 I appreciate obviously the intention to focus on  
25 prevention and not detention and trying to de-

1  
2 escalate situations that unfortunately sometimes land  
3 children in handcuffs when they don't need to be and  
4 suspended and issuing summonses. So, are we looking  
5 at school safety agents in terms of the headcount,  
6 and is there an update that you could provide to us  
7 on the school leadership climate team as it relates  
8 to other restorative justice?

9 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, first of all,  
10 you know, we have the new discipline code that went  
11 out. We purposely put it out middle of the year so  
12 we could see what parts of it worked and what parts  
13 of it don't, so by the time we open in September, if  
14 we need to tweak it in any way we'll be able to do  
15 it. What we have seen already even prior to the  
16 discipline code is that our suspensions are going  
17 down. And they're not going down just to falsify the  
18 records, they're going down because people are being  
19 much more proactive in classroom management issues.  
20 They're more proactive in making sure that part of  
21 the Mondays we've asked every principal in the city  
22 to use at least one or two of the Monday's PD to talk  
23 about classroom management and how do you talk to  
24 kids, how do you de-escalate issues? And I think we  
25 already have a tremendous amount of principals who

1  
2 are invested in this movement, particularly in the  
3 high schools, and we're just going to be doing a lot  
4 more training. I think the other big piece of this  
5 is the school safety officers are going through new  
6 training. They're going for new training under Mark  
7 Grampasat [sp?] to be able to understand what the new  
8 code of behavior is so that instead of summonses  
9 there'll be warnings. We're also looking for school  
10 safety officers to make, work more proactively with  
11 kids in a positive way. So for example, the same way  
12 the NYPD has the Pal Program where they play  
13 basketball with the kids so they get to know them in  
14 a different way, I'd love to see more of that from  
15 school safety officers. I'm actually addressing  
16 them, I believe, next week. He's bringing a lot of  
17 the heads together, and one of the things we're going  
18 to start doing is celebrating school safety officers  
19 who go above and beyond. I don't think it's about  
20 having more. It's about having the right people in  
21 the right schools with the right attitudes, and I do  
22 think that makes a big, big difference, and we have  
23 people who are willing to work with us on this  
24 initiative.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, and I  
3 appreciate that. I am definitely in favor of quality  
4 versus quantity, and certainly the creative  
5 partnerships in recognizing all of our educators and  
6 students need to be safe, but we want to make sure  
7 we're doing it in a creative way. You said that  
8 suspensions are going down. What about the number of  
9 students receiving summons? And can you explain a  
10 little bit more about the warning system? Is there  
11 like a three warning before it turns into something?

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: No. Under this new--  
13 the discipline code, they will not have the same  
14 summons procedure, and the warning is simply a matter  
15 of getting to know students. One of the things I'm  
16 recommending to principals is that kids who are  
17 consistently the ones in trouble be treated a little  
18 bit differently. Bring them to the office on  
19 something positive. How do we celebrate the kids who  
20 are doing the right thing? SO there's a lot of  
21 things that are involved in this, and I think Letitia  
22 who's your superintendent in District Nine has taken  
23 this as one of her priorities, and talking with  
24 principals about how do we celebrate when kids do  
25 something right rather than wait for them when they

1  
2 do something wrong. It's not an easy solution, but I  
3 also agree with you that handcuffs are not the  
4 answer.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right, I agree,  
6 and I do think it's not easy, but we come to the  
7 table with the same mindset. We certainly can make a  
8 lot of strides of progress. I just also wanted to ask  
9 a quick question about the number of guidance  
10 counselors and suicide prevention specialists. So,  
11 in my district in District Nine we had two suicides  
12 last year, and just trying to prevent and focus on  
13 some of the intervention work. After these  
14 unfortunate suicides, I got an incredible amount of  
15 resources for those particular schools, but then  
16 after a serious of months they were gone. So I'm just  
17 trying to see, is there anything consistent that  
18 we're looking to do as far as guidance counselors and  
19 suicide prevention specialists?

20 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, first of all,  
21 we've increased guidance counselors by 200, but  
22 nowhere the number that we need. To me, the  
23 community schools is another place where we'll have a  
24 lot more of those services available. I'm perfectly  
25 aware of the suicide numbers in the city, and one of

1  
2 the things that we've done is done a lot more  
3 training of guidance counselors and social workers  
4 and other people in buildings about the warning  
5 signs. We have also put out entire pamphlets around  
6 what are the things parents should be able to think  
7 about. We've done workshops for parents. One of the  
8 best attended series of workshops this year were how  
9 to deal with your teenager's stress, because I think  
10 everyone needs to be aware that there are signs. And  
11 one of the signs is also absenteeism. You know, we  
12 keep going back to absenteeism. So, there's a lot  
13 more work to be done on this, and I do understand  
14 that we shouldn't lose any child, but it's a lot of  
15 work and it requires--this is a really home/school  
16 connection kind of work. It's not just on our hands.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, thank you  
18 so much. I appreciate it and look forward to working  
19 with you, and thank you, Mr. Chair, for your  
20 leadership.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Council  
22 Member Gibson. I look forward to working with you at  
23 a future hearing as well on some of these issues.  
24 So, thank you. Lightening round. I had some  
25 questions on special education to ask you as well.

1  
2 I'm looking at the Mayor's Preliminary Management  
3 Report, and I see that the numbers of students  
4 referred into special education has increased by  
5 approximately 30,000 if I'm reading this correctly,  
6 both in the number of students receiving special  
7 education services and special education enrollment  
8 in preschool. Can you explain why those numbers have  
9 gone up like that?

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: First of all, this is  
11 a national number, and I will tell you that right now  
12 it's also because a lot of these students are being  
13 recommended by their parents. Special education is  
14 also speech. It's also OT. It's a matter of a lot  
15 of things that are not necessarily these students  
16 being placed in special ED classrooms, but getting  
17 special ED services. So I think parents are getting  
18 a lot more sophisticated, a lot more support for  
19 having IEP's that will help their children in many,  
20 many ways. So I don't think it means that we're--  
21 we're certainly not putting more children in self-  
22 contained special ED classrooms. That's not--in  
23 fact, if anything that's going in the other  
24 direction, but it's about getting a lot more service.  
25 I would say the largest growing service in special ED

1  
2 is speech. You know, the whole language development  
3 issues, and it's now, you know, at one point we  
4 started looking at these in third grade, and now it  
5 starts as early as kindergarten. So, that's really  
6 one of the reasons for that increase.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So for teacher  
8 initiated referrals, what is the ladder of referral  
9 for teachers to follow? Is that changed at all, or  
10 has that remained basically the same? How is that  
11 done on the--

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] it's  
13 basically the same. I mean, certainly they should  
14 move it up to the principal who then, you know,  
15 presents it before the committee. I think one of the  
16 things is that we don't have school based support  
17 teams in the same we used to have them, but as we  
18 move now into the borough offices, we expect to have  
19 that support at the borough office so that they can  
20 do that. And like I said, we're moving more towards,  
21 you know, collaborative team teaching, and but it's  
22 not like we're growing District 75 or any of those  
23 programs substantially.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Are there any  
25 investments being made to prevent students with just

1  
2 language barriers from being referred into special  
3 education rather than to receiving ESL services or  
4 ELL services?

5 CHANCELLOR FARINA: That is on our  
6 agenda, absolutely. When you have students who may  
7 be misdiagnosed, and that's one of the reasons why I  
8 separated the Department of Special ED and the  
9 Department of English Language Learners. We need to  
10 see them as two separate things. For too long they  
11 have been put into one category, and that is not  
12 really the way we want to go. So, there are students  
13 who come to us who may have a language issue, but in  
14 no way does that make them special education, or  
15 special education may have overlays. So, the reality  
16 is that it's a big concern. It's something I discuss  
17 all the time with both of my Deputy Chancellors, but  
18 separating that department, there were many reasons  
19 for it, but that was one of them, because I think for  
20 too many years we assumed that if you didn't speak  
21 English like within the first month of coming here  
22 that there was something wrong with you, and that  
23 cannot be the way the we go forward. So, yes, Danny,  
24 it's on my mind and we're looking at it.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, I want to thank  
3 you also for doing that, because that's something  
4 that I personally have raised here in this committee  
5 in the past four or five years that wasn't done, and  
6 just separating them out and giving them different  
7 titles I think was vitally important, but also  
8 appointing the new Director Milady Baez to that  
9 position I think was a move in the right direction.  
10 We look forward to continuing to work with her. I  
11 thought we had a very successful ELL hearing here a  
12 month ago in terms of exploring the issues, and there  
13 are many more that we could have gotten into, but the  
14 hearing went on for hours as it was. I'm sure we'll  
15 go back and look at some of those issues and look  
16 forward to working with you on that as well in the  
17 future. Another question I have in this lightning  
18 round, do we still use ARIS? What's going on with  
19 ARIS, and if we're not using ARIS, is there a new  
20 company and how much does that cost?

21 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We actually stopped  
22 using it and we're developing something that  
23 hopefully will be better and more complete, and we're  
24 happy to discuss that with you in terms of what we're  
25 looking at.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. And one of the  
3 big concerns with that was parental access to the  
4 system.

5 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I'm sorry?

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I'm sorry. One of the  
7 big concerns about that was parental access to the  
8 system, is that part of your--

9 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] Yeah,  
10 well the reality is that there was very little use.  
11 The parents were not using it. I mean, I think we had  
12 in the single digits parental use of it. So, to spend  
13 that money that we did on that without it being used  
14 doesn't make any sense. So we can use that money for  
15 other things.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: But the parental--the  
17 reason parents weren't using it, what was the reason  
18 parents were not using it? Was it--

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] No, I  
20 think there's just so many other ways to get  
21 information and if we really encourage principals to  
22 do the right thing and teachers, we have many ways to  
23 get that to parents rather than them having to go on  
24 technology.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Can you tell us at  
3 this point if you're going to do an RFP for a new  
4 contract or?

5 CHANCELLOR FARINA: No, I think we're  
6 doing it in house.

7 RAY ORLANDO: Yeah, I believe the work's  
8 being done in house, but I can get back to you.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I'm sorry?

10 RAY ORLANDO: I believe the work's being  
11 done in house, but I can get back to you.

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: In house.

13 RAY ORLANDO: In house, excuse me.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: In terms of some  
15 additional UPK questions, what is the total budget  
16 for UPK program for Fiscal 2016 and how much of that  
17 will go to CBO's versus UPK programs? And if you can  
18 identi--

19 RAY ORLANDO: [interposing] We're still  
20 putting together the budget for the upcoming year for  
21 Fiscal Year 16. It depends on a million factors, as  
22 you know. It's going to depend on how enrollment  
23 actually lands as well as a multi--you know, what  
24 rates we're able to negotiate with the providers that  
25 we're talking to right now in the RFP process. I

1  
2 expect that by the time that we come back at the  
3 executive budget hearing that I suspect you'll be  
4 holding, we'll have a much--we'll have a picture for  
5 you.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, and I think you  
7 held--

8 RAY ORLANDO: [interposing] There's a lot  
9 in flux right now.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: You held a press  
11 conference a week or so ago, two weeks ago, saying  
12 that I think 22,000 students had signed up just in  
13 that first day or so. Where do we stand now? Maybe  
14 Sophia or somebody can answer that?

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Thirty-five? Thirty-  
16 seven thousand.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thirty-seven thousand  
18 as of today?

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Just in the short  
20 period of time.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So we're about more  
22 than--

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Way  
24 ahead of last--  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] A little  
3 more than halfway there, right? Okay. One issue  
4 that keeps coming up and Council Member Levin and I  
5 have just begun to really explore this. I'm going to  
6 explore a little bit publicly, well maybe just to  
7 mention it to you. We still have daycare centers  
8 where essentially they're doing the same job as we're  
9 doing in UPK. Has any thought been given to pulling  
10 those day care centers into the DOE system or into  
11 the UPK system, because it's still early childhood  
12 education that's happening in those daycare centers?  
13 And I'm talking about three years and younger. Has  
14 any discussion gone on about that?

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think the  
16 Mayor has made a strong statement on zero to three  
17 education, but at this moment, I think we have enough  
18 on our plate with four years and up, but certainly  
19 we're looking at everything that will increase  
20 literacy and children's wellbeing as young as  
21 possible. So, you know, we'll keep talking about how  
22 we can work together on this.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Because one of the  
24 issues that I hear from some of the teachers in the  
25 daycare centers is that you have UPK teachers who are

1  
2 there essentially making more money than the director  
3 of the daycare center and making more money than the  
4 teacher of the three year old room, and I think we  
5 would agree that what the three year old room is  
6 doing is as important as what's going on in the four  
7 year old room. And I would like to see some  
8 discussion going on about that.

9 CHANCELLOR FARINA: You know, keep in mind  
10 that a year ago we didn't have the parody we even  
11 have today with the UPK. You know, it takes time  
12 because money is not flowing. So, you know, we make  
13 decisions based on many different things.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. And there's an  
15 issue of--it came up recently in a WNYC report  
16 regarding co-locations or placement of UPK's into  
17 other schools, into existing schools. Some claim  
18 that that should be done with the co-location  
19 process. I think you have a difference of opinion  
20 with that. Can you explain where you're coming from  
21 on that issue?

22 SOPHIA PAPPAS: So, as we meet our goal  
23 of providing a seat for every child, we're using a  
24 number of strategies as Ray mentioned. It involves  
25 schools. It involves community based centers, and in

1  
2 certain areas where we have a very high demand and we  
3 don't have a permanent location yet, but we want to  
4 make sure we fulfill our commitment for this  
5 September, we are creating DOE operated Pre-K  
6 centers, some of which have locations in district  
7 buildings. So we are working very closely with those  
8 communities and the principals, SLT's and CEC's to  
9 make sure that implementation goes very smoothly. On  
10 the particular question of the co-location, we do not  
11 believe that what will happen in that building as a  
12 result of this changes the use of the building  
13 significantly to warrant that. That's why we don't  
14 consider it a co-location. All that being said,  
15 we're out there. We're developing plans in  
16 collaboration with the principals to make sure that  
17 this is a benefit to the school community.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Is this situation  
19 similar to the situation where you may open a new  
20 school, for example, in a Catholic school or  
21 something and then you begin to grow the culture of  
22 the school by placing a grade in at a time? And then  
23 I have seen other schools take a floor of that school  
24 until the new school has grown, and you place them in  
25 there temporarily, is that similar?

1  
2 SOPHIA PAPPAS: So, I'm not familiar with  
3 that model, but for these temporary seats, I will  
4 say, every year we will be assessing where we are  
5 with the permanent location, enrollment trends and  
6 what's going on at the school to figure out if we  
7 still need to have the pre-k there. Because in a lot  
8 of these cases, it just won't be in those locations  
9 depending on where we are with the permanent  
10 location.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Let me just give you a  
12 little example. In PS 280 in Jackson Heights for  
13 example was a Catholic school. They opened that  
14 school a number of years ago. The school was filled  
15 one grade at a time, and in the meantime they were  
16 putting kids in that building I believe from  
17 neighboring schools until another school could be  
18 built. Is that essentially what you're saying is  
19 going on with the UPK as well? You're placing them  
20 into these schools until you find another site for  
21 them?

22 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Again, I'm not familiar  
23 with that particular model, but for these pre-k  
24 centers, I think what's exciting for us is that you  
25 have locations in multiple buildings where you have a

1 supervising teacher on site all the time supervising  
2 what's going on in each location, and then you  
3 actually have a DOE principal who oversees all of the  
4 pre-k centers. So, what's exciting about that is you  
5 essentially have DOE operated pre-k centers where a  
6 principal is focused on just overseeing those pre-k  
7 classrooms.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Is the teacher, the  
10 supervising teacher, what they would have formally  
11 called a teacher in charge?

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Or an Assistant  
13 Principal.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Or--

15 SOPHIA PAPPAS: [interposing] They're  
16 still firming up what exactly the title is, but the  
17 function is like an Assistant Principal.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I was going to say,  
19 there was some type of a differential, I believe, in  
20 programs where you had what they allied teachers in  
21 charge in the contract, and--

22 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] We  
23 haven't used that in many years. Our preference  
24 would be to have an authorized supervisor, which

1  
2 would be an AP, and that's probably more what we will  
3 be doing.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I see, okay. So it's  
5 the--okay. Alright. Council Member Chin and then I  
6 think I'm done with my questioning.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair.  
8 Following up with the pre-k, I mean, we do very much  
9 appreciate all the new seats that were added in lower  
10 Manhattan. One of the questions I have is that there  
11 was some seats that were cited in Tweet [sic], which  
12 we're very concerned about, because historically we  
13 have used those classrooms to incubate for the new  
14 school. So if the seats for pre-k are being  
15 permanent seats, then we're losing space for  
16 incubating new schools.

17 CHANCELLOR FARINA: The pre-k seats that  
18 are going to be only partially at Tweed [sic],  
19 because it's not the whole floor, are going to be  
20 under--it's like an annex for the Spruce Street  
21 School. So, it will be a connection to the Spruce  
22 Street School, and I think at the moment we're  
23 expecting it to be four pre-k's, and that's because  
24 there was such a need for pre-k's in that  
25 neighborhood and Spruce Street did not have the space

1  
2 to do it. So that's really what that's supposed to  
3 be doing.

4 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Clarify that as a follow-  
5 up.

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Right.

7 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Because it may be at one  
8 of the pre-k centers.

9 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Right, okay.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: That is supposed to  
11 be--from the list that we got from DOE, those  
12 classrooms were supposed to be permanent. At the  
13 same time we have temporary class, pre-k class, in  
14 the new PEP school that's supposed to open up I  
15 September.

16 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, let me get back  
17 to you, because I understood that the supervisor for  
18 that site was going to be the principal of Spruce  
19 Street and that would be part of their--but we can  
20 get back. Yeah, we'll get back to you.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, we were just  
22 concerned that we want to make sure that we're still  
23 able to maintain the classroom in Tweed for us to be  
24 able to incubate for the next elementary school  
25 that's going to be--

1  
2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] Well, we  
3 have other sites for incubation, but certainly those  
4 particular classrooms, which there are four  
5 classrooms, will always be for whatever the needs are  
6 of the students in the district.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay. So if you  
8 could get back to us. The last question is on  
9 college access in terms of, you know, you,  
10 Chancellor, you just mentioned that you added 200  
11 counselor, and according to our headcount term and  
12 condition from DOE there's a total of 2,704 guidance  
13 counselors throughout the city, and we want to know  
14 what's the average number of guidance counselor per  
15 school? It seems like some high schools have  
16 guidance counselors and then they have college  
17 counselor, and some high school don't have that. Some  
18 high school may have guidance counselors. So, out of  
19 these 2,704 guidance counselors and only about 279 of  
20 them are bilingual, is DOE going to work on doing  
21 something to address the language barriers for  
22 parents and students?

23 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I mean, this is  
24 one area that if we were going to get money from the  
25 state I would prioritize for more needs. To me,

1  
2 guidance counselors are crucial, but in terms of  
3 whether you get a regular guidance counselor or  
4 college, that's pretty much under the principal's  
5 direction. What I have been encouraging principals  
6 to do, particularly since so many of our small high  
7 schools are co-located, that they share one guidance  
8 office, because it really is possible to do rather  
9 than have everybody duplicate the same services. If  
10 there's something--they could each have their own  
11 guidance counselor, but in terms of the guidance  
12 office, having one that's shared by several schools.  
13 I was just at a school where they realized that if  
14 they were to do that, it would not in any way impact  
15 the services for kids, but they would actually get  
16 more services overall. So, it's also a matter of how  
17 many people are actually trained well to do the  
18 college advisement piece, but in terms of language,  
19 it's really actually more for parent's understanding  
20 and we encourage that training to be done under the  
21 parent coordinators, those that have them at the high  
22 school level to educate parents. We're doing a lot  
23 more education to parents also around financial  
24 literacy for college admissions. Many of our kids  
25 miss out on scholarships because they don't even know

1  
2 that those things are available to them. So, there's  
3 still a lot of work to be done in this area, but I  
4 think we're--you know, with the new superintendents  
5 that we have in place, this is one of our emphasis.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And you are also--  
7 some of the schools, they work very closely with  
8 CBO's to do, you know, college access program.

9 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Right.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Are you looking at  
11 putting more funding, investing in college access  
12 programs?

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think the one  
14 thing we are putting more money into is more  
15 mentoring and more mentoring in high school by  
16 adults. Paula Gavin under City Service is trying to  
17 actually double the number of mentors that come into  
18 a school specifically mentoring students who are on  
19 their way to college on how to fill college  
20 applications, how to do that. So we're trying many,  
21 many different approaches, but we certainly expect to  
22 see our graduation rate grow as well as our college  
23 acceptance rate grow.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay. Thank you,  
25 Chair.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, thank you very  
3 much, and I want to thank you for coming in. I also  
4 am very appreciative of the approach and the tone of  
5 these hearings and for your openness. I thank you for  
6 that as well, and we look forward to working with you  
7 on a continued basis. Thank you very, very much. So  
8 this hearing is going to continue at one o'clock with  
9 the School Construction Authority, President Lorraine  
10 Grillo. In the meantime we're just going to leave it  
11 open until she gets here, and we'll take it from  
12 there.

13 [recess]

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Good afternoon. My  
15 name is Daniel Dromm. I'm Chair of the Education  
16 Committee with the New York City Council. I've been  
17 joined by Council Member Margaret Chin and Council  
18 Member Inez Barron, and I want to welcome everybody  
19 to today's hearing. This is the second part of the  
20 City Council's Education Committee hearing on the  
21 Fiscal Year 2016 Preliminary, excuse me, Capital  
22 Budget for the Department of Education and the Fiscal  
23 2015 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report for the  
24 DOE and School Construction Authority, or SCA. This  
25 should be a hearing on the DOE's proposed revised

1 amendment to its Fiscal 2015/2019 Capital Plan.  
2  
3 However, DOE and SCA has basically ignored the  
4 Memorandum of Understanding between the City Council  
5 and the Administration and has not submitted a  
6 Capital Plan Amendment. We are left to hold this  
7 hearing on the DOE's December 2014 proposed five year  
8 capital plan for Fiscal Year 2015 to 19. This  
9 failure to comply with the MOU is negligent to the  
10 Council and disrespectful [sic], and I believe,  
11 counterproductive. I feel it's very unfortunate. I  
12 understand that there are conditions and reasons for  
13 this happening, yet it just really makes my job  
14 impossible if I don't have that information before  
15 me, and I'm sorry I have to say that, but that's  
16 really where it's at, and I do hope that we will have  
17 this information in time so that we can analyze it  
18 and digest it prior to the executive budget hearing.  
19 So, we really do need to have those numbers. The  
20 December plan totals 13.5 billion over five years. It  
21 includes 783 million from the state's Smart Schools  
22 Bond Act, which was approved in November 2014 to fund  
23 technology in schools as well as capital projects  
24 associated with the expansion of Universal Pre-  
25 Kindergarten. I would like to hear more about the

1  
2 Smart Schools Bond Act funding, the process, the  
3 timelines and how the projects are going to be  
4 selected by the School Construction Authority. The  
5 December plan allocates 4.5 billion for capacity to  
6 construct 40,329 new seats. Of this amount, 3.45  
7 billion is scheduled in the new capacity program to  
8 build 31,823 seats and to design 806 seats. Two  
9 hundred and 10 million is to build roughly 2,800 pre-  
10 kindergarten seats and 490 million is for a class  
11 size reduction program with 4,900 seats. I'd like to  
12 hear more about this program today and how the DOE  
13 plans to target schools for class size reduction.  
14 I'd also like to discuss the new capacity plan which  
15 is 16,616 seats--that's a good number, we should play  
16 that number--seats short of meeting the projected  
17 seat need, including how the DOE and the SCA  
18 determine capacity needs and how we can finally meet  
19 those needs. The capital investment category totals  
20 5.27 billion dollars. These funds are for capital  
21 improvement projects such as technology, exteriors  
22 and the removal of transportable classroom units or  
23 commonly known as TCU's. Under the December plan,  
24 the DOE set aside 480 million dollars to fund the  
25 removal of all TCU's citywide. There were 317 TCU's

1 last school year serving 6,935 students. The  
2 December plan shows that 81 TCU's have a removal plan  
3 identified and 35 TCU's were removed since the  
4 publishing of the original capital plan. Today, I  
5 would like to hear from the DOE and the SCA about  
6 their process of identifying plans for TCU removal  
7 and how realistic it is to replace this capacity  
8 under the proposed five year plan. I realize there  
9 are constraints related to funding and finding sites  
10 for new capacity, but I am concerned that removing  
11 TCU's may not be an achievable goal given the SCA's  
12 inability to meet the capacity needs. The final  
13 category of funding in the December plan is mandated  
14 programs which includes 369 billion for projects such  
15 as PCB remediation, prior plan completion costs,  
16 boiler conversions, and wrap-up insurance. Wrap-up  
17 insurance is projected to cost 300 and--excuse me,  
18 830 million over five years. The SCA has attributed  
19 growth in this spending area to the state's scaffold  
20 law, which has contributed to high insurance  
21 premiums. There are many other issues that I am sure  
22 will come up today from other committee members and  
23 myself and I look forward to the discussion with the  
24 SCA and DOE after their testimony. I would like to  
25

1  
2 remind Council Members that this is a capital  
3 hearing, so please keep your questions only related  
4 to the capital budget. And I'd also like to thank my  
5 dedicated staff, Medina Itzamatine [sp?], Nora Yaya,  
6 Joan Polvomi [sp?], Jan Atwell, and Asia Schamburg.  
7 I'd also like to thank Elizabeth Rose, Deputy  
8 Chancellor Division of Operations at the DOE and  
9 Lorraine Grillo, President of the SCA for coming to  
10 testify before the Committee today. And now I'm going  
11 to swear you in. So I ask you to please raise your  
12 right hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm to tell  
13 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth  
14 and to answer Council Member questions honestly?

15 ELIZABETH ROSE: I do.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Very good. And who  
17 would ever like to begin may begin.

18 ELIZABETH ROSE: I will begin. Thank you,  
19 Chair Dromm. Before I actually being my formal  
20 testimony, I would like to acknowledge the concerns  
21 that you raised about the publishing of a revised  
22 amendment. We are very anxious to get a revised  
23 amendment to you. As my colleague Ray Orlando  
24 mentioned earlier this morning, we are working with  
25 OMB and with the Mayoral Administration on the

1  
2 aligning SCA capital plan, our five year plan, with  
3 the citywide 10 year capital plan strategy, and as  
4 soon as that is completed, we will be publishing the  
5 revised plan. And we thank you for your patience.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

7 ELIZABETH ROSE: Good afternoon, Chair  
8 Dromm and members of the Education Committee. My name  
9 is Elizabeth Rose, Acting Deputy Chancellor for the  
10 Division of Operations at the New York City  
11 Department of Education. I am joined by Lorraine  
12 Grillo, President and Chief Executive Officer of the  
13 New York City School Construction Authority. We are  
14 pleased to be here today to discuss the November 2014  
15 amendment to the Fiscal Year 2015 to 2019 Five Year  
16 Capital Plan, which builds upon the two previous  
17 planned investments of over 25 billion dollars and  
18 the resulting creation of over 109,000 seats since  
19 2004. Since the last time we appeared before you to  
20 discuss the plan, we have opened 11 new sites,  
21 creating over 5,000 new seats for our students, and  
22 we are on track to open 42 new locations this  
23 September for an additional 13,324 seats in the  
24 2015/2016 school year, including new pre-k sites. We  
25 are grateful to the City Council for its strong

1 support and generous funding to our schools. The  
2 13.5 billion dollar Fiscal Year 2015 to 2019 Capital  
3 Plan will create tens of thousands of new seats in  
4 areas projected for enrollment growth, directly  
5 address overcrowding and this Administration's goal  
6 of creating additional high quality full day pre-  
7 kindergarten seats. The plan also targets the  
8 reduction of class size and much needed improvements  
9 for our again infrastructure. The plan is funded by  
10 state and city tax levy and 783 million dollars in  
11 proceeds from the New York State's Smart Schools Bond  
12 Act. As many of you know, we develop and annual  
13 amendment process beginning in the 2005/2009 plan.  
14 Regularly reviewing our capital plan allows us to  
15 identify emerging needs quickly and gives us the  
16 opportunity to make changes as necessary. To track  
17 changing needs, we conduct an annual building  
18 condition assessment survey in which we send  
19 architects and engineers to evaluate our  
20 approximately 1,311 buildings which excludes  
21 transportable classroom units other buildings that do  
22 not have student capacity. This survey generates our  
23 needs for capital investment projects to maintain our  
24 buildings in good repair. We also updated enrollment  
25

1  
2 projections annually. These projections incorporate  
3 data on birth rates, immigration rates and migration  
4 rates from various city agencies. Additional  
5 agencies provide statistics on housing starts and  
6 rezoning efforts. Using a broad range of sources  
7 provides a complete view of potential student demand,  
8 and annual updates allow us to make timely  
9 adjustments when there is a sustained increase in  
10 student population in one part of the city or a  
11 decline in student population in another. These  
12 enrollment projections, which are performed on a  
13 district and sub-district level, help inform our need  
14 for new capacity projects. In addition to evaluating  
15 our school buildings and student population, public  
16 feedback plays a crucial role in our capital planning  
17 process. Each year, we undertake a public review  
18 process with community education councils, the City  
19 Council and other elected officials and community  
20 groups. We offer every CEC in the city the  
21 opportunity to conduct a public hearing on the plan,  
22 and we partner with individual Council Members and  
23 CEC's to identify local needs. Your insights in this  
24 process are essential and we look forward to our  
25 continued partnership. Public feedback has also

1 played a significant role as we've convened the Blue  
2 Book Working Group and listened to active community  
3 representatives who have voiced longstanding concerns  
4 regarding the way school space is used and how  
5 capacity is measured and reflected in the Blue Book.  
6 Last Spring, Chancellor Farina established the Blue  
7 Book Working Group, which has focused its work on  
8 understanding the underlying formulas that determine  
9 current Blue Book capacity figures and discussing  
10 recommendations that would improve the way we  
11 calculate capacity and ensure our communities  
12 understand how school space is used. Changes we have  
13 already implemented as a result of this group's  
14 recommendations include adjusting the Blue Book  
15 formula so that enrollment in transportable classroom  
16 units, commonly known as TCU's, is now included in  
17 the main building's total enrollment and creating a  
18 more user friendly Blue Book format for school  
19 communities. The group recently submitted its  
20 recommendations and they are under review. The  
21 proposed November 2014 amendment includes 4.5 billion  
22 dollars per capacity, 5.3 billion for capital  
23 investment and 3.7 billion for mandated programs.  
24 The proposed Fiscal Year 2015/2019 plan creates over  
25

