

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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February 4, 2016
Start: 1:15 p.m.
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: DANIEL DROMM
Chairperson

STEPHEN T. LEVIN
Chairperson

LETITIA JAMES
Public Advocate

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

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Lisa Bennett Wells
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Catherine Cliff, Staff Attorney
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Denise Gordon
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[sound check, pause]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, good afternoon everyone and welcome to this joint oversight hearing of the Education and General Welfare Committees on support for students who are homeless or in temporary housing. I'm New York City Council Member Daniel Dromm, and I'm Chair of the Education Committee. New York City is experiencing a homelessness crisis with homelessness at the highest level since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Currently, there are more than 86,000 homeless children and youth in the New York City public schools--in public schools including charter schools. Of those, approximately 23,000 are living in city shelters while the rest are doubling up with other family members or living in other temporary residences. Hispanic and Black children are over-represented among homeless students as are English Language Learners. Young children are more likely to be homeless than older children. In 2013 to '14 in that school year the most recent data available, 36% of homeless New York City students were in Pre-K through second grade. Disruptions during these early grades, which are a critical period for learning basic reading, writing and math

skills can be particularly harmful for future learning. Children face serious consequences to their wellbeing as a result of the instability and stress from being homeless. As one report put it: Without a bed to call their own, they have lost safety, privacy and the comforts of home as well as friends, pets, possessions, reassuring routines and community. These losses combined to create a life altering experience that inflicts profound and lasting scars. Research shows that homeless children go hungry at twice the rate of other children and suffer from nutritional deficiencies that often lead to high rates of overweight and obesity. Children experiencing homelessness are also sick four times more often than other children, and have three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems compared to children who have stable homes. Most homeless children are homeless for more than one school year, and are more likely to transfer to schools than permanently housed students. Changing schools can greatly impede a student's academic and social growth, and it is estimated that a child who changes schools take from four to six months to recover academically. Homelessness also affects

attendance as homeless students have much higher rate
of absenteeism. In addition, homeless students in
the city are falling behind their peers academically.
They perform far worse on state English and math
tests than their--than their non-homeless peers.
Graduation rates for homeless students are far lower
and drop--and drop-out rates far higher than their
housed peers. Studies have found that children who
are homeless are also more likely to repeat a grade
than non-homeless children. Unaccompanied homeless
youth face even more obstacles than other homeless
students. These barriers may include low literacy
levels, a lack of credits, self-support obligations,
and teen parenthood. Homeless youth especially those
who have been out of school for some time may have
difficulty in enrolling in regular high school
classes due to low literacy levels, and an inability
to meet the credit requirements for alternative high
schools. In addition, many unaccompanied youth
cannot attend school during regular classroom hours
due to a need to support themselves and their
children. LGBTQ youth comprise a disproportionate
number of the homeless population, and are eight
times more likely to experience homelessness.

Thousands of LGBTQ youth are forced out onto the streets every year, and they comprise a reported 40% of the total homeless youth population. LGBTQ--LGBTQ youth experience greater levels of bullying, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking violence, trauma, HIV infection, mental health issues, and substance abuse than their heterosexual counterparts in the homeless youth population. I'm especially interested in hearing about any DOE of DHS programs for this extremely vulnerable population. Today's hearing will provide an opportunity to learn more about the DOE's programs for students in temporary housing as well as DHS' efforts to assist homeless children and families. The committee also looks forward to hearing the concerns and recommendations of parents, students, educators, advocates and other stakeholders on homeless students. I'd like to remind everyone who wishes to testify today that you must fill out a witness slip, which is located on the desk of the Sergeant-at-Arms near the front of the room. To allow as many people to testify as possible, testimony will be limited to three minutes per pupil. Please note that all witnesses will be sworn in before testifying. And

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now, I'd like to turn the floor over to my colleague
Steve Levin, Co-Chair of this hearing who will make a
few remarks as well.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
Council Member Dromm, Chair Dromm. Good afternoon,
everybody. I'm Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair
of the Council's Committee on General Welfare. I
would like to thank my colleagues for being here
today. I want to thank my colleague Chair of the
Education Committee Council Member Danny Dromm for
joining me today in a joint committee hearing to
address this incredibly important issue. In New York
City there are 86,000 homeless students in the public
school system. Now, that number includes both those
that are living in the shelter system, and those
children whose parents have self-reported that they
are living quote, unquote "doubled up." We know that
between school years 2010 and 2011, and years--and
school year 2013 through 2014, one out of every nine
students experienced some form of homelessness by
that standard. We also know that these students face
significant barriers compared to their stably housed
peers. The instability, disruption and trauma of
homelessness can have profound effects on children's

development and ability to learn. And my colleague mentioned some statistics. I want to--they bear repeating. Research shows that homeless children are hungry and sick more often than their housed peers. According to the National Center on Family Homelessness, homeless children go hungry at twice the rate of other children, and suffer from nutritional deficiencies that often lead to high rates of overweight and obesity. Children experiencing homelessness are also sick four times more often than other children with four times as many respiratory infections, twice as many ear infections, and five times as many gastrointestinal problems. The high levels of stress experienced by homeless children and their frequent exposure to violence has severe mental health consequences. Children experiencing homelessness have three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems compared to non-homeless children. And a recent review of research literature found that 10 to 26% of homeless pre-school aged children had mental health requirements requiring--mental health problems requiring clinical evaluation. That number, 10--10%, a 26% increased to 24 to 40% among homeless school

age children, two to four times the rate of poor children in a similar age range. The data and the research is clear that being homeless has a server effect on the health and mental health of the children that experience it. [background comments, pause] Homelessness also increases the likelihood that students will have to transfer schools, which has been shown to be an obstacle to academic achievement, and homeless children have much higher rates of absenteeism. All of these facts accumulate in the result that graduation rates for homeless students are far lower, and dropout rates are much higher than for their stably housed peers. We know that experiencing homelessness does not only disrupt a child's life during the period of homelessness, but has lasting repercussions that can affect the rest of their life. As the Shelter Census continues to climb and as economic realities force many people to live doubled up with friends and family, we have a growing number of children that face significant obstacles just to be able to attend school. And when these children face an unstable situation, we as a city must ensure that they are doing whatever--that we are doing whatever we can to keep their school as--as a

constant in their life. One particularly troubling statistic is that this past fiscal year only 53% of families in the shelter system are placed according to their youngest child's school address. That number is down from 83% in Fiscal Year 2011. The committee is aware that DHS faces an ongoing capacity crisis and must place families wherever there is an available shelter unit. But that does not make it easier for the families that are forced to make long commutes on subways and buses to get their children to school. We are pleased at the recent announcement that Yellow School Bus services will finally be available to students living in shelter, but today we expect to hear more about the progress of that effort, and whether busing is available for all--for all students who are interested. We--we are also interested in learning from DHS today what services it provides in shelters for students. When the family assistants are available in some shelters to ensure that children are attending school, there should also be robust services for students. Children should have access to space to do homework and after school services. We are also interested in hearing what happens for children living in

commercial hotels and cluster sites where there are often little to no on-site services for families. In short, it's important that we recognize that there needs to be consistency throughout the homeless system for children that have become homeless. No child should be at a disadvantage because they had the bad luck to go into a shelter without support services. That should not happen. So we need to look at best practices throughout the system, and ensure that every single child has access to those programs, not just the ones that were lucky enough to go into a shelter with a good provider. In addition to hearing from agencies here today, we also look forward to hearing from those with on-the-ground experience working with families about what their challenges are, and what recommendations they have for the changes the city can make to better serve our students.

I would like to thank committee staff for their work today to prepare for today's hearing, Counsel Andrea Vasquez; Policy Analyst Tanya Cyrus; and Finance Analyst Dohini Sompura, as well as the staff of the Education Committee, and I want to acknowledge my colleagues who are here today, Council

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Member Mark Treyger of Brooklyn, Andy King of the Bronx, Carlos Menchaca of Brooklyn, Antonio Reynoso of Brooklyn, Margaret Chin of Manhattan, Chaim Deutsch of Brooklyn, Vanessa Gibson of the Bronx, our Public Advocate Letitia James, as well as Council Member Annabel Palma of the Bronx, and I think we are--we're joined by also Fernando Cabrera of the Bronx as well. And with that, I will turn it back over to my colleague Danny Dromm.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much Chair Levin, and now I'd like to ask Public Advocate Letitia James to say a few words.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: First, let me thank Chairman Dromm and Chairman Levin and advocates and parents and community members as well as members of the administration all for being here today. Today in New York City 84,000 students are homeless, 28,500 are in shelter; 49,000 are doubled up; 6,000 are unsheltered, according to the Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness. These children come from and continue to live in our poorest neighborhoods all throughout our city. In fact, the highest concentrations of homeless students are in District 9 in the South Bronx, and District 23, which

includes Brownsville and East New York and Brooklyn.
And District 23 in Brownsville has the highest
absentee rate in 2013-2014, and is the lowest
performing school district in the entire city. And
suspension rates is as high as 6% in some of these
districts. For homeless students, school is a safe
respite. It is their home. School plays a
critically important role in providing stable social
networks and parental support, but the fact is
unfortunately we've been failing these children. We
as a city--we as a city must do better. The number
of homeless students in New York City is growing, and
these students are continually put in under-
performing schools that lack resources to begin with,
and many of these students get suspended because they
are not given their learning supports. And so, I'm
urging--urging the Administration and all of us here
today to stop warehousing poor students in under-
performing schools. To stop placing students in
shelters too far from their schools. To stop
homeless students from dropping out, to assign
education coordinators at each shelter to work with
families to navigate the education system, and
provide a dedicated work space with tutors and

homework helpers at all family shelters. And basically, individuals that can talk to these children. To better coordinate resources and share information to address systematic gaps in services. To increase oversight and support for homeless services that have open ACS cases. A number of these children who unfortunately are in unstable home environments have witnessed a lot of trauma in their lives, and they require special services. And it's really critically important that if a child must be moved to another school or district the move must be seamless, and that means individual--individual education plan services must immediately follow the student, and more resources must be provided to the students and to the families. I thank the City Council. I thank Chair Dromm. I thank Chair Levin. I thank my colleagues in the City Council. I thank the staff of the City Council, and I thank my staff for all of the research that they have done in their commitment to this issue. And I look forward to hearing from the Administration and from all of the agencies on how we can address this major, major problem in the City of New York, and something that I

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have been focused on for a very long time. I thank
you. [background comments, pause]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Public
Advocate James. I am now going to swear in our first
panel. They are Deputy Chancellor Elizabeth Rose
from the Department of Education and Lois Herrera
also from the Department of Education. So can I ask
if you would 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?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: I do.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you and please
begin.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Thank you. Good
afternoon, Chairs Dromm and Levin, Public Advocate
James and members of the Education and General
Welfare Committees here today. My name is Elizabeth
Rose and I'm the Deputy Chancellor for Operations at
the New York City Department of Education. I am
joined by Lois Herrera, Chief Executive Officer of
the Office of Safety and Youth Development, known as
OSYD. Within the DOE, OSYD is the central office
that coordinates the implementation of the McKinney-

Vento Act in our schools, and oversees the Department's cross-functional and interagency approach. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the DOE's work to support our students in temporary housing. Students in temporary housing are among our most vulnerable populations, and we have taken several steps to ensure that they receive the same educational experience as their permanently housed peers. We understand that students in temporary housing are experiencing challenges through no fault of their own, and that for many of them school is a vital source of continuity and stability. To this end we provide additional supports and services through school district, borough and even shelter-based staff. We have a number of existing programs and partnerships such as the Community Schools Initiative, and its mental health and academic intervention components and have also initiated new programs to meet the unique needs of this population. We still have work to do, and will continue to work closely with the Department of Homeless Services and other agencies to provide additional services. We have made significant strides over the last few years in identifying and supporting our students in

temporary housing. Most significantly, we recently launched a major new transportation initiative for students in grades K to 6 who reside in DHS Shelter System. The initiative offers Yellow Bus Service to an additional 2,500 students with pickups from 300 bus stops near DHS facilities and drop-offs at nearly 750 schools. To accomplish this, we extended existing routes and created 189 new bus routes. The new service makes it easier for students in temporary housing travel from the shelter where they live to school throughout the city. This new service also provides parents with additional flexibility to undertake apartment searchers, participate in job training programs, and seek out employment to help facilitate the exit from the shelter system. Students who prefer traveling on their own are still eligible for a full fare Metro Card, and the parents of students in Pre-K through Sixth Grade are also eligible for free Metro Cards of their own to accompany their child to and from school. As we continue to roll out the program, we are working closely with DHS to ensure effective parent engagement so that all eligible students are taking advantage of this new service.

I'd like to take a moment outside of my testimony to acknowledge the work of Advocates for Children on this initiative. We've been working with them and meeting with them regularly, and they have been a long time advocate on behalf of expanding this Yellow Bus Service. Another recent initiative is our expanded effort to ensure that parents of students in temporary housing are aware of their children's eligibility for Pre-K. Outreach efforts over the summer targeted DHS shelters citywide, and resulted in the enrollment of 60% of Pre-K eligible students residing in these shelters. This is up from 45% of Pre-K eligible students the prior year, and from 30% the year before that. So effectively doubled the percentage of eligible students are now in Pre-K. More broadly, all students in temporary houses-- housing direct service programs are either provided through partnering with community based organizations or certified teachers, social workers and guidance counselors. Programs are designed to identify students' feelings, address social and our academic issues, help students set goals and develop strategies to accomplish these goals. These programs provide support both academically and through social-

emotional learning to students in temporary housing. These include tutoring, homework help, test preparation, post-secondary planning, mentoring, mental health supports, individual and group counseling and empowerment programs, and aim to identify and address issues related to behavior, self esteem, attendance, trauma and/or obstacles to academic success. In addition, the Office of Students and Temporary Housing, a constituent office within OSYD, offers family workshops where students and their families can identify with one another, and discuss issues they face. These workshops help to build a supportive network and competency to assist families in the areas of education, employment, familial relationships and parental support.

As you are aware, Congress Enacted the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001 to put protections for the educational rights of students in temporary housing into law. This Act requires school districts to take action to remove barriers to enrollment, attendance and success in school attributable to homelessness. Chancellors Regulations A-101 and A-780 in particular conform to the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act. These

regulations outline the rights listed in the act and state DOE's obligation to ensure that these students receive the programs and services that children residing in permanent housing receive. In order to understand the broad scope of our work with students in temporary housing, we would like to first define the population that we are discussing. Under McKinney-Vento and accordingly DOE Regulations, a student in temporary housing is defined as one who lives in emergency or transitional housing or shares housing due to loss of housing or economic hardship known and doubled up. Or, lives in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate housing, or is awaiting foster care placement, or is unaccompanied or lives in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, or bus and train stations, or has primary night time residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations.

During the 2014-2015 school year, 82,514 New York City public school students were covered under McKinney-Vento. 29,215 of whom were identified as living in a shelter at some point during the

course of the school year. This is a cumulative number. A student's housing status is identified in several ways. All parents are given a Residency Questionnaire at the time of enrollment in a new school and/or when they report a change of address. This type of identification, although wide reaching, is subject to the limitations of self-reporting by the parents. In addition to the Residency Questionnaire, DHS provides the DOE with a listing of school aged children who reside in their shelters. The DOE is able to match this list with its student records ensuring proper identification of students residing in DHS shelters. Once students are identified, they are assured of the following rights:

To attend school regardless of where they live for the duration of their homelessness.

To choose to remain at the school of origin where they attended before they became homeless or to transfer to another school for which they meet the school's eligibility and enrollment criteria.

To the extent feasible, a student shall be kept in the school of origin unless this is contrary to the wishes of the student's parent.

To immediately enroll in a school even if the family is unable to provide proof of residency, immunization and/or previous school records at that time, and to have a grace period of 30 days compile the necessary documentation.

To receive free school meals.

To receive free transportation to school and school programs.

To Receive comparable services and programs as offered to other students in the school.

At the school level, schools are required to display posters informing parents of their rights under McKinney-Vento and Chancellors Regulations A-101 and A-780. As part of its Youth Development Consolidated Plan, each school must assign an appropriate staff person to serve as their school's students in temporary housing school based liaison to track the STH population, and provide interventions and support services. These can include, but are not limited to helping to submit a busing request to the Office of People Transportation, reminding other school staff of an STH student's rights to immediately enroll, and clarifying which supplies can be purchased with Title 1 Funds. Over the last two

years all STH School Based Liaisons have also been required to attend an annual professional development session in the late fall in collaboration with New York State Technical and Education Assistance Center for Homeless Students known as New York State Teaches. This session provides a training course on McKinney-Vento and the importance of their role in servicing this population of students. The liaisons also participate in breakout sessions including the student panel. Multiple sessions are held to accommodate all School Based Liaisons. Training and workshops are also provided directly to parents and shelter providers. In addition, each school is required to allocate portion of its Title 1 funding to serve STH students. This funding is typically used to assist STH students with a range of academic and non-academic support including assistance with urgent needs such as school supplies, and school uniforms where applicable. To further meet the requirements of McKinney-Vento, the DOE also has STH Content Experts in every borough and shelter based family assistance. These employees are able to meet students and families where they live, and connect them to the supports and services they require. The

ten STH Content Experts supervise and support DOE shelter based family assistance. They provide training for shelter and school based staff in order to foster understanding of the law and to share best practices. The Content Experts visit family shelters within their respective boroughs to ensure that mandated services provide, and that supplementary educational and counseling services are readily available. They act as advocates for students in the schools and in the community and also work with principals to ensure that every school has viable plan for students in temporary housing. The 117 shelter based Family Assistants work with all STH families and students conducting intake and move-out interviews, distributing and collecting questionnaires and maintaining intake and move-out logs. They inform families of STH and unaccompanied youth of their educational rights by distributing the McKinney-Vento guides and posters, and help with school enrollment and transfers by collaborating with school based staff and the Office of Student Enrollment. And by assisting the STH family to obtain all necessary documents needed for enrollment. They coordinate with the Office of People

Transportation in arranging transportation for students. In collaboration with the STH Content Expert, Family Assistants monitor the attendance of students in temporary housing, work with families to improve student attendance, assist in recruiting the parents of STH for activities intended for them, and refer students to extended day activities. There are also STH Family Assistants assigned to work at DHS' Prevention Assistance in Temporary Housing, PATH Intake Center in the Bronx who meet with families at the point of entry, and refer them to DOE staff once families arrive at their assigned shelters. In addition to the Content Experts and Family Assistants School Support Services staff in the Borough Field Support Centers also support students in temporary housing. They work closely with schools to ensure that all students receive the supports to which they are entitled. They act as advocates for students in the schools by helping to identify student means and resources that are available, both within the school and community. The Student Support Service staff help principals ensure school plans for STH are submitted annually, and implemented with a high degree of fidelity.

In 2005, DOE and DHS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in order to facilitate the ability of DHS to place children and their families in shelter locations that are near the school in which the youngest child was last enrolled. In 2011, both agencies and designated shelter providers entered into a second MOU in order to strengthen our combined efforts to better provide services to the students in temporary housing. As a result, DOE is better able to accurately identify which students currently reside in shelters and, therefore, qualify for McKinney-Vento services and provisions. The DOE's shelter based family assistance also engage families, DHS staff and DHS contracted shelter providers in educational planning. Through our combined efforts, students residing in DHS shelters are more likely to be identified and in receipt of appropriate services and supports.

The DOE also works collaboratively with other New York City agencies and community based service providers to address the needs of STH. We work with the Administration for Children Services Head Start Program in order to provide services to pre-school students. We have incorporated the

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Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Asthma
Questionnaire into the intake process, and by doing
so, have been able to connect students with asthma to
appropriate medical care and treatment. We connect
students who reside in Department of Youth and
Community Development shelters with referrals for
alternative programs and educational services such as
TASK and Learn to Work programs, We conduct
professional development on STH youth in
collaboration with Human Resources Administration's
domestic violence shelters, and we are currently
working with HRA to enter into an MOU to enable us to
better address the needs of students residing in
domestic violence shelters. In addition, DOE is an
at large member on the Continuum of Care Board of
Directors. The Continuum of Care represents
different agencies and CBOs that provide services to
homeless clients of all ages and needs throughout New
York City. While we have met and exceeded our
obligations under McKinney-Vento, and are proud of
our new initiatives, we know that there is still more
work to do to ensure that students in temporary
housing have all of the supports and services they
need to succeed. The entire administration is

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committed to achieving this goal, and I know that we
can count on the support of the Council to see it to
fruition. Thank you for your time today. We look
forward to working with you on this important issue.

[background comments, pause]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So I just want to
acknowledge that we've been joined by Council Member
Mark Levine, Council Member Ritchie Torres, Council
Member Vinny Gentile was here, Council Member--Oh,
okay, Barry Grodenchik and Council Member Ben Kallos
and Council Member Inez Barron also.

