

**Testimony of the New York City Department of Education
on School Support in New York City
Before the New York City Council Committee on Education**

October 1, 2015

Testimony of Ursulina Ramirez, Chief of Staff, Dr. Dorita Gibson, Senior Deputy Chancellor, and Joshua Wallack, Deputy Chancellor, Strategy and Policy

Good afternoon Chair Dromm and Members of the Education Committee. My name is Ursulina Ramirez, and I am the Chief of Staff to the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education. Joining me today is Dr. Dorita Gibson, Senior Deputy Chancellor, who oversees our Superintendents, and Josh Wallack, Deputy Chancellor for Strategy and Policy, who oversees our Field Support staff and operations.

Thank you for inviting us to discuss the Department's work in supporting schools and driving student achievement, ultimately preparing students for postsecondary success. Since assuming responsibility of the City's public schools, Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña have focused the Department on ensuring that we are supporting and improving all schools across the five boroughs.

As the Chancellor and Mayor have discussed, our work is driven by the dual goal of promoting equity and excellence; so that every child has access to high quality schools in their neighborhood. Just as we know that the success of a child's learning and development can't be measured by one single test, we also know that our schools need to be measured across multiple factors.

(Slide 2)

We have worked to re-align the management team and our staff to reflect the priorities of this administration. One of the first changes we made was to re-envision the role of the Superintendent. Knowing that families look to their community superintendent, we hired experienced educators to lead these offices. Each of our 46 superintendents built their offices to pro-actively engage their communities and provide principals with guidance and support.

This work, led by Dr. Gibson and her team, has been amplified as we have developed Community Schools in all five boroughs and strengthened our Renewal Schools. Chris Caruso and his team in the Community Schools Office are hard at work to ensure our 130 Community Schools have teams in place. These teams are made up of parents, school leaders, community based organizations and other community members. They work closely with each school's dedicated community school director to implement this work. This engagement is already having a profound impact. Just this summer our dedicated outreach teams knocked on over 35,000 doors to get parents and families involved.

Aimee Horowitz is leading the Office of Renewal Schools and its work to improve our most struggling schools. Each of our 94 Renewal Schools has implemented Expanded Learning Time this school year, and is working closely with their partners to implement their school improvement plans.

Under the leadership of Deputy Chancellor Phil Weinberg we have reconstituted the Division of Teaching and Learning, and for the first time in many years we are providing curriculum content professional development directly to schools. Our Curriculum office under Anna Commitante recently released Science and Social Studies curricula and a scope and sequence for High School Writing. In addition, we removed summative grades from our public reports, provided schools with better ways to look at data, set rigorous and realistic targets, and continue to evolve accountability reports to align to our vision for how schools improve.

Supports to students with disabilities, including related service provisions, are stronger than ever before. Deputy Chancellor Corinne Rello-Anselmi and her team have been focused on policies and practices that directly impact the ability of students with disabilities to have rigorous instruction in an inclusive environment through flexible models of services and supports.

We elevated the work of the DOE to support English Language Learners. Recently appointed to a cabinet-level position, Deputy Chancellor Milady Baez has worked to strengthen and integrate our work to support these students.

We have reimagined family and community engagement. The Chancellor recently appointed Yolanda Torres as Executive Superintendent for Family and Community Engagement and she is leading their increased efforts to engage more parents, communicate effectively, and provide opportunities for parent involvement in their child's school community.

Lastly, the work of Josh Wallack and his division have enabled us to launch one of the largest reforms of the administration, Pre-K for All. Today New York City has over 65,000 four-year-olds receiving high quality full day instruction, ensuring that all of our students come to Kindergarten ready to learn. In addition, Josh and his team also worked in partnership with the rest of the leadership team to align supports to schools across divisions.

(Slide 3)

Over the past year we have aligned the DOE's vision to its current support structure and revised measures for schools. This work has entailed three main bodies of work.

First, we developed a vision for school improvement that was based on rigorously evaluated research. This has led to the *Framework for Great Schools*, a holistic approach that focuses on driving outcomes across the entire school community to foster student achievement.

Second, we have re-aligned our evaluative measures across the system. These measures look at school performance in a more holistic way and, for the first time, set individual targets for each school.

And lastly, we revamped our school support structure, aligning support and supervision, while increasing accountability for all levels of the system. Most importantly, this new support model, *Strong Schools, Strong*



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Communities, enables us to tailor support to schools based on individual needs, thus allowing us to more efficiently manage and deliver supports.

(Slide 4)

The *Framework for Great Schools* provides the DOE and every school with a blueprint of how to improve student achievement and schools overall. For far too long, the DOE placed that responsibility solely on the school and its leader. While this worked well for some principals who had the resources and educational vision to improve their school -- we also saw that this created inequity across the City.

With the *Framework* in place, we are now truly partnering with school communities to improve their schools. We know that schools, when functioning well, are dynamic organizations involving the whole community. The graphic in front of you has the six elements of the Framework centered on student achievement. Increasing student achievement has been, and will continue to be, the primary goal of the DOE. But we now have a research-based model on how to get us there.

The elements closest to that inner circle are the factors closest to the child and the classroom. Rigorous Instruction, Collaborative Teaching, and a Supportive Environment are cornerstones of how we improve educational practices. Having Effective School Leadership, one that is helpful and inclusive, combined with Strong Family and Community Ties, also leads to higher student achievement. When adopting this model from a body of practices in other cities, we purposefully added Trust, an element we consider absolutely essential to our work.

(Slide 5-6)

We have redesigned our system's measures to not only reflect this change in approach, but, more importantly, we are providing schools and administration with clearer and more robust data, and with new ways in which to use this data to improve school practice.

We will soon be releasing our new School Quality Snapshot to schools and families. These reports will have the traditional measures related to student achievement and progress, and will also have information about how each school and the system is performing as it relates to the *Framework for Great Schools*, creating a system of shared accountability.

We are already seeing powerful results. As we look back over the past year, we have seen schools that were strong in most of the *Framework* measures were six times more likely to have higher student achievement in the following year, than schools that were not strong in these measures. Again, we now have a way to partner with schools to improve over time.

(Slide 7-10)

The *Framework for Great Schools*, our vision for improving all of our schools, and our revamped measures, provide a strong foundation for improving student achievement, however, we need to ensure our vision is reflected in our support systems.

That's why, this school year, we also launched our new school support structure: *Strong Schools, Strong Communities*. This new structure is built on the premise that we can efficiently and effectively provide all schools with the supports they need to improve student achievement, and we can do it by being present in the communities we're serving. We have aligned structures across the DOE to meet this goal.

As the diagram depicts, Central offices, the Superintendent offices, and the Borough Field Support Centers work collectively to support schools. The roles of each of these offices as it relates to school support are clear –

- Central offices play the critical role of policy guidance and oversight, and devise professional development and training for each of the field offices to implement with schools;
- Superintendents are our schools' first stop when seeking guidance on issues that are sensitive, evaluative, instructional, or strategic in nature including personnel matters, tenure decisions and allegations of misconduct;
- The BFSCs, seven offices across the City, one in each borough with two in Brooklyn and Queens, are where schools can go for instructional, operational or student service supports. Schools will receive a number of supports from their BFSCs including:
 - Teaching & Learning – instructional practices, academic policy, teacher evaluation, school performance and accountability tools;
 - Business Services – budget, human resources procurement, payroll;
 - Operations – school foods, transportation, facilities;
 - Student Services – guidance, school climate, crisis / safety, health and wellness;
 - Special Education – instructional practices, compliance, and related service supports;
 - English Language Learners – instructional practices, compliance, program development.

We have developed clear communication and escalation protocols for each of these offices and schools to follow, and are tracking data to ascertain needs in the field.

As we heard from many of you, the impacts are noticeable; principals now know where to go. This school year we had one of the smoothest school openings in memory thanks to this new support system.

I want to take a moment to provide you all with some additional information about the new Borough Field Support Centers. This is one of the most important changes we have made and it is driven from the Chancellor's belief that we needed to provide better and more equitable support to all of our schools. As many of you know, in the past there were a myriad of support entities that schools self-selected and paid for themselves. This created a fundamental inequity in our schools.

These entities were hired by the schools and, as a result, often did the work for schools rather than build that school's capacity. We have shifted to one unified, consistent system that truly empowers schools by aligning support and supervision to build each schools' capacity.



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

By centralizing the centers we are able to meet the unique needs of schools. We have staff with expertise closer to schools and, most importantly, schools are working together. Now schools near one another can share resources and, because these schools are still part of Citywide groups, we are still able to foster collaboration across schools.

To drive innovation, we have restructured how we work with outside service providers. We have formed Affinity Groups – groups of schools that have a unique instructional/learning approach. Each of these groups of high schools are working with a singular superintendent so we can now better ascertain the impacts these organizations are having to both hold them accountable and identify opportunities to bring strong practices to all of our schools.

Most importantly, with the new school support structure we can more effectively align resources to individual school needs. In the past, each group of schools received the same resources regardless of unique needs. In the *Strong Schools, Strong Communities* support structure we can differentiate the support and staffing. The new support structure brings expertise closer to schools: each of the approximately 720 staff are working with schools in their borough. While each of the centers provides the same integrated services to schools that the past model provided, we are able to do this more effectively by tailoring these supports. Here are a couple of examples:

- In the Bronx we have seen more schools needing instructional support, so we added additional instructional specialists to that center who are expert educators providing professional development to teachers to share and learn with their colleagues;
- In Staten Island, which is our smallest geographic area, we have additional specialized student support leads working with schools to identify and plan supports for students with special needs where we have seen a greater concentration of students with this need.

(Slide 11)

As my testimony has hopefully conveyed, the DOE has been hard at work to improve our school system and ensure that we continue to see gains in student achievement. We have developed a vision and support structure that brings equity and excellence to all of our schools.

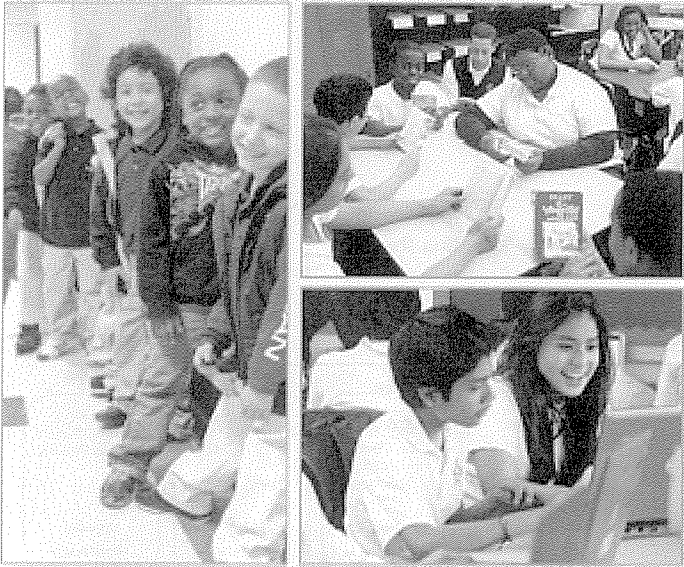
We know that in the educational field, and in a system this large, change does not happen overnight. We have set a three year horizon for completing this restructure, and as noted, are excited at the results to date. I look forward to continue working with you to ensure all of our children have an excellent education no matter where in our great City they live.