1  
2 32,600 seats which address overcrowding as well as  
3 two new Administration priorities, pre-kindergarten  
4 expansion and a class size reduction initiative. Two  
5 hundred and 10 million has been allocated for a vital  
6 increase in the number of pre-k seats and there may  
7 be future funding adjustments in this category as we  
8 continue identifying additional pre-k seats. To  
9 date, we have identified 28 projects, yielding nearly  
10 3,100 new seats in new locations in the five  
11 boroughs. Of the 4.5 billion allocated to capacity,  
12 3.45 billion is dedicated to creating more than  
13 32,600 new seats in an estimated 61 projects within  
14 school districts experiencing the most critical  
15 existing and projected overcrowding. Ten projects  
16 have recently been identified, including the Curtis  
17 High School addition on Staten Island, a PS 32  
18 addition in Brooklyn, PS 14 and PS 46 additions in  
19 the Bronx, additions to PS 24, 303, 19, and 49 in  
20 Queens, ISHS 336, also known as St. Fidelis in  
21 Queens, and High School 859 in Queens. In addition,  
22 490 million is allocated to address class size  
23 reduction and 350 million to replace facilities where  
24 leases expire during this plan. Nearly 70 percent of  
25 the 5.3 billion capital investment allocation will

1 address the buildings identified in our annual  
2 building survey as most in need of repair, such as  
3 roof and structural repairs, safeguarding our  
4 buildings against water infiltration and other  
5 facility projects. The capital investment category  
6 also includes funding for upgrades to fire alarms,  
7 public address systems and removal of TCU's. The  
8 remaining 30 percent or 1.64 building will go toward  
9 upgrading instructional spaces in existing buildings  
10 such as the restructuring of classrooms for pre-  
11 kindergarten use, upgrades to physical fitness rooms,  
12 libraries, middle school science labs, bathrooms and  
13 auditoriums, and technology upgrades. I would like to  
14 speak more about two of these areas, bathrooms and  
15 science labs. In previous hearings, many members of  
16 the council have asked about bathroom upgrades and  
17 spoken about the popularity of Reso A funded bathroom  
18 upgrade projects. While all our schools have  
19 functional bathrooms, in this proposed capital plan  
20 amendment, we have allocated 100 million dollars in  
21 funding to pilot bathroom upgrade program that will  
22 improve the attractiveness of our school bathrooms.  
23 In the prior capital plan, ensuring all high school  
24 students had access to a science lab was a priority,  
25

1 and we're happy to report that we have succeeded in  
2 this goal. Now we are able to turn our focus to  
3 middle school students. To that end, we have  
4 allocated 50 million dollars to upgrade middle school  
5 science labs to improve science instruction for  
6 middle school students. In order for our students to  
7 become college and career ready in a digital and  
8 information age, we will make certain that technology  
9 upgrades remain a priority in the proposed amended  
10 plan. We're committed to bridging any existing gaps  
11 in technology in our schools. Specifically, 505  
12 million dollars of the technology spending under this  
13 plan will build on our school building's core  
14 technology infrastructure. This funding allows us to  
15 continue to transform our school environments from  
16 industrial age to information age schools where  
17 learning can be customized to each child's unique  
18 needs. Over the next five years, essential upgrades  
19 and incorporation of next generation broadband,  
20 wireless and learning technologies are planned for  
21 all school buildings. Additionally, approximately  
22 145 million will be invested in upgrading legacy  
23 systems such as student information systems,  
24 improving enterprise level learning platforms,  
25

1  
2 developing new data systems and upgrading business  
3 operation systems in support of school needs. The  
4 total cost to support the city's effort to remove and  
5 replace all polychlorinated biphenyl, PCB, containing  
6 lighting fixtures throughout the entire school system  
7 is approximately a billion dollars, about half of  
8 which was covered by the previous five year capital  
9 plan. The proposed 2014 amendment allocates 480  
10 million dollars to replace all remaining lighting  
11 fixtures in our schools by December 2016. The  
12 mandated programs category also includes  
13 approximately 750 million for boiler conversions and  
14 approximately 125 buildings currently using number  
15 four oil. The remaining funds were assigned to cover  
16 other required costs, including insurance and  
17 completion of projects from the prior plan. The  
18 capital plan also includes funding for this  
19 Administration's priority to remove all transportable  
20 classroom units from the system and to reduce class  
21 sizes. Specifically, 480 million has been allocated  
22 to remove TCU's and redevelop the yard space where  
23 the TCU's are located. Since October 2013, we have  
24 removed 47 TCU's and have developed plans to remove  
25 94 additional TCU's. We are also working with

1 principals and superintendents to develop plans to  
2 enable the removal of the remaining 211 TCU's. Plans  
3 include building new capacity in overcrowded areas,  
4 supporting schools to better utilize the space in  
5 their main buildings and assessing the need for  
6 potential changes to zoning or other enrollment  
7 adjustments. We understand that the public school  
8 system as a whole continues to experience pockets of  
9 overcrowding and we are working to address these  
10 concerns through new school construction. We remain  
11 focused on remedying these issues and will continue  
12 to rely on your feedback and support as we do so.  
13 Our annual capital planning process has already  
14 benefitted significantly from your input and our  
15 students have benefited from your generous support on  
16 the capital projects. With continued collaboration  
17 and tens of thousands of seats slated to come online  
18 over the next five to seven years, we remain  
19 confident that the expansion and enhancement of  
20 school buildings across the five boroughs will  
21 include the educational experience for the city's 1.1  
22 million school children as well as the teachers and  
23 staff who serve them. Thank you again for allowing  
24 for us to testify today. I am now going to turn over  
25

1  
2 to Lorraine Grillo to give a presentation on the  
3 plan.

4 LORRAINE GRILLO: Thank you, Deputy  
5 Chancellor and thank you, Chair Dromm and the members  
6 of the committee. We appreciate you allowing us to  
7 be here today. I would like to present to you the  
8 overview of the November proposed plan. It was  
9 adopted in 2014 and this is the proposed amendment  
10 that we put out in November. It is 13.5 billion, and  
11 it includes--it is an increase of 700 million dollars  
12 which includes City Council and Borough President  
13 appropriations as well as additional funding for  
14 Sandy projects, and then roll over funding for boiler  
15 conversions. The highlights of the November  
16 amendment include 783 million dollars from the Smart  
17 Schools Bond Act to potentially fund technology  
18 expansion of pre-kindergarten seat creation and the  
19 removal of transportable classroom units, 210 million  
20 for the creation of new pre-k seats, funds for the  
21 removal of all transportable classroom units, ensure  
22 that all middle school students have access to  
23 science facilities, and 100 million allocated for  
24 student bathroom upgrades. This is the breakdown,  
25 4.5 in capacity programs, 5.3 billion capital

1 investments, and 3.7 billion in mandated programs.

2 In the capacity program, 3.45 billion is for the  
3 creation of approximately 33,000 seats, 210 million  
4 dollars, and as the Deputy Chancellor mentioned, that

5 number could change because initially it was for

6 2,900 seats. We've already cited 3,100 seats. Class

7 size reduction program is 490 million, and facility

8 replacement 350 million. Seventy existing leases

9 that we currently have will be expiring during this

10 five year capital plan. We have to prepare for that.

11 Again, 32,629 seats, the bulk of those seats are in

12 the PSIS school buildings, 26,000 seats, and we have

13 3,100 high school school buildings. One PSIS with

14 806 seats will be funded for design in this plan. So

15 we've really basically kept the number of seats to be

16 created pretty much the same as it had been in the

17 prior plan. And again, this is by district. We

18 don't have to go through that. And these are the

19 various sites that we found--we've created in pre-k

20 with their addresses. The capital improvement

21 section for 3.3 billion includes 2.7 billion for

22 building systems. We do this through evaluating each

23 building every year with our building condition

24 assessment survey, which the Deputy Chancellor

1 mentioned where we take a team of architects and  
2 engineers out to every single building and they rate  
3 the major systems within the building one through  
4 five, five being the worst. And then of course, the  
5 removal of transportable classroom units, and  
6 athletic field upgrades, 125 million. We did include  
7 a 1.6 billion for school enhancements, including  
8 restructuring as we explained earlier, some of that  
9 for restructuring classrooms to suit pre-k needs, and  
10 then 100 million dollars for safety, which includes  
11 the video surveillance cameras, 50 million dollars  
12 for the middle school science lab upgrades.  
13 Accessibility, 100 million. Another 115 million for  
14 physical fitness, libraries and auditorium upgrades.  
15 The bathroom upgrades that we talked about earlier,  
16 100 million dollars and 650 million dollars in  
17 technology. And again, our mandated programs include  
18 PCB lighting replacements, 480 million. Seven  
19 hundred and 50 million dollars for 125 buildings with  
20 boilers that now burn number four oil. Eight hundred  
21 and 30 million dollars for wrap-up insurance, and 660  
22 million for prior planned completion, projects that  
23 started in the last plan. And again, these are some  
24 of the programs, some of the capital investment and  
25

1  
2 mandated programs that we will undertake during this  
3 plan. And these are the 47 TCU removals that we did  
4 so far, and these are the 94 TCU sites that we have  
5 identified for removal so far. Again, these are--  
6 this is my favorite part where we show off all the  
7 beautiful buildings that we were able to build or  
8 those that are in construction. And again, our  
9 famous Net Zero Energy building which will be opening  
10 this September. And we're happy to answer any  
11 questions that you might have.

12 [off mic]

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, well thank you  
14 very much for coming in and for your testimony. I  
15 want to just start off with a couple of questions  
16 around the Smart Schools Bond Act money that we're  
17 going to be getting. So, I think that it's roughly  
18 about 783 million dollars that we're expecting, but  
19 could you walk us through the process of approval for  
20 the Smart Schools Bond Act funding? What has to go  
21 on for that to happen?

22 LORRAINE GRILLO: Mr. Chairman, we have  
23 yet to receive guidance from the state on that. We  
24 do know the general parameters which have--which  
25 include issues like transportable classroom removal,

1  
2 technology, pre-k, safety and security, but other  
3 than that we don't yet have a timeline really any  
4 guidance.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, we don't even  
6 know at this point when our proposal would have to be  
7 submitted? I'm assuming there's a proposal that has  
8 to be put forward.

9 LORRAINE GRILLO: Correct.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Interesting to say  
11 the least. Have we ever gotten to the point where we  
12 may be able to use tablets or purchase tablets for  
13 that? I mean, that's a way in which some funding is  
14 going to be used in other areas around the state, but  
15 I believe in New York City we don't have the ability  
16 to do that. Are we still waiting to hear from the  
17 state on that? Or is there an educational philosophy  
18 difference with that in terms of the Department? Or  
19 where do we stand with that actually?

20 LING TAN: The--

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] And can  
22 you just identify yourself. I think I have to swear  
23 you in also.

24 LING TAN: My name is--  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Can I ask you just to  
3 raise your right hand? Do you solemnly swear or  
4 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing  
5 but the truth and to answer Council Member questions  
6 honestly?

7 LING TAN: Yes, I do.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

9 LING TAN: My name is Ling Tan. I'm the  
10 Executive Director for Capital and Reimbursable  
11 Program for Department of Education Office of the  
12 CFO. In terms of the, I believe, eligibility of the  
13 tablet, we're still waiting for guidance because it's  
14 a bond receipt [sic]. New York City directive term  
15 [sic], the bond receipt [sic] does not allow that  
16 because of the useful life which is less than five  
17 years right now. So, that eligibility is dependent  
18 on the state funding and that should be part of the  
19 guidance once it comes up as a device.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, why is New York  
21 City different than other municipalities around the  
22 country in terms of that?

23 LING TAN: That's, as explained to me by  
24 OMB Finance, is because we have to adhere to the  
25 general accounting principle and also the state and

1  
2 the city charter relating to a minimum of useful life  
3 of five years for every equipment purchase with the  
4 capital dollars.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So I've met with the  
6 Comptroller on this issues, and I've urged him to  
7 look at that rule to see how we can change that,  
8 because I think that especially in District 75  
9 schools or where there are special education  
10 students, many of these tools could be used as  
11 assistive learning devices and would be beneficial to  
12 our students as well, and I look forward to  
13 continuing to have that discussion with him,  
14 particularly because it can be used in that way in  
15 other districts around the state, and I think it  
16 would be unfair if we don't have that opportunity  
17 here as well for our students for learning. Okay, so  
18 let me just move onto some of the testimony by Deputy  
19 Chancellor Rose. In your testimony on page four, you  
20 mention that you've removed 47 TCU's and 94  
21 additional TCU's, you've developed plans to remove  
22 them. That's a little different than the figures we  
23 had. We had 35 and 81. Is that because you have  
24 done more now since we last spoke, or what is, why is  
25 that different?

1  
2 ELIZABETH ROSE: We are continuing to  
3 develop our plans and wanted to give you the most up  
4 to date figures, and I think we also spoke about  
5 these figures at our overcrowding hearing a few weeks  
6 ago. So, we also like to be consistent with what  
7 we've said most--

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] And you  
9 used those figures at that time as well?

10 ELIZABETH ROSE: Yes, we did.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, I'm sorry. I  
12 didn't pick that up. Okay, good. Does primary and  
13 elementary schools, I noticed that there's an awful  
14 large number of primary and elementary schools in the  
15 plan. That continues to be our area of greatest need  
16 rather than high schools or junior high schools.

17 LORRAINE GRILLO: That's correct. But in  
18 the borough of Queens we continue to see overcrowding  
19 in our high schools.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: In the high schools  
21 as well. Because that's what I see, obviously, since  
22 I'm from Queens that there remains a need for high  
23 schools. Is there a plan to look for sites? Would  
24 you consider doing smaller high schools? You know,  
25 some of the high schools are built with a thousand,

1  
2 2,000, 3,000 students in mind. There may be sites  
3 where we could do smaller schools, and actually that  
4 kind of fits in with the philosophy in some ways with  
5 the Department as well.

6 LORRAINE GRILLO: Right. We are always  
7 actively looking for sites for high schools and right  
8 now we have several in the pipeline that will begin  
9 the process. As we begin to negotiate with the  
10 landlords and the owners, we will let you know. And  
11 yes, we are looking for those sites that would not  
12 necessarily house a thousand seats. We would  
13 certainly go smaller than that.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good. I noticed  
15 also in Deputy Chancellor Rose's testimony, the  
16 comments that you made about the Blue Book, and I'm  
17 really grateful to see that we're getting a more  
18 accurate number of students by moving the students  
19 that were in the TCU's and counting them as part of  
20 the overall populations of the schools. And I think  
21 it's really important that we're honest about that if  
22 we're really going to address the needs of  
23 overcrowding. So that being said, I think that you  
24 said that--yeah, well you did say. So, how many--how  
25 does that effect the overall enrollment? Have you

1  
2 seen an increase now for the need for seats now that  
3 those TCU's are being included in buildings?

4 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, in the projections  
5 that we used for our capacity needs, we have never  
6 counted the capacity of the TCU's in those  
7 projections. So, in some ways the Blue book is  
8 effectively catching up to what we've always done in  
9 projecting seat need for capital planning purposes.  
10 We do see an increase in the number, a small increase  
11 in the number of buildings that will show as over  
12 utilized in the Blue Book, but in terms of our total  
13 seat need, we had already effectively eliminated the  
14 TCU capacity in making our capital need projections.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, overcrowding in  
16 the school doesn't necessarily translate into need  
17 for additional seats?

18 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, it ha--we look at  
19 the sub-district level, and so we look at both what  
20 are the pockets of overcrowding but also are there  
21 seats available in the whole sub-district. And so we  
22 first look for what are all the opportunities that we  
23 can use to better use the capacity that we already  
24 have that may be underutilized, and then when we see  
25 no additional opportunity, that's when we would look

1  
2 for new capital, new capacity investment to address  
3 the need.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So would that also  
5 include situations like where you have annexes that  
6 are using Catholic schools and you're renting, or you  
7 say that that's a seat created, or how is that  
8 factored into your estimate?

9 ELIZABETH ROSE: If we are leasing a  
10 former parochial school, we now include that in our  
11 permanent capacity.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. I'm going to go  
13 to Council Member Barron, Chin and then Johnson, and  
14 then I want to come back with other questions as  
15 well.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr.  
17 Chair. Thank you to the panel for coming. I have  
18 questions about--well, let's start with the state  
19 money that's due to the city under the CFE. We know  
20 that our legislators in Albany are fighting fiercely  
21 for that and we are expecting that there will be a  
22 sizable amount that will be coming to New York City.  
23 How are you planning to use that money? Because the  
24 last time there were hopes of that money coming, the  
25 previous mayor said that he was going to put it into

1  
2 the general fund and disperse it around, whereas that  
3 money is actually targeted for a specific  
4 shortcomings in the system. So, should we get a  
5 sizable amount of money as a part of the CFE  
6 settlement? How will that be utilized and how are  
7 you going to ensure that that happens?

8 ELIZABETH ROSE: Well, I would wish that I  
9 had our CFO, Ray Orlando, with me who was here to  
10 speak with you earlier this morning. As that money  
11 is expense money rather than capital funding, and so  
12 we would anticipate that those funds would be used to  
13 support school budgets such that they could hire  
14 additional staff either to reduce class sizes or to  
15 simply increase the staff to student ratios.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. In terms of  
17 the money that's nee--the last hearing that the Chair  
18 had, I asked the question about the creation of  
19 technology labs, computer labs, and the panelist  
20 whose name I didn't recall said that the DOE is  
21 moving away from the policy of having computer labs  
22 and moving towards having computers in the classroom,  
23 and I was surprised to hear that, because if we're  
24 talking about STEM and we're talking about those  
25 kinds of programs, I don't know that classroom

1  
2 teachers are qualified to teach children how to do  
3 coding and use the technology to that level. So, is  
4 that the policy that you will not be establishing  
5 upgrades or building technology computer labs in  
6 schools, because that's what was said at the last  
7 hearing?

8 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, actually, since I was  
9 the person who responded to your question, let me  
10 clarify.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Oh, glad you  
12 remembered.

13 ELIZABETH ROSE: Let me clarify the  
14 response.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

16 ELIZABETH ROSE: We do--we look to the  
17 principals of schools to determine how they would  
18 best like to utilize their space. And so in their  
19 cluster spaces, they have the opportunity to choose  
20 to use cluster rooms as music rooms or art rooms or  
21 computer labs or any other type of cluster activity  
22 that they deem appropriate. We are encouraging  
23 schools to use computers in classrooms more than  
24 creating completely separate new technology labs  
25 because we want computers to be part of ongoing

1  
2 instruction and part of mainstream education. There  
3 is no reason why principals who have particular  
4 courses could not continue to have a computer lab as  
5 one of their cluster spaces. So we are not  
6 preventing principals from doing that.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So as a principal  
8 might want to in fact install a computer lab, because  
9 I visited my schools, and many of them need upgrades.  
10 The equipment is there, but they need to in fact have  
11 a person who's trained and competent to do that, and  
12 the lab itself needs upgrades. Would that be a part  
13 of the capital request that would come? Is that  
14 something that your office would look at? And what's  
15 the average cost or the range of cost for making that  
16 happen?

17 ELIZABETH ROSE: So the component that is  
18 part of the capital plan would be the electrical  
19 capacity upgrades that might be needed for those  
20 rooms. Lorraine, can I--

21 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] No,  
22 you're absolutely right. Yes, the infrastructure  
23 piece of that would be a capital upgrade. And again,  
24 we do these often times, and you know, mostly through  
25 the generosity of the City Council Members, yes.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: But don't you  
3 think that's something the DOE should provide?  
4 Because, yes, as Council Members--

5 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] Where we--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] we  
7 do that.

8 LORRAINE GRILLO: Where we can, we  
9 certainly do.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: But if you're  
11 talking about STEM being a focus, I would think that  
12 you, that it would be beneficial to have money put in  
13 the budget so that as principals say, "Okay, my  
14 technology lab, my computer lab is really antiquated,  
15 and I need to have that." Just as you're talking  
16 about upgrading bathrooms and installing sign slabs,  
17 I would think that that would be something if we're  
18 talking about having effective program in STEM that  
19 would be done. As a principal, I know that I had two  
20 technology labs, two computer teachers who were  
21 trained, and I know that beyond those two persons on  
22 staff, my classroom teachers did not have the  
23 background to encourage children to explore what it  
24 is that computers can do.

1  
2 LING TAN: So, a lot of the principal  
3 that does computer lab is based on the curriculum  
4 program in a school. So there is no centralized  
5 program across all the school buildings, so it's  
6 really up to each principal to indicate what they  
7 need, and the reason on the upgrade not across the  
8 board is that we don't actually track what the class  
9 use of each school is because is really the  
10 principal's space to do it. Where they have met  
11 request especially to Reso A on the upgrade, we do,  
12 and then centrally on the capital plan, if there's a  
13 heavy lift in terms of upgrading the electrical, we  
14 do go to SCA to--which is usually the bigger problem,  
15 because the use in the school, they do have other  
16 funding sources in the school, especially for PD,  
17 which is push out to the school, and the principal  
18 has total say on that piece. So, one of the issues,  
19 unlike [sic] the bathrooms, there's no centralized  
20 program, because it's not consistent across all the  
21 school--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] Do  
23 you know which schools have computer labs that are  
24 functioning?

25

1  
2 LING TAN: We know a handful of them, the  
3 ones that we have upgraded through the principal, but  
4 I don't know across the board.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So there's no data  
6 that captures which schools have functioning computer  
7 labs?

8 LING TAN: No.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I think that  
10 might be something that would be helpful for us to  
11 know in terms of making an assessment of where we are  
12 if we're pushing STEM as a means of getting our  
13 children into being--into that workforce.

14 ELIZABETH ROSE: I believe, actually,  
15 that the information is included as part of the Local  
16 Law 60 report. WE can double check on that.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. And next,  
18 moving onto the TCU's. There's a school in my  
19 district, East New York Family Academy, which I  
20 believe is in a leased space, and half of the student  
21 population is housed in TCU's. I don't see any  
22 provision in your plans for school to accommodate  
23 this high school once those TCU's are gone. The  
24 children cannot in anyway fit into the main building,  
25 which is already overcrowded.

1  
2 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, we are reaching out  
3 to work with superintendents and principals of all  
4 the 211 TCU's that do not yet have an identified plan  
5 for removal to discuss the potential options and what  
6 would be required to enable us to remove those TCU's.  
7 We are certainly not going to remove TCU's before we  
8 have worked with the community and know what will  
9 happen to those students.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Where in your plan  
11 do you anticipate? The TCU's, a time table for  
12 removing all of them is when?

13 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, we are--as we  
14 identify plans for removal we are adding them to the  
15 capital plan, and we'll be able to provide  
16 approximate dates for those specific TCU's, but our  
17 focus is on ensuring that we have a plan that works  
18 for each school and each community to ensure that  
19 those students are accommodated before we remove  
20 those TCU's.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And how would they  
22 be accommodated, in the example of East New York  
23 Family Academy, if they're already in a leased  
24 building and there are no other buildings in the  
25 community in that immediate area? How will be they

1  
2 accommodated if they are not even plans here to build  
3 a high school to accommodate that, that program?

4 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, there we could  
5 potentially look at other buildings where we might  
6 have available capacity we can potentially look at as  
7 we're thinking about lease replacement opportunities.  
8 We would be looking for other sites that might make  
9 sense for those students, but to keep the school and  
10 the community served.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. If in  
12 fact--where in your time table would that happen?  
13 Because all TCU's are supposed to be removed as of  
14 what date?

15 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, we don't have a  
16 specific deadline for when they will all be removed.  
17 Our goal is to ensure--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] Oh,  
19 I thought there was a deadline for the plan--

20 ELIZABETH ROSE: [interposing] that we  
21 have a plan. We have--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] for  
23 the removal of all TCU's.

24 ELIZABETH ROSE: We have funded the  
25 removal of all TCU's in this plan, and we are working

1  
2 very hard to develop the plans for each TCU to remove  
3 them.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: SO you don't have  
5 an end date for all TCU's to be removed?

6 ELIZABETH ROSE: We are focused very much  
7 on ensuring we have a plan ideally within this  
8 capital plan period, yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: But no end date  
10 by which we can say by the year 2020 they'll all be  
11 gone?

12 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, in some cases we know  
13 that TCU's will be dependent upon new capacity that  
14 we have identified in this plan. When we have the  
15 dates for when that new capacity will be completed,  
16 then we will know the date when we would be able to  
17 remove those TCU's.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Mr. Chair,  
19 I think that we need to get an end date so that this  
20 is not something that drags on and on and on.  
21 Perhaps we can sit and work with DOE so that that  
22 happens, because in an instance such as the one that  
23 I've talked about, there are no plans for a new  
24 school. I'm very familiar with the community.  
25 There's not a building that I know of that could

1  
2 house this population, but yet, and still we don't  
3 have an end date. We don't have a date for the  
4 removal, and there are no plans in here to say that  
5 we want to build a new high school. So that's  
6 something that I'm very concerned about. I think  
7 that--oh, when you talk about athletic upgrades, 125  
8 million dollars, is that only schools that have  
9 athletic fields, or are you also talking about the  
10 playgrounds? What's included in that athletic  
11 upgrade?

12 LORRAINE GRILLO: In the athletic--well,  
13 first of all, in the athletic upgrade universe, about  
14 I'd say 20 years ago or so, 15 years ago, a group  
15 called Take the Field installed athletic fields in a  
16 number of schools, probably 30 of them. The lifespan  
17 of these fields is typically 10 to 12 years. Well,  
18 we've passed that point. So a great number of them  
19 need to be upgraded. In addition, it does include  
20 some playground upgrades as well.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Can you give me  
22 an idea of what portion of, what percentage?

23 LORRAINE GRILLO: I would say the bulk of  
24 this is with the athletic field upgrades.

25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And is that a  
3 partnership that which you have--that you have with--  
4 no, it's not?

5 LORRAINE GRILLO: Not--it was. It was.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: it was.

7 LORRAINE GRILLO: It was very successful,  
8 but they no longer exist as a group.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay, thank you very  
10 much.

11 LORRAINE GRILLO: Okay, thank you very  
12 much, Council Member Barron. And Council Member Chin  
13 followed by Johnson and then Kallos.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair.  
15 Deputy Chancellor and President Grillo, it's really  
16 great to see the Pesub [sic] School picture that is  
17 going to be ready by September of community. It's  
18 very exciting. Even some people who said they don't  
19 believe it, but I guess with the picture and also the  
20 DOE citing some temporary pre-k seats there, that I  
21 think there's definitely going to be open, right?

22 LORRAINE GRILLO: Yes, Council Member  
23 Chin, that will definitely open for September.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay. So, we want  
25 to make sure that it's on the record. We're very

1  
2 happy that we have additional seats that were added,  
3 and we've been advocating for a new site, and parents  
4 have formed an advocacy group called Build School  
5 Now, and they have submitted a list of potential site  
6 to DOE and SCA, but they haven't heard back. Is  
7 there any time frame where you'll be able to get back  
8 to the parents about the different sites that they  
9 have identified?

10 LORRAINE GRILLO: I have not seen the list  
11 myself, but I can tell you that any time we get a  
12 suggestion for a site in a district where there is a  
13 need, we follow up immediately. So, I'll check with  
14 my real estate folks and get back to you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay, because it was  
16 submitted a while back. The other issue is I think I  
17 asked you at the last hearing. But finding site is  
18 so difficult. Is SCA looking at potential of using  
19 imminent domain to take some of the sites to use it  
20 for school?

21 LORRAINE GRILLO: Absolutely.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So, when you look at  
23 some of the sites, because some of these developers,  
24 they're waiting, you know, they're waiting for the  
25 highest bidder, and they're holding onto site that

1  
2 could be used for potential school. So, I think we  
3 really need to send a strong message that for public  
4 good, we need to exercise that option.

5 LORRAINE GRILLO: And we certainly use  
6 that option when it's necessary. As a matter of  
7 fact, we've initiated in two particular sites just  
8 very recently.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Can you tell us  
10 those sites?

11 LORRAINE GRILLO: I prefer if we could  
12 speak about that privately.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay, alright. I  
14 know that in the pre-kindergarten site that was  
15 identified in our district one is one Washington  
16 Street and one is on Two Lafayette, and I see that  
17 the Two Lafayette site is anticipate to open in  
18 January instead of September?

19 LORRAINE GRILLO: Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Because when we got  
21 the list from DOE, we assumed that all these seats  
22 will be open in September, all these new pre-k seats.

23 LORRAINE GRILLO: The initiative to find  
24 sites for pre-k has been ongoing, and the ones that  
25 we were able to identify earliest are the ones that

1  
2 we were confident could open in September, but we  
3 still are continuing to look, and where we can, we  
4 are opening in January and then the following  
5 September as well.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So, on the site at  
7 the Washington Street, what is the DOE doing? Did  
8 DOE purchase the site or are they just renting the  
9 space, and--

10 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] That's a  
11 lease. That's a lease space.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: That's a lease  
13 space.

14 LORRAINE GRILLO: Right.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: What's the cost of  
16 the rent?

17 LORRAINE GRILLO: I don't have that in  
18 front of me, but I can certainly get that to you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, because that  
20 is one of my concerns too in terms of the renting of  
21 facility, because one of the school that we have in  
22 our district, the middle school, the Lower Manhattan  
23 Middle School, they're in a nice building. I mean,  
24 they're in the same building as the Richard Green  
25 High School as another school in there, but they're

1  
2 paying over five million dollars a year for the  
3 lease, over five million. And then it increases  
4 after a couple of year, and then it goes as high as  
5 over seven million dollars a year. I mean, that's a  
6 lot of money--

7 LORRAINE GRILLO: [interposing] We agree.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: to rent this space.  
9 So that's what we have to look at in terms of  
10 building a new school versus leasing space,  
11 especially in areas where the rents are so high, and  
12 also, you know, landlords and developers are looking  
13 to get it out of the city. I didn't realize it was--  
14 we were able to get a copy of it. It's--I mean, if  
15 you calculate it by 30 years, that's like almost  
16 close to 200 million dollars.

17 LORRAINE GRILLO: Again, we don't disagree  
18 that some of these leases are very expensive, but the  
19 need is very great. And when you cannot find sites  
20 to purchase, sometimes this is the only alternative  
21 we have.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Well, I mean, we  
23 talked about imminent domain, I think we really need  
24 to seriously look at that, especially when the  
25 mayor's talking about, you know, building more

1  
2 affordable housing. At the same time, more market  
3 rate housing are being built, and in a lot of  
4 districts, especially down here, lot of buildings are  
5 going up as-of-right, and they're not contributing to  
6 the city, but they're adding to the overcrowding of  
7 our school. And so, we really need to figure out a  
8 way of getting them to put in. So, I look forward to  
9 really working with you on this issue.

10 LORRAINE GRILLO: Thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Council  
13 Member Johnson?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair  
15 Dromm. You're like the marathon man with this  
16 hearing since this morning until I know the end of  
17 today, so thank you for being generous to the other  
18 members with time to speak. I thank you, Deputy  
19 Chancellor and President Grillo for being here. I  
20 know we're supposed to get together later this week,  
21 and I look forward to that. I just want to first of  
22 all say to President Grillo, and I'm sure you know  
23 this, Deputy Chancellor Rose, but I think it's  
24 important to say on the record, the community process  
25 around 75 Morton Street over the past seven years,

1 since the building was identified has been  
2 phenomenal, and Lorraine and her team Melanie LaRocca  
3 [sp?] have done an unbelievable job engaging the  
4 local community. I think it's been a model. It  
5 hasn't been perfect, nothing is, but it has been  
6 close to perfect, and people are very, very, very  
7 excited for this brand new middle school that the  
8 community has fought for for the past seven or eight  
9 years. So, I want to start with that before I ask  
10 the tough questions.