MALE SPEAKER: [off mic] And Council
Member Maisel.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And Council Member
Alan Maisel also is here. So thank you, Deputy
Chancellor for your testimony, and I just want to
drill down on the number a little bit how we identify
and classify children as homeless. In your testimony
you said that during the 2014-15 school year, 82,514
New York City public school students were covered
under McKinney-Vento, and 29,215 were identified and
living in a shelter. Can you explain the--the
differences in definition and the reason for the
differences in the numbers.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So, the 29,215 represents all students who at any one point in the course of the school year were living within a New York City shelter. The larger number includes several other categories of students, including children awaiting foster care, children living in doubled up housing, children living in a hotel or motel, or other temporary residences. So all of the categories are covered by McKinney-Vento rights. Of that larger number, 29,000 was in a New York City shelter at some point over the course of the year.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So you said one--one out of every nine students experience homelessness at some point in their career?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: In--in 2014-15 at some point in the course of that school year.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Of that school year. So a huge number of students who have to face that. Well, I'm going to go directly to some questions really about transportation because that's something that I've taken an interest in as well, and really want to just home in on that. So many students in the shelters received busing last year, and of those

how many received busing to attend a school or origin
versus their local school?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So at any--as
you know, there is change is over the course of the
year of the number of students in shelters. So I'll
give effectively a--a broad average. Prior to the
implementation of this new initiative, there were
about 4,200 students who were already receiving
Yellow Bus Service in that did not require it on
their IEPs. There were about another thousand
students who have Yellow Bus Services on their IEPs,
and were receiving it. So there were about 5,200
students who were receiving Yellow Bus Service who
were living in shelters. With this new initiative we
have offered Yellow Bus Service to an additional
2,500 students who are in shelters who have not been
receiving Yellow Bus Service. Now, all students who
did not receive Yellow Bus Service in the past were
eligible for a Metro Card, and so they did have
transportation to and from school, and their parents
were also eligible for a Metro Card for students in K
to 6 to transport them to school. All of those
children have now been offered Yellow Bus Service.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So of that number, how many are receiving busing to attend the school or origin versus the local school? Do you have that number?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So we don't classify these children on that dimension. So we don't have that particular number.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Under the Chancellors Regulations busing should be arranged within five days, but we've heard a lot of complaints from people that it's taking actually a longer period of time than those five days. The beginning of the school year was particularly troublesome, but some families did not find out whether busing would be provided until just recently. How many days is it typical-- does it typically take for a student to receive busing from the day the student first enters the shelter system, and how many days does it take, typically take at the start of the school year?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So our commitment is that we should be able to provide busing within five days. From the time a child enters the system they submit a request. We have to then develop a route if there is not already one that

could serve the student, and any time we have to adjust a bus route to accommodate new drop up--drop off or pick up point, we then also have to inform the other students who would be affected by that change in the route. Because there can be a domino effect both upstream from the child as well as the children who would get on the bus after that child.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Is there a typical amount of time that students, particularly homeless students, who are being bussed back to their home school, spend on a bus on a daily basis?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So we don't have a--a typical at the moment. This is clearly a very new initiative that we are very hard to try to route these students as efficiently as we can. Some of the distances are fairly long, and by necessity we don't all--we can't control all of the traffic conditions. But we do believe that by providing a one vehicle approach to getting to school that that can be a real benefit for many families.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And--and--and much of what you're doing is commendable, but I do have concerns regarding the length of time that students spend on the bus. It's not from what I hear unusual

for students to spend over an hour, an hour and a half on some of these buses traveling. Would you concur?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So, with the new bus routes that we've initiated for this service over three-quarters of those routes area actually starting in one borough, and dropping children off in a different borough. So it--it is--it's not that we want children to spend long periods of time on the bus. We don't, but simply based on where the child is living, and where we are transporting them to, some of these are long bus rides.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: How many homeless students were not able to attend the after school programs due to a busing issue?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Well, after school programs are provided both in schools, and also after school programs are provided at shelters or in organizations based near shelters. So there shouldn't be a barrier for a students in temporary housing to attend an after school program. It maybe at their school if they are not receiving Yellow Bus transportation, or it maybe near their shelter.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So if a student gets out of school at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, takes a bus ride for an hour and a half to get back to their shelter, they're arriving there maybe 4:30 in the afternoon or so. Is there any type of special provision made to help those students with homework help and the other types of programs that you've listed in your testimony?

LOIS HERRERA: Yes, we offer a number of programs that are shelter-based as well as in the community. In some cases in places like the Y where we can help the students both academically and socially.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: But if they're missing an hour and a half of the after school program at the shelter, how is that time made up for, and how--how--what time do those programs end in the shelters?

LOIS HERRERA: There's a variety that's arranged. There are also weekend programs and vacation programs.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: How much money did you spend on Metro Cards last year?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: I don't have
that total here. We can follow up with that.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, but I'm going
to--I'm going to here because I'll have more
opportunity later to ask other questions, and turn it
over to my Co-Chair Council Member Levin.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. [coughs]
Thank you, Chair Dromm. Thank you very much for your
testimony. I want to start with a question just
about what's--where we are right now in comparison to
years past with regard to students that are--that are
not being placed in shelter according to the youngest
child's school address. So that was in 2000--FY11,
that was at 83%?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: By this past fiscal
year, it was 53%. Obviously, that's a significant
drop. What do you think accounts for that drop? I
know what we're doing now, and that might have an
impact for offering more business service for more
children residing in shelter that--that may have an
impact. But what went into the precipitous drop from
83% to 53% over four fiscal years?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Right, I think the biggest explanation is that the shelter system itself is at a higher level of utilization. So I'd like to invite Jahmani Hilton from the Department of Homeless Services can probably better address that question.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. [pause] And I'm--before you begin, I'm going to ask for you to identify yourself for the record, and we're going to swear you in. So do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and respond honestly to council members' questions?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HILTON: I do.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HILTON: Jahmani Hilton, Deputy Commissioner for Family Services at the Department of Homeless Services. So to address your question, there is definitely a relationship between the capacity constraints that you've alluded to earlier, as well as the ability to place children actually at their schools of origin. And so to the extent possible, DHS, we attempt to place families in a shelter close to the school of the youngest so that it's feasible to ensure continuity in that same

1 school or community. But it's become increasingly
2 difficult at this point as the shelter vacancy rate
3 has declined from almost 5% in 2011 to the
4 elimination of the Advantage Rental Subsidy Program
5 to less than 1% currently is what we're experience.
6 And so that means to meet our moral and legal
7 obligations we have often--often have no choice but
8 to place families where there's space. And so despite
9 the challenge in terms of placing families near
10 schools of origin, what we found is that we are
11 actually currently at a rate of 57%, and that was
12 December of 2015. We will continue to make placement
13 near the schools of origin, and we will also continue
14 to provide priority to educational shelter transfers
15 to maintain school stability.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: What's--what's a--a
18 goal in terms of that--that rate? What--what number
19 would you shoot for if--would it be 100%? Would it
20 be somewhere lower than 100%?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HILTON: In terms of
22 placement of students?

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: In terms of where--
24 the--the placement of students near--according to the
25 youngest child's school address where that was--that

was at 83% in 2011, 53% last year, and then you said up to 57% now. What's the right balance? What--what do you shoot for? What's the--what's the agency's goal in that regard?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HILTON: And I would say ultimately we're shooting for 100%. We believe it to be important that students are actually--that there's continuity in terms of their school placement. And we understand that the disruption also has a deleterious effect on children. And so, the goal is actually to shoot for 100%, but as I stated before, there is a correlation with our current shelter vacancy rate, and so--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] So it's purely a function of vacancy rate? You don't think that there's anything else going on that would lead to that precipitous drop? It's just that--

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HILTON:
[interposing] So it's--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --that easy? (sic)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HILTON: --the vacancy rate and also as we look at the increase and applications, families that are actually coming to the front door. And so, as the census has risen, the

vacancy rate has actually dropped, and that actually
has an impact on our ability to place students.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [coughs] I want to
ask about students who are considered under McKinney-
Vento to be homeless because they are doubled up.
And children that are--I'll--I'll get to in a minute
to children that are--are residing in shelter. But
in--the number of--the number of children who have
been identified as doubled up has increased during
the--at a similar period of time from 2010 to 2014
increased by 63%. And that is--that is according to
the ICPH, also city homelessness from August of 2015.
What has DOE--obviously they might not--those--those
students do not have any interaction with the DHS
system. Does DOE--has DOE noticed that? And if so,
what have you been doing specifically to that
population, those students who are also covered under
McKinney-Vento and are entitled to the same types of
services. So that their--their disruption is--is
mitigated and--and their deleterious effects of--of
their situation are mitigated?

LOIS HERRERA: So, we're able to address
the double--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: If you could speak
into the microphone.

LOIS HERRERA: Sure. We're able to reach
out to the doubled up students in a number of ways.
First and foremost, at the school level we have base
liaisons who are there to ensure that the students
are provided with school supplies, with basic uniform
if they need a uniform, with other materials, with
educational programs. So at the school level that's
the--the primary place, but in addition to that, we
have Content Experts in each borough that offer a
variety of programs. We--we just spoke momentarily,
though, about after school programs. We have 57
after school programs around the city, and our--and
our doubled up students are more than welcome and
invited to--to join in those programs.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Which programs are
those?

LOIS HERRERA: Those are the after school
programs ones for students in temporary housing by
our Content Experts throughout the city.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, and those are--
those are in place in--those are in schools or those
are at CBOs?

LOIS HERRERA: They're at--some are at schools. Some are actually at CBOs and some are in shelter locations, but we offer a variety of--of offerings to students both educational, social, college planning and college access. So there's a variety of programs that we offer out and--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Does every--does every student who's doubled up because there's--I don't know--50,000 of them?

LOIS HERRERA: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is every student that's doubled up having--do they have a clear path to access services? Do they know what services are available to them, and how do they know what services are available to them, and how do they know what services are available to them. And--and do we have sense of--I mean if--if there are 50,000 people, young children, young people in the school system that are qualified for these services that are not in the shelter system, are--are all of them--are all of them being reached? Do we know? There's--there's not 50,000 in those programs, right? So--

LOIS HERRERA: No, and I would say that the--the School Based Liaisons are really the point

of contact for these students to let them know what's available for them. But again, the vast majority will take part in programs in--at their school site with their permanently housed peers.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And School Based Liaisons are all identified either teachers or guidance counselors and there's one per school?

LOIS HERRERA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And what's the professional development that they receive?

LOIS HERRERA: New York State Teaches in collaboration with--with the DOE provide training every year. It's a full day training that they are required to attend. It's actually for us a compliance item. So we ensure that every school's School Based Liaison attends.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: If I can just add one more thing about students in doubled up housing. We had a new initiative this past summer with HRA to help support home based outreach to families who are in tenuous housing situations to help them--to prevent--help prevention of them becoming--

CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: [interposing] Uh-
huh.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: --part of the
shelter system or losing the benefits and the
services that they have.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So that ICPH number
50--63% is that--does that track what you've seen
over the last--since 2010?

LOIS HERRERA: We saw our doubled up
population. That was the largest increase over five
years. That went up 61%.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So if you could
continue speaking in microphone.

LOIS HERRERA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm sorry.

LOIS HERRERA: Yes, it's consistent. We
saw our doubled up population that had the largest
increase over five years that went up 61%, and our
shelters--out students residing in shelter increased
about 8% since school year '10 and '11.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, and obviously
this is--this is reflecting what we're seeing
throughout New York City, which is that we have an
affordable housing crisis. We have more and more

families that are facing--feeling the squeeze of increasing rents, loss of rent stabilization, gentrification, all of those things. I mean this is all very consistent with--with what we're seeing kind of in the broader affordable housing picture. So I'm not terribly surprised. In terms of--in terms of the services, Deputy Chancellor, you mentioned in your testimony--I'm just going to re-read this. On--at the bottom of page 1 when you said, "More broadly all STH direct service programs are either provided through partnering with CBOs or certified teachers, social workers or guidance counselors. Programs are designed to identify students feelings, address social and academic issues, help students set goals, and develop strategies to accomplish these goals. These programs provide support both academically and through social emotional learning to students in temporary housing." You go on to say they include tutoring, homework help, test prep, post secondary planning, mentoring, mental health supports, individual group counseling, empowerment programs and am to identify and address issues related to behavior, self esteem, attendance trauma, and/or obstacles to academic success. And then later in the

1 testimony, you said with regard to the 117 shelter
2 based family assistance a kind of a different set of-
3 -of interventions that they--that they do. So I just
4 want to help identify what a child living either--
5 either doubled up and we could talk about this
6 separately. Either doubled up or in the shelter
7 system, are they receiving all of the things that you
8 mentioned in the first paragraph about all of the
9 mental health supports and individual and group
10 counseling empowerment. All of those things that are
11 so important. Is every child that's first in the
12 shelter system are they--do they have access to those
13 programs? Are they receiving those programs? Are
14 they receiving them as close to their shelter or in
15 the school that they're attending? Do we have an
16 accurate assessment of that? Do we have a--do we
17 know what percentage of children are actually getting
18 those types of services?

19
20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: I think children
21 are getting a variety of services in accordance with
22 their needs, and Lois you can add to that.

23 LOIS HERRERA: Yeah, and--

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm sorry. Speak
25 into the microphone.

LOIS HERRERA: Yeah, they--there's a variety of offerings in it and it--it varies, as you said whether they're doubled up of whether they're the system. So the children in the shelter system have access to the--the family assistants more readily than the doubled up students.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

LOIS HERRERA: But again, after school programs and these supportive programs happen during the school day in the homes, in the school as well as whether they choose to--to be able to participate in the programs after school in that school, or whether they get it in the community through the Content Experts. So there's a variety of answers there. But are the Families' assistant--are the Family Assistants are they trained to be able to do all those things. We've--I've heard anecdotally that, you know, they pretty much just make sure all the kids are going--are--are attending school, and it's--it's a--kind of they check on the attendance. They check to make sure that they're not in the shelter during the day. You know, but it's not--they're not--they're not doing that--all those other things, the social-emotional learning, the mentoring the mental

1 health supports, all of those things. Because the
2 reason I ask all this is, you know, an--and I--I--I
3 hope that you would agree when I--I referenced those
4 statistics and Chair Dromm mentioned those statistics
5 from earlier, what we see, you know, multiples of
6 times of the instances of health impacts. So, twice
7 the rate of nutritional deficiencies. Four--getting
8 sick four times as often, four times as many
9 respiratory. These--these are--it's almost
10 unbelievable to--to conceive of this, four times--
11 kids will get--kids that live in shelter are getting
12 sick four times as often as kids that are not. Not
13 to mention--not to mention the emotional and
14 behavioral problems. That's a crisis. Do you agree?
15 That's--that's an ongoing crisis. I mean I don't
16 want to say that it's a--it's a point in time crisis.
17 It's an ongoing crisis.

18
19 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: There are
20 certainly huge challenges that--that our children
21 facing. I think maybe it would help if I gave you
22 some concrete examples of what these programs are.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Right,
24 that's what I was going to ask. Is it, so you know,
25 often there's--there's evidence based models in other

areas, but in the preventive systems there's evidence on the foster care system, there's evidence based models. Are there evidence based models in--in these programs?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So, for example in the Bronx right now we're offering--we work with social work interns from different universities that pair up with school based social workers to extend the outreach of mental health services and supports. That's one program that we offer. In North--in Brooklyn North we're offering programs for example Symbol which is for young men. It's a youth empowerment program, very consistent with YMI, a phenomenal program that are high school young men in Brooklyn North who are able to attend. There's a similar program for young women in Brooklyn North called Asset, and that's very consistent with the Young Women's Initiative. So these are just a sample of some of the things that we're offering around the city that I really would like to highlight with you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. There are shelters obviously that are able to fundraise on their own. There are shelter programs that are able to fundraise on their own. We at the Council last--

just last year put together an initiative with a number of different shelters, one in each borough for trauma informed care for children in the shelter system, and that was a million or a million and a half dollars working with some very good providers. My concern is how are we ensuring that the same--a child that is at Wynne or Henry Street Settlement or CAMBA who have--who are very good providers, just to name a few, but also have the ability to fundraise on their own. How are we ensuring that a child that's placed in a hotel, or is placed in a cluster sites. I know we're phasing out cluster sites. That's great, but they're not phased out right now. How do we ensure that those kids are getting the same type of services as programs--as the kids that are in those programs that are able to fundraise on their own, and that have those support services because they're able to support that?

JAHMANI HILTON: So I will share actually a couple of initiatives that I think really speak to the point that you're making here. So, at DHS there are two efforts that are underway. One is last year in February we actually testified around our Safety First Team Initiative, and this was really around

providing families that we actually identified as being most at risk with social work services and intervention. That pilot was so successful that we actually put together proposals, submitted it to OMB, and we were awarded funding to do two things. One is we actually have a Clinical Services Unit that we are developing within DHS. And this is a staff of 30 social workers that are actually really the purpose is really to assist families that actually arrive at family intake at PATH to be able to do a much more thorough assessments in terms of families' needs. But those social workers are also targeted to our shelters as well. Part of the goal of having social workers on board is that they can provide technical assistance and training to our providers. This dovetails very nicely with a new initiative that is rolling out to shelters, and that is what we're calling Social Workers in Shelter. And so, we were awarded funding to be able to add social workers to all of our contracted shelter providers at a rate of one to every 25 families. These social workers are called Client Care Coordinators, and really their purpose is to help families navigate in multiple systems because we know that many families actually

in shelter are multi-system involved. And so obviously the role of the Client Care Coordinator is going to be to interface with the Department of Education and the Family Assistant to make sure that there is programming that is actually occurring on site for families. As we've been working with our providers to roll this initiative out, many of our providers have actually talked about different types of programs that can be offered from groups sessions, group work with families and children to after school recreational programming. And so, that is an initiative that is actually underway as we speak.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Thank you very much. I'm going to turn it over to my colleagues.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you again, Chair Levin. Now we're going to ask Public Advocate James to ask some questions.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. First, let me begin by stating that in my opening statements I talked about the highest concentrations of homeless students are in District 9 in the South Bronx and in Brownsville and parts of East New York District 23. My question to you is under the

McKinney-Vento Act, are these districts entitled to additional resources?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So there are McKinney-Vento assistance--Homeless Assistance Grant, which covers all the services for students in temporary housing as well as staff that support students in temporary housing, and then we also have Title 1 set-asides that are required. For every individual school is required to set aside a portion of Title 1 funding specifically to address the needs of their students in temporary housing.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So who is monitoring to ensure that each and every school in these two districts, which have the highest concentration of homeless students are, in fact, providing those services to those children?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: [interposing]
Yes.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Who's monitoring that?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: We actually monitor the--the budgeting of the--of the Title 1 funds, the set-aside. It's a compliance item for us. So we look at that in all of our schools.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Let me--in those two districts in particular--well, let me just say citywide I'd like to know are there social workers in the schools or in the shelters? Yes or no.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Yes, as I--as I was just mentioning we have a program in--in the Bronx where we're using social worker interns working with school based social workers on trauma informed care for our students.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Is that in District 9?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: That would cover District 9.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So it's--it's in District 9. Is it only in District 9, or is it--or is it also in District 23 in Brownsville?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: No, but we have another initiative that's target--that's intended for District 23 that we're in the process of rolling out. It's a called the Single Shepherd Initiative, and through the Single Shepherd Initiative, we're going to increase or actually increase the number of social workers and counselors that will be available for students in grades 6 through 12 in all of our schools

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in District 23 reducing the service ratio so that we
can address more students and with more
personalization.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So currently as
of today are there social workers in District 23 in
Brooklyn? Yes?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Yes.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And what's the
ratio?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: I don't have
that information with us here.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: What about
nurses?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So we provide a
nurse in all elementary schools that have more than
200 students, and so all our elementary schools that
have at least 200 in those districts would have a
school nurse. And then at--in upper grades we do
have nurses in many of the schools depending upon the
needs of the population.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: What about those
two districts where they have the highest
concentration of homeless students? It's the

District 9 and in--and District 23 in middle school
and high school, are there nurses?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: There are nurses
in many of those schools. We can follow up on that
with you, and there are absolutely nurses in all of
the elementary schools that have at least 200
students.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: What about mental
health counselors, are they in these schools
specifically in District 9 and District 23?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So we actually
have a very broad expansion of our mental health
program currently underway. There are a number of
new initiatives targeting mental health, and renewal--
all of our renewal and community schools are getting
mental health services. And then we have just
received the funding to launch a program that
provides a mental health-- Consultant is the word
that's going to be used in every school who will
enable--who will connect the school to local
community based resources that will help provide
mental health supports to the local school children.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing] And
I--

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So we're very excited about this new initiatives, and--and that will cover all schools.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And what about behavior specialists and/or social work interns, are they in the schools and/or in the shelters?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: They're not generally in the shelters, but they are in schools where there is a certified social worker who can supervise them, and where there is a desire to take on an intern. It's added responsibility so it's an--it's an optional.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And as was mentioned before, the ratio for social workers in some of your contracted agencies is 1 to 25. Isn't that ratio kind of high? What--what could we do to reduce that ratio?

JAHMANI HILTON: So to answer your question that is currently the ratio in which we were funded. We really see those social workers really operating more from very similar to a hospital based setting where you have social workers. So rather than carrying a caseload where you're providing therapy or treatment with families because we really

feel like that actually should happen using community based organizations, these social workers are going to assist families in connecting with needed services that are identified. They'll also assist in terms of making sure that there is an assessment that happens, whether that be a psychosocial assessment or a bio-psychosocial assessment so that we can be clear in terms of what the--the needs are of families. And then connect them with resources in the community.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So in 2011 as was--as you testified both agencies and designated shelter providers entered into a second MOU in order to strengthen your combined efforts to provide better services to STH. And as a result, DOE is better able to accurately identify which students currently reside in shelters. Do you have the ability to track homeless children in the system currently?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Yes, DHS provides us on a monthly basis with the roster of all school age children residing in shelter, and we match those to DOE records. And so yes we're able to know accurately which of our students are residing in shelter.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And you do that manually, or is there a system in place?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: We receive the-- the database electronically, and to the extent possible we match electronically. Sometimes there are discrepancies in spellings of names, and other issues. So it does involve a manual component.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And is that the basis for the reimbursement from the McKinney-Vento Act?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: No, the reimbursement for the McKinney-Vento Act or the Title 1 funding is based on the Residency Questionnaire that's provided to parents at the time of enrollment, and when they offer a new address.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I understand that October 31st is the enrollment cut-off date for schools to receive funding for the school year, and schools with a higher number of homeless students enrolling after October 31st do not receive additional funding and resources. Is that an accurate statement?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: The--the Title 1 funding is based on October 31st of the prior school

year. So it would be last year. In other words
2014-15, October 31st. So October 31st, 2014 that
would determine the Title 1 funds the school received
this year. So the number of students on register.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So if a student
enrolls the next day, November 1st, would that
student be included in your funding?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So I think what
you're referring to is the--the Fair Student Funding
that each school receives based on the children that--
who are enrolled in the school and their needs.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I guess I'm also
referring to this arbitrary date of October 31st.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So October 31st
is the date on which we, you know, audit the
register. That is the audited--the date that we
audit the register. Schools don't receive additional
funding as new students enroll after October 31st,
but nor is funding reduced from students who leave
the school after October 31st. So there are ups and
downs in fluctuations. We have found that the--the
fluctuation in students after October 31st net of
those ups and downs is not that significant across

our schools. So we do fund on--based on October 31st every year.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So if there was an enrollment of children in the month of November, what you're telling that you would be able--you'd be in a position to adjust your budget to address the needs of those students enrolled after October 31st?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Well, you know, we have had some years where we've had some significant changes. I think after Hurricane Sandy there was a great deal of transferring of students--

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing]
Right.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: --from one school to another and we were able to provide funding to schools in order to support that significant shift. But that--that was we all hope a not to be repeated kind of occurrence.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: That's a good example. Were you able to meet the non-academic needs of those Sandy students who were homeless?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Yeah, we actually partnered with a lot of mental health organizations throughout the city to be able to

provide support services in areas that were affected.
So for example in Staten Island we worked very
closely with Staten Island Mental Health, and
certainly through the southern part of Brooklyn and
Queens. So, yes, we were able to reach out to our
community based organizations and mental health
providers.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: But--but for
those community based organizations under your--in
your budget you would not be able to provide for them
because the cut-off date is October 31st?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: No, there was
federal funding that was available that we applied
for. So when there's an extreme need, obviously we--
we look every way we can to be able to meet that
need.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And what kind of
data--let me move on-- Who at the Department of
Education and/or the schools in charge of making sure
that the--the non-academic needs of the homeless
children are met--coats, food, medical costs, vision,
et cetera? I've seen children in my borough of
Brooklyn go to school without coats and--and a couple
of weeks ago.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Well, it's interesting you bring up the idea of coats because for example in the community schools they just did a huge initiative where they collected thousands of coats and distributed them to children in need. And we have many of those types of collaborations and initiatives. Certainly we do work with Volunteers of America on book bags at the beginning of the year and school supplies but then the--

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing] But it all depends upon the goodness of not-for-profit organizations--

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: [interposing] Yeah.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: --and community based organizations. My question really is what is government doing?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: The Title 1 funding is intended for those supplies.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: For coats and for medical needs, et cetera?

