

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND SUBCOMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC HOUSING

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February 25, 2009

Start: 10:15 am

Recess: 01:35 pm

HELD AT: Hearing Room
 250 Broadway, 14th Floor

B E F O R E:

ROBERT JACKSON
Chairperson

ROSIE MENDEZ
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Bill de Blasio
Lewis A. Fidler
Helen D. Foster
G. Oliver Koppell
John C. Liu
Domenic M. Recchia, Jr.
Peter F. Vallone, Jr.
Albert Vann
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A P P E A R A N C E S

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Maria del Carmen Arroyo

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

Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger
Senior Advisor to the Chancellor
Department of Education

Tom Gold
Director of External Research
Department of Education

Recy Dunn
Executive Director for Early Childhood Education
Department of Education

Margarita Lopez
Board Member
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Willie Mae Lewis
Public Housing Resident

Lisa Donlan
President
Community Education Council
District 1

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Good morning and welcome to today's joint oversight hearing on the Education Committee and the Public Housing Subcommittee on education outcomes for students living in New York City Housing Authority, NYCHA developments. The Education Committee has not previously looked at the performance of students living in NYCHA housing developments, however, in November of 2008, the Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy and the Institute for Education and Social Policy at NYU released a report entitled, "Public Housing and Public Schools, how do students living in New York City public housing fare in school," revealing that children in New York City public housing developments perform worse than other public school students as measured by state achievement tests and graduation rates. This was the first large scale study of the academic performance of children growing up in the city's public housing complexes. The NYU report found that fifth graders living in public housing did worse on standardized Math and Reading tests than fifth graders who lived elsewhere. It also revealed

that students living in public housing are more likely to drop out of high school and less likely to graduate in four years than those who do not live in public housing. While the Department of Education has collected data and otherwise focused attention on the achievement gap between white students and black and Hispanic students in the city public schools, they have not specifically tracked performance of students living in public housing. In light of the findings of the NYU report, the performance of students living in public housing may be an area where the Department of Education should track data to determine whether additional programs or interventions are needed to help these children succeed. Currently, DOE and NYCHA collaborate on two programs that serve students living in NYCHA developments. The New York City Early Literacy Learning, or NYCELL, and the Partners in Reading program, which PIR is the acronym. At the very least, these two existing joint programs should be evaluated to determine their effectiveness. This is a particular concern given that the mayor's preliminary budget for Fiscal Year 2010 has

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2 proposed cuts that would cut DOE funding for the
3 Partners in Reading program. Today's hearing
4 seeks to gather information concerning educational
5 outcomes for students residing in NYCHA
6 developments. The committee and the subcommittee
7 will also consider coordination efforts by DOE and
8 NYCHA to address the academic needs of children
9 living in public housing. In addition, we expect
10 to hear from researchers, advocates, residents and
11 other stakeholders regarding their concerns and
12 ideas relating to the education of students living
13 in NYCHA developments and will explore the need
14 for improvements in this area. I would like to
15 now turn to my colleague, Rosie Mendez, the
16 Chairperson of the Public Housing Subcommittee for
17 her opening remarks.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Thank you,
19 Chair Jackson. I am grateful for the opportunity
20 to chair this hearing with you and to hear the
21 testimony that will be presented today. I believe
22 that the low-performing students has less to do
23 with the fact that they live in public housing and
24 more that they are in low-income communities and
25 need extra services. I think one of the important

things that public housing residents and residents from the neighboring community have relied on has been the community centers at NYCHA that have provided services, tutorials and recreational space for children to keep them out of trouble. The community centers, as we all know, are at risk and it's an important element of children and services to them, as I know since I was a public housing resident. Public housing has many illustrious alumni who lived in public housing. Howard Schultz, the head of Starbucks; Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, a very famous basketball player; Mark Anthony, the singer; Sonia Sotomayor, a federal court judge; Paul Robeson, Jr.; Marty Markowitz, our borough president in Brooklyn; and right here in the City Council, besides myself, Councilman Charles Barron. It has been for many of us a way to come out of poverty and living on an affordable rent be able to go on to college. I am proud to be in the position I'm in today to advocate for public housing residents as well as students in the public schools. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Let me

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2 introduce our colleagues that are present here
3 this morning with us. To my right is Jessica
4 Lappin of Manhattan, Oliver Koppell of the Bronx,
5 and Melissa Mark-Viverito of Manhattan and the
6 Bronx, along with our staff members. Regina
7 Poreda-Ryan is hiding over there in the corner.
8 She's our finance policy analyst. Baaba Halm,
9 this women standing right behind us, is the
10 counsel to the Subcommittee on Public Housing.
11 Where's Ben Goodman? Is he here? There's Ben
12 Goodman, who's a senior policy analyst for the
13 Subcommittee on Public Housing. Aysha Schomburg,
14 to my left, is the counsel to the Education
15 Committee. Jan Atwell, standing behind the pole,
16 is our policy analyst for the Education Committee.
17 We've also been joined by Al Vann, the young man
18 in the green tie over there with the dark green
19 jacket and the yellow shirt, the matching shirt.
20 He's from Brooklyn. David Yassky, of Brooklyn, is
21 talking to Al Vann right there. They're trying to
22 decide whose going to sit where.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Mr.
24 Chairman?

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yes, sir?

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: I know that it's a very busy morning. I know for me I have two other hearings happening at the same time and I'm sure other colleagues also have this. I beg your forgiveness and that of the audience that I'm not going to be able to stay. I know I speak for other colleagues as well. It's not that we're not interested; it's that we have conflicting obligations.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you, Oliver. The first panel we're going to hear from is the Department of Education. I'm sorry, Margarita Lopez, a board member of NYCHA, we've determined that the first panel that we're hearing is from the Department of Education. We're not hearing joint panel of DOE and NYCHA. I don't know if someone told you that, but as you know, we determine the rules in the City Council and not the City of New York and not the Department of Education. Even though I respect you 110%, these are our hearings and we've determined that we're hearing them separate and apart.

MARGARITA LOPEZ: It's no problem.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

NYCHA will go next.

MARGARITA LOPEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I have three individual witness slips here. Two say they're not testifying and one is testifying. Can you please identify yourself, your title and what department or division you work for and who is going to be testifying?

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER:
Certainly. Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger, senior adviser to the Chancellor and I will be testifying this morning.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You're a senior advisor to the Chancellor?

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Can the other individuals identify themselves?

TOM GOLD: I'm Tom Gold. I'm the Director of External Research at the Department.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Director of External Research?

TOM GOLD: Yes.

RECY DUNN: I'm Recy Dunn. I'm the Executive Director for Early Childhood Education

at the department.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: With that you may begin your testimony.

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: Thank you. Good morning, Chairman Jackson, Chairwoman Mendez and members of the committees. My name is Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger, Senior Advisor to the Chancellor. I am pleased to be here to discuss the Department of Education's accomplishments in closing the achievement gap and our ongoing efforts to raise students' achievement for all of our students. I am joined today by Recy Dunn, the DOE's Executive Director of Early Childhood Education and Tom Gold, the Director of External Research. Our approach since 2002 has been aimed at improving educational outcomes for all of our students. Our Children First reforms are rooted in the belief that every child can be successful and that the way to lift student achievement is through three core strategies: cultivating strong leadership, empowering principals to make decisions about what's best for their schools and then holding them accountable for what students learn. Prior to 2002, generations of students

left school without the skills necessary to go on to college or to enter the job market after graduating. Far too often a student's home address, race ethnicity or socioeconomic status have determined the quality of his or her educational opportunities. As the chancellor tells me and other members of this team all the time, "this is not acceptable." All children need and deserve a high quality education. It's our job to be the voice of the voiceless, giving the children who never before had advocates or educational opportunity what they need to succeed in school and beyond. We have made standards clear and we've created the tools that schools and parents need to know how well educators and students are meeting our expectations. These tools also help educators make better instructional decisions and they can help parents decide where to send their children to school. For example, we've created progress reports that give schools letter grades based on the academic achievement and progress of students and the results of detailed parent, student and teacher surveys. Schools earn extra credit for helping

the lowest performing students make gains. And throughout the school year, students are assessed in Reading and Math to provide teachers and parents with timely and detailed information on students' strengths and weaknesses, as well as their progress over time. These no-stakes tests allow schools and families to target instruction to students' needs. Educators and parents can now get detailed information about student performance and progress to educators and parents. It helps teachers, principals and families identify students' individual strengths and weaknesses and devise individualized solutions. It also allows educators to share information with each other about strategies that work for students. We have also worked hard to train strong principals who are able to lead schools and are committed to ensuring that their students receive a quality education. We focused on improving the quality and effectiveness of our teachers so that all students have the great teachers they need to succeed. To do this we've worked with the United Federation of Teachers to increase salaries by 43%. We've also created incentives to motivate

great teaching and we created lead teacher positions which allow us to pay a \$10,000 salaried differential to recruit teachers to work in our high needs' schools. We have opened new schools that have helped students succeed. We've closed down schools with a record of failure. Our goal is to create a mix of successful schools that provide options to our students and families. A student shouldn't have to live in the right zip code to attend a high quality school. Since 2002, we've opened 354 new schools across our city and we've closed or started phasing out about 95 failing schools. In addition to these system-wide changes, we have also created a number of opportunities and programs focused on helping our students who are struggling the most in school. The department currently offers a wide range of services to ensure that students are fully supported in and out of the classroom. We also offer a variety of activities that take place outside of school hours, giving students various opportunities to develop new skills and engage positively in their communities. Our Multiple Pathways program, for example, are focused on the

students who are most at risk of dropping out of high school. So far we have helped 7,000 students graduate through out Learning to Work program.

Every school has at least one Inquiry Team comprised of teachers and other school staff.

These teams assess the needs of students and devise strategies to help them succeed. Further, we provide academic intervention services to all students who score at the lowest proficiency levels on state tests. Through this program, teachers in every school create instructional plans targeted to students individual needs.

Other elementary school initiatives which support our most at-risk students are Reading First and a new pilot of the Core Knowledge Reading program.

Reading First provides an intensive early childhood literary instructional program in over 100 public and non-public schools throughout New York City. The schools were carefully selected based on their students' economic and academic needs. Also, the department is currently piloting and innovative early literacy program Core Knowledge Reading in ten high-need schools. The program aims to bridge the language and

comprehension gap by providing students with exposure to rich historical and cultural content to build strong literacy skills. Finally, through our middle school success initiative, we have worked with members of the City Council and others to focus on our middle schools to ensure that these students are well-served and ready to excel in high school. The goals of the campaign for Middle School Success are that all New York City middle schools will accelerate student learning, create a culture of success, engage students through rigorous and relevant instruction, support the development of the whole adolescent and value parents, caregivers and families as partners. As I have noted, the DOE aims to serve all students in need. But we do also have a few programs that specifically target the needs of students living in public housing. Partners in Reading, which operates in more than 80 sites throughout the city, is a partnership with the New York City Housing Authority, NYCHA, and is a program through which teachers address literacy development of young children living in public housing facilities. Through New York City Early Literacy

Learning, or NYCELL, we provide early literacy and oral language development services to families who reside in or near the city's housing developments.

In our efforts to expand Universal Pre-kindergarten, UPK, access citywide, we

continuously examine neighborhood need and impact in the placement of both public school and contracted community-based organization UPK

classrooms. In fact, citywide, we have at least 62 CBO that offer UPK and are physically located

at NYCHA sites. These sites currently serve

nearly 1,500 students in UPK. We back up this

focus on instruction with dollars. Since 2002, we have cut over \$350 million out of the bureaucracy

and redirected that funding to schools and

classrooms. In addition, we establish fair

student funding so that schools are receiving

funding more equitably and now the dollars follow

students. Students receive additional funding

based on their need. For instance, if they are an

English language learner or have special needs, or

for our youngest students, those below fourth

grade, if they also qualify for free lunch or

receive public assistance. As a result of our

reform and various initiatives, we are helping all students make academic progress. More students are meeting and exceeding standards in Math and Reading. And far more students are graduating ready for college or for the workforce. We're also making strides in narrowing the achievement gap. To begin, New York City's black and Hispanic students are making faster progress than their Asian and white counterparts, closing the racial achievement gap in both Math and English Language Arts. We are seeing this gap closing on both the NAEP tests and the New York State exams. For our fourth graders, we have reduced the achievement gap in half in math since 2002. We reduced it by about 20% in English language arts. Progress in the eighth grade by has been less substantial, but it is still in the right direction. On the national tests, which are NAEP, it's important to understand that the city's African American fourth graders are leading the nation. On the NAEP exams, New York City's African American fourth graders are out-performing their peers in the nation. In reading and in math they are number two among the cities which are also involved in

the NAEP testing. Overall, our students have made sustained progress in math and reading on state tests since 2002. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards is up almost 30 points in fourth grade and eighth grade math. In ELA, the percentage is up almost 15 points in fourth grade and 14 in eighth grade. In every area, New York City students gains have outpaced gains in the rest of the state where students are taking the same tests and have not been making the same amount of progress. In the most recent state exam results in both math and ELA, and at every grade level three through eight, New York City students made progress between 2007 and 2008. New York City's one-year grade by grade gains were bigger than the rest of the state's gains in math and in English language arts at every grade level except one, grade six, English language arts. Many more students are graduating from high school. Using the city methodology which was in effect long before 2002, it shows that we have increased the four-year graduation rate by more than two points on average per year after a decade of stagnation that preceded. Under the state's

new methodology, inexistence for the past three years, we have gone up almost three points per year from 2005 to 2007. Whether you look at the city or the state's methodology, the graduation rates of our students have steadily improved. These are accomplishments for which we are all proud. In fact, in 2007, we earned the country's most prestigious education award, the Broad Prize for Urban Education, because of our steady progress in improving student achievement and reducing achievement gaps plaguing poor and minority students. Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to just take a moment to comment on the Furman Center study which attempted to examine the academic achievement of students living in NYCHA housing. As presented, the study states that students living in NYCHA had lower academic achievement than their peers. This policy brief is limited in its conclusions because it examines only one year of data, 2002 to 2003 and does not take into account achievement gains over time, or other student factors which impact achievement. In conclusions, it is the department's responsibility to serve every child who attends

our schools in New York City, no matter where that student lives or what special needs her or she may have. We focus every day on helping our struggling students to meet and exceed standards, regardless of the type of housing they live in or their neighborhood in which they reside. Since we started this work, we have made substantial progress and our students are performing better. But it's undeniable that we still have much more work to do. Thank you for your time today and I look forward to answering your questions.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Quite frankly I'm a little shocked and surprised that more wasn't said on the report. In fact, I'm looking at your eight-page double-spaced testimony. There's only one paragraph where you even talk about the report. There's mainly two sentences that address it at all. I guess if I was a professor reading your paper on the analysis or the evaluation of this report, I don't think that you would pass, quite frankly. I'm being quite frank and honest. Because this seems more like a press release as to the achievements of DOE than evaluating the Furman Report, which is

1 approximately eight pages single-spaced. In
2 looking at your comments where you stated that
3 they attempted to examine the achievement. They
4 did examine it. They didn't attempt to examine
5 it; they examined it. They have an analysis. You
6 may not agree with it, but there's a lot of
7 factors that I read in here which they said
8 contributed to it and I didn't see you even giving
9 an opinion about that. I'm curious to know; did
10 you actually read this report?