Thank you and we would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.



NYC

City Council Hearing

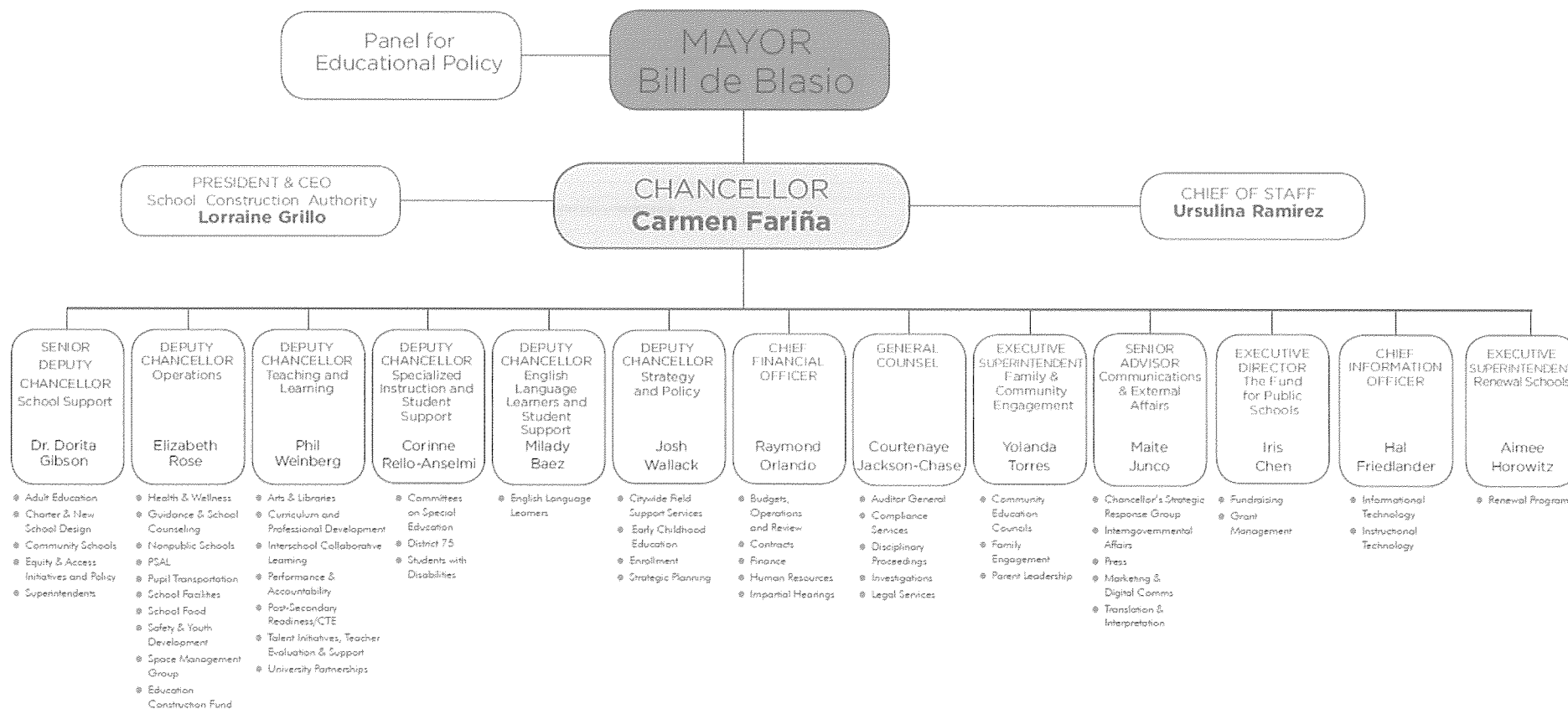


October 1, 2015

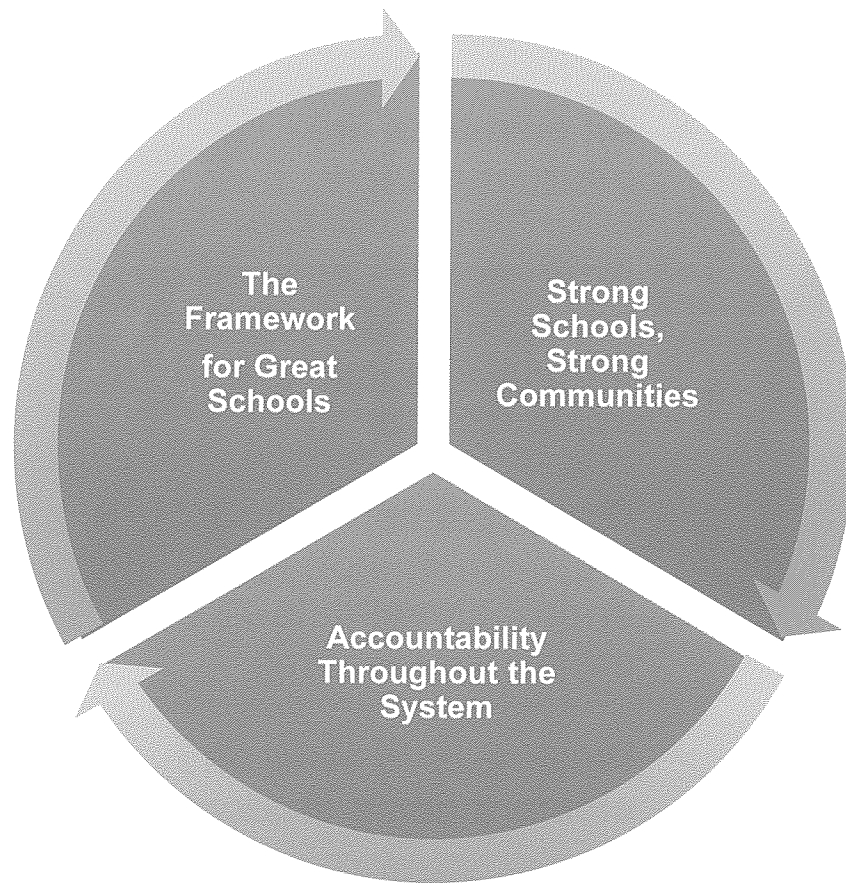


New York City Department of Education

Organizational Chart

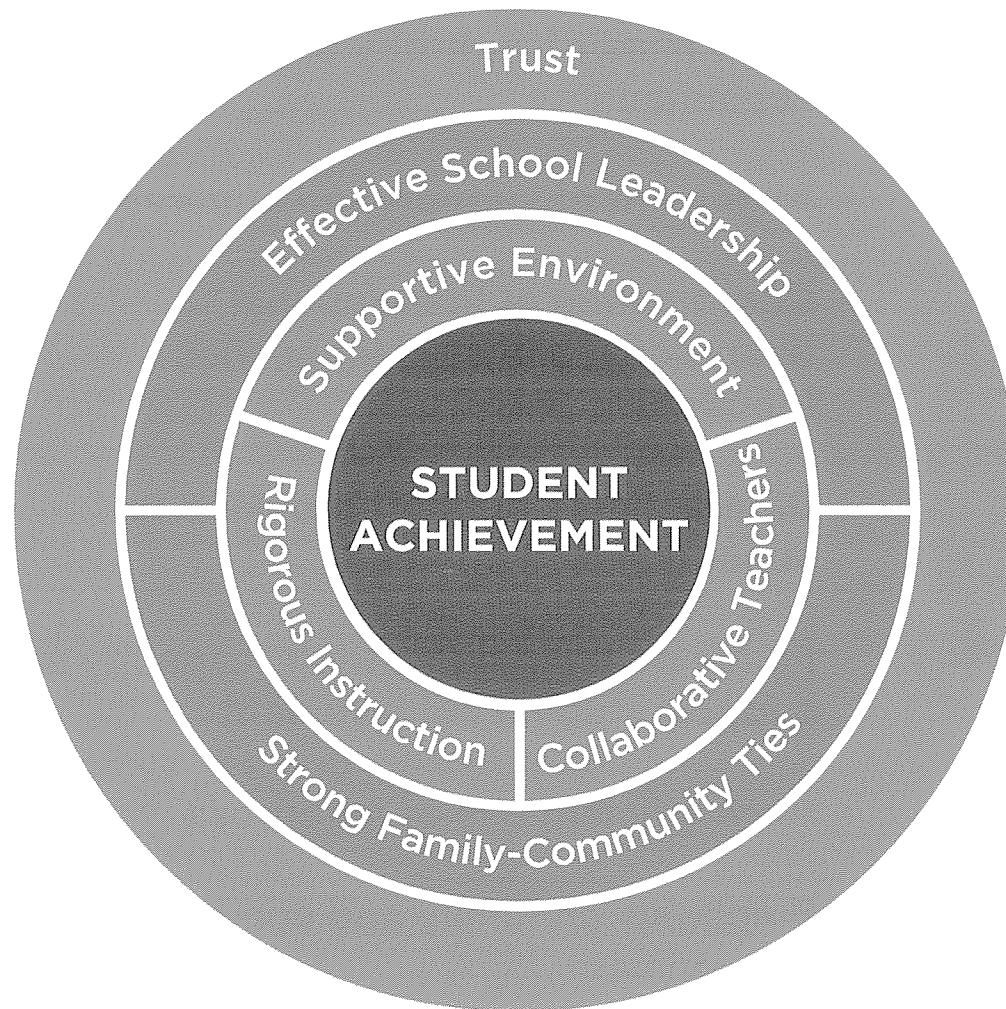


Over the past year we have worked to align the DOE's approach to its support structure and measures for schools



- Clear lines of authority and accountability
- Alignment of support and supervision
- Coordination of instructional, operational and student service functions
- Differentiated support provided to schools based on needs
- Focus on building schools' capacity to support student achievement
- More efficient use of resources
- Emphasis on family and community engagement

The Framework for Great Schools identifies six transformative elements that drive school improvement and develop students prepared to compete and engage as citizens in the 21st century



- > All elements are interconnected
- > Approach is centered on supporting schools and students to improve achievement
- > Comprehensive model is a multi-dimensional, analytic approach validated by extensive research
- > Weakness in even one element limits student growth