LOIS HERRERA: For coats, emergency supplies, school materials, educational programs.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: [off mic] They
can also--sorry--those funds can also cover
eyeglasses if needed. We also now have a program
where all students in renewal schools are being
screened for vision needs and provided with eye
glasses.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And is there
presently a liaison at the Department of Homeless
Services that the Department of Education or schools
coordinate with to meet the educational needs of
children? I've attended several shelters and I've
asked individuals whether or not there was someone to
assist children with their homework, and
unfortunately it was just not the case. And so,
children were gathered in large rooms, and they were--
it was left to volunteers who were sporadic and
inconsistent.

JAHMANI HILTON: So as of last year we
actually did add a new position to the Department of
Homeless services, and that position was the Director
of Educational Services. And so person is really the
key go-to in terms of liaising with the Department of
Education. In fact, the person who actually occupies
that role formerly worked at the Department of

Education with regards to students in temporary housing. So she's quite familiar with both the challenges as well as the opportunities that exist to enhance partnering with the Department of Education.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: What is that person's name?

JAHMANI HILTON: Susanna Villadel. (sp?)

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you, and where do homeless students go when they're suspended?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Sorry, can you-- I missed your question. I'm sorry.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Where do homeless students go when they are suspended? My understanding that the suspension rate for homeless students in the City of New York is as high as 6% in some districts including, but not limited to those two districts that I mentioned earlier, 23 in Brownsville and 9 in the South Bronx. Where do they go?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So students in temporary housing follow the same pattern as their permanently housed peers. If they're a principal's suspension it's generally served in their--in their school in a saved room. If they're on superintendant

suspension, in some cases it can be served in the school depending on the infraction. In other cases they're served at alternate learning centers.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And are the alternate learning centers as--as far as you know in close proximity to where they are residing?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: They are spread out through the--throughout the city.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And do we provide them with assistance in getting to those alternative learning centers?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: We can provide them with Metro Cards.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay. Do you provide them with Metro Cards?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Yes.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And is there a tracking method--mechanism to ensure that in fact they're going to these alternative learning centers?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: We follow the attendance very carefully in all--in our ALCs.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay, and how effective are the individual education plans getting

transferred to new schools? IEPs are they getting
transferred to new schools?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: One of the
things that SESIS can do, and it is very effective,
is that as soon as a student enrolls in a new school
the school can immediately pull up the student's IEP
through the SESIS computer system. So the school on
the same day that the student enrolls will have full
knowledge of the services that that--to which that
student is entitled.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And as you know,
I recently filed a lawsuit against SESIS because we
heard from administrators with regards to the flaws
associated with SESIS, and so we question the ability
to do just that. That being said, that's a matter
that will be resolved in court. So, I do not want to
basically take up any more time. I thank the chair
for allowing me say--to ask a few questions. I
appreciate that.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,
Madam Public Advocate. And now we're going to go to
council member questions. They'll be put on the
clock, three minutes each. We have ten and we're
going to start off with Council King followed by

Council Member Deutsch followed by Council Member
Reynoso.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Well, thank you Mr.
Chair and Mr. Chair for today's hearing. I want to
thank you, Deputy Chancellor for showing up today,
and I appreciate you being here. I want to just
tackle--I have a couple of questions that I've jotted
down. Previously as an ACS worker, I understand the
challenges that ACS deals with homeless families,
children who on domicile trying to get their--get
through their everyday existence. I understand that
you have a challenge of making sure that you deliver
education to these same families and children. But
I'm--I'm going to refer to an example of a parent in
my district who was living in the neighborhood, lost
her job and then having to go to the shelter system.
She came to the office for help. The shelter center
sent her to Brooklyn. She has no relationship to
Brooklyn at all. Her children--three children attend
schools in the district. So everyday she finds
herself traveling from Brooklyn everyday here. I
know part of what I've been reading in your testimony
the MOUs that was an agreement with the Department
that placed children within the neighborhoods that

they've been in. How were you--how was there compliance be held just to keep up this agreement so this mother doesn't everyday have to find herself trying to bring her elementary school kids back from Brooklyn to the Bronx everyday to try to keep some stability because that's all she knows? That's my first question.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: The second question that I have is I'd like to know does D-O--DOE have or have--think about creating some type of Division of Homeless--a Division to deal with homeless families just within the DOE. Because as I hear, people at specific shelter or in specific schools, is there enough staffing to deal with all these issues, all these compliances that have to take place from the President's new amendment that kicked in 2016 or to just in the case of McKinney-Vento Act that's in place as well? That's another question. My next question is how was DOE offering some level of normalcy to these children who are going through--if you could say normalcy in this world--but in the disruptive life that they're trying to deal with right now since they have no stability at home. How

are we creating that normalcy from them in comparison to kids who have a home, two families, two parents or whatever the situation is at home? How are we addressing that to make their day that much more comfortable with their living conditions? And finally, I will--I will ask the question how many--do you know how many students have actually graduated who are in the shelter system, and have become successful or if they're dropping out, what ages are they dropping out, and what are we doing to prevent that drop out? I know I gave you a lot.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: You--you gave--you've give us a lot [laughter] and I will try to cover as much of this as we can. So as--as we said earlier your--DHS does have the challenge of trying to match families to the borough where the children are in school, and we understand that that is a challenge given [bell] the high levels of families coming to them. We try to help the family address that situation. So our new Yellow Bussing Initiative may be of particular help to this particular family where the children might now be able to receive the Yellow Bus to take them to the Bronx rather than have to change trains a couple of times to get to the

1 Bronx. In terms of how do you provide normalcy, one
2 of the most important things to provide normalcy is
3 the ability of the student to remain in their school
4 of origin, to continue at the same school they had
5 been attending and with the teachers and staff that
6 were familiar to them. So again, there--our new
7 Yellow Bus Initiative should be able to help these
8 students retain that sense of normalcy. We actually--
9 -to your question of should we create a division
10 within the DOE? We do, in fact, have an office. So
11 there's the Office of Students and Temporary Housing.
12 It is part of the Division of Operations, and we have
13 well over 125 staff members who work focused 100%
14 with students in temporary housing. So that is
15 something that we actually do have. Graduation rates
16 I don't think we have it tracked the exact same way
17 that the Department or that the states track cohorts
18 of students because homeless--you know, students can
19 be in temporary housing at any one moment in time
20 over the course of those four years. But we do know
21 that students who are in 12th grade who are
22 temporarily housed actually graduated very close to
23 the rate of a typical graduating class. Anything,
24 Lois--
25

LOIS HERRERA: [off mic] [interposing] I
don't think so.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: --to add?

JAHMANI HILTON: Can I add--so one of the
things that we've done, and this has been in
partnership with the Department of Education and also
under the role of the Director of Educational
Services. We actually started our first ever annual
college bound high school event. And so what we've
been able to do is identify those students who
actually are set to graduate, and then to target key
programming towards them to ensure that they actually
do graduate. And so, something as simple as filling
out an application to, you know, completing an
application for school. We were happy to hear that
we actually have a young person who actually has
received a number of acceptances to college. But
that was an event that happened last year. It
happened at the tail end of the June. It happened at
the Intrepid. It was attended by 50 students who
were residing in shelter who were set to graduate.
We thought it was extremely successful, and so we are
now building out that program so that it can be much
more robust. The program also is not just geared

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towards students, but obviously to their parents as well to ensure that parents, you know, also see the value of their young people graduating from high school and going on to college.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: [off mic]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Put your mic on.

Council Member King, your mic.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: I--I do not have any data with me about drop-out rates of students in temporary housing. I think that's something we would have to look into.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Well, I'm going to wind u, but I'm going to ask--you know, this is like our first conversation with this. The next time you come before us, maybe you can lay out to us the success stories, data, real data. So we can have some meat and potatoes. Because everything sounds really good, but the specifics of how you've been successful or not successful and where we need to work on can help us, you know, put resources to help you deliver on our children and our families in New York. So I thank you again. Thank you, Mr. Chairs. Thank you again.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member

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Deutsch followed by Reynoso and then Gibson.

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COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you,

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Chair. Good afternoon Deputy Chancellor.

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DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: [off mic] Good

7

afternoon.

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COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: First of all, I

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want to thank you for everything that you're doing in

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improving everything that's improved the--the

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population of our--our homeless children and

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families. So I could say that in--I have a domestic

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violence homeless shelter in my district where I open

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my arms. My office is open to them, and we had a

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number of people from the homeless shelter who

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volunteered in my office. So I know the hardships.

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Some of the hardship was that there was specific

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individual that had a child who she had to go

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through--go with public transportation to drop the

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child off to school. And then she came into the

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office, and she put it on the resume, and we ended up

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finding her a job. She ended up working in a

23

restaurant, and now she is in college. But it as a--

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a tremendous hardship for her to provide

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transportation. So it was also mentioned in the

testimony by our chair that homeless children are--
fall behind their peers, and it's--they also have
three times the rate of having emotional issues and
also traumatized. So my question is regarding
transportation I know that children under five are
not provided transportation unless they are special
ed, but then you are provided transportation. So
when it comes to the children in homeless shelters
they fall under the regular bussing or do they fall
under the special ed bussing that if someone has a
child who is under five, would you provide bussing
for them?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Children in Pre-
K or under kindergarten age, there is no bussing
provided for the general education population. The
only children in Pre-K who are provided bussing are
students who have Early Intervention services and
IEPs. So, a child--a Pre-K child in a shelter would
only receive bussing if they had this Early
Intervention service. They would be eligible for a
Metro Card, or we could also try to work with them to
see if we could place in a Pre-K program that was
located to the shelter facility.

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COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Oh, okay. So I think--I'm--I just--my information is to in order to make their lives easier for these children in homeless shelters and the DOE does all they can do to provide bussing for all. So, to make--you know, if there's a school that or parents who sends their child rather than a U-P--a Pre-K program so bussing should be provided for that child as well.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: I do want to add that the Yellow Bus Program that we've initiated also provides services to all non-public schools.

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Yeah.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So a child in a shelter whether they're attending a DOE [bell] school or any other school is also eligible for the Yellow Bus Service.

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, so Council Member Reynoso followed by Gibson and Levine.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Hello, Deputy Chancellor. Thank you guys for being here. I just want to start off by saying I think the--the Yellow School Bus Initiative that you guys have is--is amazing, and I just want to make sure that-- You

1 know, a lot of the questions we're asking here is to
2 improve the conditions--the lives or the quality of
3 life of many of the folks in the homeless shelter
4 system, but there's definitely an effort that is
5 being pushed by the Administration that I can laud
6 and thank, and thank you for. I just want to ask one
7 question. There are certain schools that have a high
8 percentage of homelessness or STH students, and I
9 just want our students in temporary housing--I wanted
10 to ask you is that a per-person increase in--in what
11 the school receives in--in terms of money or funding?
12 And then after a certain percentage it stops being an
13 individual issue, and it starts being more of like a
14 chronic issue where you have a school that might have
15 30 or 40% of these kids that are STH. Are there
16 additional resources that are then applied to those
17 schools where now the population is--is--warrants
18 more funding than the traditional per-person funding
19 that you--that you would possibly get.

21 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Uh-huh.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: And then also--
23 I'm sorry--and then how much that is? What I want to
24 know is it a dollar per student? Now they get a
25 \$1.02. That what I kind of want to get to. What--

what is the increase so I can see how you guys are
trying to tackle this issue.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So there isn't a
particular per pupil rate for a student who's living
in temporary housing. We do--there are the funds
from Title 1 that do go to these schools, and many of
these students also carry additional funding with
them for other factors that--other academic factors
that do carry additional ways. Lois.

LOIS HERRERA: I just want to qualify
that a little bit because if the school is already
Title 1, the funding for students in temporary
housing is included in the large pool of Title 1
funding. That's why we ask schools to set aside at
least \$100 per student in temporary housing out of
that larger Title 1 pool to be able to meet their
needs. Now, if the school is not Title 1, they get
additional funding based on the October 31st
Register, and it varies by borough, but it's roughly
\$800 per student based on the number of students in
temporary housing the prior year on October 31st.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay, but
there's no dedicated amount per pupil for STH.

You're talking about the--after the October 1st
situation the next year, thereafter?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Yes, so it's
October 31st of--of the previous year that determines
how much Title 1 funding for not--schools that
generally are not Title 1 they get additional--

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: [interposing]
Yeah, but Title 1 funding is--encompasses a lot to be
Title 1. You know, just being poor, for example, you
automatically qualify. That student is just poor or
is a low-income student for example gets the Title 1
funding at the exact same rate that someone is S-C--
in SCH would.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: No, this is
specifically for students that meet the--the
definition of McKinney-Vento. So there's
approximately \$800 [bell] per student in not--in
schools that aren't normally Title 1 schools. So the
Title 1 schools get within their larger pool of
money, money that is supposed to meet the needs of
those students in temporary housing. And then the
schools that are not Title 1 there's additional
funding that they receive.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Great. I'm going to visit the school that has 30% in my--in my district, and I want to--I'm going to see if there is a dedicated effort to address these issues specifically right, that it's not just general funding that just going to general population of the kids. This is special cases here that we need to make sure we pay attention to. And as of now I don't think I've seen that. So I'm going to go visit to see if there is there is an actual representative, and what type of services are being provided that are specific to these--to the kids that are in--in the STH. So I'll be doing that very soon, but--

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: We'd be happy to meet with you or visit the school with you. Anything that you'd like.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay, and it's in District 32 your favorite district. So a lot of issues there. I mea--I mean it's not your favorite district.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Junior High School 50, grades of 18 (sic) they have there, Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: We won third
place in the debate.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: It's a step in
the--we won second place the first time. But we'll
get better. We'll be in first place in no time.
Jimmy Van Bramer's keeps winning.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: All right.

Congratulations to you. Council Member Gibson
followed by Levine and then Council Member Barron.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very
much. Good afternoon. Thank you for being here.
Thank you Chair Dromm and Chair Levin. I appreciate
this very important hearing. So the Public Advocate
alluded to some of what I wanted to describe. I
represent the Bronx and all of School District 9. So
when I look at the numbers of the numbers of students
that are homeless and living in temporary housing, it
is alarming. The citywide average is about 13%. I
have 20 elementary schools in District 9 that range
between 15% on the lower end, and 39% of the students
in--in schools in my district live in temporary

housing. That is alarming. That is disturbing on so many levels. So I appreciate the work the department had done in DHS, but we have to do a lot more. The fact that District 9 and District 23 in Brooklyn lead the city is a call to action. It's a cry for help. So I really wanted to dig in and ask specifically about professional development because our teachers and educators their roles are constantly being redefined. We don't have enough social workers, nurses, guidance counselors in our schools. Of my 20 schools, the majority of them have 800 students. You can't have one nurse and one guidance counselor for a school of 800 kids. So what I'd like to know most of these schools are Title 1 and they get Title 1 funding, but I need more than that. I need a priority put on District 9 within the Bronx is great, but District 9 needs help. I work with my superintendant Leticio Rosario (sp?). She great--

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: [interposing] I know.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: --but we need help. I have principals that want to hire more nurses and guidance counselors, and they don't have the budget to do so. So what I'd like to know is for the

Title 1 schools is there an average amount that each school gets? And for schools like mine in District 9, what more can we ask of the Department so that we can drive these numbers down. This is disturbing and I will not accept these numbers. So something has to be done. I am committed to working with you. I work with all of my schools. I work with the shelters. I give school supplies. I give where I can, but it is not my job alone. I need to the Department to do more for District 9 in the Bronx.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: [pause] You know, the--the challenge here, of course, is that we can't control the percentage of students who are in temporary housing. We can do--

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]
Right.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: --everything we can--

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]
Right.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: --to help them.
We can work with HRA and home base to try to support them in their homes so that they don't become homeless. We can work with the students in the

1
2 schools to try to support them emotionally, and give
3 them the strategies and tools and--and the sense of
4 self to help them succeed. We--we actually don't ask
5 principals to pay for nurses. [bell] Nurses are a
6 staff member that the Department of Education
7 provides in addition to a school's budget. It's not
8 part of the principal's decision of I need to spend
9 some of my money on a nurse. We will provide the
10 nurse. And--and it is an enormous challenge that--
11 that we are--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]
13 Absolutely.

14 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: --working with--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing] But
16 I need your commitment.

17 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: --the
18 superintendants to try to meet--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing] And
20 I will also add as I--I close--I know my time is up,
21 but thank God for School based health centers. Thank
22 God that I have organizations like Montefiore and
23 Bronx Community Health Network that come into my
24 schools that provide medical, dental and vision
25 services because I don't know what my schools would

do with them. I certainly will work with you and have conversations off line, but please understand my commitment is deep. The absenteeism is high, and children need help, and we know that there are root causes to why they're in shelters in the first place, and we have to deal with that. But, while they're in school under the care of DOE we have to do a lot more for these children. 39% is unacceptable in any community in this city, and certainly in District 9.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: And I really want to thank you for mentioning all of those medical supports that are expanding under this administration. We certainly--

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]
Absolutely.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: --expanding school based health centers. We are expanding school based mental health centers.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: We are expanding this new program that I just mentioned earlier with the mental health consultants for all schools that don't have either a community based organization partner or a school based health center or mental

health center. So that all of our schools will have
access to mental health services.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Absolutely.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: They have the
expanded vision support, vision program as well as
the expanding dental services. So thank your for
raising that.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very
much. Thank you, Chairs.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you Council
Member Gibson. Council Member Levine followed by
Barron and Kallos. Okay.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member
Barron.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you to the
Chairs. The Public Advocated talked about District
23, and there's a particular school that I know of.
It's not one of the schools in my district, but I
know the person who used to be the principal at that
school. All of this that you're having in your
testimony sounds great. None of it happened at her
school. She did not get additional resources at that
time. She is not currently there. She did not have

a way to get funds for children to get uniforms to have coats. There was a high absenteeism because if a parent has to go to one of the other agencies and perhaps a child needed to be picked up, and the parent is not back at pick-up time, that's an issue. So my colleague had asked about the funding, and I keep hearing double talk or to me it's not clear. If every school gets the same--gets an allocation as Title 1 School and then there are additional schools that have according to this report from ICPH 46% of the population in that particular school as homeless, what is the allocation? What is the dollar amount that is identified apart from the Title 1 money that is dedicated to those schools, dedicated to that particular school? If I went to the principal and asked her how much or asked him how much of the allocation in the school is for students in temporary housing, could they give me a dollar amount? And where will I find the posting of the McKinney-Vento rules when I go in a school? Where is that posted? Those are my first two questions?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Lois, do you want to try to answer the posting question?

LOIS HERRERA: Sure. Schools are
required to hang up--there's a--

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]
Where?

LOIS HERRERA: I'm sorry?

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Where?

LOIS HERRERA: It's up to the school to
hire--to place it. It can be in the front lobby. It
could be in the main office. It could be in both
places, but they are required to--to post the rights
for homeless children in their school building.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So in terms of
funding, all students are--have a weight (sic) that
they are given as part of the Fair Students Funding.
There isn't a specific weight (sic) for temporary
housing.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]
There is not specifically?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: There is not a
specific weight for fair housing.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: That's a problem.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: But many of
these students because--they're the same
circumstances that may lead to temporary housing--

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] No,
it's more when you're--and it's the same.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: --are
circumstances that also have that's also homeless.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]
It's the same as a child in temporary housing as a
child in a low-income area. And there are additional
needs that those children have, and they are not
being responded to. So simply saying it's a Title 1
school and take a \$100 for each of the children who's
in temporary housing is not an adequate answer.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: We're working
very hard to increase the [bell] funding that is
provided directly to schools according to--to Fair
Student Funding. At the moment not all schools get
100% of that funding and our focus is on increasing
the percentage of Fair Student Funding for all of our
schools.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Mr. Chair, I hope
we'll have a second round. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Following up on--on
Council Barron's question there so for four
consecutive years Title 1 Part A Federal Fund for New

York City have been substantially reduced. At that same time, the number of children who were homeless in New York City under McKinney-Vento has increased substantially. So how are we increasing--how are we able to increase the funding for children under McKinney-Vento while Title 1 funds continue to decline?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: You know, that is definitely a challenge because Title 1 funding does cover both, the typical Title 1 needs as well as the rights under McKinney-Vento, and special allocations for students in temporary housing. As I said, we are doing everything we can as an--as an agency to try to direct as much of our funding as possible directly to schools, and increase the funding that schools receive.

LOIS HERRERA: We also apply AIDP Funding, which is Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention, and that helps us with our staffing needs.

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: How much funding do-- does the system get as a whole under McKinney-Vento? And--and just to be clear, a principal or a school

needs to set aside at least \$100 out of their Title 1 funds for each student under--for each pupil under McKinney-Vento. It's not--it's not as if they're getting extra funding, right? It has--it comes out of their Title 1 per school, is that nor right?

LOIS HERRERA: We get \$1.5 million in McKinney-Vento funds from New York State. We get--we use \$8.5 million of AIDP funding, and we use about \$9.7 million of Title 1 funding.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, the AIDP funding, though, is only for what age students?