11 JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Are these
13 your prepared remarks, or are these the remarks
14 prepared by your press people? I'm being very
15 honest. I'm not joking. I'm being very frank.
16 This is page eight and this is the paragraph which
17 deals with the report. It really says nothing and
18 I'm really surprised. I'm going to let my
19 colleagues talk about that and then see whether or
20 not they have any questions concerning your
21 testimony. Let me introduce the other colleagues
22 that are present. Way over to the right is Inez
23 Dickens from Manhattan. Then way over to the left
24 is Lou Fidler from Brooklyn and to his right is
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2 Domenic Recchia of Brooklyn, and next to him is
3 Peter Vallone, Jr., of Queens. Let me turn to our
4 colleagues for questions that they may have on
5 your statement and testimony. Oliver Koppell of
6 the Bronx?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Thank you,
8 Mr. Chairman. As I indicated, I'm going to have
9 to leave. I don't really have a question because
10 I don't think their statement suggests any
11 questions. I agree with what you said entirely.
12 There was a report issued and this entire
13 testimony deals with overall achievements of DOE,
14 which I don't really take issue with. This
15 hearing is about the fact that a study indicated
16 that students from NYCHA do significantly worse.
17 The comment of the one paragraph that deals with
18 the study say that it's not that persuasive
19 because it only dealt with one year. If the
20 Department of Education feels that the study is
21 inadequate, at the very least I would have
22 expected them to come this morning and say that
23 they're doing their own study to see whether it
24 validates this. By the way, Mr. Chairman, the
25 paper done by the staff of the Council discusses

the report in much better detail and suggests even some reasons why it might be true that students at NYCHA housing projects don't do as well. The report of the Council is a much better report than the Department of Education on this subject of the hearing. The other thing I would say is according to the report of the Council staff, and I assume it's correct, NYCHA has 400,000 residents. Those are legal residents. There probably are more because we have a lot of people unfortunately who double up and so on. Now think about this for a moment. If we had a city in New York State with 400,000 people and it showed that the educational outcomes in that city were significantly worse than other cities in New York State, you don't think there would be an outcry to do something about the education in they NYCHA city? There would be. Here we have a virtual city of people living in NYCHA housing and there's a report that says the outcomes are significantly worse and all the DOE comes here and says is that they're doing a good job. That's inadequate. The DOE at the very least has to do a study to determine why this difference exists. The City Council report, which

1 I commend to your attention, suggests some
2 reasons. Some I may agree with, others I'm not so
3 sure about it, but at least it suggests some
4 reasons. So I'm very disappointed, Mr. Chairman.
5 I think that I would ask, on behalf of this
6 committee, subject of course to your direction, I
7 would ask that the DOE come back and report to us
8 specifically as to whether they believe this study
9 is accurate. They say it's only one year, so you
10 can't trust it, but hey haven't don't their own
11 validation. Let them do their own validation. Is
12 this study accurate? If it is true that the
13 outcomes are significantly worse then we have to
14 know theories as to why and what's going to be
15 done about it. This paper doesn't satisfy that.
16 I don't know whether you want to comment on that,
17 but that would be my request. Mr. Chairman, I
18 think you should request it because this is
19 totally inadequate.

21 JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: I would
22 like to comment. Thank you very much. I think I
23 should first start by saying that the department
24 currently does not follow students according to
25 the type of housing that they live in. It's only

those students that live in temporary housing because that's necessary to determine school entry and such. What we do follow, which is what we find critically important and we tried to stress in our testimony today, are our students in terms of their need. That's what is most important to us. And when we talk about need, we talk about their income needs, which we do follow closely. Their free or reduced lunch needs and also their academic needs, such as whether or not they are performing below standards on these state exams. Or whether they are over age or under credited students or other things that indicate academic need. Those are our most critical indicators. For those pieces we provide and are required to provide academic intervention services for all of those students. Again, we try to collect as much information about our students as possible in order to provide the adequate services and the necessary services for our students. But we don't collect from a parent things that may appear to be more invasive, such as where do you live, do you rent, do you own a home, or do you sublet a home. We don't ask families currently what is their

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2 highest educational degree. These are things that
3 families may fee are invasive. That's why we
4 don't have the specific match of a child to a
5 public housing unit.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: I don't
7 want to get into a debate, Mr. Chairman. I don't
8 think that that's an adequate explanation.

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: We will
10 clearly take your recommendation in order to
11 communicate to DOE and see how they respond.
12 Obviously they're in the schools, not necessarily
13 in the NYCHA developments. As I indicated, your
14 testimony in my opinion does not address the
15 report at all. It doesn't seem like you or anyone
16 else put any real effort into analyzing what was
17 being said. I'm curious to know whether or not
18 you, as a senior advisor to the chancellor who is
19 here representing the chancellor, and/or anyone on
20 the staff talked to the Furman NYU people prior to
21 preparing your testimony.

22 JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: Yes. In
23 fact, Tom Gold can speak to that point.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Just identify
25 yourself for the record.

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2 TOM GOLD: I'm Tom Gold. I'm the
3 Director of External Research at the department.
4 I did speak with the Furman Center. I spoke with
5 Amy Schwartz. She does speak with us quite a bit
6 about her research and we do provide data for the
7 Furman Center for them to conduct their research
8 and to the Steinhardt School.

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.
10 We've been joined by a colleague to my left, next
11 to our counsel, John Liu of Queens. Marie del
12 Carman Arroyo appeared. She's chairing a
13 committee. Dan Garodnick is upstairs voting.
14 Vincent Ignizio appeared. These are all members
15 that may have appeared, but there are about three
16 different committees that are ongoing and some of
17 them are chairing committees and some are
18 sponsoring legislation in which they much speak on
19 the committee. So when you see people come and
20 go, please understand that there are several
21 committees that are going on at the same time.
22 Let me turn to our colleague Rosie Mendez for some
23 comments before we turn to Al Vann.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Thank you,
25 Chair Jackson. I'm very disappointed with this

1 testimony. While I have issues with the study for
2 the Furman Center, which is very brief in its
3 scope, public housing has been in existence for
4 over 70 years. There could have been a little bit
5 more analysis or even just going to the Furman
6 Center study and contradicting what they said.
7 You even mentioned that you track by needs and
8 school lunches. Why isn't more of that
9 information presented to us? Show us which one of
10 those schools are near public housing developments
11 or in public developments. I know in my district
12 I have schools right across the street from a
13 public housing development or located within one
14 of the mega blocks. So I don't understand the
15 testimony and it makes it seem like there were no
16 services prior to 2002. I can tell you that I
17 attended a Head Start and a nursery school and a
18 daycare center and an after school program, all in
19 NYCHA facilities where I got free meals and
20 services and recreational activities.

21 JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: One thing
22 that we did notice, through the UPK expansion, we
23 do have at least 62 of our CBOs are currently in
24 NYCHA facilities. That was a comment made in the
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2 testimony. Other things, for instance, our
3 Partners in Reading program, there was a study
4 conducted back in 2005-2006 where in fact we found
5 that students that participated in Partners in
6 Reading did as well as the citywide average. We
7 would be more than happy to provide that report to
8 the Council. So that was another indication that
9 our students in public housing that participated
10 in the Partners in Reading program, partnered with
11 NYCHA, was at least as effective as our city
12 programs overall.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: I have no
14 further questions at this time. Councilwoman
15 Dickens had to leave for a meeting that was
16 happening at Harlem Hospital. She has residents
17 from her district who are here today and she was
18 very concerned about what's particularly happening
19 in her District 3. Community centers are slated
20 to close, which provide educational opportunities
21 to children and teenagers in her district. She
22 feels that these are important vital services that
23 exist that NYCHA has been providing. I just
24 wanted to state that for the record. Thank you,
25 Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Council Member Al Vann or Brooklyn.

COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, must speak and run, as it were. My observation is that at the beginning of your testimony you indicated that the reforms are rooted in the belief that every child can be successful and that the way to lift the achievement is through three core strategies. That construct I think is faulty. That construct is based on leadership, empowering principals and accountability. It's really one principle that I understand, which is leadership of principals and holding the accountable. What is absent from that construct is any reference to community or parental empowerment, parental involvement. I think most studies, going back since the beginning of the public school system, will show that one of the elements of successful schools has always been parental involvement and community involvement. So I would suggest and perhaps you can advise the chancellor that they ought to take another look at these core strategies. Parental engagement and involvement ought to be a priority in any

construct to try and lift the achievement of students, whether it's in NYCHA or not in NYCHA. Whether you agree with this study or whether this is a study you want to use as a frame of reference, once you determine what the status is of children in NYCHA, I think you will find something comparable to what this study has already disclosed. They will probably be behind. Whatever it is, we know they're not functioning at the level that they need to be functioning on to compete in this global society. It seems to me that public housing of NYCHA provides an opportunity. It could be like a laboratory. Because the children are focused in one particular area. Just as the Chair of Public Housing indicated what she received when she was a student, this is a unique opportunity to wrap around all the services that not only a child needs but the family needs. You can provide those services right in the development. The early childhood opportunities are limitless it seems to me. We all recognize what happens in those first years really determines perhaps the success that child will have in life. It seems that with some

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2 creativity and how we focus our resources,
3 children in NYCHA would have an extraordinary
4 opportunity of fulfilling their talents and the
5 creativity that god has given them. I would hope
6 that you advise the chancellor that this one
7 member of this committee feels that they are
8 missing the mark. They're not seriously about
9 trying to educate NYCHA kids because if they were,
10 they would put more priority, more resources and
11 more creativity in seeing that that gets done.

12 JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: May I
13 comment? We wouldn't disagree with you. We know
14 that our colleagues from NYCHA will be talking
15 much more in detail about the programs that they
16 provide to the students in public housing. What
17 we do want to talk about that for us it's really
18 about the schools and how the schools are serving
19 the students. A few things to talk about, going
20 back to the report, is that three of the schools
21 that are cited in the report actually received A's
22 on their progress report in the 07-08 school year.
23 So these are well-functioning schools that serve
24 students in those areas. Another thing to look at
25 is that in the Furman study, there is a small

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2 table that talks about the comparison of the lunch
3 eligibility of students in the Furman study as
4 compared to all other students. I think it was
5 72% to 85% of the students in public housing were
6 receiving reduced or free lunch. That speaks to
7 the points I was trying to make. We are providing
8 the services for our low income students and that
9 is our priority for the department. And even in
10 that study that the Furman Center presented, she
11 talks about the need of those students and that's
12 where when we go to look at low income students,
13 we're looking at that piece already.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,
15 Council Member Vann. We've been joined by a
16 colleague. Over to my right is Council Member
17 Letitia James of Brooklyn. Let's turn to our
18 colleague, Peter Vallone, Jr., of Queens.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you.
20 I don't think you need to be on defensive at all.
21 I couldn't disagree more strongly with just about
22 everything I've heard coming from this side of the
23 barrier so far this morning. What you should have
24 done is sat there and said, you know this is a
25 nice study. I'm glad they did it. They used

private money to do and we'll take it under advisement. But no way should you be spending time and precious money right now doing studies tracking kids determined by what sort of house they live in, whether it's brick or wood or whatever. If you're going to do studies, do them on low income versus high income. Do them on boroughs. Do them on areas. Do them on single moms versus non-single moms. Do them on stuff that might make a difference. But what type of housing they live in? In a perfect world, maybe. Get as much information as you can, but anyone who wants these studies done, please answer how many teachers we should cut to have that done or how many programs we should cut to spend time doing studies on the type of building somebody lives in and how that affects their education. I happen to disagree with everything I've heard up here. Let me commend you for not wasting any time doing studies like this or collecting data on this type of study. There's much more important information that if you were going to do studies you should do them one. NYU did this one, and good for them. I don't think that gives any responsibility to you

at all. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you, Council Member. Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito of Manhattan and the Bronx?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't even know how to respond to that. I respect my colleagues here but the purpose of this hearing has not been addressed. I think a lot has been said by my colleagues to that. It is very disappointing that DOE would not respond to the purpose and intent of this meeting. The fact that we have a Subcommittee in this City Council on public housing is because we care passionately about the residents that live in public housing. We believe it's a priority for this city and that we need to do everything we can to continue to support public housing. If there are certain indicators which may reflect that children in public housing may not be performing at level, then we need to do everything that we can to ensure that we're providing the resources to make sure that everyone does receive equal treatment and equal education in the City of New York. To pooh-pooh a study or

1 to say that we're not going to give it credence or
2 credibility, I really don't think that's in the
3 best interest of the children and the families and
4 the residents of New York City. There has to be
5 some value given or at least some testament given
6 that speaks to why you feel that in fact maybe the
7 findings are inaccurate. There was nothing that
8 really spoke to that today. I think that's
9 something that is a disservice to us here in the
10 Council, but also a disservice to those that we
11 represent. In particular, do you have any
12 statistics? We talk about the two programs that
13 DOE is providing within NYCHA and in some
14 community centers. I have not heard anything. I
15 know I had to step away for a second to vote. But
16 I would like to hear anything that you can speak
17 to with regards to the Early Literacy program, the
18 Partners in Reading program. These are specific
19 programs. We want to understand whether they're
20 being evaluated and whether they're successful.
21 Are models that we could be expanding into other
22 NYCHA facilities because I understand that it's
23 very limited in terms of the scope, or where they
24 are right now in terms of developments. I really
25

1 think it's disrespectful, not to us, but to those
2 that we represent. This is something we believe
3 and want to really address it by having this
4 hearing. To then just basically say we're not
5 going to give it credence and we just want to talk
6 about the wonderful work we're doing at DOE is not
7 the way to approach this. If you could at least
8 speak to specifically the programs that we talk
9 about in our briefing paper that I know are being
10 provided in conjunction with NYCHA. If you have
11 any sort of statistics, I think we really could
12 use some information. We've gotten absolutely no
13 information from DOE today.

14
15 JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: Thank
16 you. I did mention that in 2005-2006, the
17 department did an evaluation of the Partners in
18 Reading program. I actually have the document
19 here and I'm more than happy to send that to
20 Chairman Jackson. We did an intensive study
21 looking at early childhood. Early childhood is
22 tricky because we don't have test scores, which
23 are what we use to see progress. However, we did
24 look at the third grade students that participated
25 in the Partners in Reading program compared to

their citywide peers. What we found is that Partners in Reading students did as well as their peers citywide in English language arts.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: So based on that, is it something that DOE is looking to replicate further in other areas?

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: The Partners in Reading program?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: Yes. You're saying that it's successful. You're saying that it is helping students perform. Is it something that you're looking to replicate additionally in further NYCHA facilities?

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: Given the economic times, those are things that we have for discussion about how we can provide services like that.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: But is it projected in your budget? I mean the budget is out. We're going to have hearings on it soon. Is it something that is in your budget?

RECY DUNN: The Partners in Reading program is not projected to grow. It's projected to stay where it is. That's actually gotten

smaller over the years because I think a number of the students who are qualified and who are at those developments are also eligible for a number of supplemental educational services programs. So that conflicts directly with it because it's an after-school program. While many years back there were closer to 5,000 students in the PIR program, now it's dropped significantly.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:

We're seeing that in the preliminary budget for Fiscal Year 2010 that you have proposed cuts that would eliminate the Partners in Reading program.

RECY DUNN: It's NYCELL, not the Partners in Reading program.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:

NYCELL?

RECY DUNN: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: But it is going to be eliminated?

RECY DUNN: We're projecting cuts to the NYCELL program, not the Partners in Reading program.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: What cuts are you projecting? How deep? Is it going

to be cut in half?

RECY DUNN: The complete program
for NYCELL?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: So
you're not projecting any cuts to the Partners in
Reading program?

RECY DUNN: Not at this time.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:
Obviously then that's a concern. Something that
is successful, I really don't understand the
rationale for cutting it if it's going to help
students perform. The next question I'll wait for
NYCHA and the restructuring of these community
centers and how that may impact the programs that
are currently being provided. Again, we would
appreciate whatever addition information you can
provide to us. I don't think we're saying and I
know that I'm not saying that children that live
in public housing are worse off or should be
considered worse off. But if there are certain
factors that demonstrate that children who are
living in public housing are not performing at the
level of their peers then that is something that
we really should be looking into. If you are

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2 saying that that is not accurate, then anything
3 that you can present to contradict through
4 statistics, through studies, through your
5 research, then I think that's something that would
6 be valuable and that could add to this
7 conversation and this discussion. I know I have
8 other questions, but they're more pertinent to
9 NYCHA. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,
11 Council Member. I was talking to Regina Poreda-
12 Ryan, who is our finance policy analyst and she
13 informed me that her communication with DOE's
14 budget people is that the Partners in Reading
15 program is going to be cut and there is going to
16 be a reduction. I believe you said that there was
17 no plans for that. So that's clearly a
18 contradiction of information that we have. Our
19 finance budget analysts talked to your budget
20 people. In the document it shows supplemental
21 programs cut of about \$300,000. I need to know
22 which information is correct. Are you correct?
23 Are the budget people correct?

24 RECY DUNN: I'm happy to revisit
25 and double-check. The \$300,000 cut is

1
2 approximately the size of what NYCELL is. That's
3 why I'm saying it's NYCELL. But we're happy to
4 revisit it and clarify it.

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Is it
6 possible you can verify that or maybe somebody can
7 blackberry over and communicate before this
8 hearing is over? I'd just like to know what
9 program if any is scheduled to be cut under the
10 proposed preliminary budget. Let's turn to
11 Letitia James of Brooklyn.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.
13 I'm glad Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito went
14 prior to me, but I'm okay now. We just came from
15 a breakfast at DC 37. Most of my colleagues
16 attended. DC 37 outlined all of the ways that we
17 could provide funds for all of these programs,
18 including cutting funds for privatization
19 outsourcing and a host of other avenues that we
20 could produce revenues for something as worth as
21 this. So to suggest that we have to cut teachers
22 and police officers is a false preposition. To
23 argue that there are not funds to address those
24 who need it most is intellectually dishonest. If
25 there's money to retrain Wall Street workers,

there's money for studying the educational needs of the children of public housing and any other child in the City of New York. To sit here as a child who is born with a silver spoon in their mouth and to be not compassionate for the least among us I think is cruel, inhuman, and again, represents this Republican conservatism and compassion, which again is another false notion. As President Barack Obama said last night, we have an obligation to provide public education to every child in the City of New York and no segment in this country should be ignored. We all have to raise the standards and the outcomes of every child no matter where they are housed. We particularly have to look at children of public housing because this study is a reflection of the reality that I see in my district and in every district in this city. We are leaving behind a segment of our population and that is children in public housing who are more prone to drop out of school, more prone not to be provided science and technology because, again, oftentimes they do not have a voice. That is an indictment on us as elected officials and an indictment on us as a

society. We have an obligation to do more. Let me also say that part of the problem is because we are segregated. Our housings patterns are segregated. We live in a segregated city. Those who say we should ignore the needs of children of public housing are the first ones to say we don't want any affordable or low-income housing in our neighborhoods. The best way to address education disparities is, again, to integrate this city. Right now we live separate and apart. That's why our children, particularly in public housing, are being left out. So this study by NYU was instructive and we should look to this study. We should examine this study. We should urge that the Department of Education do what they are doing, yes, in my district because I have been a loud voice in creating an educational campus for the children in my public housing: Ingersoll, Whitman and Farragut. That's exactly what we are doing. If more people would do that and, again, talk about the residential segregation which exists in the City of New York and join onto my bill which talks about that, then we would be a better city and a better society. It's a priory

of Council Member Rosie Mendez, Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito, Council Member Jackson, and myself, who continue to come to the Subcommittee of the Public Housing and talk about these issues. I'm not prepared to leave any segment out. I'm not prepared to ignore the issues of any child. I'm not prepared to say that just because you live in public housing that you should be treated any different if you live in a brownstone. I won't do that. We should not do that. You should be ashamed if you ever make any statements to the contrary. It's an indictment on you and it's an indictment on us and it's an indictment on this house. I urge the Department of Education to look at this population, to study it endlessly and to work with this committee, this body and those who are conscious and those who are in this City Council to do the right thing. Those others who are lost in the wilderness and caught up and absorbed with their own power, then we should just ignore them because they're a voice in the wilderness and they will always be lost. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,

Council Member. Clearly this is an emotional issue for you as a representative of so many individuals that live in NYCHA housing developments. There are many people on the Council that share your passion.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: A point of personal privilege, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Sure.

Please, go ahead, Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I attempted to respond, but there was so much extraneous, intellectually dishonest things that I don't know where to begin.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Before you begin, Council Member, is his relating to the witnesses or in response--

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE:
[interposing] This is relating to the personal attack which was just made on me, Mr. Chair. I'm taking a point of personal privilege to respond to it.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Hold on one second.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: If you feel the need to--

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [interposing] Excuse me, Council Member. I'm chairing this committee please. Wait, please. Wait to be acknowledged.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Council Member Vallone, you felt that you were personally attacked during her statement?

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Did I feel that way?

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm asking a question.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: You heard it. You were sitting there. Yes, I was.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Then you're afforded an opportunity to respond.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I'll be very brief, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm going to ask my colleagues to please refrain from personal attacks or comments on colleagues. I should have said this earlier, Council Member Vallone, but I

1
2 may not have been paying close attention. So
3 forgive me if I didn't.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: It was a
5 long speech, Mr. Chair, and I think most of our
6 eyes glazed over.

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You may
8 respond and then I'm going to move on to the next
9 witness.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: As I said,
11 I will be brief because I don't think the best use
12 of our time and trying to help our case is to make
13 long speeches about topics that have nothing to do
14 with the topic we're here for today. To clarify,
15 I said nothing of the sort. My disagreement is
16 the best use of funds to help our kids. Our job
17 as responsible elected officials is to use the
18 money as wisely as possible in order to help the
19 kids who need it most best. That is our
20 disagreement and that's the only disagreement I
21 have. I have to go vote on the 16th Floor. Thank
22 you.

23 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,
24 Council Member. I just have a couple of addition
25 questions, if I may. The NYU report mentions

other possible contributing factors to the low performance of students in NYCHA housing. Among them is the high rates of in-school violence at the NYCHA schools, meaning schools that are closely located near the NYCHA development. What information does the Department of Education have about incidents occurring at these schools? Do you have any information about that? What is being done about it? Has DOE coordinated with the NYPD to access that data? Because the report indicates that if you look at the NYCHA development and look at the NYCHA students, a lot of them are concentrated in schools right near the developments. In analyzing this report, can you respond to whether or not you've looked at and analyzed the in-school violence at these schools that are very close to NYCHA developments?

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: We do collect information on incidents and suspensions and such in schools. I do not have that information with me. I'm fully prepared to provide that to you.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You had mentioned in your response to a question that

there were three schools cited in the report that received A on their progress. What schools specifically are you referring to?

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: It was School 147, School 257 and School 59. They had over a 50% population of students in NYCHA housing.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How did you ascertain that data?

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: Through student zip codes.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Was that done in analyzing this report to come up with those three schools that were cited near NYCHA housing developments and then accessing the addresses to determine it? There's an assumption that a lot of children come from that development.

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: The report is based on those same assumptions.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: The same assumptions for those same schools?

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: Yes. In particular there were, I believe, 30 in the report. There were about 33 schools that had the

1
2 deepest population, using the assumption of the
3 zip code and address data. There were about 33
4 schools that were most highly populated. I'm sure
5 the Furman Center will probably go back and look.

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Does the
7 Department of Education agree that New York City
8 Housing Authority schools, meaning schools that
9 are close near there, have poorer facilities than
10 other schools? Do you agree or disagree with
11 that?

12 JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: No, I
13 think we would disagree with that. In fact, there
14 are some schools that are very high performing.
15 Many of our districts that high populations of
16 NYCHA facilities have shown really good
17 achievement gains. We're happy to provide that
18 district data to you.

19 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I believe you
20 are referring to the performance and I'm talking
21 about the actual physical facilities, the schools.

22 JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: I'm
23 sorry. I would need to go back to check that.
24 But not that I'm aware of.

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Are you aware

of how many of these schools are overcrowded or without adequate facilities?

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: No.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: That was raised as a possible factor in the report. You have no information on that?

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: No. I could also question the report and the authors to ask whether or not they had actually done any site visits to in order to make such assumptions.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I think that would be a good thing to inquire of them. Also, independent of inquiry to them is to determine, in looking at all the various reports that DOE has with this. Based on your response, do you know if the five-year proposed capital plan has any proposed capital improvement projects and/or new schools near NYCHA developments? I would assume you don't know.

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: I don't have that offhand.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: What attempt, if any, has the Department of Education made to coordinate other community-based services in and

1
2 around New York City Housing developments to
3 address the academic needs of youth in the area?

4 JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: I think
5 that I would turn my colleague, Recy, who can talk
6 about the Universal Pre-K and the community-based
7 organizations that are currently in the NYCHA
8 facilities.

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Just identify
10 yourself for the record and you may begin.

11 RECY DUNN: My name is Recy Dunn.
12 I'm the Executive Director for Early Childhood
13 Education. A lot of our work is with our
14 community-based organizations, many of whom we
15 contract with to provide Universal Pre-
16 kindergarten access citywide. About 60% of our
17 children in Universal Pre-K, which amounts to
18 about 32,000 children, are served by community-
19 based organizations. It's through that
20 partnership really that we look at where some of
21 the need is. Many of those end up being in our
22 higher impacted areas. When we did the initial
23 address matching to some of the sites, that's how
24 we came up with that there were at least 62 sites
25 that are actually on NYCHA's facility sites. I'm

1
2 sure there are many more. We'd have to do a
3 deeper dive on the data to see which ones are
4 across the street or nearby that serve many of
5 those populations.

6 JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: As we
7 mentioned, even in just those 62 sites, we're
8 serving more than 1,500 students in Pre-K.

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: At those 62
10 sites in NYCHA developments?

11 JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: The Director
13 of Early Childhood Development or Curriculum?

14 RECY DUNN: Early Childhood
15 Education.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Can you tell
17 me what would be the impact of laying off 250,
18 give or take, employees that were employed in
19 NYCHA community centers? What impact would that
20 have on the youth and their development in your
21 opinion as the Director of ED for early childhood
22 education? Do you have an opinion on that?

23 RECY DUNN: I would defer to NYCHA
24 on any impact it would have.

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: But you're

the ED for Early Childhood Education. Is that correct?

RECY DUNN: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm asking your opinion as a professional as far as what impact would be of closing community centers where youth from NYCHA developments attend after school programs. You know what the after school programs deal with, right? We're talking about homework, health, sports, arts, tutorial programs and things like that. By not having that, what type of impact would that have on their development as children?

RECY DUNN: I would be concerned about any programmatic cuts to any programs that do any of the social, emotional or other developmental issues at such a young age. We're obviously concerned largely with the early childhood education as essentially the foundational learning blocks for learning in further public school in-school success. So any programmatic cut to any of those types of services I think is a bad thing. I think it's not beneficial to the children, especially the

children in the impacted areas.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: What is IHAD?
What does that stand for?

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: We don't
know. We have not heard that.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: When did the
I Have a Dream program begin?

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: I'm
sorry, that's a NYCHA program that we're not as
familiar with.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: We understand
that the Department of Education does not
currently track the performance of students living
in public housing. However, given the findings of
NYU, is this an area where the Department of
Education may consider tracking data in the future
to determine the need for possible interventions?

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: We made
the comments before about how our focus is about
school student achievement and there are so many
other academic in-need factors that we currently
follow, such as income, poverty level, achievement
need, race, ethnicity. All of those things are
very highly correlated with academic need. Those

1
2 are our priorities at this time. We, at this
3 time, feel that tracking public housing or
4 wherever children reside in that very formal flag
5 that you would put on a student that says check
6 public housing, or check homeowner, or check
7 renter would be very invasive.

8 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I think that
9 when it comes to children and evaluating whether
10 or not their environment is impacting them, you
11 have community schools and you have a lot of other
12 programs that are there to assist students. If in
13 fact this report has brought out some statistics
14 based on even the one of your analysis as far as
15 the fifth graders that were looked at as far as
16 their standardized exam results and attendance and
17 other things like that, they're not performing as
18 well. That's a given. Even though they didn't
19 reach conclusions, there are a lot of factors that
20 they concluded were possible considerations in
21 that. You do not think that that requires further
22 evaluation by DOE? Is that what you're telling
23 me?

24 JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: We can
25 absolutely go back and talk about whether or not

1
2 this is an indicator we feel should be followed in
3 that way, or if there are other ways to get at
4 that information without actually putting a flag
5 on, just as we're exploring other options for
6 information that we collect about students.

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Would you
8 please let us know what your determination is and
9 whether or not you plan to do something as far as
10 some other methodology or by tracking and if so,
11 when and how?

12 JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: If you can
14 get back to our Council on that, we'd appreciate
15 it.