12 ELIZABETH ROSE: Can we just say thank  
13 you. That kind of feedback is wonderful to hear and  
14 we really appreciate hearing the positives, because  
15 we certainly always hear the negatives. So, thank  
16 you very much.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: No, it's been  
18 great.

19 ELIZABETH ROSE: They're doing a terrific  
20 job.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you. I'm  
22 deeply appreciative as I know the other elected  
23 officials at CEC and the parents are. So, after  
24 saying that, I just want to say, and we're going to  
25 talk about this on Friday, and this isn't--I'm not



1  
2 I want to understand how decisions are made on making  
3 these upgrades. I know, Lorraine, that you all have a  
4 facilities team as well, that if there is a dangerous  
5 condition besides dealing with the five year capital  
6 plan, it can be--someone can be sent out and a  
7 dangerous condition can be taken care of right away.  
8 And I think some of these probably qualify for that.  
9 Last night I had my participatory budgeting expo.  
10 You know, we're giving out a million dollars that the  
11 community decides how it's going to be spent, and the  
12 majority of the people that were at my expo last  
13 night were middle schoolers, and they were there  
14 asking that their bathrooms be fixed, and they  
15 brought photos. They had photos of students with cut  
16 hands from using facilities. So, this is serious,  
17 and I want to understand what the process is to  
18 getting these fixed as quickly as possible.

19 LORRAINE GRILLO: Okay. Well, I'll  
20 respond to part of that. I look forward to our  
21 meeting actually, and I look forward to working with  
22 you on all of these issues. Elizabeth, you want to?

23 ELIZABETH ROSE: SO, I'll add a little  
24 bit of detail to the bathroom renovation projects.  
25

1  
2 So, we are expecting for Fiscal Year 15 to complete  
3 127 or 128 bathroom renovation projects.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: How does one get  
5 on that list?

6 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, our division of  
7 school facilities which manages the custodial staff  
8 is prioritizing bathrooms of the schools for these  
9 projects. And it's based on the need and condition  
10 and in consultation with the principals.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Well, I'm ready  
12 to go with that team to these schools as soon as  
13 possible. I'll go with them. We can schedule the  
14 appointment. I'm serious.

15 ELIZABETH ROSE: No, and absolutely  
16 please send us your list of--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: [interposing] But  
18 I'll walk with these engineers and they can tell me  
19 if they don't think this warrants an immediate fix.

20 ELIZABETH ROSE: Yeah. And what I can  
21 tell you is that the scope of work includes new wall  
22 and floor tile, new bathroom fixtures, new toilet  
23 partitions, new lights, new entrance door. We're  
24 required painting. We're required covers for  
25 radiators. We're required painting. We're required

1  
2 covers for radiators, we're required, and that we're  
3 very pleased with the progress that DSF is making. I  
4 would also like to add that we are also getting--we  
5 are ultimately going to be able to effect more than  
6 100 million dollars in renovations because we also  
7 received funds from the Department of Environmental  
8 Protection to upgrade toilet facilities to lower  
9 water fixtures, and so we are effectively getting  
10 extra help in pursuing our bathroom upgrades and we  
11 are trying to sort of manage across these two funding  
12 streams as efficiently as we possibly can to get the  
13 most impact we can.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Okay, so I mean,  
15 we'll go over this list on Friday. I look forward to  
16 doing that and identifying which things get taken  
17 care of immediately, but I'm not exaggerating or  
18 being facetious when I say I will make an appointment  
19 and I'll go with the engineers or the people that  
20 make these decisions I'll take time out of my  
21 schedule to go and look at each school, each  
22 bathroom, each ceiling that's collapsing, each trip  
23 hazard and have them explain to me. I want to be  
24 included in this list, and I want to understand how  
25

1  
2 that decision gets made, if there's a scale, if it  
3 gets rent; I want to be part of that.

4 ELIZABETH ROSE: And I can look at some  
5 of the details and see. I think some of the schools  
6 that are in your district are already in progress.  
7 So, PS 33--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: [interposing]  
9 Yes.

10 ELIZABETH ROSE: I believe is in your  
11 district, that one is complete. The building MO 17,  
12 which houses Lab Middle School and Lab High School is  
13 now complete. So some of those buildings are in fact  
14 being addressed as part of this project.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you. And  
16 with this, Mr. Chair, I know at the beginning of--  
17 there is a chart that does a breakdown by sub-  
18 district on the capacity program. In that, the  
19 Tribeca and Village section which Council Member Chin  
20 and I share, there's an additional need of 42  
21 unfunded seats. I wanted to just understand where  
22 those seats are and what's the plan? The total  
23 identified was 1,970 for Tribeca in the Village. The  
24 December 2014 funded need was 1,928, and there's 42  
25 seats that are unfunded.

1  
2 LORRAINE GRILLO: I think that--oh, I'm  
3 sorry. I think that in those cases when you see  
4 numbers like 42, this is a matter of the program of  
5 requirements. If we're able to fund a particular  
6 school size with a particular number of students, you  
7 may see that small number, you know, show up because  
8 we weren't able to include those 42 seats within a  
9 building that we've designed and built.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. We're  
11 excited about Beacon High School on 44<sup>th</sup> Street on  
12 the same block as PS 51, but there is some serious  
13 safety concerns on that block, because there are  
14 bunch of different taxi automotive shops that double  
15 park, and then there's the Hess gas station on the  
16 corner, as you all know, and now with Beacon High  
17 School moving there and with PS 51, we're going to  
18 have over 1,000 school kids per day on that block.  
19 And we need to, given the Mayor's Vision Zero plans  
20 and the excitement surrounding this new school, I  
21 think we all have to work together, DOE, SCA, my  
22 office, and the parents and principals to ensure we  
23 have a safety plan for when that school opens to  
24 ensure no accident happens.

1  
2 LORRAINE GRILLO: Right. And we typically  
3 work very closely with DOT on those issues before the  
4 school opens. So, hopefully we can all work together  
5 on that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you. I  
7 look forward to seeing you Friday. Thank you again  
8 very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.  
10 And I want to just point out I believe the 50 million  
11 of the 100 million was given by the Council toward  
12 that effort. Am I correct on that?

13 ELIZABETH ROSE: I know it was requested  
14 by the Council very strongly, and we responded to the  
15 request.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

17 ELIZABETH ROSE: But I don't believe that  
18 it was given by the Council.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, okay. I'm  
20 sorry. We like to give and take credit for  
21 everything. I guess--

22 ELIZABETH ROSE: [interposing] there you  
23 go.

24 [cross-talk]

1  
2 ELIZABETH ROSE: But we'll give you the  
3 credit.

4 LORRAINE GRILLO: But if you feel like it,  
5 if you're in the mood--

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Thank  
7 you for representing. I heard you mention about  
8 Environmental Protection going to give you some  
9 dollars for additional bathrooms. How many will that  
10 be, and do you know the dollar amount? And will it be  
11 included in the upcoming capital plan?

12 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, it is not in our  
13 capital plan. It is in their capital plan, and I can  
14 follow up with you on the dollars.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Will these be--will  
16 these be bathrooms that are in the condition that  
17 Council Member Johnson has talked about, or will  
18 these be--I mean, when you do a renovation, the  
19 toilets that you renovate are up to standards for  
20 water saving and stuff like that?

21 ELIZABETH ROSE: yes. So, when we put in  
22 new fixtures, we always knew up to date water saving  
23 fixtures.

24

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So you might go into a  
3 school and do the toilet replacement, but not  
4 necessarily a whole upgrade in the bathroom.

5 ELIZABETH ROSE: Well, as I said, we are  
6 trying to optimize across these streams so that we  
7 can result in the most impact to bathrooms possible.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: What would be helpful  
9 is if Council Members could know where you intend to  
10 put that money so that there are additional reso  
11 dollars that might be needed to do the bathroom  
12 upgrades, because we're very interested in doing  
13 that, because I do think it sends a message to kids  
14 when they have to go into an old bathroom like that.  
15 Maybe we can work together on adding that funding.

16 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, I'm delighted to say  
17 that we have a little real time answers here. The  
18 total funding from DEP is about 45 million dollars.  
19 So that's almost a 50 percent increase on top of what  
20 we are able to put in our capital plan, and we think  
21 that that will provide funding to change the fixtures  
22 in 427 schools.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Additional schools,  
24 is that--

1  
2 ELIZABETH ROSE: I believe that is  
3 additional.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And do those schools  
5 also need an overall upgrade?

6 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, I don't believe that  
7 all 427 will get the full upgrade that we are funding  
8 with the 100 million from our capital plan. So we  
9 are trying to select where we spend our dollars very  
10 carefully so that we have the best, greatest impact  
11 across as many schools as possible.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And so where this, the  
13 direction of this conversation is going, I probably  
14 should have been a plumber, but--

15 ELIZABETH ROSE: [interposing] Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do these toilets  
17 include the urinals? I ask that because in some  
18 schools they're like troughs and they're not actually  
19 individual urinals, and I think that's an important  
20 upgrade as well.

21 ELIZABETH ROSE: Yeah, the word is  
22 fixtures, and yes, it includes urinals.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. And now I have  
24 another one for you. I spoke with the Chancellor  
25 recently about lunch room upgrades, and that is an

1 interesting idea as well. I didn't see it in any of  
2 your testimony, but in alliance with what the  
3 Chancellor's been talking about, creating, you know,  
4 lunchrooms that are more receptive to student needs.  
5 She suggested perhaps looking at different murals,  
6 painting, repairs. I wonder if that's something that  
7 we couldn't also look at in terms of placement of  
8 Reso A dollars in the future.

10 ELIZABETH ROSE: We would be delighted  
11 for additional Reso A dollars to help support  
12 cafeteria upgrades, and cafeteria upgrades is  
13 something that we have created a category for in the  
14 plan this year.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It's in the where?

16 ELIZABETH ROSE: It is in the plan. It's  
17 in the capital investment category, and I'm sure I'll  
18 get a dollar amount in just a minute.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I mean, I would  
20 imagine it also depends on the size of the cafeteria,  
21 but do you have an average amount?

22 ELIZABETH ROSE: Well, so I think it  
23 depends very much on the size of the cafeteria, and  
24 there are different--cafeterias have different needs.  
25 So, for example, we have some cafeterias where

1  
2 currently the service window is literally just that.  
3 It's a window. You can only serve one student at a  
4 time. It's slow. It's not particularly inviting.  
5 So, a lot of our focus on these cafeteria upgrades is  
6 on the service process to make this a more open and  
7 welcoming environment, you know, that students will  
8 feel, you know, excited about having lunch in them.  
9 So, a lot of it is focused on the service aspect of  
10 the cafeterias. And we have 25 million dollars in  
11 the budget to address cafeteria serving lines and we  
12 think that that will provide the ability to do  
13 upgrades in about 45 buildings.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And in a school in my  
15 district, in IS 230, the new school actually, is a  
16 beautiful stand out mural designed. Would things like  
17 that be able to be included in these upgrades? I  
18 would assume so, if it was in--it was done in the  
19 construction of this new building.

20 LORRAINE GRILLO: That actually, that  
21 beautiful mural is part of the Percent [sic] for Art  
22 Program that we include in all--

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Which  
24 art program?

25



1 leadership on education issues both here in the city  
2 and throughout our state and for this very long  
3 hearing today. The Gov Ops went seven hours and 49  
4 minutes, so that is just as a small challenge. I want  
5 to just thank you for all that you do, and  
6 specifically to Elizabeth Rose, I will be visiting PS  
7 183 in the future and would love to have you join me.  
8 And just as a disclosure, I represent her, so I have  
9 to make sure that I am on best behavior. I want to  
10 focus a little bit on community education District  
11 Two. That's what I represent as well as Council  
12 Member Chin, Council Member Johnson, Council Member  
13 Mendez, and Council Member Garodnick. There's a lot  
14 of us, and a lot of us came out today because our  
15 district is higher needs than most would think, and  
16 ultimately just try to make sure that we are asking  
17 for the amount of funding that we need and making  
18 sure that your agency is doing that as well as our  
19 body. So, according to the December 2014 report, DOE  
20 has identified a total need of 49,245 seats citywide.  
21 The December plan included funding for construction  
22 of 31,823 new seats, leaving an unfunded or partially  
23 funded need for 16,616 and so by way of planning, I  
24 feel--I'm concerned that we might be setting  
25

1  
2 ourselves up for failure. So if we have an  
3 identified need for 49,000 why not build 49,000 or  
4 perhaps more so that we actually don't have to worry  
5 about having schools that are overcrowded?

6 LORRAINE GRILLO: And while we would love  
7 to have more to build as many as possible, you know,  
8 we do have a lot of competing priorities and limited  
9 funding. So, it's that simple. We had to decide.  
10 We certainly have buildings, existing buildings that  
11 need capital improvement and a large portion of our  
12 plan had to address those issues. So, you know, we  
13 did what we included as far as the 32,000, was really  
14 as close as we could get to the number of seats that  
15 we accomplished in the last plan. We felt that that  
16 was a reasonable number, but again, it is a matter of  
17 competing priorities.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I for one would  
19 say that I don't believe that there is a higher  
20 priority than education and investment in education  
21 returns several fold over our city's lifetime and we  
22 get our expense funding from income, and when people  
23 have a better education they earn more. So, how much  
24 would you need in order to be fully funded for your  
25 identified need?

1  
2 LORRAINE GRILLO: We would need--what?

3 I'm sorry. An additionally, yes, we would need an  
4 additional 1.7 billion dollars, 1.7 billion more.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: That is great.

6 When I got elected we had 73 billion dollar expense  
7 budget. Now we have a 77.7 billion dollar expense  
8 budget. So as our expense budget continues to grow

9 and our capital budget also continues to grow, I

10 think we should be advocating for exactly as many

11 seats as we need. Along those same lines, I was

12 proud to work with so many of the people here to

13 fight for universal pre-k. I'm glad we got it. I was

14 disappointed that we got something like 50 seats in

15 Council District Five, and we actually lost pre-k

16 seats in the district with the closing of Rheinlander

17 [sp?], which was subsidized by the--by a foundation.

18 And so we actually had a net loss of pre-k seats.

19 When meeting with the Mayor, he indicated that he was

20 willing to put temporary pre-k's in empty classrooms.

21 I have identified to the mayor and to the Department

22 of Education several locations for universal pre-k

23 locations, and I know there is need because parents

24 keep asking me, "Can we use some of the vacant school

25 spaces?" I have a lot of new schools, so they are in

1 elementary school and they're now up to third grade,  
2 but they have the second--the fourth and fifth grade  
3 classroom is completely empty while they're waiting  
4 to grow in, which means we have two years of  
5 classrooms that we could use for pre-k at several  
6 buildings. So, I guess I will ask again, can we get  
7 pre-k in more spaces in my district for the much  
8 greater need than 50 seats?  
9

10 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, I'm going to guess  
11 that you're referring to the Our Lady of Good Counsel  
12 building in PS 527, I think.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Really impressive,  
14 yes. It's not the only one. I also have another one  
15 in the same, co-located with PS 158, and--

16 ELIZABETH ROSE: [interposing] Where the  
17 middle school is phasing in.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Yes.

19 ELIZABETH ROSE: Alright. So, I will  
20 certainly from this meeting go back and follow up  
21 with Sophia Pappas who many of you met this morning,  
22 she was here for the expense budget hearing, and  
23 understand whether there's potential or what the  
24 plans are for where there's an opportunity to use  
25 some of that space on a temporary basis.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I, with regard to  
3 building, I'm very pleased to see that community  
4 education District Two will be getting 3,190 new  
5 seats. I am slightly concerned, however, because we  
6 are putting in--we are--my district is getting raised  
7 and warehoused, and we're now in the age of the super  
8 scraper. So, in my district we're going to be  
9 getting a 900 foot tall building, 90 stories, which  
10 will likely have 900 units or something crazy like  
11 that, and we're seeing thousands and thousands of  
12 units of development, talking about tens of thousands  
13 in CEC Two, and yet, we're only building for 3,190.  
14 Would it be possible to make sure that our--that we  
15 are at least being able to see the equations and data  
16 that you are using to contemplate why we need so few  
17 seats while the city is about to undergo an  
18 unprecedented construction? And especially with the  
19 mayor's new zoning plan, which is going to encourage  
20 even more development, I don't think we can keep up.

21 LORRAINE GRILLO: Sure. Yes, I certainly--  
22 --we'll certainly get that information to you, but in  
23 addition to that, we update these numbers. We do  
24 demographic studies every year to update and keep up  
25 with what has been unprecedented development, and

1  
2 certainly we'll continue to look at that, but if  
3 you'd like to meet with us separately to go over  
4 these issues, we're happy to do it.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: If you can share  
6 the underlying demographic data that would be  
7 exceptional.

8 LORRAINE GRILLO: Sure.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: My last question  
10 is with regard to gifted and talented, and I think it  
11 falls on the special education spectrum because you  
12 have both needs. You have people, both are high  
13 needs populations and it's just for different ends of  
14 the spectrum, and so in 2013 there were 36,012  
15 children who applied for gifted and talented, and of  
16 those, 25 percent are in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or  
17 above. We are truly an amazing city, and that comes  
18 out to 9,003. That is--I have a couple of schools  
19 with G&T in my district. I went to Bronx Science. I  
20 believe in gifted and talented programs. It's a good  
21 way to be somewhere for a little bit of time that  
22 nobody's going to beat you up for being a smart kid.  
23 I'm wondering if that was Margaret's experience as  
24 well. She also went to Bronx Science, but the  
25

1  
2 question is, all these schools have wait lists, can  
3 we actually build the 9,000 G&T seats that we need?

4 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, as the Chancellor  
5 said at District Two Town Hall a year ago, all of our  
6 schools in District Two are gifted and talented  
7 schools, because as you pointed out there are so many  
8 students who qualify that what you end up with is a  
9 very strong academic culture in all of the schools.  
10 What we find is that families who are applying to  
11 gifted and talented programs are very interested in a  
12 very few specific gifted and talented programs, and  
13 that if they don't get into those specific programs,  
14 they want to be at their zoned neighborhood school,  
15 and particularly in your Council District those  
16 schools are very strong and families are very happy  
17 with those local neighborhoods. So it's not that  
18 there are not a need for 9,000 additional seats,  
19 those students. It's a question of which schools  
20 those students choose to attend. There's capacity  
21 across the system for all the District Two students.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you. And  
23 thank you to the Chair.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. I just  
25 want to follow up on that questioning about gifted

1  
2 and talented. In District 30, for example, we don't  
3 have enough seats. So there's a situation which I  
4 think you're aware of where students attend the  
5 school in Council Member Kallos' district on  
6 Roosevelt Island. Those students cannot get bussing,  
7 because they go to the school on Roosevelt Island,  
8 which is technically Manhattan and another school  
9 district. I think we spoke about this with former  
10 Deputy Chancellor Kathleen Grimm as well, but that  
11 number seems to be increasing from my district and  
12 from Council Member Van Bramer, Council Member  
13 Constantinides, and I would really like to relook at  
14 that issue to see how we might be able to accommodate  
15 those parents so that they can get some type of  
16 transportation to go there, and would welcome a  
17 discussion on that with you further.

18 ELIZABETH ROSE: I'd be happy to have a  
19 separate discussion.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. And in  
21 terms of the future with the increase in population  
22 in the city, the mayor's been talking about 200,000  
23 units of affordable housing. Have we begun to think  
24 about a plan how to deal with that? Will schools be  
25 included in the affordable housing piece? Have we

1  
2 begun to estimate where those schools might go, what  
3 the need would be for those schools, etcetera, so  
4 forth and so on?

5           LORRAINE GRILLO: Well, we are working  
6 very closely with City Planning on their, you know,  
7 neighborhood initiatives that they are working on,  
8 and our staff attends meetings with them on a regular  
9 basis. We talk about the plans for the future and  
10 what we need to develop as far as new schools are  
11 concerned. There's going to be obviously some  
12 changes as the years go by, because of the affordable  
13 housing initiative, and again, particularly in the  
14 several neighborhoods that the city has already  
15 designated as part of this neighborhood  
16 revitalization plan. And we are working very, very  
17 closely with them, and we anticipate that these  
18 schools would be included in future plans and  
19 amendments.

20           CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, you know, at the  
21 Willis Point site, to use that as an example, there  
22 was planning for an elementary school to be placed  
23 there, but no plan made for the high school students.  
24 In other words, the kids that would attend--if and  
25 when that housing was every built or is every built,

1 those students would be able to have the elementary.  
2 It think it's an elementary to eight now, if that's  
3 still on the drawing board, but no high school. So I  
4 would urge you that when we talk about affordable  
5 housing that we take in the full length of the needs  
6 of the students for schooling, not just the  
7 elementary levels, and that be part of the overall  
8 plan.  
9

10 LORRAINE GRILLO: We're actually in that  
11 particular area I'm familiar with it. We do have  
12 some options that I would like to talk about  
13 separately.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Because I think those  
15 students would have to be going to one of the local  
16 schools otherwise, so.

17 LORRAINE GRILLO: Yep.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Just a few  
19 more questions, because we did pretty good and I  
20 think we had a successful overcrowding hearing not  
21 too long ago. On page eight of the projected pre-  
22 kindergarten sites it says that the number of seats  
23 is now increased to 3,078 and the last report we had  
24 was 2,880. Can you tell me where those additional  
25 site are from the last report?

1  
2 LORRAINE GRILLO: I don't have the  
3 comparison with me, but I think our report shows the  
4 various sites that we have identified.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I just don't see where  
6 it was different. I see the sites, because they're  
7 listed here, but I don't know which ones were the  
8 newly added, the extra 200.

9 LORRAINE GRILLO: Oh, I'm sorry. Oh, okay,  
10 alright. Yes, thank you. Actually, there's a new  
11 site in District Two on Lafayette Street that--

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Which  
13 one?

14 LORRAINE GRILLO: Lafayette Street.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

16 LORRAINE GRILLO: District Two. The site  
17 on Webster Avenue in District 10. There is a site  
18 now included in the Dock Street Development in  
19 District 13. There is a pre-k site there now. Two  
20 sites, the following two sites, Fifth Avenue and 71<sup>st</sup>  
21 Street both in District 20, these are the newest  
22 sites to be included. But again, we're working on  
23 this every day. So we include new sites regularly.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Thank you for  
25 that information. Prior to me giving the opportunity

1  
2 to other Council Members to ask questions we were  
3 talking about how you project seat need, and I just  
4 have a couple of more questions on that. How do you  
5 factor in overcrowding into the projected seat needs?

6 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, we start with a  
7 projection of the total enrollment, where do we think  
8 the total demand is, and that's based on the  
9 demographics. We add to that the additional demand  
10 that we project based on housing development so that  
11 you get to a total demand figure. We then compare  
12 that total demand figure to our total capacity,  
13 meaning our current capacity plus any new capacity  
14 that is already in the plan in the pipeline. So,  
15 existing overcrowding is factored in through the  
16 comparison of the demand projection to the capacity.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Does class size factor  
18 into that formula?

19 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, it does, because  
20 capacity is defined based on certain class sizes. So  
21 it's based on the class size in grades K to three of  
22 20 students per grade, in four through eight of 28  
23 students per grade, and then in high schools I  
24 believe--  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Thirty-  
3 four?

4 ELIZABETH ROSE: are 30.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thirty. The extra--  
6 the additional 16,000 additional seats that are  
7 needed in the five year plan, how much would that  
8 cost to fund that?

9 LORRAINE GRILLO: An additional 1.7  
10 billion.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: 1.7 billion.

12 LORRAINE GRILLO: Right.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Just--did  
14 we do PCB lighting? I just want to go over that a  
15 little bit with you. In May of 2013, the DOE reduced  
16 the plan for replacing PCB containing lighting  
17 valence in schools from 10 years to five years. How  
18 has the shortened plan impacted the PCB remediation  
19 program and the cost of completing it?

20 LORRAINE GRILLO: Well, the number of  
21 schools is somewhere in the neighborhood of 747, I  
22 believe was the number, and we did accelerate the  
23 program, and we estimate the cost to be a billion  
24 dollars total. We are more than halfway completed  
25 with the replacements, and these projects are

1  
2 ongoing. I cannot make a judgement as to the  
3 difference in cost. We have certainly flooded the  
4 market, but you know, these projects just continue to  
5 push forward, and we intend to have everything  
6 completed by December 2016.

7 ELIZABETH ROSE: If I could just add, I'd  
8 say one of the impacts of this acceleration is on  
9 summer school programs, schools that need to be  
10 closed in the summers that might have previously  
11 offered a summer school program, so we have to  
12 relocate summer school, after school programs in  
13 order to accommodate the night and weekend work that  
14 we are doing both during the school year and full  
15 building closures over the summer in order to  
16 accomplish the compressed time frame. So, less clear  
17 what the impact is on a dollar projection, but there  
18 is a real impact on schools and students as we need  
19 to literally close buildings to get these done.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, and maybe for  
21 the last question, and we'll follow up with the other  
22 questions by letter or other forms of communication.  
23 Charter schools, do you have an estimate of what the  
24 cost of an additional hundred charter schools would  
25

1  
2 be to the city if the Governor's proposal was to go  
3 through?

4 ELIZABETH ROSE: No, I do not. You know,  
5 what--clearly there are different aspects to that,  
6 including the per pupil tuition and whether or not we  
7 have the ability to locate those schools in our  
8 existing buildings or not. So there are a lot of  
9 variables there.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And Deputy Chancellor,  
11 is it true--I believe it is true that the existing  
12 charter schools who haven't expanded to their full  
13 capacity could still expand and then we have to pick  
14 up the cost for those seats, even if they're not  
15 collocated they would have the right to use private  
16 space, rental space that we would then be responsible  
17 for. Am I correct?

18 ELIZABETH ROSE: Pretty much. So, any  
19 schools that is expanding their grade levels are  
20 eligible under the recent state legislation to apply  
21 for space from the Department of Education. If we  
22 are not able to provide them an offer of space, they  
23 then are eligible to appeal to receive rental  
24 reimbursement.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And that cost, would  
3 it be about 40 million for the city? We'd have to  
4 pay the full cost up to about 40 million. Then  
5 there's a breakdown with the state of a 40, 60  
6 percent division of the funding, but it still could  
7 rise to maybe 150 to 200 million according to some  
8 very informal estimates that I've heard.

9 ELIZABETH ROSE: I'm not familiar with  
10 those estimates.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do you know what  
12 we're spending on rent right now?

13 ELIZABETH ROSE: So, pursuant to the  
14 state law, we have not yet had any expenditures.  
15 However, there are a number of charter schools who  
16 have not been able to receive space in a DOE building  
17 who have appealed and who have a judgement in their  
18 favor that the Department of Education would be  
19 required to provide rental assistance.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. I had asked the  
21 Chancellor some of those questions earlier as well,  
22 but just wanted to get a feel for what your thinking  
23 was on it as well. So, I think that's going to be  
24 about it for now. I thank you for coming in and for  
25

1  
2 sharing information, and I think that we have--we'll  
3 follow up with you in the letter form.

4 ELIZABETH ROSE: Great. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.  
6 And this hearing will continue. I'd say let's--okay.  
7 Then we'll take a break until three, and then we will  
8 hear testimony beginning at three o'clock from the  
9 public.

10 [recess]

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Thank you.  
12 And we're back from our break. It is now 3:00 p.m.,  
13 and I'm going to call the first group of witnesses,  
14 and we do have a lot of people that want to speak  
15 today in this public portion of this oversight  
16 hearing for the expense budget and the capital budget  
17 for the Department of Education. So welcome back,  
18 everybody, and let me start off by asking Evelyn  
19 DeJesus, the UFT Vice President for Education Policy  
20 to come up to testify. So, Evelyn, as you know, I  
21 swear everybody in at this hearing. So can I ask you  
22 to raise your right hand? Do you solemnly swear or  
23 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing  
24 but the truth and to answer Council Member questions  
25 honestly?

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EVELYN DEJESUS: I do.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.