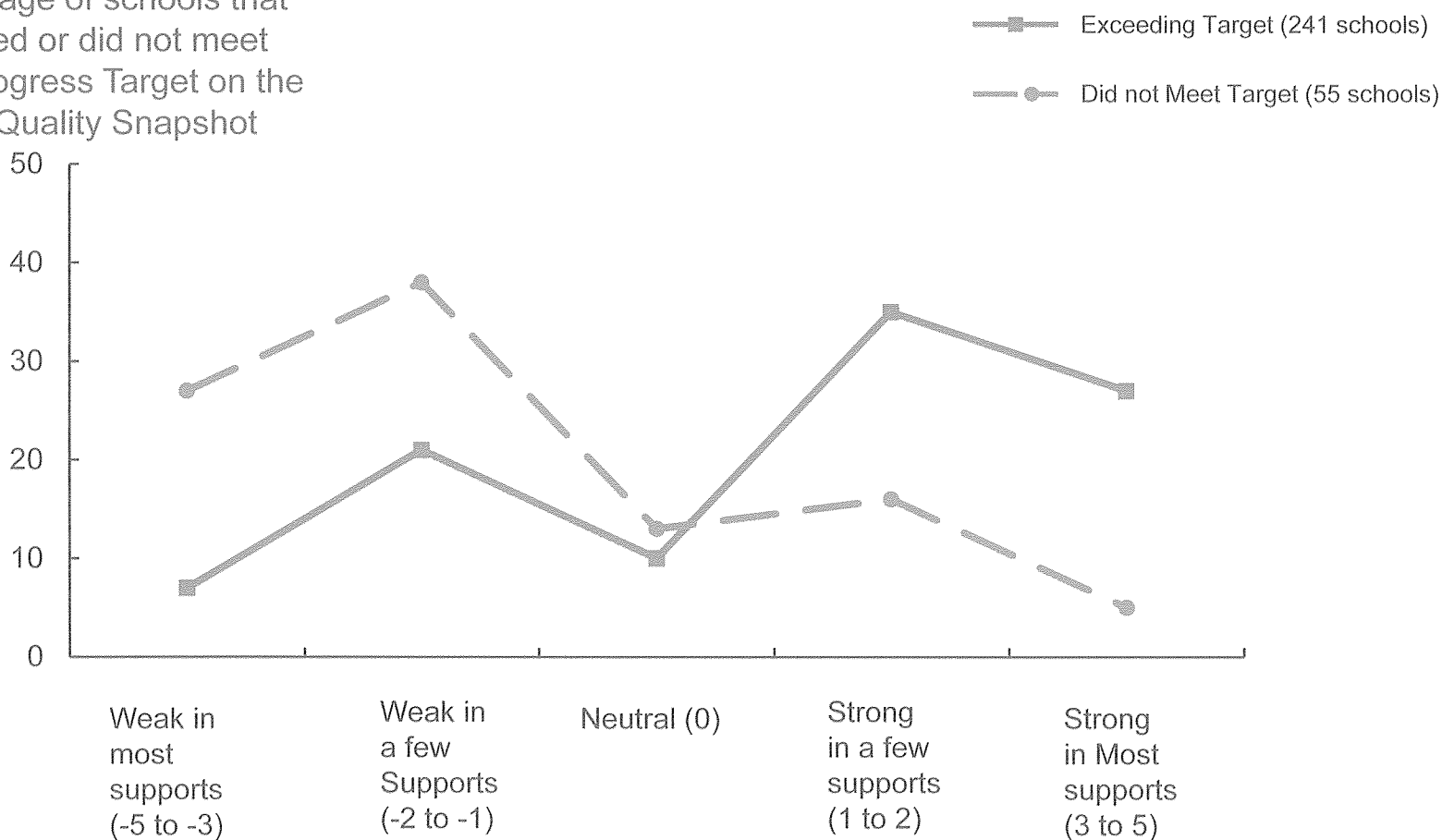
SOURCE: Bryk, Anthony, et. al. "Organizing Schools for Improvement Lessons from Chicago." 2010

We now have data to share with schools that aligns to the Framework and the new approach

- **The 2015-16 SY Snapshot is designed to give schools information that is aligned to the Framework measures**
 - Each school is rated in the six elements of Framework for Great Schools based on multiple measures including:
 - Quality Reviews (most recent review from 2012-13 or later),
 - the 2014-15 NYC School Survey results,
 - other data, such as Chronic Absenteeism and movement to Less Restrictive Environment rates from 2013-14
- **The report also includes information for each school on key student outcomes including: graduation rates, percent proficient, and student progress**
- **Background information about each school is included in the report including: student population, attendance, staff experience, program activities and sports**

The initial data is powerful: Schools strongest in the elements were more likely to exceed their School Quality Snapshot target in progress

Percentage of schools that exceeded or did not meet their Progress Target on the School Quality Snapshot



Note: Analysis includes 1,217 schools that had scores on all of the elements and a progress score from the 2014-15 SQS

Strong Schools, Strong Communities: Support Structure

Central Offices

- Policy Guidance and Oversight
- Professional Development and Training
- Program and Data Analysis

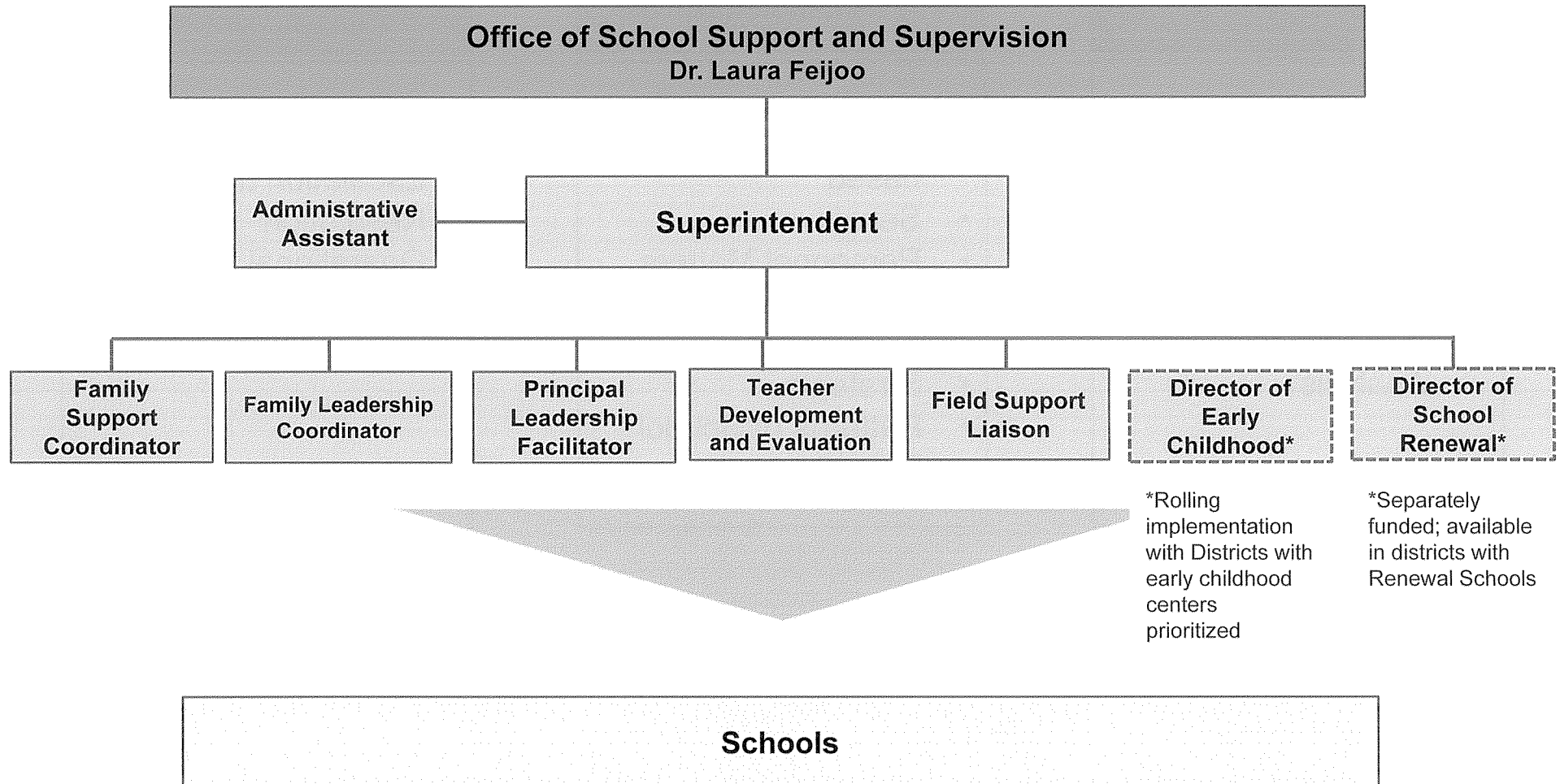
Superintendent Offices

- District or Portfolio based
- Sensitive
- Personnel Matters
- Evaluative
- Instructional
- Strategic
- Patterns of School Behavior

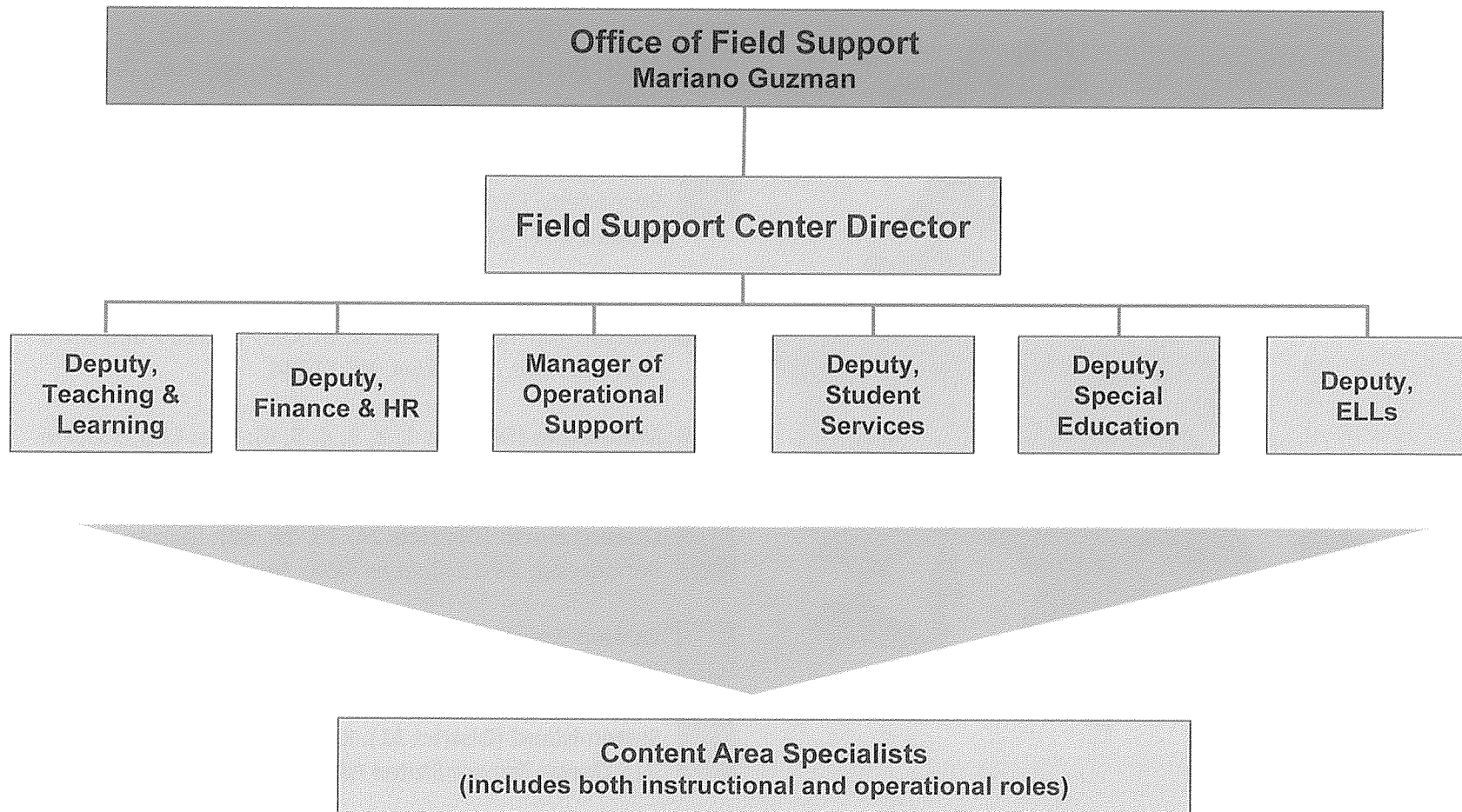
Borough Field Support Centers (BFSCs)

- Borough Based
- Escalation and Resolution
- Operational Support
- Instructional Support

Superintendent offices are focused on ensuring that schools meet student achievement goals, operate in alignment with the Framework for Great Schools, serve as the rating officer for principals, provide evaluative supports, and act as a partner to the local community.