16 JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: Yes. I
17 just wanted to follow up on a final note. You
18 were asking about the budget. It is preliminary
19 stage. We don't have the final. We won't have
20 that until after hearing, about the question about
21 whether it's Partners in Reading or NYCELL or what
22 that is. But we do want to note that all of this
23 is preliminary. There's lots of moving pieces.
24 Not just based on this conversation but on many
25 others that we're having as well. We're concerned

1
2 about any service cuts, whether it's within our
3 schools or on the programs outstanding. That is a
4 primary concern. The chancellor has gone up to
5 Albany and has gone in front of everyone to really
6 talk about it and plead our case and the needs of
7 our students. All of this is very much in flux,
8 even as President Obama spoke yesterday, until we
9 really figure out and prioritize what are the most
10 important needs and how do we best serve our
11 students.

12 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I totally
13 agree with you. One thing there is to seek
14 clarification as to what is the current status of
15 a situation and Mr. Dunn indicated that that
16 program was not scheduled to be negatively
17 impacted as far as the information that he has.
18 Our finance budget analyst, who is in contact with
19 your budget people has indicated that it would be
20 impacted. Your response still did not give
21 clarity to the question that I asked you.

22 JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: On that
23 one question we will get back to you after this
24 hearing. We were unable to get in touch with our
25 budget director at this moment. We will be able

to do that.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: My college,
Co-Chair Rosie Mendez.

CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: I just have to
make a statement. I'm offended that you would
think that determining if they lived in public
housing and asking those questions are invasive.
That one city agency would not look into that
because if extra services are needed then they
need to be provided. Whereas another city agency,
the police department, do track that and go out
and specifically find tenants so that they can
evict them. So I don't understand why one city
agency would track it for one purpose and another
city agency that could track it for a better
purpose to provide our children with a better
education won't track it.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you for
coming in.

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: Thank
you.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Can I just
ask one last question? I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Council

Member James?

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: I apologize for not asking the question previously. But the comments I made earlier limited to one particular situation. Again, I just want to join in the sentiments of Council Member Mendez. Stimulus funds are coming down which are directed towards education. In Harlem I do know that there is a campus that was created particularly around low-income children. Again, I've been working with the DOE to create a campus in my district. If you look at those two campuses, which have been outlined, they primarily focus on children of public housing. So why is DOE prepared to do that and you're not prepared to look at it more systematically?

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: We are taking that under consideration.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay, sorry. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you very much.

JENNIFER BELL-ELLWANGER: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Next we'll hear from the New York City Housing Authority, board member Margarita Lopez, our former colleague and any other representatives that wish to come forward representing New York City Housing Authority. We have been joined by our colleague, all the way to the right at the end, Jimmy Vacca of the Bronx. Board Member Lopez, welcome again, our former colleague, it's always great to see you.

MARGARITA LOPEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Can you please introduce yourself and your other colleagues at the table and their position?

MARGARITA LOPEZ: I will as soon as I make a comment about your magnificent way in describing the attire of Council Member Vann. I felt that I was in a place better than Hollywood. I was wondering if you can do the same thing for me.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Let me just tell you, you're looking great. In fact, I like your hairstyle.

MARGARITA LOPEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Obviously, your dress is very sophisticated and up to date, as it always is. In my opinion you look great, and obviously the perception of your look, hopefully your health is 100% and that just goes without saying. I wish you the best. You know that.

MARGARITA LOPEZ: Thank you. I'm so sad that Council Member Vann is not here. That went over the top on his case. Thank you very much. My name is Margarita Lopez. I am one of the three board members of the New York City Housing Authority. Present with me are two of my coworkers.

UKAH BUSGITH: Good morning. I'm Ukah Busgith. I'm the Deputy Director for Community Operations.

HUGH SPENCE: I'm Hugh Spence. I'm the Deputy General Manager for Community Operations.

DEIDRA GILLIARD: Good morning. I'm Deidra Gilliard. I'm the Assistant Deputy General Manager for Community Operations.

MARGARITA LOPEZ: Good morning,

Chairperson Jackson and Mendez and members of the Education Committee and Public Housing Subcommittee. I am Margarita Lopez, board member of the New York City Housing Authority, better known as NYCHA. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in response to the Furman Center study on the students living in public housing. I am pleased to have the opportunity to discuss NYCHA's commitment to the educational success of the children who live in our buildings, as the city itself, under Mayor Bloomberg's leadership, has prioritized the academic achievement of all New York City students. Before I speak about some of NYCHA's efforts to increase educational opportunities for our children, I would first like to express NYCHA's concern about the message seemingly implicit in the Furman Center's report. That because you live in public housing you are less able to succeed. We are alarmed that these types of misleading reports can contribute to the continuous stigmatization of NYCHA residents, which exacerbates the negative image that many of us have fought for decades. This is one of the reasons that I appreciate the

1
2 opportunity to testify today and to be joined by
3 our partners at the Department of Education. I
4 want to indicate to the City Council members that
5 I was present when this study was unveiled in New
6 York University. As the nation's largest housing
7 authority, NYCHA provides housing to 1 in 13 low
8 and moderate income New Yorkers, which is
9 approximately 633,000 people. NYCHA manages
10 177,976 apartments in 340 public housing
11 developments across the city and also administer
12 approximately 93,000 Section 8 vouchers citywide.
13 Within this core mission to provide housing,
14 however, we also offer a myriad of educational,
15 recreational, social and cultural programs for
16 residents, including young people. NYCHA has a
17 long-standing history of collaboration with many
18 educational institutions, including St. John's
19 University, CUNY, and the Department of Education.
20 I welcome this opportunity to discuss some of our
21 programs. The Furman study sets out to examine
22 the academic performance of youth living in public
23 housing. We found that the study was based on
24 information that outdated, limited and incomplete.
25 I would like to point out just a couple of the

study's more obvious defects. The study not only focused on old data from 2002 to 2003, which was nearly six years ago, and it only focused on the performance of fifth graders. Since 2002, there have been significant changes in the structure of the Department of Education and public school. Those changes have produced significantly improved outcomes for all students across the city. It is important to understand that under this administration the city does not and will not segment out NYCHA youth as a separate cohort. We do not believe that a student should be segregated based solely on their address. We are one city and the mayor has worked diligently to ensure that NYCHA and its residents are fully integrated within the broader community. This includes education where the DOE has labored to improve all schools and provide opportunities for all students regardless of where they live. Now, I'd like to discuss the programs that NYCHA has in place to enhance the educational success of our young residents. Under this administration, NYCHA has collaborated with several city agencies, universities and community-based organizations to

offer an extensive network of educational opportunities for the 111,465 children, aged 5 to 18, who live in our buildings. I will describe just a few of them. Partners in Reading is a collaboration between NYCHA, the mayor's office and DOE. The goal of the program is to improve the literacy skills of first, second and third graders, aged 6 through 8, through a combination of classroom instruction, individual tutoring, use of interactive projects and outreach to parents. PIR currently serves 2,500 children. During the 2005-2006 program year, DOE explored how well PIR participants mastered grade appropriate literacy skill. When compared to students citywide, PIR students did as well as and in some cases slightly better than their citywide grade level peers. In January 2005, the mayor's office, DOE and NYCHA launched another initiative called the New York Early Literacy Learning Program. It's goal is to strengthen language and pre-reading skills of children between the ages of 1 to just under 4 years old so that they enter school ready to learn and succeed. The program is offered at four NYCHA developments and serves over 150 NYCHA families

each year. As we become an increasingly technologically driven society, computer literacy for NYCHA residents has become even more important. Our technology gateway centers provide computer technology programs for teens, adults and seniors. The program's goal is to close the technological gap and allow residents to develop the skills necessary to pursue enhanced education and/or employment opportunities. NYCHA is also partnering with the City College of New York to implement computer training career development programs at some of our community centers. This program provides access to computers and technology-based educational and job preparation activities to NYCHA residents ages 13 years old and older. For the last 12 summers, over 10,000 NYCHA residents have participated in the after school all-star program at St. John's University. It provides four weeks of onsite programs geared towards education, athletics and career development activities for youth between the ages of 7 and 13. The curriculum includes multimedia computer instruction, reading, writing, science and sports activities. All participants are pre-

tested and post-tested and results reveal increased performance in reading and writing after attending this summer program. NYCHA is the rare landlord that has taken such extraordinary steps to bolster educational opportunities for its residents. We are very proud of this approach and regret the fact that the Furman Center study did not take programs like this into consideration when they put together the study that they did. Public housing in New York is a national success story. It plays a vital role in our communities and is an economic engine for the city overall. In our history there have been residents who went on to play important roles in the life of this city and this country. They have made their marks in every field: politics, business, education and entertainment. Individuals like Whoopi Goldberg, Congressman Elliott Engle, Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein and Schools Chancellor Joel Klein. We applaud their success and the determination of countless current and former residents like yourself, Chairperson Mendez, who raised and educated their children in public housing to reach their full potential. At NYCHA, we make every

effort to support those goals and are proud of the strides we have made in partnering with the school system to advance education. I want to add a personal comment. I stopped reading the names of individuals who have been part of the NYCHA family that grew up, because if I continued reading all of their names, we will be here perhaps until next year. The individuals who grew up in public housing are individuals who have gone all over the United States of America to contribute to the greatness of this nation. To put public housing as a reason why children would not succeed in their life is an atrocious proposal. Thank you for your time. I will conclude my remarks here, but look forward to answering any questions you may have. I also would like to let you know that we have the following programs in NYCHA that currently serve the population of our students. The Partners in Reading program is an after school program. It is a mayoral initiative in collaboration with the New York City Department of Education. In January 2005, the mayor's office, in collaboration with the Department of Education and the New York City Housing Authority launched a

pilot program, New York Early Literacy Learners. The goal of the NYCELL program is to strengthen language and pre-reading skills of children between the age of 1 to 3.9. The Technology Gateway Center program was established through a three-year neighborhood network grant to provide computer technology programs for teens, adults and seniors. The gardening and greening program, which is the oldest non-botanical urban re-gardening program in the country, expanded the mission to include the planting of large trees, implemented broader environmental educational program and the production and access to nutritional organic produce as a medium for improving one's health. The after school all-star program, former known as Inner City Games, was established in NYCHA in 1997. Since then the program has provided a comprehensive six-week program geared toward education, athletics, career development and other activities for 800 NYCHA youth between the ages of 7 to 13. The programs operate at St. John's University, Queens campus for four weeks and City College for New York Manhattan campus for two weeks. The Salvadori

Center received a grant for \$1.14 million from the National Science Foundation to operate the BRIDGES program. Build, Research, Invent, Design, Grow and Explore through Science is a program for five years. Global Partners Junior program is a collaborative between the Office of the Mayor and New York City Housing Authority that connects students in New York City with students around the world as a way to foster global understanding through internet-based exchange. The State University of New York, SUNY, and the University Center for Academic and Workforce Develop, through funding from the New York State Legislature operate a project called Advanced Technology Training and Information Network. ATTAIN Lab is a technology project created by the University Center for academic and workforce development of the University of New York with funding support from the New York State Legislature. In this program, participants are six years of age and up who are in the process of being eligible, which means their incomes are not more than 200% above federal poverty guidelines. Participants in this program lab are not only able to enhance their

employability academic skills, but are also able to take part in the worldwide technology revolution. That is the last program that I wanted to speak about today. As you see, it's an array of programs that NYCHA, together with other partners have put in place based on our concern for the educational advancement of our residents.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you, Board Member Lopez. Can you submit a copy of the list of the NYCHA programs for the record?

MARGARITA LOPEZ: I'm only going to keep it in my hand until you finish. When we finish, I'll give it to you.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You can submit it to us then. Let's turn to our colleagues Lou Fidler and then Jimmy Vacca. Lou Fidler of Brooklyn.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Margarita, before I make my comments, you know I love you, right?

MARGARITA LOPEZ: Yes. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I understand your comment about not stigmatizing residents of public housing. I think this does go

1
2 to the underlying point that Council Member
3 Vallone was trying to make. I assume we're going
4 to have the Furman Center folks next, right?

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yes. They're
6 waiting.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I was
8 really going to wait until they came up to ask my
9 questions. If there is a causal and not merely
10 correlative relationship between living in public
11 housing and receiving a poor education, isn't it
12 appropriate that that be investigated, looked at
13 and addressed, regardless of the stigma, if that
14 is in fact the case? That's the first point.
15 I'll just say a couple of other things and then
16 let you respond. As to your criticism of the
17 report that it looks at old data and it ignores
18 improvements, Margarita, you are drinking the
19 Bloomberg/Klein kool-aid.

20 MARGARITA LOPEZ: No, I'm not.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Yes, you
22 are.

23 MARGARITA LOPEZ: No, I'm not. I
24 love the mayor, but I--

25 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER:

[interposing] I respect the mayor. I won't say I love the mayor. I respect the mayor. But I am telling you that there are a lot of people sitting on this side of the aisle who do not believe that the schools have improved in the manner in which you have just said. The fact that the prior witnesses said that we have schools near NYCHA housing projects that got A's on their progress report card is the ultimate self-fulfilling circular reasoning. It's the professor giving himself an A and then saying look what a great professor I am, I got an A. Because it's absolute and utter nonsense. We don't buy it. I don't buy it. I don't think the Department of Education has improved in any significant measure so that we can stand back and look at 2002 data and say that's just another reality. Your remark about the mayor treating our city as one city, I don't buy that at all. With all due respect for my old friend Freddy Ferrer, he had it right four years ago. This mayor does not treat the city as one city. Fortunately, and thankfully, I don't think it's an issue of race. But unfortunately, I think it's an issue of economic class. I think that NYCHA

1
2 residents fall into the economic class in this
3 city that gets the short end of the stick in the
4 Bloomberg world. I think that colors the view
5 that you just expressed. I just had to say that
6 because of my deep affection and respect for you.
7 I think that you are looking at this with
8 Bloomberg-colored glasses.

9 MARGARITA LOPEZ: I want to make
10 clear that you know I love you too, right? We
11 love each other. First of all, I am a human being
12 with a very clear intelligent capacity to
13 distinguish things that require my thought
14 process. I don't drink kool-aid from anybody. I
15 don't care who prepares the kool-aid. I don't
16 believe you intend to offend me with it. I don't
17 take it like that. But I want to make clear that
18 I am a person who has ethics and principles and I
19 don't lose them because I am on the city
20 administration at this moment. You asked the
21 question if it's appropriate or not for studies to
22 be made. I believe that a study should be made.
23 I believe that studies should be made all the time
24 in order for government in general to be able to
25 direct funding, programmatic activity, and

1 policies to the right place that will bring back
2 the biggest bang for the dollar. I also believe
3 there has to be certain decorum in the way that
4 you put studies in place. That's the reason there
5 are rules and regulations and conditions in which
6 you do studies. When I express my views in
7 regards to the Furman study, I'm not speaking for
8 the Department of Education. I'm speaking for New
9 York City public housing. I was not talking about
10 the achievement or non-achievement of children in
11 the school system because frankly I don't know.
12 You can read my testimony again and you will see
13 that I was not talking about that. What I'm
14 talking about are the results in reference to what
15 NYCHA has done and contributed with the
16 programmatic activity that we have in partnership
17 with the mayor and in partnership sometimes with
18 the Department of Education and sometimes with
19 universities and other institutions.