EVELYN DEJESUS: So, good afternoon. My name is Evelyn DeJesus, and I am the Vice President of Education for the United Federation of Teachers, and it is a privilege for me to speak today on behalf of our members and our students whom we serve about how the city budget can be used to strengthen our schools and improve outcomes for our students. I want to thank Chairman Dromm and members of the Educational Committee for this opportunity as well as your tireless advocacy on behalf of the public schools in your districts and the all the districts, and our school communities are stronger thanks to you guys and to your leadership. This hearing comes at a pivotal time as we all know with negotiations on the state budget taking place as we speak. There are a lot at--there's a lot at stake in those discussions. For the last four months, the UFT has been engaged in public--in a public battle with Governor Cuomo over his discredited educational proposal and his making any increase in school and contingent on his agenda being adopted. The Governor's proposal for public schools are so counterproductive that the New York

1  
2 Times accused him of engaging in political score  
3 settling rather than dealing with the central issue  
4 of school funding inequities. The core problem is  
5 that our Governor is refusing to acknowledge the  
6 landmark campaign for fiscal equity, CFE, settlement  
7 which obligates the state to provide New York City  
8 public schools with the funding necessary for all  
9 students to receive a sound basic education. Speaker  
10 Mark-Viverito and the Council have repeatedly and  
11 passionately spoken up about the need for the state  
12 to honor its obligations under the CFE settlement and  
13 for good reason. New York City schools will receive  
14 roughly 2,600 dollars more per pupil if the CFE  
15 settlement was fully funded. According to a recent  
16 report by the Alliance for Quality Education, by this  
17 calculation, New York City public schools are owed an  
18 additional 2.5 billion dollars, which means, A:  
19 Manhattan schools have been collectively shortchanged  
20 376.7 million. Brooklyn Schools are owed an  
21 additional 724.8 million. Queens schools should have  
22 received an extra 704 million. Bronx schools are  
23 due an additional 513.9 million, and Staten Island  
24 are owed an extra 154 million. Within the boroughs we  
25 have individual schools that are owed each literally

1  
2 millions and millions of dollars. As you know, the  
3 state stopped working to meet its obligations under  
4 the CFE settlement following the 208 financial  
5 crisis. Now, both the state and the city economies  
6 are recovering and the state is still failing to step  
7 up to the plate. The state's failure to fund its  
8 obligations amounts to a disinvestment in our public  
9 schools that as parents and teachers can tell you  
10 takes a toll. IN New York City, we have 4,000 fewer  
11 teachers, a five percent decline since before the  
12 financial crisis. That is why the council's  
13 leadership and support is so critical for the  
14 following initiatives, each of which meets an urgent  
15 need to ensure that our city's students receive a  
16 high quality education. Reducing class sizes,  
17 especially in K through three, grades K to three,  
18 down to no more than 15 children, which can be paid  
19 by closing tax loopholes for nonresident absentee  
20 owners of luxury properties, improving facilities for  
21 student learning, for instance, renovating current  
22 space, adding new buildings and removing trailers,  
23 supporting teacher centers, ensuring high quality  
24 professional development, and continuing support for  
25 the Teacher's Choice Reimbursement Program, and

1  
2 redesigning more schools into community hubs serving  
3 students and parents through the Community Learning  
4 Schools Initiative. We welcome the Council's  
5 continued support and advocacy for our students in  
6 school. So as we talk to reducing class sizing and  
7 adding more seats, what does that look like? Parents  
8 and educators know and research has confirmed that  
9 smaller class sizes offer children greater  
10 opportunities from the individualized attention they  
11 need, but sadly tens of thousands of New York City  
12 students still attend oversized classes or have  
13 classrooms in trailers. At a recent news conference,  
14 the UFT proposed that the city could pay for reducing  
15 class sizes for K to three down to 15 children by  
16 closing tax loopholes that allow some 90,000  
17 nonresident absentee owners of luxury properties to  
18 avoid paying their fair share of taxes. We also  
19 believe that the city has a far greater need for new  
20 classroom seats than would be provided under the new  
21 capital plan. We estimate the need for additional  
22 seats to be between 45,000 and 70,000. The plan  
23 calls for adding just 32,000 seats. We need a  
24 comprehensive strategy to reverse this trend of  
25 oversized classes, and we seek the Council's support

1  
2 for creative approaches to generating the needed  
3 revenues. We applaud the city's move to make long  
4 overdue technology enhancements in our schools and to  
5 accelerate the timeline for replacing PCB  
6 contaminated lighting fixtures. Ultimately, the  
7 Smart Schools Bond Act may be helpful in  
8 accomplishing all of these goals, but Governor  
9 Cuomo's Administration has yet to detail a plan on  
10 how money from that bond will be distributed or  
11 spent. So, let's talk about enhancing teacher's  
12 skills. Thanks to our collaborative work with Mayor  
13 de Blasio and Chancellor Farina and to a series of  
14 innovative programs established by our new contract,  
15 we are proudly moving our schools forward. That  
16 includes an expanded career ladder for teachers  
17 through the new positions of master and model  
18 teachers as well as dedicated time for professional  
19 development and parent engagement. These initiatives  
20 are enhanced through the work of our teacher centers,  
21 which offer intense in-classroom support, after  
22 school study groups, citywide networks, conferences,  
23 and workshops and operate within more than 125  
24 schools around the five boroughs. The offerings  
25 through teacher centers are based on the latest

1  
2 research and best practices in specific academic  
3 areas as literacy, early childhood education, math  
4 and instruction for English language learners. And  
5 as you know, we were here a few weeks ago to talk  
6 about that, and many things have changed since that,  
7 and we're really moving on that. We are proud of the  
8 advances our schools are making through the  
9 additional professional development and other work  
10 that our teacher centers are able to accomplish on a  
11 limited budget. But there is a real fear that this  
12 year Governor Cuomo will completely eliminate funding  
13 for this program. That is why we are asking for the  
14 Council, council support in the form of a 20 million  
15 dollar allocation to keep this vital program running.  
16 We also want to talk about increasing teacher's  
17 choice. Our members, as you all know, so appreciate  
18 and value the Council's Teacher's Choice Initiative,  
19 which reimburses educators for some of the on average  
20 close to 500 a year is what teacher's spend out of  
21 pocket for the classes. We respectfully ask that the  
22 Council continue its commitment to this important and  
23 enormously popular program for the Fiscal Year of  
24 2015, 2016. We propose a 20 million dollar  
25 allocation. We also are working very diligently with

1  
2 our community schools and our union strongly supports  
3 additional investment toward the development of  
4 community schools, which through partnerships offer  
5 programs such as mentoring and tutoring, food and  
6 wellness, vision and dental services, physical and  
7 mental and health, and more to students and their  
8 parents, and help the schools remove whatever  
9 obstacles stand between children and their academic  
10 success. As we look to strengthen the work of the  
11 UFT's own community learning schools, we hope the  
12 council could again provide support. This year, our  
13 hope is to secure one million dollars from the  
14 Council to develop a mental health program for teens  
15 that will align mental health services with our  
16 various community schools. Students and their  
17 families faced a myriad of challenges daily from  
18 homelessness to food insecurities to mental health  
19 and behavioral issues. We have proposed providing  
20 easy access to mental health supports by creating a  
21 collaboration and infrastructure of a network of  
22 mental health providers and key community partners  
23 that will service our students and their families at  
24 our community learning school sites. If a school  
25 need additional mental health support, they will be

1  
2 able to access the network and decide which mental  
3 health providers will be the best fit for their  
4 school community. The UFT wants to thank the City  
5 Council for its leadership and advocacy on behalf of  
6 our school's community, particularly on the issue of  
7 school funding. You have shown that sufficient  
8 funding and strong support can make a world of  
9 difference for schools and students. We're seeing  
10 that our community learning schools--we're seeing  
11 that with our community learning schools. We are  
12 also seeing change at the renewal schools, which are  
13 now beginning to receive much needed supports such as  
14 additional guidance counselors, more academic  
15 intervention services and instructional time, and  
16 mental health and physical health programs. We will  
17 not stop fighting for our students by pushing back  
18 against Governor Cuomo's harmful political agenda.  
19 We welcome your support in that effort, and we look  
20 forward to working with you in the months ahead.  
21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, thank you very  
23 much and thank you for your strong resistance to some  
24 of the Governor's changes because I also deeply  
25 believe that they're not right for our students in

1  
2 New York City, nor for any student in New York State  
3 actually, to be honest with you. And I think that  
4 fortunately, according the Quinope [sic] Act Poll,  
5 most people agree.

6 EVELYN DEJESUS: Correct.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: With the issues that  
8 we see or are in favor of. And so that is a relief  
9 to see. I do have some questions about some of the  
10 proposals that you made here in the presentation.

11 EVELYN DEJESUS: Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And just one comment  
13 also regarding the CFE money. I saw a list provided  
14 by I think it was AQE if I'm not mistaken, that many  
15 of the schools in my district are owed. If you took  
16 the total money that we were asking for from the  
17 state, they would get about two million dollars a  
18 school, which is incredible when you think about it.  
19 I mean, what each school in my district could do with  
20 two million dollars would be just incredible. So, I  
21 think we really must continue to keep the focus on  
22 that, and you're right to keep the focus on that from  
23 your perspective as well. And then one other  
24 observation. As a former UFT Chapter Leader and  
25 somebody who is deeply involved in the union, who

1 still deeply believes in the cause of the union, I  
2 know that often times when we would have contract  
3 discussions at delegate assemblies, yes, pay was an  
4 important issue for teachers as it should be, because  
5 I do believe that you get what you pay for. But that  
6 was not always on the minds of teachers. What  
7 teachers were equally fighting for was a reduction in  
8 class size because they knew firsthand how it is that  
9 you can get the children an individualized, your  
10 instruction, when you have fewer students in your  
11 class. And so, you know, prior to this we had a  
12 hearing with Lorraine Grillo, the President of the  
13 School Construction Authority, and we spoke a lot  
14 about class size and reducing class size because we  
15 think that that's vitally important as well. Now, in  
16 terms of your proposals, you said that the Governor  
17 may eliminate funding for the Teacher Center Program.  
18 Now, that's a program that I did take advantage of as  
19 well, and I know how vitally important that is to  
20 teachers who want to present their students with some  
21 type of a lesson, or you can go there and get advice  
22 and help and curriculum materials, everything really  
23 that you need to be a successful teacher. How is the  
24 Governor going to eliminate that? Is that just  
25

1  
2 taking--that's not included in his budget, or what--  
3 what's the story with that? Jeremy, I need to swear  
4 you in, so raise your right hand. Do you solemnly  
5 swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth  
6 and nothing but the truth and to answer Council  
7 Member questions honestly?

8 JEREMY HOFFMAN: I do.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And state your name  
10 please for the record.

11 JEREMY HOFFMAN: Hi, Jeremy Hoffman,  
12 United Federation of Teachers. The money for the  
13 teacher's center has been historically included in  
14 the state budget was not included in this current  
15 proposed state budget. So, we're kind of inactive,  
16 or really the Legislature, Senate and Assembly in  
17 active negotiations to try to restore that funding.  
18 It's hard to exactly know where that's at. At this  
19 particular moment over the next seven to 10 days  
20 there'll be lots of discussions occurring. If the  
21 money does get restored, then that's takes a little  
22 bit of the pressure off on the funding end in terms  
23 of maintaining the services of the Teacher's Center,  
24 but if it does not get restored, we need to have it  
25 funded. It's too critical in terms of a service in

1 schools. I mean, you know, from your own experience  
2 the services it provides and everything that we're  
3 trying to do in terms of the quality side, but it was  
4 not included, has yet to be included in the budget.

5  
6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I don't get the  
7 Governor, really, because you know, he wants to  
8 eliminate the opportunity for teachers to seek  
9 professional development and support at the same time  
10 that he wants to change the evaluation system. I  
11 mean, it's just so like, you know, anti-teacher, and  
12 you know, get rid of every teacher. I just don't  
13 understand where he's coming from on this issue.

14 EVELYN DEJESUS: And can I just add, you  
15 know, we have the Renewal Schools now. We're hoping  
16 to get--because they have the--the Department of ED  
17 has a group that comes in, assesses the Renewal  
18 Schools where they need help, but then they leave.  
19 Once they assess they leave. They put a plan of  
20 action, and I think--as a teacher, and as you know,  
21 we need sustainability. These schools have been in  
22 trouble for many years, so if we have a teacher  
23 center in these schools that can sustain that  
24 teachers can go and say, "I'm having--I need help on  
25 this. I need you to mentor." Because many of our

1 schools don't have mentor. Now we have the career  
2 ladder with the master teacher that helps. So,  
3 within, we're building teachers within teachers to be  
4 master at that craft, and we're building capacity  
5 from within. But these Renewal Schools are going to  
6 need sustainability like never before, and if he  
7 takes away that budget, what's going to happen to  
8 these schools moving forward?

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I want to urge you to  
11 keep very close to us as we go through the  
12 negotiations, both at the state level and let us know  
13 what's going on there, and also here on the local  
14 level so that we can figure out if God forbid that is  
15 not put into the state budget what we can do on a  
16 local level as well.

17 JEREMY HOFFMAN: Of course.

18 EVELYN DEJESUS: Thank you so much.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just one more. I  
20 have--

21 EVELYN DEJESUS: [interposing] Okay.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: a couple more  
23 questions if you don't mind.

24 EVELYN DEJESUS: Okay.  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: You mentioned the one  
3 million dollars for the CLS initiative for the  
4 behavior stuff, one million dollars. Would that be  
5 in all 94 schools, or how would that break down?

6 JEREMY HOFFMAN: Yeah. So, the CLS  
7 funding that we received helped develop the initial  
8 [sic] of the UFT [sic] units. First and foremost, we  
9 should thank the Council for its partnership on that  
10 and the Council's been generous in its support. The  
11 CLS funding that we are trying to secure would be  
12 specifically for the several dozen CLS schools that  
13 the UFT is directly partnering with. That's a subset  
14 of the 94 that I think the mayor has called for  
15 including or expanding in the city. About 24 give or  
16 take are directly in partnership with the UFT, and we  
17 provide various levels of support, technical  
18 assistance and building out of program design and we  
19 want to expand the mental health services component  
20 of that.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It'd be like one of  
22 the schools that I visited up in Broadway and Hunt--

23 JEREMY HOFFMAN: [interposing] Yeah, CHA,  
24 Community Heights Academy.

25 EVELYN DEJESUS: District Six.

1  
2 JEREMY HOFFMAN: Yeah. CHA Academy is one  
3 of our hallmark CLS programs.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, so a million for  
5 that. And then Teacher's Choice, what is the current  
6 amount? Is it about six million?

7 JEREMY HOFFMAN: I think it's just over  
8 six million, and that's down from a high of over 20  
9 million dollars before the previous mayor kind of  
10 systematically began to eliminate and cut that  
11 program.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And what were  
13 teachers getting individual for that six million?  
14 Was it about--was it less than 100 dollars each  
15 teacher or 75 dollars?

16 JEREMY HOFFMAN: Yeah, much closer to 35  
17 [sic]. The allocation formula is a little bit--it's  
18 not across the board. It's a set amount for  
19 teachers. Lab technicians get a different amount.  
20 So some classroom teachers there's different  
21 increments of that, but it averages out to about 35 a  
22 teacher, and that is well down from what it used to  
23 cover.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And if we were to go  
25 to 20 million, how much would each teacher get? I

1  
2 think at one point at a high, teachers were getting  
3 about 235 dollars?

4 JEREMY HOFFMAN: Yeah, it'd be just over  
5 200 dollars per teacher on average, but bear to mind  
6 the distribution formula is a little bit--varies from  
7 job title.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright. No  
9 questions? Very good. Alright, thank you--

10 JEREMY HOFFMAN: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Evelyn DeJesus, UFT  
12 Vice President, and Jeremy Hoffman. Okay, our next  
13 panel will be Liz Accles from the Community Food  
14 Advocates, Nafestia Caleb from Bushwick Youth Food  
15 Council, Roshley Roy from Bushwick Food Council as  
16 well, Felicite Dambras--sorry if I'm mispronouncing  
17 your name--Simone Springer, Bushwick Youth Food  
18 Policy, Aminata Abdugarame [sp?], Bushwick Food  
19 Council, Jay Anaya Goshbins [sp?], Bushwick Food  
20 Youth Council, Alleyne Hughley, Citywide Council on  
21 High Schools, and Doctor Christina Fernandez who is a  
22 pediatrician. Okay.

23 AMINATA ABDUGARAME: Good afternoon,  
24 everyone. My name is--

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Just  
3 hold on. I have to swear you all in. So, if you  
4 would raise your right hand, and do you solemnly  
5 swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth  
6 and nothing but the truth and to answer Council  
7 Member questions honestly? I do? Okay, very good.  
8 And if you'd like to begin, please do so.

9 AMINATA ABDUGARAME: Good afternoon,  
10 everyone. My name is Aminata, and I'm currently 16  
11 years old in the Bushwick Campus High School. This  
12 is also my second year with the Youth Food Policy  
13 Council. I am testifying today to expand universal  
14 free school lunch to all schools. I thank the City  
15 Council and Mayor de Blasio and the Chancellor for  
16 your support both this year as well as last. Imagine  
17 someone who has been trying to stay on scene for the  
18 longest time in a hide-n-seek [sic] game. They try  
19 their best to not show any evidence at all of their  
20 hiding place. Why are they hiding? Because they  
21 don't want to be seen by other members of the game.  
22 Why not? Because if that does happen, they lose. In  
23 the case of school lunch, many students play this  
24 game of hiding and being unseen. Why do students not  
25 want to be seen on the lunch line? Because of the

1  
2 fear of getting caught. Why? Many reasons to answer  
3 that. Let's go through the main points. Firstly, it  
4 is the social class system that is being reinforced  
5 by the school lunch process. Secondly, stigma or  
6 bullying. All over the world, the model is to treat  
7 people the way you want to be treated. Well, the  
8 model does not exist in school's lunch, in school's  
9 cafeteria. Name calling, put downs, bullying,  
10 stigma, etcetera. Students get labeled. Can you  
11 believe that school lunch actually does this to kids?  
12 People are ashamed to get up and get lunch. What  
13 about if they're hungry? What if that lunch is the  
14 one and only meal for their whole entire day? What  
15 about if their parents don't have money to give them  
16 to go buy lunch? Then what? The answer is obvious.  
17 They are hungry for that whole day until hopefully  
18 they get home and eat something. The reason why  
19 students don't get in line is because they are afraid  
20 to get caught eating what our world knows now as  
21 "free-free." Getting labeled or being bullied for  
22 being a free-free is like getting labeled as an  
23 outcast. Being an outcast in school for our  
24 universal free school lunch means that everybody  
25 knows who you are in a very, very bad way. This, it

1  
2 has the same stigma as the person who is homeless and  
3 who is also on public assistance. You can believe  
4 whatever I'm saying to be credible because I was a  
5 witness. I know that this is not what the DOE was  
6 aiming for, but this is what actually happens in  
7 student's cafeterias. We ask you to please expand  
8 universal free school lunch to all schools in New  
9 York City so this will be a great success and  
10 achievement for all. Thank you very much.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Next,  
12 please.

13 SIMONE SPRINGER: Hello, my name is  
14 Simone Springer. I am 16 years old. I'm a junior at  
15 The Brooklyn School for Math and Research in Bushwick  
16 High School campus. I joined the Youth Food Policy  
17 Council last year, and I've been an active member  
18 this year. We saw that lunch was a problem in our  
19 school and we wanted to solve it. We thought why  
20 just our school? What about the others? We joined  
21 the Lunch for Learning Campaign to get free school  
22 lunch for all schools in New York City. Throughout  
23 our journey we have met many Council Members and  
24 students to talk about the issues in our school lunch  
25 system. Today, I'm proud to say that--sorry. Yeah,

1  
2 today, I'm proud to say that universal free school  
3 lunch is in most New York City middle schools, but  
4 that's not enough. I witness students being bullied  
5 for eating the free-free. That could be disgusting,  
6 and they--when they go to get free school lunch.  
7 Universal should be available for all. Students who  
8 pay for lunch are labeled as rich and the students  
9 who don't are bullied for being poor. We don't--we  
10 should not have this equality in our lunch room. No  
11 one should be bullied for the food they eat.  
12 Remember, students who don't eat don't learn. If  
13 they don't learn, they could fail school. I would  
14 like to thank the City Council, Mayor de Blasio and  
15 the Chancellor for your support this year and last  
16 year, and ask you to please expand universal free  
17 lunch in all schools. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.  
19 Next please.

20 FELICITE DAMBRAS: Hello. My name is  
21 Felicite and I am 16 years old. I attend Bushwick  
22 School for Social Justice and I am a member of the  
23 Youth Food Policy Council. Being in school is not  
24 easy, especially as a teenager. Our parents and  
25 society tell us school is important and it is the

1 first key to success in life. One obstacle to  
2 success that students face is staying focused during  
3 class because of hunger. Food is the first priority  
4 in our minds when we wake up in the morning and  
5 through the afternoon. Students can't concentrate on  
6 what they are doing without having food in their  
7 body. I had an experience where I had to pay for  
8 school lunch and it was a burden. In my school, some  
9 students pay while others don't. I do not believe  
10 that this is fair. All students should be able to  
11 have access to free lunch so they can concentrate in  
12 class. If the Department of Education wants students  
13 to be treated equally at school, then everyone should  
14 be able to have access to free and healthy school  
15 lunch regardless of their parents or guardian income.  
16 Today, I am asking that universal free school lunch  
17 be expanded to all New York City schools. Thank you  
18 for your time.

19  
20 JANNAY YASKINS: I am Jannay Yaskins. I  
21 am a 15 year old. I go to Academy for Environmental  
22 Leadership, and I am a part of the Youth Food Policy  
23 Council. I believe in universal free school lunch,  
24 because in order to focus throughout the school day,  
25 you need to eat so that you do not focus on being

1  
2 hungry. This also brings situations related to  
3 health. Health is very important because with good  
4 health you do not have to worry about a barrier  
5 preventing you to do things. Without eating in the  
6 school day, you cannot concentrate in classes, which  
7 can cause failing grades. Classroom academics should  
8 not be caused by lack of nutrition and hunger. Thank  
9 you to the City Council, Mayor de Blasio and the  
10 Chancellor for your support in taking the first step  
11 last year. We should now expand free school lunch to  
12 all levels of school.

13           ROSHLEY ROY: My name's Roshley Roy, and  
14 I attend the Brooklyn School for Math and Research at  
15 the Bushwick campus. I'm 16 years old and currently  
16 in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. And I'm part of the Youth Food  
17 Policy Council at my school. First, I would like to  
18 thank the City Council, Mayor de Blasio and the  
19 Chancellor for providing universal free school lunch  
20 this year in middle schools. Universal free school  
21 lunch is what everyone is talking about these days.  
22 Thankfully, free school lunch was officially  
23 instituted in some middle schools, and this year, I  
24 need the same to be instituted in my high school and  
25 all high schools citywide next year. Cost of school

1  
2 lunch is something that causes a burden on many  
3 parents. Not all parents who send their kids to  
4 public schools can afford to pay bills without  
5 worrying about a limit. My parents fit into this  
6 category, and ever since I started high school, my  
7 parents were constantly stressing about how to  
8 balance all of the bills and also pay for both me and  
9 my brother's school lunch. Once free school lunch  
10 was established in middle schools that was one less  
11 school lunch fee for my parents to worry about. I  
12 know I'm not the only one who has struggling parents.  
13 Universal free school lunch shouldn't only be limited  
14 to middle school. It should reach out to all schools  
15 alike. Thank you.

16                   NAFESTIA CALEB: Hello, my name is  
17 Nafestia Caleb. I'm 17 years old and I attend at  
18 Brooklyn School for Math and Research at Bushwick  
19 campus. I am here to speak to you about the Lunch  
20 Learning Campaign. As some of you may know, the  
21 Lunch Learning Campaign was created to have universal  
22 free school lunch in all public schools. I'd like to  
23 thank the City Council, Mayor de Blasio and the  
24 Chancellor for making school lunches free in some  
25 middle schools this year. Although this is a great

1  
2 start, it is not enough. Today, you heard about the  
3 bullying and the stigma student's face in the lunch  
4 room, the impact on our parent's finances, and the  
5 health implications of hunger. However, I'd like to  
6 make another point. What happens when a student has  
7 free school lunch in middle school and then begins  
8 high school and no longer has it? The transition  
9 into high school is challenging enough, so why create  
10 another barrier. We are asking that you expand  
11 universal free school lunch in all New York City  
12 public schools so that this doesn't have to happen.  
13 In general, if a student has access to free school  
14 lunch, that can--oh. If a student doesn't have  
15 access to free school lunch, that can affect them as  
16 well. Students can't focus when they are hungry.  
17 Education is the key to success, so why take away  
18 something to have a good education?

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Are any of the adults  
20 going to te--speak?

21 CHRISTINA FERNANDEZ: My name is Doctor  
22 Christina Fernandez, and I'm a General Pediatrician  
23 who practices in Washington Heights. I'd like to  
24 start by thanking the Council, Mayor de Blasio and  
25 Chancellor Farina for the universal free lunch in the

1  
2 New York City middle schools this past year. As a  
3 pediatrician, the health and well-being of children  
4 and adolescents is my number one priority, and I'm  
5 here to request full expansion of universal free  
6 lunch to all students. Nutrition is of utmost  
7 importance when considering the health of children  
8 and their future. My anticipatory guidance to  
9 patients typically entails encouraging families to  
10 eat more fruits and vegetables, limit intake of  
11 sugary beverages and snacks, and promote regular  
12 exercise. What I had failed to recognize was that my  
13 counseling was only considering part of the problem.  
14 My pediatrician colleagues and I have noticed several  
15 instances of health side effects in our patients who  
16 regularly skip school lunch to avoid being bullied or  
17 called out for eating the free-free in the cafeteria.  
18 My friend, Doctor Janet Lee, a pediatrician with a  
19 focus on adolescent health who practices in East  
20 Harlem recounted a story to me as follows. "It was  
21 during my time working a school-based health clinic  
22 that I met Nick. Nick, a slightly lanky 10<sup>th</sup> grader  
23 with glasses a little too large for his face, came  
24 down to the clinic every day during fifth period.  
25 Without fail, he would complain that his eyeballs

1 felt like they were going to pop out of his head.  
2 Every day, I would ask him the same questions,  
3 questions ranging from "Were you vomiting with a  
4 headache?" to, "Are you coming down here because you  
5 left your math homework at home?" Fifteen doses of  
6 Ibuprofen later, I finally figured out that the  
7 question I had been neglecting to ask was, "Did you  
8 eat lunch?" It turned out that Nick had been  
9 skipping lunch every day because he wanted to avoid  
10 being bullied in the lunchroom for being the poor  
11 kid." I had a similar experience last month with an  
12 11<sup>th</sup> grader named Janet who came into my clinic  
13 complaining of feeling dizzy and like her heart was  
14 beating really fast. I asked all the standard  
15 questions about family history of heart disease,  
16 blurry vision, blacking out, and whether she felt  
17 like she wanted to throw up. When I got to the  
18 questions about whether she was eating and drinking  
19 water in school, she looked down and shrugged her  
20 shoulders. She told me she felt embarrassed to each  
21 school lunch because several of her friends did not  
22 receive free lunch and would always crack jokes about  
23 the students who did. Our experiences working with  
24 teenagers has helped us to understand the  
25

1  
2 developmental scientific basis for the skipped lunch  
3 phenomenon. As the current system of lunch in school  
4 stands, children and teens are labeled as the poor  
5 kids when obtaining free lunch. During the early  
6 years of adolescence, 11 to 13 years especially,  
7 relationship development has a powerful impact on the  
8 social constricts of the lunchroom. It is during  
9 these years that young people develop a much stronger  
10 interest in peer relationships. This heightened  
11 interest is such a strong social determinant that  
12 teens have a developmentally appropriate increased  
13 focused on peer acceptance, even stronger than the  
14 physiological needs of things like food. This  
15 developmental trajectory can contribute to the  
16 increased prevalence of bullying in this age group.  
17 Children that are labeled as different are very  
18 quickly isolated and marginalized. High school  
19 students have reported that the highest rates of  
20 bullying, especially of lower income children who are  
21 eligible for free lunch in their schools occurs in  
22 the lunch room. When harkening back to my  
23 understanding of brain physiology with high fuel  
24 demands of the brain to function optimally and  
25 thinking about the rapid physical changes with growth

1  
2 spurts and puberty, and finally, the important  
3 frontal lobe development that contributes to  
4 executive function in our adult brains, I cannot sit  
5 quietly and simply accept that children are not  
6 eating lunch in schools. The voices of my fellow  
7 pediatricians come together saying we must break down  
8 the barriers to lunch by first making lunch  
9 universally free for all New York City public school  
10 children. We must stop the interrupted school days  
11 for all the students that go to their school-based  
12 health clinics and nurse's office for headaches and  
13 stomach pains that could have been avoided if kids  
14 were able to safely and comfortably eat lunch. I  
15 encourage the council on behalf of pediatricians who  
16 feel it's important that children not go hungry in  
17 schools because of stigma to please approve universal  
18 free lunch. Thank you.

19 ALLEYNE HUGHLEY: Good afternoon. Thank  
20 you for allowing me to sit before you and speak about  
21 the issue of free lunch and the hunger that the  
22 students have each day. My name is Alleyne Hughley.  
23 I am the President and Queens representative of the  
24 Citywide Council on High Schools. I'm sitting before  
25 you today to ask that you fit the free lunch program

1  
2 into the budget and let it reflect this much needed  
3 free lunch for all students universally. I handed a  
4 resolution that we have passed on our council to  
5 reflect the free lunch program. It says, "Federal  
6 law allows New York City to make healthy school  
7 lunches universally free for every public school  
8 student and New York City is not taking advantage of  
9 the great opportunity in making healthy school  
10 lunches universally free for every public school  
11 student, and the need for universal free lunch  
12 students is clear. One in every four New York City  
13 children live in a home that lacks enough food and  
14 the consequences of childhood hunger are dire.  
15 Hunger negatively impacts children's learning and  
16 health, and school meals are a critical tool in the  
17 fight against hunger, but because of the way the  
18 program is currently administered, only about 50  
19 percent of New York City children are eligible for  
20 free lunch or reduced lunch to eat. In 2013, 250,000  
21 out of 780,000 students eligible for free or reduced  
22 priced meals do not participate in subsidized school  
23 lunch programs. Many are students--many more  
24 students are above income eligibility for free or  
25 reduced price lunch, yet are in families that are

1 struggling to make ends meet. Additionally,  
2 currently, 81 percent of elementary school students  
3 eat school lunch. it drops to 61 percent in middle  
4 school and 38 percent in high school due to high  
5 stigmatization of these students who receive free  
6 lunch are poverty stricken and the fear of being  
7 labeled by their peer with long lasting health and  
8 educational consequences. Hundreds of thousands of  
9 students in New York City public schools do not  
10 participate in federally funded school lunch due to  
11 programs, poverty, stigma. If students participated,  
12 more nutritious choices could be offered, and the  
13 stigma would be eliminated. An astonishing 68  
14 percent of New York City schools, 1.1 million public  
15 school children have family incomes low enough to be  
16 eligible for free school lunch. Some income children  
17 are not enrolled in the free or reduced price lunch  
18 program because their parents do not submit the  
19 paperwork. Many of these parents are concerned about  
20 sharing personal financial information. Immigrant  
21 parents fear the reprisal from the government or do  
22 not know about the program. Making lunch universally  
23 free to all students eliminates all these barriers  
24 and ensures all New York City public school children  
25

1  
2 have access to a healthy lunch. By expanding the  
3 program, advocates seek to eliminate the shame and  
4 embarrassment that keep many children who qualify for  
5 free lunches from receiving them. The New York City  
6 Council on High Schools believes that New York City  
7 should take advantage of the federal options  
8 available to provide free meals and that the city  
9 should make the small investment needed so that no  
10 student has to pay for a meal, and that the New York  
11 City Council on High Schools wants to ensure that  
12 more children eat healthy school meals by making them  
13 free for all regardless of income. The New York City  
14 Council on High Schools calls upon the Mayor and the  
15 Governor and also the City Council to make school  
16 lunches free for all students irrespective of the  
17 income levels of their parents. Thank you.