LOIS HERRERA: No.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: AIDP is for--for all ages?

LOIS HERRERA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So--so then we're talking total--outside of Title 1, total how much?

LOIS HERRERA: \$1.5 and \$8.5.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, so \$10 million for 85,000 children who are homeless.

LOIS HERRERA: The \$1.5 million of the McKinney-Vento funding is used generally for the program, the after school programs I spoke about.

\$8.5 million is used for stuff including the family assistance to--to assist and the Title 1 funding is used for academic programs, emergency supplies, counseling and data collection.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Outside of the Title 1 funding that--that adds up to--that's \$10 million. That's about .5% of the Department of Education's budget, .5% of the Department of Education's budget. So that is so woefully inadequate when we're talking about 85,000 children, \$10 million. It's not--it's--it's something that we--the City of New York can't do it on its own. So it's not as if I'm putting all of the responsibility here on the Department of Education, but clearly the services cannot be effectively provided with such a lack of funding.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: And let me just add that that funding does not include other services that are provided to all children, and that students in temporary housing also benefit. So nursing, after school programs, sports, in our middle schools free lunch, free breakfast for all students, and the transportation services are all incremental to those funds.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Of course, but--but as the data shows the--the health impacts, the mental health impacts, the educational impacts are so huge, so huge that you just can't do it with 100 bucks a year per kid. It's just not possible. I mean that's just--those--those types of hurdles are not able to be overcome without significant resources.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: And many of the programs that we've put in place that provide a lot of those services, the school based health centers, the mental health initiatives, the community school initiatives, et cetera, are also in schools that have a higher than average population of students with temporary housing.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And we applaud this administration and this Department of Education for doing that.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much. Council Member Menchaca followed by Treyger and then Chin.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you so much, Chairs. I am curious you know this--this conversation has seen a couple of big things. One, the data needs to drive policy, and so what I'd like

to do is drill in a little bit about implementation on some of these programs and access for the kids and parents. In Sunset Park one of my schools has 36% students in temporary housing. Also unacceptable. This are Spanish and Chinese primarily speaking at home families. So unclear about how communication is happening already. They could--the schools have a lot of flexibility. Tell me a little bit about language access as it turns--as it pertains to--to getting information at. So just let--let us know a little bit about how that's working. And two, I have a--I'm curious about how you identified this population in terms of DHS giving you data of how many kid, or is it really-- Because I kind of heard it earlier, the initiation of services happens when a parent interacts with you and signs up.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: [off mic] Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: A huge barrier to access. If you're going to require somebody to go into your office and say we need help.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Uh-huh. So we identify families in two ways. One is through the data collection and--and the data sharing with DHS. And so that doesn't require a parent to say hey count

me in. This is something that comes right off the
reg--their register, their list of school age
children. The second way through the Residency
Questionnaires, which are translated, available in
translation, as well as all of the materials that we
offer. So, no, you're right. There's--there are
guides that are in the different languages and
available. So it's--

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: [interposing]
Is that a voluntary questionnaire? Sorry to
interrupt.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: The
questionnaire is given to parents at the time of
enrollment when they first enroll the students, and
when they report a new address.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: And you get
100% returned? You have to because they're
enrolling. So they have to fill it out.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: It's amongst
the--the paperwork that we ask of them but, of
course, any parent can say I really choose to share
this.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Got it. So
there's a--there's a voluntary moment there. So how-

-how different are the questionnaires coming back?

Are they confirming the same percentages from DHS?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Pretty much.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Pretty much.

Okay, that's good to know. Tell me a little bit about a language access, and how you're communicating to parents about all the services. I think we're all trying to point that not only do we not have enough, but--but there's real disconnect between the dollars that are coming for these students and the general population.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So we've actually just launched a--an expanded language access initiative, and Matay, if you could come and speak a few min--minutes about that.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Can we pause the timer? This will be my last question. Than you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I have to swear you in.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Oh, all right.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Would you 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?

MATAY LUONGO: Yes. [bell]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And state your name.

MATAY LUONGO: Matay Luongo, (sic) Senior Advisor. So, as--as you know these same services that are available for our general population students are in terms of translation and interpretation. We have the whole unit that does interpretation, and translation, and also we also contract work out. So, basically the new--the new thing we have, which is wonderful now is that at any time during the day a person from a school, a teacher, a principal can call our line and get interpretation services over the phone to answer any questions that parents may have. We have these services, of course, available in 200 languages, and we translate everything into ten languages the department does.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: So I get the general piece. This is my last--just--just drill down a little bit. How have you see that work in this population and this particular access point. Share with us what's--what's happening with this particular population. I get it that's and--and you--your recent announcement of even further, but this--

when we're talking about this population, how is it
working and how is it not working?

MATAY LUONGO: I don't--personally for
this population I don't know. I mean this is
something we can definitely meet and talk about
afterwards in terms of--of this particular
population, but I can tell you that we have a
tremendous renewed effort in--improving our services
in translation and interpretation and that, of
course, this is a population that needs it, and we'll
see the effects of that improvement, and that, you
know, both the administration and the chancellor were
all really committed to sort of improving those
services and making sure that the barriers--the
language barriers are not there. And particularly
because we know these are our parents. These are the
parents that need it the most, and they coming into
our system. And, you know, they're coming to our
schools and they don't understand it. You know, a
lot of us are incredibly committed to this, and we're
happy to--to--to hear these examples, and to try to
work them out. But I can tell you that we--you know,
this is something we really focus on.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Great. Let's
visit 503--PS-503 together. Thank you.

MATAY LUONGO: Great.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Council Member
Treyger.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you,
Chair--Chair Dromm and Chair Levine for this very
important hearing. I don't know where to begin.
First, let me just ask this--this question. Well, I
feel--let me just begin by saying that this
initiative that's beyond personal for me as a former
educator, and as someone who represents a district
that has a number of schools as well in District 21,
particularly in Coney Island that has sizeable
populations living in--in shelters, out of shelters.
I know--I take issue with the acronym. Quite frankly
some of these families have been in shelter or
homeless beyond just temporary. We can debate what
temporary means. They're still in schools, by the
way that have temporary boilers that are now three
years past Hurricane Sandy. Is there a correlation?
Does the DOE see any correlation between some of the
schools that have sizeable populations of--of
children who--who live in shelters, temporary housing

and the schools that have been deemed the renewable schools, and schools that the state has labeled as struggling or failing? Is there any relationship or data that points to a connection between these two factors?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Well, we know that schools that are renewal schools are--do have larger populations of high need students. I don't think that we have done a specific correlation to look specifically at temporary housing. We do know that they have an above typical percentage of students in temporary housing. The system as a whole is about 8% students in temporary housing, and renewal schools are about 14, 15% students in temporary housing, but it's certainly one of the challenges they face that is not driving, or we don't think that it is the driving force of the challenges they face.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I would argue that some of our schools that have been labeled as struggling or in need have children that are in my opinion mislabeled. I take great issue with Albany of some in the city that would call these kids failures. Quite frankly, if a child comes to school

1 hungry or had a difficult time in a shelter, the last
2 thin they care about is Mosul (sic) or Danielson or
3 other types of acronyms that we throw at classrooms
4 these days or assessments. I also want to echo the
5 comments of my colleagues about the strong need, the
6 serious need of social workers, additional guidance
7 support, guidance that has caseloads so big that
8 they've been relegated to just programmers [bell] and
9 not actually helping to--to go beyond to give them
10 time and support to actually provide services. And
11 the last point before I conclude: Is it not true
12 that schools have a tool called the SBO, School
13 Building Option--

14
15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: [interposing]

16 Uh-huh.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: --that could
18 actually spread across Title 1 money for other things
19 such as tutoring for assessments? Because that's
20 what happens. I'm a former teacher. I--I know--I
21 know my stuff. Right now the name of the game is
22 compliance with state and federal mandates, test,
23 test, test, test, test. They don't care if the kids
24 come to school hungry or in great need. So
25 principals in schools are then forced to take their

budgets and spread Title 1 money across the board to hire people to do tutoring for testing, and so when Chair Levine mentioned before how that's inadequate, Chairs, I have news for you. It's even worse than you think because they take the Title 1 money and spread it out to pay for after school tutoring for assessments rather than provide direct needs in that classroom every single day. And I thank the chairs for this hearing.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Council Member Chin.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair.

Good afternoon. Deputy Chancellor, thank you for the testimony. I mean it's great to hear about the initiative in terms of the bussing and getting kids who are in shelter to be able to get to the schools that they've been attending. I want to focus on the hidden homeless. It was great to--to hear that finally somebody is counting them that DOE are tracking students who are doubling up, living in temporary housing, and the number is outstanding. There are over 80,000 and my question is that how do we make sure that the family that are living, doubling up, tripling up know about all these resources that are available to them. In my

1 district, I got some--I got this information from UFT
2 thank you--that I do have a lot of schools that is
3 around the citywide average of 13% or less. But I
4 have five schools in my district, and these are very
5 good schools. The students there, they're wonderful.
6 they--they work hard, they--they're great, and I was
7 shocked to see that some of the school 18% of the
8 population all the way up to almost 39% are doubling
9 up, tripling up and living in temporary housing. In
10 one of my schools, PS-2 the school is 760 students,
11 and almost 39% means almost 300 students are in the
12 situation of living in shelters or doubling up and
13 tripling up. Now, when you talk about that, each
14 school has a liaison. Now, some of these schools are
15 large. So how is one person going to be able to deal
16 with 290 families? Right. So the school is big.
17 You--the school age, the School Based Liaison that--
18 that works with parents and students in temporary
19 housing, are they getting extra help? Are there two
20 of them in that school? Because, you know, there are
21 schools that are big and there are schools that are
22 small. And the other question is that I wanted to
23 make sure that the language capacity that one of my
24 colleagues has asked that people know about the
25

resource. I mean I assume the signs you put up are in multi-lingual. But the fact that you know who the students are because you track them, but about the sending information to them directly? Let them know these are all the programs that are available to you especially the importance of the after school program. We don't have Universal after school program for elementary kids. Because I have students in my school that are on waiting lists or they just don't have the program, and they can't afford to pay. Even, you know, even the--the one that's low cost, the family can't afford to pay. [bell] So, how do we ensure that they know about all these services that's available to them? Can you just do--give them a direct mailing, a direct letter to take home that lists all these services that are available. If you live in a doubling up situation, you can go to an after school program, and not have to--and get a decent snack and homework help and not have to, you know, go--go back home in a crowded situation where you might not even have a place to do your homework.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: You asked a number of things, and I'm--I'm hopefully going to hit upon all of them. One of the first things you asked

about were the School Based Liaisons, and it isn't our expectation that this is the sole person in the school who is going to meet the needs of our students. It's--it's really somebody who's coordinating those efforts. And so we do count on other staff members particularly in large schools or where there are a large number of students with high needs. And so, in some cases it might be ensuring that the school library is open, and you need to have the librarian on board. Or, it may be that you need enhanced counseling services, and you need the counselors and social workers involved. And so, the School Based Liaison is not the only person who provides the--the services. They just ensure that those services are being met or that the administration is aware of the need. In terms of the notifications about services and the Residency Questionnaire and the posters, those are in translation, and those are available. When we send flyers home from school, we through our own Chancellors Regulations are required to send them home in the ten languages. And when the parent comes in who speaks the language as was--was discussed, we have the ability to do a phone-in, and have

interpretation services if we don't readily have
somebody on who are able to do that type of
communication through phone service.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [off mic] Yes, my--
[on mic] my question is like focusing on this school
of students that have, you know, special needs
because they live in overcrowded situations, or they
live in the shelter to really inform their parents
that services are available to them in the school.
So, again, what I'm asking for is a little bit more
effort in terms of getting the information to them,
and maybe that's what the School Based Liaison could
work on to make sure that the parents get that
information. To make sure that they do access the
resources that is available to them to help them in
that situation. I mean we have kids that when they
go home, they have no place to do their homework
because the situation that the live in. But if they
could have a meal in school, and have--have someone
who can help them, and then by the time they get home
the homework is done. It makes a big difference, but
because of the language, a lot of people don't know
that this is available to them, and this is extra.
So I think we need to make that extra effort to get

that information to them. Thank you. Thank you,
Chair.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,
and before we go to the second round I have a couple
of follow-up question regarding Lesbian, Gay,
Bisexual and Transgender Youth as well. How do we
provide services to those homeless youth. Many of
them are runaway and/or homeless. What is the DOE
doing for those students in particular?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So, and the
Unaccompanied Minor Pool we work very closely with
DYCD who--who has this under their umbrella, and
provide them the same supports that their--the other
STH students are entitled to.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, do you go to
centers like Ali Forney, Green Chimneys, Sylvia's
Place, et cetera to know who's there or how--how--is
there outreach there directly from the DOE?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Yes, we're in
communication with DYCD. We work collaboratively
with those students.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And, you know, it
says to me that I think about 7,000 youths are on the
streets every night, LGBT youth hustling or, you

know, providing sex work, et cetera. 3,500 perhaps are lucky enough to get into some type of a--a homeless shelter. How is DHS dealing with that issue? Do you deal with that issue, or does that come through another agency?

JAHMANI HILTON: Well, no, it actually does come through DHS, but that actually is through our Adult Services Division, and not through the Family Services Division.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, why is that?

JAHMANI HILTON: Um, because when we actually service families with children, we're talking about households that actually are a composition where there is a parent in place as well as children. And that is based on OTDA Guidance and Regulations. But, in terms of programming for LGBTQ youth, that takes place under the umbrella of Adult Services, and there is robust programming taking place.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, do you have connections and contact with places like Ali Forney and places like that?

JAHMANI HILTON: On the Adult Services side there is coordination that actually happens at the sites.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, I'm confused as to why is it under Adult Services.

JAHMANI HILTON: So, there are two sides to the house within the Department of Homeless Services, Adult Services that are working with youth that are without parents as part of their households. And then with regards to Family Services once again it's a composition of either a single parent with children or a two-parent household with children.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So what type of coordination goes on between DHS and DOE in terms of providing services to those LGBT youth?

JAHMANI HILTON: I mean once again I mean as we referenced, there is all of the Family Assistants that actually are at shelters. And so, that is what's happening for families with children in the shelter.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: But--but a lot of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual youth are not at shelters with their family, right?

JAHMANI HILTON: But they're not in
family shelters.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So--so they're in--
well, yeah, they are. As a matter of fact, there are
gay people everywhere, and--and I would assume that
many are in the shelters with their families, but not
all are with their family. And so, um, I'm--I'm--I'm
asking the question to find out specifically what
type of outreach it would be to those (1) who are
with their families in family shelter, (2) those who
are in shelters like Ali Forney are between the ages
of 18 and--or certainly maybe even younger if I'm not
mistaken--and 24 who are homeless?

JAHMANI HILTON: Do you want to take
that.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Yeah, so I think
it--it is again as Lois mentioned, we work closely
with DYCD so that we can identify those students and
help support them with the services that they would
receive if they were in a DHS shelter and, of course,
all of the other programming that we do to support
LGBTQ students is also available to these students.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So are there specific programs to help LGBT youth with issues like homework the basic things?

LOIS HERRERA: The same initiatives and homework help that we would have for other students would be certainly open to LGBTQ students.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Are there programs for--for them to deal with their sexuality, issues of sexuality, et cetera?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: [off mic] So again [on mic] the programs that we have that work with LGTBQ students in the schools are also available to address all LGBTQ students who are in shelters, but who are in those schools so--

LOIS HERRERA: And, as you know, we are trying to take stock of the schools and the GSAs that we have available, and through the addition of the LGBT coordinator, thank you very much, we really are moving in--in the direction of increasing supports for all LGBTQ students.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So is there a representative here from HRA today.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Can I ask him to come
to the table--to--to the panel, panel, please.

[background comments, pause]

JOHN RUSCILLO: I'll share a chair with
you. [laughs] We're--we're very together here. Yes.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: We are.

JOHN RUSCILLO: I'll join with the
Deputy. [laughs]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, I kind of wanted
to ask similar--similar questions of HRA as well, but
I need to swear you in. Would you raise your right
hand, please. So can I ask if you would raise your
right hand. Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth,
the whole truth, and nothing but the truth and to
answer council member questions honestly?

LISA RACHMUTH: I do.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. So can you
address some of the questions that I was asking of
both the DOE and DHS?

LEGAL COUNSEL: [off mic] State your name
for the record, please.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I'm--I'm sorry.
State your name for the record as well.

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JOHN RUSCILLO: Sure, I'm John Ruscillo,
Director of Housing Services for the HIV-AIDS
Services Administration, which is part of HRA.

LISA RACHMUTH: Lisa Rachmuth, Director
of Clinical Initiatives and Programming, HRA Office
of Domestic Violence.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: From my notes here,
I--I see that you have oversight or you're in charge
of domestic violence shelters. Is that right?

LISA RACHMUTH: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So are there issues
o--LGBTQ issues within those shelters as well.

LISA RACHMUTH: To the best of knowledge
yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: How do you deal with
that? How is that accommodated? What type of
programs do you offer?

LISA RACHMUTH: Our shelter system
provides intensive case management and counseling on
site for any families regardless of issues,
regardless of particular situations, and those
include issues of identification or LGBTQ living
conditions.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So do you screen specifically for LGBTQ families or LGBTQ victims of domestic violence?

LISA RACHMUTH: Can you be more specific with regards to the details? (sic)

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] How do you know if somebody is LGBTQ, and how do you provide services for them if they are?

LISA RACHMUTH: Self-identification or they--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Or there's no questions?

LISA RACHMUTH: They--we ask how they prefer to be identified as.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Uh-huh, you know, I send--you know, we also--I also have a Databuild that, you know, would ask some of these questions or require agencies to ask these questions. And unless we begin to ask these questions, and we don't have data or numbers on it, we're going to continue to see the issues I think that are coming up with the questioning that I'm addressing now. So I'm very glad that the Department of Education has liaisons as perhaps part of the strategic plan that they're

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working on . This can be addressed there as well.

But the point I'm trying to make is that LGBT issues are across the board, and they're in every agency, and in every situation that we find ourselves. And I think that we need a specific way to identify and address those issues in a much clearer fashion.

Agreed?

LISA RACHMUTH: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. All right. I'm going to turn it over to Council Member Barron who has some follow-up questions. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, both chairs and to the panel for your information. Council District 42, which includes part of district--part of the 19th and 23rd School Districts. I looked again in the report and it said that there are 220--2,227 students in shelters, and that amongst those students they have a 50% absenteeism rate. What is the DOE doing about absenteeism among students who are living in shelters? It's the highest in the city, 50%.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: We have a very-- I think that was in part the--the thinking behind

changing the MOU in 2011, updating was so that we
could really work together with the--

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] So,
what are you doing?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So, what we've
done is we've worked--we've done a lot of training
between agencies, between DHS and DOE in terms of
attendance and the impact of chronic absenteeism, and
working together so that everyone who come in contact
with the family is really speaking the same language,
and--and encouraging and helping and looking for
solutions to help get children to school on a regular
basis.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Well, it's good
that, you know, we're trying to get parents, but the
reality is, as I alluded earlier, parents have other
agency meetings that they have to go to, and they
sometimes take their children. So what are you
doing? What can you do to make sure that--what kind
of program can be implemented so that perhaps there's
a late pickup, or transportation accommodations so
that children don't miss. Because parents take the
child by the hand when they have to go to an agency's
interview or whatever. So what can we do? What can

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we think that can be done to reduce this absenteeism where it's a result of--of a parent taking a child for a meeting? Perhaps we don't have the answer today. We'll--we'll get to that. In terms of the Family Assistants, are--are--is the same training or is the same population of Family Assistants that are in the shelters that are in the schools? Because I saw that it's a DOE family workers are in shelters.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: They are. We have a pool of 117 family assistants who are DOE employees, but they are shelter based.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And is it the same population as a family assistant that I would find in the school? Is it the same credentials, the same training?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: It's the same title as those that are school based.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So are they on the same payroll and the same salary scale and all of that?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, and are they there all day in the shelters? What are their hours, what do the--[bell]--things that they're doing

while they're in the shelters? We have an idea of what goes on during the school day, but what is it that they're doing specifically in the shelters?

LOIS HERRERA: Their hours or the number of hours are set, but they--some of them are in early so that they can help families negotiate getting the children on the buses. Other Family Assistants are there later so that they can offer homework assistance.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So it--it--I can tell you they all start at 8:00 and all--did another.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, and just--just if the Chair would give me one further question. You talked about the data that you get from DH--DHS because my information was that if families don't self-report, schools don't know. So that's not the case? Schools do know?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: No.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Because at a previous hearing about a year ago we were told that families have to self-report.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: In both of those processes, we require self-reporting through the

Residency Questionnaire, but at the same time on a
monthly basis--

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]
Well, that's when they first enroll.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: When they first
enroll and/or change their address, but at the same
time on a monthly basis, we receive the roster of
students who are school age, children who are school
age, and we use that to match up with our programs.
So we know which of our students are in shelter.

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

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council
Member Barron. So I just wanted to correct myself.
Before I said it was like that the--the percentage of
the overall DOE budget was .5% from the McKinney-
Vento funding. That was so far off, but I need to
correct the record. It's actually .0004%. That's
without the fringe, too. So if the--if you're
average--you know, you estimate that the DOE budget
is \$21 billion, \$10 million of that .0004%. So
that's--that's what we're really talking about in
terms of the--in addition--you--all the things that
you've been talking about that have--that the DOE is

doing on its own, but that's what we get in the McKinney-Vento for--for 80, um, 85,000 kids in the system. So that's just very sobering, very sobering. I want to ask about--we've talked a lot about school-age children. What are we doing for children under the age of 4, 0 to 3, that are both doubled up and living in the shelter system?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: [off mic] I'm going to turn to you for that?

JAHMANI HILTON: Sure. So, um--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Turn on the mic.

JAHMANI HILTON: There have been a couple of efforts that are underway that DHS has participated in. So in partnership with the Mayor's Office, we have actually made sure that DOE, ACS, HRA, City Hall, we meet to ensure that children born in 2012 were connected to the Mayor's expansion of Pre-K seats.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm not talking about Pre-K. I'm not talking about Pre-K. What are we doing outside the Pre-K expansion Initiative for children who are age 0 to 3?