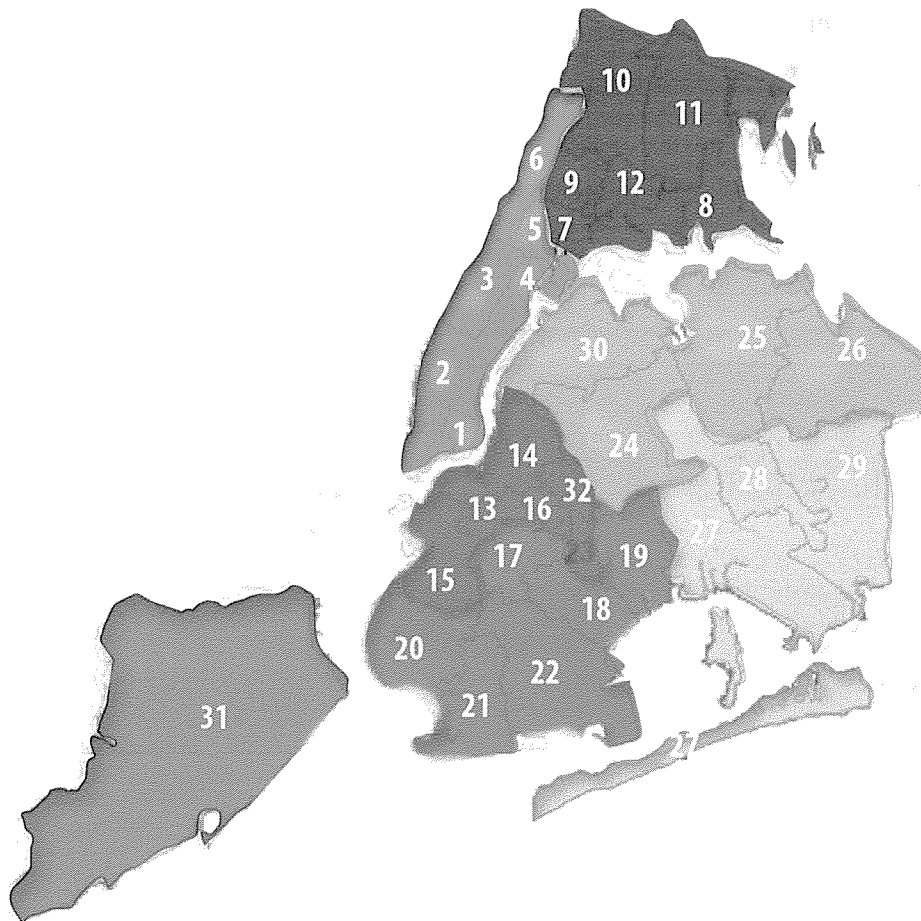


Borough Field Support Centers are staffed and provide high quality, equitable instructional and operational support to affiliated schools, allocating resources based on direction from the Superintendent's office while ensuring policy alignment to Central.



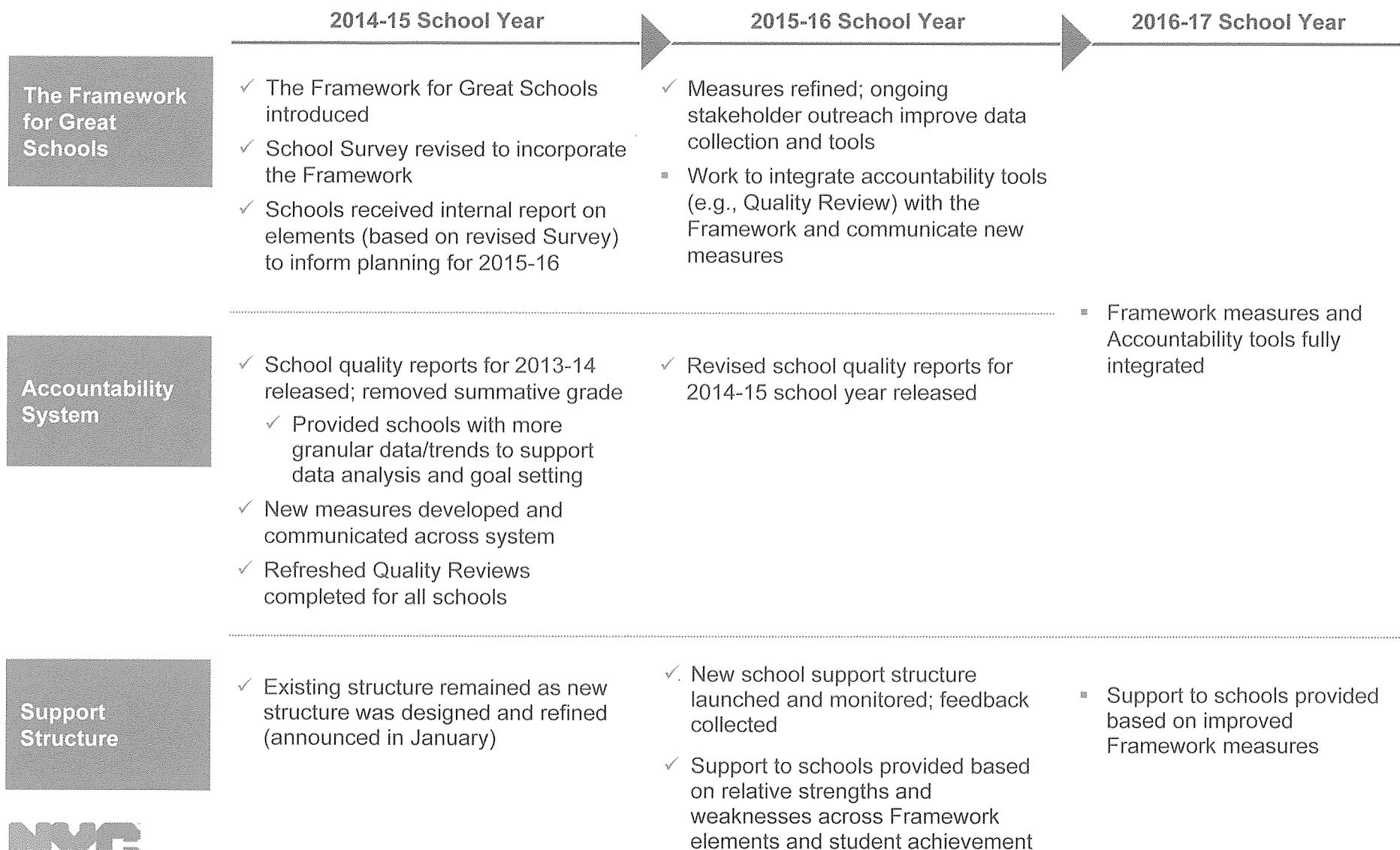
Borough Field Support Centers

Each of the 7 Borough Field Support Centers – overseen by Directors – provide high-quality, differentiated support in the areas of instruction, operations, and student services



- Bronx (Districts 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12):** Jose Ruiz, 1 Fordham Plaza, Bronx, NY 10458 and 1230 Zerega Ave., Bronx, NY 10462
- Brooklyn North (Districts 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 23, 32):** Bernadette Fitzgerald, 131 Livingston St., 5th Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201
- Brooklyn South (Districts 17, 18, 20, 21, 22):** Cheryl Watson-Harris, 415 89th St., Brooklyn, 11209 and 4390 Flatlands Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11234
- Manhattan (Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6):** Yuet Chu, 333 7th Avenue, Manhattan, NY 10001
- Queens North (Districts 24, 25, 26, 30):** Lawrence Pendergast, 28-11 Queens Plaza North, Queens, NY 11101
- Queens South (Districts 27, 28, 29):** Marlene Wilks, 8201 Rockaway Blvd., Queens, NY 11416
- Staten Island (District 31):** Kevin Moran, Petrides Complex, 715 Ocean Terrace Staten Island, NY 10301
- Affinity (Citywide):** Alexandra Anormaliza, 131 Livingston St., 6th Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201

Next Steps: The DOE has developed a 3 year horizon for this restructuring



FOR THE RECORD

TESTIMONY

**NYC COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
CHAIRMAN, DANIEL DROMM**

Oversight – DOE's Restructured School Support System

**Presented on
Thursday, October 1, 2015**



SINCE 1962
COUNCIL OF SCHOOL
SUPERVISORS &
ADMINISTRATORS
Local 1:AFSA, AFL-CIO

The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators

Ernest Logan, President

Mark Cannizzaro, Executive Vice President

Randi Herman, Ed.D., 1st Vice President

40 Rector Street, 12th Floor

New York, NY 10006

(212) 823-2020

www.csa-nyc.org

NYC Council Education Hearing

Oversight – DOE's Restructured School Support System

I would like to thank the City Council for the opportunity to submit this written testimony on behalf of the nearly 16,000 members of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA). Together, we thank you for the opportunity to present our opinions on the Department of Education's Restructured School Support Systems.

As you know, in January of 2015, Chancellor Carmen Fariña announced a new school support system called "Strong Schools, Strong Communities." CSA believes in this initiative and trusts that it will help align Superintendents and Principals, creating a path to open door transparency and accountability.

As Chancellor Fariña has noted, "We are drawing clear lines of authority and holding everyone in the system accountable for student performance. All of our offices, from central to the field, will be aligned under one vision." With the Chancellor's plan to add new field support centers, Principals will now be able to more directly and effectively obtain academic and operational support, student services such as healthcare and counseling, and support for students with special needs.