18 LIZ ACCLES: Good afternoon. I'm Liz  
19 Accles with Community Food Advocates. Thank you for  
20 the opportunity to speak and for listening to our  
21 whole crew here. So, I'm just-- I'm not going to  
22 read through my testimony. I'm going to just say  
23 thank you for all of your support and for making sure  
24 that we had this important first step last year.  
25 What's different last year from this year is that we

1  
2 actually have evidence, direct evidence, of the  
3 success of universal on the participation of middle  
4 school students in school lunch. So I'm just going  
5 to point out three very quick things, and there are  
6 charts in here on page three. But looking at the  
7 first--my colleague Agnes Mulnar [sp?], I'm not sure  
8 if she's still here, does all our number crunching,  
9 and using school food data found comparing last year  
10 to this year from September to December 2014 to 2013  
11 that middle school lunch participation was up by over  
12 eight percent. And at the same time, participation  
13 in elementary schools or high schools was flat or  
14 decreased. So it's a very direct line, a very  
15 significant increase. Actually, more than we would  
16 have anticipated very early in the program than we  
17 thought. So, the other piece to look at is that the  
18 other analysis she did was comparing middle school  
19 students this year depending on the type of lunch  
20 program they had. So, students in schools without  
21 middle school students without universal had about a  
22 52 percent participation rate. For students who are  
23 in universal middle schools with universal starting  
24 in September, it was about 67 percent. So there's a  
25 15 percent jump up. And for the students in schools

1  
2 that have had universal under an older, smaller  
3 number of students, but under an older federal  
4 option, the participation rate was 75 percent. So  
5 the more students are--it's available, the longer  
6 it's there, the less income becomes an issue. You  
7 see a 20 percent jump, over 20 percent jump in  
8 participation. In addition for the purposes of this  
9 hearing, there's a significant increase under--I'm  
10 not going to get into the technicalities of the  
11 community eligibility program here, but there's  
12 increased federal revenue just from the increased  
13 participation and the way that the reimbursements are  
14 categorized by the federal government. New York City  
15 has brought in an additional 4.1 million dollars in  
16 the first four months of universal being implemented  
17 in middle schools than the prior year. So, you know  
18 what we're calling for. I don't need to say it. Thank  
19 you for all of your support and I'm happy to answer  
20 questions if you have any.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, thank you very  
22 much, Liz, and you know that this has been a priority  
23 for this council and for this Speaker as well. We  
24 continue to make it a priority and we want to see  
25 more students served in the program. And while we are

1  
2 impressed with the results of the funding and what we  
3 did last year, we still see that there's need for  
4 more work to be done, and we would like to in some  
5 way expand that. I did, in the expense portion of  
6 the budget, ask the Chancellor for some information  
7 about what is the delay, not exactly those words, but  
8 hinted at the issue that they bring up often times,  
9 which is the cost. And she said that there are some  
10 hidden costs to it. Now, I did meet with some  
11 members of the union of Local 372 who are the  
12 cafeteria workers as well, and I think that they do  
13 have some legitimate concerns about the work load  
14 that they have right now as it stands, and that the  
15 additional work that would be needed to be done to  
16 implement this may be a concern to them as well. Do  
17 you have an idea, because this is one of the things I  
18 was trying to extract from the Chancellor, but did  
19 not get a full answer, but they did say that they  
20 were looking to work with us on this issue. Any idea  
21 of what the cost for additional workers would be?

22 LIZ ACCLES: We don't have it broken out.  
23 How--I mean, just to say, DC 37 and Local 372 are  
24 also part of the Lunch for Learning Campaign.

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes, and they support  
3 it and they would like to see us implement this.  
4 It's not that.

5 LIZ ACCLES: Right.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It's just that we have  
7 to try to, I think, get to the bottom of what the  
8 Chancellor's saying is that there's a cost attached  
9 to it and then come to terms with how we can find  
10 that funding to do it.

11 LIZ ACCLES: Yes, and our understanding,  
12 because the program is, you know, most of it is  
13 federally funded. The city makes up a gap, and our  
14 anticipation over time if it was universal that it  
15 would cost citywide there would be a 20 percent  
16 increase in participation, and that would cost the  
17 city--this what we've been saying since last year.  
18 This is including the 6.5 million in the middle  
19 schools--maximum, 20 million dollars a year. But we  
20 actually think it's significantly less because there--  
21 -by not doing community eligibility there's a  
22 tremendous amount of federal reimbursement that  
23 should be coming into the city that would help cover  
24 those costs. So it's really--there is a federal  
25 incentive program. The federal government wants us

1  
2 to do this, and the way it's incentivized both in  
3 terms of elimination of forms but also in the way the  
4 reimbursement structure works. So there would--so,  
5 just to say within four months of universal just in a  
6 very small slice of the number of students in the  
7 city, there's four million dollars that the city  
8 brought in that they wouldn't have brought in  
9 otherwise. So, there's a lot more revenue to draw  
10 down as well that would cover a lot of cost, because  
11 it's a per meal reimbursement cost. So, it's not  
12 that it wouldn't cost the city any additional money,  
13 but our cost have anticipated that way.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: The four million that  
15 you're talking about having come in, is that money  
16 that could be used toward staff, or does that have to  
17 be used specifically for food, or how does that work?

18 LIZ ACCLES: No, no, it's the  
19 reimbursement that covers all of it. So, let me be  
20 clear, 3.6 million of that money was for lunch. It  
21 went towards--the increased participation and then  
22 the way the reimbursement works under community  
23 eligibility provision, and then 500,000 of that,  
24 because the meals are reimbursed at a higher rate  
25 under community eligibility including breakfast. I

1  
2 mean, even though it brought in an additional 500,000  
3 dollars. So there is this huge amount of money  
4 that's available to be drawn down through this  
5 program. That's not--and it goes for food, labor,  
6 everything having to do with the program.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I don't know if  
8 you've had a chance to look at the budget. I don't  
9 know how it's delineated in the lines, but have you  
10 seen an increase there in the budget reporting that  
11 we've seen from the DOE?

12 LIZ ACCLES: We haven't, no. This is  
13 Agnes, she does all the numbers. I can't read that.  
14 The--right, the labor costs are covered by the  
15 reimbursements. So, any additional--yeah, I mean  
16 that's the way it's structured, is that additional  
17 labor costs, you know, it's entitlement based. So  
18 the more students, the more meals, the more money.  
19 It's not a block grant. So that's the basic  
20 structure.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Have you been meeting  
22 with the Chancellor on this issue?

23 LIZ ACCLES: We've been talking to the  
24 Chancellor and her folks on this issue, yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It's ongoing?

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LIZ ACCLES: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And they're working  
with you?

LIZ ACCLES: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. IN good faith.  
Alright.

LIZ ACCLES: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: If they're not, I want  
you to let me know.

LIZ ACCLES: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: This is a priority--

LIZ ACCLES: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: for this council and  
we want to move in that direction and we want to get  
beyond what they claim is the issue for not  
implementing the program.

LIZ ACCLES: Yes. Yes, okay, we will.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, good. So,  
alright, so I want to also thank these young women  
who came in to give testimony and the doctor as well,  
and our parent, I guess, also. I was very impressed  
by your testimony as we always are whenever we hear  
from the voices of students because that really is

1  
2 why we're here is to hear from our students. And you  
3 presented yourselves in a very, very good way. I was  
4 a teacher, you know, for 25 years before I got  
5 elected to the City Council and I love to say that,  
6 and I wish I had students as bright and good as you.  
7 I had good students and everything, but you really  
8 presented very well. I have to say, this is the way  
9 you create change, coming in, having a discussion,  
10 presenting this information to your elected officials  
11 and giving us an opportunity to try to work it out.  
12 So, I want to thank you all for coming and you're an  
13 outstanding group of young women. And it's Women's  
14 History Month, and you're here. Thank you. Thank  
15 you very much. I'm going to call our next panel.  
16 You're here making history. Next panel will be  
17 Maggie Moroff from Arise Coalition, Randi Levine from  
18 Advocates for Children, Jane Heaphy form Learning  
19 Leaders, Maria Bautista from Alliance for Quality  
20 Education, Felicia Alexander from Coalition for  
21 Educational Justice, and Natasha Capers from the  
22 Coalition for Educational Justice. Okay, I'm going  
23 to ask you all if you'd raise your right hand because  
24 I do swear everybody in at these hearings. And do  
25 you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the

1 whole truth and nothing but the truth and to answer  
2 Council Member questions honestly? Okay, very good.  
3 Who would like to begin? Have you done the coin toss  
4 yet? Okay, we'll start on the left over there.

5  
6 MAGGIE MOROFF: Okay. Good afternoon.  
7 Thank you. Thank you for the chance to speak today.  
8 It's been a really interesting day so far. I'm  
9 Maggie Moroff. I'm the Special Education Policy  
10 Coordinator at Advocates for Children. I'm also the  
11 Coordinator of the Arise Coalition, and I'm here  
12 today on behalf of the Arise Coalition. Arise is a  
13 group of parents, advocates, educators, academics  
14 that came together a bunch of years ago around  
15 special ed reform issues and we work to improve day  
16 to experiences and long term outcomes for students  
17 with disabilities. Among the concerns that we've  
18 raised with the Department of Education over the past  
19 years, Arise has been advocating with the DOE to  
20 significantly increase literacy rates for students  
21 with disabilities. The current DOE does seem to  
22 share this goal, but to make that a reality, they're  
23 going to need sufficient resources to do that work.  
24 So for that reason, we were really very happy to see  
25 the line in the Mayor's proposed budget allocating

1  
2 3.2 million dollars to support literacy development  
3 for students with disabilities, including students  
4 with dyslexia. This funding would be spent over five  
5 years and it represents a great start, but it's  
6 really only a start. I'm here today to urge the  
7 Council to fund this initiative as a down payment on  
8 what we hope will be a much longer term commitment to  
9 ensuring that every student in New York City learns  
10 to read proficiently. Students with IEP's represent  
11 a substantial and growing population in our city's  
12 schools. There are currently about 19 percent of the  
13 entire student population. In 2014 less than seven  
14 percent of those students between grades three and  
15 eight who participated in special--in standardized  
16 testing scored threes and fours on their ELA exams.  
17 In 2013, only 31 percent of the high school students  
18 with disabilities who took the ELA Regents Exam  
19 passed, but without a passing score, a student can't  
20 graduate from high school with a Regents or a local  
21 diploma. Not surprisingly, unemployment rates for  
22 adults with disabilities are twice what they are for  
23 their peers without disabilities. More can and must  
24 be done to support students with special education  
25 needs in developing literacy skills. There are

1  
2 plenty of studies that show that when students with  
3 disabilities receive age appropriate, intensive,  
4 systematic, and evidence-based interventions, their  
5 literacy skills do progress. All student's skills  
6 improve when they're taught in literacy rich  
7 environments that include explicit instruction in  
8 phonemic awareness, in phonics, in fluency and  
9 vocabulary and comprehension strategies, and when  
10 they then receive targeted small group instruction  
11 when assessment demonstrates the need. Last fall,  
12 the members of the Arise Coalition identified a  
13 number of specific reforms that we believe are  
14 necessary to improve literacy rates for students with  
15 disabilities. We shared those with the DOE on a  
16 number of occasions, and in fact, we shared them with  
17 you last October as well, very quickly. Those were  
18 the students need to receive evidence-based core  
19 literacy instruction, that from kindergarten through  
20 high school, student need to receive ongoing  
21 screening for reading ability and then get additional  
22 evidence-based intervention when that's not enough,  
23 that by using augmentative communication devices,  
24 assistive technology, age appropriate materials,  
25 digitalized text and other multimedia, that schools

1 can support literacy development and content  
2 instruction for all students regardless of their  
3 ability to use spoken language or to access  
4 curriculum through paper and pencil alone, or even to  
5 access the same content as their more typically  
6 developing peers. And the last of those  
7 recommendations is that schools absolutely need to  
8 partner with parents in literacy instruction  
9 providing strategies for parents to use at home,  
10 engaging in ongoing dialogue about individual  
11 children and providing information on how to access  
12 needed screening and interventions. So, as I said  
13 before, the changes we recommend are really critical,  
14 but they require an investment from the city. The  
15 3.2 million proposed is a great start, but when  
16 spread out over five years, and then more than  
17 186,000 students with IEP's, it comes out to only  
18 about three dollars per student per year. So it's  
19 really not enough to make much of a dent. We  
20 encourage the city to start with this money, to take  
21 it as a down payment to do the work that they need to  
22 do and to continue to fund school students in order  
23 to improve literacy rates for students with  
24

1 disabilities in order to see meaningful changes.

2 Thank you very much, and I'm happy to answer--

3 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Sure,  
4 before we go to the next panelist, I just want to ask  
5 you, I was unaware of the 3.2 million. This is new?  
6

7 MAGGIE MOROFF: No, this was a item in  
8 the proposed budget. It's explicitly identified for  
9 two pedagogical seats, for school--not for school  
10 staff, but for DOE-wide staff to support students  
11 with disabilities and it specifically says students  
12 with dyslexia. Although in conversations we've had  
13 with the DOE since that came out, they say it's to  
14 support all students with disabilities.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, this has been in  
16 the budget before?

17 MAGGIE MOROFF: No.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Oh, so that's what I  
19 was asking.

20 MAGGIE MOROFF: Yeah, no, no--

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] This  
22 is--

23 MAGGIE MOROFF: this is brand new in the  
24 proposals, I'm sorry.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do you know where in  
3 the budget it is? Is it in the DOE budget?

4 MAGGIE MOROFF: It is.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

6 MAGGIE MOROFF: And in the DOE, it will  
7 sit with the division of specialized instruction.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Go ahead.

9 MAGGIE MOROFF: And that the amount for  
10 this year alone is 655,000. So that 3.2 is spread  
11 out over those five years.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Good. We need to  
13 just know that. In your testimony you mentioned  
14 communication devices.

15 MAGGIE MOROFF: Yeah.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Were you here for the  
17 whole hearing?

18 MAGGIE MOROFF: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: When I asked about the  
20 tablets?

21 MAGGIE MOROFF: Well, actually I was here  
22 for most of the hearing.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah. Is that what  
24 you're referring to there?

1  
2           MAGGIE MOROFF: So, we're talking about  
3 the use of assistive technology for individual  
4 students with disabilities and then instructional  
5 technology for classrooms as a whole, and really the  
6 combination of the two will allow a lot of students  
7 who don't already access the content for a number of  
8 personal reasons to be able to process, access,  
9 understand, communicate, all of those things.

10           CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And finally, I just  
11 want to ask you, does the Arise and the number of  
12 students being served in special education cause any  
13 alarm or is that a good thing?

14           MAGGIE MOROFF: I think it's--I also  
15 think that it, yes, it is of interest, but I think  
16 that it is probably a more accurate reading of the  
17 numbers of students with disabilities. I think that  
18 some of the stigma has been removed and so as the  
19 Chancellor said earlier, more families are seeking  
20 those supports, but at the same time, I think that  
21 they're seeking those supports because they're not  
22 getting the support at the school level already. So,  
23 a lot of, you know, for example, with the technology  
24 that we were just talking about, a lot of the need  
25 that you see coming up for students might not be

1  
2 present if students only were able to access the  
3 curriculum that they're missing, and if teachers were  
4 better prepared.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you. I  
6 just wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to  
7 ask some special Ed questions. Thank you.

8 MAGGIE MOROFF: Thank you very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Next, please.

10 RANDI LEVINE: Good afternoon. Thank you  
11 for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name  
12 is Randi Levine, and I'm Policy Coordinator at  
13 Advocates for Children of New York. Advocates for  
14 Children speaks out for students whose need are often  
15 forgotten, such as students with disabilities,  
16 immigrant students and students with behavioral  
17 challenges. We are heartened to see that the  
18 preliminary budget includes increased funding to  
19 support these groups of students and their families.  
20 While far more funding is needed to have a  
21 significant impact on student achievement, the  
22 preliminary budget takes several positive steps. I'm  
23 not going to read my entire written testimony, but  
24 will highlight a few of these programs. First, each  
25 year, Advocates for Children hears from thousands of

1 families of students with disabilities, many of whom  
2 are requesting help because their children are  
3 struggling to learn to read. While teaching students  
4 to read is a fundamental responsibility of schools,  
5 the most recent state tests revealed that 93 percent  
6 of the students with disabilities in New York City  
7 who took those tests are not proficient in reading.  
8 So we agree with the Arise Coalition testimony. We  
9 think that the literacy initiative in the preliminary  
10 budget is a good step and as a down payment on a  
11 longer term commitment to ensuring that all students  
12 with disabilities learn to read. Second, each year,  
13 we work with hundreds of families whose primary  
14 language is not English, and we're pleased that the  
15 preliminary budget includes increased funding for  
16 over the phone interpretation services through  
17 language line. While the budget includes onetime  
18 funding for a public awareness campaign regarding the  
19 availability of interpretation services, we think  
20 that the DOE must to more to ensure that school staff  
21 who interact with families are aware of these  
22 services. We also urge the Administration and City  
23 Council to increase funding for written translation  
24 of important documents such as IEP's to help parents  
25

1  
2 understand their children's educational needs and the  
3 services the school is recommending. Third, every  
4 year we work with several hundred families whose  
5 children are experience behavioral challenges in  
6 school or are facing suspension. We support the  
7 funding in the preliminary budget for therapeutic  
8 crisis intervention training as well as guidance  
9 counselors at the Alternative Learning Centers where  
10 students go when they're suspended. Hereto, however,  
11 the city should have a far more significant, can have  
12 a far more significant impact with an additional  
13 investment in funding for initiatives such as  
14 restorative practices and increased social workers  
15 and guidance counselors in targeted schools and at  
16 juvenile detention sites. And finally, we're pleased  
17 that the preliminary budget includes an ongoing  
18 commitment to full day pre-k. We look forward to  
19 completing the job of making sure that every four  
20 year old in New York City has a pre-k seat. At the  
21 same time, we're hearing from families and from pre-k  
22 staff that pre-k students are not receiving their  
23 mandated IEP services at pre-k programs, and we want  
24 to make sure that there's adequate staffing for the  
25 Committee on Preschool Special Education Offices. As

1  
2 the number of children in pre-k increases, we're  
3 going to see a rise in the number of children  
4 identified earlier and need to make sure that the  
5 staffing is there to provide these children with  
6 their services early in life when they can have the  
7 biggest impact. Thanks for the opportunity to speak  
8 with you and I'm happy to answer any questions.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, quickly, also as  
10 the increase of about 30,000 special ed preschool  
11 students, is that of any concern to you, or is that a  
12 good thing?

13 RANDI LEVINE: It's always hard as we're  
14 analyzing data. It's a nuanced picture when we see  
15 an increase in the number of students identified  
16 earlier for students who needs those services that's  
17 positive. The research shows that the earlier we can  
18 identify delays and address those delays, the better  
19 off these children will be and the greater likelihood  
20 that these children will be declassified at some  
21 point and be able to enter general education  
22 classrooms. At the same time, we know that there's  
23 both an over-classification problem and an under  
24 classification problem in New York City. I think  
25 generally, with the expansion of pre-k, we would

1  
2 expect to see more young children being identified  
3 and getting services and that that's positive. At  
4 the same time, we still have 17 year olds walking  
5 into our office who have never learned to read and  
6 who have never been identified as needing special  
7 education services. When we get evaluations for  
8 them, we see that in fact they have dyslexia or some  
9 kind of learning disability, and had it been  
10 identified much earlier, we could have helped make a  
11 tremendous difference in their lives.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Absolutely. Council  
13 Member Chin has a question also.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yes. Earlier when  
15 we asked the Chancellor about translation services  
16 and she was mentioning now that they have this system  
17 set up where every Tuesday they meet with parents to  
18 talk about the IEP and translations are available.  
19 So, do you find that working? Is it true that  
20 parents are getting that service and have  
21 translations available to them to explain their kid's  
22 IEP?

23 RANDI LEVINE: First, let me say how much  
24 we appreciated your asking those questions of the  
25 Chancellor. The Tuesday time is the time carved out

1  
2 in the new union contract for schools to be  
3 interacting with families. We were glad that at the  
4 start of this school year, Chancellor Farina  
5 encouraged schools to use that time to especially  
6 reach out to parents whose children have IEP's. So,  
7 that is a positive development. In terms of  
8 interpretation and translation, we continue to see  
9 tremendous problems in that area, both in terms of  
10 the quality of interpretation at IEP meetings or  
11 interpretation not being offered as an option, and we  
12 honestly rarely see an IEP that has been translated  
13 into the family's native language. So that continues  
14 to be a big concern for us.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Do you have like an  
16 estimated amount of funding should be added to make  
17 sure there is enough written translation?

18 RANDI LEVINE: I don't have that right  
19 now. We can certainly work with your office and  
20 discuss that further.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay, that would be  
22 great. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you. And  
24 next, Jane?

25

1  
2 JANE HEAPHY: Good afternoon. Thank you,  
3 Chairman Dromm. [off mic] Thank you fellow  
4 panelists. Good afternoon. Thank you, Chairman  
5 Dromm and Council Member Chin and the rest of the  
6 Council for the opportunity to testify today on the  
7 importance of support for family engagement in our  
8 public schools. My name is Jane Heaphy, and I'm  
9 Executive Director of Learning Learders, which is  
10 dedicated to public school student success through  
11 family and community engagements. Bringing needed  
12 resources to schools, we train over 4,000 parent  
13 volunteers to provide one to one support in  
14 classrooms, assist in libraries, facilitate book  
15 groups among other roles. We also deliver hands on  
16 workshops to an additional 4,000 families to level  
17 the playing field on navigating the school system,  
18 and share simple but effective strategies parents can  
19 use to support young people's educational  
20 development. The families we work with reflect the  
21 diversity of our city. Twenty-five percent are  
22 immigrants to the US, 50 percent speak another  
23 language at home other than English, and over 70  
24 percent identify as people of color. The 200 plus  
25 schools that we partner with are over 90 percent

1 Title One and are spread across the city. So why are  
2 we dedicated to this larger mission of family  
3 engagement is because we know from research and what  
4 Chairman Dromm and the Speaker and the Chancellor and  
5 the Mayor and many other Council Members have stated,  
6 that parents as engaged partners are a major  
7 component of student success, but it does not happen  
8 automatically. It doesn't happen just because  
9 parents care about their children's education or all  
10 parents would be deeply engaged in our schools, as  
11 they do care about their children's success. And it  
12 does not just happen because school leaders are told  
13 they should address barriers and include families  
14 more meaningfully. True partnership with families  
15 requires capacity building on both sides, resources  
16 for communication and outreach and structured  
17 opportunities for collaboration. We see multiple  
18 impacts of our work. Parents who complete training  
19 as volunteers and give their time to their child's  
20 school make an impact on the whole school.  
21 Principals cite improved school climate and increased  
22 academic success of students as two top benefits of  
23 such programs. Volunteers are proud of their  
24 contributions, but they also describe important  
25

1  
2 outcomes for their families. They say what they  
3 learn as volunteers they bring home to their own  
4 children, and they cite the confidence they gain as  
5 volunteers as parents engaged integrally into the  
6 school as why they run for SLT and PTA's and CEC's  
7 and the reason they pursue their own continued  
8 education or gain new employment. Our workshop  
9 evaluation shows parents overwhelmingly want and  
10 value new information in ways to strategize around  
11 their children's learning. So, I applaud Chancellor  
12 Farina's focus on family engagement, making it one of  
13 her four pillars, and I believe this is true, that  
14 families keep the house upright. And I'm grateful  
15 for the Council's belief that parents need to be part  
16 of the solution. With this much alignment on the  
17 importance of families, we have tremendous  
18 opportunity to make good on this message, but it does  
19 take deliberate action and resources. Real school  
20 family partnership requires funding to do outreach  
21 training screening and support of volunteers to build  
22 the capacity of schools to effectively partner with  
23 parents, for schools to provide better communication  
24 and more opportunities for involvement, to meet  
25 parents where they literally and figuratively live

1  
2 with the information they want and need to help their  
3 kids succeed. It takes funding to do all this work  
4 and to do it in multiple languages meeting local  
5 needs. In closing, I express my gratitude that  
6 families are essential vision of this Council and of  
7 the Department of Education, and I ask you to support  
8 the programs and strategies that make family  
9 engagement come to life. I urge you to make family  
10 school partnership a priority in the city's budget,  
11 and I thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Jane, what happened  
13 with your funding last year?

14 JANE HEAPHY: With the Department and with  
15 the Council?

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: In the both.

17 JANE HEAPHY: With the department, over  
18 the last part of the last Administration, the funding  
19 that schools could use to train volunteers was  
20 eliminated, and so there was no funding at all. We  
21 are in conversations with the Chancellor. She  
22 believes obviously in a broad range of strategies for  
23 family engagement. We also had previously Council  
24 Member--council support to provide workshops for  
25 families around middle school applications, because

1  
2 we know how inequitable that process is, and that  
3 funding was not granted last year, so we're looking  
4 for restoration of that specifically for us. But I'm  
5 also here today largely, you know, to make sure that  
6 family engagement is thought of as a very clear  
7 budget item. So, for the work that we do and for  
8 other programs around the city to really think about  
9 not another mandate on schools, but really making  
10 sure that the resources are there so that families  
11 are meaningfully involved in ours in particular as  
12 well.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: What was your Council  
14 allocation in I guess it would be Fiscal 14?

15 JANE HEAPHY: Eighty thousand, and then--  
16 well, in--yes, in 14. So, and we've asked for  
17 restoration actually of a little more than that for  
18 to continue the work with middle school families.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And that was  
20 completely cut out last year?

21 JANE HEAPHY: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do you know where that  
23 came from originally, what pot?

24 JANE HEAPHY: Origin--very originally?

25 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, where was--

1  
2 JANE HEAPHY: [interposing] Well, it was  
3 the Speaker, the Speaker.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.

5 JANE HEAPHY: Okay, thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Maria?

7 MARIA BAUTISTA: Hi, good afternoon. My  
8 name is Maria Bautista. I'm the NYC Campaign  
9 Coordinator for the Alliance for Quality Education.  
10 Thanks for this space to be able to give testimony.  
11 The Alliance for Quality Education is a statewide  
12 coalition that focuses primarily on securing adequate  
13 funding for public schools, as well as being  
14 committed to advocating and ensuring that these funds  
15 are distributed equitably throughout the state. We  
16 commend the efforts of City Council Member Daniel  
17 Dromm, Inez Barron and other City Council Members who  
18 have been very vocal advocates at the state level  
19 calling for the state to comply with the CFE court-  
20 mandated distribution of funds. New York City is  
21 currently owed 2.5 billion dollars. Year after year,  
22 our schools have been depleted and starved and then  
23 called failures, and for these reasons we urge the  
24 City Council Education Committee to continue to  
25 advocate and fight for these monies owed. Equitable

1  
2 distribution of funds both at the state and city  
3 level is a central component to addressing the stark  
4 disparities our schools are faced with. And so we  
5 also urge the City Council to look at the disparities  
6 within in our own New York City Department of  
7 Education. Earlier today, students from the  
8 International Community High School in the Bronx  
9 protested the fact that their school as well as many  
10 other schools across New York City do not have access  
11 to sports. Do we think that 17,000 students of color  
12 going to school without any sports teams is just?  
13 Thirty-six thousand students of color go to schools  
14 with almost no sports. Is this equity? But that  
15 just scratches the surface of what inequity in New  
16 York City Schools looks like. We work with and have  
17 heard testimonies from parents and students who do  
18 not have libraries or librarians, functional  
19 technology, text books, science labs, AP courses, no  
20 arts or music, and many of those schools are in  
21 communities of color. There is no equity in post-  
22 secondary planning in schools or guidance counselors.  
23 There is no equity for English language learners and  
24 special needs students. The Mayor's Renewal School  
25 Initiative is a great opportunity to provide

1  
2 comprehensive supports and resources to schools that  
3 are struggling and that address [sic] inequities  
4 propagated at the state level and exacerbated by the  
5 past Administration. We need to see increased  
6 funding for schools that work with families and  
7 students with higher needs. This is the way to go.  
8 While New York State's decision to not adequately  
9 fund our schools has tremendously impacted all New  
10 York City schools, we see that the effects in low  
11 income communities have been even more severe and  
12 drastic. We urge you to not only look into the  
13 disparities in resources, but to also take action to  
14 ensure that schools that have been stripped and bled  
15 of resources have equitable funding to begin to  
16 address the gaps and provide opportunities that all  
17 students need to be successful. In this budget,  
18 let's prioritize the schools and communities that  
19 have the highest needs. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Maria, and  
21 very proud to have worked very closely with you, and  
22 I know Natasha's going to speak on other topics as  
23 well that we've worked very closely on, but you know,  
24 on Monday we're going to have another Education  
25 Committee hearing, and that's going to focus on

1 testing and the parent's right to opt out of testing.  
2 And I believe that what undermines a lot of our  
3 discussions in education is this overemphasis and  
4 misuse of standardized tests, and so much is based on  
5 that and tests were never meant to be used that way,  
6 etcetera, so forth and so on, but I'm very proud of  
7 the work that this committee has done and that my  
8 staff has done as well, because at the next Stated,  
9 we're going to pass four resolutions on CFE funding  
10 and making sure that we get our share fair of dollars  
11 for that on testing, because I think that's really  
12 vitally important for people to understand how those  
13 tests have been misused, the charter cap and on  
14 receivership. So, I want to thank you for your work  
15 on that and Natasha as well.

17 MARIA BAUTISTA: I also want to thank you  
18 all, because you've done such an amazing job. I  
19 mean, you went up last week and met with our Black  
20 Caucus at the state level, and that really has made  
21 an impact. I think that every time we speak out and  
22 every time that our Education Committee members speak  
23 out about how this is impacting our education budget,  
24 it really sends a loud message, and people are

1  
2 listening. So, thank you so much for your advocacy  
3 and your work around that issue.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Natasha?

5 NATASHA CAPERS: Good afternoon. I am  
6 Natasha Capers, the Coordinator for New York City  
7 Coalition for Educational Justice. I want to thank  
8 you and the City Council for having us at this  
9 hearing today. CEJ is a coalition of community based  
10 organizations across the city working in low income  
11 communities of color for educational equity. The  
12 Coalition for Educational Justice believes that  
13 parent engagement is an important component to make  
14 schools successful. We also know that schools,  
15 administrators and teachers need assistance and  
16 guidance to make this possible. Mayor de Blasio is  
17 quoted as saying, "Our experience as public school  
18 parents has guided our vision for public schools,  
19 including our firm commitment to make parents our  
20 partners." This is a great sentiment, and I am proud  
21 to have a mayor who understands the importance of  
22 parent engagement, but unless there are systems and  
23 supports to make this possible, it will never become  
24 a reality. The truth is that parents and families  
25 all across the city have been pushed out of their

1 schools and continue to be disenfranchised. This is  
2 because there aren't enough ways to engage parents.  
3 We believe that the Department of Education should be  
4 incubating and innovating new and exciting parent  
5 engagement models. Parents within CEJ have been at  
6 the helm of creating and uplifting models. CEJ  
7 proposes that the City Council support model  
8 initiatives for transformative parent engagement that  
9 will seed innovation across the city and establish  
10 the foundation for New York City to lead urban school  
11 districts nationally. Grounded in the work of Doctor  
12 Karen Mapp [sp?] in developing the US Department of  
13 Education Dual Capacity Framework for Family School  
14 Partnerships, CEJ proposes a package of initiatives  
15 that will set the bar for family school partnerships  
16 and increase parent participation and student  
17 achievement by strengthening the relationship between  
18 families and school staff, helping families feel more  
19 comfortable inside the school as well as help school  
20 staff feel more comfortable within the school  
21 community, developing parent skills and knowledge  
22 about how to support their child at home. We are  
23 uplifting five models of parent engagement.  
24 parent/teacher home visits, in this model that helps  
25

1  
2 to strengthen a relationship between teachers and  
3 families by having a team of two teachers visit the  
4 home in the summer, the questions teachers ask to  
5 learn more about the family and to know what their  
6 hopes, dreams and aspirations are for their child. A  
7 second visit is conducted in the spring to continue  
8 to strengthen that relationship. Academic parent  
9 teacher teams: Teachers hold classroom meetings in  
10 September as part of extended parent/teacher  
11 conferences. At these meetings parents--at these  
12 meetings, teachers present performance data for the  
13 class, model activities for families and give parents  
14 individualized instruction on their child's  
15 performance. And parents can share learning  
16 strategies. Parent advocacy program: Parents  
17 advocates work in overcrowded classrooms with  
18 struggling students. They receive weekly trainings on  
19 schools, curriculum, teaching strategies for working  
20 with struggling students and for their own students.  
21 Parent resource centers which builds off the district  
22 offices to ensure that parents have a means to  
23 understand everything that is happening in their  
24 school and in their district. And lastly, the parent  
25 university. We want a comprehensive training program

1 based on existing model in Boston in which parents  
2 can earn credits as well as college credits by  
3 attending university and leading small and large  
4 group trainings. These models are grounded in  
5 research and have been proven results, increase in  
6 parent participations, school climate, and  
7 ultimately, student achievement. The parents of New  
8 York City Coalition for Educational Justice would  
9 like to see these programs funded in the DOE's budget  
10 so that schools can start to put the mayor's  
11 commitment to parent engagement into action. If the  
12 DOE is unable to fund them, we hope that the Council  
13 will step up and make sure that to include them in  
14 their budget. Parent engagement is the key to  
15 turning around student achievement, our schools, our  
16 communities, and thus in turning around our city.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Natasha.