JAHMANI HILTON: So, one effort I can speak to is the partnership with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. It's the expansion of the Newborn Home Visiting Program, and so the Newborn Home Visiting Program prioritizes visits to children between the ages of 0 and 3 months. There is--are visits that are taking place by a paraprofessional that is doing an assessment, connecting families with services, identifying needs that the families may have actually for those newborn infants. And so that is an expansion that recently occurred in the fall.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So every newborn, an infant born in the shelter system is getting that service?

JAHMANI HILTON: So there are two phases to the rollout. The first phase covered three boroughs. We are actually moving to a citywide rollout, actually--I believe it's actually this month that will actually be available for all newborns in shelter.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, so not just-- it's not just in every borough. All newborns in shelter will be able to receive those services?

JAHMANI HILTON: That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

JAHMANI HILTON: And so--so we're talking not only born in shelter, but if a family actually presents at family intake PATH with a newborn they would also be eligible for those services.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. What about between the ages of 3 months and 3 years?

JAHMANI HILTON: One of the other things that we're doing with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is introducing Early Intervention. And so we actually quarterly meet with all of our shelter directors. This upcoming February, February 29th, in fact, we actually have a shelter director meeting that we're actually hosting as resource fair. DOHMH was asked to participate in that resource fair for our shelter directors, and one of the things that we want to begin to do is to introduce Early Intervention services as a resources for our shelters.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But Early Intervention has always been a resource for anybody that qualifies for Early Intervention. So, you know, that's not anything new.

JAHMANI HILTON: But, it's the question of whether or not this is a resource that's actually being accessed--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Okay.

JAHMANI HILTON: --by shelters and so--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] And the Early Intervention is for age 3, right?

JAHMANI HILTON: It's--yes, correct.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. Okay, so then what is--okay, so then we're expanding Early Intervention? Is that what--is that what you said?

JAHMANI HILTON: We're--we're making sure that that resource is connected to all shelters, and families within shelters.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. How about for children that are age 3 months to 2 years?

JAHMANI HILTON: So, um, there isn't specific programming that's taking place. And you've highlighted an area that we actually do need to work on.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, because obviously that is a--a critical time in brain development, a critical time and the--the children that are homeless or--I didn't--I haven't asked about

what are we doing for children age infant to 3 years
who are doubled up, which obviously those--you're not
reaching them, right? DHS isn't reaching them.

JAHMANI HILTON: Correct. They're not in
shelter.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So, is there--
I mean is there anything that--

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: I think we all
agree that the need is tremendous.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: And that there
is much more that we could be doing across all of the
agencies and so, you know, if--if this is something
that the Council would like to discuss--

JAHMANI HILTON: [interposing] Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --I'm sure we would
all like to discuss, you know, is there potential
funding for programs to expand our services to these
students, and we--we would welcome those
conversations with Council funding.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We've done that.
We've done that in two initiatives over the last two
years. In terms of libraries is there--what could be

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done to expand to have a library in every family
shelter?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: We have launched
that initiative.

JAHMANI HILTON: [laughs] That is
something that is--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] All
right.

JAHMANI HILTON: --under Libraries. (sic)
Yes.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: Yes, earlier
this year the Chancellor working with Scholastic and
partnered.

LOIS HERRERA: Yeah, we had partnered.
New York City Service had partnered.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: And New York
City Service. Go ahead.

LOIS HERRERA: Okay. All right. It was
in collaboration with New York City Service who
provided a set of scholastic books for those family
shelters.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: So we launched
libraries in every family shelter--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Okay.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: --so that there
would be books that families could read to their
children and, you know, create the--the culture of
literacy--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Uh-huh.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: --that we know
that students need.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. I apologize.
I'm going to be jumping around a little bit because
there are just a few more questions that we need to
get on for the record. Do--do we have a breakdown
both of children in the shelter system and children
who are doubled up by age? Do we have a clear
picture of how many children 0 to 4 or 0 to 5 school
age and then high school age? Is that something that
that is broken down, and available for the public?

JAHMANI HILTON: So we actually did that
breakdown at the end of the calendar year--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Uh-huh.

JAHMANI HILTON: --'15, and so we do have
it for school age children. We're looking at 4 to
18. We do have that broken out in terms of age
groups.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, and do--how many children 0 to 4 are in the shelter system? Do you have that?

JAHMANI HILTON: I don't actually have that data with me, but we can access that data.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, that would be helpful to know, and then how would you even count the number of children who are 0 to 4 not in school who are doubled up? Have you thought about that?

LOIS HERRERA: We wouldn't have that information if they're--if they're not school age yet.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: When families--is there--is there an option for families to mark that down when they're--when they're doing their voluntary forms?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: No, the questionnaire is really aimed at the school age children.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So you can't add a question of do you have any children under the age of 4?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: It's an
interesting question, and we've actually had that
question in a couple of different contexts.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Uh-huh.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: You know, for
example as it might relate to future population of an
elementary school that people think that might be
very helpful--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Right.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: --to begin
asking those questions. So, it's kind of --

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] But in-

-

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: --having the
number of population. (sic)

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But--but also in the
context of getting a clear picture of exactly how
many. We say that there are 83 or maybe 2,500
homeless children according to McKinney-Vento
standards. That doesn't count all the children that
are 0 to 3 or not--

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: [interposing]
Correct.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --in--in a Pre-K or
school age setting. So we're missing kids.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: But we could
probably hypothesize. You think of--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Sure.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: --overall what's
the proportion of children of different ages.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure.

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: You could
probably come up with and extrapolate a number of a
possible population

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. [coughs]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [off mic] Can you
wrap up?

DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ROSE: [interposing]
[laughs] That was his big--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] We're
not done to wrap it up. I know that we have a lot of
testimony. My final question or two here has to do
with the PATH Center. So right now parents are
required to bring every child with them to PATH
unless the child has an exam that day in order to
verify the number of children in the family. Is that
having a negative effect? I've been with families

1 that have gone to PATH, and it's not often, you know,
2 just like an easy breezy couple of hours. It's a--
3 it's a long and involved process. Is that having a
4 negative impact? I mean these kids are already at a
5 higher risk of being absent from school for all the
6 reasons we've talked about today. Is there--is
7 there--is that also adding to--is that having a
8 deleterious effect on these children's education,
9 just that requirement.
10

11 JAHMANI HILTON: So that's a great
12 question. So must to provide a little bit of context
13 so PATH is actually open 24 hours a day, 7 days a
14 week, 365 days of the year, and there is no
15 requirement that families have to go to PATH with
16 children. There are no set rules and regulations
17 that compel families to present at PATH with their
18 children. However, in terms of best social service
19 practice we do require that the entire household be
20 present so that we can actually see the family
21 interactions, the engagements that actually happens.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm sorry. You just
23 said two different things. You said that they're not
24 required, but they are required?
25

JAHMANI HILTON: Well, there are no--
there's no regulations that they actually have to be
at PATH together.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But they are
required?

JAHMANI HILTON: From a Social Service
best practice perspective correct.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

JAHMANI HILTON: But, once again, you
know, I would really drill down on the point that
they don't actually have to come at--during school
hours because PATH is open 24 hours a day. And so we
do see families that opt to actually come after
school hours as well.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So they can still
until 2:00 in the morning because it's--I mean I--if-
-if--if they want to be able to try to get as much
done during the course of the day, obviously they're
not going to come at 5 o'clock at night. They're
going to--it--there--there seems to be an incentive
for them to come during the school day, which means
that the kids are going to be missing school. Just,
you know, the way things are. So, would--is there--I
mean have we--have--has DHS have any data to show

that--that there is--that families are alleging that they have more children than they have---than they truly have? I mean is this based on--this--this best practice is it based on--is it based on any data driven findings?

JAHMANI HILTON: So it's--so there aren't any--there isn't any data that speaks to this. I think if anything what we're talking about are when we know that family is particularly vulnerable and that there may be other issues that are drivers in terms of homelessness whether it be domestic violence or other issues. Wanting to be able to do a thorough and comprehensive assessment with the family, and noting that it would be challenging to do that through and comprehensive assessment if children aren't present and you don't have an opportunity to engage with the children as part of the household.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, and then I'm sorry, the last couple of questions here about HRA DV shelters. There's been an expansion obviously in the partnership with HR--with DHS and DOE on bussing. Is that also available to children in the DV shelters.

LISA RACHMUTH: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: HRA run DV shelters.

LISA RACHMUTH: Yes. If--if families choose to use bussing, they have that as an option and the shelters and the DOE staff will help coordinate that.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, it's covered under this expansion that was just announced?

LISA RACHMUTH: Yes, it is.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: How many students K to 6 are currently residing in HRA DV shelters?

LISA RACHMUTH: Currently, we have age range 5 to 12. So Kindergarten through sixth grade. We have about 660 children.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And the family specialists that are in--that are in the DHS shelters are those also available to children and families in the HRA DV shelters?

LISA RACHMUTH: Yes, they are.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And are those also available in--in clusters and hotels?

LISA RACHMUTH: Yes, but for cluster sites because there are no on-site services, they are usually stuck--they are usually placed at the CBO that's connected to those cluster sites.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Thank you very much. That concludes my questions. Chair Dromm.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank. That's the end of our grilling for you all right here and now. So, you've survived and we thank you very much for coming in and providing us with some answers, and we will do follow up with you later on, and thank you for all the hard work that you do for the residents of the City of New York. Thank you.

LISA RACHMUTH: Thank you.

JAHMANI HILTON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Now, I'm going to call up Karen Alfred from the United Federation of Teachers, and Beverly Logan, Principal from PS 156 representing CSA. [background comments, pause] Okay, great. Let's get started here. Could I ask you to raise your right hand, and I need to swear you in. 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?

PANEL MEMBERS: [in unison] I do.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Very good. Karen, you want to start.

[audience members talking loudly]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: [gavel] Quiet,
please. Quiet.

KAREN ALFORD: Good afternoon, all. I'm
Karen Alford, the UFT's Vice President for the
Elementary Schools. [bell]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: First of all, let's
just--I'm going to-- Yeah, okay, so reset the clock.
Let's close the door in the back, please. And all of
our reporters I know you're very happy, but we need a
little order here. Thank you reporters. [background
comments]

KAREN ALFORD: Thank you, Chairs Dromm,
Levin and Public Advocate James for holding this
hearing. As a former classroom teacher and now I'm
the UFT's Vice President for the Elementary Schools,
I want to thank you for focusing on the needs of our
most vulnerable students, our children in temporary
housing. When I taught at PS 156 and Ocean Hill and
Brownsville in District 23, it was certainly not
uncommon for us to have to purchase coats and
uniforms and I am sure that--that the problem has
gotten even worse from when I left the school. And
now as a union leader, and the Union's point person
on Community Learning School, my job, our job, is to

try to clear away the barriers that prevent our children from achieving. And let's be clear. Until we tackle poverty for which homelessness is just one of its many faces, we are not going to see our neediest schools turn around, and we are not going to see all of our children thriving. What the UFT is Doing: We have an initiative, our Community Learning School Initiative and we're working with 26 schools, and those schools are in many of these areas where you see the highest concentrations of students in temporary housing. Of course, we know there's Districts 9 and 23 where we see these greatest concentrations, but we certainly can't forget about District 5, District 7, District 10, District 12 and District 16 where you're seeing 15% or more of the children that are living in temporary housing. The UFT has figured out that we have to have targeted sustainable community based programming in our schools. For each school we have provided a resource coordinator that we--that we have paid for to--to reside in the school to help the school figure out how to do some of this programming for our students in temporary housing, and all of the students in the school. Let me focus on PS 34 for a moment in

District 5 in East Harlem. Over 31% of the students meet the DOE's criteria for children in temporary housing. This particular school there are 13 shelters that feed into that one school. In this school, the resource coordinator has partnered with Food Bank New York, and with 20 faith based institutions as they realize that working together, they will be that safety net for the school. One of their concerns right now in that neighborhood is that the largest supermarket, Pathmark is no longer there creating a food desert and food insecurity within that community, and that's something that they're working on. The UFT has provided a social worker to augment what's going on with the school based support team. That is our investment in the school as well, and with Food Bank there is financial literacy and training to help parents figure out how do you do a budget to help you sustain yourselves. Also, the UFT and our Community Learning School we are also building two school based health centers. [bell]

Just one more moment, please. And we are also working with Hedy Chang one of the leading experts in the nation around attendance, and how do we help schools mitigate chronic absenteeism. So we applaud

the efforts going on. We believe that bussing definitely helps create stability, and we know that there's more to do and the UFT wants to be a partner in that work as it gets done. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Ms. Logan.

BEVERLY LOGAN: Good afternoon, Chair Dromm and Chair Levin and the distinguished guests of the Council. CSA wants to thank you for taking the opportunity to testify--giving me the opportunity to testify on the concerns and the Department of Education's efforts to help students who are homeless or in temporary housing. I am the principal of PS 156 in the Brownsville, Brooklyn, a community learning school as well as a community school under the Department of Education. What's the difference? Under a Community Learning School I have partnered with the CBO. It happens to be the United Federation of Teachers. Through these collaborations I'm able to provide many services for our children in temporary housing. In Brownsville, all my children have needs. So if you walk in my school, there's no difference. When you walk in my school, my children are in uniforms. I provide uniforms to whoever needs

1 them. When our STH population comes in, we have a
2 certain protocol that we follow to make sure that not
3 only the children's needs are--are supplied, but the
4 parents' need as well. That's usually something as a
5 Metro Card providing them access to the services at
6 the shelter that they may be in, whatever their needs
7 are. We have after school programs 'til 6:00 p.m. I
8 have a social worker on staff that I go through being
9 a Community Learning School through UFT, a
10 partnership through their Social Work, Division that
11 has helped to provide the support to families when
12 they come in because we don't them to keep going out
13 to other supports. So we have the supports in
14 school. It makes their lives easier. Through the
15 collaboration with the DOE and the Department of
16 Health and Mental Hygiene I have 715 students. They
17 brought in the Vision Screening Team. They screened
18 every student in my school. After the first
19 screening, 176 kids needed glasses. They came back
20 and screened those 176 and again. 125 of those
21 students need to get glasses. Of the 125, 32 were
22 students of temporary housing. Those kids were in
23 school while it happened. The parents didn't have to
24 take time off of their schedule to take them. We
25

1 have medicals provided to them through the
2 Department--the Nursing Department where we--once a
3 month a doctor comes in to provide medicals for the
4 children who their parents get physicals if they
5 can't get them to the doctor. So we have many
6 supports. I provide barber shop services so kids
7 who--my boys who in, let's talk, right. I feel good
8 when I look good. When I look good, I do better.
9 So, we have an opportunity, a collaboration with a
10 local barber who takes them Monday, Tuesday and
11 Wednesday. We take kids on their lunch time so
12 they're not losing instruction. They get their cuts.
13 They look very nice, and again they can focus on
14 their academics. I have a Saturday program that
15 works from 9:00 in the morning until 2:00 o'clock in
16 the afternoon. So, it's academic and enrichment. So
17 parents have afforded the opportunity, and we look at
18 how we could support our children to make sure that
19 they are getting the services that they need. Thank
20 you.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Well, first of all,
23 let me say thank you for coming in. The programs
24 that you have described is incredible that you have
25 to provide that many services. It's wonderful. I

1 though you were teachers not social workers,
2 psychologists, psychiatrists, you know, the whole
3 line of everything. But I--having been a teacher
4 myself know that unless many of those issues are
5 dealt with first and foremost that you can't really
6 get to educate the child. If the child doesn't have
7 a set of glasses, how can you teach them to read, you
8 know? So it is really commendable. What I am--I'm
9 most interested in is this relationship. You said
10 there's--UFT is acting as a CBO in your school. Can
11 you explain that further to me because that's the
12 first time I've heard of that.

14 BEVERLY LOGAN: Two--two years ago.

15 KAREN ALFORD: [off mic] Two years ago.

16 BEVERLY LOGAN: Two years ago there was a
17 grant, an RFP came out for an AIVP grant, and I
18 applied. We got it and we had to get a CBO to help
19 us support the services in the school. So I chose,
20 you know, if I was reaching teachers CBO side to be,
21 and they've helped facilitate some of the services
22 that we have within the school.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So this is principals
24 and Teachers Union collaborating, working together.

25 KAREN ALFORD: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Which also is unusual to see, but good to see. I applaud you for that. Ms. Alford, you had mentioned in your testimony as well that you were providing certain services to the school. How do you do the funding for that, or is there funding involved in that? How does that work exactly?

KAREN ALFORD: It's a blended funding model. UFT, of course, picks up some of the funding. We thank you all for some of the funding.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Does that come out of the Community Schools Initiative funding?

KAREN ALFORD: Yes, it is. Yes, it is as well as grants that we apply for with the schools. Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So I believe that Community Schools funding is maybe about \$450,000. Am I correct? It's around that--

KAREN ALFORD: [interposing] We'll get-- get it to you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --I believe around that number?

KAREN ALFORD: We'll get it to you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And is all of the funding use for this purpose, or is it used for other reasons as well in different communities--Community Schools.

KAREN ALFORD: We have 26 schools and we make sure that all of the schools are receiving services, and we make sure that--that they're unique to that community with the understanding that each school looks a little different. So what you will see you may see barber services in one school. You may see a washer and dryer in another school because again it's about self-esteem. If children have to come to school in dirty clothes, they're not going to come or they may come and get teased by their peers. So we really have to think out of the box with how we're doing this work in addition to making sure that we have social workers through the UFT that are coming in and working with at-risk students because there just haven't been enough social workers from the DOE. And so, we're trying to fill in the gap, and work together where we can.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Amazing work. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much for your testimony and for all that you do. I just want to ask a quick question of Principal Logan about if--my question is kind of broadly. If--if you weren't able to--you--you were not able to find all of these resources kind of through your ingenuity, does the Department of Education provide a baseline level of support that do you--that do you feel is adequate for--for children who are living in temporary housing.

BEVERLY LOGAN: The Department gives us--there's--there a baseline. For example the, the physicals that are provided that's through the DOE. The--the collaboration with the vision service was the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. That's through--that was through DOE. The money that we offset in our budget would provide for me to buy uniforms to pay for kids to go on trips to buy coats. Is there room for more? Absolutely, but a school could--it depends on your population. I--I have right now 125 students in temporary housing. So, you know, to me that's a lot of children that I--I--are my most neediest, and I take pride and I make sure

that their basic needs are met. You know, the school down the block from me may have much less than that.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And of--of those children who are in temporary housing, there's a certain number who are residing in shelter.

KAREN ALFORD: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Do you--have you been contacted or do you have a relationship with the shelter provider or the CBO that is attached to the shelter provider that's doing wraparound services within the shelter. Do you feel like that outreach from the DS--DHS side of the equation if that's adequate from a principal's perspective?

BEVERLY LOGAN: Right now, I have seven shelters that feed into my school. I'm in contact with my Content Specialist through the DOE, who is our liaison. I have three shelters that I'm personally in contact with because most of my students come from them, and I provide parent workshops at the shelter for the parents. Everything from financial literacy to de-stressing, to how to get my child ready for the test, to journal writing. We provide opportunities and workshops on the breaks so that if they don't have the affordability to take

1 them out or away there's something fun for them to
2 there. And then there's the Family Workers at all
3 the shelters who are in contact with my Family
4 Workers at my school. Whenever we have a child
5 coming into the system, they're usually escorted to
6 my school from the Family Worker from the shelter to
7 the school, and then they meet with my Family Worker
8 to get the families acclimated.
9

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That's amazing.

11 BEVERLY LOGAN: I also have--how could I
12 forget--being a Community Learning School you have a
13 Community Resource Director, and that person's
14 responsibility is to get as many resources as
15 possible for the school. And she's a very key person
16 in my building to provide resources for my needy
17 families, and it could be everything from when they
18 drop off their child. Last she arranged a
19 partnership with CAMBA, and on Friday we were able to
20 provide bags of food to go home for the weekend to
21 the families. And all you have to--you know, they
22 just sign up, and that was a win-win for CAMBA. It
23 was a win-win for us. So, her--here activity is--is--
24 -it's--the passion is there and, you know, I have a
25 school community that just embraces all of our

1 children. So if a family comes in and mom drops
2 over, we have grab and go. If a kid comes in late,
3 they get breakfast, they go. But if we see mom is
4 hungry, someone in my staff will, whether it's Sharon
5 or myself, we'll order their mom breakfast. We'll
6 talk, we'll sit. I have sewing classes for parents
7 while they're waiting. This whole PATH thing is a
8 whole other story. When they have to go back and
9 forth, if they have to wait to go back to the Bronx,
10 we have an opportunity-- We make it--it's a Community
11 School, and the object is that everyone coming in
12 feels comfortable and wants to--wants to be. We want
13 our kids to be there and we want our families to know
14 that our kids want to be there.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Thank you
17 very much, and thank you for the wonderful work
18 you're doing. I'd love to come out there to visit
19 you.

20 BEVERLY LOGAN: Any time.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We'll all go
22 together. [laughs]

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And Council Member--
24 Chair Levin was I think a prime opponent of Breakfast
25 of the Bell. So, we should give him a big round of

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applause for his work as well. [applause] Council
Member Inez Barron.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr.
Chair, to the Chairs. I want to thank you for
coming, and providing accurate on-the-ground
information as to what's happening. I know where
is. It's a part of District 23, which is where I
first started when I was teaching, and I commend you
for all that you're doing. Now, you said that your
population comes from basically seven shelters and, I
know that some of them are probably in walking
distance, but how many of your students come from
shelters that require them to have transportation,
being bussed?

BEVERLY LOGAN: About 20, 25.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And how far away
are they from these shelters, from the school? How--
what's the--

BEVERLY LOGAN: The furthest--I don't
know the name of the shelter. I just know it's on
Miller Avenue in--

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] I
know. Okay.

BEVERLY LOGAN: --in East New York.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yeah, yeah, I
know that.

BEVERLY LOGAN: Last year I did have a
kid come from the Bronx, and that was the parents'
choice for him to come through public trans--through
the Yellow Bus system.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So was it a child
who had been in your school, and then was located to
the Bronx?

BEVERLY LOGAN: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, so they
wanted to maintain that continuity.

BEVERLY LOGAN: Continuity, right.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And finally, you
described a lot of what you're doing in partnership
with the UFT, and that's really great and I want to
commend the UFT as well. If we had the time and if
we could look at the books, the records in your
school, would you be able to identify a dollar amount
that the DOE has contributed towards your children
who are living in shelters? Could you find that
dollar amount? Your finance person sit down and go
over that and say oh, okay, all of these were, in

fact, funded through the DOE allocation. Could you point, pinpoint a dollar amount.