In addition, Superintendents will finally work within their geographic districts, resulting in a more intimate platform to help build rapport with parents, schools, and school communities. As opposed to having Superintendents placed in distant districts, the new structure creates an easy access point for Principals and community members to connect directly with their Superintendents. Parents will also be assured that any concerns of theirs are indeed being heard directly and that Superintendents are being held to the highest standards of accountability.

With the seven new geographically based Borough Field Support Centers (BFSCs) in place, schools will have the additional help and support they need in areas of instruction, operations, finance, and human resources. Borough Field Support Centers will also give Superintendents easier access to manage struggling schools, respond to parental concerns, and provide much needed support to Principals.

We also recognize that new structural reforms strengthen the role of the Superintendent by expanding their staffs and increasing their opportunity to get to know their Principals so that they can supervise, rate, and evaluate them in a fairer way. Moreover, the new system empowers Principals to take full responsibility for hiring teachers and other school personal and for managing school budgets, with the help of their regional support systems.

Of course, as with any new system, CSA will continue to monitor concerns from the field and work with administrators to make improvements where needed. As Clara Hemphill, editor of *Inside Schools* stated, "The new Chancellor believes correctly, that Principals need some supervision. The question is whether Superintendents will be good supervisors."

Although we have been tentative about supporting restructuring efforts in years past, we have more confidence in the process this time. We believe that the Chancellor's personal experience

as a Superintendent, and as a school leader at every level, has provided her with the necessary vision to execute the plan and make other improvements throughout the system.

I thank the Chairman and the Council for recognizing the importance of this restructuring and inviting us to let you know why we think it will more effectively serve our children, teachers, school leaders and communities. It is in the best interest of everyone to encourage collaboration at all levels thereby improving educational outcomes throughout the City of New York.

Sincerely,

Ernest A. Logan

President

Dear City Council Member,

Hello, my name is Gregory Di Stefano. I was a teacher in the New York City system for 33 years. I come here today to protest the firing of about 2,000 probationary teachers, many of whom were fired unjustly.

Many of these teachers were in schools with incompetent and, in some cases, corrupt principals. Some of these principals were eventually fired. These principals hired friends or friends of family members. Many of the fired teachers were first year teachers who after spending much and working very hard to get their education are currently out of work and incurring much financial hardship. These teachers deserve a second chance. New York State Law states that discontinued teachers have the right to work in another N.Y.C. district or work under another license they may have. The last administration prevented this from happening on purpose. The present administration of the DOE has had some discussion with the U.F.T. but hasn't corrected the problem. Many of us voted for the present administration to have a progressive agenda. How can we have a progressive agenda when this injustice continues?

I am calling on this esteemed body to investigate the violations of State Law and also to investigate the current hiring practices of the DOE in regards to administrators and teachers. Principals should not be hired on nepotism or political affiliation. Teachers should have a fair chance to secure jobs. There is a strong need to return to some form of Civil Service.

Thank you,

Mr. Gregory Di Stefano
26 Covington Circle
Staten Island, NY 10312
718-757-4552 (cell)
unionuoftgreg@yahoo.com

METRO

Fariña blames prior administrations for shutting out parents

By Aaron Short

April 12, 2014 | 4:21pm



Chancellor Carmen Fariña

Photo: Kristy Leibowitz

Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña on Saturday blamed prior administrations for shutting out parents and laid out plans to get them more involved during her tenure.

“When parents are engaged at the school and district level, children and schools benefit,”

she told 300 teaching students and instructors at Columbia University's Teachers College. "We know they've been shut out for far too long."

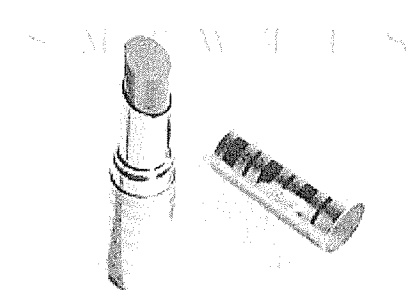
The Department of Education has already begun forming parent advisory groups and is "infusing parents into many of our existing structures," Farina said.

The DOE will also hold three full-day parent conferences in May and June on curriculum and strategies to increase parent involvement.

FILED UNDER CARMEN FARINA , DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION , EDUCATION , PARENTING , PUBLIC SCHOOLS , SCHOOLS CHANCELLOR

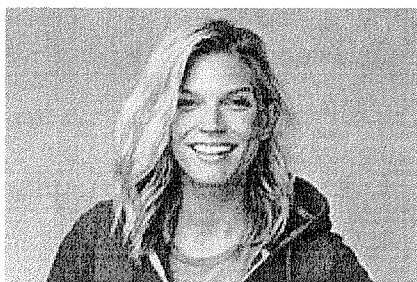
Man wielding shotgun ki...

PROMOTED STORIES



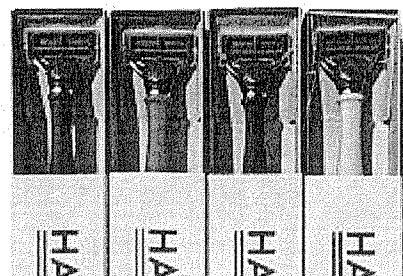
7 Lip Sheers You Can Switch From Monday to Sunday

Beautycounter



Insanely Popular Sweatshirt has 5-month Wait List in New

Business Insider



I Tried Harry's: Here's What Happened

Harry's on Popdust



Testimony

Before the Education Committee of the New York City Council

Regarding

“Department of Education’s Restructured School Support System”.

Provided by NYC Department of Education

Council Chambers – City Hall

October 1, 2015

Presented by Rue Zalia Watkins

Education Services Specialist

Mental Health Association of New York City

I would like to begin my remarks with two points of gratitude. First, thank you to the Education Committee, for holding this hearing. I am sure this hearing will serve as a distinct “screen shot”, if you will, gathering information that will serve as a base line as this restructuring rolls out into full implementation. Secondly, I would like to publically thank Chancellor Farina and her extraordinary team for attempting to give the school system back to the students, parents, teachers and communities of New York City. It is hard to believe that parents were denied access to our school system for years, if not a decade. During this time, parents, teachers, administrators, almost everyone in and out of the system, had nowhere to go for specific, concrete assistance, no matter how simple or complex the issue. The network structure was, perhaps a dazzling structure to outsiders, or persons in the corporate world, but for all of us needing solutions, it left us dazzled and dizzy with frustration, disappointment and sometimes fear. Fear because, parents are fearful about their children not getting the education services and support needed for successful outcomes, as well as the fears that arise when you cannot get a new school placement for your child when they are being bullied.

I am both grateful and hopeful that this restructuring will right the wrong that has hampered us for too long. In its infancy, it is a wonderful beginning to supporting schools and students, without inflating the bureaucracy completely back to its over inflated status. In its beginning, it provides a point of access for parents beyond the teacher and school administrator.

In the midst of this hopeful glow, we would like to express a few concerns that are crucial for all families, families of special needs students and a few specific needs reflective of the experiences of families whose children have mental illness and/or behavior or emotional challenges.

The primary concerns affecting all students are the following:

- ❖ This reorganization is for all students, special needs or not, teachers, administrators, communities and residents of NYC. It is for all of us and must be developed and communicated with this broad vision in mind. It requires a comprehensive plan for communicating this new road to many different

constituents. It will require traditional outreach and advertising. It will require updated information on the NYC and DOE websites, but also the bus stop portals, WIC offices, HRA offices, subways and buses. This reorganization is for everyone and it needs to be shown everywhere.

- ❖ Training will be necessary across the city, outside of the school system to ensure that everyone understands the structure and how it is supposed to work. This means not only the 311 operators and other auxiliary staff, but also library staff, for example, so that libraries in our communities can offer workshops for families on this structure and assist families that need where to go for help. This library school connection would be particularly useful as there are many reading groups throughout the city for parent with young children and afterschool homework and literacy supports as well.
- ❖ Inside the school system, the training needs are both apparent and significant, as teachers, as well as parents will need to receive training on this new system and know not only where to go for what, but also who is doing what, where and perhaps, how.
- ❖ In the midst of thinking about professional development it would be helpful for the council to remind the DOE that NYC high school students are smart, savvy and preparing for independence. They may need training on this restructuring to better access services and concerns based upon their needs as well.

The concerns regarding special needs students have been predominately expressed by my colleagues on the ARISE Committee, however, I would like to make the following addition:

- ❖ Many students eligible for homeless consideration and services under the McKinney Vento law, very often have IEP's, however it is difficult for their services to remain intact because they are being moved from shelter to shelter and school to school. Even though the law provides transportation to keep them in their existing school, they are often encouraged to move and the receiving school may or may not have the services needed and detailed on the IEP. It is crucial that the Education Committee help these students by ensuring that this new structure has the necessary processes to help these frail students, whose lives are complex enough without them being denied the services needed for academic success. Specifically, we are seeking your help to ensure that staff, working in the homeless system, will receive comprehensive and extensive training and that a pathway in the new structure will be identified for these staff persons to use to preserve the IEP's of these students so they receive the services they need.

The specific concerns regarding students with mental illnesses and/or behavioral or emotional challenges are the following:

- ❖ For students who have been hospitalized in a NYS hospital or a Residential Treatment Facility, an updated IEP and/or a change of placement are often necessary. Under the old system, these students were expected to go back to their previous school setting and access the IEP process from there. But, these students, at the very least, are too embarrassed to return to their previous school and more often experience toxicity to their previous school environment. The new restructuring has to provide access to the IEP process once the student is preparing to be discharged. Therefore, this requires not just a process but a path to personnel somewhere in the District or Borough structure, or both. To date we do not know who, or where they are or if the process can be changed so that students are not discharged to their old school, allowed to revert to old thought processes and behaviors and ultimately end up re-hospitalized.

- ❖ Similarly, for students who have mental health services and supports requiring HIPPA compliance, who are the contact persons for mental health professionals to seek when working with these students who require confidentiality parameters and coordination of services. Where would these staff persons go, especially when what is sought may not be attainable with the principal. There are only so many people you can talk with regarding one student if confidentiality is to be maintained. .
- ❖ For students with disruptive behaviors we would like to know whether the suspension offices will remain in their isolated locations and how they fit into the new structure. Specifically, will they be working with anyone in the district or borough offices and if so who and how will they work together.
- ❖ Lastly, we would like to know why the Bronx, a borough with a large number of renewal schools (if not the largest of all boroughs), a history of the most 911 calls for disruptive behaviors and identification as a high needs borough for children with mental health needs, only has one Borough Field Support Center.

Thank you for your time in considering these issues. We are hoping you hold another hearing like this next year to evaluate the progress on these and the other issues raised today.



151 West 30th Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10001
www.arisecoalition.org

**Testimony to be delivered to the New York City Council Committee on Education
Re: Oversight: DOE's Restructured School Support System**

October 1, 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this afternoon.