19 NATASHA CAPERS: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: We heard a little bit  
21 from the Chancellor in regard to parent engagement.  
22 I clarified the word "engagement" and "involvement"  
23 with her. I don't think we were 100 percent satisfied  
24 with some of her answers. She seemed to revert back  
25 a little bit to the concept of parents doing some

1  
2 work in school like around cooking classes and things  
3 like that. I believe that the current parent academy  
4 or as it's called, I think, is with LIU, am I not  
5 mistaken?

6 NATASHA CAPERS: I believe that it was  
7 contracted through LIU, and I believe that now it's  
8 going to Learning Leaders, at least--well, then I  
9 don't know.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I believe it is LIU.

11 NATASHA CAPERS: Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, is that  
13 something--have you had any involvement with LIU?

14 NATASHA CAPERS: I haven't, no. We have  
15 not.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So you're parent  
17 university that you're proposing, is that you would  
18 hook up with a school or university?

19 NATASHA CAPERS: It would basically be--  
20 it could be housing a district to really address the  
21 needs of parents and students in that district and  
22 really to help to hone in on the skills that parents  
23 feel like they need to work on, but it's also a way  
24 to partner with say like CUNY to ensure that parents  
25 are growing their capacity and their skills as well

1  
2 so that they can start to go onto further education  
3 if they deem that's something they want to do.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And what type of  
5 classes would you like to see?

6 NATASHA CAPERS: I think that a lot of  
7 parents whatever the skills are that they want. So,  
8 some parents may want to do things like learn another  
9 language, like myself, I desperately need to learn  
10 Spanish. Other parents may want to continue their  
11 degrees. Others may need to go back and perhaps get  
12 a GED. So, it really would depend on the needs of  
13 that family and what it is that that family deems  
14 necessary for themselves.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Fair Student Funding  
16 formula, how are you feeling about that?

17 NATASHA CAPERS: I'll let Maria take that  
18 one.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

20 MARIA BAUTISTA: I think that was going  
21 back to my point about equity, right? Like, we need  
22 to really--I don't know what the formula is and how  
23 it's weighted, but we need to definitely weigh things  
24 more seriously. We see that there are a lot of  
25 communities that aren't getting the resources that

1  
2 for years have been denied access through resources  
3 that don't have the programs that they need, and we  
4 need to start addressing those gaps in those schools.  
5 And so we really need to take a look at the formula  
6 to see if it's really getting to these communities  
7 and addressing the needs of like English language  
8 learners, special needs students, students in high  
9 poverty communities.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, good. I'm  
11 going to end it there. We do have a few more panels.  
12 We'll probably be here til eight o'clock tonight, but  
13 I want to thank you for all coming in, and I  
14 appreciate it very, very much. And our next panel is  
15 Barbara Harris from Granny for Peace Brigade, Janet  
16 Poppendieck, New York City Food Policy, Lisa Levy  
17 from New York City Coalition against Hunger, Alexis  
18 Henry, Citizens Committee for Children, Sarah  
19 Fajardo, Coalition for Asian American Children and  
20 Families, and Erin George from NYLPI. Yeah, New York  
21 Lawyers for Public Interest. Okay, I do swear  
22 everybody in. So, I'm going to ask if you would  
23 raise your right hand please. Do you solemnly swear  
24 or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and  
25 nothing but the truth and to answer Council Member

1  
2 questions honestly? Okay, Barbara do you want to  
3 start? Put that mic on there.

4 BARBARA HARRIS: Thanks. All of the  
5 groups I've heard so far have been requesting funding  
6 for programs, and I'm here to ask the Council--thank  
7 you very much, Council Member Dromm and I think Chin  
8 is--thank you, so much being here. I'm urging  
9 Council Members to vote to eliminate the  
10 approximately 1.5 million dollar tax levy allocated  
11 for a program, the Junior ROTC in 18 high schools in  
12 the city. We're supporting that program in these  
13 public high schools. The Committee on Education and  
14 Department of Education can find far better uses for  
15 1.5 million of tax payer dollars in supporting a  
16 military program that is developed by the Pentagon.  
17 The little transparency or oversight of curriculum or  
18 goals achieved in military delivers the wrong message  
19 to our high schools students, and for many reasons,  
20 the Junior ROTC program should not be subsidized by  
21 New York City tax payers. First, the cost of the  
22 program. The federal government is paying slightly  
23 less than half of the cost for 40 military  
24 instructor's salary, including all the fringe  
25 benefits of the JROTC programs. The instructors are

1 not employees of the New York City Department of  
2 Education, but employees of the federal government.  
3 This sets a troubling precedent of having individuals  
4 who do not possess the requisite qualifications to be  
5 a teacher in the New York school system, yet are  
6 engaged in teaching high school students. The funds  
7 used to cover the remaining costs of JROTC instructor  
8 salaries and all normal employment taxes and benefits  
9 that also cover regular teachers is paid by the tax  
10 payer. Each school with a JROTC program hires two  
11 instructors for their unit, which means that unlike  
12 most other subjects, two teachers are managing every  
13 JROTC class. These instructors are not required to  
14 have the same training and credentials as mandated  
15 for most NYC teachers. Some senior instructors may  
16 have a BA, but assistant teachers can be assigned  
17 with the minimum requirement of 20 college credits,  
18 yet they are paid the same salaries and benefits as  
19 regular accredited teachers. I'm skipping around a  
20 little bit if you're reading it, because I want to  
21 get to the heart of it. The program is described as  
22 developing leadership, citizenship and discipline,  
23 but little data records or reports of outcomes are  
24 every presented. The curricula focuses on military  
25

1 values and hierarchy, the idea of soldiering,  
2 following commands, fitness and drills. It is a  
3 military training, not critical thinking. It is the  
4 military approach to social and political change.  
5 The curriculum is developed by the military and  
6 presents a partisan pro-military view of historical,  
7 political and moral issues. Curriculum content is  
8 decided by the military and the Department of  
9 Education does not control or oversee what is taught  
10 and appears to be out of the loop. There's no  
11 transparency. Since my time is running out already,  
12 just to highlight, the JRTOC teaching procedures  
13 follow a very authoritarian approach in teaching  
14 American history, civics, communications, inspiring  
15 students to find their own path, develop character,  
16 their character, and raise self-esteem should be  
17 taught by those teachers trained and certified to do  
18 so. But the most disturbing part of the program is  
19 the use of weapons. JRTOC students are given  
20 uniforms and vaccimily [sic] rifles, which are used  
21 for drills, parades and assembly programs. Each  
22 member of the JROTC marches into assemblies in  
23 uniform carrying rifles. Is this not hypocritical of  
24 the current school regulation of zero tolerance with  
25

1  
2 guns and weapons of any sort in schools. JROTC sends  
3 the wrong message about weapons. Students cannot  
4 bring weapons into school, but they read and learn  
5 about handling them in JROTC textbooks. In the 2015  
6 City Council allocation funding document, there's an  
7 anti-violence 550,000 dollars has been allocated to  
8 programs that teach anti-violence, anti-weapon and  
9 conflict resolution strategies. How confused can the  
10 student be? JROTC kids carry rifles. Guns are fun.  
11 Guns are macho. War is a game. So what's going on in  
12 the public high schools? And the overwhelming  
13 majority of New Yorkers have no idea that the tax  
14 payers are funding the JROTC program, and our  
15 experience speaking with people in the streets has  
16 informed us of this fact. They oppose JROTC. So,  
17 citizenship, leadership and discipline can and is  
18 successfully trained, taught by trained New York City  
19 certified teachers, and we look forward to the  
20 Council leadership on a significant educational  
21 issue.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Barbara.  
23 And you know how I feel about this.

24 BARBARA HARRIS: I know.  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I've gotten myself  
3 into a lot of newspapers because of my opinions that  
4 are very similar to yours, and so I applaud you for  
5 coming down and for continuing to speak out on this  
6 important issue, and we'd like to have some other  
7 conversations outside of this hearing about how we  
8 continue to fight this issue.

9 BARBARA HARRIS: Thank you so very much.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Next,  
11 please.

12 JANET POPPENDIECK: Good afternoon. I'm  
13 Jan Poppendieck, the Policy Director of the New York  
14 City Food Policy Center at Hunter College in the CUNY  
15 School of Public Health. And I want to thank you for  
16 this opportunity to present our views on the  
17 education segment of the New York City budget. I'm  
18 here, as I said, on behalf of the Policy Center,  
19 which was created in 2012 to develop intersectoral  
20 [sic] innovative and evidence-based solutions to  
21 preventing diet related diseases and promoting food  
22 security in New York. We thank the City Council for  
23 financial support of our center and the Speaker's  
24 office. We urge the provision in the budget for the  
25 expansion of the universal free meals for all New

1  
2 York City public schools. Providing a healthy lunch  
3 to all of our school children will contribute to the  
4 achievement to at least two of our center's  
5 fundamental goals, the reduction of diet related  
6 disease and the promotion of food security. In the  
7 long run, it will advance academic achieving and  
8 educational entrainment and thus contribute to the  
9 development of our city's economy. As I mentioned,  
10 the center is committed to evidence-based social  
11 policy, and I'm here to say that the evidence is in  
12 on universal free school meals. The figures that have  
13 been presented to you about an eight percent increase  
14 in participation in schools, middle school where the  
15 program was implemented. Eight percent may not sound  
16 like a great deal, but to have achieved that in four  
17 months with virtually no publicity is a remarkable  
18 outcome and really gives testimony to what I've heard  
19 all across the country, which is that stigma is  
20 indeed the primary barrier for participation for many  
21 students who are eligible. The other group of  
22 students who benefit enormously from the  
23 implementation of universal free schools meals are  
24 students who are not in fact financial income  
25 eligible for the free and reduced price, because

1  
2 their family incomes are above the cut off, but who  
3 are struggling financially. And many people don't  
4 realize that the income eligibility cut off is the  
5 same nationwide. It's the same in New York City  
6 where costs are very high as it is in rural Alabama  
7 where costs of living are low. So one reason the  
8 program, the national school lunch program, has  
9 thrived in the rural south is because that same  
10 income eligibility cut off embraces a much larger  
11 segment of the community. So, the evidence is in,  
12 and we think it's time for the City Council to really  
13 take a leadership role with the Chancellor's office  
14 in making sure that they pay attention to the  
15 evidence. I hope the council will continue to  
16 interact with the Chancellor's office to find out  
17 just how the six million from last year was used.  
18 You raised some questions earlier about labor hours  
19 and the concerns of the employees, but there's a  
20 formula for labor hours per hundreds of meals served.  
21 So they should in fact be expanding employment, which  
22 is good for us all, which is good for the New York  
23 City economy when people have those jobs, and those  
24 are jobs that are compatible with being a parent.  
25 Working on the school calendar is an asset,

1  
2 especially for single parents. There's more to my  
3 testimony, and I see that my time is out. So, I just  
4 want to say that not only does it address the hunger  
5 issue and enables students to eat a meal that's free  
6 of shame, okay, but it also addresses the diet  
7 related disease issue. School meals have gotten  
8 healthier. New York City can take pride in its  
9 leadership role. When we introduced citywide food  
10 standards in 2008, we were ahead of the curve. The  
11 federal government has somewhat caught up with us.  
12 There is mounting evidence, and it's in here with  
13 footnotes, that the meals prepared and served at  
14 schools are healthier than meals sent from home, even  
15 when parents pack a meal. So, we have an opportunity  
16 here that we really need to seize. I think that given  
17 the changed composition of the Congress at the  
18 federal level, we had better get in on the community  
19 eligibility option now while we're sure it's at hand.  
20 I would lock it in if I were you.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. And we are  
22 going to follow up on that six million dollar  
23 question, and a matter of fact, staff is already told  
24 me that we did not see it in this preliminary  
25 hearing, but that we should see it in the next

1  
2 executive, because they just received the money. But  
3 a thought occurred to me having heard your testimony  
4 behind Barbara's, which is that wouldn't it be nice  
5 if we put the 1.5 million out of the guns and into  
6 feeding people, you know, and food for people rather  
7 than arms for people, so.

8 BARBARA HARRIS: So funny because that was  
9 the same as last time, I--

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Speak  
11 into the mic. Speak into the mic.

12 BARBARA HARRIS: No, the last time I was  
13 here and I had the 1.5 million, and the person next  
14 to me was with Sports in Small Schools for two  
15 million, and I just wanted to hand it to him.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It's all a matter of  
17 priorities, and actually, a budget speaks to what the  
18 priorities of the city are.

19 BARBARA HARRIS: Yes, right.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Exactly. Exactly.  
21 Thank you. Next, please. Yes.

22 LISA LEVY: Hi. I'm Lisa Levy, the  
23 Director of Policy Advocacy and Organizing at the New  
24 York City Coalition Against Hunger. I'm testifying  
25 on behalf of the city's more than 1,100 soup kitchens

1  
2 and food pantries and the more than 1.4 million New  
3 Yorkers who live in households that can't afford  
4 enough food. I want to first thank Chair Dromm and  
5 the Education Committee for allowing me to testify  
6 today. I will try to be brief as I have also  
7 submitted written testimony. One in five kids in New  
8 York City goes to school hungry every day. Children  
9 who are hungry cannot learn, just as hungry adults  
10 cannot work. New York City has made great strides to  
11 get children to eat school meals, but we are still  
12 behind. The city has great opportunity to improve  
13 nutrition among food insecure and hungry children,  
14 decrease childhood obesity and receive more revenue  
15 from the federal government for the Department of  
16 Education. The city can quickly and easily achieve  
17 these outcomes by expanding the provision of  
18 Breakfast after the Bell and universal school lunch.  
19 As you heard Chancellor Farina testify, each day  
20 schools across New York City offer universal free  
21 school breakfast. They require no paperwork forms,  
22 hassle or costs to the student. Despite the  
23 simplicity of this process and the outreach efforts  
24 of the DOE's Office of School Food to increase  
25 participation in the school breakfast program, New

1  
2 York City's participation has significantly lagged.  
3 According to a January 2015 report by the Food  
4 Research Action Center on school breakfast  
5 participation in 62 large urban school districts  
6 across the country, New York City ranked second to  
7 last with only 35.4 percent of the students receiving  
8 free or reduced price lunch also receiving free  
9 breakfast, 35.4 percent. That's a lot of room for  
10 improvement. Given that most school districts must  
11 now have a complex system in place to collect forms  
12 and data on the income of each student's parents to  
13 determine the eligibility of each child for either  
14 free reduced price or full cost meals. When a  
15 district adopts a universal breakfast or lunch  
16 policy, not only does it reduce the stigma faced by  
17 children and thereby increase participation, it also  
18 reduces the paperwork and bureaucracy, saving the  
19 school district time and money. Additionally, given  
20 that text books are widely understood to be a  
21 critical educational tool, public school districts  
22 typically lend them out free of charge to all  
23 students. The time is right for the nation to view  
24 school meals in the same way. Free breakfast and  
25 lunch should be universal to all classrooms. By

1  
2 expanding breakfast in the classroom or the grab and  
3 go model in hallways, the Department of Education can  
4 improve nutrition, improve educational outcomes,  
5 decrease child obesity and receive more revenue from  
6 the federal government. We believe that a  
7 progressive, proactive and effective approach will be  
8 successful in expanding breakfast after the bell and  
9 universal school lunch. We hope we can count on the  
10 Education Committee, the rest of the City Council and  
11 Mayor de Blasio's entire Administration to make these  
12 programs happen. The 600,000 low income New York  
13 City School children who do not eat breakfast at  
14 school are counting on each of you. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.  
16 We hear you. Breakfast for all. Thank you. Next,  
17 please.

18 SARAH FAJARDO: Good afternoon. My name  
19 is Sarah Fajardo, and I'm the Education Policy  
20 Coordinator for the Coalition for Asian American  
21 Children and Families. I would like to thank Chair  
22 Dromm and the members of the Education Committee for  
23 holding this important oversight hearing on the  
24 Fiscal Year 2016 preliminary plan. For nearly 30  
25 years, CACF has been the nation's only Pan-Asian

1 children's advocacy organization. We work to improve  
2 the health and wellbeing of APA children and families  
3 in three policy areas, education, health and child  
4 welfare. CACF has identified several key needs faced  
5 by Asian Pacific American students. A high  
6 percentage of APA students are also first generation.  
7 These students and their families need translated and  
8 interpreted supports to navigate the school system,  
9 understand their language rights as student and  
10 parents and access resources to support student's  
11 learning. Thirty-five percent of New York City APA's  
12 and 22.4 percent of APA students are limited English  
13 proficient. Limited English proficiency creates  
14 barriers to parent participation at school events,  
15 discussions and meetings about students educational  
16 achievement as interpretation is not always easily  
17 accessible for our families. In New York City  
18 Schools, approximately 20 percent of English language  
19 learners students spoke an Asian language at home in  
20 2012, the second largest language group after  
21 Spanish. The diversity of languages and dialects  
22 spoken by APA families makes community outreach and  
23 education challenging, and without targeted outreach,  
24 these communities will continue to be isolated. Many  
25

1  
2 APA's also have limited literacy in their native  
3 languages. This underscores as well the necessity of  
4 partnering with community based organizations and  
5 community members to engage in direct outreach to  
6 contact isolated families by phone, visits or word of  
7 mouth. On behalf of the 40 Asian led and serving  
8 community organizations that comprise our membership,  
9 I urge the council to ensure that the DOE provides  
10 cultural competency trainings for interpreters,  
11 teachers and staff. Cultural competency helps ensure  
12 that interpreters are sensitive, comprehensible, use  
13 colloquial language, and that parents feel  
14 comfortable engaging in conversations. CACF  
15 encourages the DOE to implement cultural competency  
16 trainings for school staff and students in a  
17 coherent, integrated and systematized program that  
18 discusses the need for cultural competency across  
19 races, ethnicities, gender identities, sexual  
20 orientations, religions, and physical and mental  
21 abilities. Diversity training for staff were piloted  
22 several years ago, but never widely implemented, and  
23 we encourage the DOE to build on these efforts. We  
24 have many more recommendations, and I see my time is  
25 running out. So, I'll touch on a few of them. We

1  
2 encourage the Education Committee to ensure that the  
3 DOE conducts targeted parent engagement and outreach  
4 campaigns beyond the proposed language access  
5 campaign. We think this is a great start, but we need  
6 much more targeted outreach. We encourage the DOE to  
7 support the incorporation of socio/emotional supports  
8 in school standards and in guidance services to  
9 support increased and standardized guidance services  
10 and staffing. Thank you so much for your continued  
11 support for this campaign. We really appreciate all  
12 that you've done in standing up for this ask for  
13 community members. Ethnic studies is a critical  
14 inclusion in DOE curricula, and we are heartened by  
15 the inclusion of restorative justice responses in the  
16 preliminary budget and in the recent changes to the  
17 disciplinary code, and we encourage the DOE to fully  
18 fund staff training. We're concerned about funding  
19 levels for staff training and to ensure that these  
20 are really successful programs. And finally, thank  
21 again for your support for improved data collection  
22 desegregation and reporting. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And we're going to  
24 have those hearings soon on the data collection. So,  
25 stay tuned.

1 SARAH FAJARDO: We'll be there.

2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes, thank you.

3 SARAH FAJARDO: Thank you.

4 ALEXIS HENRY: Good afternoon. My name  
5 is Alexis Henry, and I'm the Policy Associate for  
6 Early Education and Education at Citizens Committee  
7 for Children. I would like to thank the Chairs,  
8 Chairs Dromm and Ferreras as well as the members of  
9 the City Council Committees on Finance and Education  
10 for holding today's hearing. CCC appreciates that  
11 Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Farina have spent much  
12 of their first year re-evaluating various aspects of  
13 the city's education system and putting into place  
14 new ideas aimed at improving outcomes for children.  
15 CCC also appreciates the de Blasio Administration's  
16 commitment to expanding pre-k to every four year old  
17 and expanding after school programs for over 100,000  
18 middle school students. We also appreciate the new  
19 investments in the preliminary budget, specifically  
20 literacy intervention teams, therapeutic intervention  
21 training, guidance counselors, girls' varsity teams  
22 and language learning, and we urge the City Council  
23 to support these. CCC also appreciates the City  
24 Council's longstanding commitment to investing  
25

1  
2 critical resources into the DOE to strengthen the  
3 programming available to public school children.  
4 We'll be urging the Administration to restore and  
5 base line the initiatives supported by the City  
6 Council in Fiscal Year 2015, and we hope the City  
7 Council will do so as well. In the executive budget,  
8 we hope to see additional investments into building  
9 new schools, reducing class size and enhancing the  
10 budgets of individual schools. We also urge you to  
11 support the following: One, school meals. Thank you  
12 to the City Council and the Public Advocate for the  
13 commitment to universal school lunch and Breakfast  
14 after the Bell. Your efforts have ensured that  
15 thousand more middle school students each lunch every  
16 day. CCC will be urging the Administration to  
17 maintain universal school lunch for middle school  
18 students and expanding this program to elementary and  
19 high school students. In addition, we'll be urging  
20 the Administration to maintain its campaign promise  
21 for universal breakfast after the bell/breakfast in  
22 the classroom. Number two, physical education.  
23 Quality physical education classes provides a number  
24 of health and academic benefits to children.  
25 Unfortunately, New York City's out of compliance with

1 state regulations regarding physical education. We  
2 urge all City Council members to sign on as co-  
3 sponsors of Intro 644, which is a data reporting  
4 bill, to pass Intro 644 and then to urge the  
5 Administration to implement reforms that will improve  
6 physical education in school, including hiring more  
7 certified PE teachers and addressing space issues.  
8 Number three, maintain elementary after school  
9 programs for 1,882 children. The DOE contract with  
10 17 after school sites is due to expire on June 30<sup>th</sup>  
11 of 2015 without any intent by DOE to renew contract.  
12 In addition, DYCD has no funds to support nor the  
13 ability to take over the contract. This would cost  
14 5.9 million. CCC urges the Administration and the  
15 City Council to ensure that we do not return to the  
16 days of cutting afterschool programs. The 17 sites  
17 and their corresponding Council Members are listed in  
18 our written testimony on page seven. Number four,  
19 school based health and mental health services. CCC  
20 will be urging the Administration to shore up the  
21 fiscal viability of current school based health and  
22 mental health clinics and then to expand the number  
23 of schools with on site health and mental health  
24 services. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.  
3 I appreciate you coming in. Next, please?

4 ERIN GEORGE: Good afternoon. My name's  
5 Erin George. I'm a Health Justice Advocate at New  
6 York Lawyers for the Public Interest, and I'm here  
7 today testifying on behalf of the PE for All  
8 Coalition. The PHYS-ED for all Coalition would like  
9 to thank Chairperson Dromm and the Education  
10 Committee for the opportunity to testify on the  
11 critical issue of New York City school funding. As  
12 the Council considers the city's education budget, we  
13 hope the Council will push to ensure that the DOE  
14 does more to help schools meet the state requirements  
15 for providing our children with physical education.  
16 Research shows that participation in quality PE  
17 enhances student's academic achievement, instills  
18 good habits for healthy living, and teaches critical  
19 skills such as teamwork. PE can help improve  
20 children's grades in standardized test scores, as  
21 well as their concentration and classroom behavior.  
22 PE improves physical fitness for all school children,  
23 and it's especially critical for students with  
24 obesity and related health problems. Despite the  
25 well documented benefits, the DOE schools routinely

1 fail to provide their students with the PE required  
2 by state regulations as part of the opportunity for a  
3 sound basic education to which all students are  
4 entitled under the state constitution. As our  
5 coalition recently testified at this committee's  
6 hearing on overcrowding, part of the issue is that  
7 New York City needs to invest more in school  
8 construction and maintenance. Our schools don't have  
9 enough gymnasiums, playing fields or playgrounds. Too  
10 many of the spaces we do have are falling into  
11 disrepair. Co-located schools struggle to schedule  
12 sufficient time for PE in their shared gymnasiums and  
13 spaces. Strained school budgets also inhibit  
14 schools' ability to hire certified PE instructors to  
15 help develop, implement and oversee comprehensive PE  
16 curricula. Schools also need guidance and assistance  
17 to best use the staff space that they have. Without  
18 these investments, our children won't get the PE that  
19 they need to promote lifelong healthy habits.  
20 Unfortunately, the lack of data on PE and our schools  
21 makes it difficult to evaluate whether the DOE is  
22 investing properly or effectively. The DOE's failure  
23 to make public and in many instances even track basic  
24 data on the quality and amount of PE instruction  
25

1 hampers citywide efforts to improve access. This is  
2 why the PHYS-ED for All Coalition urges the Council  
3 to enact Intro 644 which will require the DOE to  
4 report on all aspects of PE including space and  
5 facilities in New York City schools. The goal will  
6 provide parents, communities and elected officials  
7 critical information about how PE in New York City is  
8 currently functioning and where the budgetary gaps  
9 lie. A reporting bill will inform where funding  
10 should be directed in order to have the greatest  
11 impact upon student's access to quality PE  
12 instruction. Intro 644 was introduced in February  
13 2015 by Council Member Elizabeth Crowley, and it  
14 already has the bipartisan support of 28 Council  
15 Members, including the Chairs of the Education and  
16 Health Committees. We're grateful for your  
17 leadership on this as well. We urge the Council to  
18 hold hearings and bring this bill to a vote as soon  
19 as possible in order to better inform the  
20 appropriation of the New York City public school  
21 budget. Thank you.

22  
23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. And on  
24 physical education for all, I'm with you. Obviously,  
25 I'm on the bill. In my school we had 44 classes, but

1  
2 we only had 25 gym periods. So you obviously could  
3 not accommodate all those kids, never mind even meet  
4 the state mandate. So we're going to look at this.  
5 We'll hopefully get a hearing at some point in the  
6 future. I don't know exactly when, but we want to do  
7 some more on physical education.

8 ERIN GEORGE: Great. We appreciate it  
9 very much.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you for coming.

11 ERIN GEORGE: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And I want to thank  
13 the panel for coming in, and I'm going to call the  
14 next group up. Thank you. And I'm going to call  
15 some students. If I can just ask the unions to bear  
16 with me, because they have to go home. And so these  
17 are--I hope I get it right--Ariana Jenkins [sp?]. Is  
18 Ariana here? Yeah, oh, okay. Diamond Rivera? And  
19 Ariana is from Bridges After School Union Settlement  
20 and so is Diamond, and Nina Dastur from Union  
21 Settlement, also. Okay, thank you. And I need to  
22 swear you in, so if you'd raise your right hand. Do  
23 you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the  
24 whole truth and nothing but the truth and to answer  
25

1 Council Member questions honestly? Okay, thank you.  
2  
3 Who'd like to start? Okay.

4 NINA DASTUR: Good afternoon.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just pull that mic a  
6 little closer.

7 NINA DASTUR: Good afternoon, Chairperson  
8 Dromm, Council Member Chin. Thank you for the  
9 opportunity to testify today. My name is Nina  
10 Dastur. I'm the Director of Policy and Advocacy at  
11 Union Settlement Association in East Harlem. We are  
12 members of the Lunch for Learning Campaign, and I'm  
13 here today with two of our students, Ariana Jenkins  
14 and Diamond Rivera, from our Bridges After School  
15 Program at Isaac Newton Middle School for Math and  
16 Science. For the last year we've focused our civic  
17 engagement and leadership development program on  
18 supporting the lunch for learning campaign. We  
19 joined the campaign because issues of health,  
20 wellness and food insecurity are so pervasive in our  
21 community, which is marked by high rates of obesity  
22 and diet-related diseases and where too many families  
23 struggle to afford food. We believe that an  
24 appealing, healthy, free school lunch can play a  
25 critical role in addressing all of these issues but

1 we know from a survey that our students did last year  
2 of their peers that the stigma attached to school  
3 lunch was undermining their participation. More than  
4 a third of the students that we surveyed reported  
5 that students were teased and that they believed that  
6 students would be teased for eating school lunch, and  
7 the impact and effects of that stigma were really  
8 striking. In our school where 98 percent of the  
9 students qualified for free school lunch, only 20  
10 percent of the students reported eating it five days  
11 a week, and 42 percent reported that when they  
12 skipped school lunch, they went the whole day without  
13 eating anything. And we all know what impact that  
14 has on their school performance. We were so grateful  
15 for your leadership last year and the support of the  
16 Council in supporting the launch of the Middle School  
17 Free Lunch Initiative, and now we know from the  
18 recent analysis from Community Food Advocates that we  
19 were all right. It was a stunning success. More  
20 students in middle schools are eating school lunch,  
21 and on top of all the other benefits, the city's  
22 actually also benefitting financially, right? This  
23 is a no-brainer. Our students this year did another  
24 survey, and they may talk about it, and only 61  
25

1  
2 percent of their peers were actually aware of the  
3 fact that school lunch is free for students in middle  
4 school. So, we believe that with a really robust  
5 public awareness campaign, those participation  
6 numbers would go even higher. Now, what we know is  
7 that we need to expand to elementary and high school  
8 students, and we hope that the Council will  
9 prioritize the expansion to truly universal free  
10 school lunch in the budget for Fiscal Year 2016. I  
11 want to note that my written testimony is longer and  
12 has more details about the work that we've been doing  
13 and also has statements from other students in our  
14 program who weren't able to come on their field trip  
15 today, but now I want to turn it over to Diamond and  
16 to Ariana to tell you why they believe that the  
17 Council should support universal free school lunch.  
18 Thank you.

19 DIAMOND RIVERA: Good afternoon,  
20 everybody. My name is Diamond Rivera. I go to Isaac  
21 Newton Middle School and I'm in eighth grade. I'm in  
22 the Lunch for Learning Program After School where we  
23 have been working to make school lunch more  
24 satisfying and valuable to students at our school.  
25 Not many students at our school or other New York

1  
2 City schools eat the school lunch and that has a  
3 serious impact on our school work. At my school,  
4 only 50 percent of students eat the school lunch more  
5 than twice a week. This is sad because not many kids  
6 are fortunate enough to be able to bring a nutritious  
7 meal from home. When we talk to Isaac Newton  
8 students, 95 percent said making school lunch free  
9 would be fair and a good idea. However, many  
10 students are still afraid of being teased if they  
11 take it, if they take the school lunch. It's great  
12 that school lunch is free for all middle school  
13 students, but not fair if it isn't for elementary or  
14 high schoolers. I will be in high school next year  
15 and want to have a healthy affordable lunch to get me  
16 through the day. If we make school lunch universally  
17 free, more students will eat it. If we improve how  
18 the food tastes, more students will eat it. And if  
19 more students eat it, then we can remove the stigma  
20 that only poor students eat the school lunch. That  
21 is why it's important to us to make these changes.  
22 Yesterday I was in class and after morning  
23 announcements about school lunch I overheard my  
24 friends say, "You should eat school lunch since it's  
25 free. It's better than spending your money on junk."

1  
2 Then at lunch I saw people I never see eat school  
3 lunch get school lunch and eat it. We hope you will  
4 support our campaign by making school lunch  
5 universally free by putting money in the city budget.  
6 Thank you.

7           ARIANA JENKINS: Good afternoon. My name  
8 is Ariana Jenkins and I'm in eighth grade at Isaac  
9 Newton Middle School. I'm a member of Lunch for  
10 Learning and have been working to understand why  
11 students do or do not eat school lunch. We are here  
12 to present because we want free school lunch for all  
13 and to bring a change to school lunch so that more  
14 students will eat. I recently found out that only 50  
15 percent of the New York City children that are  
16 eligible for free or reduced price lunch actually eat  
17 it. This is upsetting, but I am not surprised. When  
18 the Bridges participants talked to our peers many  
19 didn't eat school lunch because they believed it  
20 wasn't appetizing or that it wasn't cool to eat it.  
21 Many still thought that middle school students had to  
22 pay for it and still spend the day hungry is that. I  
23 think that by making school lunch free for everyone  
24 we can fix this problem. If we also work to improve  
25 the school lunch, adding seasoning and varieties to

1  
2 the food more students will eat it, and school lunch  
3 wouldn't be considered uncool anymore. Today we are  
4 asking you to continue to support our efforts in the  
5 Lunch for Learning Campaign to make school lunch free  
6 for all New York City public school students. Thank  
7 you for having us.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, thank you very  
9 much for coming in. I really appreciate that. I think  
10 that your testimony was really important, and as I  
11 said, there was another group of young women here  
12 prior to your testimony. I think it's probably the  
13 most powerful testimony that we hear, is the impact  
14 that the school lunches have or free school lunches  
15 have on our students. So, I really appreciate you  
16 coming in, and I know you had to wait a while to give  
17 testimony, but I appreciate the fact that you stuck  
18 it out. So, thank you very much for coming in.

19 ARIANA JENKINS: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, Dr. Randi  
21 Herman from the Council for Supervisors and  
22 Administrators, CSA, and Donald Nesbit from Local  
23 372. I think John has been here with us since 10  
24 o'clock this morning. So, he's a real soldier, you  
25 know.

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RANDI HERMAN: Yes, he is.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I need to swear you in. So if you'd raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and to answer Council Member questions honestly?

RANDI HERMAN: I do.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, and Dr. Herman, would you like to start?

RANDI HERMAN: Okay, I'm here representing the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators. My name is Doctor Randi Herman. I am the First Vice President. Just a year ago, Speaker Mark-Viverito said we're still not getting our fair share from the state, and the fair share as we know translates into 2.6 billion dollars in campaign for fiscal equity funds, which would go a very long way in supporting resources to our schools. We continue to stand with the Speaker and the Council in demanding our fair share of the education budget. That said, there's a lot of good news about the Mayor's education initiatives in New York City. The increased focus on parent engagement as positioned education is a priority for New York City families.

1  
2 And the ways in which City Hall and the DOE have  
3 strengthened the partnership between Department of  
4 Education and the Early Childhood Education Centers  
5 across the city ensured a smooth roll out of the UPK  
6 expansion. CSA members rally behind the continued  
7 expansion of after school programming at our middle  
8 schools and applaud the 150 million dollar investment  
9 in the Renewal Schools program. These initiatives  
10 are a benefit to children and families and we support  
11 the Mayor's continued expansion of what works.

12 Chancellor Farina has shown the light on the unmet  
13 needs of our English language learners and students  
14 with special needs and has made significant strides  
15 toward aligning resources and supports in both those  
16 areas. The Chancellor urged principals to hire more  
17 guidance counselors and CSA supports that, too. I  
18 have to pause here to remind us all that teachers of  
19 English language learners, students with special  
20 needs, guidance counselors, teachers of music and  
21 art, science and physical education come with a  
22 significant cost to schools. Additional funding for  
23 the arts, which we know is often the game changer for  
24 our students has to be included on the list of must  
25 haves for schools rather than on the wish list. We

1 must adjust our school budgeting priorities to  
2 support these essential elements of a sound public  
3 education. I'd like to talk for a minute just about  
4 one key component of great leaders in great schools  
5 that's often overlooked, professional development.  
6 The Chancellor knows from experience the value of  
7 professional development. As educators, we move  
8 through stages in our professional careers, and all  
9 of us need to stay current in our practice. New York  
10 City educational leadership requires a continuum of  
11 quality professional development and CSA, through the  
12 Executive Leadership Institute, with consistent  
13 generous support from the City Council has been able  
14 to provide research based professional development  
15 for our members. For the ninth consecutive year,  
16 with funding from the City Council grant and  
17 supplemented with New York State Ed aid to  
18 localities, the extraordinary school-based  
19 intermediate supervisory institute mentoring program  
20 will continue to provide 39 mentors for approximately  
21 245 newly appointed first and second year assistant  
22 principals, CSA directors and assistant directors of  
23 city funded early childhood programs. These 39  
24 mentors continue to engage in their own professional  
25

1  
2 development through ELI so that they can be as  
3 effective as they work with school leaders. You have  
4 a handout there with specific details about the  
5 program and who has been served and in what way. The  
6 City Council has consistently recognized and  
7 supported our efforts. You've provided funding for  
8 the continued professional development of school  
9 leaders. We need your support now more than ever  
10 before. The initiatives from City Hall and the  
11 Department of Education have generated increased  
12 demands for professional development for school  
13 leaders. It's our hope that the Council will  
14 maintain or even consider increasing funding for the  
15 Executive Leadership Institutes so that we can  
16 continue to meet the needs of the leaders of the New  
17 York City public schools. Thank you, Council Member  
18 Dromm and Council Member Chin for giving me the  
19 opportunity to testify this afternoon.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I have to say,  
21 Margaret Chin has been here since 10 o'clock this  
22 morning, too, so she deserves extra credit on that.  
23 Doctor Herman, I heard that you mentioned in your  
24 testimony, but I don't think it's in your written  
25

1  
2 testimony, a reference to ELI, to the Educators  
3 Leadership Institute?

4 RANDI HERMAN: The educational  
5 leadership, the Executive Leadership Institute.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: The Executive  
7 Leadership--

8 RANDI HERMAN: [interposing] It's in the  
9 written testimony, but I brought today handouts for  
10 you so that you could see exactly what programs  
11 they've delivered to how many people, the topics,  
12 subject areas, and how many people they've touched?

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do we have that?

14 RANDI HERMAN: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good we got it.  
16 So that's one thing we're very interested in doing,  
17 because I think we increased the allotment from  
18 300,000 to 600,000 last year, and we need those  
19 statistics so that we go into budget negotiations, we  
20 know what we're talking about, so we continue that  
21 program.

22 RANDI HERMAN: And let us know if you  
23 need any more about the current initiatives and how  
24 many demands we have from the DOE to provide  
25 additional services and from our members.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: You have additional  
3 demands for?

4 RANDI HERMAN: For professional  
5 development from our members based on the new  
6 initiatives. They find they have specific needs in  
7 professional development so that they can meet these  
8 new initiatives.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Very good. Okay,  
10 that's good to know. I mentioned to the Chancellor  
11 near the end of her testimony about the possibility  
12 of looking at Early Childhood teachers younger than  
13 the four year olds, and I wanted to just raise that  
14 question. Do you have any ideas or thoughts about  
15 that that you'd like to share with us? I mean,  
16 they're all Early Childhood teachers?

17 RANDI HERMAN: They're all Early Childhood  
18 teachers. There are issues related to pay parity.  
19 There are issues related to stability. There are  
20 issues related to just workplace problems that  
21 generate from the salary disparities. So, I think  
22 through collective bargaining we can address a lot of  
23 that, and that's supposed to be coming soon. The  
24 city's contract rounds are getting closer to the  
25 Early Childhood contracts. As you know, they're in

1  
2 the service contract category. So, those teachers  
3 deserve every penny they get, but the higher we raise  
4 that salary, if we don't balance it out with the  
5 raises for those who supervise them, we've just  
6 created another area of discontent.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So I said to the  
8 Chancellor that there are some teachers in four year  
9 old pre-k classrooms who are making more than the  
10 directors of their centers, and that that--

11 RANDI HERMAN: [interposing] That's  
12 correct.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: needs to be rectified.  
14 I also mentioned to the Chancellor that there are  
15 teachers in three year old classrooms who are  
16 qualified just as the same as the four year old room  
17 who are being paid much less than the teachers of the  
18 four year old room. So, I hope that as you go into  
19 contract negotiations this will be negotiated out,  
20 and ultimately, I really believe that all educators  
21 should be under one department and that's Department  
22 of Education.

23 RANDI HERMAN: We couldn't agree more.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, great. Thank  
25 you. And I think we're going to go to Donald.

1  
2 DONALD NESBIT: Good afternoon Education  
3 Committee Chair Dromm and Finance Chair--Committee  
4 Chair Ferreras and distinguished members of the  
5 committee. My name is Donald Nesbit and I'm the  
6 Executive Vice President of Local 372. I would like  
7 to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony  
8 on the Mayor's proposed budget for 2016 for  
9 education. As Executive Vice President of Local 372,  
10 I represent close to 23,000 Department of Education  
11 employees who perform essential services for the  
12 children of New York City. Most Local 372 members  
13 work in the communities in which they live, spend  
14 money, pay taxes, and vote. They not only take their  
15 job seriously, they take them personally with a very  
16 strong sense of commitment. Our members provide the  
17 support services that are essential to making our 1.2  
18 million school children learning ready. I want to  
19 commend the mayor for his vision and bold reforms  
20 that brought thousands of UPK seats to kids across  
21 the city, for making municipal ID's available to  
22 hard-working immigrants, and additionally, affordable  
23 housing to New Yorkers. I also commend the mayor for  
24 creating a pilot program that would bring universal  
25 lunch to middle schools and expanding breakfast in

1 the classroom. But most importantly, we want to  
2 thank the Mayor for not making cuts to the education  
3 budget. In previous years, school leaders dealt with  
4 severe budget cuts and had to make tough choices as  
5 to what programs and services would be eliminated in  
6 an attempt to balance the school budget.

7 Essentially, they had to do more with less. In an  
8 attempt to balance a school budget, school leaders  
9 were forced to eliminate valuable staffing positions  
10 and programs that help keep students engaged. SAPIS,  
11 Substance Abuse Prevention Intervention Specialists,  
12 work with students and their families to keep our  
13 children from being at risk of drug, alcohol abuse  
14 and related violence. Local 372 SAPIS specialized in  
15 substance abuse prevention, anti-bullying, violence  
16 prevention, confidence building, goal setting, and  
17 gang prevention to just name a few. Our 243 SAPIS  
18 service all schools in all 32 districts and all  
19 students from K to 12. They are from the community,  
20 serving the most vulnerable. There is a dire need  
21 for one SAPIS in every New York City school.

22 However, at this point, we are requesting funding for  
23 an additional 500 SAPIS, which would bring us to  
24 staffing levels of 2002. In 2006 there were 502  
25

1  
2 SAPIS servicing all five boroughs. As of today, there  
3 are only 243. There are 1.2 million school children  
4 in our school system in New York City, over 1,200  
5 schools in New York City, multiple schools in single  
6 school buildings, and only 243 SAPIS workers. This is  
7 one SAPIS counselor in five schools. This is  
8 unacceptable, especially in light of recent uptake in  
9 the use of alcohol, illegal and prescription drugs.  
10 Moreover, we have seen the proliferation of synthetic  
11 drugs, epidemic level use of heroin, and the  
12 introduction of alcohol use at a younger age. With  
13 the pressures of social media, children need all the  
14 support they can get to stay away from the increased  
15 social pressures. Parent coordinators, there should  
16 be a parent coordinator in every school. Are you  
17 aware that parent coordinators are not required to be  
18 in every New York City high school? Citywide, we  
19 have 737 parent coordinators and community  
20 associates. A PC plays a key role in not only  
21 keeping parents informed, but serve as a liaison  
22 between the school's administration and parents.  
23 2002, the Mayor and the Chancellor created the  
24 position of parent coordinator to ensure that there  
25 was someone in each school directly responsible for

1 supporting families. Parent coordinators assist  
2 parents with language barriers, handle HRA paperwork,  
3 work along with city agencies to provide services  
4 directly to parents and work with adult and last  
5 chance learners. Parent coordinator's salaries are  
6 set by the principal, but can make--but they can make  
7 a minimum of 34,000 with a Bachelor's Degree. Parent  
8 Coordinators have become a necessary and vital part  
9 of the school system after mayoral control took  
10 effect. They help parents feel more comfortable in  
11 navigating what can be an intimidating, bureaucratic  
12 environment and force the greater parental  
13 involvement in the education of New York City's  
14 school children. They maintain contact with larger  
15 communities such as faith based groups who provide  
16 assistance on issues such as healthcare, after school  
17 activities and mentoring. Many go beyond the call of  
18 duty every day to protect our children, help our  
19 families to find new homes after losing their  
20 apartments and helping parents to get jobs. Our  
21 schools cannot run smoothly without parental  
22 involvement. Parent coordinators are crucial in  
23 giving parents a say, and respectfully request 500  
24 more parent coordinators.  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Mr. Nesbit, can you  
3 just summarize for us?

4 DONALD NESBIT: Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: What I'll do is--  
6 because I have some questions I want to ask you as  
7 well and some information about questions that I did  
8 ask the Chancellor, which will probably get at the  
9 heart of the matter as well. So, if you could just  
10 quickly summarize?

11 DONALD NESBIT: Okay, I'm just going to go  
12 into the conclusion. In conclusion, the job of  
13 school leaders and teachers is to provide the  
14 instruction, support and resources that children need  
15 and demand. However, it is a moral obligation of our  
16 schools to provide adequate school staffing in order  
17 for schools to function. Local 372 members are  
18 essential to the running of New York City school--the  
19 New York City school system. They allow teachers and  
20 administrators to do their job and provide services  
21 in schools that keep our children off the streets and  
22 out of jails that will send them to college and into  
23 the workforce that will allow them to grow into  
24 adulthood with the equality and opportunity they  
25 deserve. Once again, we ask for funding for

1 additional Local 372 supportive staffing in schools.

2 Thank you.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Great. So, earlier  
5 today when the Chancellor was here I did bring up the  
6 issue of parent coordinators and asked her to  
7 consider having one parent coordinator in every  
8 school. I think the problem exists mostly in high  
9 schools, and I said to her, which was what was told  
10 to me by a principal actually, that you have to stay  
11 on top of those kids even more sometimes when they're  
12 in high school rather than when they are young, and  
13 to facilitate that type of communication is really  
14 important to have somebody at the school level who  
15 can work with parents. So we did address that. She  
16 did not give us an affirmative answer, but I said I  
17 would like to speak with her further about that issue  
18 because I believe deeply in those parent coordinators  
19 as being somebody that works closely with the  
20 principal to bring those parents into the school.  
21 She did speak in terms of parental engagement in the  
22 schools, but I think that piece of it is very, very  
23 important. The other piece that we got to--well, of  
24 course, we spoke a lot about universal school lunch,  
25 but in that discussion we talked about some of the

1  
2 costs that might be involved. And in previous  
3 conversations that I had with you we acknowledged  
4 that there's a need for additional school lunch  
5 employees as well. Have you had any meetings with  
6 the lunch people who testified here before, universal  
7 free lunch people, to determine what the cost might  
8 be so that we can get a number to the Chancellor in  
9 terms of first middle school, but then universal free  
10 lunch overall?

11 DONALD NESBIT: Well, we've had like  
12 coalition meetings, but we haven't had one on one  
13 meetings. We look to do that in the near future.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Because one of the  
15 things that I'm trying to get to push this issue  
16 forward is just a cost estimate, because the  
17 Chancellor put up the issue of the cost as being one  
18 of the factors that prevents them from moving  
19 forward. I think, philosophically we agree that, you  
20 know, universal lunch is the way to go on this issue,  
21 but she says that there is a need for these  
22 additional workers, and I can understand that as  
23 well, and I agree, and I think that we're  
24 understaffed as it is. So, if we could try to come  
25 up with some type of a figure on that, I think that

1  
2 would be very beneficial to the discussion moving  
3 forward.

4 DONALD NESBIT: Okay, well as a estimate,  
5 if we could do some multiplication, the average  
6 school lunch worker who works four or five hours a  
7 day, they only make about 15 to 20,000 dollars a  
8 year.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Amazing.

10 DONALD NESBIT: So, you add that times  
11 500 that we're requesting for I think is around 10  
12 million or so.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And then the question  
14 was raised that they have already received six  
15 million dollars in funding or will receive that very  
16 shortly if they haven't actually received it to  
17 offset some of those costs. So, I think going into  
18 the executive budget, that's one of the things that  
19 we want to look at and ask, how much additional  
20 funding would be necessary, would be needed to you  
21 know, make it universal, truly universal for  
22 everybody going forward. The other issue of major  
23 importance with me in regard to the members of your  
24 union are the school crossing guards. Now, I had a  
25 terrible incident about a week ago in my district

1 where a school crossing guard, a beloved school  
2 crossing guard, was hit by a car and critically  
3 injured. School crossing guards put their lives on  
4 the line every single day for our students. I  
5 understand that you're talking with the  
6 Administration and you may not be able to tell too  
7 much about what's going on there, but from what I  
8 understand, school crossing guards are paid  
9 approximately 10 dollars an hour if I'm not mistaken.  
10 Is that correct?

12 DONALD NESBIT: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And we are  
14 understaffed in terms of our school crossing guards?

15 DONALD NESBIT: Yes, there are 325  
16 vacancies. They are not people coming forward to  
17 fill out applications because at 10 dollars an hour  
18 you can't afford to live in New York City.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And irregular hours in  
20 the sense they come for two hours in the morning, two  
21 at lunch, and one in the afternoon?

22 DONALD NESBIT: Yes, and also in the  
23 citywide contract, there's a cap on their hours where  
24 they can't work more than 25 hours a week.

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And are there any  
3 discussion to raise that cap going on, or is that an  
4 objective of yours?

5 DONALD NESBIT: Well, it is an objective  
6 from our end. We are in discussions with the  
7 Administration and it seems like the city's  
8 Administration is geared towards lifting these  
9 things. There was a conversation with the Police  
10 Commissioner on that issue of lifting the cap, but I  
11 think he wants the monetary figures attached to that.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: We always want money.

13 RANDI HERMAN: If I may?

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes.

15 RANDI HERMAN: Crossing guards is a  
16 subject near and dear to a principal's heart. Many  
17 of our schools had crossing guards who retired. They  
18 weren't replaced. In addition, please understand that  
19 the principal doesn't get the job posting for  
20 crossing guard to circulate within the school  
21 community. From what I was given to understand that  
22 posting is at the local precinct, and honestly, the  
23 person who sees that bulletin board is not the member  
24 of your school community that you would encourage to  
25 take that job. And we have asked repeatedly for the

1  
2 principal to get the posting so that it can be  
3 circulated among the school community and among the  
4 families, because that's who you want out there with  
5 those children.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So what is the number  
7 we're down by?

8 DONALD NESBIT: Well, there's 325  
9 vacancies here in the city. Like she had mentioned,  
10 our biggest concern is advertisement. How are you  
11 advertising that there's job openings when a police  
12 officers, when you're advertising for the police  
13 officer job you see it on the train, you see it at  
14 the bus stop. You see it. It's in the newspaper.  
15 However, you never see a school crossing guard  
16 posting anywhere. The advertisement is last.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Would--if you had  
18 those numbers increased, would that give a school  
19 crossing guard for every school in the city?

20 RANDI HERMAN: No.

21 DONALD NESBIT: No, we'll still be  
22 limited. We still wouldn't have enough, especially  
23 on the priority corners like Northern Boulevard where  
24 the school crossing guard was actually hit. Some  
25 corners need two or possibly three school crossing

1  
2 guards. They're just that big, in locations like  
3 Queens Boulevard. You think of Flatbush Avenue in  
4 Brooklyn. You need more than one crossing guard  
5 there, and some of those corners don't even have one.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I know in my district,  
7 what used to actually be part of my district--my  
8 district still borders on it at Junction Boulevard  
9 and the Long Island Expressway. If you can imagine,  
10 there's a four corner, or actually an eight corner  
11 intersection there and kids have to cross under the  
12 LIE on the service road of the LIE, and for years  
13 there was no school crossing guard there. Really  
14 amazing. You know, one of the mayor's priorities is  
15 Vision Zero, and so I think that we need to make this  
16 a big part of that program and ensuring the safety of  
17 our students on the way to school is a priority for  
18 everyone in the school community.

19 RANDI HERMAN: And particularly with the  
20 expansion of the Community Schools Initiative,  
21 schools are going to be open longer hours. The  
22 building will be open longer hours. You'll have  
23 families coming and going at other hours. You need  
24 somebody there at that intersection.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So we are working  
3 with NYPD and the DOE in terms of trying to get them  
4 to share those postings. I'm not at privilege right  
5 now to say exactly what it is that we're doing,  
6 etcetera, so forth and so on, but this is a common  
7 sense approach that I think they need to take.

8 DONALD NESBIT: If I may, Councilman, I  
9 was at a safety meeting in Brooklyn about a month and  
10 a half ago and there was some principals there who  
11 were requesting that they get a school crossing guard  
12 at their junior high schools, and the NYPD's response  
13 was, "Well, we don't put school crossing guards at  
14 junior high schools." And that was the first time I  
15 actually I started--if I could remember growing up,  
16 that I actually started to going to school on my own,  
17 and I went with my friends and we fooled around in  
18 junior high school. So, I think there's more of a  
19 need in junior high school also for a school crossing  
20 guard to be there, but I think the NYPD, the response  
21 that day was--and there was principals asking. They  
22 were begging for school crossing guards, and NYPD's  
23 response was, "Junior high school, there's not a need  
24 for it."  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, that's very  
3 disturbing to hear, because on Northern Boulevard and  
4 80<sup>th</sup> Street in December of 2013, perhaps, maybe 2012  
5 I had a 12 year old boy killed because there was no  
6 crossing guard there. And now, I believe that there  
7 is a crossing guard there, but it shouldn't take the  
8 death of a child or the death of a crossing guard to  
9 really take a good look at this policy and see what  
10 we can do to improve the situation.

11 RANDI HERMAN: And also, we have to  
12 remember, children who are coming to school very  
13 often have their earbuds in or they're texting while  
14 they're walking, and they're not paying attention to  
15 traffic.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, this boy had  
17 just gone to the deli to get his little snack. I,  
18 you know--terrible.

19 RANDI HERMAN: Shouldn't happen.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: No, it's always  
21 terrible. So, anyway, thank you. And I really  
22 appreciate you coming in and giving your testimony.

23 DONALD NESBIT: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright, okay. Casey  
25 Foster [sp?] from Urban Youth Collaborative. Latonia

1 [sp?] Haldip [sp?] from Make the Road, Matthew Evans,  
2 Urban Youth Collaborative Future of Tomorrow, Onyx  
3 Walker [sp?], Urban Youth Collaborative as well,  
4 Ebony Towns [sp?] Urban Youth Collaborative, Youth  
5 Ministries for Peace and Justice, Latrell Stone,  
6 Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice Urban Youth  
7 Collaborative. And thank you all for waiting. I see  
8 you sitting back there, and it's been a while for  
9 you, a long hearing as well. Certainly been patient  
10 and we want to hear your testimony. And we have one  
11 final panel after this. So, if you intend to speak  
12 and you have not filled out one of these forms,  
13 please do so or forever hold your breath. Thank you.  
14 I have to swear you all in. If you'd raise your  
15 right hand please? Do you solemnly swear or affirm  
16 to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but  
17 the truth and to answer Council Member questions  
18 honestly?  
19

20 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

21 UNIDENTIFIED: I do.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

23 CASEY FOSTER: So, I want to thank

24 Council Member Dromm for continuing to be a advocate  
25 for all students in New York City, and I know many of

1  
2 you up there have probably been there since 10,  
3 Council Member Chin is one [sic], so we want to thank  
4 you for being here for us. And I'm going to turn it  
5 over to our youth leaders.

6 MILTYANA HOLDIB: Sorry. Good afternoon.  
7 My name is Miltyana Holdib [sp?]. I'm a junior at  
8 the Brooklyn School for Math and Research in Bushwick  
9 Campus and a youth leader at our Student Success  
10 Center. Youth leaders are responsible for helping our  
11 peers fill out college applications for SUNY and CUNY  
12 applications. They're also responsible for finding  
13 scholarships, completing the free application for  
14 federal student aid, and promoting college going  
15 [sic] culture. The Student Success Center is more  
16 than just a college office. It's a safe place that  
17 students feel like we own a part of and where we can  
18 help each other reach our dreams. College is a  
19 gateway to which your future holds. For example,  
20 getting a degree can open you up to several different  
21 opportunities that can benefit you in the future.  
22 Just getting a high school diploma doesn't grant you  
23 such opportunities. Some schools in our city have  
24 one counselor trying to help support 500 or more  
25 students go through the college process. By putting

1  
2 a Student Success Center in more high schools, that  
3 provides more support to guidance counselors and puts  
4 people--and puts the people most invested in their  
5 education at the center of a building towards a  
6 college going culture. Also, as a student helping a  
7 student on a peer to peer level that student would  
8 seem more comfortable and easier to communicate with  
9 than adults, because you're in the same age group as  
10 that student. It also makes communication easier to  
11 communicate with YL's about simple questions which  
12 they can ask during school hours to find out basic  
13 information about colleges or the college classes.  
14 This is because youth leaders are knowledgeable,  
15 because we have attended summer training on how to  
16 help students throughout the college process. Having  
17 a Student Success Center is beneficial in every way  
18 the school students and our futures, but right now,  
19 we still have many students that aren't supported  
20 because their school doesn't have the resources to  
21 help them. We should scale up Student Success  
22 Centers as one solution to help more students enroll  
23 in college.

24 LATRELL STONE: We are a coalition of  
25 organizations led by youth that come together to

1 fight for racial justice in our public school system.  
2 Every year, New York City dedicates at least 300  
3 million dollars towards over policing and excluding  
4 black, Latino, LGBTQ and students with disabilities  
5 through a broken windows approach to school  
6 discipline. There is no evidence that heavily  
7 investing in police in schools create a safer  
8 learning environment or contributes to the overall  
9 improvement of the school. Research shows that the  
10 affect is actually the opposite. Students do not  
11 feel safer and there is no improvement in the  
12 learning environment or achievement. What happens in  
13 those schools are students are more likely to be  
14 arrested or given a summons and all students feel  
15 disengaged and disconnected from the school. We  
16 continue annually spend 300 dollars per student on  
17 creating what feels like a jail environment, and  
18 going into the 2015 to 2016 school year it looks like  
19 we are going to spend 1.2 million of restorative  
20 justice training for educators and administrators,  
21 roughly one dollar per student. It should not come  
22 to surprise as anyone that black and Latino students  
23 make up 89 percent of all students suspended and  
24 arrested in our schools and 93 percent all youth in  
25

1 the juvenile justice system. This is the return on  
2 our investment that we should respect--expect. There  
3 are many educators and students leading the fight to  
4 dismantle school to prison pipelines, and we believe  
5 the Administration fully believes in the need to  
6 change our approach to the school discipline, but we  
7 are not going to build the buy-in [sic] we need and  
8 fully support schools to successfully change their  
9 approach without fully investing in additional staff  
10 and comprehensive school-wide training and  
11 restorative practices for all school-based staff. As  
12 black and Latino graduation rates have continued to  
13 go over the last several years, we have yet to see  
14 the school district develop a comprehensive plan to  
15 equitably support all students, especially students  
16 in historically under-resourced schools due to  
17 college exploration process. Seventy percent of all  
18 youth in New York City that do not attend college or  
19 employed have a high school diploma. Our benchmark  
20 for success must go beyond getting students to  
21 graduate. We have high schools that have one to 700  
22 guidance counselor to student ratios. What are we  
23 going to do to address these inequalities? It is not  
24 enough to acknowledge that schools are inequitably  
25

1  
2 resourced. Where is the plan to systematically  
3 readdress these inequalities? Thank you.

4 JULIAN THOMPSON: Okay. I will be  
5 speaking on behalf of Ebony Maria [sp?], another  
6 member of my organization. I am Julian Thompson of  
7 Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice and the Urban  
8 Youth Collaborative. We need the Department of  
9 Education to fully invest in getting us to college.  
10 New York City's graduation rates are going up, but  
11 many of us are not receiving the kind of support we  
12 need to successfully enroll and enter college. I am  
13 lucky because I go to high school where we have a  
14 college center where counselors help us through the  
15 college process all the way from taking the PSAT to  
16 filling out the FASFA to writing our personal  
17 statements. It is the same kind of support that our  
18 schools provide through Student Success Centers or  
19 having dedicated college counselors, but the truth is  
20 there are still too many students that don't have  
21 support that don't know if they're on track with the  
22 credits to graduate, that don't know about taking the  
23 PSAT or how many times they should take the SAT's.  
24 Right now, we are investing in students like high  
25 school graduation as the finish line. It is not the

1  
2 finish line for us. It is the beginning of our  
3 future, the beginning of our future of the people  
4 that are going to run this city. Investing in  
5 Student Success Centers, college counselors and  
6 Summer to Bridge [sic] College programs is an  
7 investment in the future of our city. Thank you.

8 MATTHEW EVANS: Good evening. My name is  
9 Matthew--huh? Oh. My name is Matthew Evans and I'm a  
10 youth leader with Future of Tomorrow and Urban Youth  
11 Collaborative. This fall I'll be a freshman enrolling  
12 in college. I'm a first generation student in my  
13 family. Going to college I thought was like a  
14 fantasy, but I never thought it would be a reality.  
15 I walked into the Student Success Center ran by  
16 Cypress Hill Local Development Corporation on the  
17 Franklin K. Lane [sic] Campus and was wondering,  
18 like, who's going to help me, because guidance  
19 counselors are not prevalent in schools. There's so  
20 many students. During my time in my high school I  
21 don't remember meeting with my guidance counselor to  
22 discuss college. In a school with so many students,  
23 like I said, he was always busy and never had enough  
24 time to provide the intense one on one training with  
25 the students during the college process, which is

1  
2 very important. I'm thankful as--I'm thankful as I'm  
3 getting ready to graduate. I got accepted to so many  
4 schools. I don't think I would be there. I don't  
5 think I would be accepted without the Student Success  
6 Center. But without the Student Success Center,  
7 where would I be? What happened to all the other  
8 schools that doesn't have a Student Success Center,  
9 when they have that one guidance counselor? Where  
10 are they at? Where are they at? It's sad. It's sad  
11 to say that these schools without the Student Success  
12 Centers, they're--these kids are not going to  
13 college. I wouldn't be where I am now without the  
14 Student Success Center. It's important to invest in  
15 Student Success Centers and other programs working in  
16 the city. Almost 50 percent of all students that  
17 apply to college in the fall don't end up going to  
18 college that year. We need more money for pre-k. We  
19 need more money for after school programs. We need  
20 more money for junior high school. We also need  
21 money for what happens after high school. And right  
22 now, it feels like the students in high school are  
23 being forgotten. Thank you.

24 ONYX WALKER: Good afternoon. My name is  
25 Onyx Walker. I'm a youth leader with Future of

1  
2 Tomorrow and the Urban Youth Collaborative. The  
3 Department of Education should invest in restorative  
4 justice. It has been proven over and over again that  
5 suspensions and zero tolerance policies are not  
6 working. They have instead resulted in schools  
7 pushing out students with disabilities and students  
8 of color like myself and Matthew. Our Mayor and  
9 Chancellor have said that we have to start doing  
10 things differently, but when will we invest in a new  
11 approach? In my high school we had a peer mediation  
12 program a few years ago. A teacher volunteered time  
13 to be in charge of running the program with the  
14 student leaders. Due to her being called to perform  
15 other duties in the school and a lack of funding, we  
16 had to discontinue our peer mediation program. Many  
17 of the high schools that have been trying to start  
18 peer mediation programs and other restorative justice  
19 programs have had the same thing happen. We can't  
20 expect to do it the right way if schools don't have  
21 resources to continue doing the work right. If the  
22 education budget provides money into restorative  
23 programs, we would be able to hire a restorative  
24 coordinator and get peer mediation back into our  
25 schools. Restorative practices have been proven to

1  
2 reduce suspensions, repair relationships and build  
3 community in schools. There is research coming out  
4 that shows it is having a positive effect on  
5 graduation rates, attendance and other learning  
6 outcomes. When we make priorities, we find it the  
7 funding to make things happen. When we hear there is  
8 no money in the budget for restorative justice but  
9 there's money for testing and there's money for the  
10 NYPD and there's money for other programs, we hear  
11 ending the school to prison pipeline is not a  
12 priority. Thank you for hearing my testimony.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.  
14 Where am I hearing that clapping? Yes. Give them a  
15 round of applause.

16 [applause]

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: They deserve it.

18 UNIDENTIFIED: I would just--a couple of  
19 the numbers that we're still unclear on, we know  
20 annually, Latrell said, we spend about 300 million on  
21 NYPD. That goes directly from the Department of  
22 Education to the NYPD. What we've seen so far in  
23 this budget coming up is that there's going to be 1.2  
24 million spent on training schools and restorative  
25 practices, and not in a school-wide training, but a

1 couple staff members from a school to get training.  
2  
3 And so, I think when we juxtapose those two numbers,  
4 right, the 300 million for security and policing and  
5 1.2 million for restorative justice, I think for us  
6 that's just not an acceptable way to go into the new  
7 school year.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just checking the  
9 figures on that and looking at that and highlighting  
10 that as well, I couldn't agree more. I've been at a  
11 number of rallies with your organization as well  
12 prior to being elected as Chair of the Committee, and  
13 it does leave one to see it's a warped sense of  
14 priorities when we have more school safety agents  
15 than we do guidance counselors in our schools, and  
16 when we see the budget for those officers versus the  
17 budget for restorative justice type programs. But  
18 since I've been elected Chair of this committee, that  
19 has been a priority for us, and I think at almost  
20 every meeting that I've had, because I meet fairly  
21 regularly with the Chancellor, that is something that  
22 we've been pushing on. I think philosophically also  
23 she's there with us on that issue.

24 UNIDENTIFIED: Absolutely.  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And she has begun to  
3 institute some changes in the system to make that a  
4 reality. Now, we weren't very happy with the overall  
5 change in the discipline plans. I think many of the  
6 advocates wanted to see more there as well, and I  
7 think we should still continue to advocate for that,  
8 but there have been some changes. But I do want to  
9 thank you, Casey, for always bringing people in or  
10 for young people coming in with you to really make us  
11 realize the impact that these policies have on actual  
12 human lives. And that to me is the greatest impact  
13 that we can have. So, I want to thank all of the  
14 young men that you brought with you and the young  
15 woman as well who is here. But let me just ask them  
16 a couple of questions, too, because you know, some of  
17 those changes have begun to take effect in the  
18 schools. Like, now the Chancellor's been talking a  
19 little bit about the retraining of the school safety  
20 agents. Have any of the young people here begun to  
21 see any change in the approach or the attitude of the  
22 school safety officers?

23 UNIDENTIFIED: So, I'm going to--Onyx,  
24 you should stay there, because their organization has  
25 actually started these youth based training for the

1 school safety agents in their school in Franklin K.  
2 Lane [sic], and so they can talk about, you know, the  
3 training that you've been doing at your school and  
4 what effect it's having. And this isn't--this is not  
5 the training that the school safety agent officers  
6 are doing. Their organization has actually started  
7 to train the school safety agents at their school.

8  
9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And which  
10 organization?

11 UNIDENTIFIED: Future of Tomorrow Cypress  
12 Hills Local Development Corporation.

13 ONYX WALKER: Okay, we've spoke with a  
14 few school safety agent officers.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Can you just speak up  
16 a little bit?

17 ONYX WALKER: We spoke with a few school  
18 safety agent officers, and I think like the problem  
19 with the--it was just communication, like a block in  
20 the barrier between the two. So, all it took was I  
21 guess a little bit of understanding, meeting, some  
22 one on ones, and I guess the level of understanding  
23 that we have for one another, it ends up rising. So,  
24 there's a better communication with all the students

1  
2 and the school safety agents in the past few months  
3 anyways.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: You know, when I--I  
5 was a teacher for 25 years, and I had run in's with  
6 school safety agents in my school, believe it or not  
7 in my own school, who actually asked me for  
8 identification before they would let me in the  
9 building, and I was like, "Wait a minute. I'm the  
10 UFT Chapter leader here, you know?" I believe deeply  
11 in what you just said. I think that when we can get  
12 our agents to look at people as human beings it makes  
13 a huge difference, and I think communication  
14 facilitates that, and so I'm glad to hear that. And  
15 you feel that that's going well on your level?  
16 That's at Franklin K. Lane?

17 ONYX WALKER: Uh-hm, yeah.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: High School? Do you  
19 both go to Franklin K. Lane?

20 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes, sir.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And you agree?

22 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes, sir.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Are you part of the  
24 program there as well?

25 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes, sir.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good. How about  
3 the other folks?

4 CASEY FOSTER: Anyone else want to talk  
5 about what it's--

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing]  
7 Anything going on in your schools?

8 CASEY FOSTER: Changes with the SSA's?

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Any changes with  
10 school safety agents?

11 LATRELL STONE: Well, the school I attend  
12 is East Bronx Academy, and the whole relationship  
13 between the students and the school safety agents  
14 sort of like changed. Say about three years ago, the  
15 school safety agents would be very handsy [sic] and  
16 would be quick to like grab a hold of students, and  
17 the students wouldn't really feel safe when the  
18 student safety agents would do that, because it  
19 almost feels like they're attacking or just  
20 constricting them, but now say like today in 2015,  
21 the school safety agents will only grab a student if  
22 like really, really necessary. Otherwise, it's like  
23 more of a delicate approach, per say. Like, they  
24 will just try to calm the student down, but if the  
25 students showing like no stopping, they would have to

1  
2 go on for several minutes before the student school  
3 safety agents will really do anything.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So on the other side  
5 of the issue, do you see any increase in terms of  
6 kids that are acting out because they think it might  
7 be easier?

8 LATRELL STONE: No, they are not.  
9 They're not acting out [sic].

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: You think kids respect  
11 the respect, so to speak?

12 LATRELL STONE: Repeat that.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: That kids respect the  
14 idea that school safety officers are giving them more  
15 respect?

16 LATRELL STONE: Yes, that's correct.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Good.

18 CASEY FOSTER: Onyx, were you going to  
19 say something?

20 ONYX WALKER: No, I was just going to  
21 agree with--

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] You want  
23 to what, agree?

24 ONYX WALKER: I was just going to agree  
25 with what he said.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Agree?

ONYX WALKER: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

CASEY FOSTER: We do--and I'm not sure what it is in the budget, but I believe--so they've extended the training for school safety agents by I think by about two weeks, and part of the training I think they're now going to be offered is collaborative problem solving. Which is, you know, we actually commend. It's a very, I think, effective way of de-escalating issues and building better relationships in schools.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright. And just I'm curious to know, this young man here, I'm sorry I didn't get your name in the black hoodie. Matthew?

MATTHEW EVANS: Me?

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yeah, you, with the New York Yankees cap on.

MATTHEW EVANS: Oh, yeah, my name is Matthew.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Where are you thinking about going to college?

MATTHEW EVANS: I'm going to SUNY Cobleskill [sic].

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, very good.

3 MATTHEW EVANS: Yeah, I made up my mind.

4 On the regards of the--yeah, like I feel like now  
5 that I'm leaving there's a whole--there's going to be  
6 generations and generations going to my school. My  
7 family went--my family, my uncles and auntees [sic]  
8 went to Franklin K. Lane and it's changed so much.  
9 Like, I want the SSA's to be more respectful, which  
10 they are now, and I feel like now I'm making a  
11 difference and leaving my mark and leaving my legacy  
12 there.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, thank you for  
14 your story. How did you manage to get, you know, to  
15 the point where now you're going to college? You did  
16 that mostly on your own?

17 MATTHEW EVANS: The Student Success  
18 Center helped me with everything. It's a very good  
19 program.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

21 CASEY FOSTER: So, we have about--there  
22 are about nine Student Success Centers on high school  
23 campus, including Fannie Lou Hamer in the Bronx,  
24 Franklin K. Lane, Bushwick, and the Taft campus in  
25 the Bronx, and because there are four or five schools

1  
2 in all those campuses, they serve about 17 schools.  
3 But actually, Cypress Hill's also runs a middle  
4 school Student Success Center, which supports  
5 students with making the high school choice, which we  
6 know is a very difficult choice for families,  
7 especially families that don't have the kind of  
8 knowledge and social capital that other families may  
9 have, and what high school you go to in New York City  
10 is actually the biggest indicator of whether or not  
11 you go to college after high school. And that right  
12 now the Department of Education dedicates through  
13 post-secondary planning office, they dedicate 600,000  
14 dollars to running Student Success Centers. And  
15 students that work in them, they get a stipend during  
16 the year. They're trained by CUNY over the summer in  
17 an intensive five week course on how to be a college  
18 advisor. Under the last Speaker, the City Council  
19 also used to provide funding for Student Success  
20 Centers in schools, but we no longer receive that  
21 funding.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, you lost it  
23 last year?

24 CASEY FOSTER: Yes.

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And you're receiving  
3 now 600,000?

4 CASEY FOSTER: Post-secondary planning  
5 and Department of Education commits 600--they have  
6 600,000 committed last year--

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] They  
8 have--

9 CASEY FOSTER: at least 600,000 committed  
10 this year as well.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good. Thanks for  
12 those figures too. It's important for us to look at  
13 that. Alright. Thank you very much. I'm going to  
14 call the next panel. Thank you for coming in. Thank  
15 you for waiting. Thank you. Good luck.

16 [applause]

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright. These guys  
18 really get the star for waiting for last. Beth  
19 Broderick, the Center for Court Innovation. Looking  
20 forward to hearing what you have to say. Eric Pryor,  
21 the Center for Arts Education, the same. New York  
22 Immigration Coalition, Max Ahmed. Max, you've been  
23 here a long time, too. Kim Sykes, New York  
24 Immigration Coalition. Same thing. And Wendy  
25 Chapman, Build Schools Now. Okay, can I ask you all

1 to raise your right hand so I can swear you in?

2 Thank you. Do you solemnly swear or affirm to tell  
3 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth  
4 and to answer Council Member questions honestly?  
5

6 Very good. Thank you. Who'd like to start? Over  
7 here, alright. Okay, yep.

8 ERIC PRYOR: Yes. Good afternoon. I'm  
9 Eric Pryor, the Executive Director at the Center for  
10 Arts Education. I want to thank Chair Dromm and all  
11 the members of the Education Committee for the  
12 opportunity to testify today on the city's budget. I  
13 want to start by thanking you all for your leadership  
14 in making arts education a priority in last year's  
15 budget. The 23 million allocated by the Council and  
16 the Mayor in last year's budget has gone a long way  
17 towards addressing inequities in the delivery of arts  
18 education. Tens of thousands of city students  
19 identified in the city Comptroller's report now have  
20 access to arts education experiences. You all  
21 deserve a credit for stepping up to the plate,  
22 initially proposing the funding line in your budget  
23 response. Thank you for taking the lead. I'm here  
24 to ask you to continue to fund the initiative  
25 annually at 23 million, building on the great work

1  
2 already being done such as the hiring of arts  
3 teachers in over 84 schools. One hundred and 20  
4 schools have received grants to partner with arts and  
5 cultural organizations addressing priorities ranging  
6 from English language learners, students with special  
7 needs to parent engagement. Eight million has been  
8 committed to purchase instruments and other  
9 technology and to refurbish neglected art spaces in  
10 city schools. Borough arts directors have been hired  
11 to support and help arts poor schools to meet state's  
12 instructional requirements in the arts and expanded  
13 professional development opportunities for teachers  
14 including the new crop of pre-k teachers. Quality  
15 instruction in the arts provides a wide array of  
16 social and academic benefits, preparing students for  
17 college, career and life. However, more work needs  
18 to be done to fully close the access and equity gap.  
19 So we ask you to ensure that the full 23 million is  
20 committed to this Fiscal Year 16 budget. Thank you  
21 very much.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. I was  
23 very glad to see that that was included in part of  
24 the new mayor's initiatives. You also had a big part  
25 to do with that. So, I want to thank you for your

1  
2 advocacy as well, and we will continue to fight to  
3 have it in there. You know, as a New York City  
4 public school teacher, teaching through the arts or  
5 using the arts to teach was really important and it  
6 was one of the things that had the biggest impact on  
7 my students who to this very day come to my office  
8 and tell me about the arts programs that I did with  
9 them when I was a teacher. Those are the things that  
10 they remember, and those are the things that brought  
11 them to school every day. So, I couldn't agree with  
12 you more.

13 ERIC PRYOR: Thank you, Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

15 BETH BRODERICK: Good afternoon. Good  
16 evening, Chair Dromm and distinguished members of the  
17 Council. My name's Beth Broderick. I'm the Project  
18 Director at the Staten Island Youth Justice Center,  
19 which is a project of the Center for Court  
20 Innovation. So, I'm here to urge the Committee on  
21 Education as you're considering the Mayor's proposed  
22 budget to support funding for the Center for Court  
23 Innovation as we continue to develop new and  
24 innovative approaches to increase access to  
25 educational resources and opportunities for all young

1  
2 people throughout New York City and to improve  
3 outcomes for disconnected and justice involved youth.  
4 The Center for Court Innovation has developed  
5 multiple programs in an effort to work with  
6 disconnected and justice involved youth, working to  
7 provide them with resources and opportunities that  
8 lead to healthy and productive lives at our youth and  
9 community justice centers in Staten Island, in  
10 Brownsville, in Harlem. The Justice Community Plus  
11 Program provides employment readiness, workforce  
12 development services for youth exposed to community  
13 violence. It's designed to emphasize soft skills  
14 while providing participants with resume help,  
15 interview preparation and off-site internships. In  
16 Queens and in Staten Island at our Youth Justice  
17 Centers, the Alternative to Detention Programs, Quest  
18 and Ready, respectively, provide intense supervision  
19 along with after school programming for youth with  
20 cases pending in Family Court. These programs  
21 emphasize education providing participants with  
22 support related to school placement, engagement and  
23 discipline. The year round after school components  
24 are organized around social/emotional learning  
25 principles, interacting effectively with others, how

1  
2 to properly navigate the world. Programming includes  
3 homework help, structured recreational activities,  
4 educational and vocational workshops and cognitive  
5 behavioral and skill building group work. The City  
6 Council support has been invaluable to the success of  
7 the Center for Court Innovation, helping us to  
8 maintain core operations and launch new initiatives  
9 at our demonstration projects throughout the city.  
10 This year we seek the Council's support in continuing  
11 to increase access to educational resources and  
12 opportunities for disconnected and justice involved  
13 youth as well as additional support for our critical  
14 new initiatives which are focused on youth diversion,  
15 police community youth relations and enhanced access  
16 to equal and fair justice for the city's most  
17 vulnerable citizens. And we've already begun this  
18 work. At the Brownsville Community Justice Center,  
19 police youth community dialogues are regularly  
20 convened. These unscripted conversations among  
21 teens, officers and residents help to build trust and  
22 understanding and they advance common goals. In  
23 Staten Island where I work, a new program, the  
24 Neighborhood Youth Justice Council brings young  
25 people together with community members and justice

1  
2 stakeholders to design and implement projects, not  
3 just to talk about police community dynamics, but  
4 actually to create positive change. And with the  
5 Council's help, we hope to expand our police youth  
6 dialogue work to all of our youth and community  
7 justice centers, creating these neighborhood youth  
8 justice councils in neighborhoods like Queens, East  
9 Harlem and other communities. The Center for Court  
10 Innovation looks forward to continuing to work with  
11 the City Council to increase access to educational  
12 resources and opportunities for young people  
13 throughout the city to reduce truancy, to improve  
14 school safety and improve outcomes for disconnected  
15 and justice involved youth. We respectfully urge you  
16 to continue to support our work, and I thank you  
17 again for the opportunity to speak.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just, I want to ask  
19 quickly. You said you are seeking the Council's  
20 support in the amount of 750--775,000. Is that what  
21 we currently give you?

22 BETH BRODERICK: No, it's an increase.  
23 As I mentioned, we have a couple of new critical  
24 initiatives, including the police youth dialogues

25

1  
2 that I was just describing, and so that number  
3 reflects the new initiatives.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And what are we giving  
5 you now? How much of an increase is it? Do you  
6 know?

7 BETH BRODERICK: I believe that it's  
8 closer to 400,000.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Four hundred thousand  
10 now, okay. You get any anti-gun money?

11 BETH BRODERICK: Yes. So, some of the  
12 money that the center received last year was through  
13 specific line items, and those, some of that is for  
14 our SOS programming in the South Bronx, in Bed-Stuy  
15 and in Crown Heights. Some of it is a direct line  
16 through the anti-violence initiatives for the Justice  
17 Community Plus programs which I described, and some  
18 of that was directly to the center which funded some  
19 of the core operations.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good. Alright,  
21 that's what we wanted to know. Thank you. Max?

22 MAX AHMED: Good afternoon. Thank you.  
23 Before I begin my testimony I want to appreciate you  
24 bringing up the school support structure and the need  
25 for translation and interpretation supports for our

1  
2 parents as well as Council Member Chin. We were very  
3 pleased to hear that was brought up with the  
4 Chancellor, and I was here for that. And thank you  
5 so much for hosting this hearing. Also, if I seem a  
6 bit drained, it's not because of the time, I'm  
7 actually on a hunger strike because the education  
8 budget or the state budget does not reflect the Dream  
9 Act, which we really hope would include a pathway to  
10 college access for immigrant students. So, please  
11 forgive me if that--

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Max,  
13 did you say you're currently on a hunger strike?

14 MAX AHMED: Yes, that's correct. That's--

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] How  
16 long have you been on the hunger strike?

17 MAX AHMED: We started yesterday, and  
18 it's going to go until the budget, the state budget,  
19 is announced on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: How many are joining  
21 you?

22 MAX AHMED: We've gotten about 50 people  
23 joining, about 30 New York City and folks from across  
24 the state as well.

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Are these young  
3 people?

4 MAX AHMED: These are, yeah, young people  
5 mostly.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, I--when I was  
7 Immigration Chair I attended a finale, I guess, of  
8 the hunger strike at St. Peter's, I think it was. I  
9 really admire you for doing that, you know, and all  
10 the people. Good luck with all that.

11 MAX AHMED: Thank you. Good afternoon.  
12 Thank you to members of the Council and to Chairman  
13 Dromm for his continued leadership for immigrant  
14 communities. My name is Max Ahmed, and I'm the  
15 Senior Associate of Education Advocacy at the New  
16 York Immigration Coalition. We are an umbrella  
17 advocacy and policy organization with nearly 200  
18 members from New York State and we aim to achieve a  
19 fairer and more just society that values the  
20 contributions of immigrants and extends opportunity  
21 to all. As part of this work, we convene an  
22 educational collaborative of grassroots immigrant  
23 organizations, policy and legal organizations and  
24 practitioners. Together, we fight to increase  
25 English language learners and immigrant student's

1  
2 access to a quality education and to expand  
3 opportunity for parent, for their parents to be  
4 engaged. As you know, there's a serious need to  
5 improve translation and interpretation services for  
6 immigrant parents. A lot of that was discussed in  
7 the panels that came before me. There are some  
8 specifics that I won't go into here. We strongly  
9 support the additional funding for Language Line  
10 Interpretation Services that Council Member Chin  
11 brought up, and we recognize that much more needs to  
12 be done to support these--to support students and the  
13 access for parents. We also support helping parents  
14 better understand their right to language assistance  
15 services through the awareness campaign, but I want  
16 to focus my testimony and my time here more on the  
17 bigger issue that schools and other divisions within  
18 the DOE are not presently aware of, their obligations  
19 or how to provide quality language access to parents.  
20 Much more has to be done beyond the modest budget  
21 increase to address the very serious problems  
22 parents' experience, and the DOE must seize a  
23 critical opportunity now to dramatically improve the  
24 situation. They must ensure that each newly expanded  
25 superintendent office has a language access

1 coordinator who goes out into the district, sees how  
2 schools are doing with language access, provides  
3 needed support, and ensures that parents are getting  
4 quality services that meet their needs. Right now,  
5 there are only two people to do the job, to go out  
6 and serve 1,700 schools with these support services,  
7 and that just does not work. We cannot miss this  
8 opportunity to better engage immigrant parents. And  
9 finally, last year, 13 million in new funding was  
10 provided for English language learners and these  
11 funds were largely supposed to expand field support  
12 staff that would go out and support schools. We need  
13 more transparency regarding the use of these funds as  
14 we don't currently know whether that, those funds  
15 were used or how they were used. We thank the  
16 Council for the opportunity to testify in support of  
17 these funds, and we look forward to working with you  
18 and the DOE to implement these recommendations.  
19 Thank you.

20  
21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Did you  
22 have a testimony?

23 WENDY CHAPMAN: Hi, thank you. Am I the  
24 last for the day? I hope for your sake. My name's  
25 Wendy Chapman. Today I'm here on behalf of Build

1  
2 School Now. We're a volunteer organization that  
3 started a couple of years ago as a result of PS 150,  
4 which is downtown almost being closed. We moved out  
5 of the neighborhood because of overcrowding. There  
6 was thoughts of turning it into a pre-k or a  
7 kindergarten center, and Margaret Chin as well as  
8 others helped keep the school open, and the good news  
9 is I can say that we actually won a national Blue  
10 Ribbon Award this year, and Margaret brought our  
11 students in and we were recognized in this chamber,  
12 and it was a joyous day for all. I'm here today  
13 because I wanted to talk a little bit about the  
14 situation in Community Board One with building  
15 schools. I want to thank the Council, especially  
16 Margaret Chin for advocating, approving and funding a  
17 456 seat school to help ease overcrowding downtown.  
18 While the money is currently in the city budget,  
19 there seems to be no plans to site and build this  
20 much needed school in CB1. We hope that the City  
21 Council working with our elected officials and local  
22 leaders will help turn this school into a reality by  
23 continuing to press the Department of Education  
24 School Construction Authority into action. As most  
25 of you know, CB1 is one of the fastest growing

1 neighborhoods in New York City, and some would say  
2 within the world. Some areas in CB1 are experiencing  
3 an almost 250 percent population growth in the last  
4 10 years according to the latest census. This would  
5 be the financial district, which doesn't currently  
6 have a school in the neighborhood. New residential  
7 construction continues at a record clip with new  
8 story lines appearing in the local press every month  
9 announcing a new mega residential tower. The DOE's  
10 School Construction Authority has overseen the  
11 building of several new schools, but it isn't enough.  
12 The DOE itself acknowledges the need for 1,000 new  
13 seats downtown. They acknowledged this a couple  
14 years ago in a public meeting. Eric Greenleaf [sp?]  
15 of Sheldon Silvers Overcrowding Taskforce estimates  
16 that that need is at least 1,300. Additionally, the  
17 mayor's new pre-k for all program, which is  
18 wonderful, adds a lot more pressure for school space  
19 in Community Board One. Our public schools in  
20 Community Board One are bursting at the seams. If  
21 the new 456 seat school was approved and sited today,  
22 it would take roughly five years to build and would  
23 be overcrowded the day it opened. We need to act  
24 fast and we need to be creative to tackle this new  
25

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2 issue. Build Schools Now, and again, we're just a  
3 few parent volunteers, have partnered with the Pratt  
4 Graduate Architecture School to identify new school  
5 sites in CB1. In December, we presented this work to  
6 the Overcrowding Taskforce, and we asked the School  
7 Construction Authority at that meeting to be more  
8 transparent and partner with us to help solve this  
9 very difficult problem to find school space. We  
10 certainly know that we live in the most crowded and  
11 expensive areas in the world, but to date, we're  
12 still in the dark if anything was done with the work  
13 that we presented at the Overcrowding Taskforce with  
14 the School Construction Authority, and we just ask  
15 that you help us in that quest. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.  
17 That is very eye opening news to me. If you live in  
18 this building that they built over across the street  
19 on the other side of City Hall near Pace [sic]. I  
20 can't think of the name of that--

21 WENDY CHAPMAN: [interposing] Yeah, that's  
22 the Gary Building that the Spruce School was in, but  
23 it's overcrowded. Every school in this area is  
24 overcrowded. They can't keep Pace. And I don't know  
25 if you know, but Margaret Chin would know this, but

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2 the Howard Hughes Corporation just announced that  
3 they have bought air rights and they plan on--I don't  
4 think the plans are drawn up yet, but it's very  
5 possible that they'll build the tallest residential  
6 tower in New York City. And that will again be in an  
7 area that currently is--doesn't have enough school  
8 seats. So, it's wonderful that we have the Pecsuh  
9 [sic] School as the newest, but the pre-k seats that  
10 are going to take any, you know, classrooms that are  
11 there, that's great. They'll be temporary, but you  
12 know, long term--you have to start today, because it  
13 takes so long to build a school.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So where's the Howard  
15 Hughes Corporation want to build this? Is it South  
16 Street [sic] Seaport [sic]?

17 WENDY CHAPMAN: Just outside that area,  
18 yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: They own a lot of  
20 property there.

21 WENDY CHAPMAN: Yes. Which, you know,  
22 devel--I don't want to pick on them, because there's  
23 a lot of other developments going on as well in our  
24 neighborhood. The way the city works, and maybe this  
25 is a longer term issue, is that developers are

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2 converting all these office towers into residential,  
3 you know, facilities, but there's no triggers,  
4 because they just have the as-of-right to build their  
5 building. They don't contribute to any school pool or  
6 any parks pool, and they advertise that they should--  
7 you should move to our neighborhood because we have  
8 great public schools, and we do, and we're very  
9 blessed. A lot of the issues and the problems I  
10 heard today, you know, we don't experience them quite  
11 as much, but the wait lists in this neighborhood are  
12 extremely long, and the way the Kindergarten Connect  
13 has changed the system, the wait list problem  
14 actually is a lot less transparent than it used to  
15 be, but the year before, there was 149 wait list on  
16 the kindergarten for downtown. Now, you don't see  
17 that anymore because it's hidden a little bit more,  
18 but the overcrowding is still a problem.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just to let you know,  
20 too, I represent Jackson Heights and Elmhurst.

21 WENDY CHAPMAN: Queens is definitely  
22 right up there with this community, and the northern  
23 part of Staten Island is also having huge  
24 overcrowding. So, Pratt Institute--  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] And  
3 that's just in the overcrowding, but in the  
4 development in overcrowded, the areas that are  
5 already overcrowded.

6 WENDY CHAPMAN: That's right. That's  
7 right. And getting new schools built. The thing  
8 that we're excited about right now is that we have a  
9 parent who actually is a public school parent are PS  
10 276 who is the head of the Graduate Architecture  
11 School of Design, and he is having his graduate  
12 architecture students as their project to do city  
13 planning to look at Community Board One and find  
14 sites to build a public school and build a  
15 theoretical school, and that's what we've been  
16 working on. It's real exciting to have the best and  
17 the brightest at Pratt partnering on this front, and  
18 I think they could do it in other neighborhoods too,  
19 but the School Construction Authority, you know, I  
20 understand is very leery of partnering with us. But  
21 I think if--because we're working with the Pratt  
22 Architecture School, it's a different situation. And  
23 we're going to be having--Pratt is going to be  
24 hosting--I just found out today, I haven't invited  
25 anyone yet on the Overcrowding Taskforce. April 23<sup>rd</sup>

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2 at 12:30 out at Pratt's campus in Brooklyn we're  
3 going to be having a panel discussion about some of  
4 these findings that the students have come up with  
5 and some of their ideas and inviting in the municipal  
6 arts society, other architecture programs, city  
7 planners, elected officials, you know, whoever wants  
8 to come to try and say this is a hard problem to  
9 solve everywhere and we have to be really creative.  
10 So, I hope you come.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, thank you. I  
12 will look and see if I can. You do have the best  
13 Council Member representing your district.

14 WENDY CHAPMAN: I agree.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I will admit that.  
16 And she certainly has a lot of stick-to-it-tiveness  
17 [sic] because she's been here with us the whole day.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: We did ask  
19 President Grillo, and when I told her about the  
20 suggestions of the site, she didn't know about it.  
21 So, she has to check with her real estate section  
22 because she wasn't at the meeting. So her staff has  
23 not brought to her attention. So we'll make sure  
24 that she knows--  
25

1  
2 WENDY CHAPMAN: [interposing] That is  
3 very clear that I actually think it's a systemic  
4 problem. We have been trying to talk with anyone and  
5 everyone. We keep showing up like a bad penny to any  
6 meeting that's a public meeting. I think the School  
7 Construction Authority is very uninterested in  
8 partnering with parents in any way, and I think it's  
9 a situation right now where they do their work on a  
10 sub-district level, but the problems that are  
11 happening in very specific community boards, they get  
12 blended out in the reports that they send to the  
13 city, and those crisis situations that are happening  
14 in neighborhoods like the Financial District just get  
15 blended away when they report it in to something  
16 larger.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: But we'll make sure  
18 that she gets the information.

19 WENDY CHAPMAN: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, I thank you all  
21 for coming in. You are really great to have stayed  
22 throughout this whole hearing, and I thank you and  
23 congratulate you, and with that I will adjourn this  
24 meeting at 6:06 p.m.

25 [gavel]

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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 that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date April 16, 2015