BEVERLY LOGAN: The only dollar amount I could pinpoint is what I am getting--you know, required to scheduled through compliance. So that's the \$100 per child.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Oh, okay. So it's \$100 per child based on the number of children. There's nothing other than that \$100?

BEVERLY LOGAN: Outside of service?

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Say again.

BEVERLY LOGAN: Outside of service?

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes.

BEVERLY LOGAN: No. So they provide services, but in terms of--

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]
Right.

BEVERLY LOGAN: --for me and my budget I know so right now I have \$12,500 scheduled. We could have 125 students.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Under the--

BEVERLY LOGAN: [interposing] Has my number increased? I have to put more money in.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: You have to find
a way to do that?

BEVERLY LOGAN: Well, it comes out of--

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]
Well, right. That's the way it's done. (sic) Okay.
Thank you so much, and I again commend you for what
it is that you're doing. It's a part of what people
do who love what they're doing, and understand it's
not just the academics. It's not just the
interaction in the classroom, but certainly the
entire culture that you create in your school and I
commend you for that. Thank you.

BEVERLY LOGAN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And just to follow up
a little bit on that question about the money, the
money how is that determined? When is it determined?
I mean that--we were asking questions about October
31st before. Is there a similar system for the
allocation of \$100 per student?

BEVERLY LOGAN: Usually my compliance
starts in I guess September so---

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: You give them the
number of your enrollment?

1 BEVERLY LOGAN: No, it's in the system.

2 So whatever is logged from either enrollment or--I,
3 well, I learned today Department of Homeless
4 Services, I get an email telling me this is what the
5 amount that I have to offset.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So that's done once a
7 year, or is that done as you take students?

8 BEVERLY LOGAN: No, it's--it's multiple
9 times a year.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Throughout the year.
11 Okay, thank you.

12 BEVERLY LOGAN: Because the number
13 fluctuates with the--you know the children
14 discharging and leaving so--

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.
16 Well, it was really emotional for me to hear
17 testimony from both of you today to know the good
18 work that you're doing in our schools. Thank you,
19 congratulations and keep up the good job. Thank you.

20 KAREN ALFORD: Thank you.

21 BEVERLY LOGAN: You're welcome.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Our next
23 panel--oh, I'm sorry. Our Public Advocate did want
24 to ask some questions.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So yeah, I--I know the hour is late and so I won't take much time. I just--I, too, want to add my sentiments and congratulations to all that you're doing and praise to all that you're doing. And I, too, would like to visit 156, if we can arrange that. I would greatly appreciate that. So I'm not going to hold you. I want to come and see it for myself.

BEVERLY LOGAN: Okay.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And I hope DOE is still here. Obviously, you need additional assistance. I want to thank UFT for all that you are doing, but clearly the information that was just shared with us previously about all the things that they are doing obviously you're on the ground. And you--you testified to the fact that primarily your assistances comes from UFT and your collaborations with community based organizations. And we really need to get you additional assistance because you only have one social worker?

BEVERLY LOGAN: No, no, I have--so--and that's--the DOE provides for schools. So--so I have a social worker. I have a guidance counselor, but I

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3 have an additional social worker being a Community
4 Learning School.

5 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: As a result of
6 UFT?

7 BEVERLY LOGAN: Right, right.

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So, it's two
9 social workers primarily for 125 students, correct?

10 BEVERLY LOGAN: I actually have three
11 because I have a school based support team social
12 worker--

13 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing]
14 Okay.

15 BEVERLY LOGAN: --that's provided by DOE.

16 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So it's three a
17 100 students?

18 BEVERLY LOGAN: Right, right.

19 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And it's \$100
20 annually for those 125 students, correct?

21 BEVERLY LOGAN: Right.

22 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And were you here
23 when I was asking questions with regards to this
24 arbitrary date of October 31st?

25 BEVERLY LOGAN: Yeah, I was here.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Are you familiar
with this date?

BEVERLY LOGAN: Yes, I am.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: What does it
mean?

BEVERLY LOGAN: It means that on October
31st, that is the--the date that we're--our audited
registers will be funded for. So, whatever happens
on--if a kid comes in after October 31st, I don't get
any more money until the following year.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Exactly. So,
therefore, you've got to borrow from other--

BEVERLY LOGAN: [interposing] Right.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: --pot of money to
accommodate the needs of that child. And do you have
any mental health counselors?

BEVERLY LOGAN: Well, those are part of
my social workers and my guidance counselor.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay.

BEVERLY LOGAN: I also--we're starting a
mental health clinic in our building, and that's
again through the collaboration of the grant. We
hope to have it up I guess by summer. We will have
more on-site mental health resources.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So thank you for being more than a school. You're a one-stop center, and I look forward to visiting. I think we're going to do a field trip all of our senior schools. So be prepared.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Just before I let you go, though, I'm sorry Public Advocate that I did not recognize you before. So, you know, the funding that we provide from the City Council that you're using for these programs it's amazing to hear you say today that you have to go out and buy washing machines for the schools. But you know what, that does come before anything, right? So we need to really look at how we're--we're providing funding there, and I'm going to work with my--with my colleagues in the Council to see what we can do to provide further assistance through the Community Schools Initiative that we have here in the Council. Thank you very much.

BEVERLY LOGAN: Thank you.

[pause]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Karen Redlener from the Children's Health Fund, Valerie Barton Richardson from CAMBA, and Andrew Leonard from the Children's

Defense Fund of New York. Is that right? Oh, I'm sorry, there were two names with--Elizabeth Stevens as well from CAMBA. [pause] I have to swear you in so I'm just waiting for the others, too, to be seated. Okay, so I do have to swear you. If you'd just raise your right hand. Okay, just a moment. All right, everybody. Yep.

PANEL MEMBER: Yes. [laughter]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. 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?

PANEL MEMBER: Yes.

PANEL MEMBER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, very good. Who would like to start? The lady in gray.

KAREN REDLENER: All right. Thank you. Good afternoon, Public Advocate James and members of the Committees on Education and General Welfare. Thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you to share some of our concerns, insights and recommendations about the challenges facing homeless students in New York City schools. My name is Karen Redlener and I'm Executive Vice President of

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the Children's Health Fund. I oversee the Fund's Comprehensive Primary Care Programs for many of our city's most disadvantaged children and families. We see nearly 6,500 children and their families each year at 66,000 different medical, mental health, nutrition, case management and other visits. This is in health centers and through mobile medical clinics. 2,500 of these children live in family shelters, and hundreds more live doubled and tripled up in the South Bronx community. We also have a Health Care Initiative that is based in three high need elementary schools in the South Bronx and Harlem where one in four children are homeless. So let me share some of what we have learned, and conclude with some key recommendations that could help homeless children stay healthy and succeed in school. As you have heard, under the longstanding McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, all 87,000 of homeless children both in shelters and living doubled up are eligible for supports to improve attendance and access to education services. However, we are deeply concerned that the guidelines are not being implemented consistently to all children who are designated as homeless especially those 60,000

children who are not in shelters. And the consequences of failing to meet their basic needs are dire, as you know, and let me just mention a couple of additional facts. Only 17% of homeless students passed the third through eighth grade math exams in the school year 2013-14 compared with the citywide rate of 35%. An incredible 58% of elementary students living in shelters were chronically absent in that same year compared to 19% chronically absent citywide. This means that these children are missing more than 20 days of school in an academic year and many of them it's up to two months or three months. This is a problem that is well known to correlated with lower test scores in all grades, and increase risk of being held back, and ultimately higher dropout rates in high school. Though there are mandated education liaisons at the shelters, as we've heard, we have found working in those shelters that there are still children whose attendance, enrollment or access to education services are delayed because schools are not contacted or nor accommodating [bell], bus is not made available or parents not engaged. While homeless children have extremely high rates of asthma, some five times higher than national

prevalence data, access to competent health care is difficult for sheltered children. As a result, children with under treated asthma come to school symptomatic, exhausted and unable to concentrate. The restrictions of Medicaid managed care often limit rather than enhance access to health care for homeless children. Our school based initiatives, which is a new initiative that I mentioned before where 25% of students are homeless, nearly 905 of students are not reading at grade level in third and fifth grades. We have two-person team that we've placed in these three elementary schools to coordinate, screen and follow up health barriers to learning as well as provide mental health services. And we have focused on identifying these health barriers to learning. More than one in five of the children in these schools have uncorrected vision problems that make it difficult to read or see the board. Ten percent have previously undetected or untreated hearing impairments, and as we heard--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] If you could just wrap up because we've gone over time.

KAREN REDLENER: Okay. Sorry, and many other health issues such as behavioral problems,

uncontrolled asthma occur in the schools that we see.
So, we're very concerned and our key recommendations
have to do with making families more aware of their
eligibility for McKinney-Vento; making sure that
health resources are available to children in schools
and in shelters; addressing health barriers to
learning; focusing on the importance of attendance
making sure that families and agencies under the
value of that, and really providing supports that
families need across agencies. We look forward to
working with you. We're very pleased that the
Council has made this an issue. It's extremely
important for the children that we all care for.
Thank you so much for your attention.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.
Let's to Mr. Leonard.

ANDREW LEONARD: So you can reference my
written statement for the full testimony, I'll hit it
a little bit. So good afternoon. My name is Andrew
Leonard, and I am the Senior Policy Associate for
Health, Housing and Income Security with the
Children's Defense Fund New York. Among the many
issues that we care about CDF remains committed to
security equitable barrier free access to stable

housing and high quality education for New York children and families. CDF understands the important role that stable housing plays in a child's life and believes that all children deserve access to safe and affordable housing. CDF New York's Beat the Odds Scholarship Program provides social and academic college readiness program to high school students that are working hard to overcome tremendous obstacles in their personal lives who demonstrate academic achievement, and give back to their community. In addition the Beats the Odds program offers scholarship opportunities and support services to aid scholars throughout their college career. Since the program's inception in 1995 many of our scholars have experienced homelessness. This year one of our scholars has struggled to maintain stable housing. He and his mother live doubled up with family for a few years before ultimately entering the shelter system. The experience of being in shelter led the student to become shy and withdrawn. He had to balance the pressures of completing school assignments on time with the pressing need to take care of his siblings. His mother noticed his struggles and had him join a program called Safe in

My Brothers Arms, SIMBA. SIMBA is a program operated within the Department of Education, and it provided him with tutoring and gave him the opportunity to take college classes for credit. With the help of SIMBA and the Beat the Odds Program he is now set to enter college and create--and achieve great success. CDF would like to acknowledge the work of the Department of Education in supporting homeless students, but would like to highlight two ways in which the City can better support homeless students. The first is preserve and expand Safe in My Brothers Arms and programs like it. The SIMBA program has been a critical lifeline for New York Students experiencing homelessness including our own Beat the Odds scholars. Most importantly, SIMBA offers homeless students a safe space in which they can simply be themselves without being burdened by the stigma of homelessness. SIMBA fosters supportive friendships among students who share the experience of homelessness, and it provides students with the supports needed to achieve academic and personal success. New York City should preserve and expand support for SIMBA and programs like it so that it can continue to provide the spaces and resources needed to

promote excellence among students experiencing homelessness. The second point is expand access to fee waivers for CUNY applicants. The experience of homelessness often threatens a student's ability to enroll in college while federal and institutional financial assistance can help a student finance the cost of college. The expenses associated with applying can be enough to be a--enough of a barrier to prevent a student from ever enrolling. In particular, the limited availability of application fee waivers to the City University of New York prevents some students from applying. CUNY has a strong history of supporting students who have experienced homelessness. But a number students cannot receive these needed supports because they cannot afford the \$65 application fee. While all homeless students are likely eligible for a few waiver, [bell] CUNY only has the capacity to distribute a very limited number of waivers to counselors in New York City high schools, and expectedly some homeless students find themselves without a much needed fee waiver. By ensuring all students--all homeless students have received a fee waiver, the city with a relatively small investment

can significantly improve the educational and employment opportunities for some of our most vulnerable youth. I'd like to thank the Chairs Dromm and Levin and Public Advocate and all the members of the Education and General Welfare Committees for the opportunity to testify today.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Let's go to I guess to your left.

Thank you. Good afternoon Chairs Dromm, Levin and Public Advocate James. My name is Valerie Barton-Richardson, and I'm an Executive Vice President for CAMBA. CAMBA has been providing emergency shelter since 1996, and today our portfolio include three Tier 2 shelters for homeless families for a total of 391 units. The Flagstone Family Center, the Landing and the Kensington, and we just want to note the appreciation of the City Council members of those districts, Council Mealy, Julissa Ferreras-Copeland and Brand Lander for their communication and support. We want to highlight the ways that we work well with the Department of Education. We have on-site staff, the Family Assistants, at all of our sites. They work with the families at intake when they come in and register

families. So we make sure it's a seamless process. They work on transportation for children whether it's the Metro Cards or the buses, and they really are a part of the team, the social services team. We fully integrate them with our case managers, our social workers, our housing specialists on the site. Flagstone is in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. It has 158 families, and just to give you a sense of scope, there are 463 children at Flagstone, 327 of them are school aged. Of those children, 236 are attending school in Brooklyn, and 91 are in other boroughs. Currently, 64 children are bussed to schools. We have about 34 children who are in after school programs at their school site. That doesn't represent all children in after school programs, but it is one of the challenges for children participating in after school because there isn't necessarily a second wave of free bussing that comes in the evening for those children. Flagstone is also one of the sites for the Sonic Pilot Expansion Program, and so we have an on-site program for middle school students at the shelter, and I've detailed some of the activities in the written testimony that happens at the site. Not in the testimony, Flagstone

is also one of the sites that is part of the trauma informed care generously supported by the Council with our Safe Care Evidence Based Program. We have two sites that we opened up this year. One is the Landing in East Elmhurst, Queens. At the Landing we have 159 families and that represents about 199 almost 200 children, 63 are school aged, 31 are attending school in Queens and 32 in other boroughs. [bell] With the expansion, we have more children who are taking advantage of bussing versus being escorted by their parents with the Metro Cards. And our last site that just opened in December the Kensington, we have at that site, it's a smaller site so there are less school aged children. Again, we have a DOE representative on site. That one is part time, and a tremendous amount of community support and volunteer support. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Next, please.

VALERIE BARTON-RICHARDSON: We're together. So we're going to answer questions.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Oh, okay. We were a little confused about that.

VALERIE BARTON-RICHARDSON: Sorry about that.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: All right, well,
thank you very--thank you very much. I heard the
recommendations particularly as they related to CUNY,
and that is a very interesting idea. I'm going to
convey that to the Higher Education Committee, and I
think it would us--it was about \$33,000, if I'm not
mistaken?

ANDREW LEONARD: Yeah. So what's in
there is--if you look at the number of students who
are expected to graduate and sheltered I believe is
the number and times a single \$65 application fee
waiver, it would be a very small investment.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: But you estimate
about 500 students are in high school, 500 homeless
or 500 students at risk of homelessness.

ANDREW LEONARD: Well, so I mean it's
slightly larger than that if you look at beyond the
sheltered population in the McKinney-Vento.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

ANDREW LEONARD: I think look at the ICH
Report it's closer to 3,000. So there would be--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] But the
500 was what number? That was in your testimony.

ANDREW LEONARD: Right, so that's the
shelter--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] The
shelter population. Okay good. Okay. All right.
Thank you to the panel. We appreciate it very, very
much. Thank you for your time.

VALERIE BARTON-RICHARDSON: Can I--Can I
just add one?

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Sure.

VALERIE BARTON-RICHARDSON: --addition,
and I know it's not necessarily for just homeless
children, but the need for universal after--universal
after school programs. The COMPASS Programs really
need an expansion. We got contacted all the time
about schools looking for additional seats and
services, and schools that don't have a COMPASS after
school program. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Amen for that. It--
it--we applaud the Administration on the expansion
for all middle schools, but I was at an elementary
school, a high needs elementary school last week.
You know, I said--I asked the principal what's--
what's going on? What do you guys need? She said I
need an after school program.

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VALERIE BARTON-RICHARDSON: Yes,

3

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That's perfect.

4

VALERIE BARTON-RICHARDSON: Yep,

5

absolutely.

6

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah. Thank you.

7

VALERIE BARTON-RICHARDSON: Thank you.

8

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Next up we're going

9

to call Pamela Stewart, Co-Chair of Citywide Council

10

for Special Ed on Special Ed; Jennifer Erb-Downward,

11

ICPH with colleague Linda Bazerjian, Linda

12

Basergione; Michelle Frank, Advocates for Children.

13

[background comments, pause]

14

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And my apologies if I

15

messed up anybody's name. [background comments,

16

laughter] Whoever wants to begin.

17

PAMELA STEWART: Okay, I'll start. I'd

18

like to start by thanking our Public Advocate Ms.

19

James. Also all the Council Members for--for--the

20

council members in New York City Council for allowing

21

me to speak. I'm not sure if you remember me. I was

22

here about a week ago. I was speaking about

23

Universal Free Lunch, and I brought up a lot of facts

24

and figures highlighting the median income for New

25

Yorkers as well as emphasizing on each borough. For

example Brooklyn, the median average income minus the rent income and what people were left with. And in the end when you subtracted all of that, most Brooklynites were left with about \$1,200 a month, and that didn't include the deductions for payroll, insurance, essentials, transportation, food, all of those things. And I don't think I emphasized why I was so passionate about it. And the reason I was so passionate about it is--is--it's because most New Yorkers are about one paycheck away from being homeless. And, I actually was one of those people as well who was one step before arriving in a homeless shelter. I was a single parent of a pre-schooler, and I was pregnant, and while I was pregnant I lost my job. And, I tried my best to find a job, but when you're about seven months pregnant there are not too many people who want to hire you. Even though it's illegal for them to say we're not hiring you because you're pregnant, I'm sure there are other reasons that they chose not to hire me that was for the betterment of their company, and I understand that and I know a little there. So I did what I had to do. I downsized to a smaller apartment then to a room with my pre-schooler, and then eventually

1 whatever resources I had available to me they were
2 depleted. So, I had no choice but to go to a
3 homeless shelter, and I'm not angry. I'm grateful.
4 There were some services there that were very helpful
5 at the time that I needed, but still in all there
6 were things that I felt could have been done better
7 that weren't done. One example was I was from
8 Harlem, New York. My doctor, my OB was in Harlem,
9 and somehow I was placed in a shelter in Staten
10 Island. My son's school even though he was a pre-
11 schooler was in Harlem, and we were in Staten Island,
12 and for nothing, Staten Island is awesome. But, when
13 you're from Manhattan you know very little about
14 Staten Island and the transportation and getting
15 around and that made things very [bell] complicated.
16 It was unfortunate when the--a member from the
17 Department of Homeless Services said that they're at
18 a 50% rate of trying to keep people within their
19 neighborhood. My situation happened over 20 years
20 ago, and it's still an issue today, and for me that's
21 scary. I--I do applaud them for actually hiring a
22 Director of Education, but I also think that they
23 need to look into a Director of Special Education
24 because there are a lot of students who need special
25

education, and their needs are not being met. I remember when I had to go to what they now call the PATH. I went there terrified out of my mind, and I had to bring my son with me. I could not take him to school, and I was there for two days. I mean I hope that's changed, and people aren't there two days overnight, but that was my experience, and my son had to be there with me. So children who have special needs they're missing two days of school, which is very, very important. If you have occupational therapy, speech therapy, counseling, PT, these are all things that they need to have when they're supposed to have them, and they're missing out on it. And so, I would encourage them at the PATH Center to maybe hire some substitute teachers through the Board of Education. Have them in there while the parents are doing whatever they're doing so they're not missing so much school. I would also encourage them to consider maybe having some related services people there as well if that's possible. I don't know what their budget is like. Also, if they do have to move students to a completely different borough or it's not convenient for the parent, maybe they might even want to consider having some related services in the

shelter itself. I mean I know they're not here now,
but if you could pass that information on to them
until the Department of Education has the ability to
bring the services at that school for that child.
And I have much more to say, but I know our time is
limited. If you need to reach out to me, I am with
the--I'm one of the Co-Presidents of the Citywide
Council in Special Education. I would love to speak
to any of you at any time.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Say your
name for the record by the way.

PAMELA STEWART: Pamela Stewart.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Thank you so
much Ms. Stewart.

PAMELA STEWART: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yes, thank you.
Thank you very much for your testimony. I look
forward to keeping in touch with you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

LINDA BAZERJIAN: Hi. Good afternoon.
I'm Linda Bazerjian, and I'm with the Institute for
Children Poverty and Homelessness. We are going to
give our formal testimony, but we're going to save
everybody some time because thank you very much you

used a lot of the--the foundational data that we had
a chance to take a look at throughout the hearing.

And I just wanted to share the purpose of the
Institute really is to take a look at the data, and
to share it with policymakers like you with parents,
with people who are working directly in the system.
But they are the experts who we should look to for
the policy recommendations. And so when Jen talks a
little bit about her testimony, a lot of what we're
looking at is just pointing out the things that we
are finding. And folks who spoke a little bit
earlier today I think they brought up some very good
examples, and there are a lot more examples out there
and the service providers of what actually can work
to address these needs.

JENNIFER ERB-DOWNWARD: Thank you, Linda
and thank you for having this hearing. It's an
incredibly important topic. So my name is Jennifer
Erb-Downward. I apologize that was name was
incredibly complicated to say. I think we might win
that.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Because I wasn't able
to.

JENNIFER ERB-DOWNWARD: Oh, no, but I'm going to just jump through most of the statistics that you have already used and heard, but one thing just to reinforce the scope of the issue that we're talking about right now is just that the number of students who were homeless in New York City in 2013-14 is the equivalent of the population in Trenton, New Jersey. So we're--I--I mean this--this is really an incredibly large issue that we're dealing with, and this has a lot of educational implications for children. Some of the things that we found in our research that when you look at third grade test scores for students who are homeless, just 17% of students who are homeless were proficient at grade level in math, and only 13% were proficient at grade level in English. And that if you look at students who are housed in low-income the rate of proficiency is two times that, and for students are housed and not low-income the rate was three times that. Similar trends are seen in graduation. So if you look among homeless students or students who experience homelessness during high school so across those four years less than half of those students graduated high school in four years. And then if you look at

students who are housed in low-income, 69% graduated and then among students who are housed and not low-income 86% graduated. One thing that we haven't talked about much here today is that the impact of homelessness on students and their education is something that's lasting, and that's actually something that is in a report that we are going to be releasing shortly called *Aftershocks: Looking at the Lasting Impact of Homelessness on Educational Achievement*. And what we found there is that among students--if you look at students who are housed, but had experienced homelessness within the previous three years, that those students are performing just as poorly on their third through eighth grade tests as students who are currently homeless. And that is a really important thing to think about that we need to think not just about what's going on with students in the present moment when their homeless. But, also what's happening to students after they become stably housed, and how do we address the long-term impacts and the needs of these students. And this impact that we saw was above and beyond poverty alone. So it's an important thing to consider. I'm going to wrap up my testimony there because I believe all the

other statistics that I was going to cite have already been mentioned by other people. But if you have any other questions about anything in the data and the outlets of student homelessness or any other data relating to homeless students in New York City I'm happy to answer those questions. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, and thank you for all the--the work that your organization has done, and certainly we found it very useful in preparing for this hearing. So thank you. I look forward to continuing to work with you.

JENNIFER ERB-DOWNWARD: [off mic] Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you--It is not on. [on mic] How about now? Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Michelle Frank and I'm the Assistant Director with New York State Teachers. As a project of Advocates for Children, New York State Teachers has worked closely with the New York City Department of Education and the related city agencies who are here today for the last ten years. We handle between 2,000 and 3,000 cases every year regarding the educational needs of students in temporary housing

across New York. Our focus today is on the need for funding to adequately support the Yellow Bus Initiative that we heard about today. That means adequate staffing and funding for that staffing, and funding for upgraded data systems that will allow integration and communication across city agencies. I also want to take a moment to share our strong support of the Interagency Collaboration last year in support of Pre-K access for students in temporary housing in shelters. School stability and the right to continue enrollment in the school of origin are the central focus of federal and state laws that protect students in temporary housing, and have been since 1987 through today. And the reason is that experts recognize stability as a key factor, protected factor in academic and social outcomes for students in temporary housing. The New York City DOE's Yellow Bus Initiative for K through 6 students in shelters is a tremendous step forward for stability. It means that the parents of K through 6 children no longer need to choose between taking their child to school and searching for work, or looking for homeless--for permanent housing to end homelessness. And because of this landmark change

children no longer have to forfeit their right to an original school placement if, for example, public transit is a hardship for students whose families have a disability, or to children who need to travel to two different places at the same time. The new program must be appropriately funded. It must be appropriately staffed, and it must be memorialized in written policy to ensure its success and continuation. We recommend that this year's budget include funding to pay for the increased bus routes, and increase funding for the additional staff members who will be needed to arrange the buses. Also, funding is needed to expand the policy to apply to children in pre-kindergarten programs. Currently, the DOE has only one staff member stationed at the Department of Homeless Services Intake Office, PATH, to work with families entering DHS shelter. Staffing is crucial. Families need help at the point of intake. Although there are plans to add a second DOE staff member, two staff cannot adequately serve the average of 100 to 150 families who pass through PATH's door on any given night. Last Thursday, for example, DHS reported that 122 new families with children entered PATH. [bell] Additional funded is

needed so that DOE staff can be placed at PATH to process bus requests, share educational information, and ensure that there is seamless provision of services. The students in temporary housing program, and the family assistances are the primary points of support for all of the other students in temporary housing. Right now there are staff lines for 117 Family Assistants. They're assigned often to more than one shelter location, which makes it difficult for families to connect with the person in person who is there to help them. As for the rest of the over 86,500 students who are outside of the DHS system, their primary people are the STH Content Experts. There are ten citywide. So funding and support is needed to increase the students in temporary housing program both for the provision of bus service, but also so that they can enrich the programming and services that are available. Similarly, DHS and HRA need funding for staff point people to serve as liaisons to communicate with the DOE about education needs, and with families who are in those shelters about their children's educational needs. In addition, there's a deep need for coordinated data systems. Right now, to operationalize an initiative

on the scale of this Yellow Bus Service, we need data from CARES the data system used by DHS and ATS, the system used by DOE. They need to talk to each other. At the moment, they're not integrated, and when we have data systems that don't match, we see delays in processing the bus requests, missed school for children, difficulty ensuring that the families are receiving the services they need. Improved data systems will mean that it's easier for city agencies to collaborate to address attendance initiatives to support improved academic outcomes for children in shelters. The comment that I'd like to offer is our strong support, and appreciation for the progress that's been made by this Administration on Interagency Collaboration. Particularly last year the Interagency Collaboration that was undertaken to increase pre-kindergarten enrollment for students living in shelters. We're pleased with the 60% increase--of the increase to 60% of four-year-olds living in shelter who are enrolled in Pre-K this school year, and we encourage continued partnership so that all students in temporary housing have an opportunity to participate. I thank you for the

opportunity to speak with you today, and I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Well, thank you very much especially for the information on the number of staff persons or person in PATH and it's information actually that we wanted to get to, but because of time constraints and need to move along, we didn't quite get to. So, with the--with a second person, as you mentioned in your testimony, it appears to be an impossible job for any two people to do. So having that on record, I think has been very important. Do you have anything else add?

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Just that we will continue that line of question of DHS and Department of Education at our budget hearings, which are starting next month. So, because those are budget related issues actually for the staff lines it's-- it's something that we can continue to focus on. But we really want to thank you and this entire panel because we need to continue to focus on this, and it's--I--I feel more strongly now than I did even at the beginning of the hearing that the status quo is an outrage. It's a tragedy. It's something that we can't in good conscience let continue on without

doing something about it, and we really thank you
for--for marshaling all these resources to get a
clear picture of this, and for advocating for greater
resources. Thank you.

JENNIFER ERB-DOWNWARD: Thank you.

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Alisha Tischer,
BronxWorks, Anna Rollen (sp?), Volunteers of America,
Tracy Scott, Covenant House, Doug Apple, Samaritan
Village[background comments, pause] Liza Pappas of
the IBO. Do you want to come up and testify as part
of this panel? [background comments] Whoever wants
to begin.

ELIZABETH TITER: Hello, my name is
Elizabeth Titer. I'm a resident instructor of
BronxWorks at Nelson Avenue Family Residence.
BronxWorks operates three family shelters with a
total of 279 families and more than 500 school aged
children. The initiative between DHS and DOE have
been invaluable to our families. At BronxWorks we
believe that every student deserves access to a top
notch education regardless of their status in
shelter. All schools have designated student and
temporary housing liaisons to track the progress and

supports needed for students experiencing homelessness. Accordingly, we have been working with DOE for many years in order to provide our school aged children with the opportunities they would otherwise have been denied. This relationship has allowed us to--has allowed us to provide an enhanced level of support in education related services. Since the beginning of the current mayoral administration shelter Pre-K participation has increased sharply. DHS has provided particular support around enrollment and access to open blocks in community schools. Shelters have seen a greater number of four-year-olds attend Pre-K in recent years. DHS and DOE continuously promote Pre-K programs and encourage enrollment through targeted recruitment efforts and events. They have also provided great opportunities for college bound students including free laptops and one-on-one assistance with applications and financial aid. Many family shelters have DOE Family Assistants on site to serve education needs. The Family Assistants help with enrollment, bussing, Metro Card distribution, attendance and any other school issues such as evaluation for services and IEPs. Shelter staff work

1 closely with assigned Family Assistants to resolve
2 any issues or concerns and provide ongoing support to
3 all families. Crucially, a comprehensive bussing
4 program was recently created to ensure that all
5 children have greater access to school. 189 new
6 routes were designed and 1,200 others were expanded
7 to better serve students at 750 schools. This new
8 initiative between DHS and DOE provide safe and
9 reliable transportation to a greater number of
10 children. I could speak first hand to the importance
11 of these efforts, and my position as Residence
12 Director. Our children are experiencing higher rates
13 of attendance and decreased tardiness. Many shelter
14 children--children are forced to frequently transfer
15 schools, but with these new initiatives our children
16 have transferred significantly less often. More
17 students are able to remain in their school of origin
18 providing greater levels of stability and continuity
19 during a complicated time. Furthermore, DHS and DOE
20 have responded quickly to any school related issues
21 that have arisen as families transition in and out of
22 shelters. And interagency communication has proven
23 invaluable. BronxWorks commends both agencies for
24 their efforts to better serve our families and
25

children while in shelter. BronxWorks hopes that the efforts continues and appreciates all the--the dedication they have so far to get started with some of these--these needs. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you.

TRACI SCOTT: Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman Levin, Chairman Dromm and Madam Public Advocate. I would like to thank the General Welfare and Education Committees for this opportunity to share the unique challenges in education homelessness and runaway youth face. My name is Traci Scott. I'm the Director of Education and Workforce Development at Covenant House New York. Last year, 2000 homelessness young adults made their way to Covenant House of which 65% lacked a diploma and 70% have dropped out with no immediate plans to return to school. The struggle to find suitable education pathways is fraught with many obstacles unique to being homelessness such as undiagnosed learning disabilities, education trauma, and prioritizing employment. Most youth who find their way to Covenant House have some high school experience. However, many arrive reading and computing at the fifth and seventh grade. We estimate approximately

20% of youth who seek education counseling at
Covenant House struggle with undiagnosed learning
disabilities. The state offers education resources
for those with learning disabilities if a learning
disability can be documented. Unfortunately, very
few homeless youth can meet this requirement due to
under-funded programs with the Department of
Education, a shortage of professionals who can
administer a neuropsychological examinations,
extended waiting lists, and an extensive and long
examination. Most students choose to forego this
process as struggle in regular course is not
structured to accommodate those with a learning
disability. Which can delay their task readiness
threefold, a delay of approximately a year to a year
and a half. In addition to social stigmatization
around learning disabilities, many homeless youth
leave high school due to traumas they face while in
school especially among those identified as LGBT,
which accounts for 20 to 40% of popular--serving
population. Many recount their school experiences
filled with bullying, being ostracized or facing
indifference from teachers and administrators. For
them, school represents a toxic part of their

personal experience and often refuse to return to any environment that rembles schools--resembles schools in the slightest. Transgender youth are especially vulnerable and reluctant to pursue an education or enter the workforce for fear of repeated abuse and ridicule from their peers or rejection from teachers, employers and then educators. They often return to the street life, which all too often means participating in human trafficking or other exploitative circumstances. Most all transitional living programs require employment at the minimum to quality. Thus, in advertently signaling youth to delay their education. Yet, without a diploma the majority find minimum wage jobs with schedules incompatible with standard school hours. The same is true for vocation training programs. For example, Covenant House offers training programs that lead to solid middle-income careers. Unfortunately, both have high attrition rates due almost exclusively to housing issues such as having met the maximum time in their transitional living programs or an inability to afford housing a minimum wage salary. Insecure and unpredictable employment and unstable housing they double the time it takes to complete a four-month

long high school equivalency or training program.
These are not to say that homeless or runaway youth
cannot achieve their dreams of a high school diploma.
Covenant House has maintained a 75 to 80% passing
rate for the GED and the TASK over the past [bell]
four years. A strong partnership with DOE
transitional housing in District 79 assistance to
return to or remain in traditional high schools or
participate in a work study program for a small
number of Covenant House residents. A strong
partnership with CUNY Admissions Office provide
counseling and financial aid applications support.
Creative partnerships such as these are greatly
needed to assist the vulnerable population in
achieving educational and vocational goals that will
lead to becoming independent, healthy and productive
members of our community. Covenant House stands
ready to assist the committees in sharing the
challenges our young adults face as well as explore
practical solutions to not only provide a safe haven
for them, but a solid pathway out of homelessness
that is best suited for them. Thank you. [pause]

DOUGLAS APPLE: Good afternoon. I'm
Douglas Apple, Executive Vice President of Samaritan

Village. I want to thank you for having us here today, councilmen and also our Public Advocate a special hello. I'm a--I'm a new man. I will summarize my testimony as many of--much of what you've heard is similar and talks specifically about some of the issues around Samaritan's three family transitional housing programs, one in Queens in Councilman Dromm's district, the Boulevard Family Center, and two in--two in the Bronx, Gloria's House and Bridge Haven. We serve over 600 youth in those programs, and we have seen dramatic improvements in school attendance and school enrollment. 98% of the kids are now enrolled in school where that number was more in the 80% range a year and a half ago. So there has been significant improvements from--from--from the providers. We're seeing the things you've heard. We're seeing it actually happening. Bussing has been a key part of that as--as you've heard. Clients are now getting enrolled the day that they come to the program in--in bussing. We have on-site DOE liaisons in every single program. In fact, we have two in the Boulevard Houses. So on day one when--when a family comes to our center, they will meet with a case manager and with a DOE rep. We

really do try to attempt to keep them in their school that they were in. That is a significant challenge in many cases because of the borough that people come from versus where they're housed. But, we find that to be very important, and actually very successful. So that more than 70% of the kids are actually in the school they came from once they're in the center as well. Another thing that's--I think made a big difference is that the DOE on-site staff are very integrated into our case management and supportive services. We have regular weekly case management meetings where we actually see the attendants of the child. Is the process is when--when a parent has a child going to school we do ask them to sign out for the day, but we double check that then against the actual attendance roster from that the week. So the week after we'll get a copy of the attendance roster from the DOE liaison. That liaison will let our case managers know of kids who are having attendance problems or they're not attending, and then we'll try to actively intervene in terms of getting them back into school. We also work closely where we can with the principals in the schools. I know the principal that talked earlier talked about that. That works

1 really well with the schools in the neighborhood. It
2 doesn't work as well obviously when the kid is
3 returning back to a school that might be in a
4 different borough. But we do try to connect as much
5 as we can. And the last thing I wanted to mention,
6 and this was mentioned, is the tremendous value of
7 on-site after school programs. We have a SONYC
8 program the DYCD SONYC program in our Boulevard
9 Houses serving sixth, seventh and eighth graders. It
10 is actually at capacity, and they're looking to add
11 more funding for more capacity for September [bell],
12 and we're going to add another program as well there.
13 We have a similar one in our Gloria's House in the
14 Bronx, and as you've heard before, after school
15 programming works, and we actually think on-site
16 after school programming is a huge opportunity. So,
17 thank you very much. [background noise] [off mic]
18 Whoo. Oh, yeah, we'll move it. This is not going to
19 work. Sorry. [background noise]

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [coughs] If--if I
22 could just ask one question to follow up, Doug. What
23 does on-site mean in the context of Samaritan
24 Village? Like what--how does that exactly work, and
25

is that a DYCD program. Is that a--is that it leaves
it for a COMPASS? Is it--?

DOUGLAS APPLE: The program at Boulevard
Houses is--is actually physically within the
building. Um, so we have--we have dedicated space
within that building on the first floor to an after
school program. It's--it's a large room where they
do after school tutoring. They do some educational
services. They do some recreation services. They
sometimes will take the kids out for activities. We
actually in--in that case have an arrangement with
the local--there's an--there's an Apple store. The
Councilman knows this neighborhood well. They Apple
Store actually lets 13 of the kids come once a week,
and lets--gives us access to the computers. We're
actually going to install a computer lab in another
one of our programs. In Gloria's House we've got a
small foundation grant, and we're going to installing
in a computer lab, and have an after school program
as associated with that as well.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: The kids go once a
week to the Apple Store?

DOUGLAS APPLE: Yes, yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Where is the Apple
Store?

DOUGLAS APPLE: It's the one in the
Queens Mall.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Great.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And--and that's
funded by DYCD as part of COMPASS?

DOUGLAS APPLE: The--the--the SONYC
program is funded is funded by it?

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: SONYC?

DOUGLAS APPLE: Yes. It's run by
Sunnyside Community Center.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I see. Okay. So--so
you're not the--

DOUGLAS APPLE: No, we're not the
provider.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Yeah.

DOUGLAS APPLE: We partnered I believe
and I think CAMBA has one--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Right.

DOUGLAS APPLE: --maybe one or two
others. I think they piloted in--in several of the
transitional housing programs this year is putting
SONYC programs on site.

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CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Got it. Got it, and
so those kids are opting to go to the after school
program on site rather than--

DOUGLAS APPLE: [interposing] Correct.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --if one was
available.

DOUGLAS APPLE: Yeah, they--they
obviously whatever opportunity they may have in their
school many of them do that as well.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

DOUGLAS APPLE: And for some it's a
supplement. They may go certain days of the way to
the--stay at school and other days they'll come to
the programs.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So what hour does it
go to?

DOUGLAS APPLE: It usually runs from I
think it's--I think it's 3:30 to 6:00.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Great. Thank
you. Thank you. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Before you--before
you leave or just as--what school do they go to, the
majority of them? Do they go to RS 5?

DOUGLAS APPLE: I'll have to get you the list. What I do know is that more than half of the children in the Boulevard Family Residence are going to schools in their home. So outside of Queens. IS 5 is the closest school. I do know a number of the children go there. I can get you more specifics on exactly the roster and the breakdown.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That sounds very good. [background comments] Oh, okay.

LIZA PAPPAS: Good evening [laughs]
Chairs Dromm and Levin and Madam Public Advocate. My name is Liza Pappas and I'm Education Policy Analyst at the New York City Independent Budget Office. So thank you for the opportunity to testify. We've submitted written testimony, and I'm just touch on some of the highlights. Our testimony is based on data from the Department of Education that indicates students who have been identified in temporary housing on that Residency Questionnaire that was mentioned. And also over the last year we have interviewed more than 100 staff in DOE schools, actually 12 schools that serve large shares of students in temporary housing as well as 50 families. So we've talked a lot today about the size and the

growth of this population, but I want to underscore the variations. So in school year 2013-14 students identified in the two largest temporary housing categories, shelters and doubled up housing they present as two different categories of students, of course with variation between and within. Students that year residing in doubled-up housing received English Language Learner services at more than twice the rate of students residing in shelters, and conversely, students residing in shelters were twice as likely to receive special education services. Generally, students' schooling outcomes also look different by housing type. Analysis of data in the same year showed that students in shelters were absent noticeably more than their peers in doubled up housing and permanent housing. And that, students residing in shelters and other temporary housing types were also suspended more like almost twice the rate of students who doubled--in doubled up in--in permanent housing. So, while the differences are most glaring for those students from the shelters, I also want to say that we need to know more to understand the educational outcomes of students that are doubled up. The definition under federal law is

vague, and we found a wide interpretation of this housing categorization in interviews with staff. Some consider whether the family had a security of a lease. Others whether there was more than one family in the--the living quarters. Still others zeroed on whether the child had a bed. Given this variation it is likely that students who are identified in this category include a wider variety of housing arrangements, and with some more likely to have a negative impact on schooling than others. Third, we need to consider the use of the word "temporary" comparing data across all four years. We have--we have data presently from 2010-11 to 2013-14. We've identified significant numbers of students who've identified as living in a shelter or doubled up for more than one year. So let me must put this out. For the close to 30,000 students that were identified in shelters that year, 67% were also identified as living a shelter in at least one of the three previous years. Twenty-two percent were found in shelters all four years. Those number are very similar for students that are in doubled up situations. [bell] Fourth, students identified in temporary housing, shelters and doubled up are

concentrated in a relatively small number of New York City Schools. In this year of 2014--excuse me--2013-14, one-third of New York City's schools served close to 70% of all students that were identified as a living in a shelter or doubled up. So this means that the kind of educational challenges mentioned earlier, absences, suspensions, certainly lower test scores, disproportionately impact a small number of schools in New York City. And then lastly, I did want to talk a little bit about the resources because we've heard a lot today that schools are asked to set aside \$100 of their Title 1 allocation. The staff across the 12 schools that we interviewed, emphasized that that could not be stretched beyond a school uniform or a backpack. While there's been a 25% increase in four years, again from 2010-11 to 2013-14, there has been no increase in state dollars to support mandated services and programs. Families who participated in the focus groups we conducted--this was across community and across several language--verified that they were without many basic resources, transportation, clothing, space for homework that better housed families can provide for their children. While families certainly attested to the

many personal items that teachers and other staff had given them, such as warm coats or food, supports for counseling, tutoring, after school programming, child care, job training, and affordable housing were far beyond their reach. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: The Public Advocate has follow-up questions.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yes, thank you. I think your testimony--I think you're the last witness. Is she the last witness?

FEMALE SPEAKER: No.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: No. Okay, okay, okay, sorry. I just wanted--I think your testimony to me highlighted some--some--some vagueries in the law, specifically as it relates to federal law, and whether or not individuals who fall in the category of living in doubled up arrangements whether or not they qualify for McKinney. And based upon your testimony, it appears that there's some inconsistency across the board. And perhaps we can work together to get clarification on that aspect of the law by contacting our United States representatives. I would love to work with you on that issue. Secondly,

1 the--the, you know, no one has mentioned the State
2 here. We did a good job of asking questions of the
3 City, but the fact is that Campaign for School Equity
4 would go a long way in addressing the needs of these
5 children. And that aside, the fact is that the State
6 government including the Governor of the State of New
7 York really should be focusing on this particular
8 issue. And I am confident that these two chairs
9 along with this public advocate will be bringing it
10 to the attention of that individual so that we can
11 get our fair share. [gavel] Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Madam
14 Public Advocate, and I also want to thank Ms. Scott
15 for bringing up the issue of LGBTQ youth. You were
16 the only one who mentioned it so far today. We do
17 have another panel coming up, but it's so true that
18 often times those youth are overlooked, and I'm so
19 proud the Covenant House in particular has done this
20 and highlighted it in--in your testimony here today.
21 And I think it's a issue that we need to look at
22 really deeper. But, you know, I was questioning the
23 gentleman from DHS. I didn't really quite understand
24 why they classify youth as adults for the homeless
25 count system or however he was describing it. Do you

understand that better than I do, or can you explain that for me.

TRACI SCOTT: [off mic] Well, I'm not--
[on mic] Sorry. Well, I'm not sure that I can be the authority on that, but to our understanding for Covenant House we serve young adults between the ages of 18 and 21. Therefore, we're under--we're not under the auspices of Administration of Children Services, which are younger than that. We're under the auspice of the Department of Homeless Services because they're 18 and older.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So anybody over the age of 18 then is considered an adult? Is that the-- is that the--

DOUGLAS APPLE: Yeah, I can.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

DOUGLAS APPLE: From past--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Yeah.

DOUGLAS APPLE: --and also currently it comes up. If you are--come into the system as a single individual if you're under the age of 18, you would go to the DYCD shelters as you know. But if you're 18 or older you are considered an adult for

the purpose of--of I think under state law. And,
therefore, you would go to the single adult system.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So you would have an
18 to 21-year-old perhaps go into an adult men's
shelter?

DOUGLAS APPLE: We do--we do run six of
them so we--we have some experience with young
adults. They tend to be somewhat careful about where
they place them. I don't know if yours are placed
through DHS or other means as well.

TRACI SCOTT: [off mic] They come from
all over.

DOUGLAS APPLE: They come from all over.
So I do know that they try to be careful about
placing. I don't want to speak for--for Tom--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] It
still raises a big flush inside here. (sic)

DOUGLAS APPLE: --but it's their function
on how that happens, and how they do that.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] Because
when we look at it from the DY--as the DYCD or other
youth programs that they have, we're dealing with
kids like 16 to 24 or so.

DOUGLAS APPLE: Right.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So to put these 18 to 21-years old in with other adult males some of them, many of them are coming out of prisons, et cetera showing up in these places. It really seems to defeat the purposes in some ways of providing shelter and getting them set on the right path once they leave--you know, I mean they're into the system. It's just--it's--it's something that I found a little bit shocking in the testimony that I heard today that I really want to look at it and develop further, and particularly as it relates to LGBT kids. Because what happens to LGBT kids is that their own families don't want them. So then they are stuck without any family, you know, and--and if you--if you had a family that is supportive, you're lucky. And in the LGBT, too. But many of these kids who are on the street who do go to Covenant House are there because their families have rejected them. So thank you. That is just a point that I was trying to make. I thank everybody on the panel for coming, and I appreciate it all. Thank you.

[background comments, pause]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And--and one thing that I just wanted to add for the record, and this

1 is--I want to thank our Policy Analyst Jan Atwell for
2 pointing this out is that there are a number of
3 parents that don't fill out--the forms to self-
4 describe as living in temporary housing, and so the
5 data that we are working with, the number of 86,000
6 that is going to be off. It's going to be low. It's
7 going to be not totally accurate in terms of
8 reflecting the need because not every parent is
9 filling out the forms. Thank you. I want to call up
10 the next panel Gazelle Routhier and Catherine Cliff,
11 Coalition for the Homeless; Mercedes Jennings,
12 Partnership for the Homeless, and--and Homeless
13 Families and Children; Lisa Bennett Wells. I'm
14 sorry. [pause, background noise and comments]
15 Whoever wants to begin.

17 LISA BENNETT WELLS: [off mic] Can you
18 hear me?

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: You may have to turn
20 on the mic.

21 LISA BENNETT WELLS: Hello. Good
22 evening, Council Members, Public Advocate James.
23 Thank you for having me. I am a member of the
24 Citywide Council on Special Education. I am also a
25 parent of a student an IEP, and I am also a

professional that works in Queens in the social
service field for the last tens in a variety of
capacities. I have worked helping--or I have come in
contact with a lot of families that go into the
shelter system. I'm here today to advocate on
behalf of students and families who have
individualized education plans. I appreciate the
conversation and discussion that was had with the
council members, Public Advocate James. It was--you
guys touched on a lot of things that I would have
said so I appreciate that. The one thing I feel was
not touched on enough was students with
Individualized Educational Plans. According to the
report, ICPH, there are about 20% of the students in
temporary housing that also have Individualized
Educational Plans. These families and students have
additional hurdles, multiple additional hurdles in
addition to what was mentioned by the Council at the
beginning of this hearing. I can speak for myself.
I live in District 29 in Queens. We are having an
issue now with limited resources. District 29 or
Community Board 29--Community Board 12--excuse me--
holds 50% of the DHS shelters in Queens. Fifty
percent where some districts or some community boards

1 don't have any shelters. So for me trying to find a
2 neurologist for my child it--the waitlist for the
3 nearest neurologist is about six months. Mind you,
4 we have limited community resources for students with
5 individe--Individualized Educational Plans because we
6 require--these students require services in the
7 community that DOE cannot provide like a neurologist
8 or a neurological evaluation. Students with
9 Individualized Educational Plans have needs that vary
10 from speech and language delay that range all the way
11 to students in wheelchairs. So we need more
12 community supports to support these students in
13 temporary housing who have Individualized Educational
14 Plans. And again, a lot of things we touched on, and
15 one thing that was mentioned briefly by Public
16 Advocate James was the need for coordinators to make
17 sure that these services happen seamlessly. Students
18 who have Individualized Educational Plans, just to
19 get those services in the school system requires a
20 lot of efforts, and then on top of that manage
21 dealing with the shelter system is a lot more energy
22 and efforts. So again, we need more support to
23 support all students in temporary housing. But
24 again, although they're a small population, they are
25

in my opinion the most vulnerable, those students in temporary housing who have Individualized Educational Plans. Thank you and I handed in my written testimony that goes into more detail and my recommendations. [bell] Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much.

MERCEDES JENNINGS: Good afternoon, or rather good evening. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today. I did give n my detailed testimony, but I'm going to be touching on it very briefly because like I said because of the context of time. My name is Mercedes Jennings. I'm an Education Advocate for the Partnership for the Homeless in East New York, Brooklyn. I work with families that are currently homeless that go to district schools in District 19 and District 23. So I speak from the experiences of these homeless children and families that are currently living in unstable housing. One of the things, as you know, I'm going to touch on briefly is the PATH classes. Many times we know that they have to go to PATH, and then they get placed into a temporary shelter for ten days. However, that's not what's really happening. Many of my families stay there for months. Sometimes

it becomes their permanent housing. For example, I have one family that I worked with where she was in that shelter for six months. Six months in a temporary site without services. She constantly went back and forth to OPT to request bussing. She was informed that because she was in temporary shelter she could not receive bussing. She was also told that because she was placed outside of borough that they do not provide bussing out of borough. Once she came through the doors of the Partnership for the Homeless, after she was there for six months, she got bussing for all three of her children who had IEPs in one week. That's a--that has to change. In addition to that, this story is just a reoccurring story that could--that could cease to exist if we continued to have better partnerships than the DOE and DHS. That they really are talking to each other. They need to start doing that more. Of course, also we're aware that after missing ten days of school, the DOE the policy is that many students either get held over, they fail their course subject or they're mandated to attend summer school. Many of the children that I work with and the families they fall under that category. I have found that schools that were

1 willing to work with families that they're told in
2 advance. However, these are not posted in the
3 schools. There have been parents that have come to
4 the Partnership for the Homeless for the past year
5 that I've been there begging me to get this paper so
6 that they could put it up in their schools. It needs
7 to be put in every public school, every charter
8 school, and this has to be more present at PATH
9 because it's not happening, and it's not fair. Last
10 but not least, out of all the many issues that
11 definitely my families face that I've been working
12 with in this district that's definitely most
13 prevalently affected by homelessness increased
14 collaboration between DHS, DOE, and OPT especially,
15 more community board. And the amazing CBOs that have
16 been here today are committed to providing services.
17 We definitely need to continue working together to
18 help homeless families in New York City. We need to
19 ensure that the trauma of losing one's home does not
20 equate to losing one's entire community, their
21 teachers, their classmates, their friends. So that
22 this does not continue to set back a child even
23 further in their educational progress. In addition
24 to that, also included with my testimony is an
25

outline detail from our CEO Mr. Arnold Cohen, a
Recommendation that I hope that this committee could
definitely take into consideration as we continue to
talk about this very important topic. I look forward
to also being part of collaborative discussion with
any one of you so that we can come to a resolution
for all the educational challenges that these
families face. Thank you so very much for your time.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

GAZELLE ROUTHIER: Hi, my name is Gazelle
Routhier. I'm the Policy Director at the Coalition
for the Homeless. I want to thank the Council for
calling this hearing and highlighting the challenges
that homeless students and their families face when
they're in shelter. I want to first start by talking
also about PATH. The shelter application process
itself contributes to many of the problems regarding
schooling for homeless families. When families are
forced to apply for shelter multiple times, as nearly
half of all families are forced to do, they may be
moved from one temporary placement to another, making
it virtually impossible to maintain consistency for
their child's schooling. I recently met a homeless
family. The father is a U.S. Navy veteran, and they

spent the better part of a year trying to be found eligible for shelter before they were finally granted eligibility. They moved to shelters in all five boroughs often every few days or every few weeks. Their young child missed a significant amount of school. As a result, ACS got involved. The father lost his job, and I meant this because it's a prime example of a system in dire need of reform, and I highlight the importance of making the shelter application process far less burdensome for homeless families and their school aged children. So, that being said, to touch on a couple more points. We're glad that the City recently started providing increased bussing from shelter to schools for homeless students, but more needs to be done. Specifically, DHS and the Department of Education must revise the shelter intake process so that homeless children are excused from participation so that they do not have to miss school. Place families into shelters near their child's school at the outset of the shelter application process to minimize commute and school transfer. Transfer any family that has a long school commute to a closer shelter facility. We definitely need additional DOE staff at

PATH. These additional staff members should provide families and could provide families with the information on school selections, school transportation options, and the right to students with special needs. DHS staff should also assist with these duties when DOE staff are not available. Eliminate or minimize the placement of families with school aged children in commercial hotels. Continued enhanced funding for bussing and expand after school programming for students in shelter. I want to thank you all for the opportunity to testify today.

CATHERINE CLIFF: Good evening. My name is Catherine Cliff. I'm a Staff Attorney at the Legal Aid Society in our Bronx neighborhood office, and I spend quite a bit of time at PATH conducting outreach. So even just being there yesterday I saw families with this specific issue. Council Member Levin had asked about the deleterious effects of requiring all the children to be present at every application at PATH, which could be every ten days for quite a while as Gazelle mentioned. And the family that I met the had been going to this office for a while. They were missing documentation. They had to come back and reapply, and spend all day there

and the mother was forced to choose between sending her child to school and, therefore, getting an overnight at PATH because there was no way she would make it back to PATH and finish the application process in time to get the regular placement Or, not sending him to school, and having him miss yet another day. And she had chosen to send her child to school, but she was going to lose out on a placement that had actually been a convenient location, had the services they need, but she was going to lose it because she wanted her child to go school. And that choice should not be a choice that parents have to make, and unfortunately it's a choice that many, many parents are making. And as Gazelle mentioned, we really see a need for the DOE staff at PATH to take on a greater role, and to really help these families when they're going through the process to fill out those Residency Questionnaires or show the parents how to do so. So that that data is there for more information that can help the agencies provide the proper services. Right now with the two staff members that are there, there's just no way that they're --they're doing much more than providing Metro Cards and basic information. So again, we just

reiterate the need to really look at the PATH application process because that is where at least in my work I see families and returning and missing schools especially with placement commercial hotels. As you mentioned earlier, a family's kid were out of school for a whole month because they were on Staten Island, and they couldn't get to their school. So it's really important that we promote affordable housing, which we commend the Administration for all the programs they've introduced so far. But there needs to be a bigger push because as long as the shelter capacity is so high, the chance that kids are going to be able to get to school easily is--is very low. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [coughs] So then you don't consider it best practice to--

KATHERINE CLIFF: [laughs] No, we do not.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Than you very much to this panel.

LISA BENNETT WELLS: Can I add one point. I know it's late in the evening, but in regards to the students with IEPs, if you look at the statistics and the information, the students with IEPs and the--

Public Advocate James touched on it, the areas like District 9. District 9 has a shortage of related service professionals. However, the students that are in temporary housing the numbers keep increasing those areas. So, if DHS would house students with IEPs, if they were required to stay in their schools where the service is already in place, DOE would wouldn't have to then hustle to try to get them their services. So again, just to touch on the vulnerability of these students.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: It's a very good point, a very good point. And just one other thing about PATH is the--the example that--that you just brought up with the family that you were--that you've been working with the idea of having to go back, have they been--is it somehow easy to go back after work hours and go to PATH and get to path at 6 o'clock in the evening and, you know, somehow that's like a reasonable or stable thing to do. Other than like in an extreme emergency, it seems strange to me.

KATHERINE CLIFF: Exactly, and given the capacity crisis, I've been told by families that they start giving overnights around 3:00 or 4:00 so it's

really impossible to go to school and come back and
get a regular placement.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That's a very good
point. Sure. Public Advocate James.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: To my Legal Aid
colleague, I'm a former Legal Aid attorney, and I
have a question. With regards to the failure to--
where parents have to choose between taking the child
to school and completing the PATH application
process, to me that suggests that there's a violation
of McKinney or something.

KATHERINE CLIFF: I'm not sure that
McKinney speaks to that type of issue because we're
the only station--

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing]
Right

KATHERINE CLIFF: --with a vacant
shelter. McKinney has to do more with transportation
and getting to school and the right to go to your old
school, which you do have all those rights, but it's
very, very difficult to do when you're being sent to,
you know, five different shelters in five different
boroughs in a matter of a few months.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: But some parents because it's the Hobson's choice between applying-- you know, getting housing or--or sending your child to school. They can be charged with educational neglect here.

KATHERINE CLIFF: [interposing] Yes, and many, many parents are very concerned about that.

MERCEDES JENNINGS: [interposing] Well, Public--Public Advocate James--

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yes.

MERCEDES JENNINGS: --I'm sorry--

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing] That's okay. Jump in.

MERCEDES JENNINGS: --to inject, but that's actually what I did write in my testimony as well that ACS is a rampant--they get rampant calls in just the area that I'm in. So I can imagine every other area especially because of our concentration, and a lot of parents are having to deal with education neglect in ACS cases because they were just trying to go through PATH.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Right. So that suggests to me that there is not a failure of federal law than a failure of educational law to some extent.

I don't know. I need to do some research on this,
but obviously this is another issue that needs to be
focused on, and I thank you ladies obviously for
testifying and for hanging out until 5:15.

MERCEDES JENNINGS: Thank you for having
us.

KATHERINE CLIFF: Thank you for having
us.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Ms. Wells, thank you
also for coming in. District 29 is always well
represented when I see you and, you know, the results
of the Special Ed Reporting Bill that we've passed
here in my legislation is coming out at the end of
the month. So a number of the issues that you also
addressed in your testimony, which didn't read from
but was in here concerning special ed students, we
may begin to get some answers in terms of that as
well. So thank you. It's always good to see you.

LISA BENNETT WELLS: [off mic] Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Okay, I think
this is our last panel. If you have not signed up,
and you want to speak, this is the time to do so.
Denise Gordon, Parent Empowerment Services. All

right, Denise is here. I'm sorry, it may be Lara Brooks from Urban Resource Institute. Did I say it correctly? Yes. Okay. And Anna Rollone from Volunteers of America. Is Anna still here? Okay. So we have two panelists. [background comments] I'm going to swear you in. Can you just raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth and to answer council member questions honestly?

DENISE GORDON: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, and if you'd like to begin.

DENISE GORDON: Good evening. I am Denise Gordon. I previously worked for the Department of Education for 17 years. Within the last nine months I have formed a for-profit organization, LLC, Parent Empowerment Services. Some of our clients are parents in temporary housing. The only difference is one of the parent I want to highlight today she lives in her car. She lived in the shelter, and after three days she decided no more. Her child happens to be in one of the leading schools in New York City. The child is ARISTA/ARCHON. Thanksgiving day I went to my

family's home with about 43 members, but before I left she call me and she was in her car. When the DOE testified they did clearly state that parents-- children from K through 6 were given transportation. What about the other children? Title 1 is basically for family engagement. Schools decide by October 31st how they'll use their Title 1 funds. There's an allocation of Title 1 funds that says between 1 and 5% of the school's budget. But if parents aren't given a Metro Card to go to school, we say public school, we say parent engagement matters, but that's a lot of lip talk. When a parent and you know, God forbid I found it strange when this client was referred to me, a Caucasian lady who worked in one of our universities, politically astute, but she got into a major conflict with her husband. So there were threats. So in order to secure her child, she basically had to survive the best way possible. Even though she is acquainted with so many elected officials that she knows personally, no one is helping her because she refuses to put her children in a shelter where she says I've got to stay up all night just to watch my child. What I'm asking you as council members it is so simple. The individuals who

1 needed to speak about homelessness quite frankly
2 should be parents that are in those shelters. Well,
3 they say we can't call them shelters any more. We
4 must call them temporary housing, but I bet if all of
5 you can just choose maybe three or four temporary
6 housing in your community [bell] and have a basic
7 feedback, a basic survey as to how people say they
8 feel wounded. They feel degraded. They do not feel
9 as though--I'm an adult. I'm a professional yet if
10 you can just basically ask the question how can we
11 help you? These are your constituencies by the way.
12 How can we help you? What is it like? What are the
13 resources? Oh, the DOE they spoke so eloquent. It's
14 almost like a woman dressed up outside, but messed up
15 inside. If we really want change--change is the only
16 constant in life--let's go into these shelters. And
17 when I worked in District 5 we have nine shelters,
18 and I would go there in the evening to bring food
19 from schools who would normally throw out food. I
20 would do workshops with these families. Let me tell
21 you I believe the average person is only one paycheck
22 away. God forbid if you have a home. If you do have
23 a home and you lose your home, let's be real. I will
24 help you with the service. I'll go in there myself,
25

but what these families, these professionals will tell you, it's night and day different from someone who's being funded by the system or the system itself. Parents do not want to say they're in shelters because a teacher may not like that students, and all of a sudden all the children in the class know that child is in shelter.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Uh-huh.

DENISE GORDON: Ladies and gentlemen, please do not take this lightly, but for the grace of God there go I.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you for your testimony and we hear you, and we realize that the picture that the DOE painted is not as perfect as they might like it to seem--

DENISE GORDON: [interposing] Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --and that's the purpose of this hearing, and so hearing from people such as yourself come in. And we will go to our--our--our homeless shelters. I have one in my district that the Director of it was here testifying before. I've spoken with a number of the people in there, the parents, et cetera. So we are fighting for those parents, and that's one of the purposes and

the outcomes that we hope to get from this hearing.

Thank you for your testimony.

DENISE GORDON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Next
please.

LEHRA BROOKS: Good evening. I think
this is evening now. I thank you for allowing me to
be here today to testify. I am--my name Lehra
Brooks. I am with the Urban Resource Institute.
This is a domestic violence shelter facility, and we
have five shelters. We are in the Bronx, Manhattan
and in Brooklyn. I've been with them for 28 years
coming and District 5. I'm going to say we have a
very good relationship. I'm not going to say that it
always was like that, and you know, our Public
Advocate said something about the State. Well, I
want you to know that I'm one of those people that
had no problem with calling the State any time I had
a problem. So, maybe for that reason I have a good
relationship, but I would like to say that, you know,
our mission is about sustainability. The Urban
Women's Shelter that we service 1,400 people annually
a year, and all the rest are violence shelters when
they come in with 48 hours. Everyone has to come--has

1 to meet me that has a child. And the goal is to get
2 the best educational support systems for that child,
3 which is what I do. Every child is in a special
4 programs, gifted whatever. Because their mother has
5 been abused or battered doesn't mean that that child
6 should have to leave that type of program and go to
7 whatever school. I'm able to advocate, and get the
8 child in the same type of school setting. Very often
9 I will speak to them about safety, and domestic
10 violence is a little bit different because very often
11 those parents cannot go back to the area that they
12 came from. It's not safe. So very often those are
13 the children, and you will see thousands of them that
14 have to be relocated, and sometimes because now
15 we're--because of the increase in the homeless
16 population people are staying with us a year. But
17 actually are a 90-day facility. So, you would say
18 that every 90 days people are going to PATH, would be
19 going to PATH. So this is stopping, which is
20 allowing us to actually bring about permanent housing
21 for people, and to actually do a lot more healing.
22 We are trauma based. We have three social workers,
23 one child therapist, and what is not in here is that
24 we have two classrooms. We do service children
25

[bell] three months and up. We have an infant and toddler center, and we have a pre-school center, and we have an after school center and a recreation center. So children that might be on the bus as you said for an hour and a half, when they come they are fed a hot meal. They do get a snack, and we have service until 8 o'clock at night for these children. So we're able to actually help them with their homework and to meet most of the needs that they have because we're looking at the total package. Staff will actually go and pick up children from school if necessary. We do have a van or we will go by foot if--if the school is close enough unless it's in another borough. Our parents are getting bussing, and I have put in here because of the shortness of time we had situation that was really, really a crisis with a child that had an IEP, a special needs child. And one of the things that I thought was really phenomenal was that once we got--the parent got her permanent apartment, when we notified our DOE person that she was moving on this particular date into her new apartment, the child was only out of school one day. Because they had actually changed--put in for the change so the bus could pick the child

up at the new address, which was in another borough.
Okay, and I think that this is what we want to see
happen, but it's something that I guess has to be
worked on. But at the retreat the Urban--the Urban
Resource Institute really is looking at partnering,
and we've been doing this for years, and trying to
make sure that service all the needs of the children.
Because if mom knows her child is okay, then mom can
be okay and go do the things that she needs to do and
regain safe living. I thank you very much and, you
know, everything else in here but, you know, I--I
really thank you for the--

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] What a
nice way to end this hearing on a note of expertise
from somebody who is so experienced in the field and
knows what they're talking about. And so I really
appreciated that, and thank you for your reference
also to the amount of time that some of these
children do spend on buses. And thank you for your
program, which recognizes that as well, and make sure
that these kids get a little snack a little something
when they come in the door, and then get the help
that they need. And the 8 o'clock time is--is great

as well. So thank you for the work that you're doing
in our communities.

LEHRA BROOKS: Well, we feed our children
breakfast. We actually feed them three meals a day--

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [off mic]
[interposing] Wow.

LEHRA BROOKS: --and two snacks. It's
great.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And you know, that's
been something that has been very important to the
three--or to the two chairpersons and the Public
Advocate. I was going to call her a chairperson.
She's kind of like a chair.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [laughs] Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: She sits up there
above us, you know. But food is--is a basic thing--

LEHRA BROOKS: [interposing] Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --for everybody.

LEHRA BROOKS: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And just having that
food when they come in, you know, it's so nourishing
not only just to their stomachs but to the heart as
well--

LEHRA BROOKS: Right.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: --so they know that
something--that somebody cares, you know.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [off mic]

Exactly.

LEHRA BROOKS: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So thank you.

LEHRA BROOKS: I thank you and have a
good day.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [off mic] Thank
you, ladies.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And with that, we're
going to adjourn this meeting. It is now 5:30 p.m.
Thank you all for coming. [gavel]

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 February 19, 2016