My name is Maggie Moroff. I am the Coordinator of the ARISE Coalition. We are parents, educators, advocates, and academics who work together to push for system-wide changes to improve day-to-day experiences and long-term outcomes for youth with disabilities in New York City.

Last spring, when the DOE first announced their intent to reorganize the school support structure, the Coalition members reached out to Chancellor Fariña and Deputy Chancellor Rello-Anselmi to say we were pleased to see the DOE moving away from the network structure that had proved confusing and obstructive to parents of students with disabilities. At that time, we offered a number of suggestions to make sure the new structure would provide increased instructional, programmatic, operational, and financial support and oversight for schools and improve special education services for children with disabilities and experiences in obtaining appropriate services for families.

ARISE Coalition Members: Adaptive Design Association, Advocates for Children of New York, AHRC New York City, Cathy Albisa, Mark Alter, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education & Human Development, New York University, David C. Bloomfield, Brooklyn College and the CUNY Graduate Center, Bronx Independent Living Services, Bay Brown, Brooklyn Center for the Independence of the Disabled, Brooklyn Defender Services, Center for Hearing and Communication, Center for the Independence of the Disabled, New York, Citywide Council on Special Education, Citywide District 75 Council, Coalition for Educational Justice, Tamesha Coleman, The Cooke Center for Learning and Development, Ziograin Correa, Sr., M.S.Ed., Helene Craner, Susan Crawford, Ruth DiRoma, Disability Rights New York, Education Rights Project of the Partnership for the Homeless, Richard and Lora Ellenson, Everyone Reading, Inc., The Go Project, Goddard Riverside Community Center, Olga Gonzalez, Jay Gottlieb, New York University, Paul Hutchinson, Include NYC, Revere Joyce, The Learning Disabilities Association of New York State, Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, Aurelia Mack, Matthew Mandelbaum, Shelly McGuinness, Diana Mendez, The Mental Health Association of New York, Metropolitan Parent Center of Sinergia, Inc., National Economic and Social Rights Initiative, Dana Neider, New Alternatives for Children, NYC Special Education Collaborative, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, New York Legal Assistance Group, New York Performance Standards Consortium, Jaclyn Okin Barney, Esq., Parents for Inclusive Education, Parent to Parent of New York State, Parent to Parent New York, Inc., Partnership for Children's Rights, Samantha Pownall, Cathy Rikhye, Ed. D., Department of Curriculum and Teaching, Teachers College, Columbia University, Raphael Rivas, Miguel L. Salazar, Jennifer and Peter Sellar, Iriss Shimony, Jon Sigall, Jo Anne Simon P.C., Karin Spraggs, Mark Surabian, MA, ATP, Instructor, Assistive Technologies, Pace Graduate School of Education, United Federation of Teachers, United We Stand, Constance Van Rolleghe, RueZalia Watkins, Wishes of Literacy.

Coordinator: Maggie Moroff -- mmoroff@advocatesforchildren.org -- (212) 822-9523

Since then, we have seen realized some of the recommendations we offered last spring. That's encouraging. Among the changes made, the DOE has created a position at each district office – a Family Support Coordinator - to serve as a dedicated contact for parents. However, a few of those Family Support Coordinator positions, including that for District 75, NYC's district for students with some of the most complicated special education needs, remain unstaffed. Also promising under the reorganization, each Borough Field Support Center employs a Deputy Director dedicated to Special Education. That Deputy Director works with the Central Office of Special Education and supervises several important staff members, including a Special Education Community Liaison, Administrators of Special Education, and some additional staff with expertise in a few areas critical to students with disabilities, such as transportation services.

However, some of the recommendations we made last spring were not adopted and remain areas of grave concern. We believe two of those recommendations, in particular, are essential for success under the new support system.

First and foremost, the new support structure, and corresponding contact information, must be disseminated to families. Parents need to be told who they should reach out to with concerns and questions, where they can find those people, and how they can get in touch with them. We urged the Chancellor last April to ensure that information would be sent home to families before the end of the 2014-15 school year, but for the most part, families still don't know how to find their way to Family Support Coordinators. That's clearly a problem. We polled ARISE Coalition members, and as of yesterday, only a few of us who are New York City public school parents had received any notice of the changes to the support structure. There is information on the DOE's website about where families can go for help. Information and a description of the new structure is also included in the Achieve NYC Guide to NYC Public Schools. There's a one-page Back-to-school Basics fact sheet, too. But most families we spoke with hadn't received a copy of either the full guide or the fact sheet as of this week. We have heard that schools have been told to deliver the fact sheet before the end of September, but that was yesterday and that is too late. Parents had questions and concerns over the summer. They had questions and concerns this past month. The DOE should have put copies of both guides, as well as instructions about how to access information on the website, into the hands of parents months ago. In addition, the DOE needs to answer questions specific to parents of students with disabilities, like who issues Related Service Authorizations or vouchers for special education tutoring under the new structure.

I'd also note that the information in the fact sheet and the guide are inconsistent – with one urging parents to reach out to District Family Advocates and the other directing them to Family Support Coordinators. Any extra steps required for parents to find help when they need it are problematic.

We have heard from some families who have managed this fall to find their way to Family Support Coordinators in the Superintendents' offices, and, for the most part, they appear to have had positive experiences. That makes us hopeful that as the Department gets staff in place and gets information to parents about where to turn for help, those parents will find the help they need much more easily than under the previous system. It is, however, too soon to tell for certain. The DOE, therefore, should act quickly to distribute information to parents through multiple means – backpacking letters home, posting information in schools, and sharing information via public service announcements on the trains, on billboards, and in social service and community-based offices throughout the city.

Second, I would like to speak briefly to another suggestion we made last spring to the Chancellor. It has been our experience that while some principals welcome support from above, others do not. Through this reorganization, the DOE should exercise considerably more authority over schools that have proved resistant to providing appropriate supports for students with special education needs as demonstrated by data and requests for assistance from parents and advocates in the past. We were excited last spring when the Council passed a bill requiring data sharing from the DOE with regard to special education. We hope to see the DOE use its new infrastructure to ensure that problems with service provision revealed by the data are addressed.

We thank you for hosting this hearing and giving us the opportunity to speak. To reiterate, we urge the DOE to get information on the new structure out to all parents as soon as possible. We also hope to see the DOE use this new structure to ensure that students with disabilities receive their mandated services as well as the quality instruction that they need and deserve. We encourage the Council to hold a similar hearing after the new structures have been in place for a while to make sure that our concerns and those of others have been addressed.



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

Testimony to be delivered to the New York City Council Committee on Education

Re: DOE's Restructured School Support System

October 1, 2015

Board of Directors

Eric F. Grossman, *President*
Jamie A. Levitt, *Vice President*
Harriet Chan King, *Secretary*
Paul D. Becker, *Treasurer*
Matt Berke
Jessica A. Davis
Adrienne Filipov
Robin L. French
Brian Friedman
Kimberley D. Harris
Caroline J. Heller
Jeffrey E. LaGueux
Maura K. Monaghan
Jonathan D. Polkes
Raul F. Yanes

Executive Director

Kim Sweet

Deputy Director

Matthew Lenaghan

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. My name is Randi Levine, and I am the Policy Coordinator at Advocates for Children of New York. For more than 40 years, Advocates for Children has worked to promote access to the best education New York can provide for all students, especially students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. AFC leads the ARISE Coalition and is a member of the New York Immigration Coalition's Education Collaborative and supports the testimony that both groups are giving today.

By linking supervision of schools with support of schools and by providing clear lines of accountability, the new DOE structure has the potential to serve as a conduit to help deliver high-quality classroom instruction, hold schools accountable for upholding the rights of students, and provide families with assistance in resolving problems. We also are pleased that each Borough Field Support Center has a deputy director for special education and a deputy director for English Language Learners, two populations that are in particular need of specialized support. While the jury is out on whether the new structure will result in improved schools, we would like to speak today about our experiences with the family support component of the new structure.

Through our Education Helpline, funded by the City Council, Advocates for Children speaks with thousands of parents every year. We know how difficult it can be for parents to navigate the education bureaucracy and figure out how to get assistance when a problem cannot be resolved at the school level. We are pleased that the new DOE structure includes a Family Support Coordinator in each Superintendent's office who is responsible for addressing families' concerns. In order for Family Support Coordinators to be effective, we have several recommendations.

First, Family Support Coordinators can help only if families know how to reach them. While we understand that the DOE asked schools to send home a back-to-school fact



sheet that explained the role of Family Support Coordinators, we have heard from families who have not received this information. In addition, this citywide fact sheet did not provide contact information for the specific Family Support Coordinator working in the student's particular school district, merely providing a link to the website that lists all of the Family Support Coordinators. We recommend that the DOE ensure that schools send information to families explaining the new structure and how to get help, along with the name, phone number, e-mail address, and office address for the specific Superintendent and Family Support Coordinator associated with the school. In addition, the DOE should add the Family Support Coordinator's name and contact information to each school's website.

Second, Family Support Coordinators can help only if they can give families accurate information and work to resolve issues effectively in a timely manner. The DOE needs to ensure that Family Support Coordinators have adequate training and a clear process for getting help when an issue arises that they do not know how to address. While families and AFC staff have reported some positive experiences working with Family Support Coordinators, they have also reported receiving incorrect information about issues such as the placement process for students with disabilities. We do not expect Family Support Coordinators to be experts in all areas of education during their first months on the job. We do, however, expect them to get the support they need to provide accurate information to parents.

Third, we want to ensure that the DOE does more than resolve one problem at a time, but uses the information Family Support Coordinators receive to drive change on a school, district, or citywide level. We recommend that the DOE track and monitor problems brought to Family Support Coordinators so that the DOE can identify trends, target resources and training strategically, and work to address systemic challenges.

Finally, given that more than 40 percent of New York City public school students speak a language other than English at home, the DOE must do more to ensure that families have access to high-quality interpretation and translation services so they can play a meaningful role in their children's education. AFC supports the call of the New York Immigration Coalition's Education Collaborative for full-time Language Access Coordinators in each Borough Field Support Center to help achieve this goal.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. I would be happy to answer any questions.



137-139 West 25th Street
12th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 627-2227
www.thenyic.org

**New York City Council Hearing DOE's Restructured School Support System
Testimony by Max Ahmed, New York Immigration Coalition
October 1st, 2015**

Good afternoon, and thank you to the members of the Council for convening this hearing and to Chairman Dromm for his continued leadership for immigrant communities.

My name is Max Ahmed, and I'm the Senior Education Advocacy Associate at the New York Immigration Coalition. We are an umbrella policy and advocacy organization with nearly 200 members from New York State, and we aim to achieve a fairer and more just society that values the contributions of immigrants and extends opportunity to all. As part of this work, we convene an Education Collaborative of grassroots immigrant organizations, policy and legal organizations and practitioners. Together we fight to increase English language learners' (ELLs') and immigrant students' access to a quality education and to expand opportunity for their parents to be engaged.

Thank you for this opportunity to share perspective on positive steps and opportunities to better support students and engage immigrant parents through the newly restructured school support system.