20
21 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Sometimes
22 with the City Council too, right?

23 MARGARITA LOPEZ: Yes.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I just
25 wanted to get that in there.

MARGARITA LOPEZ: Absolutely. We will be happy to show you what we were talking about in terms of the results that we see by these programmatic relationships. That's what I was talking about. The studies, when you put them in place, are very much welcome when people participate in them. NYCHA did not participate in this study whatsoever. We were asked for some addresses and that's it. We were not asked for information regarding our programmatic activities. We were not asked to participate in trying to figure out how we can identify a better way to look into our children receiving the appropriate help they should in regards to education in the areas where they are. We were not invited to participate in any of that. Studies that are going to be made with the intention of talking about the education of children should be made on that context. If you then are going to state that children who live in public housing tend to do worse than other children, then you're bringing me in. Then don't expect me to sit quiet and not fight for public housing. The stigma that continues to be put in place and continues to be

1 created needs to be included. Include the
2 possibility that as a child moving from an
3 apartment that is a tenement that is in bad
4 condition to an apartment that is better in public
5 housing that for some reason suddenly the child
6 that is four in that one who is four in NYCHA do
7 worse. I want to make clear that this study
8 raises questions. Questions that should be looked
9 at. But if we're going to look at this, then look
10 at this in a fair way with a study that is going
11 to really take into consideration all of the
12 aspects of what it means to be a resident of
13 public housing. By de facto doesn't make you a
14 failure. By de facto doesn't make you a person
15 that because you live in public housing that you
16 don't have a chance to move forward.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I'm glad
19 you came around in full circle. I'm going to
20 direct the questions to the Furman folks when they
21 come up. I am skeptical of the conclusion. But
22 the question I asked you was with the hypothetical
23 if. That if the factor of someone living in
24 public housing, if you're able to factor out the
25 other things that go along with the demographics

1
2 of people who live in public housing in this city,
3 if the mere fact of living in public housing was
4 resulting a poorer educational outcome for the
5 children living in public housing, then that's a
6 perfectly legitimate thing to do. If there's a
7 stigma attached to it, then the answer is to
8 address that issue so that the problem is removed
9 and the stigma disappears. That was my point.

10 MARGARITA LOPEZ: Let me put it to
11 you this way. If I participate in a study that is
12 designed with the objective of figuring out if
13 public housing is a virus that creates a problem
14 in the education of children, I will be the first
15 one with a sledgehammer in my hand and a hard hat
16 to start demolishing public housing. Because I
17 understand that the purpose of public housing and
18 the context and the philosophy under which it was
19 created was precisely was to advance the
20 possibility for low-income people to move forward
21 on the ladder. If we're going to talk about that,
22 then let's have a fair conversation about it.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Are you
24 saying that you believe the Furman study is
25 flawed?

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2 MARGARITA LOPEZ: In my opinion
3 that study is unacceptable.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Are you
5 saying that as a research tool it's incorrect and
6 it wasn't correctly designed?

7 MARGARITA LOPEZ: What I'm saying
8 is that it's making insinuations in the paper. In
9 the beginning of the paper it insinuates that the
10 housing where people live that had nothing to do
11 with the education of people. But then when you
12 continue reading it, eventually it speaks on the
13 matter that perhaps it fulfilled the opinion of
14 some people that believe that public housing is a
15 characterization of people in silos where poverty
16 is the only thing that exists there with role
17 models that are not good. Role models that they
18 never can have access to because whoever lives
19 there doesn't work and has children like crazy.
20 They don't have role models of people who go to
21 work every day. Today public housing has more
22 than 43% of families that are working families.
23 That's what I'm saying. To put that in here, for
24 me, was offensive. Beyond the questioning of
25 questioning the science behind it, if you want to

1
2 use this as a political tool to attack public
3 housing in order to dismantle public housing, then
4 come and say it to me clearly. But if you want to
5 talk about the educational of children and you
6 want to talk in a fair way about that, then let's
7 do a study really about that. If public housing
8 is a factor that makes means children are not
9 educated appropriately, by all means, let's all of
10 us get together and stop public housing from
11 existing. Because if we are doing that, we should
12 eliminate public housing from the face of the
13 planet.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I just will
15 say, Margarita, it's always stimulating to have
16 you here. The body was a lot more fun when you
17 were around. I wish that when the next panel
18 comes up that you were sitting here and would be
19 able to ask them some of these questions because
20 you are obviously very conversant with the report.
21 I am somewhat skeptical as to the conclusions that
22 I've read. I have not read the report. I've just
23 read the conclusions. I have some real questions
24 about whether or not the factors that lead to poor
25 educational outcomes in the City of New York are

1 limited or relative to public housing. I think
2 that people in that situation live in public
3 housing or private housing and are poor or perhaps
4 have a single parent or many of the other social
5 factors that we've discussed in the past that
6 those tend to lead to poorer educational outcomes.
7 If you factor that out and whether they're living
8 in public housing or private housing may not be
9 relevant. That I think is the point that needs to
10 be understand as to whether the Furman study is
11 correct or not.

13 MARGARITA LOPEZ: If not because I
14 love Councilwoman Mendez representing my district,
15 for one minute I would ask her to leave me her
16 chair then continue.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: We do have
18 term limits.

19 MARGARITA LOPEZ: I should not say
20 what I said, because I don't want to come back.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: We need you
22 where you are right now.

23 MARGARITA LOPEZ: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Council
25 Member Jimmy Vacca of the Bronx.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: First, I do want to say that I admire you so much for your passion and your commitment.

MARGARITA LOPEZ: Thank you sir.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: It is invigorating. My concern, and you did allude to it in your testimony, is that we have NYCHA community centers that I don't think we're using to their full potential. You mentioned about getting college programs there, or partnering with colleges.

MARGARITA LOPEZ: We have them currently.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: You have some. But I see so much more that we could do with City University. I'm looking at adult education. I'm looking at continuing ed for adults. I'm looking at parenting programs. I'm looking at what they call in City University, Kid's College. I do realize that some of these fee-based, but many of them may not be fee-based. I just came from a meeting at the City University Committee of the Council. There are programs for adults 50 and older that are not fee-based. City

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2 University houses them only at City Universities,
3 but I think our community centers in NYCHA can be
4 incubators for those programs. We could have the
5 centers become more of a focal point and bring
6 more people in. Can you look in that direction?

7 MARGARITA LOPEZ: NYCHA welcomes
8 partnerships anywhere we can make them. These
9 universities that we mentioned before have been
10 more than willing to partner with us. Some of you
11 have made the effort to give discretionary dollars
12 to create laboratories for us in terms of computer
13 laboratories. Some of you have given us money for
14 programmatic activities in the developments.
15 These university relationships have been sometimes
16 created by assembly members, senators, congress
17 members, City Council members. NYCHA welcomes all
18 of those partnerships. We are ready to join those
19 partnerships. What I need to clarify for you is
20 that until the federal government earmarks dollars
21 for us to provide the social component that is so
22 critical for NYCHA, we have a problem. I want to
23 invite all of you to help to create that reality
24 again. That the federal government come to agree
25 again that the programs that Council Member Mendez

1 mentioned that were available at the time she was
2 there will be embraced and will be earmarking that
3 money for those programs. That's the problem we
4 have on that. If the issue is not funding and is
5 just partnership and working together, we are
6 ready, willing and able to help to provide the
7 space if that's what's needed. If resources are
8 needed, then we need to work on that and figure
9 out where it will come from. Thank you, Council
10 Member.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.
13 Co-chair Rosie Mendez?

14 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Thank you
15 Chair Jackson. To Council Member Fidler, I'm
16 sorry I'm not as much fun as your former
17 colleague, but that's okay.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I didn't
19 say that, Rosie.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: I tend to
21 agree. Commissioner Lopez, thank you for being
22 here. I have to say first that I'm not in
23 agreement with the Furman study. I think that
24 part of the flawed reasoning in there is it's not
25 taking into consideration, whether it's public

housing or not, communities that naturally exist. Public housing, more often than not, were created in distressed areas where no one wanted to build.

There you have other distressed housing and you have low-income individuals. That is the result and they're just taking a little snapshot as to why maybe some residents of public housing who attend public schools are not doing as well.

However, I want to ask you some questions because with great distinction you represented this district that I now represent and you taught me a lot. You took office in '98 and were in office for eight years until 2005. How many public schools in your district had libraries in them? How many of them were in schools that were near or in public housing?

MARGARITA LOPEZ: When I took office there were none. At the time that I became a council member, I allocated funding to create those libraries in every school in my district. I allocated my discretionary dollars to do that because I considered that the school system that we have in the community needed to have a library in every school to be able to advance the

education of children in a way that was better for that community.

CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Having a library in the school is like an essential tool, but many of your low-performing schools did not have a library when you took office. Is that correct?

MARGARITA LOPEZ: Not only the low-performing ones, but all of them did not have libraries.

CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: All of them?

MARGARITA LOPEZ: The high-performing and the low-performing did not have libraries. I located money for the purpose of developing that because I was convinced that if you have a library inside of the school that will gear to a better outcome.

CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: If we can make a distinction, there is a School District 1 and a School District 2 within the council district. Was there a difference between either one of those school districts?

MARGARITA LOPEZ: I get confused with the numbers. Councilwoman, help me with the

district. School District 1?

CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: It goes from 14th Street to about Delancey Street.

MARGARITA LOPEZ: And district 2 is the one up? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: And then underneath Delancey in the way it's gerrymandered.

MARGARITA LOPEZ: School District 2, in the upper part, the parts that were closer to Park Avenue, two of those schools did not have the library. Two of those schools did not have also enough space for the students to function because the population of children in Manhattan has grown. When I was in the Council, it was when we were getting more people coming back to New York City.

CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: How many of those schools had computers?

MARGARITA LOPEZ: I cannot answer precisely because some of them did, but I don't remember which ones.

CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Was it a few, or was it a lot?

MARGARITA LOPEZ: It was the

beginning in which funding for computers were happening at the time. Very few had computers at the time. Honestly, that period of time was a time at which the Council and Mayor Giuliani was able to put together more funding for computer systems. It was a big effort on the part of the educational system to try to locate money to get that particular equipment because it was important for the skills of the children that needed to be developed.

CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Thank you. I asked you these questions because I think in today's world a library and computers are essential educational tools. Our schools did not have them. Our schools also didn't have science laboratories. So our kids were going into high school without ever walking into a science lab which is required. That's one of the things that I've now been working on. I think when you look at those schools, some of them are located in or near public housing. I just want to thank the Housing Authority because you never distinguish when it comes to services between public housing residents or residents from the surrounding

community. When it comes to employment, under section 3, when it comes to the services at your community centers or at your senior centers, there's not a distinction. I think we all treated things that way this would be a better world and people could get more services. Those are the only questions I have right now.

MARGARITA LOPEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

What role, if any, does NYCHA Social Services Department play if a resident is having problems or is performing poorly at school?

MARGARITA LOPEZ: That's a very delicate situation.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Do you have a department or unit within NYCHA where a resident is having problems or performing poorly in school that you can address that? How do you address that, if you have one at all?

MARGARITA LOPEZ: I'm going to qualify the answer to that question. I need to be very careful how I answer this. And not because I don't want to give the full information to you. But we need to protect privacy. We have a social

1
2 work department that is there to assist any family
3 who needs help. Those families who come to us and
4 request that help, we will give it, no questions
5 asked, in regard to anything they may need help
6 with. We have programs that are some of the
7 programs that I described to you that are offered
8 to all of the residents of the Authority. They
9 are posted. They are given information for people
10 to take advantage of that. If a particular family
11 develops a particular situation where they need
12 assistance, whatever that situation may be and
13 that situation is connected to their tenancy, then
14 we intervene. If it's not connected to their
15 tenancy, we do not--

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [interposing]
17 By tenancy, you mean keeping their unit that they
18 live in? Is that what you mean?

19 MARGARITA LOPEZ: Yes. Or things
20 like paying rent, or a disturbance in the house or
21 a situation where a person needs help to maintain
22 the unit of housing where they are. Because we
23 are not in the business of evicting people. We
24 are in the business of providing housing. Then
25 the social work unit is intended to make sure that

families who live in public housing are fulfilling their responsibility and if they are not fulfilling that responsibility because at a given moment they need social services, then if they engage in an activity that becomes attached to their tenancy, we will intervene without being asked for the services.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Do you keep statistics as to certain categories for an evaluation point of view? Where it may be like 15% dealt with school issues, 15% dealt with issues of family problems or substance abuse or marital problems. Do you keep statistics as far as categories in order to evaluate that particular program?

MARGARITA LOPEZ: We don't keep statistics like that in regard to what I described to you. The statistics that we keep in regards to what I described to you are only and solely connected to tenancy actions. All of these programs have information and statistical data that can be useful for analysis. The department that runs these programs accumulate data because this data demonstrates correlations between

1
2 programs and results versus no programs and needs
3 for the program.

4 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Based on what
5 you've said, if I was a resident of NYCHA and my
6 child was having a problem in school and I reached
7 out to the social services unit?

8 MARGARITA LOPEZ: We would help
9 them.

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You would
11 help them by maybe making referral or something
12 like that?

13 MARGARITA LOPEZ: We will connect
14 them and we will make sure that they get the
15 services. We have partnerships with social
16 service programs outside of NYCHA for all kinds of
17 services.

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: NYCHA
19 recently closed 18 community centers and has
20 proposed a transfer of an additional 15 community
21 centers to DYCD. Recently my understanding is
22 that a couple hundred employees were terminated
23 last Friday from the community centers. Were any
24 student educational programs eliminated as a
25 result of the recent closures? Will any such

1 programs be transferred to DYCD operation?

2 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Identify
3 yourself please.
4

5 HUGH SPENCE: I'm Hugh Spence, the
6 Deputy General Manager of Community Operations.
7 Last year the Housing Authority closed 15 NYCHA-
8 operated community centers citywide. We had
9 proposed to close an additional 19 and with the
10 help of the City Council and some funding, we were
11 able to develop a relationships with DYCD to
12 provide services at NYCHA locations and at the
13 same time to save an additional 11 sites that were
14 scheduled for closure. We have met extensively
15 across the city with the new providers and
16 residents. One of the things that we've heard
17 from our residents were concerns about how the
18 current programs at those locations would be
19 impacted. As we go forward with our plan, which
20 has not been completely perfectly honed, the goal
21 of NYCHA and DYCD is to be able to try to maintain
22 services that were at the sites that already may
23 have been funded. For example, programs such as
24 Partners in Reading, or the child care feeding
25 program we have that's been very successful over

1
2 the last couple of those sites to maintain those
3 services at those locations and where possible to
4 do a wrap-around process with the new provider
5 coming in which is going to provide services for
6 the first year until DYCD has an opportunity to
7 vet an RFP to be able to bring in providers at
8 those locations. On Friday of last week we had
9 200 NYCHA staff layoffs.

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm just
11 trying to seek clarity here. Were any educational
12 programs eliminated as a result of the closings?
13 Yes or no?

14 HUGH SPENCE: Currently we have not
15 eliminated any of our educational programs.
16 Because it's a process that we're going through,
17 programs may have to be moved or transferred, but
18 we have not eliminated any of our educational
19 programs.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: When you say
21 moved or transferred, does that mean moved from
22 one NYCHA community to another location?

23 HUGH SPENCE: They may be.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: May?

25 HUGH SPENCE: Meaning that you

1 really need to look at every site individually.
2 They all have an individual set of circumstances.

3 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I request
4 that whatever occurs, whether or not there is an
5 elimination, and I hope there isn't, or whether or
6 not there is a transferring of venue or even
7 combining a program within the same venue, I would
8 ask that you please communicate that to us
9 immediately through our chair of the Subcommittee
10 on Public Housing Rosie Mendez.

11 MARGARITA LOPEZ: The Chairman
12 Ricardo Morales has no intention to move in that
13 direction at this point. This is not an issue
14 that has been discussed by the board at all. As
15 far as we know from the part of the board, at this
16 moment as we stand today, these programs are not
17 going to be harmed. If that will change, we will
18 more than happy to communicate with you.

19 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I want to
20 thank you all for coming in. Margarita, you were
21 pretty emphatic about not being pleased with the
22 results of the report. In my understanding and
23 reading of the report, their statistics were based
24 on a review of the standardized test scores in
25

English and math and based on some other factors such as attendance, to conclude that fifth graders in the study in 2002-2003, did not do as well. Statistically students that even lived outside of NYCHA developments with the same economic did better. So do you disagree with that conclusion?

MARGARITA LOPEZ: Yes, I do. When you're looking at a child and you are evaluating this child versus this child, the particularities of the conditions of each child need to be looked at. Because different factors have to do with the education of a child. It's not the place where they live, it's the people in which those children are operating in. That goes for every level of society. It's not our apartments. It's not the composition of our unit. It's not where they are located.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: There were some factors that were raised in the report and the report did not reach any definitive conclusions, but they raised several factors, such as whether or not there are appropriated role models, whether or not there are other institutions around NYCHA that give support

services. They raised the issue of maybe the environment of NYCHA developments and in essence there may be activities around NYCHA developments like gangs and other things that have a negative impact. I know as a member of the City Council I've gone into housing developments in my district and the long waits to get the elevator to come downstairs, walking down the stairs in some of the environments was not the most pleasant as far as the smell or urine and other things like that. Do you think that those are all factors that may come into play? Based on all of the things that they've raised in the report, do you think that those factors may contribute to their conclusion that based on the results of the data they evaluated that the NYCHA students that were examined are not doing as well based on a lot of factors that come into play.

MARGARITA LOPEZ: Council Member Jackson, I have visited every single one of the developments of NYCHA.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And I have not?

MARGARITA LOPEZ: No, that's not

1 what I'm saying. I have visited each and every
2 one of them. I'm telling you that each and every
3 one of them is different. Each and every one of
4 them have different situations, conditions and
5 particularities. By communities each and every
6 one of them is different. Some of them are better
7 maintained, better occupied and better localized.
8 You cannot deny that the ones that are in
9 Manhattan are in a better situation than the ones
10 that are in the Far Rockaways because the distance
11 for the people in the Far Rockaways to be able to
12 access services is more difficult than for the
13 people who are in Manhattan. What I am
14 articulating here to you and to the entire Council
15 is that when you look at this issue you cannot
16 make a generalization like the one that was made
17 unless you show to what you are comparing our
18 children. How do I know that the children they
19 are talking about that don't live in public
20 housing are similar to the children that we have?
21 Where did somebody get the idea that the children
22 that live in public housing are children with low
23 role models? Where did they get that idea? Where
24 did that come from? NYCHA has a series of

policies today that make us make sure that people who are engaged drug trafficking, engaged in crime get evicted from our developments. People who are engaged, arrested, or involved in things that they should not be involved in can even be arrested on the campus of our facilities by the laws that have been put in place about trespassing. NYCHA has rules and regulations in our development that if somebody has a family member that engages in criminality and was convicted, that we have to take that family member outside of the family and the rest of the family can stay. We cannot allow sex offenders to live in our facilities. We are the only landlord in this city that is mandated to house victims of domestic violence. Nobody else has that mandate. We have to house those people and rightfully so. The victims of domestic violence need housing to protect their children and their family. When you look at us, you know you need to look at us in a very particular way. If you want to say, for example, that the children of domestic violent victims are going to have the propensity towards violence, you can make that statement. Because statistics show that the

1 children of victims of domestic violence because
2 violators or victims themselves. Then I'm going
3 to conclude that because NYCHA housed domestic
4 violence victims that we are housing future
5 rapists, violators and people who are going to be
6 doing things that they shouldn't. That's what I'm
7 talking about, Council Member. When you try to
8 analyze the healthy existence of public housing,
9 let's analyze it but let's be fair in the way we
10 do it. In the process you can demonize it, you
11 can stigmatize it and you can then get the idea
12 that you need to demolish public housing for the
13 benefit and the health of communities where these
14 buildings exist.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Please,
17 applause and boos are not really warranted here.
18 I appreciate that even though you may be
19 applauding Margarita but if I can accept your
20 applause, then I can accept boos and I don't want
21 to accept either one, if you don't mind. I
22 appreciate your response. You had indicated in
23 your statement that further study is necessary so
24 there's an assumption that NYCHA will be willing
25 to participate if in fact the Furman Center takes

a further deeper look at this particular matter.
I just wanted to mention that that clearly
appeared in your statement that further study
should be considered.

MARGARITA LOPEZ: My opinions is
that the studies are welcome. They can be done.
We will partner with people to look into our
operation and our facilities. We are transparent
in what we do. We partner with people who are
fair with us and respectful to us.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You're not
insinuating that they're not fair are you?

MARGARITA LOPEZ: I believe that
this study was not fair.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You believe
it wasn't. Thank you very much for coming in.
Now we're going to hear from the Furman Center
representative.

CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Before Amy
Schwartz from the Furman Center gives her
testimony, I just want to announce that the next
panel will be Barbara Slatin from PS/MS 188 and
Willie Lewis, a resident from NYCHA.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Please

introduce yourself and you may begin.

AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: Chairman Jackson, Chairman Mendez and all the members of the Committee, I'm honored to be here today to share with you some of our research on the educational outcomes of youth living in NYCHA housing. My name is Amy Ellen Schwartz and I am a professor of Public Policy, Education and Economics at NYU's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service and the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development and I am also the Director of the Institute for Education and Social Policy. The Institute for Education and Social Policy is a joint research center of NYU's Wagner and Steinhardt Schools founded in 1995. IESP brings the talents of a diverse group of NYU faculty, graduate students and research scientists to bear on questions of education and social policy. We are one of the nation's leading academic research centers addressing urban education issues and a substantial amount of our work focuses on New York City Public Schools and students. This project represents a unique collaboration with NYU's

Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy, which is itself a national leader in research related to the public policy aspects of land use, real estate and housing. In New York City there are 180,000 units of public housing, more than in any other city in the United States. These developments house an estimated 130,000 children or about one out of every nine students in New York City's Public Schools. Despite making up a sizable portion of the city's school population there has never been an examination of how those children do in school. For the past several years we have been engaged at research aimed at understanding how housing and schooling are joined. Most recently we undertook a study to better understand how children living in NYCHA housing perform in school. To do so we focused on three primary questions. First, are NYCHA students concentrated in a few schools? If so, do the characteristics of the schools that the children living in public housing attend differ from those of other schools? Secondly, do students living in public housing perform at the same level as students of similar background who

do not live in NYCHA housing? Finally, does the performance of students living in NYCHA housing vary depending on the neighborhood where the public housing is located? To address these questions, we brought together two large detailed datasets. The first from the Department of Education, compiles data on the city's public school students and their schools, including information on the students' demographics, their test scores and attendance rates, as well as the teacher characteristics, pupil/teacher ratio, and the characteristics of other students at their schools during the 2002-03 school year. The second was from the New York City Housing Authority describes the location of all 343 public housing developments in the city. By marrying these two datasets we were able to match a student with his or her school performance and the characteristics of the school he or she attends. What we found was troubling. Even after controlling for differences in race, in gender, in nativity status and school characteristics, fifth grade students living in public housing performed worse on standardized tests than those living

elsewhere. I'm going to go through our results for each of the above questions in a little bit more detail. First of all, before considering student performance, we looked at the distribution of public housing students across the school system. We found that public school students living in NYCHA housing are indeed concentrated in a handful of schools. As an example, we found that 25% of all elementary school students living in NYCHA housing attend just 4% of the city's public elementary schools and half attend just 10%. This pattern of concentration holds at the high school level as well. We also found that the schools attended by students living in NYCHA housing tended to look somewhat different than other schools. NYCHA students attend schools in which their peers are more likely to be poor and more likely to be racial and ethnic minorities. The students in the average schools NYCHA students attend perform worse on standardized tests. Specifically, only 38% of the students in the average school attended by NYCHA students passed the reading exam. Just 41% pass their math exams. In the average school attended by non-NYCHA

students almost 50% pass their reading exams, while nearly 52% passed their math exams.

Unfortunately, research suggests that these differences in classmates will be important because student academic performance is shaped in part by the performance of a student's peers.

Note, however, that the differences in peers are not matched by comparable difference in school resources. Instead, we found only small differences in teacher experience and education in the average school attended by NYCHA students compared the average school attended by non-NYCHA students. The pupil/teacher ratio at the typical school attended by NYCHA students is a little lower than the typical school attended by non-NYCHA students. Next, in considering academic performance, we look at the students' scores on standardized reading and math exams.

Specifically, we examine how fifth graders living in public housing fared compared to their counterparts who were not living in public housing. Even controlling for differences in race, gender, nativity status and the school the students attends, we find that fifth grade

students living in public housing perform significantly worse on math and reading tests than students that live elsewhere. At the high school level we find the gap persists but is a little less pronounced. Public housing students are slightly less likely to take the math Regents exams than otherwise similar students. Among those who take the tests, they are less likely to pass. Specifically, 53% of NYCHA students taking the math Regents exam pass the exam, compared to 60% of other students. Similarly, about 70% of students taking the English Regents exam pass while slightly over 75% of other students pass. Finally, only 55% of the NYCHA students graduate from high school in four years, compared with 61% of their non-NYCHA peers. For a final research question, we wanted to look at whether neighborhood context matters. As you all know, NYCHA housing is located throughout the city. In many cases this means that it's located in middle or upper income neighborhoods, or in neighborhoods in transition. A growing body of research suggests that neighborhoods may be important to shaping academic success, so the students living

in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty may be particularly disadvantaged. And in fact, we found that NYCHA students living in high poverty neighborhoods score lower on standardized tests than NYCHA students living in lower poverty neighborhoods. I must stress that our study was not designed to disentangle the causes of the performance gap. That said, it seems clear that it is worthy of attention. In an era when research and policy debates on public housing tend to be focused on moving residents out of public housing, rather than on the well-being of residents living in public housing, we think these findings should prompt us to once again focus on the experience of the people living in the city's 180,000 units of public housing and those living in the nation's 1.2 million units. At the same time as we look for ways to close the gap in performance between students from different backgrounds, we become increasingly aware that the answers and solutions may lie outside the schoolhouse doors. The education community and the housing community need to come together to better understand the causes of the disparities in

performance. Before turning to remedies, however, it behooves us to more carefully diagnosis the problem. More research is necessary to fully unpack these findings and better understand the factors that contribute to this troubling gap.

The study I've described uses data that is by now several years old. What that means is we can look again at these students and ask whether these disparities persist and have widened or have disappeared. We could bring to bear more sophisticated techniques and longitudinal data to disentangle the causes of poor performance and identify ways to improve. These sorts of studies are possible and I would argue critical. When we began our research looking at the interaction between housing and education we could hardly have imagined it would attract the attention that it has. Clearly, it is important to move out of our silos in order to understand why some students succeed while others don't and to identify and implement policies that close these gaps. We are very grateful to Marilyn Gelber and the Independence Community Foundation for funding the study I've presented today. Let me just say a

couple of things in conclusion. I should say we have no interest at all on stigmatizing children living in NYCHA housing, quite the opposite. We hope to draw attention to their educational needs and to look for ways to address them. As a general matter, it seems our job to look for disparities, raise them and bring them to the attention of policy makers. To the extent that our research finds these significant disparities, as academics we are compelled to share this with policy makers. Finally, I should say that we are as eager as you are, if not more, to replicate this study with more current data, with greater sophistication and are delighted to work with anybody who is interested in helping us think through these issues and trying to pull apart the causes and consequences of unevenness in academic performance. It has been our experience that the Department of Education has been forthcoming and cooperative in helping us by providing data. Obviously a challenge in this is finding the funding to do this research. But I should say, thinking back about a comment made a couple of hours ago, this is not the kind of research that

1
2 is extremely expensive to do. It's not cheap and
3 it's not free but this is not research that is
4 impossible to do if we have the will to find the
5 answers. Thank you for your time. I'm happy to
6 answer any questions you have.

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How much did
8 you spend on this report and research? What would
9 it take to do an updated report? I'm curious.

10 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: Depending on
11 the scope and where you draw the boundaries, I
12 think we probably spent between \$50,000 and
13 \$100,000 to do this report.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And for a
15 more comprehensive report?

16 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: Depending
17 again on boundaries, I'd say \$100,000. My
18 favorite things are first too look at where these
19 kids are now. This was not, as we say in the
20 education world, a value-added study. We didn't
21 ask any of those questions. We'd really love to
22 ask where are these kids five years later. We
23 have the data. I'm sure DOE would be supportive
24 of that. But also to do this again. Is it really
25 different five years later? I'd be happier than

anybody to say in five years we've really changed everything. Easy enough to do. We could do this for multiple grades. This is not rocket science.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How was it determined to do this particular study?

AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: As I said, we have been interested in this nexus between housing and education for a while. We have been doing some other studies related to this and have been looking to try to understand both the causes of poor performance and digging inside the poor performance of some of our kids in school.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Why NYCHA? You could have done apartment buildings versus co-ops or condos versus private homes.

AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: There were several reasons. There are the pragmatic and then there are the ones that are of import. The first is that we're really interested in doing work that will point in a direction of a solution. So it seems to me and seemed to us that this is a tremendous population. This is not a few students. This is a huge group of students. We were able to identify a mechanism, a policy, an

1 intervention that could address these problems,
2 it's an important finding. This would be
3 important. We're not interested in looking at the
4 impact of the configuration of your house, such as
5 how many bedrooms do you have or is it brick or is
6 it wood. I mean, in the end, what we want to
7 understand is are there ways that we can identify
8 solutions. Looking at kids in public housing is
9 identifying one of the biggest populations we
10 have. So in a way you look where the most
11 important problems could potentially be and where
12 you can try to find solutions and make a
13 difference. We have other studies in which we're
14 beginning to look at the school food program
15 because obviously providing nutrition is an
16 important part of what we do as well. We're also
17 interested in more broadly in neighborhoods and
18 this question of what about the availability of
19 things that happen outside of school about
20 libraries, about after school programs. We're
21 doing those studies as well. Would love to come
22 back and talk about those another day.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Obviously,
25 you know this is a pretty controversial issue as

you sat there and listened to opinions about the particular matter.

AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: And I do have to say that a few years when we first tried to get these studies funded, we could not get anybody to provide us the funding because we would go to talk to housing people and they would say the education thing is kind of interesting but it's not what we do. Then you go to the education world and you say we want you to fund this study, and they'd say this housing thing is kind of interesting, but that's not what we do. We went to foundation after foundation and asked them to fund the big scale study that does the whole comprehensive site visits, qualitative work that other people have mentioned. Sign us up. We couldn't get traction. People are very much, in our experience, in one camp or the other. You're housing people or you're education people and you're asking folks to look outside their comfort zone. It's not great to hear people say they didn't think every study I ever did was brilliant. I'm just delighted to be having the conversation. I know all of my colleagues at the institute and at the Furman

Center feel the same way. If what we're doing is raising a conversation and bringing into the fore this problem that might previously have been undercover, well, you know, that feels like our job. Let me turn my colleague, Council Member Lou Fidler of Brooklyn.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a great deal of experience and respect for the Furman Center. I really have to tell you I question the value of this particular study because you indicate that you made no attempt to establish the causes for the performance gap. If your point was that students in public housing are doing more poorly in education, I don't really think I needed a study to know that. The question is why. You cannot then proceed to talk about the importance of this study in terms of crafting remedies without knowing why. You can't go to solutions until you know the causes. You were in the room when I was questioning Margarita Lopez and alluded to it and I think Council Member Vallone was kind of alluding to it, although I think it kind of got lost in the message. You have factored out

1
2 differences in race, gender, nativity status and
3 school characteristics. Can you sit here and say
4 that those are the only factors that should have
5 been filtered out? That would be my first
6 question to you. What about single or two-parent
7 homes? What about economics? What about the
8 learning level of parents? What about parental
9 involvement? We talk about that a lot here. Not
10 having factored out any of those, what's the
11 validity of the conclusion?

12 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: I have a
13 couple of thoughts on that. First of all, you
14 want to understand this as we did, as laying the
15 foundation for a conversation and providing the
16 information that you need to start asking
17 questions. And by no means did we describe, and I
18 don't believe in the brief either, this as the end
19 of the line. There's a lot of really important
20 research and a lot of important policy analysis
21 that we need to know that describes the way the
22 world is. How segregated are our schools? Are
23 our NYCHA students all collected in one set of
24 schools while there a bunch of other kids
25 attending a different set of schools? Is that

1
2 true or not? Because if the answer is that
3 they're all in the schools and it's a lot of
4 mixing and it's really not any kind of segregation
5 or concentration, that's going to point you in a
6 very different direction than if I say that we've
7 got a bunch of schools that are primarily serving
8 the NYCHA students and it's a different set of
9 schools that are serving the kids who are not in
10 NYCHA. I would like to say that we began to pick
11 up the stick at the place that we thought was most
12 important. Also I want to say most important and
13 foundational. Because without this understanding
14 of this set of issues, then you're never going to
15 understand the rest.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I want to
17 get to your comment about whether the students are
18 congregated in a handful of schools in a minute
19 because that was exactly my next line of
20 questioning. But without filtering out all of the
21 other significant factors, is there any legitimacy
22 to this study? Does it matter that a child who
23 might be of a lower economic class living with a
24 single parent who was not a high school graduate
25 who may have other societal issues lives in public

housing or private housing? Are you studying the right question? Should this question not have been are poorer kids, are kids coming from single family households, or what are the factors that lead to a poorer performance? So I understand Margarita's feeling that you're stigmatizing public housing because there may be and there probably is, and I'm trying to be politically correct here, a higher concentration of lower economic class folks living in public housing than in private housing. Is the distinguishing the factor the housing or the economics or the parenting or the parental involvement? Your study doesn't tell me anything because it hasn't answered the questions that I would assume are the most significant factors in education performance.

AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: Let me think of these in a few categories. The first question has to do with whether or not we picked the most interesting or important question. I take your point. There are other really important questions to answer. I understand the frustration with the perhaps limited ambition. What is this, you're pointing at the problem, and you're not telling us

1
2 a solution. I understand that.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I don't
4 think you're pointing at the problem.

5 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: But I think
6 that if you read the report carefully what you
7 will see is that what we are saying is not we know
8 it's because they live in public housing. What
9 we're saying is if you identify this group of
10 children and you look at the kids who live in
11 public housing the truth is that they do earn
12 lower grades. So now the question is can we try
13 to pull apart possible explanations. Are we at
14 the end of the line? Absolutely not. Did we pick
15 up the stick where we thought we could begin to?
16 Yes. Why don't we look at single family homes?
17 Sign me up. Why do we not do this? Because the
18 Department of Education doesn't ask that. I don't
19 know that they would be easily allowed to.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: That's a
21 great segue to the next question.

22 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: I mean there's
23 a series of things that we don't know the answer
24 to. We don't know about parental education. I
25 don't know if any of you have kids in public

1 school. I certainly do. Every time I go to fill
2 out the form to sign my kid up, I go there and I
3 think, so look what they're asking. Isn't that
4 interesting? And some I don't answer because I
5 think it's none of their business and some of them
6 I wonder why they're not asking. This is how we
7 know what we know. Now, in the big scheme of
8 things, could we work with HRA and ask them for
9 data that would match to the schools' data and ask
10 them to do this? Is that technically feasible?
11 Absolutely. Big pain. Not easy to do. That
12 costs a lot of money. These are all doable
13 things. This is not an easy thing to do.

14
15 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: You came to
16 the conclusion that you people in living in NYCHA
17 housing are concentrated in a handful of schools.
18 The Department of Education testified they don't
19 accumulate that information. So how do you know
20 where they're going?

21 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: We spent a
22 heck of a lot of time matching this. It's a
23 geekier conversation perhaps than everybody wants
24 to have. The cliff note version is we have a
25 bunch of data that comes from the Department of

1
2 Education that includes the kids' zip codes. We
3 were able to take this address information, figure
4 out what blocks the kids live on and match it to
5 address data that we coded using GIS systems and
6 matched them based on their address data. Weeks
7 and weeks and weeks of putting together data from
8 disparate sources. This is not something that
9 they hold on to. This is something that we had to
10 find.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: From actual
12 address or from zip codes?

13 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: From address
14 data.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: So the
16 Department of Education provided you with address
17 data for students?

18 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: I'd have to
19 look at exactly what the data is.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I'd be
21 surprised because I know when I've asked for that
22 I'm told by the Department of Education that
23 that's not available and that they will not
24 provide that.

25 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: I think we may

1
2 have block data or something like that. I'd have
3 to look into that. But I'd be happy to come back
4 to you.

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: They don't
6 give you students' names in there. They just give
7 address.

8 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: Absolutely
9 not.

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: If the
11 housing development is across the street from a
12 school is the address is let's say 148th Street
13 and St. Nicholas Avenue, which there's no NYCHA
14 development there. But if all of the kids in that
15 development are attending the school, then you
16 know.

17 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: Absolutely.
18 There was some group of kids who we were really
19 unable to tell if they were in or out. They were
20 just too close.

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So you
22 excluded them.

23 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: We excluded
24 them.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I'm

1 particularly interested in that you're
2 extrapolating that to high school. I know my kids
3 when to one high school and the kid next door went
4 to another one and the kid on the other side of me
5 went to a third one because the Department of
6 Education has utterly and totally dismantled the
7 notion of a neighborhood school when it comes to
8 high schools and probably junior high schools as
9 well. Again, you matched block and lot data to
10 the high schools in the City of New York and you
11 came to that same conclusion?

12
13 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: No, we matched
14 the information on where the kid lives. So we
15 know the block they live on and we can match that.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Their high
17 school?

18 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: We also know
19 where their high school is.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: You can't
21 know where their high school is because there are
22 no zoned high schools.

23 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: No, but I know
24 the high school the child attends.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: So you

1
2 didn't have the name but you had identifying
3 information as to residency and then you sorted
4 that out throughout a myriad of high schools.

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Did they give
6 you the information, the address where the child
7 went to high school but without identifying the
8 name?

9 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: Yes. This is
10 actually how much of the education research goes
11 on. We get files. It's de-identified.

12 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Just for
13 analysis purposes?

14 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: Right. The
15 kid goes to Bronx High School of Science or they
16 go the High School of Environmental Studies or
17 something. You know the high school they attend.
18 We know a bunch of other things about the child.
19 In fact this is how much education research
20 proceeds. That's how we know most of everything
21 about education.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: That is
23 enlightening. I really had not thought you'd be
24 able to get that.

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Council

Member, one second. I just want to frame the timeframe overall for us. There's another hearing here scheduled at 1:30. I'm enjoying the dialogue because it's really diving into the report and how the report was made and analyzed. That's extremely important to understand everything. So I can appreciate that. But clearly we have some residents and leaders here that also wanted to give testimony.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Last sentence and I'm done. I think we are looking at old data here. As it relates to the high school situation I think that data is probably truly outdated because the Bloomberg administration has done so much in the last number of years to dismantle neighborhood high schools, to break down the big schools into little schools. They would say to a positive advantage. Others might quibble. But I think the data in that regard is probably extremely antiquated.

AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: We have an ongoing study that has been funded by the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education to look specifically at

the efficacy of the new small schools in New York City. So I'd be delighted to come back and talk about that as well. Nobody would be happier than we would to come back in six months or a year and talk about what this looked like in 2007. My one last thought would be to say that you all are probably even more familiar than I with the distance between the rhetoric and the reality. I would just encourage you to really look at what it is the report rather than what people say is in the report. Because I think our claim in the report about what we find is considerably more cautious about drawing conclusions that we sort of read about second hand.

CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Thank you.

Thank you, Council Member Fidler for your questions and your restraint on limiting your questions. This is a very interesting dialogue and I personally have a lot of questions, but I'm not going to ask them in the interest of time. I will say this, I think there are things that need to be looked at. Important things like whether they're English proficient, whether their parents are, if it's grandparents. More often than not,

1 children are being raised by their grandparents.
2 And to see whether some of these developments have
3 a NYCHA center and what are the facilities and
4 services in those NYCHA center. So I will be
5 calling you, Ms. Schwartz.
6

7 AMY ELLEN SCHWARTZ: I would love
8 to because we really did try to get that data to
9 look at the services provided across the different
10 units. Because I myself went to one when I was a
11 kid. It was too hard to find. But we'd be
12 delighted to continue that conversation.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: I would ask
14 you to stay and listen to the rest of the
15 testimony. I'm glad to see that NYCHA is still
16 here. Is anyone from DOE here? Yes? Great.
17 Thank you for your testimony. Next is Willie
18 Lewis, a resident of public housing and Barbara
19 Slatin, the principal from PS/MS 188, Manhattan.
20 You can both come on up. Then the next and last
21 panel will be Lisa Donlan from CEC District 1,
22 Gregory Bender from United Neighborhood Houses and
23 Lisa Burriss from Public Housing Residents of the
24 Lower East Side, who is also a tenant and a
25 student in public housing. That will be the next

1
2 panel. Thank you. If you could identify yourself
3 for the record.

4 WILLIE MAE LEWIS: Good afternoon,
5 my name is Willie Mae Lewis. I'm a mother, I'm a
6 grandmother, and I'm also a resident of New York
7 City Housing Authority. I've sat here for the
8 last three hours and listened to all of the
9 testimony about people living in public housing.
10 First of all, I would just like to say that I have
11 two daughters. They're both grown and they both
12 finished college. I raised them in public
13 housing. They didn't go to the schools in my
14 district. One of my children went to school in
15 District 4, and then from there in District 3.
16 St. Nicholas Houses development in Central Harlem,
17 from 127th Street to 131st, from Adam Clayton
18 Boulevard to Frederick Douglass. So it
19 encompasses 14 buildings, 1,523 units and I would
20 say, give or take, when we talk about children, at
21 least about 70,000 if we're going from infancy all
22 the way through to high school. Getting back to
23 my children which I raised in public housing and
24 basically as a single mom, let me just say that it
25 starts in the home first, regardless of where you

live. Whether you're in public housing, a condo, a co-op, or wherever. You have to have rules and regulations. You also have to emphasize and participate. Parental involvement is very important. I went to PTAs. I went to dance recitals. I went to piano recitals. And a lot of times after coming from work, I really did not want to do this. But my children insisted that I come and I wanted them to know that I was interested in their education and their involvement. The oldest one graduated from the University of North Carolina because that's where I'm from. She works for Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical as a manager. My baby daughter graduated from Rutgers University in New Brunswick. The reason I decided to be a president, because I had a lot of help. I went to people to get scholarships. One of my daughters came home one year very excited about going to South Africa. We didn't have any money to go to South Africa. The college was donating a certain amount of money for her to go to South Africa, but it wasn't enough. So through my volunteer of political work throughout the community, I said we

should write a letter. We're going to go to the politicians. Anytime is bad to ask for help, but at Christmastime it's really bad. But we did it. We had faith. The governor of New York State now, Governor Paterson, was the one that helped my daughter with funds to go to South Africa to study abroad for six months. There are a lot of problems. I also work for the Department of Education. I do the attendance for the school that I work at. And attendance is very, very important and very difficult. We have brought our attendance up this year to the 90% level. However, we have a lot of kids who are asthmatic. We have children where their parents are babies having babies. And sometimes they look at the public schools as a babysitter's club. But I feel that any child can learn regardless of where they live. But you have to put time and effort into those children in order to have them to give back and to be what they should be, which is people and citizens of a community and give back, have good jobs, and have a good education. It's not easy. Temporary housing is another problem in a lot of the schools because this is a problem that's not

only in New York City Housing Authority, but you have a lot of schools that are not coming up to the task. Temporary housing children are in and out of schools throughout the school year. You have children that may be in this school for three months and then they leave there and they go to someplace else. And then they go there and then they go someplace else. That's very disturbing to a child's education because there's no stability. You have to have stability with children. We also have children with special needs. A lot of times parents are in denial of that and they refuse to get the help that the child needs. They child may not be in a special needs program all the time. They may get enough education or enough of whatever they need in order to move into general ed. Also, you have some parents that because they can get a check, and I'm making a testimony today. If they get a check from SSI for \$600 and there may not be nothing wrong with the child. The child may have some behavior problems, but as far as academically they're okay. But because they get a check sometimes they want to put these children in a special education class and regress.

That's not good. As far as public housing is concerned, my center was one of the centers that was scheduled to close. Harlem Children's Zone, I don't know if all of you are aware of that, but I started going to some of their meetings and started participating in some of their activities and eventually brought them into the center.

Harlem Children's Zone demands that they have parental involvement. They offer a lot of good programs. They're in my center now. We're still in the process of getting a lot of the permits, both from the Department of Health and also some permit that they need to get from Albany. But the bottom line is that housing before they started closing the centers, they did have programs such as Partners in Reading. They did have technology and computer programs. Believe it or not, even the slowest child in the school can operate a computer. They've very interested and they can do a lot of work with computers. The main thing is school zoning. In elementary schools they have what they call school zoning. You could be living in one block down the street, as this gentleman has said, and you may not be able to go to that

particular school, you'll go to another school. Then there are times when you have a lot of behavior problems and the parents become part of the problem. We need to really involve our parents. I don't know how we're going to do that as far as school, because when we have parent teacher conferences, a lot of parents won't come. A lot of times some of them work and they may be inconvenient. But we try to have it in two sessions where you have a session during the afternoon and you have a session during the evening.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Ms. Lewis, I'm listening to what you're saying. Truly, I totally agree about parent involvement. With respect to this report, I don't know if you've read it, but you've heard the testimony by the authors of the report. Do you have any comments specifically relating to the report or its finding?

WILLIE MAE LEWIS: The testing.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm sorry, the what?

WILLIE MAE LEWIS: They were very

adamant about children being able to pass the test. They scored low on the test.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: The analysis of the study group was that those students in the NYCHA developments that they studied scored lower as far as math and I believe the English tests. Do you have a comment about that? I know we discussed a lot of factors. Even they discuss in their report a lot of factors. They didn't say one contributed to the other. But like in life, there's many factors that are involved. Do you have any comments specifically on the report?

WILLIE MAE LEWIS: The testing part of it, in some instances you have language barriers. We have bilingual teacher that tried to test these kids. In some cases with special need kids they get extra time for testing. Really the testing part of it, it is true in a lot of cases that our students do come up with low testing. But there are reasons for that. You have overcrowded classrooms. You have now with Mayor Bloomberg's policy of the testing that they test to be testing. I feel the reason they're failing a lot of the tests is because they are not getting

the basic things like multiplication tables. With language arts it may be sentence structure. I haven't been in school in a while, but where you process the verb, the noun, the pronoun and these type of things. Mr. Jackson?

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yes, ma'am.

WILLIE MAE LEWIS: You have to sit down with these kids. Because say from daycare when you're supposed to read to your children and you're supposed to do certain things, they missed the basic fundamentals of that and you put them in a classroom. Every child learns differently. You do have some children that really ace those tests. But they look at the majority of the test scores.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Ms. Lewis, I'm sorry, I'm being pressed for time and my counsels and colleagues are asking me to consider the whole context of my timeframe. So I appreciate your testimony.

WILLIE MAE LEWIS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I have to move on.

CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: I just want to thank you for coming back. I know you were

planning to leave, but I thank you for coming back and giving your testimony.

WILLIE MAE LEWIS: Let me just say this and I'm finished. I don't think we should be stigmatized because we live in public housing. There are a lot of difficulties and stuff with that. And it's not just public housing, it's also the schools. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Barbara Slatin, PS/MS 188, Manhattan. Just identify yourself and your position for the record and you may begin.

BARBARA SLATIN: I'm Barbara Slatin, the principal of PS/MS 188. My school is on Houston Street, right in the middle of the Lillian Wald Housing Project. Across the street is the Baruch Housing Project and homeless shelter. I read the report.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Before you begin, what's the population of your school? How many students?

BARBARA SLATIN: We have 425

students.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: What grades?

BARBARA SLATIN: Grades pre-k to eighth. Over 90% are free lunch eligible. We have 65 students in temporary housing. We have 110 students who are English language learners. We have 100 students with IEPs. I would generally say that we're a micro chasm of families with challenges and children with challenges.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm sorry, go ahead. I just wanted to frame it.

BARBARA SLATIN: I'm not surprised that when they aggregated children in the projects because of the poverty rate and the poor schooling that many schools around projects offer that they found these results. I agree with them that neighborhood configuration absolutely matters and resources matter. I really wish that in a new study they would focus on which schools are succeeding. Because they lumped the schools together. But there are schools like ours that are succeeding. Going further into the cause I'm really thinking that we should be looking at what it takes to be successful and how can we make sure

1 we ensure the dollars, the energy and the
2 expectations to do that. So I'm coming from a
3 slightly different place. I've been working with
4 Pedro Nogara at NYU Metro Center. He says that we
5 have standards in reading and math but there
6 really are no standards for what the minimum
7 things that should be in a school and
8 opportunities children should have across the
9 United States. I really think it's about equity
10 of opportunity. It's very nice to deny poor
11 children their fair share and to blame race and
12 poverty and blame the children. Isn't that so
13 much easier? It's blame the victim. The truth
14 is, I believe, and I think we're proving that it's
15 really about equity of opportunity. Sometimes I
16 hear people refer to them as bad schools now. Why
17 should we pour any more money into bad schools?
18 How can you call a school bad when it has children
19 in need? They say that those schools get the
20 Title 1 dollars. Title 1 dollars is \$1,000 per
21 child. Now let me contrast that to a child
22 uptown.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: What do you
25 mean by uptown?

BARBARA SLATIN: On the Upper Eastside.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Because I live Uptown. I live in Washington Heights.

BARBARA SLATIN: Let me contrast that to a non-Title 1 school. First of all, the culture of that school is that all children are expected to learn. That it is their job to get everybody to pass the tests, not to blame them.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: That should be a minimum.

BARBARA SLATIN: Right. Second, the parents feel that they are entitled to have that. In other words, that's what they expect in a school. If a child's having a problem in one of those schools, they hire tutors for \$150 an hour and they help. So a parent could spend \$6,000 a year on tutors. Then there's summer camp for another \$6,000. There's enrichment activities. There's recreation. There's lessons. They could easily be spending \$20,000 extra on their child without the PA funds. And everyone is saying that the Title 1 schools get so much money. They get \$1,000 per child. So let me say that there is not

equity of opportunity. Now when we looked at our school when I first came in, the school was really in shambles. Only 12% of the students were passing math and 18% were passing reading.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How long ago was that?

BARBARA SLATIN: Ten years.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And now?

BARBARA SLATIN: My hair is gray from ten hard years. Now we're above the citywide average. We're over 50% in reading, 65% in math and our middle school students are above the city average. Are you curious why?

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Of course we're curious why. Tell us why.

BARBARA SLATIN: We decided that the school in the project really has to be the hub of building community and offering resources to the families.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So it's a community school?

BARBARA SLATIN: We have this big beautiful school. We're using the community school model. We're open six days a week. We

open at 7 o'clock in the morning and close at 9 o'clock at night. Because we have GED, ESL and this year for our middle school students who were having problems doing their homework and succeeding, we have a scholar's lab open every night from 6 to 8 with a math tutor, a reading tutor and technology so that the children can stay and get their work done. We say to teachers when they give us low grades, we say, okay, what are you going to do to help the child succeed?

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Who's paying for all of those resources?

BARBARA SLATIN: We have begged and borrowed and we've gotten a lot of federal grants because our children are eligible. We have the 21st Century Learning Grant. We have looked for the monies that are available. We have independent partnerships. The average school is funded about \$7,500 a year in New York City. I would say we're spending \$14,000. Dalton is spending \$36,000. This is the time when new monies are coming through our new president and our incentive. I guess what I want to say to you is you need to make sure that the dollars that

1
2 come in go to the children who need it. Until our
3 children have equity in terms of dollars and
4 access to tutors and resources, people have to
5 stop blaming them. They need a fair shake. We
6 gave them a fair shake and our children are
7 performing and getting into great high schools.
8 We're now thinking that we should work on job
9 training and economic development of parents right
10 out of the school. A neighborhood school is a
11 beautiful thing near a project. It's a big
12 beautiful facility that can be opened and can be
13 used to support the family. I just wanted to
14 share because I want to shift the paradigm. We
15 can make a difference in those schools. Dollars
16 are part of it, expectations and a belief that we
17 can. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you for
19 coming in. Clearly, I know the community school
20 model works because when I was President of
21 Community School Board 6 in Northern Manhattan,
22 the Children's Aid Society opened its first
23 community school there, IS 218, up in Washington
24 Heights. It clearly worked. You're talking about
25 servicing the whole family, the whole child and it

takes extra resources to do that. But that's what's necessary today. I want to thank you for coming in.

BARBARA SLATIN: We have Nena Ryan, we have a health center, we have a St. Vincent's Mental Health Center, and we have dental. We just keep trying to figure out what else we can do to help families succeed.

CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you very much.

BARBARA SLATIN: You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: I want to thank you for coming in and giving your testimony. It was very important. We have another hearing waiting to start and two people have generously offered to submit their testimony in writing. So we'll be taking the last person to give testimony, Lisa Donlan from CEC District 1.

LISA DONLAN: My name is Lisa Donlan and I am the President of the Community Education Council for District 1. For those of you who don't know what an education council is, we are the versions of the school boards under male control that are abused, ignored and have

basically no power. So I'm a parent volunteer. I'd like to thank the Public Housing Subcommittee and the Education Committee and especially Chairs Mendez and Jackson for the opportunity to speak to you today. I wanted to talk about the unique policy in place in District 1 schools. They are based on parent choice which is an important mechanism for engaging in empowering parents. The value of which was referred to earlier by Council Member Vann. They strive to increase the economic and social diversity in the public schools of the Lower East Side and the East Villages that are really the subject of the Furman report. In 1991, the Community School Board in District 1 remove the catchments in order to create a controlled choice program that was designed to increase opportunities for equity and decrease racial isolation in our community schools. This was in order to improve the academic outcomes of all of the children in our district. Intended to impede the city's prevalent residential segregation pattern from replicating in our community schools, as referred to in the Furman report when they talk about the issues of zoning, the policy grants all

students in District 1 access to all district schools, while controlling for diversity. A controlled choice program increases equity and diversity as part of the overall pedagogical goals so that our community schools better serve and reflect the whole neighborhood, creating an environment that builds the kind of tolerance over time that learning, working and living together can bring about. In various iterations in 1991, 1993, 1994, and again in 2000, 2002, and 2003, the policy was modified and refined, but the basic premise has remained the same, codifying the following community values. Since 1991, the school of choice policy continues unaltered and allows all families in the district to choose any school for their child. Given that all district schools offer full day pre-k and that continues today under the empowered principals with complete control over their budgets. Both pre-k and kindergarten are considered admission entry points. There is family continuity, which means that siblings are given priority at ever level of admission preference. Academic racial, ethnic and economic diversity is the pedagogical value and

goal behind the controlled choice program. As a school of choice district with no attendance zones, District 1 admissions operate like no other district in New York City. The recent citywide centralized kindergarten admission policy, however, explicitly makes District 1 an exception by centralizing the kindergarten admission policy in District 1 only. Whereas, across the city, kindergarten admissions are being managed by individual principals and schools. We are very gratified that DOE recognizes the uniqueness of District 1 and our admission policy history because we as a community continue to propose to DOE ways to accommodate the citywide policy that would preserve and protect the values and practices previously developed by the District 1 School Board and carried out formally by the district administration, which was dissolved under mayoral control. The recent DOE policy preserves the choice aspect of the District 1 program but has removed the controls. Choice alone will not help us meet our goal of diversity in an increasingly segregated environment. A recent report by the Civil Rights Project at the UCLA

based on federal data from 2006-07 indicates a surge in minority students enrollment with increases in racial segregation of African American and Latino students and a disproportionately large number of students living in poverty. The race neutral blind lotteries that the DOE will use to assign seats in our schools will more than likely give rise to greater segregation in our schools, taking us further from our aim of diversity as a pedagogical value. Both the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the Civil Rights Project at UCLA have argued that using race as a factor, among others, for admissions decisions may still be allowable, even under the Meredith court ruling. However, we're willing to cooperate with the DOE's Office of Student Enrollment to develop a controlled choice program that is based on other socioeconomic markers, such as geography or poverty, since as they said in their testimony, factors such as the type of housing or parental education are considered invasive. We've been joined by a number of out elected officials, ranging from Speaker Silver, Assembly Members Kavanagh and Glick, to Senator Squadron, Manhattan

Borough President Stringer and Council Members Gerson and your own Chair Rosie Mendez, in urging the New York City Department of Education to work with us to reinstate a controlled choice program in District 1. The Community Education Council, District Presidents Council in District 1, a number of concerned parents in District 1 and 3, along with several elected representatives are proposing application of a choice model that controls for poverty based on the Title 1 free and reduced lunch status that is already collected and used in the schools. Currently more than 40 school districts across the U.S., including the Cambridge Public Schools in Massachusetts are using socioeconomic integration to improve the outcomes for children across this nation. With your support such a program could serve as a model for schools across the city as a way to combat the destructive effects of high concentrations of poverty that replicate in our schools, condemning children to a destiny determined by address and a future of hopelessness. Thank you for staying.

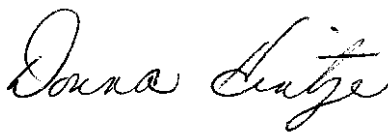
CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: No, thank you for staying. Ms. Schwartz, I wanted to make sure

you got a copy of her testimony with all the references. It really is important information here. I just want to state that I think I've been very lucky in my life. I lived in a warm place that was nice to live in. All the students, my classmates, wanted to come to my house to study and play. I had wonderful teachers, individuals who I'm still in touch with until this day. My parents struggled, but they paid attention and they came to parent/teacher nights. They couldn't take us to all of our evening activities. We were basically playing in the park and doing some other stuff. But they kept an open eye. Lillian Wald, the houses that surround the school that Barbara Slatin is the principal at, was a social planner in the 1800s. That's a combination of urban planners and social workers. Social planners back in the 1800s determined that housing in and of itself was not enough. You needed social services to combat poverty and other social ills. So I think that is what we end this with. Certainly hearing from Barbara Slatin and what she's done in her school and for the children of my district hearing from Lisa Donlan about how parents are

trying to take control and self-determination in our school district. Hearing from Ms. Lewis about someone who was very active in her children's lives and in public housing. And to make sure that services are available now to residents who are there that that is an important thing to have and that we need to work at all levels to ensure that those services continue. So I want to thank everyone for coming. I want to continue our dialogue. And at some point, I would like you to maybe meet with these two incredible people who have a wealth of information. The hearing has come to a close and I want to thank everyone for staying until the end.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Donna Hintze certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.



Signature_____

Date March 18, 2009