The NYIC appreciates the Translation & Interpretation Unit's new parent brochure that was recently distributed to all schools. The brochure has helped immigrant parents understand the language services available at schools and how to leave feedback on the services received. We also appreciate the Translation & Interpretation Unit's real concern for the barriers immigrant parents face and the opportunity to work with them to address these issues.

We're here today because DOE has significantly restructured how New York City's schools are supported for the first time in over a decade, yet translation and interpretation support for schools is yet to be included. Research has shown that one of the major factors predicting student achievement is the extent to which a student's family is able to participate and become involved in their child's education.¹ We applaud Chancellor Fariña for her welcome and wise focus on parent engagement.

The Education Collaborative's Build the Bridge campaign has worked hard to ensure that parents have access to quality translation and interpretation to help them be meaningfully engaged. Nearly half² of public school students – almost half a million families – speak a language other than English at home. According to the DOE³, more than 180 languages are spoken by our school families. Translation and interpretation are essential preconditions for ELL parent engagement, and also for including immigrant parents more who have English proficient children in our schools.

Parents have a right to translation and interpretation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and according to the DOE's own regulation – Chancellor's Regulation A-663⁴.

While services are technically available, lack of quality translation and interpretation remains a very serious problem for immigrant parents across the school system. Key barriers for parents accessing services at schools reported by the community include:

¹ See National Education Association research available at: <http://www.nea.org/tools/17360.htm>.

² 42% of public schools students speak a language other than English at home.

³ See <http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/languagepolicy.htm>

⁴ See <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/Translation/ChancellorRegulation/Language%20Access%20Policy>

- **Non-impartial or inappropriate individuals are often called upon to translate.** This includes students translating about their own academic performance, fellow parents translating about situations viewed as private family matters by the impacted parents, and school staff who haven't been properly trained;
- **Parents and schools face long wait times** for interpretation and translated materials. Parents are discouraged by messages from the school regarding how long and difficult it is for them to get services for parents. Parents lose income from waiting after they've taken time off work;
- **Parents who need services do not get them.** This happens even though parents have requested services. In addition, parents receive translated documents, but they aren't in the appropriate language;
- **Parents are afraid to ask for services due to the school climate or misperceptions.** Many schools are unaware of cultural gaps that need to be bridged to connect parents with services. Parents can feel unwelcome in schools and perceive, based on body language, tone, etc., that they should not ask for services even though they know services are available. Parents may have concerns that asking for services will make the family subject of unwanted attention, negatively impact their children's grades or mark the student and/or family as a problem or burden on the school;
- **Often, student-specific materials are not translated.** This includes report cards and Individualized Education Programs, which are rarely translated;
- **Translation quality is poor.** Sometimes services are provided but are so literal or technical that the parent cannot understand.

SOLUTION

Many schools want to provide quality translation and interpretation services to parents, but they need support to understand how the translation system works, to know best practices, and to solve problems. And, we need to ensure that ultimately schools are getting the support they need and are doing their part to provide quality services to parents.

Currently there are just 2 people at the Department of Education with the job of seeing how schools are doing with translation and interpretation, helping schools that need it, and ensuring improvements. There are more than 1700 schools for these 2 people to cover.

The NYC's Education Collaborative is calling for the new school support system to also include staff who are focused on overcoming language barriers parents are facing. Instead of 2 people for 1700 schools, at a minimum there should be a person in each Borough Field Support Center who is accountable for doing four very important things:

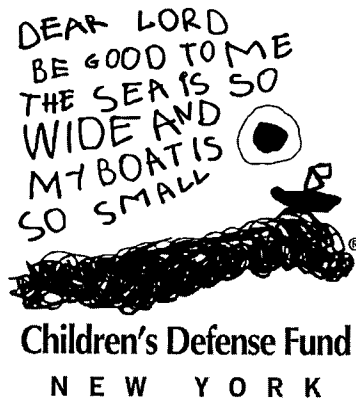
1. **Distinguishing** which schools need support on translation and interpretation.
2. **Identifying successes and gaps** to help schools recognize what's working and where they need help. They need to get input from schools about translated documents and interpreters provided through the DOE's central office.
3. **Supporting** schools.
4. **Ensuring** that parents get quality services.

The DOE needs to act now to bridge the gaps in the system because schools need support on translation and interpretation and immigrant parents need change.

Thank you.

Testimony of the Children's Defense Fund – New York
before the New York City Council Committee on Education regarding:

The DOE's Restructured School Support System



Delivered by:

Charlotte Pope

CDF-NY Education Justice Researcher
October 1, 2015

Contact:

Children's Defense Fund – New York

15 Maiden Lane, Suite 1200 NY, NY 10038
(212) 697-2323 www.cdfny.org

Good Afternoon, my name is Charlotte Pope. I am here on behalf of the Children's Defense Fund – New York. The Children's Defense Fund's (CDF) Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, a safe start and a moral start in life, and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. Through our national Cradle to Prison Pipeline® Campaign, CDF-NY works to replace punitive school discipline and safety policies in New York City that push children out of schools with social and emotional supports that encourage a positive school climate and improve educational and social outcomes for youth.

CDF-NY would like to thank Chair Dromm as well as the members and staff of the Council Committee on Education for convening today's hearing and providing this opportunity to provide testimony on New York City's Restructured School Support System. As steering committee members of the Dignity in Schools Campaign – New York, we are here today to draw attention to the opportunity this new system affords to operationalize NYC schools' use of guidance interventions like restorative justice -- an inclusionary school discipline approach focused on accountability and healing that is proven to increase academic achievement¹ and nurture inclusive school communities², and decrease race disproportionality in school discipline³.

In the past year, the Department of Education has taken significant steps to encourage the use of restorative justice practices in schools by adding "restorative approaches" to the progressive ladder of encouraged alternative supports and guidance interventions in the district discipline code, introducing staff from approximately 30 schools to restorative practices through off-site trainings, and partnering with the Brooklyn Community Foundation to place full-time Restorative Justice coordinators in four Brooklyn schools.

The DOE's new Restructured School Support System, composed of seven geographically-based Borough Field Support Centers (BFSCs), has the potential to maximize and operationalize these efforts by providing more centralized and meaningful technical assistance, coaching, and metrics to teachers, administrators, and students on school campuses as they implement restorative practices. Borough Field Support Centers are positioned to provide borough-level capacity to strategically monitor, evaluate and resource successful restorative justice implementation in schools. Such a coordinated system of support for the implementation of restorative practices does not currently exist in New York City, however we know it has been extremely important to the successful implementation of district-wide restorative practices in other localities like Oakland⁴ and Denver⁵.

School-wide restorative justice programming takes a community building approach to addressing the root causes of student disruptive or conflict behavior through listening, accountability, and healing.⁶ Importantly, it also aligns squarely with the six principles emphasized within Chancellor Farina's "Strong Schools, Strong Communities" school improvement plan: rigorous instruction, supportive environment, collaborative teachers, effective school leadership, strong family-community ties, and trust.⁷ These six elements of school improvement are grounded in the work of the Consortium on Chicago School Research. "The Framework for Great Schools," produced by the Consortium, stresses the establishment of a safe and orderly environment as the most basic prerequisite for learning.⁸ School reform efforts that do not build in social emotional learning⁹ and relational

trust¹⁰ have failed repeatedly in improving student achievement. In Chicago, an absence of a sense of safety and order in school had a direct effect on student motivation for learning and school participation.¹¹ Restorative justice increases trust in schools¹², and, as Chicago demonstrates, when trust grows, so does improvement in teachers' work orientation, the school's engagement with parents, and a sense of safety and order experienced by students.¹³

As we understand it, Borough Field Support Centers (BFSCs) will provide streamlined support to schools in a range of areas from school climate and safety to instruction and operations. The exact range and depth of supports is expected to vary. We have encouraged the DOE to further strengthen the utility of BFSCs by ensuring that they serve as borough-level coordinators of Restorative Justice implementation, assisting schools in developing, implementing, evaluating and improving restorative justice action plans and providing regular spaces for ongoing dialogue about the role of progressive discipline in schools. Such deliberate prioritization and incorporation of restorative justice within the "Strong Schools, Strong Communities" plan will facilitate desired outcomes and reduce reliance on currently over-utilized exclusionary discipline practices like suspensions, classroom removals and arrests.¹⁴ Research throughout the country consistently identifies links between exclusionary discipline and lower academic achievement, and disengagement from the learning environment.¹⁵ Without sincere and holistic efforts to utilize district systems of support like Borough Field Support Centers to improve schools' capacity to implement positive discipline and guidance interventions like restorative justice practices we will see compromised student outcomes¹⁶ and feelings of disillusionment with school.¹⁷

We are hopeful that the Council will continue to join us in calling for a long term, strategic approach to coordinated and resourced restorative justice implementation in NYC schools that not only resources and requires BFSCs to assist schools in implementing restorative justice and other positive discipline interventions, but also reforms the district discipline code to truly reflect inclusionary discipline philosophies. We are grateful to the Council for funding the 2015-2016 Restorative Justice Initiative, and ask that ongoing monitoring of the Initiative include inquiry into how and to what degree Borough Field Support Centers are able to support Initiative schools in implementing whole-school restorative practices. We look forward to working with the Council and DOE to ensure that the DOE's new system of support is effective as possible at improving outcomes for students. Thank you again for this opportunity to testify.

¹ Schiff, M. (2013). Dignity, Disparity and Resistance: Effective Restorative Justice Strategies to Plug the "School to Prison Pipeline". Prepared for the Center for Civil Rights Remedies and the Research-to-Practice Collaborative, National Conference on Race and Gender Disparities in Discipline. Retrieved from <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/state-reports/dignity-disparity-and-desistance-effective-restorative-justice-strategies-to-plug-the-2013school-to-prison-pipeline/schiff-dignity-disparity-crrr-conf-2013.pdf>

² Lewis, S. (Ed). (2009). Improving School Climate: Findings from schools implementing restorative practices. International Institute for Restorative Practices, May 19, 2009. Retrieved from <http://www.iirp.org/pdf/IIIP-Improving-School-Climate.pdf>

³ Gonzalez, T. (2015). Socializing schools: Addressing racial disparities in discipline through restorative justice. In D. J. Losen (Ed.), *Closing the school discipline gap: Research for policymakers*. New York: Teachers College Press.

⁴ Jain, S., Bassey, H., Brown, M.A., and Kalra, P. (2014). Restorative Justice in Oakland Schools Implementation and Impacts: An Effective Strategy to Reduce Racially Disproportionate Discipline, Suspensions and Improve Academic Outcomes. Oakland Unified School District. Retrieved from <http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us/cms/lib07/CA01001176/Centricity/Domain/134/OUSD-RJ%20Report%20revised%20Final.pdf>

⁵ Padres & Jóvenes Unidos and Advancement Project. (2014). *Lessons in Racial Justice and Movement Building: Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline in Colorado and Nationally*. Denver, CO: Author. Retrieved from <http://padresunidos.org/reports/lessons-racial-justice-and-movement-building>

⁶ McCluskey, G., Lloyd, G., Kane, J., Riddell, S., Stead, J., & Weedon, E. (2008). Can restorative practices in schools make a difference? *Educational Review*, 60(4), 405-417.

⁷ The New York City Department of Education. (2015). Strong Schools, Strong Communities: A New Approach to Supporting New York City's Public Schools and All of Our Students. New York, NY: NYCDOE. Retrieved from http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/C955EF12-EBBC-4B41-AF8D-20597C55DF0C/0/StrongSchoolsStrongCommunities_NYCDOE.pdf.

⁸ Bryk, A. S. (2010). Organizing Schools for Improvement. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91(7), 23-30.

⁹ Jain et al., Op. Cit.

¹⁰ Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., & Easton, J. Q. (2010). Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

¹¹ Consortium on Chicago School Research. (2010). New Book by Consortium Researchers Identifies Proven Formula for Successful School Reform in Chicago [Press Release]. Retrieved from

<http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/OrganizingSchoolsPressRelease.pdf>.

¹² Morrison, B., Blood, P. & Thorsborne, M. (2005). Practicing restorative justice in school communities: Addressing the challenge of culture change. *Public Organization Review*, 5(4), 335-357.

¹³ Bryk et al., Op. Cit.

¹⁴ According to 2013-2014 data released through the Student Safety Act, nearly one-fifth of all suspensions (or 9,000 suspensions total) were issued for insubordination. Black and Latino students make up nearly 67 percent of the student population but represent almost 90 percent of students suspended from school. Further, only 12 percent of NYC public school students have individualized education plans (IEPs), yet students with IEPs make up 36 percent of suspended students. According to the 2014-2015 Student Safety Act Reporting on Arrests and Summonses, there were 283 arrests and 472 summonses, where disorderly conduct accounted for 37.7% of all summonses issued. (see <http://www.nyclu.org/content/student-safety-act-data>)

¹⁵ American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force. (2008). Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in Schools?: An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations. *American Psychologist*, 63(9), 852-862.

¹⁶ Hargens, D. (2012). Restorative Justice in Schools: Review of the Literature and Current District Data Brief. Louisville, KY: Jefferson County Public Schools – Shaping the Future. Retrieved from

http://www.jefferson.kyschools.us/departments/planning/ProgramEvaluation/Judi2_20_14/RestorJustisPract2011_JV.pdf.

¹⁷ Lewis, S. (Ed). (2009). Improving School Climate: Findings from schools implementing restorative practices. Bethlehem, PA: International Institute for Restorative Practices. Retrieved from <http://www.iirp.edu/pdf/IIRP-Improving-School-Climate.pdf>.



Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council (CPAC)

Website: <http://www.cpacnyc.com>

Twitter: @cpacnyc

Email: infocpacnyc@gmail.com

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/cpacny>

Co-Chair - Nancy Northrop

1st Vice-Chair - Nan Eileen Mead

Recording Secretary - Abi Corbin

Corresponding Secretary - Marianne Russo

Co-Chair - Yvette Small

2nd Vice-Chair - Adrienne Ferenczy

Treasurer - Ray Wilson

Parliamentarian - Martha Kessler

Testimony before the Committee on Education of the City Council, October 1, 2015 regarding DOE's Restructured School Support System by Nancy Northrop, Co-Chair, Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council (CPAC)

Good afternoon. My name is Nancy Northrop. I am the Co-Chair of the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council (CPAC), which represents all the Presidents Councils, and through them, all the PAs, PTAs, and parents in New York City.

Part of the restructuring of the school support system involved the complete reorganization of high school superintendents, although this change was made quietly without input from parents, teachers, or school principals. The new organization is so complicated that the DOE has yet to post a complete structure on its website. Nearly every high school superintendent now covers high schools in multiple boroughs, likely spending more time driving than in schools. Most parents, teachers, and principals who wish to meet with their high school superintendent will need to travel to a different borough to do so. Queens has been hardest hit – it no longer has a dedicated high school superintendent. Instead it has 12 high school superintendents. Little wonder that parents across New York City (through CPAC, please see attached letter) and the UFT have both come out against this reorganization.

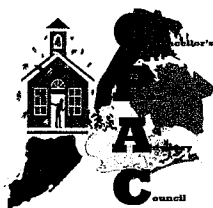
Why does CPAC oppose the reorganization?

- 1) We believe the DOE needs to come up with a plan to fix high schools first and then develop an oversight structure.
- 2) The new structure is exactly the same as the discredited network system, which will undermine efforts to improve high schools. Schools need to work together to find solutions to the myriad problems they face – and this is difficult when four schools sharing a building could have four different superintendents and any single district or borough could have up to a dozen high school superintendents.
- 3) There is no expectation that high school superintendents will attend DLT or Presidents Council meetings – which means that meaningful discussions on local high school issues by all stakeholders will no longer take place. At one recent DLT meeting, a high school principal attended in hopes of discussing enrollment issues with his superintendent – but of course, there was no one there.

4) It will become nearly impossible to hold anyone accountable for high school performance. Who will you call about performance in your district? In your borough? Will you call 12 different superintendents???

I will leave you with the lament of one high school principal who noted that he had had six different superintendents in eight years. Like most of us, he believes this latest structure will not last, but what he wanted was a superintendent who could get to know him and his school and provide real assistance.

Please join parents and the UFT and encourage the DOE to develop a sensible high school superintendent organization.



Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council (CPAC)

Website: www.cpacnyc.com

Email: infocpacnyc@gmail.com

Co-Chair – Yvette Small

1st Vice-Chair – Nan Mead

Recording Secretary – Abi Corbin

Corresponding Secretary – Marianne Russo

Co-Chair – Nancy Northrop

2nd Vice-Chair – Adrienne Ferenczy

Treasurer – Ray Wilson

Parliamentarian- Martha Kessler

August 13, 2015

Carmen Fariña
Chancellor, Department of Education
Tweed Courthouse
52 Chambers Street
New York, New York 10007

Dear Chancellor Fariña,

In May the CPAC Executive Board and presidents of the High School Presidents Council representing Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx wrote to you expressing our concern over the creation of the Affinity Group Superintendencies. CPAC, representing all the community districts and boroughs – that is, all the elementary, middle, and high schools in NYC -- is joining with the UFT in opposing the new reorganization of high school superintendencies. We agree with the UFT description that “the plan is inadequate and is a step backward rather than a step forward in improving our schools.”

The new high school superintendencies more closely resemble the much ridiculed networks, which proved ineffective and divided communities -- and which you rightly disbanded. The newly created high school Affinity Groups snake across New York City, but under the new structure, even community-based high school superintendents have seen the number of districts under their responsibility grow from 3-5 to an unmanageable 6-8. Most boroughs will now have 6-9 overlapping high school superintendents. Why do we oppose this reorganization?

1) The DOE needs to develop a plan to fix high schools first, so that students have access to the coursework – both remedial and advanced – to ensure that they can master high school material, graduate in a timely manner, and be adequately prepared for college or career. Fixing the system will depend on creative thinking and will likely depend on communities of school sharing resources and facilities. Only after the DOE has developed its plan should it settle upon a high school structure.

2) We believe that the new structure will undermine efforts to improve high schools. Last year we began to see superintendents reassert themselves, working with schools to raise standards and bringing principals together to share best practices. Under the new structure, superintendents will spend hours in cars covering great distances simply to complete their basic task of reviewing and assisting schools. Principals will have to travel to other boroughs simply to share best practices with colleagues. As with networks, many nearby high schools will not have the opportunity to work together and will no longer have the ability to find geo-centric solutions to their myriad problems.

3) Oddly, the new structure makes it even more difficult for boroughs and districts to discuss how to improve high schools. With no expectation that high school superintendents will attend the DLTs in which they have schools, meaningful discussion of local high school issues by all stakeholders will not take place. How can anything substantive be written in DCEPs about high schools when it could require the coordination of half a dozen high school superintendents? In addition, DLTs are mandated to resolve SLT grievances and provide requested support to improve school governance, but without the active participation of the superintendent at the DLT, this function is meaningless.

4) We question whether there will be any clear method for holding superintendents accountable for the schools in their superintendencies. Under the new system, we will no longer be able to look at high school performance by district or borough for any indication of how superintendents are faring. How will the parents, staff, the DOE, and public officials know how superintendents are doing? How will we be able to hold superintendents accountable?

5) High school parents will have little access to their superintendents. Currently, parents meet monthly with their superintendents at Presidents' Council meetings, where parents and parent-leaders know they will have the opportunity to discuss academic and school governance issues, or deeply personal issues. Many issues are resolved with a quiet word. At Presidents' Council meetings, superintendents also have the opportunity to learn whether new policies are gaining traction. Under the new organization, there is no expectation that high school superintendents will attend presidents' council meetings and thus they will never receive feedback from parents. Instead one superintendent will act as a "parent liaison" gatekeeper, ensuring that most parents will no longer have easy access to their superintendent – and many, if not most, parents will have to travel to a different borough if they wish to meet with their superintendent. Clearly a step backward in parent engagement.

We once again urge the DOE to halt the reorganization of the high school superintendencies until it has developed a plan to improve city high schools and resolved the significant logistical issues created by the new plan.

Most respectfully,

The Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council

Approved by the membership August 13, 2015

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nancy Northrop

Address: 60 Summer St

I represent: CPAC (Chancellor's Parent

Address: Advisory Council) at Tweed

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: Oct. 1, 2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jim Dewar

Address: _____

I represent: SELF

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Deputy Chancellor Dorinda Gibson
Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/1/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ursalina Ramirez

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Deputy **Appearance Card** *Josh Wallack*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/1/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deputy Chancellor Dorita Gibson

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/1/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deputy Chancellor Josh Wallack

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 10.1.15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DENISE GORDON

Address: 722 De Kalb Ave, 11216

I represent: Parent Empowerment Services

Address: as ab

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: Oct 1, 2011

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: GREGORY DISTEFANO

Address: 26 COVINGTON Circle S. IN 5

I represent: NEW ACTION / GFT 1031

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10-1-15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maggie Moroff

Address: ARISE Coalition

I represent: _____

Address: 151 West 30th St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/1/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Randi Levine

Address: _____

I represent: Advocates for Children of New York

Address: 151 W. 30th St, New York, NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/1/15

Name: Matthew (PLEASE PRINT) Rudensky

Address: 500 E 2ND AVE 13E

I represent: Myself and former students

Address: at PS 34 (District 1)

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Rue Zalia Watkins (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 50 Broadway

I represent: Mental Health Association

Address: 50 Broadway 19th Fl. New York, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/1/15

Name: Max Ahmed (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 137-139 West 25th St. 12th Fl. NY, NY 10011

I represent: New York Immigration Coalition

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 10/1/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Aileen Nakkeade

Address: 1102 Marwick Street

I represent: Parents + Children they had D&B

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 10/01/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jenny Dossou

Address: 444 Avenue X #5A

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: October 1 2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alicea Flynn

Address: 488 Bch 66th St

I represent: Title 1 DPAC 27 chair

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms