

**Testimony of NYC Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña  
on the Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget**

March 21, 2017

Good morning Chair Dromm and all the members of the Education Committee here today. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Mayor de Blasio's Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget as it relates to New York City's public schools. I am joined by Ursulina Ramirez, Chief of Staff and Chief Operating Officer for the New York City Department of Education (DOE), and Raymond Orlando, the DOE's Chief Financial Officer.

I would like to thank Speaker Mark-Viverito, Chairperson Dromm, and all the Members of the City Council for your continued leadership and partnership on behalf of New York City's 1.1 million students. As we move forward, it is important that we work together to fight against the proposed federal budget cuts to education, promote the good work done by our public schools, and support quality public education for all students.

This Administration is committed to ensuring that all students have access to an excellent and equitable education, and I am proud of what we have accomplished so far on behalf of the City's students. Last year's graduation rate is the highest it has ever been, with 72.6 percent of high school students graduating in four years. Our dropout rate is 8.5 percent, the lowest it has ever been. We are also pleased with the results from last year's New York State tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math, where New York City outperformed the rest of the State in ELA results for the first time, and our overall improvement outpaced the rest of the State in both ELA and Math.

While we are pleased with our progress, we know we have a lot more work to do. That's why in the fall of 2015, Mayor Bill de Blasio and I announced Equity and Excellence for All, an agenda that set ambitious goals for New York City schools: by 2026, 80 percent of our students will graduate high school on time and two-thirds of our graduates will be college ready.

The initiatives that make up Equity and Excellence for All address our students' academic, social, and emotional needs—starting with our youngest learners and the first book they successfully read by themselves until they earn their high school diploma and receive a college acceptance letter.

This school year marks the first full year of the implementation of our Equity and Excellence for All agenda, which will be rolled out to all schools citywide over the next several years. There are over 800 schools with at least one Equity and Excellence initiative this year—this number has continued to grow over the course of the year.



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Here are some highlights:

As part of our Universal Literacy initiative, over 100 reading coaches are currently working in elementary schools to ensure that, by the end of second grade, all students will be reading on grade level. Next year, we will have around 140 coaches in our schools.

Teachers are strengthening their math instruction in over 200 elementary, middle, and high schools through our Algebra for All initiative. We're starting this work in the fifth grade, and will ensure that all eighth graders have access to Algebra.

Our College Access for All initiative is making college an achievable expectation for our students. We have eliminated the CUNY application fee for our low-income students, and, for the first time, all high school juniors will take the SAT for free during the school day on April 5. Many of you participated in College Awareness Day in January, and I would like to thank Chairs Dromm and Barron for issuing a proclamation recognizing College Awareness Day. 20,000 middle schoolers are visiting colleges this year, and we're giving families additional supports along the way.

Last year, we saw a record high number of students who took at least one Advanced Placement (AP) exam. I am pleased to say that participation and performance gains were largest for Black and Hispanic students, with an 18 percent increase in the number of Black students passing at least one AP exam, and a 10.8 percent increase in the number of Hispanic students passing at least one AP exam. Our AP for All initiative, which is bringing new AP courses to 63 high schools this year—and will eventually ensure every high school student access to at least five AP classes—will build on this progress.

The Single Shepherd initiative in District 7 in the Bronx and District 23 in Brooklyn is showing promise. This program serves all 16,000 students in 50 schools and provides them with a dedicated counselor or social worker who will guide them on a path to success. Guidance counselors are able to spend more time and be more proactive with their students—as one principal said, time builds relationships and relationships create success.

Last, but not least, through the District-Charter Partnerships program, district and charter schools are coming together to share best practices on specific topics such as instruction for English Language Learners and math instruction, and the sharing goes in both directions.

We also launched an initiative to build collaborative partnerships between schools on shared campuses. This program helps principals find new and innovative ways to share best practices and resources. Under this program participating schools have created parent welcome centers, put college resource centers in place, and hired campus managers to create unified systems and institutions.



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In addition, Renewal Schools throughout the City are making progress:

- At J.H.S. 50 in Brooklyn, Principal Honoroff has leveraged his school's Renewal resources, including additional learning time, to create a championship debate team. The debate program has not only won Citywide tournaments, but it has also sharpened students' critical-thinking skills and helped them perform better on State ELA and Math exams. Since 2014, the school has increased its ELA proficiency by 15 points and continues to show progress among its ELL students.
- Boys and Girls High School in Brooklyn has a new principal who is focused on attracting local students, growing enrollment, increasing the school's graduation rate, and ensuring students are ready for college and meaningful careers. The school recently opened a college and career center, a college advising office, and a parent engagement center, where current and prospective parents can learn about what the school has to offer.

Across all Renewal Schools, we've seen a seven percent graduation rate increase over the last two years. Attendance is up, chronic absenteeism is down, and teachers are developing stronger instructional practices. These schools are receiving clear guidance on the progress they need to make and resources to meet the rigorous but realistic goals, including an additional five hours of expanded learning time. They are working with partner community-based organizations to provide rich after-school programming, and are offering increased professional development for school leaders, teachers, and other school-based staff through coaches and partnerships with institutions of higher education. Additionally, each Renewal School is being transformed into a Community School, offering wraparound services to our students and their families. These schools were neglected for many years, and we know sustainable change takes time. However, we're committed to helping schools build on this progress and continue to improve

Generous funding from the City Council has enabled us to provide intensive restorative justice programming in 25 schools, and we are seeing a decrease in suspensions in these schools. Also, with City Council funding, for the first time our school communities will benefit from the programming and support of a Gender Equity Liaison. We also worked with the Council to supply all middle and high schools with free feminine hygiene products, to expand access to physical education and sports programs—particularly for female students and those who attend smaller schools—and to increase civic engagement, voter registration, and participation among high school students.

With regards to the work of the DOE's LGBTQ Liaison, a position also initially funded by the Council, we recently worked closely with colleagues across our advisory council organizations and other City agencies to review and release updated Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Student guidelines, and to offer training and professional development to more than 2,000 staff members including parent coordinators and family support specialists since August. The Lambda Literary LGBT Writers in Schools program was expanded through the Council's support, and we continue to work to identify, grow, and support the Gay/Straight Alliances in our schools.



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Involving parents has always been a central focus—this continues each and every day across the DOE. We are pleased that our increased emphasis on parent engagement has resulted in significantly more parents attending parent-teacher conferences, participating in parent groups, and running for their local Community Education Council (CEC). CEC elections are underway and we are in the middle of the candidates forums which will culminate with the vote later in the spring. I look forward to welcoming old and new CEC members starting on July 1.

I am also particularly proud of our work to better serve students who are English Language Learners (ELLs). As a former ELL myself, this work is very personal. We currently have 434 bilingual programs in every borough in the City, and recently announced the opening of 68 new bilingual programs in September, including the first-ever bilingual program in Urdu. We are holding native language family engagement conferences in Spanish, Bengali, Arabic, and Mandarin. These conferences give parents an opportunity to take part in workshops and activities in their native language.

We are working with two national experts to improve ELL instruction. In collaboration with Dr. Aida Walqui of WestEd and Generation Ready we are establishing an ELL Leadership Institute for superintendents, principal leadership facilitators, and select principals from 12 districts that explores the role of leadership in providing high-quality teaching and learning for our multilingual learners. We are also partnering with Dr. Nonie Lesaux from the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Language Diversity and Literacy Development Research Group to design an institute to equip schools with tools and knowledge to independently deepen their work with ELLs.

Our commitment to meeting the individual needs of our students with disabilities remains a focus for the DOE and is evidenced by the growth of our ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) Nest, ASD Horizon, and Bilingual Special Education programs. This school year, we opened 28 additional ASD Nest and Horizon sections in existing schools, and seven new schools opened ASD Nest or Horizon programs.

And, to ensure that all students have access to a Gifted and Talented (G&T) program, this year we opened G&T classes in Districts 7, 12, 16, and 23, which did not previously have G&T programs. These programs will continue through middle school.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are also a key part of our strategy to put students on the path to college and careers. To that end, we are investing in 40 new high-quality CTE programs opening this year and across the next two school years, and we are also strengthening our numerous existing programs. In addition, City Council funding has allowed us to significantly expand and strengthen work-based learning opportunities, including paid internships for students enrolled in CTE programs.

We are also implementing several new initiatives this school year to support the academic, social, and emotional needs of students living in temporary housing. We have hired attendance teachers and social workers, and are implementing literacy programs in shelters. Additionally, the City launched a program to provide yellow bus service for students in grades K–6 who reside





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in the Department of Homeless Services shelter system. As part of the program, we have created more than 360 new bus routes serving shelters and commercial hotels throughout the five boroughs, providing service to more than 750 schools.

None of our work would be possible without the truly excellent educators who serve our children. Teachers play a formative role in the lives of their students, and we were pleased to be named a winner by the National Council on Teacher Quality in the first ever Great Districts for Great Teachers initiative. In particular, we were recognized for our work to foster, develop, and support leadership and collaboration across the 77,000 teachers in our system.

Now, I will discuss next year's budget for our schools.

The FY2018 Preliminary Budget includes an allocation of approximately \$31 billion, including \$24.3 billion in operating funds and another \$6.7 billion of education-related pension and debt service funds in FY18. Our funding is a combination of City, State, and federal dollars, with City tax levy dollars making up the largest share at 57 percent, State dollars at 37 percent, and federal dollars at 6 percent.

The Mayor's proposed FY2018 budget for our schools builds on this Administration's progress, and continues the historic investments made in previous years to ensure that students have access to rigorous instruction and non-academic support to boost student achievement, and also makes additional targeted investments in our schools.

Last year, for the first time, our summer programs served high-need second graders. The preliminary budget includes over \$14 million to serve an additional 4,400 second graders in the upcoming summer.

We are investing over \$16 million to provide better and faster internet service. Internet speeds will improve in all school buildings by the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

Since 2009, the State has not met its court-ordered obligations under the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) lawsuit. In this school year alone, New York City public school students have been shortchanged \$1.6 billion in State education funds. Over two years, we raised the Citywide average Fair Student Funding (FSF) level from 88 percent to 91 percent. In addition, we are funding all Renewal and Community Schools at 100 percent of their FSF level and no school in the City is below 87 percent. Next year, we intend to raise the Citywide average to 92.5 percent with no school below 90 percent of their FSF level, a plan that is contingent on additional State funding. And we are committed to getting to 100 percent for all schools by FY21, an accomplishment that can be realized if the State continues its commitment to fulfill the CFE settlement.

While we are confident that we are headed in the right direction, we know there is more hard work ahead. I look forward to partnering with you and building upon this work alongside our educators and families. I thank you for your time and look forward to answering your questions.

*Below are recent stories highlighting DOE initiatives in a number of key areas including Equity and Excellence for All, progress at Renewal Schools, expansion of bilingual programs and efforts to increase gender equity.*

### Equity & Excellence

#### **With more guidance counselors, one Bronx school is no longer merely ‘putting out fires’**

CHALKBEAT – Christina Veiga

February 14, 2017

<http://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2017/02/14/with-more-guidance-counselors-one-bronx-school-is-no-longer-merely-putting-out-fires/>

Nicholas Melendez was always in triage mode.

As the only counselor at The Urban Assembly Bronx Academy of Letters, Melendez was responsible for 600 students in middle and high school. With dozens of hours of required counseling sessions every week, there was only time for the neediest students.

“It constantly felt like I was putting out fires,” he said.

That was before the New York City Department of Education launched Single Shepherd, a program that placed more than 100 additional counselors and social workers in two of the city’s neediest school districts: District 7 in the South Bronx and District 23 in Brooklyn. Both have among the lowest graduation rates in the city; most students are poor and homelessness is prevalent.

The city’s goal is to pair every student in middle and high school in those districts with a dedicated counselor who will work closely with not just students, but also their teachers and families.

The \$15 million-a-year program is only one piece of the city’s larger Equity and Excellence initiative, which has infused schools with extra resources with the ultimate goal of getting more students to graduation. It’s too early to know whether that will happen — or how similar Bronx Letters’ experience is to other schools. But teachers and counselors there say they’re already seeing an impact.

With extra hands on deck, Melendez has time to notice when a student’s grades start to slip. He can counsel students who are still learning English on the possibility of taking state tests in their native language, or schedule a phone call with a family that needs help navigating social services systems — rather than relying on an outside agency that may be too overwhelmed to follow up.

“I feel like we’re serving all the students,” he said.

Nycole Dash became a Single Shepherd counselor at Bronx Letters after working with young people in the nonprofit world. She’s assigned to the freshman class, and makes time to see every student at least once a month.

“It creates almost like a family for these kids, where they have somebody to go to — and it’s a consistent person,” she said.

Dash has already seen that bond pay off. Most school days, Dash said her morning routine includes a knock on the door from a particular student. On a recent visit, the student needed to talk about a tough situation she dealt with over the weekend.

“Normally she was someone who would kind of just keep it to herself and react in class,” Dash said. “But because she’s close with me — she sees me every day — she was able to let out something that she wasn’t able to before.”

Counselors like Dash and Melendez also serve as a resource for teachers when there’s trouble in the classroom.

Klajd Kovaci, who teaches high school history and English, remembered one case in particular. One moment, he was leading a class discussion on politics. The next, a student with special needs was in a frenzy, hurling curse words as he stormed out of class.

Kovaci called for Melendez as the student walked out, and the counselor was able to usher the young man into his office. There, they came up with a plan: Whenever the student felt overwhelmed, he could leave class and cool down by Melendez's side.

Melendez also worked with Kovaci to track the student's behavior and pinpoint what set him off. With Melendez's help, Kovaci agreed to work short breaks into his lectures so the student wouldn't get anxious.

"We have a lot of conversations with teachers to make individual plans for students, which is something we couldn't do before," Melendez said.

In Kovaci's case, the difference has been remarkable. He credits the relationship that counselors have been able to build with their students — and the time counselors can give to teachers who come to them with classroom problems.

"Because their case load is smaller, they actually know who I'm talking about," Kovaci said. "They're able to get to more students."

Often times, that means understanding what's going on in a child's life outside of the school building. When the school realized parents were often reluctant to send their children away for college, counselors helped launch informational sessions at the beginning of the year. That way, families could have conversations and set expectations for their children earlier in the application process.

In return, counselors worked to understand families' needs. For example, if a student needed to stay close to home to help pay bills or take care of family members, counselors could help find the best university settings nearby.

"We want to include the values of the community in the education process," Melendez said. "It's meeting the family and the parent where they are."

### **Literary Coaches Part of City's Goal to Have All Third Graders Reading on Grade Level Within 9 Years**

NY1 -- Lindsey Christ

February 17, 2017

[http://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/education/2017/02/16/literary-coaches-part-of-city-s-goal-to-have-all-third-graders-reading-on-grade-level-within-9-years.html?utm\\_source=Master+Mailing+List&utm\\_campaign=846eced0fe-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2017\\_02\\_17&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_23e3b96952-846eced0fe-75479549](http://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/education/2017/02/16/literary-coaches-part-of-city-s-goal-to-have-all-third-graders-reading-on-grade-level-within-9-years.html?utm_source=Master+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=846eced0fe-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_02_17&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_23e3b96952-846eced0fe-75479549)

The city is deploying special coaches to every elementary school to train teachers on how to get the youngest students reading. NY1's Lindsey Christ filed the following report.

Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña visited PS 375 in Crown Heights, Brooklyn Thursday to read one of her favorite books: *The Big Orange Splot*.

Sitting next to the chancellor was one of the school's newest staff members, a reading coach. It's part of Mayor Bill de Blasio's goal of having all third graders reading on grade level within nine years. Right now, only about 40 percent of them are on track.

The reading coaches are the biggest investment toward that goal. The first 103 coaches were hired last spring and deployed to the South Bronx and Central Brooklyn, districts with the lowest reading scores. The chancellor vows to have a coach in every elementary school citywide by September 2018.

"We wanted to start smaller so we could see what was working, what needed to be improved. We're really in a good place right now," Fariña said.

The coaches' role is to help teachers improve how they teach kids to read.

"A coach is not only someone who knows good literacy and can work with students, but also, how do you work with adults who already think they are doing a good job?" Fariña said.

Lisa Pena-Draper was a second-grade teacher for 10 years at another Brooklyn school before she was hired to be one of the first reading coaches.

"I go in and I visit classrooms to watch the teachers and see their strengths and their weaknesses, and then I meet with teachers about what I saw, and we pick certain things that they want to work on," she said.

Thirty thousand students in kindergarten through second grade are now receiving the reading enrichment, at a cost of \$16.4 million. It will cost \$75 million a year once the program expands citywide.

The chancellor announced Thursday the city will also invest millions in buying books for the youngest readers. The cost will be more than \$100 per student to buy the books that Fariña read as an elementary school teacher and still loves reading as chancellor.

### **Public School Students Work to Develop Prototype for Intrepid Mobile App**

NY1 – Lindsey Christ

March 7, 2017

<http://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/education/2017/03/7/public-school-students-work-to-develop-prototype-for-intrepid-mobile-app.html>

The Intrepid Museum wants to build a mobile app -- but instead of hiring digital developers, the brainstorming began with public school students. Our education reporter, Lindsey Christ, has the story:

On a deck of the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum on Tuesday, 225 young computer scientists worked intently.

Their goal: to come up with a rough prototype of a mobile app to serve museum visitors.

It was a hackathon - an event for techies to collaborate in solving a problem or creating something, under a tight deadline.

But in this case, the competitors were kids.

"I felt really proud of myself. And I feel like even though it's really hard, I was able to do it," said Afsana Rahman, of the Young Women's Leadership School in Astoria, Queens.

The city's Department of Education began hosting student hackathons a few years ago, but this was the largest - and most ambitious - yet. The event was part of Mayor de Blasio's \$80 million initiative to get all students studying computer science citywide.

"The goal of Computer Science for All is to bring computer science to students who have been traditionally left out of computer science - girls and black and Latino students. So these are all students studying computer science in their schools and it's really representative of the city. We have schools in all five boroughs, from Brownsville to Staten Island," said Debbie Marcus, head of computer science for the city's Department of Education.

The students toured the Intrepid museum -- then each team had 90 minutes to develop an idea, build a prototype and prepare a pitch. Volunteers from the tech industry served as judges.

"Who is the user?" one judge asked.

"I think the user is international visitors and kids," the student replied.

"Research shows that more diverse teams are more productive, so it's not just a good idea to include everyone from a moral standpoint, it also makes good sense," said one of the judges, Kate Edmundson, a web developer.

The Education Department wants to host more hackathons in places like the Intrepid so students can get a sense of how their computer science work could have real-world applications.

Several of the winning designs created smartphone games out of the Intrepid's exhibits.

The young hackers say they learned a lot - and not just about app development.

"I learned new things about my classmates," said Maxwell Newlandu, a student at IS 392 in Brooklyn.

"I didn't know that Udes, for example, Udes is very good at coding. She's not just a girly-girl make-up and nails. She's very fun to work with."

**This Bronx elementary school is changing the way it teaches math — and it's showing results** CHALKBEAT —

Christina Veiga

March 10, 2017

<http://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2017/03/10/this-bronx-elementary-school-is-changing-the-way-it-teaches-math-and-its-showing-results/>

Fifth-grader Darmairys Henriquez used a green marker to write her answer to a math problem on a big poster board. Her classmates at P.S. 294 stopped by in small gaggles to take a look at her work.

The question:  $3 + 6 - 2 \times 4$ .

The students were learning how to use grouping and the order of operations to solve a math equation, but it would be at least 30 minutes before teacher Nicole Lent would stand in front of the class and reveal the answer.

This approach is part of a citywide effort to make sure all students pass algebra by the end of ninth grade — paving the way for college and high-demand careers.

In 67 elementary schools across the city, including P.S. 294, fifth-grade math instruction has been “departmentalized” just like in middle or high school. Instead of sticking with the same classroom teacher for every subject — reading, writing, math and science — students have a teacher responsible only for math instruction.

The idea behind the city's Algebra for All initiative is to have the most dedicated and effective teachers focus on this critical subject area, an approach backed by research.

“There's still a lot of anxiety among elementary teachers about teaching math, and they still cling to the textbook,” said Clara Hemphill, who coauthored a report about math anxiety for the New School's Center for New York City Affairs. “One way to break through that is for an elementary school to pick a teacher who really loves math and [have him or her] teach all the students in fifth grade.”

With a solid foundation in elementary school, the city hopes students will be ready to tackle math in middle school — and higher-level courses such as calculus in high school.

“It is a building block for college readiness,” said Matt Larson, president of National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

P.S. 294 in the Bronx has embraced the model, with specialized math teachers in not just fifth grade, but starting in third grade. One teacher serves as a coach for her fellow math instructors, allowing the strongest teachers to share what works and problem-solve when lessons go wrong.

Along with departmentalization, P.S. 294 launched a whole new way of teaching math, using a method that encourages students to engage in discussions the same way they might debate literary themes in a book club.

“In a lot of schools, literacy takes the forefront,” said Principal Daniel Russo. “What we do here is try to build the strongest, most inquisitive, abstract mathematicians we can.”

First, students try a problem on their own, and then debate it with their classmates, defending their answers or changing their minds entirely based on the input of their peers.

With her classmates gathered around, Darmairys began her defense: “So what I did was I added,” she said, describing her approach. She added parentheses around one part of the equation so it read  $3 + (6-2) \times 4$ .

“I got a total of 28,” she said. “I’m ready for questions and comments.”

That was the cue for her classmates to jump in. A boy who came to a different answer — 1 — was the first to speak up.

“You were supposed to just get 1, because you didn’t really need parentheses,” he said. “I thought it was just simple. You were just supposed to add.”

Lent had been floating around the room with a clipboard, but now she stopped by Darmairys’s group to listen in. She asked a few leading questions, like “Do I really need parentheses?” But Lent stopped short of providing any answers, even when her students came up with wrong responses. (The answer, by the way, was 1).

Instead, the students were left to explore the possible solutions and methods together. Eventually, one boy noticed his classmates came to different conclusions depending on where they placed their parentheses in the equation.

From the outside, Lent’s teaching seemed largely invisible. But everything was carefully curated, from the type of problem students were asked to solve to the students who were asked to present their particular approaches.

“It’s a lot of thinking on your feet,” she said. “You’re always looking for what is going to bring the most discussion.”

Class had started with a problem that was intentionally different from anything they had seen before. Lent looked over their shoulders as they worked, marking on her clipboard groups of students who used different strategies to come to different conclusions. Next she chose students to present their work, picking those who had some parts correct but demonstrated different misconceptions.

Lent said this kind of teaching “did not happen overnight.” But she “always felt more comfortable” teaching math, and passionate about sharing it with students.

P.S. 294 was already using the model, along with “departmentalized” math teachers, when the city announced its Algebra for All initiative. The school joined the program to take advantage of extra training and resources. Teachers involved in Algebra for All receive at least 17 days of training, and P.S. 294 landed a city grant to pay for materials and professional development sessions tailored to the school’s needs after Lent noticed teachers needed help teaching fractions and algebra. Lent said the trainings were instrumental.

“It changed my way of thinking,” she said. “I always thought you had to teach the easiest way to just get an answer, and that is not the case. It really opened up my mind to thinking about the how and why.”

P.S. 294 overhauled its math instruction three years ago and “departmentalized” last year for the first time. Their first round of test results suggest the new approach is paying off.

In Lent’s class, 23 percent of students have a disability, 35 percent are current or former English Language Learners and 29 percent live in temporary housing. Another 19 percent have repeated a grade.

Yet the school’s students outperformed city and district averages on last year’s state math tests, with 53 percent of students passing, compared with 40 percent across the city. Students who are learning English — typically among the lowest-performing subgroup — improved their scores by 9 percentage points.

In the high-stakes environment that schools operate under, Russo hopes schools like his will encourage other principals to try new approaches to math. He understands the pressures well: P.S. 294 opened in the place of a school that was phased-out after struggling for more than a decade.

“If I don’t know for sure that this model is going to push my scores and my children, I’m afraid to try it, because I have so much to lose,” he said. “I think that when the Algebra for All schools come out with some data that’s trending a little bit stronger, that will pique the interest of more schools.”

Russo admits it takes the right teachers and leaders to make an approach like theirs work. The Department of Education has made departmentalization optional at elementary schools. So far, about 400 teachers across the city have gotten professional training to encourage the same kind of strategies that are in place at P.S. 294.

“We’re really focused on helping teachers understand the content and giving teachers ... strategies to teach the content,” said Carol Mosesson-Teig, senior director of mathematics for the department. “We want to make sure that kids have a sense that they belong they belong in the math classroom.”

### **New York City Expands Elementary School Literacy Program**

WSJ – Leslie Brody

March 19, 2017

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-york-city-expands-elementary-school-literacy-program-1489944916?tesla=y>

New York City officials plan to more than double the number of literacy coaches in elementary schools next fall in a push to get children reading on grade level by the end of second grade.

In the coming school year the city Education Department aims to have about 243 coaches, up from 103 today, working in 306 schools, up from the current 107. The coaches have been deployed in high-poverty districts with low scores on third-grade reading tests for the first time this school year.

“This is a game changer for our young learners,” New York City Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña said.

The mayor set a goal of 100% literacy in 2026 when announcing the coaching initiative in September 2015. Skeptics say it will be hard to meet that target without reducing class size, improving quality among teachers, providing more services for special-needs children and establishing a stronger curricula.

Many teachers have welcomed the help, along with a donation of children’s books for classroom libraries.

Literacy coaches have been assigned to observe instruction in kindergarten through second grade, give teachers feedback and provide model lessons.

An Education Department spokesman said that in the 2017-18 school year, coaches are expected to reach about 75,000 children, at a projected cost of about \$42 million.

Now, coaches are in districts 9 and 10 in the Bronx, and districts 17 and 32 in Brooklyn. The expansion would bring coaches to the remaining elementary schools in the Bronx, districts 5 and 6 in Upper Manhattan and districts 16, 18, 19 and 23 in eastern Brooklyn.

By fall 2018, the city plans to have a coach in each of the roughly 800 elementary schools, at an annual cost of \$75 million.

### **Renewal Schools**

#### **EXCLUSIVE: Renewal of Promise, Renewal Schools program, shows marked progress**

DAILY NEWS - Ben Chapman

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/education/mayor-embattled-renewal-schools-program-shows-marked-progress-article-1.2961052>

January 31, 2017

Troubled public high schools participating in the city’s costly Renewal Schools program managed better graduation rates last year, city Education Department officials said Tuesday.

The Renewal Schools program is Mayor de Blasio's signature effort for fixing troubled public schools, and its total cost is estimated at more than \$400 million.

The program has drawn criticism for achieving mixed results despite a sky-high price tag. But now Education Department officials have produced some good news.

Preliminary graduation rates provided by the city for the 31 high schools in the program increased to an average of 59% in 2016 — up from 54.5% in 2015 and 52.1% in 2014, when de Blasio kicked off the effort.

Twenty of the 31 schools showed improved graduation rates compared to 2015; eleven schools posted declines.

Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña praised the schools' overall progress, which far outpaced gains made by high schools outside of the program in the same period.

"I congratulate these students and their teachers for the hard work they've put in," Fariña said. "We know that there is a lot more work to do, and we are laser-focused on continuing to improve."

Although the Renewal Schools' graduation rates are up, they are still well below the city average of 70.5% in 2015, the most recent year for which a citywide grad rate is available.

And city data shows enrollment at the Renewal high schools also shrank to 18,479 in 2016 — down from 20,233 in 2015, 23,624 in 2014 and 27,271 in 2013, before the Renewal program began.

Education Department officials said the enrollment reductions were planned to facilitate the creation of new schools in particular buildings.

Many Renewal schools have encountered changes in leadership and direction since the program began, including Boys and Girls High School in Bedford-Stuyvesant, where city officials in January shelved a plan to put another school into the building after families protested.

The city's new data shows the 2016 grad rate at Boys and Girls leapt to 57.5% in 2016, up from 52.8% in 2015 and 42.9% in 2014.

Principal Grecian Harrison, who took over Boys and Girls following the abrupt departure of former leader Michael Wiltshire in June, said the rising grad rate is proof that Brooklyn's oldest public high school is on the right track.

"I've always said that the historic Boys and Girls is a school on the rise," Grecian said. "We are building on this progress."

De Blasio's Renewal Schools program targets participating schools with a range of supports that include added hours of instruction, extra teacher training and increased social services for students.

### **Boys and Girls High School Is On the Rise, Principal Says**

DNA INFO - Camille Bautista

<https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20170201/bed-stuy/grecian-harrison-boys-and-girls-high-school>

February 1, 2017

Once nicknamed the "pride and joy of Bed-Stuy," Boys and Girls High School has seen its share of struggles over the years through principal turnover, low enrollment and academic strain.

But the Fulton Street school is "on the rise," according to new interim acting principal Grecian Harrison who is seeking to return it to its glory days with a variety of new initiatives and campus collaborations.

The high school was tapped by the city as a Renewal School for its recent underperformance. Since her arrival in July 2016, Harrison said she has sought to "change the perception" outsiders may have of Boys and Girls in partnership with two other schools that share the four-story building at 1700 Fulton St.



Harrison worked at Boys and Girls as a teacher under Principal Frank Mickens, who was credited by alumni with turning around the troubled school after taking over in 1986.

Most recently, she served as assistant principal at Alfred E. Smith Career and Technical Education High School for 13 years.

“It was just really paying homage and respect to the legacy,” Harrison said of her return.

“The historic Boys and Girls High School, as I like to call it, is one that has a really deep history, where there are so many stakeholders that have a vested and continue to have a vested interest in the success of the school... so I wanted to make sure that I did it justice.”

Whether it's by implementing a new, campus-wide College and Career Readiness Center this spring, or expanding the school's theater program that helped feature two students in Spike Lee's upcoming “She's Gotta Have It” series, the school is on the move, she explained.

DNAinfo New York sat down with Harrison to discuss the school's new initiatives, challenges she faces and plans for Boys and Girls' future. This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

What were your main goals when you first took over?

Even though there had been so many things that had been written about Boys and Girls High School, I noticed that they had made some strides and the graduation rate had increased. [42 percent in 2013-14 to 50 percent in 2014-15, per city figures.]

When I first came in, the projected enrollment was maybe from 276 students and we're currently at 386, and our numbers are growing in terms of the number of students that have applied to our school. So what that told me is that there is a growing interest in Boys and Girls High School and that I think that people sometimes take that for granted.

The other thing I started to do when I came in was really take a good look at data in terms of how our students were performing overall. I wanted to get some ideas about what the needs were, in terms of how we were running our extended program which provides opportunities for more time on-task with students. ...With our PM school classes, they run until approximately 6 p.m. and we have our Saturday Academy which goes until 1 p.m.

What are some challenges you experienced?

We've have some challenges with staffing. I think because I came to the school so late, and then trying to really make sure that we have opportunities to find teachers to fill some of the vacancies that we've had. Our support centers have been working hard with us to ensure that we were able to do so.

Can you describe some initiatives you recently implemented at the school?

I've been working extremely hard with my attendance committee and right now Boys and Girls High School is running to date at least 86 percent attendance, so we are excited about that... there's been a lot of push in terms of communications that have gone out to families to also get them to understand how important that is.

We have invited parents in for college workshops on social and emotional needs. I'm happy to say we are getting ready to open our Boys and Girls High School Wellness and Meditation Center. This is a place where students will be able to engage in yoga, meditation, relaxation, and it's all a part of our wellness initiative — and that's not only to educate the mind, but the body and the soul.

We are also creating a College and Career Readiness Center that is going to be a shared center with all three schools. We will have a dedicated counselor and support staff that will work with students directly on college and post-secondary studies. It's not just for seniors, we are starting in the ninth grade.

Some people talk about a stigma associated with Boys and Girls, of it being unsafe and struggling. What would you say to them?

I would say that I would encourage them to visit our school, to talk to some of our student athletes, to talk to some members of our student council who will share with them their experiences, and our student advisory.

And that was something I started this year, where our ninth graders as well as our 12th graders are currently engaged in an advisory structure which ensures that one time every day they have a caring adult that is with them that is providing resources for them, our guidance and support staff use it as a time to bring in guest speakers.

You have so many young people that are persevering and that experience so many different challenges that we don't hear about the AP environmental course that they may be taking or the experience they had when they visited the African-American museum. We have CTE classes in engineering, architectural drafting, computer technology.

I think that the perception sometimes goes back to when we're talking about a huge school, large numbers and right now, Boys and Girls High School compared to years ago, when it was almost 4,000, is a much smaller place. And I think it's one of the things that you see from the staff. It's a dedicated staff that's really close knit, they're very close, and we know our kids.

As a school that is co-located with two others, how do you collaborate with other principals?

We have definitely become a team. One of the first things that we are partnering with is the College and Career Readiness Center, but in addition we've discussed a lot of activities that we would like to see happen, such as how to increase parent engagement across the board to really work and think about activities that may change people's perception of Boys and Girls.

I think that the more that we're doing this and we're working as a campus, it helps us and our students as well as our stakeholders to see that this is indeed a family.

This is a community-based school so there's a lot of resources that we share, and in going forward we're also looking to share resources starting with guidance counselors but also advance placement classes and other things.

What are your goals for the future?

I would like to bring more advancement placement classes, but I would also like to bring in more classes around the arts. For AP classes, currently we have environmental science, I'm looking to bring in ELA and History.

For the arts, we have theater, but by the time I came in my music teacher had left and there was no art teacher so it has been a little challenging. So right now I'm looking to hire an art or music teacher.

What is one important thing you want people to know about the high school?

I want them to know that Boys and Girls High School is definitely on the rise. That we are a school that has moved and is showing improvements towards our increased enrollment, our increase in overall attendance, as well as performance of our students.

I think that over the last few years this school has really persevered through some adversities and I think the staff, the alumni, the community advisory board, and our students, our wonderful, phenomenal students are the reason for a lot of these changes.

It's the staple of the Bedford-Stuyvesant community. I mean, no matter what, no matter where you go, anyone and everyone knows about Boys and Girls High School.

### **The Renewal-School Gamble**

THE ATLANTIC – Meredith Kolodner

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2017/02/the-renewal-school-gamble/515985/>

February 9, 2017

The zone for Public School 67 was drawn exclusively around the sprawling Ingersoll public-housing complex, but as children trudge into the building, they can see the tips of the gleaming glass luxury towers that are reshaping the skyline around them in downtown Brooklyn.

No children from those luxury condos have enrolled in P.S. 67. It has roughly 225 students; 99 percent are low-income. The school has struggled to stem sliding enrollment and to address poor safety ratings by parents and test scores that were among the worst in the city.

In 2012, city officials became convinced that the school could not improve and began the process of shutting it down.

But community members rallied to keep it open, in part because of its auspicious beginnings—it was the first public school for black students in Brooklyn, opening the same year that slavery ended in New York, 1827—and in part because parents weren't convinced that a new school would solve old problems.

So in the fall of 2015, P.S. 67 began the year with yet another new principal, this time as part of the city's "Renewal" program, a last-ditch effort to rescue failing schools. And now the community's wary acquiescence to yet another effort to "fix" the school has morphed into something more elusive: hope.

Enrollment has stabilized, attendance has improved, and parents say they feel welcome in the building.

"This principal is the best we've had in a long time, but it's more than that," said John Rondon, who has taught at P.S. 67 for 27 years. "There's something that's changed internally. The fear we're going to be closed down isn't there as much. Somebody said to us, 'you're valuable,' and the kids feel that."

Last year, 23 percent of the school's third-graders passed the state reading test, up from 0 percent in 2014. School staff members, in part, credit the improved academics and optimism to the targeted extra resources that come with being a Renewal school, a sort of supercharged version of a "community school."

Where the model works, it offers hope for other struggling schools in poor and disadvantaged neighborhoods, not just in New York, but nationally.

The stakes have become extremely high. If the Renewal program succeeds, it could become a prototype for improvement elsewhere. Until recently, education reform has prioritized the growth of charter schools, enforcement of strict discipline, and high-stakes testing. As those ideas have produced less progress than anticipated, community-school advocates hope their model can take over the mantle of reform.

The country has approximately 5,000 community schools, according to the National Center for Community Schools. The model is based on the idea that diagnosing the social and emotional needs of children and their families and then alleviating barriers such as hunger, mental-health issues, and poor eyesight will make academic success more attainable. Research has shown that the model can be successful, although, as in New York, progress in some places has been uneven.

"Academic failure doesn't happen in a vacuum ... Students don't fail by themselves; it's a whole culture of failure that happens," said the New York City Schools chancellor, Carmen Fariña, explaining why she mandated that all Renewals had to become community schools. "I wouldn't have imagined doing this without community schools as a model."

In New York City, Renewal schools got extra funding—about \$547 million over three years for 94 schools—to provide more services, such as an extra hour of instruction for all students and additional mental-health services. And each school has been paired with a community group "partner" to help serve various needs.

But some supporters of the community-school model worry that the Renewal schools' rushed and uneven progress in New York may tarnish the whole concept.

"I'm very frustrated ... and I'm very fearful of what will happen with this program," said Michael Mulgrew, the president

of the United Federation of Teachers and a backer of community schools. “The funding by the city is there; it’s now more about the management system.”

Indeed, out of the original 94 Renewal schools named in 2014, Mayor Bill de Blasio’s administration has already closed three and merged five others into non-Renewal schools, arguing that families have “better options” in those communities. Schools were chosen for the Renewal program because they were in the bottom 5 percent of lowest-performing schools in the state, among other unwanted distinctions. On average, in the selected schools, less than 8 percent of children were reading at grade level in 2015; 88 percent of students were black or Latino; and students were also poorer, more likely to have learning disabilities, and less likely to be fluent in English than students at other city schools.

Even by Renewal school standards, the children at P.S. 67 have a very high level of need. According to the principal, Kyesha Jackson, close to one in five children there is homeless. The school’s neighborhood has the highest rate of gun violence in Brooklyn. Children are dropped off and picked up inside the school’s cafeteria or auditorium, rather than the schoolyard, at parents’ request. Almost 30 percent have some kind of disability.

Jackson was made principal only five days before the start of school in 2015, having never met her community partner, Tal Bar-Zemer, a community-school director from the nonprofit group Partnership with Children. By a stroke of rare good luck, their shotgun relationship worked.

Children have noticed the change in the school.

“There’s less fighting, better security, and we have more stuff,” said Mariah Mayweather, who is in fifth grade. “It makes you want to come to school more.”

Jackson was new to the community-school model, but having spent 16 years teaching in another high-needs Brooklyn school, she found it made sense to her.

“I know we would not have had as much progress without the community-school model,” Jackson said. “There were so many issues that just with an [assistant principal] and a guidance counselor, we would not have been able to handle it.”

Jackson said that Bar-Zemer, who focuses on attendance issues and parent involvement, has played an important role in the school’s progress. Her presence and the division of labor mean that Jackson can concentrate on the academic and instructional issues. She visits every classroom every day, which allows her to get to know the kids and give the teachers immediate feedback.

“We try to help decrease the stresses and remove the barriers to learning,” Bar-Zemer said. “In high-needs schools, teachers are the first line of defense; you’ll see them bringing in coats and food, trying to find legal help for families. We take the onus off of them so they can teach.”

As to the infusion of funding and services, Bar-Zemer said, “Equity isn’t equality. Some kids and schools need more stuff, because they have less stuff.”

Partnership with Children also provides a full-time social worker and two part-time interns. They help connect families that have legal, housing or medical issues to resources, and they run courses in each classroom on topics like how to deal with strong emotions.

They also see 14 children weekly in individual counseling and 24 in groups where they use art or other activities to work through difficult issues and trauma.

The counseling “is as important as the academic piece. We have been able to develop a culture where they learn that there are people here to support them,” Jackson said. “They can reach out through words and art rather than belittling others and lashing out. And they are expected to do so.”

Bar-Zemer said a “student sorter” program given to all the Renewal schools has also been very useful. She can filter student attendance by commute time, past attendance, counseling status, and class. One pattern they found was that attendance is higher across the board on the days the school has its art program.

“It allows us to look at problems and also celebrate successes,” Jackson said.

But not all the Renewal schools have made the same progress as P.S. 67.

By the program’s own measurements, a number of schools have not succeeded. More than one-third of the schools haven’t met even half of their own goals for attendance, academic progress, and other improvements. Among its 31 high schools, graduation rates increased in 21 and decreased in eight last year over 2015 (two stayed the same).

Community-school advocates blame the failures on the rollout and management, not the program itself. To begin with, not all the principals in the schools dubbed Renewal were convinced of the community-school model. Some new principals had no idea what a community school was. And not all of the superintendents who did the hiring fully understood what was required in a community school.

In addition, because the 86 current Renewal schools are spread among 27 different superintendents, the average superintendent has just two or three Renewal schools among the roughly 50 he or she oversees.

And the rollout has been undeniably messy. For example, it wasn’t until this past August, more than a year after the program began, that the city held its first meeting between principals and community-school directors to discuss the most effective ways to build a community school.

That lack of coordination has played out at the school level, too. At one school in the Bronx, for example, the community partner and the principal didn’t meet until the first day of school last year. The crush of the first weeks of school and the tensions that ensued meant that community staffers were not in place to lead the extra hour of learning time until November. And no mental-health services were available in the school until January.

At the citywide level, the Education Department’s separate silos for the superintendents and the Office of Renewal Schools have also had an impact. Some principals say they have received missives from superintendents that conflicted—or weren’t coordinated—with directives from the Office of Renewal Schools.

Early last fall, for example, each Renewal school received word that they should hold a “state of the school” event in late September and invite parents, community members, and elected officials. But each school was also told, by a different office, that they must hold a family night in September as a way to build family and community involvement. School leaders, completely overwhelmed, protested, and eventually the two events were combined.

Fariña acknowledges that there have been unanticipated problems. “With any new programs, there are going to be bumps in the road,” she said.

“From the very beginning we focused on writing and literacy in particular,” said Fariña, who was a teacher for 22 years. “If I had to change one thing right now, I would say I wish we had done the same thing with math.

“One of the changes we made is clearer lines of hierarchy,” she added, “because superintendents really own these schools now, which they didn’t in the beginning. I think the schools not making as much of a success are the ones where part of the structure fell apart.”

In addition to the coordination issues, educators and some community groups say there has not been enough systematic attention paid to improving instruction. Parent and community groups such as the Coalition for Educational Justice fought to get expert teachers into the schools, but the agreement came too late to recruit enough teachers for all the schools in the program’s first year.

This year, however, there are 241 model teachers in the schools, which several principals say has helped enormously—especially since teacher turnover is high in challenging schools.

School experts had expected higher turnover in the Renewal schools as teachers who were a poor fit cycled out. But at some schools, it wasn’t the long-term teachers who left. At a dozen of the Renewal schools, at least half of the teachers newly hired in 2015-16 didn’t come back this past fall.

City officials say that getting the right leadership in place has been the most important step to getting the schools on the road to improvement. Indeed, close to half of the original principals have been replaced.

Officials are also working to give more guidance about the use of the extra hour of learning time. “We’ve learned that working with individual communities to implement it works better” than simply providing the extra hour without much guidance, Horowitz said. “Lesson learned, and this is something we could have adapted from the start.”

But advocates’ biggest fears center on whether the progress that has been made will be recognized so that the program can continue.

“The timeline for academic turnaround and attendance improvement is very short,” said Robin Veenstra-VanderWeele, the chief strategy officer at Partnership with Children. “In the court of public opinion, a few points increase in attendance and reading scores is going to look incremental, and since it is hard to create other standardized measurements, we’re not measuring anything else.”

P.S. 154 in the South Bronx is another Renewal school that struggled for years, was almost closed, and is now improving. Alison Coviello taught there for 12 years before becoming principal in 2012. That year, on the annual schools survey, only 13 percent of teachers said that order and discipline were maintained.

Coviello’s first move was to try to change the school’s culture by instituting some new morning procedures. They began using a single entry point and walking children to their classrooms, so they at least knew who was in the building.

That was only the beginning. Coviello also instituted morning meetings and designated that a staff member be on call at all times if a classroom teacher felt they couldn’t handle a disruption. Things didn’t change overnight, but four years later, children no longer run through the halls, adults no longer scream at students, and children are engaged in classrooms. Last year, 27 percent of children passed the state English exam, up from 5 percent in 2013.

“We wouldn’t be able to go into the academic work without these other things in place,” Coviello said.

The school now has a full-time asthma manager, through the Renewal program, who has helped improve family health and school attendance. She not only treats patients, but she also goes into homes to assess risk factors. Like some other Renewal schools, P.S. 154 found that asthma was a big reason for absences, as children were kept home when they were sick or when their parents were too ill to take them to school.

And then there are housing issues. The heat and hot water went out during the coldest weekend in January at the Mitchel Houses, where the majority of the children live. Attendance plummeted that Monday as children who were unable to bathe, get clean clothes, or sleep properly stayed home.

P.S. 154’s community partner, the YMCA, provides nine staff members, who work as teaching assistants in every kindergarten, first- and second-grade classroom.

Like Jackson, Coviello said the school couldn’t have improved as much as it has without the community-school services. And like other teachers and principals at several Renewal schools, Coviello and her team say that it was the belief that they could improve that made the key difference.

“It was the first time at this school that anyone came with the lens of ‘What’s going well and how can we support it?’ instead of looking for what’s wrong,” said Coviello. “The paradigm of support instead of shutting down—it’s huge. I can’t even put into words what it did for us and our morale.”

### **Criticized at home, city's Renewal program seen as statewide model**

POLITICO NY – Eliza Shapiro

<http://www.politico.com/states/new-york/albany/story/2017/02/criticized-at-home-citys-renewal-program-still-seen-as-statewide-model-109477>

February 10, 2017

Mayor Bill de Blasio's \$400 million program aimed at improving nearly 100 struggling schools has been criticized by charter school advocates, editorial boards, elected officials, and union bosses alike. But despite questions at home about the effectiveness of the 3-year-old program, leaders of troubled school districts across the state are looking to the Renewal program as a model.

Later Friday, about 30 superintendents and school turnaround staff from Rochester, Troy, Syracuse, Yonkers and Buffalo — districts with large numbers of low-performing schools — will visit six Renewal schools in Brooklyn and Queens that have shown improvement. The visits are part of a conference aimed at sharing the program's best practices statewide.

Schools chancellor Carmen Fariña has made collaboration between city schools the defining philosophy of her tenure, and said that work would now be expanded statewide.

"The Renewal School program is on the right track and we're seeing important progress," she said in a statement. "Best practices are meant to be shared, and we're excited to highlight our progress and welcome colleagues from across the State."

The city Department of Education held a similar event in the fall for pre-kindergarten providers across the country to highlight its successful universal pre-K program. But the Renewal program is more politically fraught than de Blasio's pre-K initiative. While education officials have noted that graduation rates, attendance rates and standardized test scores have risen at many of the 86 Renewal schools, many other schools have shown either little improvement or have slid backward.

The city has already or is planning to close 16 of the original schools in the program. Fariña and others have stressed that many of the Renewal schools have been under-performing for decades, and that the current administration inherited crises in some of these facilities.

In addition, de Blasio has struggled to find local public support for the Renewal initiative, even among his usual allies. In a recent interview, United Federation of Teachers president Michael Mulgrew said his members are "just walking out" of Renewals that aren't improving, and said principals haven't been adequately trained in the struggling schools. Still, Mulgrew said, "we do have Renewal schools that are moving forward."

Ernie Logan, president of the city's principal's union, has been a critic of the program, as have Public Advocate Letitia James, former Board of Regents chancellor Merryl Tisch and others.

The fact that school leaders from across the state are looking to New York City's school turnaround program for inspiration for their own districts demonstrates that the city still remains ahead of other urban districts on the issue.

"New York City is doing what perhaps other [districts] are not doing: investing in those schools that are facing difficulties," Yonkers superintendent EdwinQuezada said in an interview.

Aimee Horowitz, the director of the Renewal program, said the initiative is "absolutely a model" for other districts.

The Renewal program's elevation to statewide school improvement model also shows, crucially, that the state education apparatus continues to be supportive of the city's school turnaround efforts.

Fariña and state education commissioner MaryEllen Elia have a close relationship, and share a similar philosophy on school improvement — namely, that it takes years of incremental change to fix a long-struggling school.

Elia has been supportive of the Renewal program in the past, and Fariña has said Elia considers it a statewide model. When the State Education Department threatened to put a struggling Renewal school under a third party receiver late last year, the city simply moved to close it instead. The city and state have already agreed on a monitor to oversee the closing of that school, JHS 162 in the Bronx.

Friday's conference, dubbed "building on promising practices," was not organized by the State Education Department, but was based on a similar event the department held about receivership schools last year.

Educators will visit August Martin High School, Richmond Hill High School in Queens, and JHS 80, MS 363, Urban Scholars Community School and P.S. 154 in the Bronx. Each school will showcase a different turnaround strategy: Richmond Hill High School, for example, has a new student data tracking system, and P.S. 154 has adopted a curriculum that bridges academics with social-emotional learning.

In interviews, administrators from the visiting districts said they were eager to bring lessons from the Renewal program home.

Elizabeth Mascitti-Miller, who oversees Rochester's struggling schools, said she was looking for strategies to drive down chronic absenteeism and address mental health needs among low-income children. David Mauricio, a schools chief in Buffalo's education department, said the city will begin compiling best practices for turnaround on its website.

The Renewal program is facing a major deadline at the end of this academic year, making State Education Department support for the program all the more crucial for the de Blasio administration.

The mayor vowed to assess the program at the end of three years — meaning this coming summer — to see which schools improved substantively and which didn't. Schools that didn't meet improvement benchmarks will be considered for closure or consolidation. De Blasio has been sharply critical of former mayor Michael Bloomberg for closing scores of under-performing schools during his tenure.

**This Harlem school has one of the highest dropout rates in New York City. Meet the principal working to turn it around.**

CHALKBEAT – Alex Zimmerman

<http://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2017/02/17/this-harlem-school-has-one-of-the-highest-dropout-rates-in-new-york-city-meet-the-principal-working-to-turn-it-around/>

February 17, 2017

Just two months after becoming principal, Geralda Valcin's plan to reduce her school's dropout rate landed her in a parking lot at Rikers Island.

One of her students at the Coalition School for Social Change had been incarcerated, so she made the trip — with a care package of clean t-shirts and socks in tow — to convince the jail's staff to enroll him in a U.S. history class, one of the only courses he needed to earn a diploma.

“The principal at Rikers was like, ‘You really came up here to do this?’” Valcin recalls. “It fell on deaf ears.”

The jail wouldn't let her visit the student or place him in the class Valcin requested, but that was only part of the reason for the trip. “He totally appreciated us for it,” she said. After his release about six months later, the senior returned to school and is on track to graduate this year.

Valcin chalks this up as a success story, but acknowledges she has many other students who need that type of support. At her Harlem school, more than a quarter of the ninth-graders who started in 2012 dropped out at some point during their high school careers, meaning they left without enrolling in another school. Only a handful of other traditional high schools in New York City had higher dropout rates, according to new statistics.

Valcin, who became principal last March after more than five years as assistant principal at Bronx High School for Law and Community Service, says she's ready for the challenge.

She has spent much of the past year reinforcing systems to identify students early who are at risk of dropping out, and working with her school's nonprofit partner to intervene. And the stakes are high: Coalition is one of 86 schools in the city's “Renewal” program for low-performers, which offers schools extra social services and academic support, but which must show signs of progress in return.



Though her previous school wasn't in the program, it also struggled with low graduation rates. It was "pretty much in the same predicament," she said. That school boosted graduation rates by almost 20 points during her tenure, eventually besting the current citywide average of 72 percent.

Though graduation rates at her new school have started to climb, Valcin isn't sanguine about the work ahead of her. For one thing, her students — roughly 92 percent of whom are black or Hispanic — often arrive far behind grade-level. Three-quarters come from poor families; 35 percent have disabilities.

Valcin isn't willing to speculate about why Coalition's dropout rate is higher than other schools with similarly high-need populations, and is careful not to assign blame. "The numbers spoke for themselves," she said. "Coalition hasn't graduated 50 percent of its students in six years or more. A lot of the work probably wasn't happening."

Soon after arriving, she launched a "Saturday academy" to help students stay on track and prepare for the state's exit exams, and began carefully watching students who had attendance or disciplinary problems early on. "If that pattern begins, you're almost doomed," Valcin said.

That's why, before students start classes in the fall, school staff review their middle school records and conduct home visits, so they can talk about previous problems before they crop up again.

"From the beginning of the year, we have highlighted a cohort of kids that without significant additional support wouldn't cross the finish line," said Derek Anello, a program director at Partnership with Children, the school's nonprofit community partner. "We're starting with ninth-graders before they're even in the building."

The school zooms in on students who don't earn passing grades during the first few months of school, and offers extra academic help. (Valcin keeps a color-coded spreadsheet on her desk that tracks student progress toward graduation.)

If a student is showing up late — or not at all — they'll likely get a knock on their door, sometimes from Valcin herself, or from a staff member at Partnership with Children. And if they're routinely showing up late to class due to an extra-long commute, school officials might help the family find a school that's closer to home.

City officials are expecting those efforts to produce significant results this year. Under the benchmarks assigned to the school through the Renewal program, its graduation rate should increase to 63 percent this school year, up from 46 percent. The education department considers graduation rates in decisions about whether to close or merge schools in the program.

Partnership with Children's Anello is optimistic about meeting that goal partly because of Valcin's embrace of his community organization. "Not every principal allows the [nonprofit partner] to be their right hand," he added. "That's not consistent across Renewal schools."

But the school faces strong headwinds that make it hard to attract students who are more likely to graduate, including intense academic segregation. Among last year's ninth-graders, for instance, fewer than five students had passed either their eighth-grade math or reading tests.

The school's inclusion in the Renewal program, historically low graduation rate, and sagging enrollment have also signaled to prospective families that the school doesn't have a strong track record.

In fact, Valcin has been reluctant to aggressively market the school. "I don't want to go on the street and say, 'Hey send your kids to this school' given the condition we're in currently."

But she's banking on this year's graduation rate changing that calculation.

"The day after graduation, I'll be on the corners passing out fliers," she said.

## **Bronx School Hopes Flight Simulators Help Students' Interest in Science and Math Take Off**

NY1 – Lindsey Christ

March 17, 2017

<http://www.nyl.com/nyc/all-boroughs/education/2017/03/17/bronx-school-hopes-flight-simulators-help-students--interest-in-science-and-math-take-off.html>

It's an idea gaining altitude in city schools: getting kids to hone their science and math skill by learning what it's like to fly a plane on flight simulators like the ones pilots use. NY1's Lindsey Christ filed the following report.

A 12-year-old is flying over the coast of Long Island while sitting in a Bronx classroom.

At the Leaders of Tomorrow public middle school, a teacher's lounge is now the Aviation Room.

Students are learning to fly on four new flight simulators, not to become pilots, but as a way to learn STEM, science, technology, engineering and math.

A donor gave \$20,000 to buy the simulators, made by a company called STEMPilot. A seventh-grade science teacher was trained on incorporating them into the curriculum.

Thirty students have been studying with them twice a week since September, learning concepts like how to chart locations on graphs.. and the science of flight.

"We looked for kids who had an interest in math and science," said Sean Licata, principal at Leaders of Tomorrow. "So it wasn't just kids who think these are video games, because they're a lot more than that."

Leaders of Tomorrow has been identified as one of the city's most struggling schools. Just 7 percent of students passed the state math test last year.

"It's not like the other classes. It's hands-on," said one student.

The principal hopes the aviation program will help. He'd like to expand it to serve all his students.

"I'd love a big room filled with tons of flight simulators that was like a flight aviation class," Licata said.

The room is decorated with photos of famous aviators.

"For me, it was very important that our kids would see people who looked like them in aviation. But when you go back historically and look at aviation, it is not a very multicultural industry," Licata said.

But they were able to find black and Hispanic and female role models.

Getting girls involved with science is another goal.

"I actually thought it was going to be boring. And it looked really hard. But then I started to like it," said one female student.

The flight simulators are landing in schools all over the city. StemPILOT equipment is now in 27 schools, spanning all five boroughs.

### **Bilingual Expansion**

#### **Bilingual programs for students learning English to open in city schools**

NY Daily News – Laura Dimon

February 28, 2017

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/bilingual-programs-kids-learning-english-open-schools-article-1.2985150>

Bienvenido. Dobro pozhalovat. Welcome.

A whopping 68 new dual-language and transitional bilingual programs will open in city schools this September, Chancellor Carmen Fariña said Tuesday.

The \$1.1 million, citywide project will include 39 dual-language programs and 29 transitional bilingual programs for kids learning English.

“As long as we’re going to be a nation of immigrants, which I think New York will always be, then I think this is one of the things we hold holy,” Fariña said at a press conference at Manhattan Bridges High School to announce the programs.

Fariña has been criticized for providing too few resources for English-language learners, who make up nearly 13% of city students and lag native English speakers on some measures of academic achievement.

The new programs include lessons in Urdu, the first time that classes in the official language of Pakistan have been offered in the city schools.

The city’s 1.1 million school kids speak roughly 180 different languages at home, according to the city Education Department.

### **City to expand dual language, bilingual education programs**

Politico – Eliza Shapiro

February 28, 2017

<http://www.politico.com/states/new-york/city-hall/story/2017/02/city-to-expand-dual-language-bilingual-programs-109937>

New York City will spend \$1.1 million to significantly expand its dual language and bilingual education programs starting this fall, part of city schools chancellor Carmen Fariña’s goal of increasing opportunities for students who are learning English or who want to learn a second language.

Fariña announced the expansion at Manhattan Bridges High School in Manhattan on Tuesday. There will be 68 new dual language and transitional bilingual education programs starting this fall, including 14 programs in city high schools, which have typically not had bilingual programs. The city is also adding a dual language program in Urdu for the first time.

While Fariña has overseen the creation of many new dual language programs over the last three years, new data showing declining graduation rates for English language learners have presented an urgent new issue for Fariña.

Even as graduation rates increase for many city students, fewer older students learning English graduated high school last year compared to years prior, and more of those at-risk students are dropping out of high school.

Fariña, a first generation immigrant from Spain who learned English in the city’s parochial schools, has said she wants to redouble her focus on helping high school students still learning English. Fariña said Tuesday she hopes the new bilingual programs in high schools will help reverse the negative trend for English language learners.

“They will absolutely help, and that’s one of the reasons we’re doing it,” she said.

She said many high school students learning English are recent immigrants, and that some of the students at Manhattan Bridges, where many of the students come from Spanish-speaking countries, had only been in the United States for three months.

When asked if the city hoped to integrate its deeply segregated schools by offering dual language programs as an incentive for parents to enroll their students in public schools, Fariña demurred.

“Certainly it would not be my first reason for doing it,” she said. “My first reason is to make sure as many students as possible in New York City can speak two, three, even four languages.”

English language learners can request a spot in either dual language or bilingual programs in addition to receiving existing services for students learning English.

The new programs will be sited in 66 schools, mostly in Brooklyn and Queens. Schools operating new dual language programs will receive \$20,000 planning grants, and schools with new bilingual programs will get \$10,000 grants. The initiatives are partially funded through the federal Title III program.

Fariña said she was not concerned about funding cuts to the program under President Donald Trump's administration. "New York is committed," she said.

Recruiting teachers who are fluent in several languages remains a "very big concern," Fariña said, and the city is working with the United Federation of Teachers to recruit more dual language teachers.

The Department of Education will have 507 bilingual programs in school as of this fall, and Fariña has already opened 90 new programs over the last three years.

### **Dozens of new programs to open across City Schools in September**

NY1 -- Lindsey Christ

February 28, 2017

<http://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/education/2017/02/28/dozens-of-new-bilingual-programs-to-open-across-city-schools-in-september.html>

Nearly 70 bilingual classes from Arabic to Russian are coming to some city schools.

The Education Department says 66 schools across the five boroughs will take part in the dual language and transitional bilingual programs.

Officials say it's the largest expansion of the program since 2010.

"The graduation rates of the students in dual language and transitional bilingual tends to be higher. Our gap is closing, so if what we really want is educated citizens of tomorrow, this is one of the ways to go," said Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña.

Officials say 90 bilingual programs have opened across the city in the last three years.

There will be more than 500 programs in place by September.

## **Gender Equity**

### **Meet NYC's First-Ever Gender Equity Coordinator for Public Schools**

DNA INFO -- Amy Zimmer

February 27, 2017

<https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20170227/upper-west-side/kimberly-shannon-gender-equity-nyc-schools>

MANHATTAN — Kimberly Shannon, the Department of Education's recently hired, first-ever gender equity coordinator, has a long list of issues she plans to tackle, from gender-based violence and pregnant or parenting students to boosting representation in career technical programs or STEM classes.

Shannon is also charged with figuring out ways to better support and empower girls, transgender students and gender non-conforming students — particularly students of color, students with disabilities and students in temporary housing — in the city's 1,800 schools.

The position was created in partnership with City Council Speaker Melissa Mark --Viverito's Young Women's Initiative.

"I'm building partnerships with community-based organizations, other city agencies and DOE employees and parents," said Shannon, who hit the ground running about two months ago, bringing workshops into schools and focusing on programs that promote access and gender equity.

As President Trump's administration has moved away from ensuring strong protections for transgender students, recently rescinding federal guidelines that allowed transgender students to use the bathrooms that matched their gender identity,

the DOE has been moving in the opposite direction with the new position for Shannon, who will work closely with the DOE's liaison for LGBTQ students.

"The greatest need for my role is focusing on the most marginalized populations. That's something we're committed to at the DOE," Shannon said. "I've been really moved at how many organizations and schools are eager to work with me."

She's teamed up with middle and high school peer educators from the NYC Healthy Relationship Academy, run by the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, to help create a full-day training for guidance counselors and social workers on intimate partner violence.

"The peer educators do great work in schools and connect with students on a deep level," Shannon said. "We talked not only about emotional abuse but also technological abuse. That's why it's important to bring in the peer educators. Things are evolving every day with how technology is used."

Shannon — who previously served as the deputy director of education and research for the New York State Association of School Business Officials — is exploring ways to create more mentorship opportunities for girls, transgender and gender non-conforming students.

She's been working with the Office of Postsecondary Readiness on how to encourage these students to look at non-traditional career technical education programs, which currently draw a disproportionately-male population.

She's also hosting a women's history panel next month at the Ed Department's Tweed headquarters where experts will speak about the accomplishments of under-recognized women and transgender individuals.

Joseph Cimpian, associate professor of economics and education policy at NYU Steinhardt, whose research focuses on gender equity, was pleased to hear about the DOE's new hire and hoped that Shannon's work could be a model for other cities.

He was hopeful that her job would be able to address some of the issues related to bullying and emotional distress for transgender students.

He said he also hoped she would focus on the gender achievement gap that starts early and lays the foundation for girls avoiding STEM careers.

Cimpian's research, looking at test scores and teachers' perceptions, found that the achievement gap starts widening after kindergarten, when teachers — female ones more than male ones — often underrate girls' abilities.

"Because of that, girls are falling behind," Cimpian said. "The teachers may not be aware of some of the biases they have."

Many female teachers of younger students might have a personal phobia of math, which they consciously or unconsciously transfer to their students, Cimpian said.

"We probably need to raise the level of math knowledge and confidence of early education teachers," Cimpian said. "That would go a long way in helping gender equity."

### **Education Dept. requires city school staff to address transgender students by their preferred pronouns**

DAILY NEWS – Ben Chapman

March 2, 2016

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/education/nyc-requires-schools-transgender-students-chosen-pronouns-article-1.2986453>

School staff are required to address city transgender students using the pronouns the kids prefer, according to updated guidelines educators issued this week.

The pronoun directive is one of many contained in a 10-page Education Department memo on transgender kids for use by school staff, students and families. The new rules expand on a single page of protections the department first published in 2014.

The guidelines come after President Trump revoked federal protections for transgender students and underscored a previous mandate that the kids must be permitted to use public school bathrooms that align with their gender identities.

The rules describe the conditions for using “non-binary” — masculine or feminine — pronouns.

“It is important to note that for students who are gender-nonconforming or who do not prescribe to the gender binary, they may prefer gender-neutral pronouns such as ‘they,’ ‘ze,’ or other pronouns,” the memo states. It also includes information about how to protect transgender and gender-nonconforming kids from bullying.

“It is important for school staff, students and parents to be aware that transgender and gender-nonconforming students may be at a higher risk for peer ostracism, victimization, and bullying because of bias and/or the possibility of misunderstanding and lack of knowledge about their lives,” the rules say.

The memo is the latest support for transgender and LGBT students in city schools, in a process begun under the de Blasio administration. Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña hired the public schools’ first lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community liaison, Jared Fox, in 2016 and the city schools’ first gender-equity coordinator, Kimberly Shannon, in 2017.

Fox said the updated rules resulted from meetings with more than 3,000 city educators, parents and students in his first year on the job.

“It’s about a safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment,” Fox said. “It’s really hard to concentrate on English or math or social studies when you don’t feel like you belong.”

The guidelines also include a glossary of appropriate terms for use in schools such as cisgender, which is defined as “an adjective describing a person whose gender identity corresponds to their assigned sex at birth.”



TESTIMONY OF  
THE UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

BEFORE THE  
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

REGARDING THE FY2018 EDUCATION EXPENSE PLAN

MARCH 21, 2017

Good afternoon. My name is Carmen Alvarez. I'm the Vice President for Special Education at the United Federation of Teachers. I'd like to begin by thanking Daniel Dromm and the Education Committee for holding this hearing and ensuring that important budget issues involving our neighborhood public schools get the attention they deserve. On behalf of the UFT, I also want to thank Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Finance Committee Chair Julissa Ferreras and the entire City Council for its support and advocacy on behalf of our members and students.

My testimony today focuses on five programs that make a real difference to our students. We hope you will support these initiatives in the upcoming city budget.

Before I address specifics in the budget, it's incumbent upon me to discuss the national scene. As you're aware, we're facing a huge change in the nation's education policy, and we will need to take steps to protect our public schools and our students. The Trump administration has made it clear that it is not a friend of public schools. The destructive words emanating from the White House and its allies, which malign public education, immigrants, people of color and the LGBTQ community, are antithetical to every American principle.

#### PROTECT PUBLIC EDUCATION

Many Americans are appalled by the actions of the Trump administration, which is tearing apart immigrant families, rolling back the rights of women and the LGBTQ community, and threatening to take away health insurance from 24 million Americans. Our neighborhood public schools are now squarely in the right wing's crosshairs, and the threats we face are very real.

Billionaire Betsy DeVos, now Secretary of Education, spent her career stripping tax dollars from Michigan's public schools to finance for-profit charter schools. She has generously donated to political campaigns of those who support the diversion of public funds to private school voucher programs and tax credit vouchers. She has also financed similar attacks on public schools here in New York State.

President Donald Trump last week took the first step to gut funding for our public schools and to promote charters and private and religious schools. The Trump administration is seeking to cut \$9.2

billion — or 13.5 percent — from the Education Department's budget, a dramatic downsizing that would reduce or eliminate after-school programs and aid to low-income and first-generation college students. More than \$1.2 billion alone would be cut from the federal government's community schools initiative, called the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, which provides enrichment, tutoring and other academic services to students before and after school.

Despite the steep cuts, the proposal would fulfill a major Trump campaign promise: an unprecedented federal investment in so-called "school choice," including the expansion of charter schools and publicly funded private and parochial school options. It includes a \$168 million increase for Charter Schools Program grants, which fund the expansion of charter schools, boosting the program by about half. And it proposes a new \$250 million private school choice program, which would likely allow families to use public funds to help pay for private schools. It would also increase a \$15 billion allocation of Title I funds for poor students by \$1 billion, encouraging school districts to adopt "student-based budgeting" systems that allow "federal, state and local funding to follow the student to the public school of his or her choice."

What's more, the New York State Senate GOP has also taken a page out of the Trump/DeVos playbook by proposing a budget package that would divert millions from public schools, sending that taxpayer money to corporate charter operators instead. That's on top of their plan to eliminate the cap on charter schools, increase rent aid and give them more access to co-location space in city schools, all the while not proposing a single measure to hold charter schools accountable or require them to accept and keep all children. The Senate's actions would essentially create a Wild West of unregulated charter schools across the state.

We've run the numbers. New York City's public schools could lose as much as \$140 million in federal funding under Trump's budget proposals, and an additional \$243 million if the NYS Senate GOP gets its way. Those are losses that our public schools can't afford. It's worth noting that the State Assembly's one-house budget package takes the opposite approach and includes a plan to expand and enhance the millionaire's tax, a fair-share proposal that would bring billions of dollars in additional revenue to the state — a plan the UFT wholeheartedly supports. Not only that, but the Assembly's package also smartly includes significant accountability and transparency measures for charter schools, as well as a call for equitable enrollment.

With so much of what we believe in at risk, we cannot afford to stand by or idly watch. To keep our public schools well-funded and educationally sound, we need to prevent the Trump/DeVos privatization agenda from gaining a foothold in the state. The UFT stands firmly opposed to the Senate budget resolution, and our members have been calling and faxing Senate Republicans all week to voice their displeasure. Our members have also been on the front lines of demonstrations and social media campaigns against Trump's policies ever since he took office.

We ask that the Council stand with us and support policies that protect our students, our families and our professions. We must fight the redistribution of tax dollars from public schools to fund corporate charter special interests and school vouchers. We ask that you help us fight for legislation to protect public funds by increasing the transparency and accountability of charter schools, and for charter equity legislation that requires taxpayer-funded charters to accept and keep the same number of high-needs students as our district public schools. We must also ensure that our schools remain sanctuaries for our most vulnerable children including immigrants, children with special needs, homeless students and children who identify as LGBTQ.



The Trump/DeVos supporters are once again trying to label all of our public schools as failing. It is past time we say, "Nonsense!" and stop letting proponents of privatization frame the discussion. We know miracles happen every day in our classrooms, thanks to the hard work of our dedicated UFT members and many others. We document these stories in our union newspaper, as does the NYC media. You visit your schools as well and I know you see successes all the time.

Do we have work to do in some of our schools? Of course! Poverty, social inequalities and newcomers to our shores create challenges for our educators. But we have met these challenges for decades and we have more tools in our toolkits than ever before. We will never give up on our children, and neither will you.

This winter, we have been telling public school success stories as part of our #PublicSchoolProud campaign, and I'm happy to say that the campaign has gone national. We invite all of you to join us and participate in the campaign by continuing to visit and support the schools in your district, and showing your pride on social media. Let's make sure the country knows just how amazing our neighborhood public schools really are.

### SUPPORT TEACHERS' CHOICE

Our union prides itself on the selflessness of our members. We work hard on behalf of our students, often going beyond our job descriptions. That commitment includes spending our own money — hundreds, sometimes thousands of dollars — on materials for our classrooms.

When I was a teacher, a week didn't go by without having to buy something for my students. On average, our members spend upwards of \$500 a year on supplies; some tell us they spend \$1,000 or more. Often, we pay for basic supplies including paper, pencils, poster boards, disinfecting wipes and trash bags. We also have members who pay the cost of science projects, musical instruments, computer software and sports equipment. Last year, one teacher told us he stocked the shop class, while another paid for field trips.

It's also a sad but true that some of our students are so poor, they come to school without a winter jacket or appropriate footwear. Others are in old, worn-out clothing. Many of my colleagues and I have bought jackets, gloves, shirts, sweaters and boots for our students. We do it because we want our students to have every opportunity to succeed, and they can't focus on their classwork if they're cold or embarrassed about their clothes.

There's an old joke that says teachers are among the only professionals who steal supplies from their homes to bring to work. It would be funny if it weren't also true. It's an expensive proposition, frankly. Buying supplies for our classrooms is a burden unique to our profession, and it amounts to a whole lot more than pocket change.

We're grateful the City Council has long supported New York City's public school educators through a program called "Teachers Choice", which provides teachers with spending money for their classrooms. It's a wonderful show of commitment to our members, and we are grateful for the Council's ongoing support. We respectfully ask the Council to fund Teacher's Choice next year at a level of \$20 million.

### INVEST IN COMMUNITY LEARNING SCHOOLS

The link between our public schools and their neighborhoods is vital. Schools do not exist in isolation; they serve a community, and the strongest of our schools are considered community hubs, offering activities, programs and services for students during the day and many of the neighborhood's constituents during the evenings and on weekends.

The growing community schools movement has its philosophical roots in the symbiotic relationship between a school and the surrounding community. Community schools rely on partnerships with companies, non-profits and community-based organizations to provide programs and services to the school, based on the most important needs of the school's population. Parents and school staff have direct input into developing a school's plan of action, so stakeholders can be confident that what's offered matches the needs.

The UFT's Community Learning Schools Initiative began in 2012 and now partners with 28 schools in the five boroughs. It works with some of the highest-needs schools, not just in the city, but in the state. At the center of the UFT's initiative are the Community School Directors who work fulltime in each of the buildings. These key people are responsible for developing a coordinated plan to build public/private partnerships and integrate the resulting programs and services into a school's daily operations. They work hand-in-hand with teachers and administrators to ensure that every extra academic program is fully integrated with the school's mission and curriculum.

A 2016 study comparing the percentage of students meeting or exceeding English Language Arts (ELA) and math proficiency standards from the 2012-13 to the 2015-16 school years revealed that Community Learning Schools outpaced schools in the rest of the city and the state in terms of growth in ELA and math scores.

Of the 20 Community Learning Schools that administered the state test in ELA, 16 — or 80 percent — exceeded city or state gains in student achievement. The math story is equally compelling. Of the 20 Community Learning Schools that administered the state math test, 10 — or 50 percent — exceeded city or state gains.

Additionally, the data reveals that the longer a school has been a CLS, the better its results. Three of four schools from the first cohort experienced gains of more than 10 percentage points; while four of the seven elementary and middle schools in the second cohort experienced gains ranging from more than seven to almost 14 percentage points. It's also worth noting that community schools aim to provide important and missing services in some of our highest-need communities. For example, community schools are trying to secure funds to build school-based health centers, dental and vision services and mental health programs, all of which are desperately needed by their student populations.

CLS was made possible, in part, by the strong support of the City Council, and we respectfully ask the Council to again support us. An investment of \$1.5 million would allow us to provide mental health resources to a select group of schools, as well as professional development and technical assistance to our entire network.

## FUND THE POSITIVE LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

As we learn more about how a child develops, teaching becomes an increasingly complex task but we also gain tools for reaching children in different ways. One thing we have learned is we must focus on the whole child. The UFT's Positive Learning Collaborative (PLC) is helping 16 of our schools do just that, and helping schools create and maintain a positive school culture and climate.

Many students come into our classrooms with what we call barriers to learning: personal or societal problems that hinder success in a classroom. These include health problems, mental health issues, learning disabilities, severe family problems, extreme poverty and homelessness. These barriers can manifest themselves in immature and thoughtless behaviors, and sometimes they lead to far more disruptive and serious infractions.

The Positive Learning Collaborative is a specialized, comprehensive approach to help schools manage student behavior. PLC is not a few workshops or webinars. Our team of certified experts — social workers, psychologists, trained teachers and guidance counselors — embed themselves in a school for three years and train every adult in the building, from the custodians and school safety officers all the way to the principal. The six schools that started in PLC two years ago have already seen a reduction in suspensions and violent incidents as well as a dramatic improvement in school climate.

We aim to help schools reduce the number of incidents and suspensions without resorting immediately to punitive measures. We help create systems that address student misconduct in ways that strengthen relationships between students, students and teachers, and students and the administration.

PLC teaches techniques to identify and proactively defuse potential situations as well as strategies to handle situations when they do occur. Part of that work includes restorative justice practices, which promote trust and respect throughout the school community and help students develop self-discipline and communication skills to handle issues in a constructive manner.

The PLC program helps a school create a caring and supportive environment where everyone is valued and everyone is heard. It makes sense that students learn more in a calmer building. PLC teaches students to think about how their actions affect others, how their actions have consequences and how to re-think how they react to other people. PLC gives real-life solutions in how to manage conflict and teaches children, some with few role-models, to develop healthy relationships.

With your help, we know we can make an even greater impact. Sixteen schools are participating in PLC program this year, but dozens are on the waiting list. With \$750,000, we could increase our support to 30 schools.

## STRENGTHEN DIAL-A-TEACHER

On any given afternoon after school, more than three dozen educators answer the phones at the UFT's Dial-a-Teacher. Every week, hundreds, sometimes thousands, of students and parents call about homework assignments. One of the few programs of this kind, it's hugely successful, with more than 68,000 calls last year alone and we're on track to match that number this year.

Our program reflects the city's diversity; our Dial-a-Teacher team speaks 10 languages including Chinese, Russian and Bengali. The team works with students on any subject matter from any grade.

While the program has maintained a state-of-the-art approach to the latest curriculum, we've been unable to keep up with the latest technology, and that's where we hope the Council can help. For a modest \$65,000 investment, we can upgrade our phone and internet service and position Dial-A-Teacher for years to come.

## SUPPORT THE BRAVE ANTI-BULLYING HOTLINE

Throughout the presidential campaign and election, our members saw an uptick in bullying in our schools and online through social media. It continues to be a problem. Immigrants and LGBTQ students have been particularly hard hit as evidenced by an increase in calls to our BRAVE anti-bullying hotline. Each day, a team of experts fields calls from students and parents who are dealing with bullying.

The program also offers an array of resources and tools to help educators make a difference in their schools including a series of workshops for UFT members. We want to make sure students know they have allies in their schools. The BRAVE program is respectfully requesting \$100,000 to provide call facilitators and mental health specialists to help students, parents and teachers.

#### PROVIDE FREE & HEALTHY SCHOOL LUNCH FOR ALL

In addition to the five UFT programs I've just spoken about, the UFT also supports the "Lunch4Learning" campaign in its quest to provide every public school student with a free school lunch in the 2017-18 school years.

The need for universal free school lunch is clear: One child in four in this city lives in a home that doesn't have enough food. Hungry children cannot effectively learn anything. Besides the humane virtue of ensuring our children are not hungry, free school meals are a critical tool in fighting educational inequality.

#### VISIT OUR PROGRAMS

Our members deeply appreciate the support the Council has provided. It is heartening when we see photos of your school visits on social media and hear you telling the world about the amazing work taking place in our neighborhood public schools.

We are incredibly proud of the programs I've just told you about, and we cordially invite you to visit our Community Schools, our PLC schools and even Dial-A-Teacher so you can see for yourself the value of these important initiatives.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify before you today. We face real challenges in the months ahead. Your continued help and support will help us in our fight to make sure schools provide a quality education for all.

###

# TESTIMONY

New York City Council Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget

Committee on Education

Committee Chair – Daniel Dromm

March 21<sup>th</sup>, 2017



Shaun D. Francois I – President  
Donald Nesbit – Executive Vice President  
Maria DeLaura – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
David Keye – Secretary - Treasurer  
Local 372 –Board of Education Employees  
District Council 372 – AFSCME, AFL-CIO  
125 Barclay Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007  
Local372.org

Education Committee Chairman Daniel Dromm, and distinguished members of the committee, I am here today on behalf of the 24,000 members of Local 372 - NYC Board of Education Employees, District Council 37 - AFSCME, under the leadership of President Shaun D. Francois I., to provide testimony on the Mayor's proposed budget for education.

The 24,000 members of Local 372 of which there are seven titles who perform essential support services to help the 1.2 million public school children of New York City be learning-ready. Our school crossing guards make sure the children cross the streets safely. Our school aides are with students all throughout the day: they greet the children in the morning, engaged in numerous activities to support their educational development, and help the children get to their busses at the end of the day. Our school lunch workers unload, prepare, and serve food each day, including during the summer. Our Parent Coordinators, school neighborhood workers, and paraprofessionals work with parents to navigate the Department of Education, and work with the Department of Homeless Services to make sure the children get to school and have a place to sleep at night. Our Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists (SAPIS) work with Students in mental health, anti-gun violence, anti-bullying, gang prevention, and mediation in schools.

Many Local 372 members are also members of the communities in which they work; they are neighbors to students, their families, and some are parents to school children themselves. Our members understand and can relate first hand to the struggles students and families face at home that can impact relationship between students, teachers, principal, parents and others.

Before going any further, I first want to commend the Mayor, the Chair and members of the Education Committee, and the City Council for recognizing the importance of investing in New York City's public schools and employees. The future that an education provides for a child is one of the most important obligations we must fulfill. However, certain deficits in the education system remain, such as the following issues that I will highlight:

#### School Lunch Employees

Children need food in order to concentrate and learn in the classroom. Local 372 school lunch workers work hard each day to serve breakfasts through the "Breakfast in the Classroom" program, and lunches, all which must fit into federal nutritional standards and guidelines. This is demanding work; while this meets the Department of Education's Office of SchoolFood staffing standards, current guidelines spread cafeteria employees too thin between the traditional breakfast program, the "Breakfast in the Classroom" program and preparing for lunch — time is an issue. Local 372 is extremely supportive of the breakfast program, as well as universal lunch — every child deserves to come to class with a full stomach. However, inadequate staffing as mandated by SchoolFood puts additional strain on workers, who are coming in earlier and staying later without extra compensation in order to simply make sure food is ready

to feed all 1.2 million children when that bell rings. This strain could be alleviated by hiring more school lunch staff. Local 372 respectfully requests an additional 500 school lunch employees so we can reduce the strain on the current workforce while still continuing to fulfill the Mayor's breakfast and lunch initiatives, and continuing to fill our student's stomachs.

Another struggle faced by Local 372 school lunch employees, which also has a direct impact on sanitation and hygiene in the school cafeterias and kitchens is inadequate air conditioning or ventilation. Council Member Brand S. Lander issued a report in March 2017, titled "Too Hot to Learn," based on data produced by the Department of Education and the School Construction Authority. According to the data, there were 657 buildings without A/C, 1,178 schools without A/C, and 10,985 classrooms without A/C, with reports of classroom temperatures reaching over 100 degrees in some cases. This leads to discomfort, distraction, lower scores, a loss of instructional time, and increased absenteeism. Now extrapolate that to kitchens and cafeterias: according to the report, 95% of those surveyed by the City Council reported public areas without A/C, which includes cafeterias. The kitchens Local 372 workers are in every day can reach over 150 degrees, like working in a furnace! Proper air conditioning would filter out heat, fumes, and airborne pestilence. While Local 372 is grateful of efforts to bring A/C to kitchens and cafeterias thus far, Local 372 requests that more funding be allocated towards installing and maintaining proper A/C and ventilation throughout our schools once and for all.

### SAPIS

SAPIS counselors provide essential substance abuse prevention and intervention services for public school children in New York City (all students K-12, as well as special education), including drug and gang intervention, peer mediation, and mental health services. SAPIS counselors help youth become learning-ready as they assist students and families through the use of coordinated and collaborative proven methodologies and interventions to cope with the myriad of societal pressures which detract from healthy academic, social, and home environments. SAPIS counselors are responsible for monitoring, offering resources and services to support students when they find themselves struggling and/or struggling to improve.

Today, only 300 SAPIS serve 1.2 million NYC children, or one SAPIS per every five schools. With those numbers, there are simply not enough SAPIS counselors to address the needs of all of these children and their families. In recent years, we have seen a sharp increase in drug abuse and overdose. The Mayor is now proposing spending upwards of \$38 million a year in response to this epidemic. Investing in SAPIS counselors will save money by preventing drug use in our youth, thus reducing addictions and overdoses in the long run. Local 372 believes one SAPIS in every school is imperative to prevent further lives from succumbing to these pressures, and respectfully request you consider additional SAPIS funding.

### Parent Coordinator Job Security and Seniority Rights

Local 372's 1,600 Parent Coordinators and community associates play a key role in not only keeping parents informed, but serve as a liaison between school administration and parents. They ensure that

parents know how to navigate the school system and help develop leadership and family engagement with schools. PCs assist parents with language barriers, handle HRA paperwork, work with city agencies to identify and provide services directly to parents, and handle numerous ancillary duties.

In addition to requesting an increase in the number of PCs and community associates to allow us to serve more students and balance the ratio between our workers and the hundred of children they each currently serve, I also respectfully request that the Council provide and implement job security and protections of our PC. Since 2003, these titled workers have no job protection and seniority rights. They are subject to the practice of being fired at will. Some PC are performing out-of-title work rather than risk the possibility of receiving a disciplinary write-up or termination notice for questioning the appropriateness of their assignments. Our workers take their numerous responsibilities seriously; it is only fair that, as a matter of principle, their employment is protected and that they are not treated as at will employees by principals supervisors and management.

### School Crossing Guards

Local 372 Level-I School Crossing Guards, 90% of which are women, are often the first line of defense to improve the safety for students who walk, bicycle, or take transit to school. However, under current staffing levels, there still remains thousand of New York City school children crossing main intersections without any supervision from NYPD school crossing guards, parental or adult guidance. Mayor de Blasio's Vision Zero Plan calls for a city-wide plan to place a school crossing guard at every school post and at dangerous intersections throughout the five boroughs; this will require an additional 150 full-time new crossing guard supervisors, 200 part-time crossing guards, and the implementation of a mobile replacement squad.

In addition, crossing guards work daily at a 25-hour capped part-time schedule, including early morning, lunch time, and after school hours. Local 372 asks that the city annualize this workforce, increase the position to true full-time employment, and pay our a crossing guards a living wage. This would be a real investment in higher job retention numbers, and further pave the way to much lower traffic incidents involving students and the motorized public.

### Public Employee Homeless Crisis

We all know that many of our city's communities are struggling. Just as many of our students' parents are struggling to pay for housing, food, and life's daily needs, so too are our members. As the cost of living continues to rapidly increase, wages are not rising at a comparable rate. Homelessness and "working homelessness" (where a regular paycheck is not enough to cover the cost of living), both in the general population and of those on the city payroll, have been a citywide crisis, a crisis that affects many of our members who are forced to live day-to-day, bouncing from shelter to shelter or couch to couch; all while coming to work every morning to serve our 1.2 million school children. No one who is employed, or who serves the community as our members do, should have to sleep in a shelter because they cannot afford rent.



To address the homeless crisis amongst our working members, Local 372 respectfully requests the City Council and the Mayor raise our members' wages, lower affordability requirements for rent. These modifications will allow Local 372 members to afford to stay in their homes and put food on the table, and hasten to find a solution to the lack of affordable housing in the city. Anyone working to provide a service to the city should have the right to make a living wage and afford to live in those city communities which they serve.

School support staffs are critical to a functioning school system. They create the space every day where teachers can teach and students can learn. Local 372 workers who provide these services are essential to the NYC school system, and as I have testified, are in need. Our workers come in every day and many work extra hours without pay, all to ensure that New York City's children are given the opportunity to succeed that they so deserve. Local 372 recognizes that there are not enough resources to address every worthy issue and service throughout the city and those tough decisions must be made over how to allocate limited funds. However, our children are our lives' work, and in order for our important work to succeed, we still need more support to increase staffing, create healthy working space, pay workers a living wage, and shelter those who provide critical services to the city yet cannot afford to shelter themselves.

On behalf of the 24,000 members of Local 372, NYC Board of Education DC37, AFSMCE, I thank you for this opportunity to testify.

## Testimony

### New York City Council Education Preliminary Budget Hearing

March 21, 2017

By Jahmila Joseph

Assistant Associate Director, District Council 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

Good afternoon, my name is Jahmila Joseph, and I am the Assistant Associate Director of District Council 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO (“DC37” or the “Council”). DC37 is the largest public employee union in New York City, with 51 active locals representing 125,000 members serving in 1,000 job titles throughout the New York City government. DC37 works tirelessly to improve our members’ lives on the job, but we also work for them in our communities. Our members understand that protecting and improving their jobs means preserving and advancing the vital services they provide to the people of New York City.

Since the implementation of free lunch in stand-alone middle schools in September 2014, it has yielded only positive results with thousands of additional middle school students participating in the program. We believe the time has come to expand and fully implement this program to make it available to all public school students in NYC. Universal free lunch is already being offered in major cities such as Chicago, Boston, Detroit, Dallas, and the District of Columbia.

In a city such as ours where there is great income disparity, we feel this will help to close the gap and alleviate the burden on many working families who struggle financially every day. We estimate that for a family to provide a complete and nutritious lunch for their children they would spend roughly \$1000 per student per year to cover lunch costs. By implementing universal free lunch for all, this will bring about a transformative change to the lives of thousands of students who suffer from poverty and hunger while simultaneously alleviating a financial burden on middle class families.

As a city, we should be doing everything in our power to remove barriers to participation and meet the basic needs of our students so that they are able to thrive. If children are not well-nourished, educational initiatives that seek to level the playing field for our City’s students simply fall flat. Hundreds of thousands of income-eligible

students in New York City public schools do not participate in the school lunch program due to the poverty stigma associated with traditional, fee-based school lunch. Many of these students—as well as others whose parents are not income-eligible for free lunch yet cannot afford to pay school lunch fees—struggle through lessons on an empty stomach. In addition, despite urgent need, many immigrant parents are reluctant to fill out the school lunch forms for fear of government reprisal, and the pursuit of lunch fees from parents who cannot afford it both put principals in the uncomfortable role of bill collector and directly undermines your efforts to increase parent engagement.

This is not just good public policy; it is a wise investment. Ninety percent of all school lunch costs are covered by federal and state reimbursements. The remaining cost to the City is modest, especially in light of the program's tremendous impact and reach. In one fell swoop universal free school lunch significantly eases administrative burdens on schools; provides families with much-needed financial relief; and ensures that all students enjoy access to school lunch, free of the stigma of poverty.



**Liz Accles**  
**Executive Director, Community Food Advocates**

**Testimony before the New York City Council**  
**Committee on Education**  
**Hearing on the Preliminary Budget**

**March 21, 2017**

My name is Liz Accles and I am the Executive Director of Community Food Advocates (CFA). As the organization spearheading the Lunch 4 Learning Campaign for universal free school lunch for all New York City public school students, we thank you for the opportunity to testify today and for the Council's leadership on this issue.

It is more critical than ever that all students have access to this program. We trust that the Council will make sure it happens in the 2018-19 budget.

We are baffled the Mayor has once again failed to keep his campaign promise to NYC public school families by leaving out the expansion of universal free school lunch in his Preliminary Budget. With the urging of school-based unions, school food workers, educators, public school parents, students, pediatricians, grassroots community organizations -- it seems as if the necessity of universal free school lunch is obvious to everyone but the Mayor.

This program is foundational to addressing health and educational inequities and student food insecurity in our public schools. Hungry children struggle to learn, and the city should take steps within its power to remove barriers to participation. Eliminating the poverty stigma and school lunch fees are the most crucial, immediate and far reaching solutions.

The evidence is clear: more students eat when they have universal free school lunch – at all grade levels. Universal free school lunch works.

Community Food Advocates analyzed school lunch data for the 2015-16 school year, comparing participation rates for students with access to universal free school lunch versus students with the traditional school lunch program.

A total of 582 schools offered universal free school lunch in 2015-16:

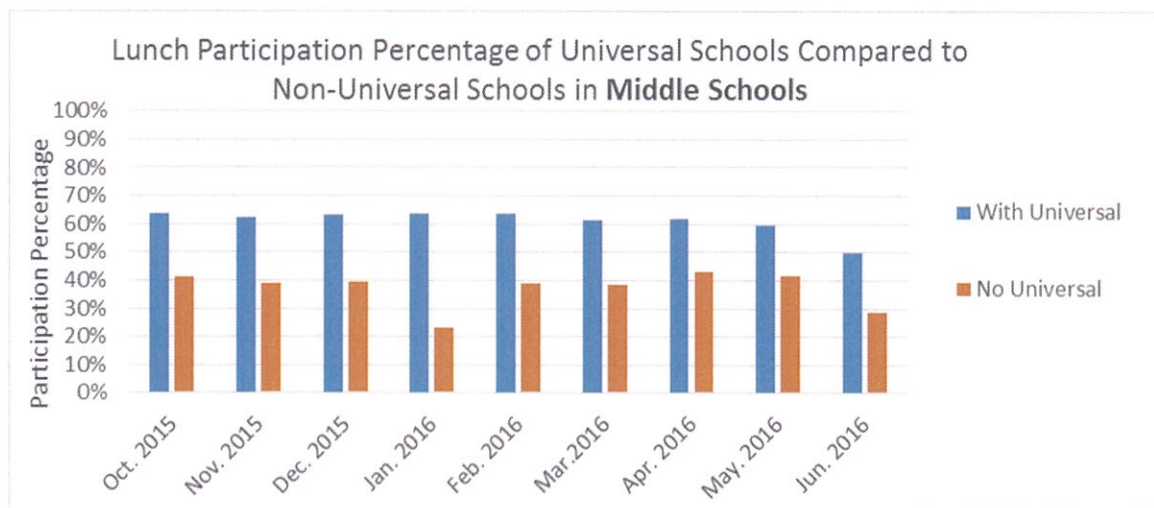
- 285 middle schools (148,119 registered students)
- 66 high schools (26,112 registered students)
- 231 elementary schools (150,640 registered students)

**FINDINGS:**

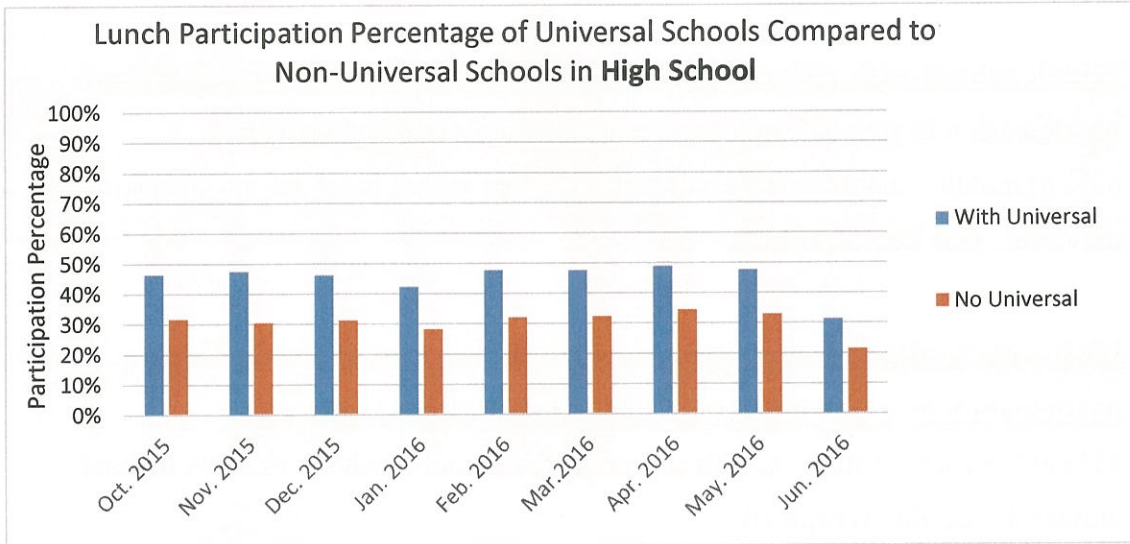
- **Middle schools with universal free school lunch have over 20 percent higher participation in school lunch than middle schools without universal**  
60% of middle school students with universal free school lunch ate vs. 40% without universal. (see Bar Graph A)
- **High schools with universal free school lunch have over 15 percent higher participation in school lunch than high schools without universal**  
45% of high school students with universal free school lunch ate vs. 30% without universal. (see Bar Graph B)
- **Elementary schools with universal free school lunch have over 10 percent higher participation in school lunch than elementary schools without universal**  
80% of elementary students with universal free school lunch ate vs. 70% without universal. (see Bar Graph C)

In addition to the overall benefit to NYC’s students, during these uncertain times on the federal level, universal free school lunch can provide a safe haven for immigrant children whose families are increasingly fearful of accessing public benefits they may desperately need. Since school food has no immigration status test, removing all barriers to ensure all children have access to food is even more critical now than ever.

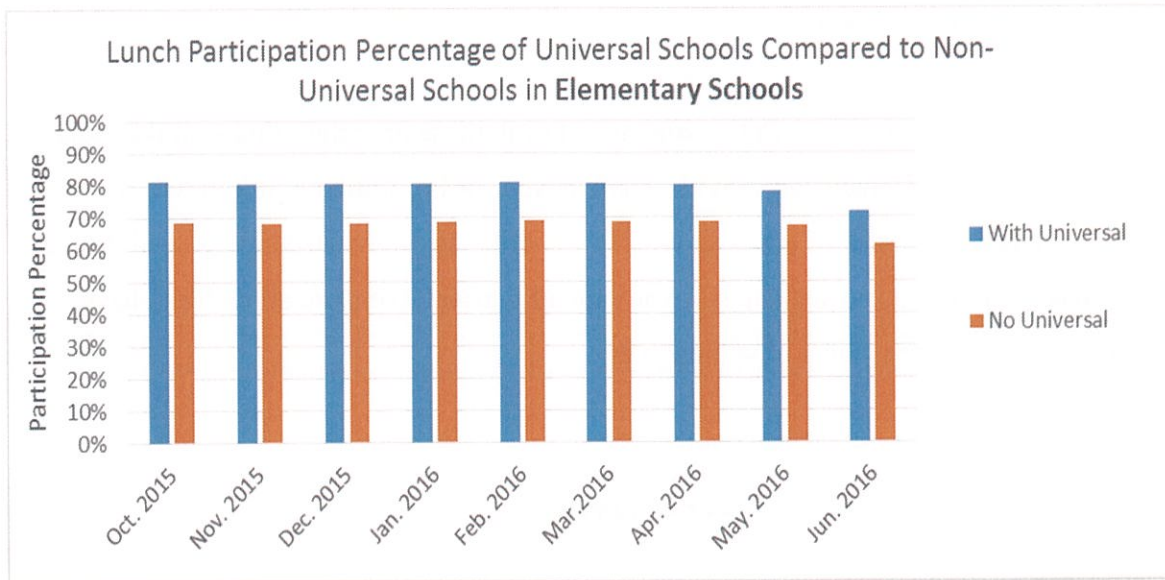
**Bar Graph A**



Bar Graph B



Bar Graph C







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Testimony prepared by

**Rachel Sabella**

for the

**Committee on Education**

on

**Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget**

**March 21, 2017**

on behalf of

**Food Bank For New York City**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Good afternoon Chairman Dromm and members of the City Council's Education Committee. My name is Rachel Sabella and I am the Director of Government Relations at Food Bank For New York City. Food Bank appreciates the opportunity to present testimony today to the City Council about the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Preliminary Budget for the New York City Department of Education (DOE).

First, Food Bank For New York City thanks the City Council for your continued commitment to addressing the issue hunger, particularly regarding childhood hunger and ensuring that all children in New York City have access to affordable, nutritious food. The City Council has long played a leadership role in this arena, and we are pleased to see continued strong leadership on anti-hunger initiatives over the last few years. The Council's instrumental role in expanding the in-classroom School Breakfast Program, implementing universal free school meals in stand-alone middle schools, as well as the vital part Council support took in creating new Campus Pantries, have all been so greatly appreciated.



For more than 30 years, Food Bank For New York City has been the city's major hunger-relief organization, working to end food poverty throughout the five boroughs. Nearly one in five New York City residents relies on our programs and services. Through our network of more than 1,000 charities and schools citywide, Food Bank's food distribution program provides approximately 63 million free meals for New Yorkers in need. Food Bank For New York City's income support services, including SNAP enrollment and free tax assistance for the working poor, put more than \$150 million each year into the pockets of New Yorkers, helping them to afford food and achieve greater dignity and independence. In addition, Food Bank's nutrition education programs and services empower more than 45,000 children, teens and adults to sustain a healthy diet on a low budget. Working toward long-term solutions to food poverty, Food Bank develops policy and conducts research to inform community and government efforts.

My testimony today will focus on childhood hunger in New York City and the importance of increased funding in the FY 2018 New York City budget to work towards ending childhood hunger.

### **NEW YORK CITY'S MEAL GAP: 242 MILLION**

SNAP is our nation's first line of defense against hunger. A federal entitlement program, SNAP now provides food assistance to 43.2 million Americans, including 1.7 million here in New York City.<sup>1</sup> SNAP is effective and efficient, and it is countercyclical, meaning has the flexibility to grow to meet rising economic need. Approximately 44% of all SNAP homes in the United States have children who rely on the benefit.

**Nearly 44% of New York City households (more than one in five) that currently rely on SNAP** have children.<sup>2</sup> These households operate with a monthly household benefit that has been averaging approximately \$260 since SNAP benefits were cut in November 2013 – a reduction of approximately \$18 per month, or \$200 per year.<sup>3</sup> Recent research finds that access to SNAP in early childhood is associated with profound long-term positive effects on health, economic and even educational status; indeed, receiving SNAP in early childhood is associated with an 18% greater likelihood of high school graduation.<sup>4</sup>

Food Bank For New York City analysis finds that, to date, the cuts have cost New York City residents more than \$540 million in lost benefits that could have been used to purchase food – enough for more than 161 million meals.<sup>5</sup>

Despite SNAP and other nutrition assistance programs (like school meals, and the Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children, or WIC), **nearly 1.4 million New Yorkers – approximately 20% of whom are children<sup>6</sup> – rely on emergency food, evidence**

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<sup>1</sup> Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) National Monthly Data, November 2016 (latest available month). United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Data as of March 6, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) as of December 2016.

<sup>3</sup> *Still Scaling the Hunger Cliff: Need at NYC Food Pantries & Soup Kitchens*. Food Bank For New York City. November 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Hoynes, Hilary, Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach and Douglas Almond. 2016. "Long-Run Impacts of Childhood Access to the Safety Net." *American Economic Review*, 106(4): 903-34

<sup>5</sup> *Still Scaling the Hunger Cliff: Need at NYC Food Pantries & Soup Kitchens*. Food Bank For New York City. November 2016.

<sup>6</sup> *Hunger's New Normal: Redefining Emergency in Post-Recession New York City*. Food Bank For New York City. October 2013.

**that a meal gap remains.** The Meal Gap, New York City's official food insecurity metric, is the most sophisticated measure of food insecurity available, representing the translation into meals of the financial resources needed by food-insecure households to secure an adequate diet year-round.<sup>7</sup>

**New York City's Meal Gap (as of 2014, the most recent year for which data is available) is 241 million meals.**<sup>8</sup> In terms of a borough breakdown, the Meal Gap for:

- the Bronx is 46.7 million;
- Brooklyn is 90 million;
- Manhattan is 43 million;
- Queens is 52.6 million; and
- Staten Island is 8.5 million.

As an attachment to my testimony, you will find a visual representation of the Meal Gap by City Council district. I look forward to meeting with individual Council Members to discuss the meal gap in your district and ways we can work together to ultimately eliminate it.

While approximately 16% of New York City's population struggles with food insecurity, children, of whom nearly one in four (23%) is food insecure, are particularly vulnerable.<sup>9</sup>

Schools are at the front lines of the fight against childhood hunger; programs such as universal school meals and school-based pantries can be powerful defenses. But without fortification and increased access, their reach can be limited. This leaves the most vulnerable children and their families, in the largest school district in the nation, without the needed nutrition to thrive and succeed at critical times in their development.

## **BUDGET PRIORITIES TO ENSURE NO STUDENT GOES HUNGRY**

No New Yorker should go hungry: access to adequate, nutritious food is a fundamental human right. But if we are not ensuring our city's most vulnerable children are fed, we are letting down all of New York's children. Thankfully, some policies and programs to realize this core principle are already in existence, and with the collective commitment of leaders across sectors, we can make this happen. While federal uncertainty has intensified the challenge, policy and budget options well within the authority and discretion of the New York City government can considerably improve the lives of New Yorkers who struggle to afford food and their children.

Closing our City's 242 million Meal Gap will require a thoughtful and aggressive strategy that uses every resource available. With millions of meals already lost, New York City's anti-hunger resources – primarily those that support our children – will be more vital than ever.

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<sup>7</sup> The meal gap was developed for Feeding America by food insecurity expert Dr. Craig Gundersen of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. When the City Council legislated that the Administration report food insecurity annually as part of its food metrics report, the Meal Gap was adopted by the City of New York as its official food insecurity metric

<sup>8</sup> Gundersen, C., A. Dewey, A. Crumbaugh, M. Kato & E. Engelhard. Map the Meal Gap 2016: Food Insecurity and Child Food Insecurity Estimates at the County Level. Feeding America, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

## *UNIVERSAL SCHOOL MEALS*

Despite their eligibility, many low-income children and teens do not participate in free school meals. Families can find the application process too difficult or confusing to complete. Some students skip the meals to avoid the stigma, not wanting to be seen as "poor." The labor-intensive process of collecting and verifying applications places a significant burden on a school system strained for resources. Maximizing participation in school meals, through expansion of Universal School Meals (USM), will provide hundreds of thousands of New York City children with access to a nutritious breakfast and lunch.

Implementing USM for *all* New York City public schools students would eliminate the application process, ensuring no student has to forego meals because of red tape or stigma. The elimination of the application process would also benefit immigrant families, among whom we are beginning to see anecdotal evidence that fear of aggressive immigration enforcement tactics is acting as a powerful barrier to accessing needed assistance, even for survival resources like food.

In the 2014-2015 school year, thanks to the advocacy and support of the City Council, stand-alone middle schools across the city began providing free school meals to all students. Since its inception, we have seen an increase in students participating – expansion would allow other students across the city that same benefit. The effect would be most profound in high schools, which currently see the lowest participation rates in school meals.

- We ask that the FY 2018 New York City budget expand Universal School Meals to all New York City public school students.

## *CAMPUS PANTRIES*

Food Bank For New York City's Campus Pantry program enables children to access emergency food that can be used to make balanced, nutritious meals at home. While children from low-income families can receive two meals a day at school, they may go home hungry, unsure if there will be enough to eat for dinner, over the weekend or during school breaks. We have met children for whom dinner is a "mustard sandwich," because condiments and sliced bread were the only food left in their kitchens. Campus pantries give these children a place to turn.

Since the beginning of the 2012 school year, Food Bank's Campus Pantry program has served over 10,000 students across the city. Some school pantries give out pantry bags filled with fresh and packaged food. Other schools employ what is known as "client choice," designing their pantries like a grocery store to allow children and their families to select their own healthy food, including fresh produce.

This year, Food Bank For New York City was thrilled to partner with the City Council to create 16 new campus pantries in all five boroughs. These pantries are the first of their kind as they share more than just food: menstrual products, soaps, toothpaste, and cleaning products are also offered, addressing the realities of poverty and helping reduce stigma from campuses across the city.

- We ask that the FY 2018 New York City budget continue to support these 16 Campus Pantries and allow for the expansion of campus pantries into additional communities through dedicated, baselined funding.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Childhood hunger faces communities across the five boroughs. We thank the City Council for continuing to advocate for and support the expansion of programs that support children and families struggling with food insecurity. Food Bank For New York City urges the Administration to present an Executive Budget proposal that includes the expansion of universal school meals and dedicated, baselined funding for the continued operation and expansion of school based pantries. Together, we can work to close the Meal Gap and ensure no child goes to bed hungry.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.

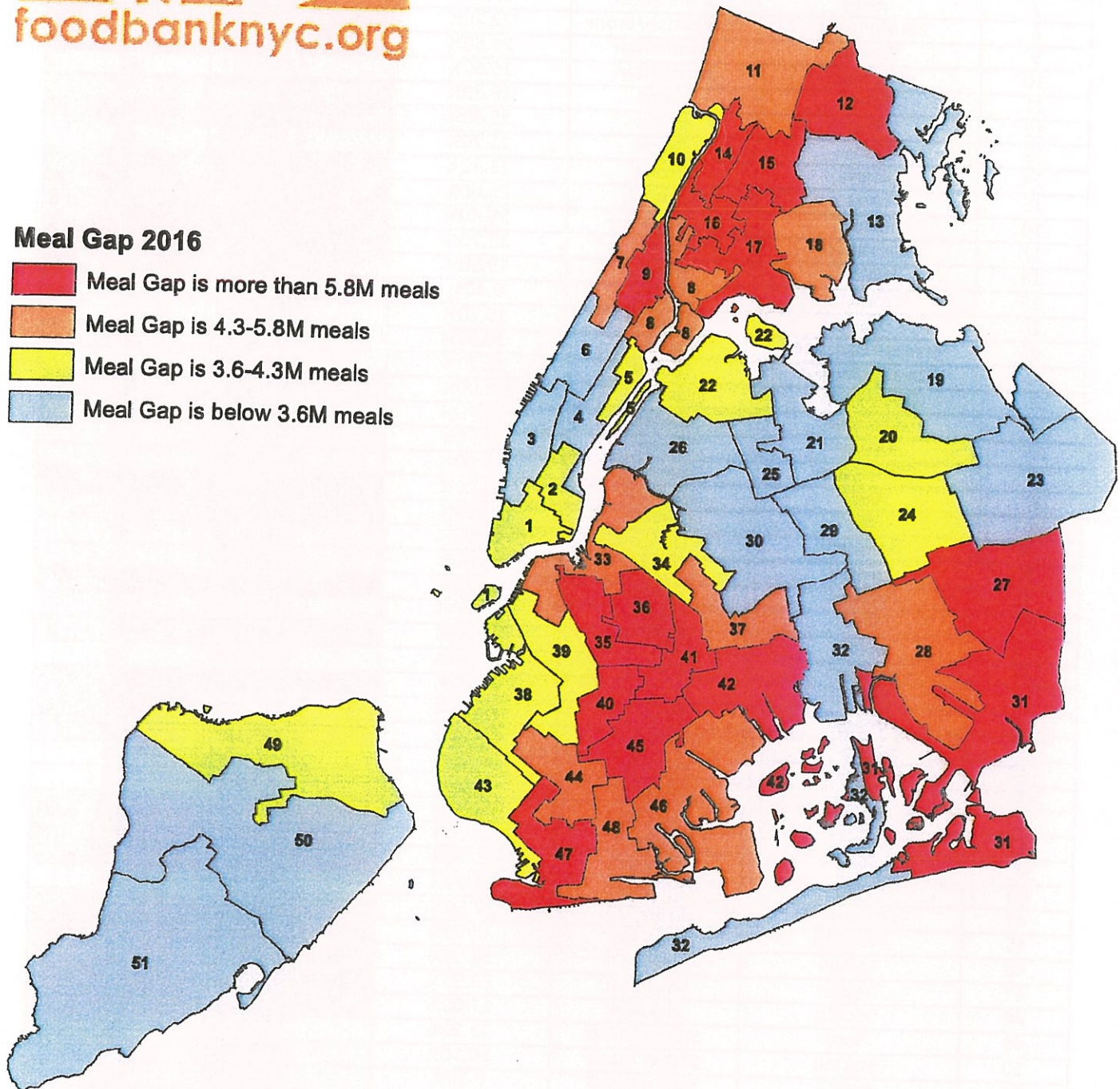




## Meal Gap by City Council District

### Meal Gap 2016

- Meal Gap is more than 5.8M meals
- Meal Gap is 4.3-5.8M meals
- Meal Gap is 3.6-4.3M meals
- Meal Gap is below 3.6M meals



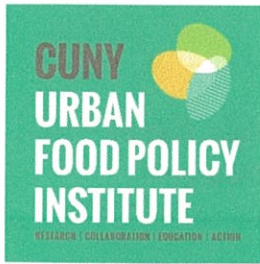
*The Meal Gap, New York City's official measure of food insecurity, represents the meals missing from the homes of families and individuals struggling with food insecurity - that is, when household food budgets fall too short to secure adequate, nutritious food year-round.*

*Food Bank For New York City analysis based on Gundersen, C., A. Dewey, A. Crumbaugh, M. Kato & E. Engelhard. Map the Meal Gap 2016: Food Insecurity and Child Food Insecurity Estimates at the County Level.*



District	Council Member	Borough	Food Insecurity	2016 Meal Gap	Rank
1	Chin	Manhattan	15.40%	3,967,682	32
2	Mendez	Manhattan	14.40%	3,710,041	36
3	Johnson	Manhattan	13.80%	3,555,455	38
4	Garodnick	Manhattan	11.00%	2,834,059	45
5	Kallos	Manhattan	14.60%	3,761,569	35
6	Rosenthal	Manhattan	10.90%	2,808,295	46
7	Levine	Manhattan	19.50%	5,024,013	18
8	Mark-Viverito	Manhattan/Bronx	22.20%	5,719,646	16
9	Perkins	Manhattan	29.50%	7,600,430	5
10	Rodriguez	Manhattan	15.60%	4,019,211	31
11	Cohen	Bronx	18.30%	5,013,771	19
12	King	Bronx	25.00%	6,849,414	8
13	Vacca	Bronx	11.70%	3,205,526	42
14	Cabrera	Bronx	23.10%	6,328,859	11
15	Torres	Bronx	23.60%	6,465,847	10
16	Gibson	Bronx	25.40%	6,959,005	7
17	Salamanca	Bronx	23.70%	6,493,245	9
18	Palma	Bronx	19.90%	5,452,134	17
19	Vallone	Queens	9.40%	2,421,452	50
20	Koo	Queens	15.10%	3,889,779	33
21	Ferreras-Copeland	Queens	10.00%	2,576,013	48
22	Constantinides	Queens	15.70%	4,044,340	29
23	Grodenschik	Queens	10.00%	2,576,013	48
24	Lancman	Queens	15.70%	4,044,340	29
25	Dromm	Queens	12.50%	3,220,016	41
26	Van Bramer	Queens	13.80%	3,554,898	39
27	Miller	Queens	24.20%	6,233,951	12
28	Wills	Queens	19.00%	4,894,424	20
29	Koslowitz	Queens	11.90%	3,065,455	43
30	Crowley	Queens	11.40%	2,936,655	44
31	Richards	Queens	22.70%	5,847,549	15
32	Ulrich	Queens	13.00%	3,348,817	40
33	Levin	Brooklyn	17.90%	4,586,821	22
34	Reynoso	Brooklyn	16.60%	4,253,700	26
35	Cumbo	Brooklyn	27.90%	7,149,291	6
36	Corney	Brooklyn	32.60%	8,353,651	1
37	Espinal	Brooklyn	17.00%	4,356,199	24
38	Menchaca	Brooklyn	16.20%	4,151,201	28
39	Lander	Brooklyn	16.60%	4,253,700	26
40	Eugene	Brooklyn	31.00%	7,943,656	4
41	Mealy	Brooklyn	31.50%	8,071,780	3
42	Barron	Brooklyn	31.60%	8,097,404	2
43	Gentile	Brooklyn	15.00%	3,843,705	34
44	Greenfield	Brooklyn	17.90%	4,586,821	22
45	Williams	Brooklyn	23.90%	6,124,303	13
46	Maisel	Brooklyn	18.50%	4,740,569	21
47	Treyger	Brooklyn	23.90%	6,124,303	13
48	Deutch	Brooklyn	17.00%	4,356,199	24
49	Rose	Staten Island	13.20%	3,636,855	37
50	Matteo	Staten Island	10.10%	2,782,745	47
51	Borelli	Staten Island	7.70%	2,121,499	51





**Testimony to NYC Council Committee on Education, Preliminary Budget Hearing - Education  
by Janet Poppendieck, CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute, March 21, 2017**

I am testifying today on behalf of the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute, located at the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy. At the CUNY School of Public Health, we recognize that nutritious food is essential to health, and that school food programs can and do play a vital role in shaping the health of our children and youth. For those who participate, they provide balanced meals and displace the consumption of less healthy alternatives. For those who fail to participate, they provide nothing at all.

Ending the school food means test—converting to universal free provision—will especially benefit three groups of students. First, it will benefit students who are not income eligible but are still in need. School food eligibility standards are uniform throughout the nation, but costs of living are not. An eligibility threshold that makes sense in Brownsville, Texas, with a Cost of Living Index of 85.8 will exclude many students in real need in Brownsville, Brooklyn, a borough where the Cost of Living Index is 181.7. A threshold that works in Manhattan, Kansas, where the Cost of Living Index stands at 95 will not be appropriate for our Manhattan, where it is 216.7. A family of three struggling to get by on \$39,000 per year in New York City is nearly two thousand dollars over the eligibility cut off for free meals, but can not readily afford the paid meal charge of \$1.75, even though it is a bargain. Eliminating the charge will bring the benefits of healthy, nutritious, federally subsidized meals to thousands of children who cannot now afford them, and their families will benefit from the resources freed for other expenses.

A second group that will benefit is composed of children of immigrants whose families have been unwilling to submit applications due to fear of being labeled a “public charge” or fear of government in general. Many of these children are in fact income eligible, but their eligibility has not been established. In the current climate of fear and uncertainty, this barrier to participation is growing. A draft executive order leaked from the Trump administration in January would have expanded the programs that can lead to a “Public Charge” designation to include SNAP, and community organizations serving the poor are reporting that immigrant families are voluntarily withdrawing from the SNAP program. I can think of no action that the Council could take that would give more meaning to our claim to be a Sanctuary City than to

remove the necessity for families to submit applications to obtain free school lunches. And of course, these lunches will become even more important to the well-being of our children if parents are in fact deterred from receiving SNAP.

A third group of students who will particularly benefit are children who are eligible to eat free, but who are deterred from participating by the stigma associated with school food, or by the threat of teasing and bullying by their peers. Eliminating the means test will gradually eliminate the stigma. As the older students who have been infected with this stigma move on, school meals will become the norm, and school lunch can realize its potential as a nourishing respite in the school day, a true part of education instead of a bothersome interruption. And, of course, students who have been eating school lunch despite the stigma will also benefit, no longer consuming a meal seasoned with shame.

New York City has tried to reduce stigma by converting to a swipe card system, but this innovation has brought its own problems. Parents in the “paid” category are billed for the meals, but in many cases, they have difficulty paying. A recent op-ed in the *Staten Island Advance* pointed out that owing money to the schools deters parents from participating in parent-teacher conferences and other school events. The attempt to collect the outstanding school food debt falls to principals and their staffs—a time-consuming distraction from their core mission—and has generally not been very successful. Community Food Advocates estimate that the City succeeds in collecting between \$8 million and \$10 million of the approximately \$28 million owed annually by parents. The missing \$18 to \$20 million will more than offset the funds needed to move the entire system to universal free meals. That is, under the federal Community Eligibility Program, the City could be reimbursed for the great majority of these meals.

Once the entire system is converted to universal, the confusion over eligibility will be eliminated and we can do what New York does so well, harness the power of our advertising industry to get the word out to parents that it is no longer necessary to give kids a dollar for a bag of chips at the corner store, and to kids that school food can be “cool.”

Submitted by Janet Poppendieck, Ph.D.

Senior Fellow, CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute

Author, *Free For All: Fixing School Food in America*

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Young Advocates For Fair Education (Yaffed)  
*Promoting Secular Education for Hasidic and Ultra-Orthodox Students*

Young Advocates For Fair Education (Yaffed) was founded in 2012 by graduates of Hasidic and ultra-Orthodox yeshivas who came to realize—all too late—that the education they received in their elementary and high schools was woefully inadequate. Yaffed works to bring this problem to the attention of the public at large as well as politicians and governmental departments of education, who until recently seem to have had little knowledge of the problem and certainly have done little to remedy it.

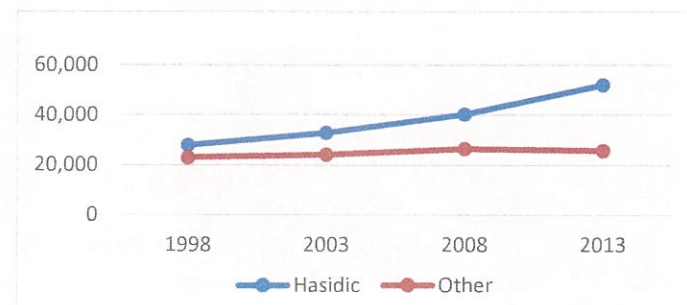
Yaffed’s goal is to ensure that all Hasidic and ultra-Orthodox children receive the secular education they deserve—indeed the same education that is mandated by law for both public and non-public school students.

Yaffed’s current focus is on secular education for boys; Hasidic girls are often expected to become the main family bread-winner—at least during the first few years of marriage—and so typically receive better secular education so as to enhance their earning potential.

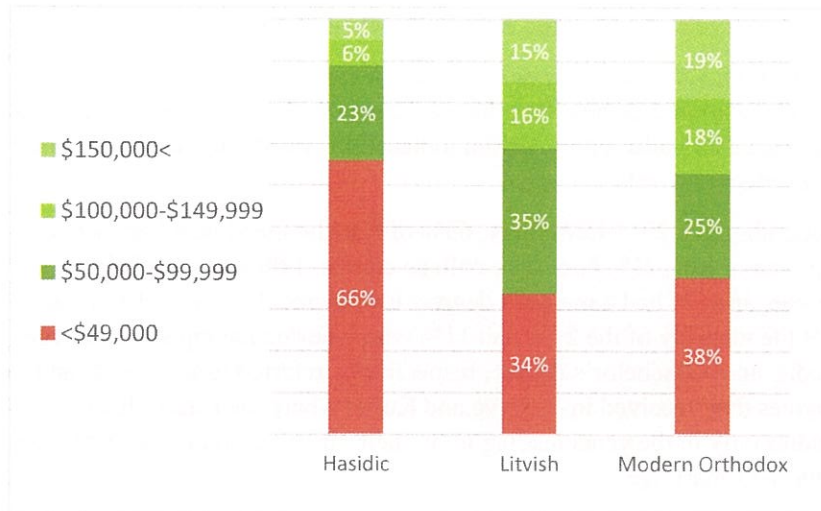
**Demographics**

The Hasidic population in NY is growing fast due to young marriages and high birthrates. That is also resulting in a tremendous growth in enrollment in Hasidic and ultra-Orthodox Yeshivas (non-public schools).

- The number of students enrolled in Hasidic Yeshivas in NYC has nearly doubled between 1998-2013.
- Enrollment in schools of other denominations has either remained flat or declined during that same period.



(Source: Avi Chai Jewish Day School Census, 2013)



(Source: UJA Jewish Community Study, 2011)

**Unique Challenges**

The issue of secular education in ultra-Orthodox and Hasidic Yeshivas is very complex. On the one hand, there are laws requiring non-public schools to provide a basic education. On the other hand, there are no real enforcement mechanisms in place, and the DOE is afraid to overstep their boundaries. Also, while most Hasidic parents want to see some improvement in the education that their sons are receiving, many are afraid to speak up out of fear of being ostracized from the community. Further complicating the issue are the powerful groups in the Orthodox community who wield tremendous power over the governor, the mayor and the city and state DOEs, through their lobbying and bloc voting, making it very difficult for government officials to take action or even to openly address the issue.

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## The Issue

New York State law requires all non-public schools to provide their students with an education that is “[substantially equivalent](#)” to that of public school. It requires them to teach English, mathematics, science, history, geography, and more.

However, most Hasidic yeshivas, and a growing number of Litvish (Lithuanian) and other ultra-Orthodox yeshivas, educate boys almost exclusively in Judaic studies. Those under age 13 receive an average of only six hours per week of secular education, and only in two subjects—English and arithmetic. After age 13, boys in many yeshivas receive no secular education at all. Hasidic children grow up speaking, and being taught, in Yiddish and so their English language skills are often extremely poor.

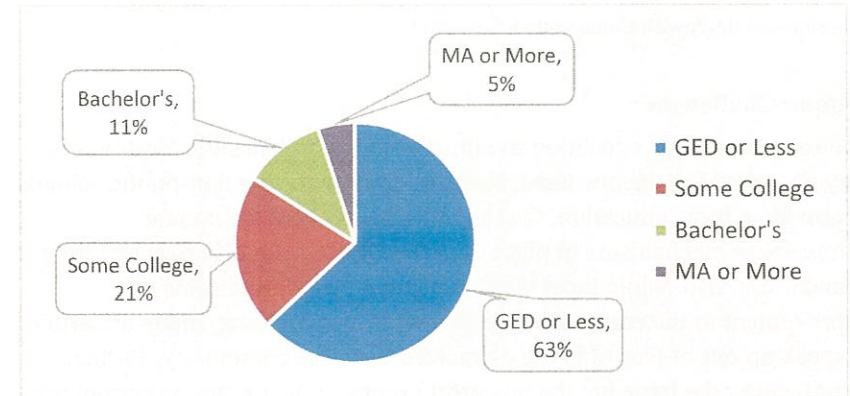
Grades →	Grades 1 – 3		Grades 4 - 8		Grades 9 - 12	
Times ↓	Hasidic	private or PS	Hasidic	private or PS	Hasidic	private or PS
6:30-7:30am					Hasidic Philosophy	
7:30-8:30am			Prayer		Prayer	
8:30-9:00am		English	Breakfast	English	Breakfast	English
9:00-11:00am	Torah	Arithmetic & science	Torah	Social studies & science	Talmud	Social studies, science, math
11:00am-12:30pm	Torah	History & geography	Talmud	Math, history, technology	Talmud	Physical & health ed
12:30-1:30pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:30-3:30pm	Torah	Physical & health ed	Talmud	Physical & health ed	Talmud	Art, music, alcohol, drug & fire safety
3:30-5:00pm			English & math		Talmud	
5:00-6:00pm					Talmud	
6:00-6:30pm					Dinner	
6:30-8:00pm					Halacha	

(Source: Yaffed and media reports)

## Data on levels of education among the Hasidic men

There are no concrete data on the exact elementary and high school grade level education that most Hasidic men possess. However, media reports and informal data collected by Yaffed indicate that most only have a 5<sup>th</sup> grade level education or less.

According to a 2011 UJA study, 63% of Hasidic men had a high school diploma or less, 21% had some college credits, 11% had a bachelor’s degree, and 5% had a master’s degree, law degree, PhD, etc. We suspect that the majority of the 21% and 11% who reported having some college credits and a Bachelor’s degree, respectively, referred to the credits and the degrees they received in Yeshiva and Kollel where men study Judaic studies only in the years leading up to their marriage and for several years after their marriage.



(Source: UJA Jewish Community Study, 2011)

## Income and poverty

According to that same UJA study:

- 66% of Hasidic families earn less than \$50,000
- 43% are “poor”.
- An additional 16% are “near poor”.
- The combined 59% of poor and near poor among Hasidim is in stark contrast to the 31% among the Litvish, and 22% among the modern orthodox.

(See graph on next page)

## Facts on Hasidic Yeshivas in NY

### Demographics:

- Yeshivas (schools) = 121+ (NYC = 83+)
- Students = 78,509+ (NYC = 52,063+)

Approximately 40,000-50,000 are not receiving a “substantially equivalent” education.

### Boys under age 13

- Allotted time = 90 minutes of secular instruction
- Time of day = 3:30pm - 5pm
- Subjects taught = English and math
- Subjects not taught = Science, history, geography, music, art, health ed, physical ed, (as required by law)

### Boys ages 13 & older

- Allotted time = 0 Minutes
- Time of day = none
- Subjects taught = none
- Subjects not taught = English, math, science, history, geography, music, art, physical ed, health ed

>Problem spreading to non-Hasidic Yeshivas and to Hasidic girls’ schools

### New York State Education Law Article 65, Section 3204:

Instruction given to a minor elsewhere than at a public school shall be at least **substantially equivalent** to the instruction given to minors of like age and attainments at the public schools of the city or district where the minor resides.

### NYSED Guidelines:

What subjects must be taught in nonpublic schools?

#### **In grades 1-6 the following subjects must be taught:**

Arithmetic, English language, reading, spelling, writing, music, geography, health education, physical education, science, United States history, New York State history, visual arts

#### **In grades 7 and 8 the following subjects must be taught:**

English, social studies, science, mathematics, physical education, health education, New York State history, visual arts, music, practical arts, technology education, home and career skills, library and information skills

#### **A high school four-year course of study must include the following units of work or their equivalent:**

English - 4 units, social studies, including a year of American history - 4 units, mathematics - 2 units, science - 2 units, health - 1/2 unit, physical education, art and/or music - 1 unit

#### **In addition to the preceding, instruction must be provided in:**

physical education and kindred subjects, alcohol, drug, and tobacco abuse, highway safety and traffic regulation, bicycle safety, school safety patrol, fire drills, arson and fire prevention



**CITIZENS' COMMITTEE for CHILDREN**  
**O F N E W Y O R K I N C**

Testimony of

Grant Cowles

Senior Policy and Advocacy Associate for Youth Justice

Presented to the  
New York City Council  
Committee on Education

***Oversight:***  
***New York City Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget***

March 21, 2017

Good afternoon. My name is Grant Cowles and I am the Senior Policy and Advocacy Associate for Youth Justice at Citizens' Committee for Children (CCC). CCC is a 73-year-old independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring every New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe.

I would like to thank City Council Education Chair Daniel Dromm, as well as all the members of the City Council Education Committee for holding today's oversight hearing on the City Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget. CCC appreciates the opportunity to testify on the Preliminary Budget's impact on education.

CCC is grateful for the City Council's longstanding commitment to education and New York City's students. CCC also appreciates the administration's efforts to strengthen New York City's public schools, particularly through the Renewal Schools Initiative and the Equity and Excellence Agenda.

CCC welcomes the proposed investments for education in the FY18 preliminary budget, including \$14 million for Summer in the City programs for at-risk 2<sup>nd</sup> graders and for expanding STEM programming and summer school from four to six hours and \$14.83 million for SESIS system upgrades. In addition, CCC was pleased to see the administration's plan for a \$495 million capital investment from FY20-24 to create 38,487 new school seats.

We have seen notable improvements in education outcomes for NYC students over the past several years. It is particularly encouraging that the graduation rate has reached an all-time high of 72.6% and the drop-out rate is at an all-time low of 8.5%.<sup>1</sup> But there is still much room for improvement, especially considering the disparate racial and ethnic outcomes for students. For example, though the graduation rate has shown improvement overall (rising from 54.3% in 2004 to 72.6% in 2016),<sup>2</sup> it is still far too low for students who are Hispanic (66.9%) and Black (68.1%) compared to the graduation rates for students who are White (82.1%) and Asian (85.6%).<sup>3</sup> And the graduation rate continues to be very low for students who have a disability (44.8%) and for those who are English Language Learners (30.8%, a drop from 40.5% in the prior year).<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, while we are encouraged that testing scores have been improving with overall ELA and Math proficiency rates for third through eighth graders rising to 38% and 36.4% respectively,<sup>5</sup> ELA and Math rates are very disparate. Passing rates are lower for students who

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<sup>1</sup> NYC Department of Education. "New York City Graduation Rates: Class of 2016 (2012 Cohort)." Available at <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/04A151BF-F9E4-4960-8881-E1B07AA57DF8/208343/2016GraduationRatesWeb21017.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> NYC Office of the Mayor. "Mayor de Blasio, Chancellor Farina Announce Highest-Ever Graduation Rate." February <http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/076-17/mayor-de-blasio-chancellor-farina-a-highest-ever-graduation-rate#/0>

<sup>3</sup> "New York City Graduation Rates: Class of 2012 (2012 Cohort)."

<sup>4</sup> Id.

<sup>5</sup> NYC Department of Education. "2016 New York State Test Results: New York City Grades 3-8." July 2016. Available at <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/C7E210CA-F686-4805-BEA6-EDD91F76E58B/199990/2016MathELASite72917.pdf>.



are Hispanic (27.2%; 24.3%) and Black (26.6%; 20%), and much lower for students who have a disability (9.3%; 11.4%) and who are English Language Learners (4.4%, 13%).<sup>6</sup>

CCC believes every NYC student can and should receive a high-quality education that provides meaningful opportunities for future education, career, and life preparation. NYC's education outcomes show that investments made by the city administration and the City Council in past years can provide positive results, but far too many students continue to be left behind.

CCC believes that the City needs to make additional investments in the education system to ensure every NYC child has access to a high-quality education that prepares him/her for college and career success. CCC looks forward to seeing additional investments and restorations in education in the upcoming Executive Budget.

CCC respectfully submits the following recommendations for the upcoming Fiscal Year.

### 1) Universal Free School Lunch for All NYC Public School Students

**CCC urges the administration to complete Mayor de Blasio's campaign promise to implement universal free school lunch for all public school students.** The Mayor has the authority to stop charging school fees for school lunches, as was done with the school breakfast program in 2003, and the Mayor should now use this authority for lunch.

Currently, there are approximately 250,000 students who qualify for free or reduced lunch yet do not participate.<sup>7</sup> Enrollment in free or reduced lunch plans is especially low as students get older, with school lunch participation dropping from 81% in elementary to 61% in middle school and 38% in high school.<sup>8</sup> Participation by eligible students is low because many students, especially older students, feel stigmatized for being in an income-based program, or otherwise are discouraged from participating due to the administrative requirements to enroll. It is important however that students get a full and nutritious lunch to better allow them to focus, participate, and learn in school, as well as to promote healthy nutrition during their growing years.

Providing universal access for lunch programs would de-stigmatize participation by allowing everyone to participate. The expansion of universal school lunch for stand-alone middle schools saw an average of 7,500 additional students eat lunch each day, showing that making these programs universal increases participation.<sup>9</sup> A universal lunch program is estimated to improve school lunch participation by almost 9 percent in elementary schools – or an additional 30,000

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<sup>6</sup> Id.

<sup>7</sup> 68% of all NYC public school students are eligible for free school lunch, meaning their family income is less than \$26,000 for a family of three. 75% of all NYC public school students are eligible for free or reduced school lunch, meaning their family income is less than \$37,00 for a family of three. Lunch 4 Learning. "Universal Free School Lunch in NYC: An Overview." Available at [https://media.wix.com/ugd/fce5d8\\_9de71cd941824627bcd773be3912e2b9.pdf](https://media.wix.com/ugd/fce5d8_9de71cd941824627bcd773be3912e2b9.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Id.

<sup>9</sup> Lunch 4 Learning. "Campaign Key Points." Available at [https://media.wix.com/ugd/fce5d8\\_9de71cd941824627bcd773be3912e2b9.pdf](https://media.wix.com/ugd/fce5d8_9de71cd941824627bcd773be3912e2b9.pdf).

additional children each day – and an estimated 20 percent in high schools – or an additional 17,000 children each day.<sup>10</sup>

Universal access to free lunch would be easier for the administration to manage, for parents to enroll, for students to participate, and for schools to provide. Each year, most parents must fill out an application that requires the disclosure of personal financial information, and in schools, staff must determine each day which students do and do not have to pay for their meals. When everyone is allowed access, there is no need to register and identify those eligible, but instead, everyone can simply participate.

Universal school lunch provides a straightforward and concrete monetary benefit to parents and families, saving them time and money every day. Research from Robin Hood Foundation demonstrates that parents would save an average of \$900 per year per child if school lunches were free for all students.<sup>11</sup>

CCC thanks the City Council for your ongoing support for universal lunch. During Mayor de Blasio's mayoral campaign, he pledged to support universal lunch. We believe it is time to fully fund and implement universal lunch in all grades.

## 2) Maintain Funding for Community Schools

**CCC urges the administration to maintain all funding for community schools and ensure the 13 community schools funded through the State Community Schools Grant Initiative receive their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of funding.**

Community schools not only have positive impacts on academic achievement, attendance, graduation rates, and post-secondary outcomes, but they are better able to address the non-academic needs of the students, providing holistic support for a student's learning and well-being. Community schools become focal points for revitalizing and supporting entire communities through their many services. The great successes of community schools throughout New York City demonstrate their incredible value as investments, and CCC is thankful for the Administration's commitment to supporting community schools.

Community schools must continue to be comprehensively funded to ensure the past investments and positive work continue to help students and communities. We urge the administration to maintain the existing funding level for all New York City community schools. In addition, New York City has 13 community schools funded through the state's Community School Grant Initiative, Cohort 2 (CSGI). The state budget, currently being negotiated, eliminates the funding for CSGI. If the state funding is not restored, we urge the administration and DOE to ensure that funding is distributed to these 13 community schools in the amount currently allocated by the

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<sup>10</sup> Community Food Advocates. "Benefits of Expanding Universal Free School Lunch to High School and Elementary Schools Under Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)." December 2015. Available at <http://www.lunch4learningnyc.org/>.

<sup>11</sup> Robin Hood Foundation. *Metric Equations*. P. 90. Sept. 30, 2014. Available at [https://www.robinhood.org/sites/default/files/user-uploaded-images/Robin%20Hood%20Metrics%20Equations\\_BETA\\_Sept-2014.pdf](https://www.robinhood.org/sites/default/files/user-uploaded-images/Robin%20Hood%20Metrics%20Equations_BETA_Sept-2014.pdf).

CSGI program (approximately \$167,000 per school) to enable these schools to maintain their ability to remain a community school.

### **3) Strengthen Efforts to Help Homeless Students**

Given both the increasing numbers of homeless students and the high absentee rates among homeless students, we believe that the administration must do more to better address the needs of homeless students. Family homelessness is at record levels, and approximately one in ten NYC public school children is living in shelter, doubled up, or in foster care.<sup>12</sup> The trauma and stress of homelessness, coupled with educational instability and/or long commutes to school, has been proven to negatively impact educational outcomes.

A 2016 report by the Independent Budget Office (IBO) documented that students in homeless shelters had the highest rates of absenteeism. In the year they analyzed, 31.9% of students in shelters were chronically absent (absent 10-20% of the school year) and an additional 33.9% were severely chronically absent (absent more than 20% of the school year).<sup>13</sup> Only 34.3% of homeless children had good attendance, as compared to 73.5% of the students not in temporary housing. It is important to note that this data is from a school year when approximately 65.4% of families were placed in the borough where the youngest child attended school,<sup>14</sup> as compared to more recent data from Fiscal Year 2016 when only 55% of families with children were placed in the borough where the youngest child attended school.<sup>15</sup> This means that many homeless students are either changing schools or traveling long distances to commute to and from school.

In last year's Executive Budget, the Mayor announced an investment of \$30 million in services to begin to address the needs of homeless students. This funding was used to create health centers at elementary schools with at least 50 homeless students, provide literacy coaches at shelters, and create additional bus routes for homeless children.

A portion of the funding, \$10.3 million, was only for one-year of funding. This amount was used to fund supports for students living in shelters, including 33 DOE social workers to work with these students and guidance counselors at schools with high numbers of homeless students. CCC was disappointed to see that this one-year funding was not continued in the Preliminary Budget. **CCC urges the administration to use the Executive Budget to restore and baseline the \$10.3 million for guidance counselors, and then add an additional \$7.3 million to the Executive Budget to fund a total of 100 DOE social workers (add 67) at schools with high numbers of homeless students.**

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<sup>12</sup> Ben Chapman. "Homelessness surges among NYC schoolkids." New York Daily News. October 17, 2016. Available at <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/exclusive-homelessness-surges-nyc-schoolkids-article-1.2834486>

<sup>13</sup> Independent Budget Office, *Not Reaching the Front Door: Homeless Students Face Many Hurdles on the Way to School*. October 2016. Available at <http://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/not-reaching-the-door-homeless-students-face-many-hurdles-on-the-way-to-school.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Fiscal Year 2014 Mayor's Management Report, Department of Homeless Services. Available at [http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2014/2014\\_mmr.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2014/2014_mmr.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Id.



CCC appreciates that the Mayor's newly announced homelessness plan attempts to better address the needs of homeless students by building 90 new homeless shelters and returning to a borough-based placement system. While this is a step in the right direction, the plan will take until 2023 to be in full effect. Until then, many students will continue to be placed far from their communities and schools of origin, often in hotels that are not appropriate places for families to be living.

To begin to better address the needs of homeless students, CCC urges the administration to reorient the system to be more proactive about helping homeless families with school-aged children, rather than being responsive to parents only after there is a problem identified. CCC suggests the following proposals be considered:

- Better staff PATH so that every parent with school-aged children can meet with an expert trained in education, educational stability, McKinney-Vento, and transportation while at PATH.
- Create a better system to arrange busing/transportation than the current process whereby busing cannot begin to be arranged until after the family is found eligible for shelter. This 10-day eligibility process can take substantially longer for families who are not initially found eligible, and thus leads to a tremendous delay in arranging busing.
- Provide monthly MetroCards (rather than weekly) for families awaiting transportation arrangements.
- Increase the number of DOE staff troubleshooting education issues for school-aged children in temporary housing from the current 8 staff. Increase the number of family assistants who provide aid at shelters to better accommodate families placed in hotels.

**4) Fund and Implement Recommendations from the Leadership Team on School Climate and Discipline**

The Mayor's Leadership Team on School Climate and Discipline released their Phase Two Recommendations in the summer of 2016.<sup>16</sup> These recommendations included strategies to address in-school environment and student behavior to promote a safe learning setting for everyone and ensuring students who misbehave or make a mistake are provided the supports to stay engaged in school for their academic and social well-being. CCC believes the thoughtful recommendations should now be funded and implemented.

**Specifically, CCC urges the administration to fund and implement:**

- a) **\$2.57 million to launch and sustain a Mental Health Support Continuum Pilot in 20 high-needs schools;**
- b) **\$5 million in FY18 to adopt and expand the City Council Restorative Practices Initiative in 100 high-needs schools; and**
- c) **\$1.4 million in FY18 to expand Restorative Practices to 4 high-need school districts (about 180 schools).**

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<sup>16</sup> The Mayor's Leadership Team on School Climate and Discipline. *Maintaining the Momentum: A Plan for Safety and Fairness in Schools*. July 2016. Available at [http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/sclt/downloads/pdf/SCLT\\_Report\\_7-21-16.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/sclt/downloads/pdf/SCLT_Report_7-21-16.pdf).

The recommendation for \$2.57 million for 20 Mental Health Support Continuum Pilots is based on the very high concentration of suspensions, arrests, and summonses in a handful of schools. About ten percent of all New York City Schools account for 41 percent of all suspensions and the vast majority of arrests/summonses.<sup>17</sup> These schools have high rates of students with emotional and psychological conditions and serve a high percentage of students with disabilities. The Mayor's Leadership Team identified the best strategy to address this issue as piloting a mental health network in 20 schools in the South Bronx and Central Brooklyn. The Mayor's Leadership Team laid out a comprehensive set of specific proposals for these 20 pilot schools that all center on providing clinic and evidence-based mental health services to students with identified behavior problems. These programs will directly address some of the most challenging scenarios facing New York's schools in a comprehensive and positive approach that will benefit every student in those schools, provide transformative support to students who are most in need, and provide the framework for scaling the program to other schools through the pilot model.

The recommendation for \$5 million in FY18 to expand the City Council Restorative Practices Initiative to 100 high-needs schools will take a model that has proven its value and effectiveness and bring it to additional schools. We commend the City Council's leadership in funding the initial restorative practices pilot program in 25 schools. The successes provided by this program should now be expanded to additional schools. Continuing to fund and expand the restorative practices model will maximize the effectiveness of these programs as they require time and commitment by all stakeholders to become ingrained and successful, and this expansion will help cement these gains and expand the scope to even more students and schools. We recommend, in line with the Mayor's Leadership Team's recommendation, that the administration fund \$5 million in FY18, \$7.5 million in FY19, and \$10 million in FY20 to sustain and build upon this expansion in the restorative practice model to more New York schools.

Similarly, the recommendation for \$1.4 million to expand Restorative Practices to four high-needs school districts (180 schools) over the next four years will capitalize on the investments already made and expand it for greater effect. We commend the Administration's funding for restorative practices training for staff at all schools in District 18 starting in FY17. We now join the Mayor's Leadership Team in recommending that the administration continue to expand this model to three other high-needs school districts by adding one school district per year, for a total funding amount of \$1.4 million in FY18, \$2.1 million in FY19, and \$2.8 million in FY20. This funding should also include funding at least two restorative practice coordinators (instead of only one) in each district, evaluation and monitoring in each district, and increased staffing in DOE's central and borough offices.

##### **5) Restore and Baseline City Council Initiatives**

The City Council's leadership and commitment to education has been tremendous and instrumental to many thousands of students' opportunity for a high-quality, well-rounded education. We are especially appreciative of the programs and services that the City Council funded last year, many of which the Council has a long history of supporting. We hope to see these programs restored and baselined in the upcoming Executive Budget so that there is no need for the annual budget dance.

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<sup>17</sup> Id.

**We hope to see the following Council education initiatives restored and baselined:**

- \$2.975 million for Educational Programs for Students, which includes \$400,000 for Chess in the Schools, \$275,000 for MOUSE, \$1.55 million for Expanded Schools, Inc., and \$750,000 for the Middle School Quality Initiative in DOE.
- \$500,000 for Child Mind Institute.
- \$1.23 million total for community schools.
- \$1.595 million for the Dropout Prevention and Intervention initiative.
- \$245,000 for the Jill Chaifetz Helpline operated by Advocates for Children.
- \$155,000 for LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum.
- \$1.925 million for Physical Education and Fitness, which includes \$250,000 for C.H.A.M.P.S., \$800,000 for New York Junior Tennis League, and \$1.0 million for the Small Schools Athletic League.
- \$1.3 million for the Restorative Justice Program.
- \$12.74 million for Support for Educators, which includes funding for STEM Teachers' College and Teacher's Choice school supplies.
- \$3.5 million for Urban Advantage.

In conclusion, we greatly appreciate the City Council's commitment to education and seeking to ensure every New York City student receives a high-quality education. We are thankful for the administration also making several key investments in education this year, but hope that the Executive Budget can continue to improve education opportunities through expanded programs and fully restored and baselined funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Advocates for Children of New York**  
Protecting every child's right to learn

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

**Re: Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget - Education**

**March 21, 2017**

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget. My name is Kim Sweet, and I am the Executive Director of Advocates for Children of New York (AFC). For more than 45 years, Advocates for Children has worked with the City's low-income families to ensure a high-quality education for children who face a variety of barriers to academic success. We speak out for students whose needs are often forgotten, such as students with disabilities, immigrant students, students who are homeless, and students with behavioral challenges.

We are encouraged to see that the Preliminary Budget includes a significant investment in upgrading the City's special education data system. It is imperative that New York City be able to track with accuracy whether and when mandated programs and services are being provided to students who need them.

We are also pleased that the Preliminary Budget continues to fund a much-needed program to train and support teachers in kindergarten through second grade on evidence-based practices for teaching children how to read. For FY 2018, full funding was allocated to the second year of the Mayor's Universal Literacy Program, for literacy coaches to be trained in strategies that have been proven effective for struggling readers, including students with a variety of disabilities. Every year, Advocates for Children receives numerous calls from families whose children are having trouble with reading and have to look to private resources to obtain the specialized support they need. Providing literacy coaches in the early elementary grades is helping schools move closer to fulfilling the fundamental responsibility of teaching all students, including students with disabilities, to read.

With respect to areas where more funding is needed, I will focus today on students in temporary housing, as well as school discipline.

**Students in Temporary Housing**

For students in temporary housing, we were dismayed that in the Preliminary Budget, the Administration cut the \$10.3 million in support for students living in shelters that



they had included in FY17. Given the extraordinarily high numbers of students in temporary housing, **we are urging the Administration to baseline that \$10.3 million to support students living in shelters and also add and baseline an additional \$7.3 million.** The additional funding would provide for 67 more DOE social workers for students living in shelters, for a total of at least 100 Bridging the Gap social workers.

The \$10.3 million in this year's budget included \$3.6 million to hire 33 such social workers. Although this program has been in place only a short time, we have already seen anecdotal evidence of promising results. At one school, for example, teachers noted appreciatively that through individual and group counseling, the Bridging the Gap social worker has been able to address the high level of stress faced by some of the students living in shelters, with the result that the students are more available to learn and to interact in a positive way with their peers

During the 2015-16 school year, 34,268 New York City school district students lived in shelters – an increase of 24% since 2010-11. Yet, the only increase in DOE staff devoted to this population was funded through that \$10.3 million. With record numbers of students living in shelters, now is the time for the City to increase its support, not pull it away. We are asking the administration to baseline the \$10.3 million to support students living in shelters and add and baseline an additional \$7.3 million to bring the total of DOE social workers for students living in shelters to 100.

### **School Discipline**

It is also important that the budget include additional resources to address school climate. Although we have seen a very positive drop in the numbers of suspensions, as well as school-based summonses and arrests, we still have far to go. Advocates for Children still receives hundreds of calls a year from families of students facing suspension, and these students are still disproportionately Black or disabled. Indeed, citywide data made public under the Student Safety Act shows continuing disparities in school discipline based on race and disability. Despite the extensive recommendations of the Mayor's Leadership Team on School Climate and Discipline, as well as the Council's own significant investments in expanding restorative practices as an alternative to suspensions, the Preliminary Budget does not contain the funding that is needed to maintain the gains from earlier investments in school discipline reform and support schools that are looking to move away from exclusionary discipline practices.



For FY 2018, we are requesting that the Executive Budget include funding for the following recommendations of the Mayoral Leadership Team on School Climate and Discipline, so we can keep moving forward and not lose the gains we have made:

1. **Pilot a Mental Health Support Continuum in 20 High-Needs Schools** – As recommended by the Leadership Team, this pilot program would create a network of mental health services to supplement existing hospital and social service supports for students and their families in the South Bronx and Central Brooklyn. It would include a partnership with two hospital-based clinics and call-in centers to assist schools with students in crisis, as well as mobile school response teams, school-based behavioral health consultants, training in a proven technique called Collaborative Problem Solving, and program evaluation. The cost would be **\$2.575 million for FY18**, with funding over the next three years to total \$7.725 million.
2. **Expand Restorative Practices** – Schools implementing restorative practices report that although it is hard work, it is improving the climate in their schools and reducing unnecessary exclusion of students from class. We ask for expansion of restorative practices on two fronts.
  - First, we ask to continue expansion district by district. For FY 17, the Administration provided funding to train staff at all schools in District 18 on restorative practices. **We request that the Executive Budget include \$1.4 million in FY 2018 to continue the good work in District 18 and expand to one other high-needs district, with two restorative practices coordinators assigned to each of the districts.** We would then like to see the addition of one district for each of the next two years, so the budget item would increase to \$2.8 million by FY 2020 and reach four districts and about 180 schools in total.
  - Second, we are requesting that the Administration allocate **\$5 million in FY 2018 (which would grow to \$7.5 million in FY2019 and \$10 million in FY2020) to adopt and expand the Restorative Practices Initiative that has been generously funded by the Council for the past two years.** For FY 18, this money would support the continuation of restorative practices in the 25 schools now funded by the Council and expand the program to another 25 schools. Over the next three years, this program would scale up to 100 schools. The funding would allow for a full-time, school-based restorative practices coordinator in each school, as well as provide schools with professional development designed to



improve school climate and build capacity to implement restorative practices.

Finally, with respect to school discipline, we also support investment in the Positive Learning Collaborative. Created by the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) in collaboration with the DOE, the PLC is a proven way to decrease suspensions, improve social and academic outcomes, and strengthen school communities. This program takes a collaborative, multi-tiered approach to equip educators with the tools they need to prevent and respond to students in emotional crisis. Direct on-site support and coaching is a critical part of the model to help school staff develop and implement the skills they learn and the positive behavior systems needed to achieve sustainability. This model is currently used in 15 New York City schools with impressive outcomes. **We recommend that the Executive Budget include \$750,000 in FY 2018 for the UFT to hire five additional full-time behavior specialists to grow this effective model from 15 to 30 schools.** We further recommend that the City continue to expand this model over the next two fiscal years, resulting in a total investment of \$4.5 million over 3 years to expand the Positive Learning Collaborative to 65 schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. We look forward to working with the Administration and the City Council as the budget process moves forward. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



**Planned Parenthood of New York City  
Fiscal Year 2018 Expense Request Testimony  
NYC Council Committee on Education Oversight Hearing  
March 21, 2017**

Good afternoon. I am Elizabeth Adams, Director of Government Relations at Planned Parenthood of New York City (PPNYC). I am pleased to submit testimony for today's Education Committee oversight hearing. Planned Parenthood of New York City thanks the Chair of the Committee, Honorable Council Member Daniel Dromm for his leadership in convening this hearing, as well as Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and the entire Committee for their continued support of comprehensive education.

Planned Parenthood of New York City is a leading sexuality education provider that offers education, training and outreach to more than 25,000 youth, adults and professionals annually. Our programs are grounded in the belief that education should support a person's whole self and well-being and meet the needs of all people. In 2016 alone, PPNYC reached more than 16,000 young people through education and outreach programs in schools, after school programs, and through work with community-based organizations. All of our curricula include components on healthy relationships, consent, and gender identity and seek to create an affirming space for all members of our community to thrive.

PPNYC's education programs are committed to reaching young people and caring adults in the communities they live, and by those they can trust and identify with. Our Youth Health Promoters are highly trained peer educators who engage in outreach in their communities and through social media, and conduct workshops on teens' rights and access to sexual and reproductive health care. Similarly, PPNYC's Adult Role Models (ARMs) are peer educators who engage parents and caring adults on communication skills and talking with their children about sex and sexuality, helping to strengthen parent-child relationships. PPNYC's Training Institute provides trainings and resources to professionals in all five boroughs, helping to expand the number of trusted adults young people can turn to for accurate sexual health information. Lastly, PPNYC's Promotores de Salud (PdS) work to bridge the gap between their respective communities and the health care system through direct neighborhood outreach and education, helping to demystify the health care process and reduce barriers immigrant communities face in obtaining health services more than ever.

Our experience as a sexuality education and service provider shows us firsthand the gaps that remain in New York City's health education, which has a significant impact on young people's well-being. The New York City Department of Education (DOE) currently requires one semester of health education in middle school and one semester in high school and the Office of School Wellness Programs calls for a portion of each of these semesters to cover sexuality education. However, due to a lack of accountability, adequate resources, and enforcement, students' experiences vary widely when it comes to sexual health learning.

The DOE recently released two reports on the state of health education in New York City and found that many middle and high school students are either not receiving the recommended sexual health education, or are being taught by unlicensed and untrained educators. According to the DOE's findings, almost half of 2016 graduated eighth graders (43%) did not receive a single semester of health during middle school,



in violation of state law.<sup>1</sup> Without clear enforcement and assessment measures, schools are not held accountable for failing to teach sexual health education. Moreover, while there are 15,397 instructors assigned to teach health education in NYC public schools, only 153 are licensed health educators and only 7.6% have attended any training on sexual health education in the last two years. As a trusted provider of sexual health education, PPNYC finds it concerning that so few instructors teaching health have received sexual health training and even fewer are licensed, as required by both the state and city.

Schools need to be adequately resourced to ensure all students can receive accurate and trusted health information. PPNYC educators partner with schools across the city to provide sexuality education and know firsthand that too often students receive false and stigmatizing information from the internet, their peers, or in classrooms, which can go uncorrected without a trusted or trained educator to provide support. The DOE's findings reveal a glaring need for dedicated funding to hire more health educators, train current teachers in sexual health, and implement accountability measures so that schools can provide the health education that students deserve and that is required by state law.

The need for comprehensive sexuality education in New York City is more urgent than ever. Rates of sexually transmitted infections are increasing dramatically among young people,<sup>2</sup> one in three New York City teens report experiencing abuse in their romantic relationships,<sup>3</sup> and LGBT youth are significantly more likely to experience sexual assault and bullying than their peers, according to the CDC.<sup>4</sup> In addition to lessons on anatomy, pregnancy, and STDs and HIV prevention and treatment, comprehensive sexuality education teaches communication skills, respect of others' values, cultures and identities, positive body image, healthy relationships and consent, and creates spaces for students to learn about anti-racism, inclusion, respect and acceptance in culturally responsive ways. PPNYC commends Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito for her commitment to fostering school environments that support young people's ability to learn safely and address root causes of bias and intolerance in the classroom. And we applaud her call to enact comprehensive K-12 sexuality education in all schools, as a key component of positive youth development, as cited in her 2017 State of the City address. In our current political landscape, New York City has a responsibility to serve as a national leader on bold and inclusive sexual health education. **As such, we respectfully request the Council and Department of Education's support in a new funding allocation to implement comprehensive sexual health education in all grades.**

PPNYC is a proud member of the Sexuality Education Alliance of New York City (SEANYC), a coalition of community-building organizations advocating for K-12 comprehensive sexuality education that is age appropriate, medically accurate, gender-inclusive and culturally competent. Studies have shown that positive youth development education, including lessons on healthy relationships and communication, is crucial in helping young people to make health-promoting decisions and feel more positively connected to schools and that sexuality education specifically reduces risky sexual behaviors,

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1 Health Data. Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, NYC Department of Education. Accessed March 16, 2017. <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/city/publicaffairs/Health+Data.htm>

2 "2015 STD Surveillance Report Press Release." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2016. Accessed December 16, 2016. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/2016/std-surveillance-report-2015-press-release.html>.

3 "Statistics." Day One. Accessed December 16, 2016. <http://www.dayoneny.org/statistics>.

4 "First National Study of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Students' Health Finds Higher Levels of Physical/Sexual Violence and Bullying Than Peers." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, August 2016. Accessed December 5, 2016. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/2016/lgb-youth-report-press-release.html>.

5 pgs. 29-31: [http://www.equitycampaign.org/i/a/document/12557\\_EquityMattersVol6\\_Web03082010.pdf](http://www.equitycampaign.org/i/a/document/12557_EquityMattersVol6_Web03082010.pdf)



absenteeism, and student dropout rates.<sup>6</sup> SEANYC’s youth leadership arm, the Youth Advisory Council, is comprised of New York City students from SEANYC’s member organizations who facilitate conversations with their peers about sexuality education, host community engagement events and participate in advocacy campaigns across the city. Members of the Council share firsthand knowledge of gaps in New York City’s provision of sexuality education and opportunities for improvement.

During outreach led by the Youth Advisory Council, New York City students provided input on the state of sexuality education in New York City schools. One student said:

“I feel uncomfortable talking to my parents about these things so I mainly search it up. If I DID have a sex ed class, I’d ask my teacher.”

– 10th Grader, Queens Public School

Other students offered concrete feedback on how to improve sexuality education in New York City schools. Their specific suggestions include:

“Provide sex ed class throughout your school years and not just one semester.”

– 12th Grader, Manhattan Public School

“Go beyond heteronormative teachings and be more open about asking questions.”

– 11th Grader, Brooklyn Public School

“Expand the topics taught and get actual sexual and reproductive health educators.”

– 12th Grader, Bronx Public School

New York City needs comprehensive sexuality education enacted in every school. In addition to greater teacher training and school accountability measures, New York City must expand sexual health education to all grades to meet the needs of students. Cities across the country, including Boston, Chicago, and Broward County have enacted comprehensive K-12 sexuality education programs. It is time for New York City to join them.

A clear public policy that is sufficiently funded and includes an achievable timeline for implementation of K-12 standards and accountability measures for enforcement and evaluation will help to ensure that every school has the ability to provide supportive and inclusive education to all of its students. **Planned Parenthood of New York City respectfully requests the Council’s support for Fiscal Year ‘18 budgetary funding to implement and enhance sexuality education in all New York City schools.**

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<sup>6</sup> Walker SC, Kerns SEU, Lyon AR, et al. (2010). Impact of School-Based Health Center Use on Academic Outcomes. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 46: 251-257.

**Fiscal Year 2018 Expense Request Testimony  
NYC Council Committee on Education Oversight Hearing  
March 21, 2017**

**Amanda R. Matos  
Government Relations Specialist  
Young Women's Advisory Council at Girls for Gender Equity**

Good afternoon. My name is Amanda Matos and I am the Government Relations Specialist at Girls for Gender Equity. I collaborate directly with the Young Women's Advisory Council at GGE in partnership with the Young Women's Initiative.

Thank you to Education Committee Chair Daniel Dromm for convening this hearing, the Speaker of the City Council and the entire committee for their continued support of comprehensive education. Today the need for funding for comprehensive sexual health education in New York City public schools is urgent.

GGE is a member of the Sexuality Education Alliance of New York City (SEANYC), a broad coalition that advocates for comprehensive, K-12 sexuality education that meets the National Sexuality Education Standards for all New York City youth. SEANYC aims to foster safe learning environments where students can access the information and skills they need to make healthy decisions and fulfill meaningful and productive lives.

As an anti-violence and education organization, Girls for Gender Equity is committed to enacting comprehensive sexuality education in NYC schools. Through our programming and advocacy, we are committed to the physical, psychological, social, and economic development of girls and women. Through education, organizing and physical fitness, GGE encourages communities to remove barriers and create opportunities for girls and women to live self-determined lives. Comprehensive sexuality education not only improves health outcomes of young people by equipping them with medically accurate information on their reproductive health, but it also decreases sexual violence and harassment that disproportionately impacts cisgender and transgender girls of color and gender nonconforming youth.

Stated in the Young Women's Initiative report that we co-created with City Council in May 2016, 40% of Black and Latina girls in New York City do not have access to support systems that would enable them to successfully complete high school. Six out of ten pregnancies in New York City are unplanned, and teen pregnancy rates are highest in the Bronx, where some of the country's poorest districts are located. The correlation between race, class and education standards cannot go unnoticed. The Bronx has also experienced a steep increase in new HIV diagnoses among women, specifically Black women. Sexuality education is not the only solution to these problems, but it can educate young people at an earlier age about consent, bystander intervention, and safe sex while simultaneously destigmatizing these experiences and holding educators accountable in creating support systems for their students beyond academia. There are only 153 licensed health educators in NYC public schools and this number is unacceptable.

A clear public policy that is sufficiently funded and includes an achievable timeline for implementation of K-12 standards and accountability measures for enforcement and evaluation will help to ensure that every school has the ability to provide supportive and inclusive education to all of its students. As such, **we respectfully request the Council's support for Fiscal Year '18 budgetary funding to implement and enhance sexuality education in all New York City schools.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.



THE CENTER FOR ARTS EDUCATION®

**Testimony for the  
New York City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing – Committee on Education  
Delivered by Dr. Jerry James, Director of Teaching & Learning  
March 21, 2017**

My name is Jerry James, and I am the Director of Teaching and Learning for The Center for Arts Education. Thank you to Chair Dromm, the staff, and the rest of the Committee on Education for inviting us to testify here today.

Our work is in three areas related to arts learning for NYC's 1.1 million public school students: Learning opportunities for public school students and their parents, professional training for school leadership, teachers, artists and advocacy for policies, and funding to support the arts and arts education. We are a nonprofit that celebrated our 20<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2016. We are based in Manhattan and proudly operate programs in over 150 schools located in every borough.

I am very happy to be here today while you are working on the FY18 budget and appreciate that you are taking the time to listen to educators and advocates from organizations like The Center for Arts Education. We share a great interest and commitment to being stewards of the resources required to ensure public school students receive a well-rounded education. My focus will be on arts education which research shows leads to improved social, emotional, and academic outcomes, increased attendance and graduation rates, and expanded career opportunities and skills for our students, leaders and workers of tomorrow.

First, thank you all for your leadership over the past few years. Thanks to this Council, and this administration, funding for arts education and cultural institutions increased substantially since 2014. This means that more teachers have been hired to teach in our public schools, and more students are

learning the performing and visual arts and have gained access to the resources for a well-rounded education. This has also translated to more New Yorkers visiting our cultural institutions and more arts learning taking place both inside and outside of our classrooms.

The new four-year annual \$23 million funding allocation that the Council and Mayor agreed to in 2014 is positively effecting classroom learning experiences of tens of thousands of students, some of whom have an art teacher for the first time. The funding is alleviating some of the real inequities in the delivery of educational services including in arts education.

Again, the Council did the right thing proposing the funding line and ensuring it was baselined for four years. We should renew this funding and expand this work. We should invest more in arts learning. We must continue our work to close the equity and learning gap.

Arts education has long been established as an essential part of the public school curriculum. In its 2011 report *Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America's Future Through Creative Schools* by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, then-Secretary of Education Arne Duncan noted that, "the arts significantly boost student achievement, reduce discipline problems and increase the odds that students will go on to graduate from college. It demonstrates that arts education can play an important role in narrowing the achievement gap between minorities and whites." The report also documented that children who were motivated to practice a specific art form developed improved attention and general intelligence, which can help lead to improvement in other cognitive domains.

This past December, the New York City Department of Education released its *Annual Arts in Schools Report* covering the 2015-2016 school year which reflected the second year of data available since the city implemented the annual arts education funding initiative. It reports modest and grand gains:

- Funding for school-based arts education increased by almost \$32 million last year over the previous year. This reflects not only the annual \$23 million financial investment, but also

principals committing additional funds from their own budgets for increased arts programming;

- There was a citywide increase of 113 arts teachers working in public schools last year. This was in addition to 175 arts teachers who were hired during the 2014-15 academic year. Many of these teachers are now teaching in schools that did not previously have an arts teacher;
- There was a 50% increase in the number of eighth grade students who completed two arts courses in two different arts disciplines by a certified arts teacher, as mandated by New York State Law.

As you might recall, the lack of arts teachers and cultural partnerships in many city schools, specifically in the South Bronx, Central Brooklyn, and East Harlem, was a key disparity brought to light in Comptroller Stringer's report issued in 2014 and was a major catalyst for the city's financial investment.

The percentage of schools that have at least one arts and cultural partnership continues to make slow progress, with the increase from 84% in 2013-2014 to 87% in 2014-2015 remaining steady in 2015-16 at 87%. The goal of every school having at least one cultural partnership is reasonable and within sight.

The hiring and placement of the new arts teachers at schools lacking arts teachers represents a very strategic and targeted approach by the Mayor, Chancellor, and Department of Education's Office of Arts and Special Projects to address these long-standing inequities. We look forward to the progress that will be made with the addition of more than 250 new arts teachers over the last two academic years of the funding. This momentum must continue to ensure all students receive the arts learning they are entitled to.

Access to the arts does not end in our city's classrooms, and thanks to the entire City Council and Administration, because of the funding for the New York City ID, hundreds of thousands of people, including families with children, have gained free and discounted access to our Cultural and Heritage

Sites. According to a report recently released by Mayor de Blasio, in the first year and a half of the program alone, more than 400,000 memberships with cultural institutions were initiated using IDNYC.

Additionally, thanks to this Council and Administration, we can soon look forward to New York City's first Cultural Plan. The cultural plan and its process is a tremendous opportunity for all the branches of the arts and cultural sector to help drive good governance, build strong communities, address issues of inequity and lack of participation, and strengthen already successful programs that serve millions. As our Executive Director, Lisa Robb, testified before the Cultural Affairs Committee last month, The Center for Arts Education supports a cultural plan that holds this as a core recommendation: every year, in every school, every student receives the arts instruction they are entitled to by law.

We appreciate the chance that producing the Cultural Plan has given organizations like ours who work with those who, while they live in a city rich with cultural offerings, may not be able to take advantage of the resources around them. By asking people what they need and want to see in their city and their neighborhoods, we can make sure that culture and heritage can truly be appreciated and accessed by everyone. Additionally, by including arts education in the plan, it is an acknowledgement that this is an issue of importance to all New Yorkers.

And in a final note, in addition to supporting this important educational funding line, CAE joins New Yorkers in calling on the Council to support an increase of \$40 million for the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) budget. Arts and culture are a hallmark of life in New York City and a vital part of what makes New York a global capital of arts and commerce. The city's rich array of arts and cultural organizations should be an invaluable part of the education of our all our public school students. Almost 1000 organizations are directly funded by DCLA and many provide arts education services and experiences for students and New Yorkers of all ages. The work these grants support help to improve social and academic outcomes and school culture, while also providing our students with invaluable introductions to careers in the arts and creative sector. With an increase in funding currently funded



organizations can expand their educational offerings and the DCLA can also offer funding to a wider array of deserving groups and artists thereby expanding equity and access citywide.

Working together, we can address these inequities and close the access and experience gaps too many residents experience. Increasing the education budget will not only signal New York City's dedication and investment in arts education in our public schools, it will also help ensure that every classroom has certified arts educators to bring the arts and creativity to life for its students.

On behalf of the board and staff at The Center for Arts Education and the tens of thousands of students, educators, and families we serve annually we thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you Chair Dromm and all the other members of the Education Committee for your service to New York.



March 21, 2017

Chair Dromm and the Members of the Committee on Education  
New York City Council

Good afternoon, Chair Dromm and the members of the Committee on Education. My name is William Crow, and I am the Educator in Charge overseeing Teaching and Learning at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I am thrilled to present testimony on how The Met has worked in collaboration with the Department of Education and the City Council to strengthen education for all New York City schoolchildren and families. The Museum offers some 28,000 programs each year to an audience of 700,000. Last year we welcomed over 136,000 students from New York City through our School Visits program, and offered professional learning programs for over 5,000 educators, principals and school administrators.

I'm sure you will agree that these are impressive numbers, but I stress to you the deep impact and even life-changing transformation that occurs with each and every individual when cultural institutions, school communities and young people work together to achieve our shared goal of student achievement. While in the past some considered a trip to a museum an enrichment activity, or a "field trip" to reward students in the spring, today we know that museums and cultural institutions are critical partners as we aim for young people to grow into thoughtful, critical, engaged, and participatory citizens.

Recent empirical studies show that even a single visit to a cultural institution can influence students' content knowledge, critical thinking, and even the ability to take the perspective of others. National organizations such as the National Art Education Association is forming a research agenda that examines the role of museums as they partner with schools in the development of students' 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity.

At the Met, we offer a wide array of opportunities for young people—from drop-in Career nights for teens, to our bi-annual teen night, "Teens Take the Met" in partnership with DYCD, to CASA programs, and internships and mentoring opportunities for young people.

**The Metropolitan  
Museum of Art**

1000 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10028  
[metmuseum.org](http://metmuseum.org)

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I know that I speak for many of my museum colleagues in the City when I say that we celebrate and support the vision proposed by Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña to tap the City's cultural institutions as partners in student achievement. Museums are uniquely positioned to provide professional learning opportunities, drop-in programs for teens, in-school services to students, family engagement activities, and programs and resources for learners of all abilities. But to do this, our schools need the resources and support from the City to take advantage of these opportunities.

At the Met, we work closely with the leadership at the NYC Department of Education: The Office of the Arts and Special Projects, the Social Studies team, the Borough Field Offices, the Curriculum and Professional Learning division, Family and Community Engagement, District 75, District 79, and many others. As we plan programs or create resources for educators, principals, school leaders, students or other constituencies, we have deep and ongoing conversations to align goals, determine teaching strategies, and create measures that will tell us if we have been successful.

As you consider the financial resources that are allocated to the New York City Department of Education, I urge you to keep our City's cultural institutions front of mind as essential partners. The cultural sector truly values the Council's support. Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

William B. Crow, PhD  
Educator in Charge, Teaching and Learning  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Chairman Dromm, Members of the Committee on Education: my name is Santina Protopapa, and I am the Director of Educational Partnerships at Lincoln Center Education, the educational arm of Lincoln Center. I am honored to be here to discuss some of the many ways that Lincoln Center Education serves students in underserved communities throughout the five boroughs.

At Lincoln Center Education, we know that deep engagement with the arts can transform schools and communities. This was proven by the University of Pennsylvania's recently released social impact study, which revealed that the clustering of cultural assets in New York City's neighborhoods significantly improves quality of life for New Yorkers. This study showed that in lower-income neighborhoods, cultural resources are "significantly" linked to better health, schooling, and security. For example, students with increased access to cultural resources demonstrated an 18% increase in scores on English and math exams.

Many of Lincoln Center Education's school programs help communities realize these important social benefits. Our programs are designed to help students build critical thinking skills that can be applied across all school subjects and in the modern workplace. Our approach centers on a teaching method that uses the study of works of art in rich learning experiences both on our campus and in the classroom; serving over 25,000 students at over 200 schools citywide. Through our work, we prepare students to Think Like an Artist, equipping them with the critical thinking, problem solving and imagination they need to perform in our dynamic, evolving world.

Our Arts in the Middle school program is one of many examples of this work. A few years ago, after learning that 22% of New York City middle schools had little to no arts programming, many of which were located in low-income communities, Lincoln Center partnered with the Department of Education to bring our Arts in the Middle program to more underperforming middle schools. This program provides critical access to the arts for approximately 4,100 middle school students citywide. Our partnership with each school is catalyzing positive change for students, educators and the communities surrounding each school by increasing student and family engagement in the arts, and building school capacity to implement and sustain arts education programs.

In addition, Lincoln Center Education is preparing the next generation of arts educators to serve in the neediest public schools citywide. In partnership with CUNY's Hunter College School of Education, the Department of Education and the United Federation of Teachers, our Lincoln Center Scholars Alternative Certification program fast-tracks placement of high-quality arts teachers in public schools with little or no arts programming. To date, this fully-subsidized graduate degree program has placed 45 certified arts teachers who serve over 12,000 public school students citywide.

We want to thank the Council for its support of this important work. With that in mind, we urge the Education Committee to support the CIG's request for a \$40 million increase to the Department of Cultural Affairs budget. We also ask that the Committee support Lincoln Center's FY18 requests for more funding to enhance our education and community programs. This funding would be leveraged by Lincoln Center into significant private dollars, and thereby enhance our ongoing efforts to improve education and quality of life for students citywide.

On behalf of Lincoln Center, thank you for this opportunity to testify. We look forward to continuing to partner with the Council to make high quality arts education more accessible citywide.



Fiscal Year 2018 Expense Request Testimony  
NYC Council Committee on Education Oversight Hearing

Good afternoon. I am Deborah Levine, Deputy Executive Director of Community Development at ACRIA. Thank you to Education Committee Chair Daniel Dromm for convening this hearing, the Speaker of the City Council and the entire Committee for their continued support of comprehensive education. The New York City Council and the Department of Education (DOE) have long shown their commitment to funding public education. Today, the need for funding for comprehensive sexual health education in New York City public schools is more urgent than ever.

ACRIA and its Love Heals Youth Education Programs are members of the Sexuality Education Alliance of New York City (SEANYC), a broad coalition that advocates for comprehensive, K-12 sexuality education that strives to meet the National Sexuality Education Standards for all New York City youth. SEANYC aims to foster safe learning environments where students can access the information and skills they need to make healthy decisions and fulfill meaningful and productive lives.

**The Love Heals Youth Education Program** works across the five boroughs through strategic partnerships with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the New York City Department of Education, and over 700 schools and community groups to provide the urgent, often unmet, HIV prevention and health promotion needs of underserved and under-resourced communities, especially among their youth. Love Heals was founded in 1992 as an independent organization in memory of Alison Gertz, who died of AIDS that same year. ACRIA acquired Love Heals in 2016 as its fourth program. In its 25-year history, Love Heals has reached over 700,000 youth, parents, guardians, community groups and other youth allies through sexual health education, HIV prevention, and leadership development trainings and presentations. ACRIA is committed to continuing and bolstering Love Heals' history of providing comprehensive sexuality education in NYC schools.

The New York City DOE currently requires one semester of health education in middle school and one semester in high school and the Office of School Wellness Programs calls for a portion of each of these semesters to cover sexuality education. However, due to a lack of accountability, adequate resources, and enforcement, students' experiences vary widely when it comes to sexual health learning.

The DOE recently released reports revealing that many students are not receiving even the bare minimum of recommended sexual health education. Almost half of 2016 graduated eighth graders (43%) did not receive a single semester of health during middle school, as mandated by state law. Throughout all public schools, there are only 153 licensed health educators in New York City and only 7.6% of all health education instructors have attended any training on sexual health education in the last two years. Students are often not learning sexual health, or being taught by health instructors that are unlicensed and untrained. Schools need the resources to hire more health educators, train current teachers and implement accountability measures so that schools can provide the health education students deserve and that is required by state law.

Sexuality education must also be expanded to all grades. Cities across the country, including Boston, Chicago, and Broward County have already enacted comprehensive K-12 sexuality education programs.

# ACRIA

New York City is lagging behind. SEANYC recommends that Department of Education Chancellor Carmen Farina pass a Chancellor's Regulation requiring comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality education that reflects the National Sexuality Education Standards for all students from kindergarten through 12th grade.

A clear public policy that is sufficiently funded and includes an achievable timeline for implementation of K-12 standards and accountability measures for enforcement and evaluation will help to ensure that every school has the ability to provide supportive and inclusive education to all of its students. As such, Love Heals respectfully requests the Council's support for Fiscal Year '18 budgetary funding to implement and enhance sexuality education in all New York City schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to take any questions.





**Testimony of Terry Kim, Senior Policy Analyst, Children's Aid  
Joint Oversight Hearing on Preliminary FY 18 Budget  
Committee on Finance & Committee on Education  
Tuesday March 21, 2017**

Good Afternoon, my name is Terry Kim and I am the senior policy analyst for the Office of Public Policy at The Children's Aid Society (Children's Aid). I would like to thank Chair Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, Chair Daniel Dromm and the members of the Finance and Education Committees for the opportunity to give testimony on the Mayor's preliminary budget for FY 2018 and its effect on the state of education in our city.

For more than 160 years, Children's Aid has been committed to ensuring that there are no boundaries to the aspirations of young people, and no limits to their potential. We are leading a comprehensive counterattack on the obstacles that threaten kids' achievements in school and in life. Success and strong well-being are contingent upon positive outcomes in four life domains: education, health and wellness, social-emotional development, and family stabilization. At Children's Aid, we are teachers and social workers, coaches and health care providers. We know what it takes to ensure children grow up strong and healthy, and ready to thrive in school and life.

We have also constructed a continuum of services, positioned every step of the way throughout childhood that builds well-being and prepares young people to succeed at every level of education and every milestone of life. Today our over 2,000 full and part time staff members empower nearly 50,000 children, youth and their families through our network of more than 50 locations including early childhood education centers, public schools, community centers and community health clinics in four New York City neighborhoods – Harlem, Washington Heights, the South Bronx and the north shore of Staten Island.

As an agency that is committed to advocacy and advancing policies that dismantle the underlying factors connected to poverty, we are a member of many coalitions and we partner with government on multiple initiatives. For example, Children's Aid is a member of the Coalition for Community School Excellence, Campaign for Children, New York City Youth Alliance, Campaign for Summer Jobs, and also a member of the Restore Opportunity Now coalition.

At Children's Aid, we believe that the journey to college and a successful independent life begins before a child is born. That belief is the bedrock of our cradle to college continuum of services and having a strong educational foundation is critical to that success and ask that the City make the following investments:

**Increase of 12% on all City human services contracts**

**We are calling for immediate investment in the nonprofit sector, a sector that serves 2.5 million clients a year, employs 180,000 people and is an essential part of what makes New York the great city it is. This would stop the closure of essential services that make New York a safe, diverse, and inclusive sanctuary for all. To ensure New York is able to respond to policies that impact all of us, we**



ask the City Council to urge the Mayor to include support for a 12% across-the-board increase in your budget response and sustain the organizations and programs serving communities across the city. Besides the recent 2.5% cost-of-living adjustment and wage floor increase, our sector has seen no increase in almost 10 years. Yet our costs increase each year. We have leveraged state and federal funding as well as philanthropic support, however our sector is at a breaking point and nonprofits, large and small can no longer carry the deficit of our city contracts.

**Children’s Aid in FY 17, currently has 115 government contracts and 73 of those contracts or 63% are through the city. Our government contracts total \$60 million or nearly only half of our \$124.7 million, annual budget. In FY 16, we had a \$12.5 million deficit on our city contracts, which is 10% of our annual budget. Without this investment, we will not be able to provide critical interventions, promote well-being, and most alarmingly, will not be able to provide the services essential to protecting and developing the potential of New York’s next leaders and advocates.**

### **Sustain 150 Community Schools Citywide**

For 25 years, Children’s Aid has operated community schools in partnership with the New York City Department of Education. We believe that community schools are a strategy to remove the barriers to learning that get in the way of children and youth being able to succeed academically in school. We integrate expanded learning programs, comprehensive health services (physical, mental health, dental, vision and reproductive health), and family engagement strategies into a school building so that school staff can focus on teaching and children and youth can focus on learning—leading to improved academic outcomes. A study conducted by the Finance Project measured the social return of investment (SROI) of Children’s Aid community schools—and the results were promising. The report highlighted that for every \$1 spent in one community school in Washington Heights, it yielded \$10.30 in savings.<sup>1</sup> Through the National Center for Community Schools (NCCS), we provide ongoing technical assistance and training nationally and locally to schools, school districts, and intermediaries interested in implementing the community school strategy.

**Currently, Children’s Aid partners with 22 community schools in New York City serving nearly 10,000 K-12 students, seven of which are under the mayor’s community school initiative.**

Community schools under the mayor’s initiative are demonstrating progress and are currently funded through a variety of dedicated community schools funding streams like Attendance Improvement and Dropout Prevention (AIDP) and Renewal, which all must be sustained. In the South Bronx, Fannie Lou Hamer High School’s academic support services and tutoring model has resulted in a 25% increase of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders completing ten or more credits in a single year and a 4% increase in cumulative class GPA. Across our community schools, we have implemented The Children’s Aid Society Success Mentor Initiative. Success Mentors work with chronically absent students who miss school two or more days a month, to address the barriers keeping them from going to school every day- and to help them reach their educational outcomes. Due to the targeted outreach of our Success Mentors program, over 50% of chronically absent K-8<sup>th</sup> grade mentees improve their attendance during the school year.

**Recommendation: We recommend the continuation of existing funding for 150 community schools citywide.**

### **Expand the New York City Community Schools Initiative to include all statewide grantees**

We are extremely pleased that advocacy efforts by community school partners statewide resulted in increased state investments in community schools through the Foundation Aid Community Schools Set Aside. Reflecting the high profile and high stakes of the community schools effort in New York City

currently underway, it is critical that the City maintain a strong investment in the 25 Community School Grant Initiative (CSGI) grantees in New York City that received funding through the state. Beginning in 2013 two cohorts of three year grants were awarded to community-based organizations who affirmatively chose the community school model through a state request for proposal. Today 25 grantees in New York City have built strong partnerships in schools and their surrounding communities and have a track record of making it work because of these grants.

**Children's Aid partners with six community schools through the Community Schools Grant Initiative (one in Cohort 1 and five in Cohort 2).** Through this grant, we have successfully implemented City Connects, a national program that provides each child in a school a tailored set of supports and opportunities to address the out-of-school factors that interfere with learning. In the 2015-2016 school year, 1,678 Children's Aid students in our community schools received 5,239 services, which included health/medical, academic support, and afterschool. Indicators suggest students are on track for long-term positive outcomes. Furthermore, a study by Teachers College, Columbia University assessed the costs and benefits of City Connects, including the costs of services to which children and families are connected, and found that every \$1 invested yielded \$3 in benefits.<sup>2</sup>

These schools are sources of learning and have developed strategies and best practices from which other school principals and community partners throughout New York City can benefit from. The community schools strategy, like all effective approaches that produce lasting change in school culture and student performance, requires more than three years to achieve significant academic outcomes. Last year, New York City merged the 12 Cohort 1 CSGI grantees in the citywide initiative. At the end of June this year, 13 Cohort 2 CSGI grantees will lose their community schools funding.

**Recommendation: Allocate \$4.2 million of the expected \$60 million in state Foundation Aid Schools Set-Aside committed to New York City be directed towards renewing 12 Cohort 1 Community School Grant Initiative (CSGI) schools currently in the citywide initiative and integrating 13 Cohort 2 Community School Grant Initiative (CSGI) schools for a minimum of one year.** Additionally, we strongly urge that the Department of Education develop and publish a sustainability plan to ensure their commitment to expand the community schools initiative includes ongoing funding for these 25 CSGI community schools.

#### **Safeguard funding streams that community schools leverage**

With our community schools work we've found that several targeted services or strategies when implemented well succeed in alleviating the barriers to learning for children. After school and summer programs play an essential role in keeping children engaged and safe during non-school hours in addition to being a critical support for working families. School's Out New York City (SONYC) & COMPASS initiatives have been a model of what an afterschool system can and should look like to serve children, youth and families with high-quality programs. The program's shared emphasis on academic skills enhancement, cultural enrichment, sports, recreation, community engagement, and leadership development offer children and adolescents the best of both the youth development and education worlds. **For the 2016-2017 school year, Children's Aid will serve just over 2,500 young people in after school programs across 15 DYCD-funded sites and 3 council-funded programs in elementary and middle schools, and community centers in our targeted communities.**

To ensure that high quality services are provided, we employ more than 160 full and part-time employees. All Children's Aid after school program sites include a full-time site director who, among other things, ensures that the program site is safe and organized. Our part-time employees are youth workers who are often local college or high school students; to education coordinators who are certified teachers who provide tutoring and support the planning of the youth workers; and

community educators from other local community-based organizations that specialize in leadership development, sports, the arts, etc., are essential to our program quality and design. Many of these employees are from the community or have graduated from the very program in which they're working.

We appreciate that the Mayor's FY 2018 Preliminary Budget included \$15 million for SONYC middle summer programs for nearly 22,800 middle school students, however, the current funding does not go far enough to ensure that all 34,000 middle schools have access to services. We currently operate SONYC programs at six sites across Washington Heights, East Harlem, and the Bronx, serving over 550 students during the summer.

**Recommendation: We request that a baseline of \$15 million be added in the Preliminary Budget for summer programs for 22,800 middle school students. Restore and baseline full funding so all 34,000 SONYC middle school participants can have summer programming.**

The Mayor's Preliminary budget did not include funding for the 3,400 COMPASS elementary slots that were covered by City Council discretionary funding in FY 2017. Furthermore, we are concerned about the rate differential between the slots. Currently, the city's COMPASS elementary school programs are funded at \$3,200 per student, which includes funds for summer programming but the elementary programs funded through the City Council's discretionary process (based on when they were awarded a contract) are funded at \$2,800 per student. We want to make sure that all programs are funded at the same rate to ensure that they have the resources to provide the highest quality program for children.

**Recommendation: We urge that \$16 million for COMPASS Elementary slots be restored in addition to an increase in capacity. Also, we request an additional \$8.8 million to ensure that all elementary COMPASS after-school slots funded by the City Council are paid at the \$3,200 rate.**

We know that Children with access to high quality early learning programs are more likely to graduate school attend college. **Our early childhood programs currently serve 1,200 children and their families across 14 sites in both school and community based centers. Many of our families with children from 0-5 years old directly benefit from Early Learn programs.** In addition to afterschool, expanded learning opportunities, and early childhood programs, community schools increase access to medical and mental health.

School-based health clinics (SBHCs) are a proven strategy that integrate primary medical, preventative, dental, vision, mental health services for children and reproductive health services for youth in their schools. For many children, SBHCs are their primary medical home. We know from experience that if children need medical attention they more than likely will not attend school (contributing to chronic absence) or if they are in school will not be able to focus on learning. The presence of SBHCs in school settings has not only shown to be fiscally prudent but overall has the potential to save on the future healthcare costs for youth. **Children's Aid operates five SBHCs, serving nearly 4,500 students and in 2012 we estimated that we prevented 573 emergency room visits and saved \$974,000 in costs to the city.** Also, this is one of the rare school-based programs that receives a state match—for every 64 cents the City funds, the state contributes 36 cents. And we are grateful to have this funding. However, operational costs can often challenge the ability of a SBHC to stay afloat. Although SBHCs can bill insurance and the state to be reimbursed by the state there are still costs that are not covered often times creating deficits.

**Recommendation: We urge increasing investments in school based health centers by the city, especially to cover operational costs.**

The Children’s Aid Society sincerely thanks City Council for their vigorous support of children, youth, families, and communities in New York City. Community schools need time and sustained support to increase student learning and success. The issues outlined above are of extreme importance to Children’s Aid and we will do all that we can to advocate, protect and increase funding. It is the right and moral thing to do to ensure that our children and families have the best opportunity available to realize their full potential.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today on this very important issue. Please feel free to contact me at [tkim@childrensaidsociety.org](mailto:tkim@childrensaidsociety.org) or (212) 949 -4935 with any questions regarding this testimony.

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<sup>1</sup>Measuring Social Return on Investment for Community Schools: A Case Study, The Finance Project. 2013.

<sup>2</sup>Levin, H. M. & McEwan, P.J. (2002). Cost-effectiveness analysis and educational policy. In H. M. Levin & P. J. McEwan (Eds.), *Cost-effectiveness and educational policy: 2002 yearbook of the American Education Finance Association* (pp. 1-17). Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

**Testimony before the New York City Council Committee on Education in Support  
of Universal Free School Lunch Expansion  
Hearing on the Preliminary Budget, March 21, 2017**

**Risa Fridy, MD**

Good afternoon. Thank you to Councilman Dromm and the committee members for providing me with the opportunity to testify on this very important issue.

My name is Risa Fridy. I am a board certified pediatrician and a specialist in the field of adolescent medicine, and I work at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore in Bronx, New York.

As a physician in the Bronx, I see first-hand **every day** the impact that poverty has on the health and wellbeing of my pediatric and adolescent patients. There are simple necessities in life that all people should be provided regardless of their socioeconomic status – food is just one of the many, and will be the focus of my testimony today.

Food insecurity is a known injustice afflicting millions, and unfortunately many of my patients in the Bronx are the rule rather than the exception. Even for families not living in poverty, the costs of basic living expenses in New York City are astronomical, and many of my patients' parents have little left to spend on food – let alone **nutritious** food. Priority is placed what is **affordable and available**, which, unfortunately, often amounts to foods deficient in adequate nutrients.

I have gone to medical school and have studied the detrimental impact of not just undernutrition, but malnutrition, on brain development and organ functioning. And in practice, as a pediatrician and adolescent medicine specialist, I encounter patients with medical problems attributable to or exacerbated by lack of access to nutritious food.

Let me paint you a picture. Approximately **one third** of my adolescent patients are obese, and many more are overweight. You might think, therefore, that they have more than adequate access to food. The truth is, however, that high caloric intake does not necessarily equal good nutrition. Many of my obese patients have vitamin and mineral deficiencies due to diets heavy in carbohydrates and sugar (both of which are found in low-priced, easily accessible foods), but they are deficient in micronutrients obtained from fresh fruits and vegetables and healthy proteins.

**For example**, many of my patients suffer from **iron deficiency** related to a lack of iron-rich foods such as meat products and green leafy vegetables. Iron deficiency is a prime example of a mineral deficiency, which **directly** interferes with cognitive functioning and learning. Boys and girls have greater needs for iron intake during their pubertal growth spurt, especially boys. And adolescent girls have increased iron loss once they begin menstruating. These are our **middle and high school students**, and we certainly want them to be able to perform at their highest academic potential in order to achieve their life goals, no matter what food is stocked in their kitchen cabinets. We know that the foods provided to them at home have inadequate nutrients, therefore it our civic responsibility to provide them with a *well-balanced, nutrient-rich* lunch while at school.

More importantly, this lunch should be free. I have seen all too frequently what happens when patients are embarrassed or ashamed of their poverty. It is not surprising that children and adolescents might skip lunch to avoid the stigma of being unable to afford the meal. We need to level the playing field so that all children have access to healthy, nutritious school lunches.

There is simply no excuse for our New York City children to be malnourished; or for pediatricians like myself to have to treat children with preventable illnesses due to inadequate nutrition. In my medical opinion, New York City should provide free school lunch to all children and adolescents.

Thank you for your time.





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**Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses  
Before the New York City Council  
Committee on Education  
Honorable Daniel Dromm, Chair  
On Education in the FY 2018 Preliminary Budget**

**Presented by Andrea Bowen, Policy Analyst**

**March 21, 2017**

Good afternoon Chair Dromm and members of the New York City Council Committee on Education for the opportunity to testify. I am here on behalf of United Neighborhood Houses, New York City's federation of settlement houses and community centers. Rooted in the history and values of the settlement house movement begun over 100 years ago, UNH promotes and strengthens the neighborhood-based, multiservice approach to improving the lives of New Yorkers in need and the communities in which they live. UNH's membership includes 38 organizations employing 10,000 people at more than 600 sites across the five boroughs to provide high quality services and activities to over 500,000 New Yorkers each year. Settlement houses provide a broad range of services including early childhood education, after-school programs, youth employment programs, adult literacy, workforce development, legal services, and services for older adults. Today, I am speaking about the issues facing a program in which settlement houses play a significant role—Learning to Work (LTW). UNH convenes the Learning to Work (LTW) Coalition which includes 18 Learning to Work providers.

**Background**

Department of Education (DOE) offers young people who are over high school age but do not have the requisite credentials to earn a high school diploma via two options listed below:

- Transfer schools, which are small schools that serve exclusively youth who have fallen behind in credits or dropped out of high school; or
- Young Adult Borough Centers (YABC), which are evening academic programs for youth who are behind in credits considering dropping out of schools or in school, but in need of the YABC because of responsibilities during the daytime such as work or caring for children or siblings.

Community based organizations support both of these programs through LTW contracts with the DOE. With LTW funding, community based organizations provide social-emotional learning supports such as counseling, career and education exploration, such as internships, and other supports to students who are pursuing both a high school degree and post-graduation career planning.

The program has remarkable outcomes. At Bushwick Community High School, for example, there was an even split among those in the most recent graduating class: of those receiving intensive LTW services, 86% graduated, and among those who did not receive intensive services, only 14% graduated. The attendance for LTW students at that same high school is higher than non-LTW students. Last year, students with intensive LTW supports averaged 76% attendance, and overall school attendance was 49%. Right now, that school is averaging 80% attendance among LTW intensive service recipients, and the attendance rate for the whole school is 61.6%.

### **FY 18 Budget**

There are currently eighteen existing or planned LTW programs. Maintaining these programs without addressing the per-program rate will cost \$10.8 million. However, LTW has been cut in previous budgets while costs have increased. Following the financial crisis, the City reduced funding for LTW programs. Moreover, costs have increased due to the increase in minimum wage and the increased fringe rates for youth in internships. The combination of reduced rates and increased costs has led to LTW programs operating with staff working with higher caseloads than the program model calls for and therefore able to devote less time and attention to each young person in the program.

LTW stakeholders are currently working together to determine the funding level necessary to ensure that programs have the resources needed to maintain services and reduce caseloads to optimal levels. This will cost more than \$10.8 million. UNH and partners among LTW providers will work with the City to determine the true cost of LTW programs and fund that actual cost.

### **Human Services Funding**

In December, UNH joined over 200 organizations in a letter to Mayor de Blasio calling for a 12% across the board increase in human services contracts. This investment is needed now more than ever. New York's community infrastructure—its settlement houses and community-based organizations—is the only thing that can ensure our City can be the sanctuary it needs to be to protect New Yorkers against policies aimed at our communities.

Contracts for CBOs in community schools, as well as programs serving other vulnerable populations including older adults, adult learners, immigrants, and young children, are struggling to meet expenses with contract rates that have stayed stagnant for years as expenses have risen. The persistent underfunding of contracts has a direct impact on the quality of services provided and leads to programs that utilize philanthropic dollars just to keep the doors open instead of providing the innovative enriching programs that we know are best able to support New York City's students and families.

We therefore urge the City Council to include in its response to the Preliminary Budget a request that the administration include funding for a 12% across the board increase to human services contracts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions.

**Testimony before the New York City Council Committee on Education in Support of Universal  
Free School Lunch Expansion  
Hearing on the Preliminary Budget, March 21, 2017**

**Pamela Stewart Martinez, Co-President, Citywide Council on Special Education**

Good Afternoon. My name is Pamela Stewart Martinez, mom of 7 and Co-President of the Citywide Council on Special Education. I would like to thank the members of City Council for the opportunity to appear before you today and for fighting for universal free school lunch again this year.

As you know, we live in the 2<sup>nd</sup> richest city in the world (based off the 2015 report put together by Martin Prosperity Institute) but we still are having trouble convincing some local lawmakers that it is not okay for children to spend the majority of their time in school hungry. In a city where 40% of the homeless population is school age children, universal free school lunch is crucial to our children's success.

This is a very personal issue for me because I was one those children. My parents, that raised me, were frightened to fill out the school lunch form for me. While others were eating school lunch, I could not and it breaks my heart, 35 years later the cycle continues, children are not eating lunch for varied reasons, most beyond their control.

I have 2 children in college and 4 children in high school thru elementary school. I would not be honest if I said we did not have days when our expense exceed our actual income, clearly the cost of living in the 2<sup>nd</sup> richest city in the world, but eventually we figure it out. Unfortunately, it doesn't always work out for everyone. I know what it is like to receive your past due lunch bill from the hands of your then 7 year old as he says "Mommy my teacher told me to give this to you and it is very important for you to read this." So my child becomes the school lunch bill collector. How does this model foster parent engagement? That is why I am here today, to thank the Council for their leadership on this issue and to ensure that Universal is expanded to all students this year.

Good afternoon Chairperson Dromm and Council Members,

Thank you for accepting this testimony on behalf of the families, students and teachers of this city who are putting their trust in you and in our continued efforts to make restorative justice a real and sustained initiative in the schools of New York City.

My name is Yanyiah Pearson. I am the Director of Youth and Community Development at Ramapo for Children. With 95 years of experience in direct service and training programs, Ramapo for Children has developed a unique ability to create inclusive environments that promote positive behavioral change, foster social and emotional skill development, and help support learning and personal growth. At the heart of the Ramapo approach is our ability to equip educators, caregivers and youth with the skills they need to build trusting relationships and a strong sense of community, to serve as effective role models, and to implement restorative practices that aid in the promotion of school safety and subsequently higher academic performance for the city's marginalized, largely African-American and Latino students. Ramapo training, coaching, and whole school capacity building has proven to help to reduce suspensions and behavioral incidents via the reduction of unnecessary referrals to special education, and by promoting inclusion where all stakeholders feel a sense of citizenship and community (Flynn, Lissy, Alicea & Mckay, 2016).

In my role, I also serve as a Restorative Justice Coordinator to a middle school in queens, IS 250 as well as more broadly oversee the implementation of Ramapo's Restorative Practices work. I have been working in the field of youth development for over 30 years, specializing in youth leadership and community development. Restorative practices are in direct alignment with my life's work having participated in the transformation of hundreds of young people, many who had previously failed in schools. In my experience the social emotional development is accelerated when youth have a sense of belonging where who they are and what they do matters, where they have opportunities to contribute. So let me reiterate that whole school restorative justice is more than an alternative approach to discipline. Restorative Justice is not a program; it is a paradigm shift that promotes individual skill development by centralizing relationships and community building, not on compliance and punishment. It a systems that operates as a three-tier interconnected structure that supports social emotional skill development and school culture that promotes safety and academic achievement. (San Francisco United School District, 2013)The goal of Tier I establishes the foundation for relationship and community building where students and staff establish trust through a variety of social emotional activities, Circles being the primary tool. The goal of Tier Two is to mediate conflict and repair harm to restore relationships, and the goal of Tier Three is to ensure that returning students, in cases where suspension was unavoidable, are welcomed back into the school community with a plan for their success. The need for Tier Three is evidenced in the school to prison pipeline students who have repeated suspensions end up in the criminal justice system. (Libby Nelson & Dara Lind, 2015).

The heart of restorative justice based on the wisdom of indigenous traditions is right relationship. Right relationship is based on honoring the dignity and the value of each person in the community, and recognition of interconnectedness where conflicts between two people can impact the whole group. The Circle practice has been incorporated in many schools to build and promote connections. Students and staff participate in these circles. It invites reflection and the teacher is encouraged to respond as community member. Teachers in my school report that leading advisories has helped them to form meaningful bonds with their students. Ideally students get a better sense of their teachers as real people with feelings, troubles, and challenges.

Restorative Justice is a whole school systems endeavor that starts first with the adults embedded in the school. Ramapo's work begins by introducing staff and administrators to restorative practices that increase relationship building, clarify expectations, and strategies to engage youth voice in those processes. Staff can inadvertently escalate student behaviors which results in punitive consequences to the students. Teaching staff de-escalation strategies helps to reduce these results. Staff trainings always

include a circle activity so staff can experience emotionally safe places to express their feelings. A year ago during Restorative Practices training, one veteran teacher expressed his own frustration from being treated disrespectfully by students. He spoke honestly and reported that at this point he really didn't care about how his students felt. A year later, after training on de-escalating behaviors, he approached me and admitted that he was having a rough time with one particular class and that he knew he was the problem. He asked for help. I am having such a hard time with this class and I have to admit that I am the problem. After one coaching session and his follow up he says that the class has had a complete turnaround. He recommended other veteran who hadn't bought in to seek help as well. However, this teacher is taking longer to trust the process. There are a lot of variables that determine readiness for change in teacher's behaviors. These changes take time and are based on personal willingness and trust. Some most trust takes time.

Community building circles also help parents. One of the most moving experiences I have had with my school happened last year when I presented at a PTA meeting. It was the student of the month event and attended by parents, students on the honor roll, and their younger and older siblings. I decided to show them how the circle works. The youngest member was four years old and the oldest seemed to be about fifty. I asked questions that even the four year old could answer. At the conclusion I asked everyone to share how the circle made them feel. One fourth grader said that he felt heard; a 7<sup>th</sup> grader said she felt revived, and an older Afghani father said he felt less isolated. I could only imagine how often this gentleman had experienced alienation. The responses have stayed with me as a testament to the power of the Circle process and the deep need we all have for connection.

Ramapo challenges all school community members to adopt a more complex and inclusive understanding of equity, fairness and justice. The disproportionality impact on students of African descent is well documented and the impetus for the City's turning away from zero tolerance policies. Examining bias and how it affects lower expectations and engagement, is a part of the journey of restorative justice practitioners. We all have different approaches to these challenges but an important element of the Pilot program is the opportunities for us to come together along with our school partners to increase our own practices and to support each other through the challenges. Matthew Guldin, former NYC dean and consultant assigned to direct and support this pilot cohort should be commended for phenomenal skills, guidance and compassion in this work.

Schools undertaking restorative justice work, should do so with the understanding that restorative justice shifts require a multi-year commitment (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2014; Brummer, 2016) and a leadership capacity building approach. While early research on outcomes of restorative justice has been mainly qualitative in nature, some empirical analysis has been conducted. Findings from a comprehensive report on restorative justice in U.S. schools published in 2016, indicate that early work in a schools (i.e., in year one) establishes community buy in, models restorative practices, enhances relationships among all members of a school community, promotes modest reductions in school suspensions and punitive disciplinary practices, and ensures the generation of a strategic plan for continued implementation of restorative practices to occur the following year (Fronius, Persson, Guckenberger, Hurley, & Petrosino, 2016). Schools that commit to multi-year restorative work and planning, have experienced reductions in behavioral incidences, dropout rates, suspensions and expulsions, and increases in school attendance and student and school-level academic outcomes (Jain, Bassegy, Brown, & Kalra, 2014). We urge you to continue to fund this important initiative.

Submitted March 21, 2017--R. Yanyiah Pearson, Director of Youth Community Development, Ramapo for Children. 49 W. 38<sup>th</sup> Street, NYC. NY 10018, [www. Ramapoforchildren.org/restorativejustice](http://www.Ramapoforchildren.org/restorativejustice)

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Marisel Martinez

The change in progression through high school that i indicated i had lack of support at home, in my past school and negative environment .Everyday was like battle within myself when i was sixteen, i honestly felt lost and alone which led me to to drop out of high school and almost faced years in upstate jail. When i turned seventeen and decided to obtain my high school diploma, luckily i found a magnificent transfer school that not only gave me that academic support to make up credits but they gave me that family support that i was lacking at home. The James baldwin school is a restorative justice school that helped me find myself and achieve my best scholar potential. Its a caring school that wants to see u progres not only as a student but also an a human being. I went from not caring about my education, from 60 average student to 85 average scholar with honor roll and academic awards. Restorative justice works in many ways ,We have intensive circles which is where we get to know each other not only as peers/ student but as a community. The best part of my school is where we have fairness community is were instead of expelling us or suspending us for a fight we have a restorative justice counselor that finds ways to communicate with both parties and havana agreement on how to stop violence in our school which increases the communication that my school has with each other within staff, students and teachers. My school makes u feel like u fit in and are part of a family. U won't ever feel alone,unsafe u won't feel like just an osis number because they're always somebody help u no matter what situation occurs. restorative justice schools are better for all students especially minority youth from low income families,Our human connection is what will help us become better scholars, communities members and stronger families. As part of the Dignity in Schools-New York campaign, we are asking you to continue funding the Restorative Justice Initiative and help us push the Mayor and City to fund restorative justice for the next 5 years.



**Testimony of Megan Moskop to New York City Council**  
**March 21, 2017**

My name is Megan Moskop. I am member of Teachers Unite and an educator in District 6 at M.S. 324, one of the Tier 2 Restorative Justice Initiative Schools.

Ever since we began implementing Restorative Practices at M.S. 324, years ago, teachers have wanted more training and more time to support students with mediations, one-on-one conversations, and community circles. Often, we've had big ideas for ongoing community support structures, that we have to abandon because there simply isn't enough time in our school days, and we need to attend to other students.

With extra funding from the city council, we've been able to expand our programs, and help students take leadership of them, but there is still so much work to do, and we need more time, and more funding to do that work.

Building community and implementing restorative practice takes time, and thoughtful adult attention, especially when our neighborhoods face difficult social and political circumstances. Unfortunately, class sizes are large, and so are our guidance counselor and social worker caseloads. More funding for restorative practices will allow us more staffing, more training, and more time to meet our students needs and truly build the schools our students deserve to heal, learn, and grow up in.

My name is Sarah Merchlewitz. I am a member of Teachers Unite and a teacher at M.S. 324 in District 6, a Tier 2 recipient of the City Council's RJ initiative funding from 2016.

I used to be the kind of teacher who thought of myself as holding my students to the highest standards if I took a "no excuses" approach to classroom management. I was the teacher who broke a clipboard on a table in extreme frustration. I yelled. I ripped up a student's homework because I wanted to send a message that it wasn't good enough. After hearing a new student loudly mouthing off in morning lineup, I told him that I didn't know him yet but I sensed that didn't like him. It's all messed up on my part, and what's equally messed up is that I was actually praised by my previous supervisors for showing my "toughness" and keeping my classes in line.

It took me three years to begin to realize that in my reflex to tighten my grip on my ideal of classroom discipline, I actually prevented myself from being the kind of teacher I deeply wanted to be: one who could connect with my middle schoolers from a place of mutual respect.

I now have six years of teaching experience, and for the first time in my career, I feel like I can better manage a classroom and connect with my students without having to be tougher. I credit the relearning of what it means to be a teacher in a truly productive space with my introduction to Restorative Practices.

Three years ago, when I was newly hired at M.S. 324, I watched Teachers Unite's documentary "Growing Fairness" at a whole staff meeting. What I began to learn there was the concept of the school to prison pipeline. I began to think about the lives of the children of Upper Manhattan that I had been a part of and how I had mostly operated in a way that replicated the systemic injustices that are present in the Department of Education. There's no denying that part of why I felt I had to be so authoritarian had to do with my internal biases and prejudices against my students of color. Part of the ongoing work that my colleagues and I engage in and grapple with is the dynamic of race and culture in the classroom. NYC is so segregated and stratified that this is a big and difficult topic to unravel. Not to mention that it is oh-so-easy to rely on the mechanisms of suspension and detentions to maintain a veneer of order to ultimately perpetuate the power structure that damages young people on the streets, the very structures that we are trying to protect them from by educating them.

Restorative Justice has taught me about the importance of community building. Yes, a fundamental piece of RJ work is in the restoring of relationships when harm or damage is done in a class or school community, but there has to be something healthy to restore. RJ is not just circles. It is in the way we talk to young people; it is how we listen to them. It is how we think of them as stakeholders in educations and not just the recipients. RJ looks for a way to stop causing trauma and shame in our young people and instead teach actual accountability to others and healing in oneself.

This past summer, a few MS 324 students volunteered to redesign the school's core values. After one week of circles, games, presentations, and creating resources, they finally decided

that our school should fundamentally be based on a PACT of Passion, Adventure, Community, and To (Make Everyone) Matter. They presented their work to the APs first and then to the entire staff at the beginning of year workshops. Our school has begun to rethink the way that we track demerits, give detentions and other consequences, and celebrate success. There is certainly more work to be done, but we have a start, and we have buy in from our students.

One 7th grader, Jazmyn, giggled over writing a circle plan to be used with struggling students and said "I feel powerful." There are many schools like MS 324 that are working to combat inequity and injustice among our young people and to cultivate their own leadership skills. This is why the City should continue to support RJ initiatives. At this same time moment however, there are also plenty of schools like my former one where policies of Zero Tolerance and inconsistent chaos are the norm. That, to me, provides a compelling argument to expand the City's support of RJ programs.

In the three years since official RJ frameworks and practices were brought to MS 324, we implemented Tier 1 circles in all of our morning Advisory classes across 17 homerooms. Teachers who previously had little or no experience with this process have been supported by our school-based RJ Committee as well as outside help from Morningside Center consultants and training and our liaison from DREAM. I am currently working with students themselves to become ambassadors for their peers. We have an RJ Action Team of about 8 committed students who are training to go into each Advisory classroom and lead circles themselves to address aspects of community such as kindness, empathy, and anti-bullying. The next step will be to create a peer mediation program so that those student leaders can become resources for their peers and monitor conflicts that arise among them. We need continued support to keep expanding our reach to create a culture of whole-school buy in from the deans and APs to all teachers and staff to students.

RJ has also changed the way that our Special Education department has worked with our most challenging students. Tier 2 Circles and group assists have kept at least one student per year on track for graduation that otherwise wouldn't have graduated. Forging stronger school-student connections and using strengths based approaches to behavior interventions have reframed how we speak about student issues and problems. All teachers, not just SPED teachers, need to continue to receive training on restorative conversations for kids in moments of crisis and to address chronic behavior and academic issues.

Deep, systematic change takes time, but as anyone who works with children knows, these long-term investments pay off down the road. If we are to begin to heal the wounds of economic inequality, disenfranchisement, bias, and mass incarceration, then we need to invest in more restorative and culturally responsive practices for both the students', teachers', and the City's sake.

Hello, I am E.M. Eisen-Markowitz. I am in my eleventh year as a teacher in New York City and I am here because making this City Council invest in initiatives that build positive school climate is *urgent* in the lives of the young people I work with.

In ten years, I've seen hundreds of small human conflicts lead unnecessarily to the suspension and push out of Black & Latino high school students. But the decades-long movement *against* zero tolerance, metal detectors, and policing in schools in NYC is building momentum and **the political tide IS turning** thanks to committed, grassroots organizing by educators, parents and young people.

And I am grateful that the City Council itself invested \$2.4 million to begin implementation of the restorative justice initiative for 25 NYC public schools for the the 2016 fiscal year

**But this money needs to go directly to schools.** We need a real, sustainable investment in full time school-based staff, not just contracts for professional development with outside vendors.

Restorative approaches can transform relationships and poisonous power relationships in schools. They are worth the time and money.

Just last week, at the transfer high school I now work at in the West Village, an allegedly "defiant" student I don't know very well cursed at me in the hallway when I asked them to get to their next class. It happens. Non-compliance is *not* an unreasonable response to years of experiences in schools that communicate to students that they have no real power.

I was angry and hurt and wanted resolution and consequences. I also knew that in over a decade of working in public schools, I have never seen a suspension for this kind of behavior *work*, where a student returns feeling ready to learn and anyone else involved feels any resolution or safety.

On the other hand, thoughtful and sustained uses of restorative approaches have the potential to work through, and even build relationships through conflict. Instead of having a dean remove the student from their next class to sit in an office or an administrator sending them home, someone who knows us both sat us down in a facilitated restorative conference. We explained our experiences of the incident and what we each need to move forward peacefully. Often a parent, advisor and other students who witnessed the incident participate in the conference, too. I personally feel much "safer" knowing I've had this kind of face-to-face conversation, rather than just seeing the student in the hall again and again after they've returned from a suspension they associate with me.

Through learning about and using *restorative* approaches with students, families and other staff, I have grown my skills as a teacher and a person. I have learned how to better listen, be more aware of my own biases, and collaboratively work toward a solution with my students who

deserve to be understood as more than whatever happened in the hallway. These approaches are far more effective than punitive discipline, and it requires a culture change in schools, including making the time and space to have these kinds of conversations. Increased funding and sustained supports for schools, along with ending suspensions for “defying authority” will keep the momentum going to make schools safer and more courageous learning spaces where young people and educators can be truly empowered.

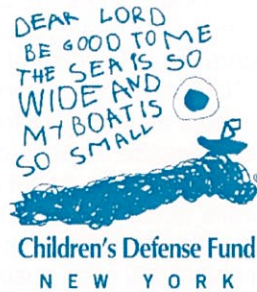
At the school I worked at for seven years, the Bronx Academy of Letters, we used DOE funding for restorative practice training for ten staff members every summer for three years. By the following school year, only 4-6 of those teachers returned and we’d be back at the beginning. Meaningful change only happened in our school when our UFT chapter voted to develop two release time positions for myself and one other classroom teacher to work as part-time restorative co-coordinators. The two of us didn’t DO all of the restorative interventions – conferences, group assists, mediations, etc. – because we had other teachers, social workers, parents and students who could, but we coordinated when, where and how they’d happen and we connected people to ongoing training and PD. We also connected people at times and places that made sense for *our* school day and we followed up. Had I been a classroom teacher with a full teaching load, I would not have had the time, energy or resources for this kind of coordination and connection. This kind of position is *vital* in sustaining Restorative Justice work in schools – and **it can only function meaningfully as a school-based role fully integrated into the school community over several school years.**

Lots of people already IN schools every day want to build restorative school climates and lots of people IN schools everyday have the skills we need to do this. **What we don’t have is the money to invest in the time and designated staff needed to get this work done.**

As a public school educator and a member of Teachers Unite and the Dignity in Schools Campaign-New York, I am here today to ask the City Council to:

1. Allocate \$5 million for the Restorative Justice Initiative to fund a second year of this initiative to ensure sustainability, and to expand the number of participating schools.
2. Direct funds to schools in order to include funding for full-time DOE staff as RJ Coordinators.
3. Encourage the mayor to also allocate funds and resources to building and expanding the number of school communities participating in restorative justice work.

With a School Safety budget nearing half a billion dollars, we have the funds to do this crucial work. We must divest from police in schools and invest in restorative justice work, work that builds strong school communities and *really* makes schools safer for students and families.



**Testimony for the New York City Council Committee on Education  
Oversight Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget  
March 21, 2017**

Good afternoon. My name is Charlotte Pope and I am the Youth Justice Policy Associate with the Children's Defense Fund – New York (CDF-NY). The Children's Defense Fund's (CDF) Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, a safe start and a moral start in life, and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. Through CDF's Cradle to Prison Pipeline® Campaign—a national initiative to stop the funneling of children, especially poor children and children of color, down life paths that often lead to arrest, conviction and incarceration—CDF-NY works to replace punitive school discipline and safety policies in New York City schools with social and emotional supports that encourage a positive school climate.

Thank you to Chair Dromm, and to the members and staff of the City Council Committee on Education for this opportunity to testify before the oversight hearing on the fiscal year 2018 preliminary budget. At the root of CDF-NY's advocacy is the understanding that harsh and exclusionary disciplinary practices such as classroom removals, suspensions, and police interventions undermine positive relationships and trust between students and adults, fall short in preventing or reducing conflict from happening, and lead to students missing the class time they need to experience a meaningful education. **Our testimony today speaks to the need to restore and expand funding for the council's Restorative Justice Initiative to \$5 million, and details how this school climate initiative can and should be a meaningful part of larger reform efforts to improve student engagement in school.**

The Need for Investment in Restorative School Supports

CDF-NY seeks to foster and support safe schools through measures that provide professional development to school staff, allow educators to build relationships with students, get to the source of student disengagement from school, and prevent and address safety concerns in a way that protects the health and well-being of all students, school staff and their communities. We understand that funding in the DOE's budget for School Safety is \$367.8 million in the Fiscal 2018 Preliminary Plan, an increase of \$10.6 million from the Fiscal 2017 Adopted Budget. The DOE is projected to pay a total of \$285.2 million to the NYPD through an intra-city payment, an increase of \$5.3 million since the adopted budget. For the past two fiscal years there have been 5,511 full-time budgeted positions in the NYPD for school safety: 5,322 for "civilian" school safety agents, and 189 "uniform" police officers assigned to the School Safety Division of the NYPD.<sup>1</sup> In 2015 we supported committee member's efforts to require the DOE to report the school-by-school count of guidance counselors and social workers, and as of the February 15, 2017 report, there were 2,800 full-time guidance counselors, and 1,252 full time social workers, for a total of 4,052,<sup>2</sup> far less than the American School Counselor Association's recommended ratio of 250-to-1.

<sup>1</sup> New York City Office of Management and Budget (2017, January). FY2018 Preliminary Budget Function Analysis. Retrieved from <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/jan17-bfa.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> New York City Department of Education. (2017, February). New York City Department of Education Report on Guidance Counselors Pursuant to Local Law 56 of 2014. Retrieved from <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/ronlyres/4C83BFEB-35F5-4263-B614-84D61A8149A4/0/GuidanceCounselorReportandSummary21517final.pdf>.



CDF-NY further understands that students who experience measures like arrests, summonses, and school suspensions are more likely to experience low achievement, grade retention, negative attitudes toward school, and leave school before graduation.<sup>3</sup> Because of the Council's Student Safety Act, we know that from January 1 to December 31, 2016, there were over 5,800 reported police interventions in New York City public schools, impacting students as young as four. There were over 1,200 arrests, 900 summonses, and 1,900 uses of restraints, and despite some declines in these numbers, troubling racial disparities have remained consistent on a system-wide level. Of all students who experienced an arrest or summons, 92% were Black and/or Latinx, while those students made up only 67% of the total student population. During the 2015-2016 school year, 37,647 total suspensions were issued in New York City Public Schools, where Black students received 49.6% of all suspensions, and students with an IEP received 38.6%, while representing 27% and 18% of the total student population respectively. Serious infractions, for which the DOE requires a school to suspend, accounted for only 15 percent of reported suspensions. National research shows that suspension tends to be used indiscriminately for a wide range of behaviors that do not threaten the safety of the school community, and that Black and Latinx students are much more likely than white students to receive every type of discipline—from classroom removals to expulsion—for the same or less serious infraction categories.<sup>4</sup> These inequalities in educational opportunity and student outcomes are exacerbated by safety and disciplinary practices that schools directly control. In our testimony today we urge the city to shift resources toward positive approaches, and more systemic, high quality supports with an intentional focus on early intervention and culture change.

### The Benefits of Restorative Justice

School-based restorative justice is a whole-school approach focused on relationships, reconciliation, and student inclusion in the school community as a means of addressing issues of school climate and the school-to-prison pipeline.<sup>5</sup> In recent years diverse models of restorative justice have been implemented in schools across the country to address concerns about the significant negative impact of exclusionary discipline. Evaluations of those models and the growing body of literature on schools committed to the implementation of restorative practices provide strong evidence of its positive outcomes for students, teachers, parents, and the broader community:

- Increased academic achievement;<sup>6</sup>
- Reduced use of suspensions and expulsions;<sup>7</sup>
- Reduced racial disparities;<sup>8</sup>
- Fewer disciplinary infractions and office referrals;<sup>9</sup>
- Fewer incidents of unwelcome student behavior,<sup>10</sup> including victimization and bullying;<sup>11</sup>
- Decreased rates of violent behaviors;<sup>12</sup>
- Decreased arrests;<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Armour, M. (2016). Restorative Practices: Righting the Wrongs of Exclusionary School Discipline. *University of Richmond Law Review*, 50(3):999.

<sup>4</sup> Payne, A.A., and Welch, K. (2017). The Effect of School Conditions on the Use of Restorative Justice in Schools. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 1-17.

<sup>5</sup> Haft, W. (2000). More Than Zero, The Cost of Zero Tolerance and the Case for Restorative Justice in Schools. *Denver University Law Review*, 77: 795.

<sup>6</sup> Schiff, M. (2013). Dignity, disparity and desistance: Effective restorative justice strategies to plug the "school-to-prison pipeline." Center for Civil Rights Remedies National Conference, Closing the School to Research Gap: Research to Remedies Conference, Washington, DC.

<sup>7</sup> Campbell, H., McCord, J., Chapman, T., & Wilson, D. (2013). Developing a Whole System Approach to Embedding restorative practices in Youth Reach Youth Work and Schools in County Donegal. Donegal ETB Restorative Practices Report. Northern Ireland: University of Ulster

<sup>8</sup> Gregory, A., Bell, J., & Pollock, M. (2014, March). How educators can eradicate disparities in school discipline: A briefing paper on school-based interventions. Discipline Disparities Series: Interventions.

<sup>9</sup> IBID

<sup>10</sup> Penny, M. F. (2015). The use of restorative justice to resolve conflict in schools. All student theses, Paper 65, Governors State University. Illinois: University Park.

<sup>11</sup> Morrison, B. (2007). *Restoring safe school communities: A whole school response to bullying, violence and alienation*. Sydney, Australia: Federation Press.

<sup>12</sup> Karp, D.R., and Breslin, B. (2001). Restorative Justice in School Communities. *Youth and Society*, 249.

<sup>13</sup> High Hopes Campaign. (2012). *From Policy to Standard Practice: Restorative Justice in Chicago Public Schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.dignityinschools.org/sites/default/files/FromPolicyToStandardPractice.pdf>.



- Increased perceptions of safety;<sup>14</sup>
- Decreased absenteeism, and increased attendance and graduation rates;<sup>15</sup>
- Improved school morale and climate;<sup>16</sup>
- Reduced recidivism;<sup>17</sup>
- Increased healthy relationships, and social-emotional understanding and skills;<sup>18</sup>
- Increased respect for teachers and school staff;<sup>19</sup> and
- Increased satisfaction among all school community members.<sup>20</sup>

It is important for school communities to realize that these changes will not happen quickly and that a long-term implementation plan is needed. Restorative justice is not simply a program or a set of disciplinary responses to behavior or violence, but rather is best described as a philosophical framework.<sup>21</sup> Implementing restorative justice focuses on how we prevent harm from occurring in the first instance and what must be done to ensure strong relationships across the whole school community. An effective restorative process may help someone to think about their behavior, and, when done well and in a supportive environment, deal with the harm done or impact of that behavior on others.<sup>22</sup>

Investment in restorative practices is supported by the evidence that exclusionary policies generally fail to change student behavior, schools are not safer or more orderly as a result of exclusionary approaches, suspension is often not in the best interests of anyone in the school community, and students' time in class is a key factor in determining their educational outcomes.<sup>23</sup> Given the negative consequences of punishment for individual students and for the overall school climate, schools need to be supported in challenging their traditional responses to student behavior. Whole-school restorative justice approaches, like the ones funded through the Council's Initiative, have the capacity to gradually transform the culture of discipline in NYC schools from one of punishment and exclusion to one focused on meeting the needs of youth.

### The Council's Restorative Justice Initiative

In 2015, the New York City Council first allocated \$2.4 million for the implementation of a restorative justice pilot program to “change the culture of the chosen 15 schools’ approach to school disciplinary policies.” Today each participating school has a school-based restorative justice coordinator who has developed a school-specific needs-based strategic plan and who is providing ongoing training and professional development to school staff, and is engaging and developing positive relationships with students, parents, and families. Tremendous need and demand exists for this initiative—while 115 schools were invited by the DOE’s Office of Safety and Youth Development (OSYD) to apply in December 2015, only 15 of the over 50 schools that submitted thorough applications expressing interest could be selected for participation. Those 15 “beginner” schools work in a network of 25 schools, ten of which are considered “intermediate” or “mentor” schools that offer site visits, provide guidance, and share best practices. **CDF-NY, along with other members of the Dignity in Schools Campaign-New York, respectfully asks that the Council allocate \$5 million to this Restorative Justice Initiative in FY 2018: \$2.4 million to support and ensure the sustainability of schools involved in the Restorative**

<sup>14</sup> Payne and Welch (2017), *op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> Rideout, G., Roland, K., Salinitri, G., & Frey, M. (2010). Measuring the effect of restorative justice practices: Outcomes and contexts. *EAF Journal*, 21, 35.

<sup>16</sup> Campbell et al. (2013), *op. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> Gardella, J. H. (2015). Restorative practices: For school administrators considering implementation. Vanderbilt University. Retrieved from <https://my.vanderbilt.edu/tn-s3-center-vanderbilt/files/2014/05/Restorative-practices-booklet-9.26.15-copy.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Armour (2016), *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Gregory et al. (2014), *op. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Karp, D. R., & Frank, O. (2015). Anxiously awaiting the future of restorative justice in the United States. *Victims & Offenders*. doi:10.1080/15564886.2015.1107796

<sup>21</sup> Penny (2015), *op. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> Thorsborne, M., and Blood, P. (2013). *Implementing Restorative Practice in Schools: A Practical Guide to Transforming School Communities*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

<sup>23</sup> Losen, D., Hodson, C., Keith III, M.A., Morrison, K., and Belway, S. (2015). *Are We Closing the School Discipline Gap?* The Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the Civil Rights Project, UCLA. Retrieved from [https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/are-we-closing-the-school-discipline-gap/AreWeClosingTheSchoolDisciplineGap\\_FINAL221.pdf](https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/are-we-closing-the-school-discipline-gap/AreWeClosingTheSchoolDisciplineGap_FINAL221.pdf).



**Justice Initiative, and \$2.6 million to allow for the expansion of the program to an additional number of schools, as well as provide interested schools with professional development designed to improve school climate and build capacity to implement restorative practices.**

Schools can perform restorative justice in many ways, including peer mediation programs, classroom community meetings, youth courts, or community circles (where members of the community engage in conversation to build relationships or teach restorative concepts and skills).<sup>24</sup> Chosen from each borough for their high need and their high rates of suspension, the participating schools are working toward becoming safer places, reducing exclusion and the demand for suspensions or other exclusionary discipline practices, and encouraging positive, supportive school climates for students, educators, and their communities. In our conversations with those participating in the Restorative Justice Initiative, we have learned that many of the 15 schools are dramatically reducing their reliance on suspension. Today, principals, deans, and counselors are being trained in restorative practices and how to perform community circles, including family care conferencing, discipline conferencing, and some advanced training in remedying conflict. Schools are pursuing different projects according to need, and some have created peer mediation programs, advisory courses, parent groups, or are carrying out weekly circles. Some schools hold their department meetings in circles; other schools have faculty meetings in circles. National research tells us that these types of circles lead to a sense of teacher ownership over the discipline process, and encourage improved relationships, meaningful dialogue, the prevention of conflict, and academic and social achievement.<sup>25</sup> Aside from continuing professional development for school staff, the restorative justice coordinators funded through the initiative meet with their peers in specialized committees, and submit a report to OSYD each month on their projects, what they've accomplished, and what challenges they face.

Last fiscal year the Mayor's Preliminary Budget made new investments to support school climate reforms developed in part by the Mayor's Leadership Team on School Climate and Discipline. It is important to acknowledge that those pilot projects were allocated funding for four years, from FY2017 to FY2020.<sup>26</sup> While we strongly believe in the importance of these initiatives, we urge the Council to continue and increase the investment in whole-school restorative justice models that include sustainable full-time school-based staff, youth and parent leadership, continuing professional development opportunities, and district-wide coordination. Most research indicates that restorative policies will be sustained in schools and continually produce positive results only when restorative justice ideas are adopted as a philosophy by the entire school population rather than implemented as one program in one classroom or at one level of administration.<sup>27</sup> By continuing and expanding the Council's Restorative Justice Initiative in particular, we have a remarkable opportunity to sincerely and strategically transform schools from an inequitable, punitive model to an alternative, preventative and restorative model that aligns with youth development principles and improves school culture and climate.

### Stories from our Students

The CDF Beat the Odds® scholarship program provides social and academic college readiness programming to high school students that are working hard to overcome tremendous obstacles in their personal lives, who demonstrate academic achievement and give back to their community. Several of our scholars attend or have attended schools implementing restorative justice; some attend schools funded through the city council's initiative, and others attend schools funded through the Brooklyn Community Foundation's restorative justice pilot program. We recently connected with two of those students, one from each initiative, to contribute some of their feedback to this testimony.

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<sup>24</sup> Restorative Practices Working Group. (2014). *Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships and Promoting Positive Discipline Schools, A Guide for Educators*. Cambridge, MA: The Schott Foundation for Public Education. Available at <http://schottfoundation.org/sites/default/files/restorative-practices-guide.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> Oretaga, L. (2016). Outcomes of a restorative circles program in a high school setting. *Psychology of Violence*, 6(3):459-468.

<sup>26</sup> New York City Office of Management and Budget. (2016, January). January 2016 Financial Plan Detail. Retrieved from [http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/tech1\\_16.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/tech1_16.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> Payne, A.A, and Welch, K. (2015). Restorative Justice in Schools: The Influence of Race on Restorative Discipline. *Youth & Society*, 47(4): 539-564.

"Before the initiative, my classmates would be all over the place. Now I see a kind of peace, and more community here. Like if a student acts out in the classroom, the teacher will send the student to the coordinator and they have a conversation about what they did and the student is brought back to the classroom, whereas before, the student would be kicked out of class and the student would miss the work for that day, and fall behind. I know that teachers prefer this program too, because they don't feel right about kicking students out of class, and they know that they would just end up roaming the halls without support. Now that student can reset. I spoke to my principal recently and she was telling me that suspension rates decreased substantially. A lot of the past suspensions were caused by disrupting the classroom. This program is giving students the chance to get their education. A lot of the time they disrupt because there is something going on with them that you can't see, and with this you get to see what is going on and allow them a say in the process and to stay engaged."

"There are fights in my school. What happens now though is that the restorative coordinator talks with teachers and helps them handle or approach a student wanting to fight. She brings peace. With students who are having an argument, she'll have the students involved come together for a private circle. They talk about what happened, listen to all sides of the story, and then they try to find a way to avoid the problem escalating... A friend of mine and I are really involved in it. In the beginning we sat in a circle with teachers, telling them what we think and having that kind of student and teacher communication. You got to know teachers a little bit more outside of the classroom. You got to know them as a person... I believe that students have changed. Students want to talk before they take action. Students talk to the coordinator, explain what's going on, and there is now a support system that we didn't have. It's different from what our counselor does. And now there isn't a straight path to suspension.

"Having this initiative, I've learned to use my words to deal with anger. If we can invest in more coordinators and invest in explaining restorative practices, we can have peace, we can learn not to act out and to speak up instead. I've met friends through the restorative practices spaces. I've seen them change. People now think and talk first. We talk about the impact of suspensions and getting removed from school. And I come to the coordinator with my problems. Yesterday I had an argument, and I was filled with anger, and the coordinator saw me and came to talk to me. She came to check in on me later and we talked about what happened. Because she's there people can avoid a fight."

### Conclusion

It is our hope that the Council continues dialogue with the DOE on the value of sustainable investment in restorative justice in schools and ending the disproportionate impact of exclusionary measures. Any policy priorities centered on academic success cannot be fully realized without making improvements to how schools and communities approach and react to student behavior and instances of harm. CDF-NY applauds the Council's leadership and acknowledges that the Restorative Justice Initiative has provided a promising step toward the long-term institutionalization of restorative approaches in schools citywide. We look forward to an Executive budget that makes the investments needed that focus on the moral, social, and academic development of youth rather than their punishment and removal.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify.





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**TESTIMONY BEFORE  
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**FISCAL YEAR 2018 PRELIMINARY BUDGET**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2017**

**PREPARED BY  
RACHEL PRATT  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
NEW YORK ROAD RUNNERS**

*Good afternoon Chairman Dromm. My name is Rachel Pratt and I serve as the Senior Vice President of Youth and Community Services at New York Road Runners. Thank you for this opportunity to testify before the Education Committee on the Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget.*

**INTRODUCTION**

New York Road Runners' (NYRR) mission is to help and inspire people through running. We achieve our mission by creating running and fitness opportunities and programming for people of all ages and abilities.

NYRR demonstrates its commitment to keeping New York City's five boroughs healthy through races, community events, youth initiatives, school programs, and training resources that provide hundreds of thousands of people each year with the motivation, know-how, and opportunity to run for life.

NYRR's premier event, the TCS New York City Marathon, is not only a celebration of New York City but is a powerful contributor to its betterment. The Marathon generates \$415 million in economic impact for New York City and in 2016, 9,000 charity runners raised \$36.1 million on behalf of hundreds of not-for-profit organizations.

NYRR and our deeply committed constituency is woven into the fabric of our city. We engage over 25,000 volunteers annually. Our free community running and walking initiative, NYRR Open Run, is getting thousands of New Yorkers out weekly in 10 local New York City Parks in all five boroughs. NYRR is also working with local stakeholders to identify areas with high health disparities, participating in local health fairs, walking with over 2,000 seniors as part of our NYRR Striders walking program, and serving as a resource and partner to public officials, community boards, business improvement districts, hospitals, community health organizations, and grassroots community groups.



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While NYRR is best known for producing the TCS New York City Marathon and our other races and community offerings for adults, our organization is also the **largest nonprofit provider of free youth fitness programs in New York City**. In the 2015-16 school year, our free school-based programs, fitness events, and resources touched the lives of 115,000 New York City youth at 663 unique schools and community centers. The good news is that we have already surpassed these figures for the current school year.

NYRR is devoted to making physical education and fitness accessible to all children. Our free programs are designed to get all kids moving, prevent obesity and illness, and help youth build their self-esteem while learning to set and reach personal goals.

### **BUDGET REQUESTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018**

NYRR is asking the New York City Council to consider two requests in the amounts of \$500,000 and \$100,000 for its Fiscal Year 2018 budget.

#### **REQUEST FOR \$500,000 UNDER THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND FITNESS INITIATIVE**

NYRR is requesting \$500,000 in support of our school-based youth fitness programs. For seven years NYRR received generous funding from the New York City Council in the amount of \$250,000 through the Speaker's Obesity Prevention Initiative, which was not funded in FY17. With this 2018 request, we are hoping to restore and increase funding under the Physical Education and Fitness Initiative as our physical fitness programs have more than doubled their service numbers to New York City students since our initial funding in 2010.

I would also like to share that we recently redesigned our youth program model to incorporate the latest research on physical literacy and grow our reach to the full spectrum of students, pre-K through grade 12. Because the new program will be even more scalable, NYRR is projecting that we will serve an additional 35,000 students in the 2017-18 school year, bringing our total to 150,000 participants annually. The redesigned program is currently being piloted in three New York City schools and the application for the 2017-18 school year opens on May 1<sup>st</sup> under the name *Rising New York Road Runners*.

While our service numbers are increasing, NYRR remains committed to quality. We have partnered with Tufts University and Canadian Sport for Life to carefully plan the new program's curriculum. It is designed to have even greater impact by being built on a growing body of research on gaining physical literacy, meaning children who participate in the *Rising New York Road Runners* program are more likely to gain the confidence and skills to be physically active throughout their lives. Additionally, every activity in the curriculum builder will feature adaptations for children with disabilities, ensuring that classes with compositions of students with varying physical and cognitive abilities can all participate.





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- With its ease of implementation, *Rising New York Road Runners* will be a true resource to New York City schools that have little time, space, and resources to run adequate physical education programs.
- Every activity in the *Rising New York Road Runners* curriculum is aligned with SHAPE America Standards, which was recently adopted by the NYC DOE. This means NYRR's program will help schools measure and meet their standards and goals with incredible ease, especially because the physical activities in the program can be customized to run in classrooms of any size, in any space, and with students of varying abilities.
- NYRR provides new equipment packs to schools, offers in-person, online, and phone and email support to school teachers, and provides the online *Rising New York Road Runners* curriculum and activity builder plus incentives like t-shirts and water bottles to schools and participants for free.
- Every school that implements the *Rising New York Road Runners* program will be invited and bused, if needed, at no cost to special NYRR youth fitness events that take place throughout the year at places like Icahn Stadium and The Armory Track and Field Center, where students participate in fun, friendly running and physical fitness activities and receive recognition for their participation.

#### REQUEST FOR \$100,000 UNDER THE STARS (SPORTS TRAINING AND ROLEMODELS FOR SUCCESS) INITIATIVE

*"My experience in NYRR's Run for the Future has shaped me to believe that being an athlete only requires thinking like an athlete. I've learned that running and most other forms of physical activity require willpower and a strong mindset. I've found that with a team as wonderful and supporting as mine behind me, I can accomplish things that I never would have thought to be possible." –Syeda Hasan*

NYRR is respectfully requesting \$100,000 from the New York City Council to support *Run for the Future*, a high-touch, high-impact program that fulfills our mission by providing a unique opportunity for young women who are rising seniors in high schools across the five boroughs of New York City. Through their participation in this summer program, the girls learn about running, build self-esteem and confidence, and develop key leadership skills, while training for a 5K race at the end of the summer. At the program's completion, each participant receives a \$2,000 scholarship for college.

NYRR has offered the Run for the Future since 2011, and has committed significant resources to develop the 7-week program so it can serve more young women with running training, workshops on health, nutrition, and positive body image, a special Career Day featuring accomplished businesswomen, and a scholarship for each participant. Run for the Future is offered free of charge to participants—all of whom enter the program with no



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prior running experience, and most of whom come from under-resourced communities. Nearly all participants are young women of color: year-to-year, between 95-98% of our participants identify as Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, or multiracial.

The STARS Initiative currently funds nine organizations (two of which we partner with) to provide programming promoting physical activity, healthy living and wellness for elementary, middle, and high school girls. The Initiative was funded at \$1.2M in FY17, and NYRR hopes this can be increased to \$1.3M in order to include our \$100,000 application in support this incredible program. With funding from the New York City Council, NYRR will be able to serve 85 young women of color with this life-changing program.

Together with the collaborating partners currently funded by STARS, NYRR will support the healthy development of girls of color in New York City so that they can overcome barriers to success, grow emotionally, academically and physically stronger, and develop as leaders in their communities. We hope you will support NYRR in our effort to deepen the STARS Initiative's impact through the inclusion of the Run for the Future program.

## **CONCLUSION**

NYRR recognizes that health disparities and inequities stifle growth opportunities within communities, and works to inspire people through running. Running is something that almost everyone can do, and is an activity that empowers you in your day-to-day life. In partnering with the New York City Council, local organizations and dedicated individuals, NYRR can provide the fitness answer to the wellness equation. NYRR looks forward to continuing our commitment to New York City, and growing our relationship with the New York City Council.

*Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have about the work of New York Road Runners.*

Good afternoon: My name is Nicole Riley. I am a member of Teachers Unite and a dean at an Edward A Reynolds West Side High School an alternative transfer school on the Upper West Side.

I am testifying today on behalf of TU, EARWSHS, Dignity in Schools Campaign, NYC Educators and most importantly NYC students.

I want to start by thanking the City Council for the 2.4 million dollars they allocated for Restorative Practices in 2016. I especially want to thank Melissa Mark Viverito, Mark Levin, Gail Brewer and all of the other City Council members who have historically been a friend to West Side High and schools across the city. Thank you for all of the vital initiatives you have funded.

The 2.4 million dollars has given 25 schools the opportunity to collaborate and develop Restorative Justice (RJ) structures in their schools.

In the first half of this school year we have

- *Reduced suspensions in 80% of the Pilot schools*
- *Provided trainings to principals and staff*
- *Established Advisory classes and Peer Mediation programs*
- *Hosted Mentor school visits*
- *Created Restorative Justice Action Teams*

*This list goes on*

Our accomplishments are quite astounding and we believe that all schools can see similar results if there is enough resources and support.

How amazing would that be?

However, in order for that to happen, we have to be committed to this practice over the long term. It could take upwards of 3-4 years to build meaningful and sustainable RJ programs.

I am asking for the City Council to please give 5 million to the RJ project for the upcoming fiscal school year so we can build on and expand this work.

All too often, our school system criminalizes students and suspends them when they make a bad choice, lose control of their emotions, or get in a conflict. What is more troubling is that NYC, and school systems across the country, disproportionately suspend and criminalize brown, black, special ed, LGBTQ students.

West Side recently had a graduate come back to visit. He graduated in 2014 and went to college. He later got a job as a DJ. This student thanked myself and my colleagues for dealing with all of his outbursts and tantrums. He apologized for the way he behaved as a 17 year old young man and thanked us for all West Side did for him. He said if it weren't for us he would not be where he is today. It was one of those teaching moments, this is why I do this.

There are hundreds of student stories like that because kids were treated humanely and not pushed out of school. If we would have suspended this student for all of his outbursts and behaviors, he would not have graduated high school and he would not have the career he does now.

So in addition to the \$5 million dollars, we ask that you continue to fund and expand the City Council's Restorative Justice Initiative. Please ask the mayor and the city to invest in restorative justice in the next 5 years as they work to finalize the city budget. Thank you!



## **Student Testimony**

**before the New York City Council  
Committee on Education**

**Hearing on the Preliminary Budget  
March 21, 2017**



**Ksenia Novikova**  
**New Utrecht High School**  
**Youth Justice League at Community Food Advocates**

Hello Education Committee of the City Council! My name is Ksenia Novikova and I am currently a student at New Utrecht High School in Brooklyn, NY. I am also a student leader in the Lunch 4 Learning campaign. First, I would like to thank everyone for giving me the opportunity to testify here today. I will be discussing the detrimental effects of the existing public school lunch system, my own personal experience with this process, and why implementing universal free school lunch is so important.

As a student at a school where 75% of the students are economically disadvantaged, I know firsthand that the current school lunch program has so many negative results. Our school, and all NYC public schools, emphasize how important our grades are, but the current school lunch system does not support that claim. Doing well on exams and being able to focus in class correlates with whether or not the student has eaten and feels well. Without eating lunch we are more likely to do worse in classes. Also, there is significant bullying facing those who receive free school lunch from those who do not. This largely has to do with the social divide between those who receive free lunch and those who have the opportunity to eat their own lunch, eat outside of school later, or are at the point where they can almost receive free school lunch but they don't because they are above the income requirement. In my school's case, many students tend to stay after school for extracurricular activities or tutoring, so most would rather wait until they can eat outside but not all students can afford this.

Finally, the tedious and intrusive school lunch forms tend to be a major problem and are often not filled out. The intrusive lunch forms tend to be something we do often ignore, but when many immigrants come to America, they often flee terror, regimes, and horrible circumstances in their home countries. Therefore, when filling out this information on their financial situation, they often feel paranoid that giving out this information will hurt them. My mother was born in the Soviet Union. She fled a horrific regime where she had little to no freedoms. Eventually, she came to America and had to become accustomed to life here. However, that mindset and feeling that she was being watched and the government knew everything about her, has never left her. These forms may not seem intrusive to some people, but to my family and many others, they are. As a low income student that does stay in school until up to 5 sometimes for extracurricular activities, free school lunch is a necessity. However, when my mother is paranoid and frightened to fill out this form because of her past experience, it is difficult to receive free school lunch. My mother's terrible experience in an oppressive regime should not impact me eating school lunch, but yet it does.

There are so many negative effects that come from not having universal free school lunch. We must not let bullying happen in the cafeteria. We must not let the social divide continue. We must not let children's financial status follow them into the lunchroom, causing them to feel insecure and compare their family's income to others. We must not let these excessive and unnecessary forms get in the way of students receiving school lunch. We must not let this current system hurt students eating and therefore focusing better in classes. We must not let anything get in the way of learning. We must implement universal free school lunch in NYC public schools to stop all of this from continuing. Thank you all for giving me the chance to speak here today on an issue that is so incredibly important to me and many other students. Thank you for supporting this issue and I hope that you will continue to support us in enacting universal free school lunch. Thank you for your time and support.



**Shamsheer Sandhu**  
**Fort Hamilton High School**  
**Youth Justice League at Community Food Advocates**

Good morning everyone. My name is Shammy Sandhu, I go to Fort Hamilton High School. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. I want to take this opportunity to speak about the effects that the current system has on students and how we think about race. The school lunch lines are many times the first time students become conscious of the concept of financial status and they begin to associate race with financial status. Personally, the lunch line in 6th grade was the first time I became conscious of my financial status and later I learned to associate race with that concept. Standing in line every day, for 5 days every week, for 9 months for many years can have quite an impact on you. I grew out of this toxic idea. However many hold onto those notions for the rest of their lives. And it's not their fault because we are responsible for the system failing them.

The school lunch lines reinforce racial stereotypes. When students see the ethnicities of people that go up to receive free lunch, it causes students, even the ones standing on the line, to subliminally form preconceived stereotypes and toxic notions about those specific races. This is important because school is where students learn to socialize and where they form many notions, among those notions may be stereotypes. These students grow up to be members of society and as a result might spread intolerance and hate, and vote against the best interest of people who are more looked down upon. This contributes to the racial tension that is prominent in this country and feeds into the division of people rather than working towards unity. If young people are truly the future of the country then why are we exposing them to such toxic ideas about race that contributes to racial division? If we want students to live in a more unified tolerant America than we do, then we shouldn't maintain the current system of lunch that divides students up. Ultimately the current system of lunch is toxic to the mental and moral development of students. I believe that New York should catch up to cities such as Washington DC and Boston. Thank you and I hope you take the aforementioned into consideration.

**Jahnice Thomas**  
**George Westinghouse High School**  
**East New York Farms**

Hello, my name is Jahnice Thomas and I am a student at George Westinghouse High School. I am here again to testify and give my support for universal free school lunch for all NYC public school students. Cyber bullying, embarrassment, pressure and fear are all factors under school lunch system and the ones who have opportunity to obtain it.

A while back, I was unaware of the origin of the term called for school lunch to be renamed "free free". The word has more meaning than it seems, better yet more impact. Last year when we were allowed to have our phones in school, students would go out of their way just to take pictures of people eating school lunch. I happened to be a victim of this situation and I must admit it got me highly upset to know later on that night I would be clowned on social media.

This caused mental frustrations to my well-being, it made me not want to show my face in school. I was one with a high popularity level as well as one who was more fortunate and this was happening to almost everyone so I can only imagine what it did to those who knew free lunch would be their only meal. Did they make the pain unbearable and overwhelming enough to sacrifice health, and cause starvation? Bullying isn't the only issue with school lunch. There were times where there wasn't enough food, it was undercooked, or just a bad taste.

Nevertheless, I think the first approach would be to make all school lunches universally free and soon enough the factors behind students not eating school lunch will become obsolete. I am asking you City Council Members, to continue to make universal free lunch a priority. We need to stop the stigma and get better access to food in our schools. Thank you for your time and your support for this meaningful, momentous, necessary issue.

**Evan Zamora Phillips**  
**Millennium High School**  
**Youth Justice League at Community Food Advocates**

Hello my name is Evan Zamora Phillips and I am currently a junior at Millennium High School. As a public school student who doesn't receive free school lunch, I know that I am in a fortunate position, and I see myself as an observer in the lunchroom of the relationships between students. Often I have noticed that students segregate and separate themselves based on who receives free school lunch and those don't.

Not offering free school lunch to all students creates a lunchroom where students are divided, a lunchroom where students can not only loudly but also silently judge others who get lunch for free. Students, sometimes without noticing it, judge other students because they are different from them. I did not judge loudly, by calling other students names, but I did judge silently, by gravitating towards students like me. This silent judgment is just as harmful as the name calling and verbal insults you can hear. Like many students, I approached and chose to interact with students who had similar traits as me, and one of these traits that stands out in the lunchroom is who eats school lunch vs. who brings lunch from home. As children we know no better than to group with people who are like us. If someone got lunch for free then he/she was too different for me to interact with, and we couldn't be friends. We shared nothing in common, and he/she was not from the same background as I was. At the time, I did not understand that these perceived differences had less to do with us as students, and more to do with the system that creates unequal statuses in the school cafeteria.

Our schools should not be a place that encourages students to segregate. Our schools should be a place where all students are equal, and where students are encouraged to bond, regardless of our differences and whether someone can afford to bring lunch from home or not. Universal free school lunch is one important step towards providing equality within our schools. Education does not only happen in the classroom, it happens in places like the lunchroom as well. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns and I hope that we can work together to create a lunchroom where all students receive school lunch for free and all students are treated equally without regard to their family income, thank you.

**Johnny Zheng**  
**Brooklyn Technical High School**  
**Youth Justice League at Community Food Advocates**

Hello, my name is Johnny Zheng, and I'm a 16 year old junior at Brooklyn Technical High School. To give you some background, I never had to pay for school lunch, since my dad is a truck driver, and has a pretty low income. The only way I can mess this up is if I don't fill out the school lunch form before the deadline. But it's intimidating with all the blanks and technical terms. And sometimes small mistakes happen that can have a big effect such as when I forgot to turn in my form on time last year.

Because of this, I got to experience what it's like to not be able to eat free lunch even though I need it. It was not a pleasant experience. Every day I wake up to a one hour commute, so I don't really have time for breakfast. Lunch should be my first real meal of the day. But, as I mentioned, I didn't fill out the lunch form last year. So how did I get lunch? Simple, I didn't. This caused a lot of problems for me, the most important of which was the amount of energy I had in school. Or rather the lack of it. I found myself nodding off during tests, chemistry, and even during my favorite class that year, Digital Electronics. You know it's bad when you're falling asleep in your favorite class. And to think, all this happened because I forgot to fill out a simple lunch form.

Some people may say, it's my fault I didn't turn in the form so I could get free school lunch. And many times, I fault myself too. But, let me ask you this: can we fault parents for being intimidated by the complicated school lunch form? Can we fault parents or students like me for making one small mistake like failing to submit the form in time? Can we fault the students whose parents make slightly above the income cutoff to be eligible? Should we be punishing those students for having parents who worked hard to give their kids a better future than they themselves had? To make sure their kids don't ever have to drive loud trucks around every day while making barely enough to get their family through life? The answer to all these questions is no. But this is exactly what's going on in school right now- we're blaming students and parents when the lunch system is unfair and unequal at its core.

Not having universal free school lunch is detrimental for students, not just physically, not just emotionally, but mentally as well. It's harming our futures, putting in place more obstacles than would otherwise be existent.

Thank you City Council members for your on-going support. I hope you continue to fight for universal free school lunch to better everyone's future and beyond, as the students are the future. Again, thank you very much for your time.

# Bard

FOR THE RECORD

## Testimony for the New York City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing on Education

*Submitted by Clara Haskell Botstein  
Associate Vice President for Early Colleges, Bard College*

*March 21, 2017*

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Clara Haskell Botstein, and I am Bard College's Associate Vice President for Early Colleges. As you may know, Bard College, a nonprofit, independent college of the liberal arts and sciences based in Annandale, NY, runs a network of degree-granting, public early college high schools that offer students the opportunity to earn 60 transferable college credits and a Bard College Associate in Arts degree, *at no cost to students*, alongside a state high school diploma. This network includes Bard's flagship early college campuses in New York: Bard High School Early College (BHSEC) Manhattan (established in 2001) and Bard High School Early College Queens (established in 2008). Based on the success of the BHSEC model in New York City, Bard has opened BHSEC campuses in Newark, NJ (2011), Cleveland, OH (2014), and Baltimore, MD (2015). The Bard High School Early College network currently serves over 2,100 students, with approximately 1,150 in New York City.

At Bard High School Early College campuses, seminar-style college preparatory and college courses take place within the same public school building and are taught by faculty who hold terminal degrees in their fields and have college teaching experience, as well as a commitment to teaching younger scholars. The BHSECs offer robust student support services, including tutoring, guidance, and college transfer advising, to promote student success at BHSEC and beyond.

Bard's early college model has proven very effective in positioning young people from a wide range of backgrounds to succeed in higher education. In the BHSEC NYC Class of 2016, 93% of graduating students earned an Associate's degree alongside a high school diploma, and 100% of students earned a high school diploma and some college credit. The significant, positive impact of BHSEC on college enrollment and completion at the bachelor's degree level has been validated by independent, quasi-experimental research conducted by Metis Associates. Due to their success, the BHSEC schools in Manhattan and Queens are very popular - over 6,000 students apply for the 300 9<sup>th</sup> grade seats at the two BHSEC schools in New York City.

The Bard High School Early Colleges are committed to serving a diverse student body that reflects the great diversity of New York City. To that end, Bard uses a portfolio-based admissions process (rather than a standardized test), which includes a faculty-designed academic assessment, individual interview, and review of the student's middle school record. This process aims to look at applicants holistically, with strong qualitative components and an emphasis on motivation, interest, and fit for the academic program, mirroring a college admissions process in ways that are appropriate for an early college



# Bard

campus. Furthermore, Bard launched the BHSEC Diversity Initiative in 2010 to recruit, enroll, and retain students from neighborhoods with low college readiness rates, who will especially benefit from the free associate's degree offered at BHSEC. Admissions staff and student ambassadors conduct middle school visits, hold on-site assessments, and give presentations at schools and at community- and faith-based organizations to increase applications to BHSEC from underserved communities, and recruited students receive extensive support services and leadership opportunities once enrolled. This approach is effective in increasing diversity – 42% of BHSEC Manhattan and Queens students in the current 9th grade class were recruited from high-needs middle schools, up from 34% just two years ago – and also requires resources, including full-time admissions and support staff and trained volunteers.

Bard requests \$160,000 in FY 2018 Council discretionary funds to support and expand the BHSEC Diversity Initiative. With this funding, Bard would hire an additional Diversity Initiative coordinator to double the recruitment from 30 to at least 60 target middle schools; expand the Summer Bridge Program so it can serve 100% of students recruited from high-needs middle schools; cover travel costs and recognize BHSEC student ambassadors who conduct outreach to target communities; and broaden the Diversity Initiative model to more NYC high schools. This would entail identifying and codifying best practices from the Diversity Initiative and working with the NYCDOE to identify other public schools interested in this work and to offer specific trainings to these schools on effective approaches to increasing diversity in admissions and integration in the school community.

Bard College believes strongly in the importance of diversity and inclusion in public schools; that belief is reflected in our investments in recruitment, admissions, and retention services at the Bard High School Early Colleges. We also know that strategic investments are needed to ensure that talented students from across New York City can reach their full potential and are not unfairly penalized based on their zip codes or prior preparation from accessing the very schools where they are most likely to thrive, including at early college high schools, which give students a critical academic and financial head start on higher education.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony, and do not hesitate to reach out to me (at [cbotstein@bard.edu](mailto:cbotstein@bard.edu) or 914-388-0699) if you have any questions or if you would like additional information about the Bard High School Early Colleges or the BHSEC Diversity Initiative.



*I am here speaking in support of YAFFED - Young Advocates for a Fair Education*

The financial drain on our system from the lack of secular education in the ultra-Orthodox Haredi community should not be underestimated. Not knowing--or knowing very little--English, math or science, these young people, the boys especially, are limited to finding low-paying or all-cash jobs within their community, thereby minimizing--or avoiding altogether--any contribution to our tax base. And yet, these same people fight for and receive numerous government subsidies, namely food stamps, Medicaid benefits, section 8 housing vouchers, etc. In other words, we, the taxpayers, are in effect supporting their way of life while they flout the law. It is time to end this vicious cycle by enforcing the law requiring an equivalent secular education for all and, more importantly, enriching the lives of these young people in the process.

Ellen Berland Gibbs  
March 21, 2017

**FOR THE RECORD**

**Testimony before the New York City Council Committee on Education in Support of  
Universal Free School Lunch Expansion  
Hearing on the Preliminary Budget, March 21, 2017**

**Jesse Hendrich, PS 9 PTO Co-President of Community Building, PS 9 Teunis G. Bergen  
School, Brooklyn New York**

Good Afternoon. My name is Jesse Hendrich. I am the PTO Co-President of Community Building, PS 9 Teunis G. Bergen School, in Brooklyn New York. I would like to thank the members of the City Council for the opportunity to testify today in support of universal free school lunch. Thank you so much for fighting for full expansion of this program. This is so important to parents in the Brooklyn and throughout the City.

In terms of race, ethnicity, culture, immigration status, and socio-economic states, PS 9 has one of the most diverse student populations in Brooklyn. Although we no longer qualify for Title One, the number of families living under the poverty line has remained the same – we have simply doubled in our student population (from 450 to 850 students over four years). We, as a city and as a school community, should not, and therefore cannot, ignore the needs of the children who still come to school hungry. Universal free school lunch would guarantee at least one nutritious meal a day for these kids.

In addition, in a school as diverse as ours, we are always concerned with issues of stigma. We do not want students feeling less-than because they qualify for free school lunch. The current system of free school lunch carries a stigma for those who receive it, and children are sometimes teased and bullied as a result. If all receive universal free school lunch, then there is no stigma, and we would be promoting an environment of integration and equity, as well as emotional safety and support, in all New York City public schools.

PS 9 is a Whole Child school, following the Whole Child tenets: healthy, safe, supported, engaged, and challenged. Universal free school lunch promotes the social-emotional environment necessary for our children to learn in a supported and intellectually challenging manner so they can be engaged learners and, someday, civically engaged citizens and leaders. When a child is hungry, they are not healthy, are not safe physically, are not supported, cannot engage, and will not be up for the challenges they need to master. If we value our children and want promote a future of integration and equity, we need your support by ensuring universal free school lunch for our children.

And so, on behalf of the families of PS 9 in Brooklyn, please know that we are counting on the Council's leadership to ensure universal free school lunch is expanded to all students in this year's budget. Thank you.

Jesse Hendrich, LCSW, M.Div  
PTO Co-President of Community Building  
PS 9 Teunis G. Bergen School  
80 Underhill Avenue,  
Brooklyn New York 11238

**Testimony before the New York City Council Committee on Education in Support of Universal  
Free School Lunch Expansion  
Hearing on the Preliminary Budget, March 21, 2017**

**Durpatie Budhram (Shanta), Bronx Borough President Appointee, Community Education  
Council District 12**

Good Afternoon. My name is Shanta Budhram. I am the Bronx Borough President Appointee for CEC 12. I would like to thank the members of the City Council for the opportunity to testify today in support of universal free school lunch.

Thank you so much for fighting for full expansion of this program. This is so important to parents in the Bronx and throughout the City.

As you know, missing lunch is associated with low intake of fiber and other nutrition and can also lead to higher consumption of sugar and sodium later in the day. School can be a very stressful place for children. The years children spend in school are crucial for healthy cognitive and emotional development. It is important for students to have at least one main meal, especially when our children are in distress, worrying about fitting in with their peers.

So many students in the Bronx make the effort to have excellent attendance, despite all obstacles. We have to do our part and feed them and provide for their basic needs in return. These children are our future. We cannot let hunger stand in the way of their ability to graduate and live their dreams. You never know who is the next President, public school teacher, or Bill Gates. On behalf of Bronx families, we are counting on the Council's leadership to ensure universal free school lunch is expanded to all students in this year's budget. Thank you.



**NYCLU**  
NEW YORK CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

**FOR THE RECORD**



Fiscal Year 2018 Expense Request Testimony  
NYC Council Committee on Education Oversight Hearing

Good afternoon,

My name is Sherell Farmer and I am a junior at Midwood High School in Brooklyn. I am also a member of the New York Civil Liberties Union's Teen Activist Project and the Sexuality Education Alliance of New York City's Youth Council. As a young person who is still growing, developing and learning, there are many things that I am still unsure of. It is because of this that I look toward the guidance of adults in my life, more specifically, the educators in my school. Schools are intended to guide us and educate us about things that we simply wouldn't learn elsewhere. My school, and public schools all around New York City, succeed in doing this in almost all areas except for what I think is the most important one – comprehensive sex education.

Currently, not only do New York City public schools not have a set curriculum for teaching sex education, leading to different experiences everywhere, but many schools use curriculum that emphasizes abstinence only. While I agree that teaching abstinence is essential, clearly that information alone isn't enough. Time and time again, my friends and family still have questions about their bodies and then have to rely on getting their knowledge from unreliable internet sources or word of mouth.

Many students, including myself, are afraid to talk to their parents about these issues. With no one to learn from, we see an influx of teen pregnancy, STIs, and students who simply don't know their rights to accessing confidential health care. In NY, minors can access information, testing and treatment without their parents, yet many of my peers don't know that and don't seek out these services as a result.

For this reason, I am so grateful for organizations like the NYCLU and SEANYC for keeping us informed. As a member of the NYCLU's Teen Activist Project, I have found a place where teens can talk openly about issue impacting them, ask questions and get information free from judgment. As part of TAP I have spoken for and lobbied for comprehensive sex education in New York and even distributed



# NYCLU

NEW YORK CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION



surveys to students across New York City, where we found that 56% of students surveyed didn't even learn about LGBTQ identities in their health or sex education classes. Many of the high school students we surveyed, like myself, have not had access to a sex education class at their school or only scratched the surface on the topic without addressing other important issues like STIs and pregnancy prevention.

While organizations like the NYCLU exist, and do great work, it is important to recognize that not every student has the resources or means to reach out to these places. That is why we need comprehensive sex education in all public schools in New York, because ALL students need access to this information. I encourage you all to take a moment and think about the importance of having real sex education in our public schools and the impact it will have on students' lives. I respectfully request the Council to support the Fiscal Year '18 budgetary funding to implement and enhance sexuality education in all New York City schools. Thank you for your time and have a great day!

One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.

**TEACHFORAMERICA**

**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION BUDGET HEARING**

**FOR THE RECORD**

**TESTIMONY OF  
TEACH FOR AMERICA – NEW YORK**

**FY18 EXPENSE APPLICATION REFERENCE NUMBER: 33231**



**AN AMERICORPS PROGRAM**



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## Introduction

Good afternoon Chairman Dromm, members of the Education Committee and Council Members. My name is Charissa Fernández, and I am the executive director of Teach For America – New York. I am proud resident of the Bronx, the borough where I was born. I have committed my entire career to expanding educational opportunity for young people in this city.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify with the Council's Committee on Education this afternoon. As a city, we collectively face the challenge of attracting and retaining highly impactful teachers. Nationally, there is evidence of a decline in the number of people entering the teacher force<sup>1</sup>. There is also a serious problem of retention. In New York City, a December 2015 report by the UFT<sup>2</sup> indicates a rising rate of teacher attrition, with starting teachers leaving at higher rates over the 2014-2015 school year. A 2012 report by TNTP estimates that the nation's 50 largest school districts lose approximately 10,000 of their highest performing teachers every year.<sup>3</sup>

In January, I was here to share about the work that Teach For America – New York is prioritizing to identify, recruit and develop diverse talent for some of the highest needs schools in New York City. Teach For America has prioritized teacher diversity because multiple studies have indicated that having more teachers who share the background of their students will result in better student outcomes. When it comes to improving educational opportunities for students, particularly students of color, recent studies suggest that students are more likely to thrive when they are taught by teachers who share their racial identity. Evidence shows that teachers of color serve as positive role models, break down negative stereotypes associated with minorities and are more likely to promote enrichment opportunities for their students of color. For example, according to the Center for American Progress, in studies where African-American students were taught by more teachers of color, fewer of them were placed in special education classes, suspended or expelled and more were entered in gifted and talented programs and graduated from high school. In New York however, where more than 85 percent of our students are students of color, less than 40 percent of their teachers share their background.<sup>4</sup> Our great city and its students will benefit greatly from a growing teacher workforce made up of diverse professionals in key geographies and license areas.

We are also committed to increasing the number of native New Yorkers because we believe those who are connected to the neighborhoods where they teach are more likely to remain working and active in the City longer-term.

## Our Ask

Teach For America – New York humbly requests \$250,000 from the City Council to support our capacity to increase the number of talented and diverse teachers to teach in some of the highest-needs schools and license areas in New York City. Our commitment to teacher diversity makes us among the most diverse teacher pipelines in the city. Over the past three years, among our incoming teachers, the majority have identified as people of color; 1 in 2 come from low-income backgrounds; and 1 in 3 are the first in their family to graduate college. We also support applicants who have Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status. Of our recent cohort of 400 first and second year teachers: 62 percent identify as persons of color, 43 percent are native New Yorkers, 53 percent come from a low-income background, 43 percent are

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2016/05/09/what-do-teachers-do-when-they-leave-teaching/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.uft.org/where-we-stand/reports>

<sup>3</sup> <http://tntp.org/publications/view/retention-and-school-culture/the-irreplaceables-understanding-the-real-retention-crisis>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2016/05/09/what-do-teachers-do-when-they-leave-teaching/>



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#### TEACHFORAMERICA

first generation college students, 8 percent identify as LGBT, and CUNY, SUNY and NYU were the top contributing universities to our teaching corps. We focus on recruiting for urgent teacher licensure areas in New York including STEM, early childhood and special education. Additionally, we leverage the reach of the Teach For America national recruitment team to bring native New Yorkers who have gone to college or worked elsewhere back home to New York City to teach.

### Background on Teach For America

Teach For America's mission is to enlist, develop and support our nation's most promising future leaders to strengthen the movement for educational equity. Our first and second year teachers, whom we call corps members, teach for at least two years in some of the highest needs schools. In New York City, our vision is that one day, every student will have access to great neighborhood schools that support, inspire and challenge them to be the leaders our city needs. We pursue this vision in collaboration with schools, city agencies, and community organizations.

New York City was one of the charter regions of Teach For America, which was established in 1990. Every year since then, we have partnered with NYC Department of Education to identify teachers for some of the hardest to staff schools in our city. Six years ago we also began providing teachers for early education centers. We provide intensive training and ongoing support to so that our teachers can have an enduring positive impact on New York City's students.

### Meeting Critical Needs

Today, there are 2,400 Teach For America educators at work in New York City schools. Our collective teacher force in New York City includes 400 first and second year teachers and 1,700 alumni teachers who completed their two-year commitment (either here in NYC or in one of our other regions) and continue to teach. This year, our corps members are teaching in 173 schools across 39 city districts in The Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan. Approximately 300 Teach For America alumni are now school leaders (principals, assistant principals and other administrators). Many of our alumni who continue to teach and work in schools – including many educators of color – have pursued school leadership roles. Teach For America alumni principals now account for nearly 10 percent of principals in New York City.

Teach For America teachers meet critical needs in City schools where at least 80 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-priced lunch. Additionally, 83 percent of the students in the schools where our teachers teach live in poverty (as defined by the NYC Department of Education) and that 93 percent of the students are Black or Latino. Collectively, Teach For America teachers serve nearly 100,000 students throughout New York City annually; an estimated 96 percent being students of color, 13 percent being English language learners and 18 percent having special needs.

Our work is concentrated in high poverty neighborhoods: East Harlem, Washington Heights, Morningside Heights, Highbridge, Hunts Point, Concourse, Mott Haven, Soundview, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, Flatbush and Crown Heights.

Our educators teach in license areas where the demand far outpaces supply:

- 45% teach special education
- 14% teach STEM
- 10% teach early childhood.



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## **Recruiting Diverse, Local Talent**

This year, we invested in a Director of Recruitment Partnerships who is dedicated to creating sustainable talent pipelines through collaboration with local non-profit organizations, community members and local colleges and universities. Earlier this winter we co-hosted a leadership conference with NYC Men Teach to elevate the teaching profession and provide professional development opportunities for aspiring educators. Other organizations we are actively engaging include: Jumpstart, CUNY ASAP, The Breakthrough Collaborative, Peer Health Exchange, Thurgood Marshall College Fund, Practice Makes Perfect, Community Impact at Columbia University, and Reading Partners. We also plan to work more closely with top public high schools in New York City to connect with and recruit their graduates to enter the teaching profession.

Our recruiter sources for teachers citywide, but our highest concentrations of teachers and alumni are teaching in schools in the following city council districts and neighborhoods: district 8: 35 teachers and 76 alumni in East Harlem, district 9: 39 teachers and 90 alumni teaching in Washington Heights and Morningside Heights, district 16: 50 teachers and 66 alumni teaching in the West Bronx and Highbridge, district 17: 47 teachers and 77 alumni teaching in Hunt's Point, Concourse, Mott Haven and Soundview, and district 41: 35 teachers and 128 alumni teaching in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, Flatbush and Crown Heights.

## **Teacher Retention**

Teach For America helps to make teaching a viable career choice by removing financial barriers to entry. We provide transitional loans and grants and provide accommodations and food before teachers earn their first paycheck. We also enroll our corps members in AmeriCorps which provides education awards to help cover costs of earning a required master's degree in education. Recently, we have been deeply concerned by the federal FY18 budget blueprint, which proposes a 13 percent cut for the Department of Education and the elimination of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) – the agency that runs AmeriCorps. If the proposed cuts materialize, it would dramatically hamper Teach For America's mission of building a diverse network of leaders committed to educational equity. We recognize that there is a tremendous amount of pressure in the city budget, but we urge the City Council to support our efforts given the unique need that our teachers fill in the education landscape of New York City.

## **A Partnership for the Future**

Teach For America is committed to building on our progress and we hope that the City Council will provide funding to support us to bring in more diverse talent to the New York City schools that need it most. We are eager to bring in more teachers who share the backgrounds of their students and help address urgent needs in our city schools. Thank you for the opportunity to share our experience and perspective.



AN AMERICORPS PROGRAM

**New York City Council  
Preliminary Budget Hearing  
Education Committee**

**LEARNING TO WORK  
INITIATIVE**

March 21, 2017

Testimony Presented By  
Michael De Vito Jr.  
Senior Director of Workforce Initiatives  
NYCID



ACT I  
Scene One

Late morning. ABE sits at table in a coffee shop, working a newspaper crossword puzzle and sipping his coffee. JAKE enters, smiles as he takes in the scene, then moves deliberately toward ABE's table.

JAKE  
(cheerfully)

I knew I'd find you here. When the weekly editors meeting goes to hell, the coffee shop is your retreat.

ABE  
(without looking up)

Shit.

JAKE

Hey, can't avoid me forever.

ABE

I came here for some peace. Go away.

JAKE  
(sitting)

There's more to this thing, Abe. I know it.

ABE

Gimme a four letter word for get lost.

JAKE

You left the office before you heard—

ABE

Your pitch stinks. Let it go.

JAKE

Not a chance.

ABE

(resigned, putting the newspaper aside)

You're a good reporter, Jake. Stick to hard news and leave the gossip to the tabloids.



My name is Michael De Vito, Jr. and I am the Senior Director of Workforce Initiatives for the New York Center of Interpersonal Development. NYCID is Richmond County's Conflict Resolution Center as well as an agency that provides youth services to more than 1,500 New Yorkers every day. I am speaking to you today on behalf of NYCID and The Learning to Work Coalition, and I am grateful for your time and attention as I seek to illustrate the value of the Learning to Work, or LTW, initiative, and your support continuing forward. Your assistance allows us to serve thousands of over-aged and under credited young adults who are some of the most at-risk youth in our city.

In 2005, the Department of Education (DoE) began to partner with community based organizations to implement the LTW initiative. Its mission has been to usher over-aged and under credited (or OA-UC) young adults towards continued engagement in school, skills building for meaningful employment, and readiness for post-secondary education. Community based organizations (or CBOs) like our own NYCID, provide a multi-faceted support system from academic tutoring to counseling, attendance outreach to job skills development, and subsidized internships to career exploration.

After 12 years in existence, the Learning to Work program is a model which has created **thousands** of success stories for our city. We provide environments where all students are supported and nurtured as they successfully earn a high school diploma. Per the Department of Education's own explanation of our work, "CBOs are an integral component of these programs and schools. The goal of LTW is to assist students in overcoming obstacles that impede their progress toward a high school diploma and lead them toward rewarding employment and educational experiences after graduation."<sup>1</sup>

Five years after the Initiative's implementation, an evaluation report was issued at the behest of the DoE and the Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation. The successes it revealed included higher rates of graduation for OA-UC than traditional high schools, high levels of engagement, and high confidence, satisfaction, and trust with the CBO professionals. For a population considered difficult to engage and at risk of dropping out, the positive outcomes were exceptional. That evaluation report was issued

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/SpecialPrograms/AlternativesHS/LearningtoWork/default.htm>



JAKE

That's grief talking.

DARCY

How could he have done that? We didn't need the money. What could have mattered to him more than Aunt Margaret and me?

JAKE

If we find the whistleblower we might come close to understanding.

DARCY

We? What makes you think I'd want any part of this crusade you're on?

JAKE

Because you loved your father. And because I need your help.

DARCY

You can't be serious.

JAKE

I'm asking you to help me fill in the blanks. To try to remember those weeks before he was arrested, the mood he was in, what he might have said. Maybe something that didn't register at the time—a reference, even a small detail could make a difference.

DARCY

(shutting down)

No. I can't go through all that again, reaching out for empty hope. You want to think he might have been used, but the evidence said he was guilty.

JAKE

I'm asking you to help me find the truth.

DARCY

What makes you so sure we don't already have it?

JAKE

Reporter's instinct. I'm convinced there's a lot more to know.

DARCY

Maybe that's what I'm afraid of.

END OF SCENE

seven years ago, and our results continue a steady upward trend of exceeding expectations.

As a long time service provider of Learning to Work at the Staten Island YABC and The Olympus Academy Transfer School in Canarsie Brooklyn, NYCID is elated to hear that the Department of Education is now committing, through the Chancellor's Equity and Excellence Initiative, to ensure that **all** our city's transfer schools have Learning to Work Programs. Over the next 18 months, the initiative's goal is to open 18 new LTW programs across the city. This further validates our accomplishments with our current partnerships, and inspires us to know that an even greater number of students will be served.

What we find exceptionally challenging is that only \$3.7 million dollars is currently allocated for an expansion that will require more than \$10.8 million. This means that some LTW program budgets will be cut – in fact, nearly \$308,000 per budget. Our LTW teams have been doing more with less since 2010, when our success was first documented. We have strived to keep our student to staff ratios of 50 students to one advocate counselor as per our contractual obligations and take pains to continue successful engagement, attention, and quality with fewer and fewer resources. We are sensitive to the difficult choices that budget realities induce, and yet the human capital benefit of the LTW initiative cannot be understated:

*“One of the most direct relationships between education and City expenditures is in the area of income support... To the degree that the City can better educate its children so that they can find stable and well-paying jobs in adulthood, it will directly minimize its budget outlays for income support<sup>2</sup>”*

Council members, there's a figure you've been given in previous testimony. It is \$325,000 - and that's the aggregated figure presented by Northeastern University and the Community Service Society,

*“in lifetime budgetary terms, ‘each individual without a high school diploma represents a net cost to New York City of \$134,037, whereas each New Yorker with a high school diploma or GED yields a net benefit of \$192,715 – a swing of more than \$325,000 per person.’<sup>3</sup> Thus, in the aggregate, simply helping one low-skilled New Yorker earn a high school degree or equivalency is worth more than \$325,000 to the city.”<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> New York City Comptroller Office, (2012, September), Beyond High School: Higher education as a growth and fiscal strategy for New York City

<sup>3</sup> Community Service Society, From Basic Skills to Better Futures: Generating Economic Dividends for New York City at 9 (Sept. 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Id. at 1.

She studies him, then touches her lips to his in earnest, a kiss full of memory and longing.

JAZZ (CONT'D)

(tenderly)

That's it. That's the one. I guess we're square now.

MARGARET

Thank you, Jasper.

JAZZ

Stay well, Maggie.

She leaves, and he stares off into the distance. Then he looks at his watch and picks up the phone.

JAZZ (CONT'D)

Joan, cancel my one o'clock. Then get me Abe Fineman over at the *Gazette*.

BLACKOUT

Through this unique service model, which promotes the building of community and the strengthening of relationships between our programs, we have helped more than **10,000** New Yorkers obtain a high school diploma since 2005. That's \$3.25 **billion** dollars of net benefit for our city.

The DoE schools report for 2014/2015 shows that YABCs have a High School persistence rate of 86%. This means that YABC students graduate, earn a High School equivalency, earn an alternative commencement credential, or remained enrolled and attending school. The Comparison Group is 56%.<sup>5</sup>

And there's also the Ty Test.

Tyrone Duchard, a 21 year old Staten Island student who will graduate in June was in our Civil Service and Trades class among his peers at 8:30 last night. There are ~~100~~<sup>100\*</sup> who take this particular class, which is visited weekly by our invited guests who are tradespeople and NYC Civil servants. There is also a weekly work scenario activity in which our student/interns develop problem solving skills by dissecting a work-place issue and deciding together the best way resolve the problem. Tyrone shared with us how he often tests new friends using what he calls the "Ty Test." In short, Tyrone asks a series of questions related to a person's generosity, respect, trust, and kindness. While it was hard to get through the class without busting a rib from laughter, the teacher and I showed Ty how such willingness to invest in finding a good friend is identical to how a company will interview for the best employee. Our students remain engaged and forward-looking to their future, and we meet them where they are.

TYPES  
OF  
CLASSES  
EACH  
YEAR

In closing, I would like to re-emphasize that earlier figure: More than **10,000** at-risk youth have achieved a high school diploma or GED since 2005. That's ten thousand potential firefighters, Court reporters, carpenters, and aides to City Councilwomen. Since that time our collective impact on this population has only increased and our referrals continue to grow. We thank you for your ongoing support, and hope that you'll find as much value in growing this program as we and our young adult participants – and their families – do. We appreciate our Council members, and thank you for this opportunity.

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<sup>5</sup> 2014-15 School Quality Snapshot / YABC

MARGARET

You used to be compassionate, Jasper.

JAZZ

And you used to be smart. The boy's no fool. He's got it in his head Frank wasn't working alone. If he keeps digging, he might learn enough to name the others involved. Then we'll have an even bigger problem on our hands. One I may not be able to fix. I should never have let you involve me in this mess.

MARGARET

(agitated)

He's already stirring things up, asking Darcy to think back over what happened then, what Frank may have said or let slip. Now she's not sleeping at night. I need you to block him, Jasper.

JAZZ

(fully alert now)

Just what are you asking?

MARGARET

(increasingly desperate)

To help me protect her. Don't let him find out. You know how ruthless your associates can be. I promised Frank I'd keep Darcy safe, not put her in the middle of—

JAZZ

She's always been in the middle of it. That's what gave them the edge over your brother.

MARGARET

Frank did what he had to do.

JAZZ

Don't we all.

MARGARET

It can't have been for nothing, Jasper. I'm risking a lot just being here. If anyone sees me—

JAZZ

(impatient)

Yeah, you'll be disgraced forever.

MARGARET

(raw entreaty)

Please, Jasper.

# NYCID

*We Improve Lives*



New York Center for Interpersonal Development believes in nurturing personal growth and teaching the power of choice. We trust in shared successes. We support our community with primary-person mentoring, conflict mediation, and restorative training. We improve lives.

In 1970, NYCID opened as The Rap Center on Staten Island as a place for young people to congregate and explore their personal issues. NYCID's founders wanted Staten Island youth to have a safe place to go with responsible adults to guide them. In 1982, the NYCID broadened its scope & opened the Community Dispute Resolution Center. With the training of our volunteers in mediation and other methods of conflict management, we began providing professional dispute resolution services in the Staten Island community.

Since our humble beginnings, NYCID has reaffirmed our commitment to supporting young people and peacefully resolving conflicts. The years have seen us grow into the noteworthy & unique service provider that we are today. Working not only with Staten Islanders but with residents throughout New York City, our menu of programs and services has expanded to include: school-based after school enrichment programs, YABC, a transfer school, drop out prevention programs, numerous innovative mediation & conflict management services, as well as dynamic trainings and professional development workshops provided by our Training Institute.

Our dual focus on youth development and conflict management services is what makes NYCID strong and unique. Our extensive work in the conflict management field directly informs and perfects the work we do with young people every day. All of our employees are trained mediators whose approach to working with children and adolescents is rooted not only in positive youth development principles but in tried-and-true conflict resolution concepts & skills as well. Many of our youth development staff have volunteered as mediators in our CDRC, further enriching these services.

NYCID values the cultivation of positive, respectful human relationships & the strengthening of communities as fundamental to achieving a civil and just society. It is towards this mission that NYCID, through it committed and talented staff, volunteers & partners, dedicates itself each and every day.



New York Center for Interpersonal Development  
718-815-4557 [nycid.org](http://nycid.org)





**Testimony of the National Institute for Reproductive Health**  
before  
**The New York City Council Committee on Education**  
regarding  
**Oversight of Fiscal Year 2018 Expense Request**  
**March 21, 2017**

Thank you Chairman Dromm and members of the Committee for the opportunity to submit this testimony. My name is Danielle Castaldi-Micca and I am the Director of Political and Government Affairs at the National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH). We build power at the state and local level to change public policy, galvanize public support, and normalize women's decisions about abortion and contraception. We don't just push back against restrictions on abortion and contraception; we fight for a society in which everyone has the freedom and ability to control their reproductive and sexual lives, and a major part of that is making sure young people are equipped with the education and tools they need to be safe, healthy, and happy throughout their lives. To that end, we strongly support fully-resourced comprehensive sexuality education in New York City schools.

NIRH is also a co-chair of the Sexuality Education Alliance of New York City (SEANYC), a broad coalition that advocates for comprehensive, K-12 sexuality education that meets the National Sexuality Education Standards for all New York City youth. SEANYC aims to foster safe learning environments where students can access the information and skills they need to make healthy decisions and fulfill meaningful and productive lives.

Since 2011, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) has required both middle and high schools to incorporate sexuality education into the two semesters of state-required health education. However, due to a lack of accountability, adequate resources, and enforcement, students' experiences vary widely when it comes to sexual health learning.

The DOE recently released new Health Education data in response to Local Law 14 and 15 (2016), which demonstrated that many schools are out of compliance with the NYS health education requirement and our city sexuality education standards.<sup>1</sup> 43% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders citywide have not received health education before leaving middle school. The vast majority of schools do not have a licensed health educator on site in middle and high schools. A staggering 15,397 unique instructors teach some piece of health education in our elementary, middle, and high schools, yet only 153 are licensed health educators and only 7.6% of them have attended any

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<sup>1</sup> Health Data. Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, NYC Department of Education. Accessed March 16, 2017. <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/city/publicaffairs/Health+Data.htm>

training on sexual health education over the past few years. Clearly, sexuality education is not being appropriately implemented across our city. DOE need the resources to hire more licensed health educators, train current teachers and implement accountability measures so that schools can provide the health education students deserve and that is required by state law.

Sexuality education must also be expanded to all grades. Just as we would not assume that a student who has never done simple arithmetic can jump into trigonometry, we cannot expect students who have never been introduced to sexuality education in earlier grades to truly understand the complex material they are asked to learn in later grades. Cities across the country, including Boston, Chicago, and Broward County have already enacted comprehensive K-12 sexuality education programs. New York City is lagging behind. SEANYC recommends that Department of Education Chancellor Carmen Farina pass a Chancellor's Regulation requiring comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality education that reflects the National Sexuality Education Standards for all students from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

There are real ramifications of our inadequately implemented and tracked sexuality education program. In February, the Independent Budget Office reported that STI cases in New York City had reached their highest numbers in 30 years.<sup>2</sup> DOE and the Administration have a serious responsibility to keep our young people safe, healthy, and equipped with the tools they need to make the best decisions for their lives. A comprehensive sexuality education policy that is sufficiently funded and includes an achievable timeline for implementation of K-12 standards and accountability measures for enforcement and evaluation will help to ensure that every school has the ability to provide supportive and inclusive education to all of its students. As such, **the National Institute for Reproductive Health respectfully requests the Council's support for Fiscal Year '18 budgetary funding to implement and enhance sexuality education in all New York City schools.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to take any questions.

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<sup>2</sup> "With Sexually Transmitted Disease Cases Rising in New York City, What Happened to Spending on Treatment and Prevention?" NYC Independent Budget Office. Accessed March 20, 2017. <http://ibo.nyc.ny.us/cgi-park2/2017/02/with-sexually-transmitted-disease-cases-rising-in-new-york-city-what-happened-to-spending-on-treatment-and-prevention/>



We see what can be.

**Testimony of Kelly Dugan, Division Director  
Good Shepherd Services**

**The Committee on Education on the subject of the New York City Council Fiscal Year  
2018 Preliminary Budget, Mayor's FY'17 Preliminary Management Report and Agency  
Oversight Hearings**

**(March 21, 2017)**

**Good morning. My name is Kelly Dugan. I am the Division Director for Good Shepherd Services' Transfer Schools programs located throughout Brooklyn.**

**I have been working with Good Shepherd for eight and a half years in the Transfer School setting. I currently oversee our four Transfer High Schools: Brooklyn Frontiers High School, West Brooklyn Community High School, Research and Service High School, and South Brooklyn Community High School – which is the original model for partnership high schools funded by Learning-to-work Funding. When I joined Good Shepherd, my role was to help replicate South Brooklyn's model with SCO and Jewish Child Care Association and their principal partners at East Brooklyn Community High School and Brooklyn Democracy Academy. I want to thank the committee for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to share testimony on my experience.**

As you know, there are currently 52 transfer high schools in New York City, 31 of which have CBO partners funding by Learning-to-work contracts. All 31 of these schools were created with the express intent of serving overage, under-credited young people who have not been successful in their previous schools. As CBO's we work with our DOE partners with a whole school approach that serves every student, and the community as a whole.

Our schools are ungraded and serve students ages 16 to 21. Students take courses based on academic needs and completion of the credit areas needed for a diploma. Our students have to pass all their regents and at the end of their course work with us, receive HS Diplomas. We connect with prospective students through guidance counselors, community stakeholders and area schools. Good Shepherd's four schools serve a population, 75% of which receives free lunch and 40% of which has IEPs.

The Transfer School Model provides school staff with a philosophy that allows the culture of the school to be oriented toward the need of the young people we serve and specifically, meeting young people where they are. It helps inform discipline, youth performance and is aligned with the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention and Restorative Practice to lower incidents in schools. Our

schools function holistically and while we are accountable for different outcomes, we work with all young people and we want to be consistent and we work together to ensure their success.

Every student we serve has experienced academic obstacles, in addition to non-academic obstacles that have affected their ability to be in school, learn, and have a positive association with schools. Most are experiencing social and economic issues or a mental health illness, to which we are particularly well equipped to respond in our role. Our job in our transfer high schools is to identify the outside factors impeding youth from succeeding and providing them and their families with resources to address issues such as homelessness, undiagnosed mental health illnesses or family conflicts, as well as helping them build healthy and productive relationships with peers and adults in the school by doing group work, mediations, crisis intervention, academic counseling and work & college readiness.

Good Shepherd's role in our four transfer schools is made possible through the Learning-to-work contracts which were created to re-engage the young people most at risk of leaving school without a diploma. We do that by providing outreach, support for families, internships, counseling and commitment to the goals of our DOE partners.

**I kindly request that the Council help ensure that the Learning To Work contracts be funded at a higher level. The city wide LTW Coalition has determined that an investment of \$10.8 million is necessary to fund the current LTW contracts at their current funding levels**, but even that is insufficient for the demands of the program, given that there have been cuts to LTW budgets in the last 10 years. As the Council knows, this is another example of why the human services sector has come together under the Sustain our Sanctuary Campaign to request a 12% increase on all City human services contracts. This investment is vital especially since many contracts, such as Learning to Work, have been cut and otherwise underfunded, even if through a lack of cost escalators, for years.

**Thank you for the opportunity to testify about Transfer Schools. I look forward to answering any questions you might have about my testimony. Again, thank you for your time and dedication to this very important issue.**



Fiscal Year 2018 Expense Request Testimony  
NYC Council Committee on Education Oversight Hearing

Good afternoon,

I am Tara Abrol, LMSW, the founder of BIG Talks Workshops. BIG Talks Workshops provides students with the opportunity to dialogue about sexuality, relationships, gender, and race. Thank you to Education Committee Chair Daniel Dromm for convening this hearing, the Speaker of the City Council and the entire Committee for their continued support of comprehensive education. The New York City Council and the Department of Education have long shown their commitment to funding public education. Today, the need for funding for comprehensive sexual health education in New York City public schools is more urgent than ever.

BIG Talks Workshops is a member of the Sexuality Education Alliance of New York City (SEANYC), a broad coalition that advocates for comprehensive, K-12 sexuality education that meets the National Sexuality Education Standards for all New York City youth. SEANYC aims to foster safe learning environments where students can access the information and skills they need to make healthy decisions and fulfill meaningful and productive lives.

As a therapist and holistic sexuality educator, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of enacting comprehensive sexuality education in NYC schools. When my young clients ask me about issues related to their sexual health, I feel fortunate to be able to offer these young people vital information; but I also worry about all of the other young people who will not receive this same important knowledge. Pregnancy and STI prevention, awareness and understanding of consent, body image, emotional intelligence, and a connection between self worth and sexuality are life skills too important to only be given to the few students who are currently receiving comprehensive sexuality education.

I am hired by schools to teach students the BIG Talks holistic sexuality education curriculum, so I have personally experienced the numerous discrepancies in how teachers utilize the DOE's current curriculum and the level of incompetence in teaching the material. Teachers need to be trained effectively, and there needs to be increased accountability by schools demonstrating what information and how much information they are offering students. Currently we are all failing our young people.

In addition, sexuality education must be expanded to all grades. I help parents understand the necessity of beginning sexual health conversations at early ages with their children, which normalizes sexuality and most importantly, keeps kids of all ages safe. If young people have not been given the building blocks for understanding basic concepts, how can we expect them to implement more nuanced behaviors?

**As such, I respectfully request the Council's support for Fiscal Year '18 budgetary funding to implement and enhance sexuality education in all New York City schools.**

Thank you for the opportunity to offer my expertise today. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments regarding my testimony.

Sincerely,

Tara Abrol, LMSW  
BIG Talks Workshops, *Founder*  
[www.bigtalksworkshops.com](http://www.bigtalksworkshops.com)





**Testimony: Education Committee of the New York City Council  
March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

West Side Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH) would like to thank Council Member Danny Dromm, Chair of the Education Committee, for the opportunity to submit testimony for the FY2018 Preliminary New York City Budget, and the urgency to expand universal free school lunch to **provide healthy, affordable and freshly prepared meals to all** New York City public school students.

Founded in 1979, West Side Campaign Against Hunger is the country's first supermarket-style, multi-service food pantry, and one of the largest emergency food providers in New York City. **In the last year, we provided over 1.6 million pounds of food, which included over 280 thousand pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables, to over 33 thousand people;** but our customers come to us for more than groceries. WSCAH combines access to healthy food, with support services, job training, and policy advocacy to work in partnership with our customers by emphasizing their right to self-determination and dignity.

The supermarket-style model we innovated, which allows customers to choose what's best for their families, combats the stigma of poverty among adults in the same way universal free school lunch would combat, if not eliminate entirely, the stigma of poverty among school age youth. In addition to the stigma of poverty, these customers are living in fear. WSCAH serves a diverse population of low-income New York City residents, a majority of whom are immigrants. In fact, only 24% of WSCAH customers were born in the United States. More and more every day, we receive requests from our customers to remove information from our database; some customers have stopped showing up entirely. Rather than consume healthy food and access social services, instead, our customers are consumed by fear.

Fifty-eight percent of our customers are women, a majority of whom are mothers to the 26% of children who rely on the fresh food and wraparound services we provide to help our customers not only survive, but thrive. There's no guess work to the social conditions that require people to rely on emergency food providers. When those same people, who all have significant barriers to overcome, begin to turn down the social services on which they so heavily depend because they would rather go hungry than risk being deported and separated from their families, **the urgency to expand universal free school lunch becomes resoundingly clear.**

Universal free school lunch, which does not require verification of citizenship, is more crucial now than it ever was. The expansion of universal free school lunch is also cost effective. Its implementation would cost only **\$8.7 million to feed New York City's 1.1 million public school students after state and federal funds are reimbursed.** Expanding universal free school lunch would not only help to close the **242 million meal gap** that persists in our city even after anti-hunger benefits have been secured and emergency food has been accessed, but it is a necessary step in providing sanctuary as we promised. We are now not only fighting hunger, we are now also fighting fear!

Once again, West Side Campaign Against Hunger would like to thank the City Council's Education Committee for its continued support of this issue, and the opportunity to testify about the need to **expand universal free school lunch to provide healthy, affordable and freshly prepared meals to all 1.1 million New York City public school students.**



We see what can be.

**Testimony of Demond Pearson, Community School Director  
Good Shepherd Services' Boys and Girls High School Community School**

**The Committee on Education on the subject of the New York City Council Fiscal Year  
2018 Preliminary Budget, Mayor's FY'17 Preliminary Management Report and Agency  
Oversight Hearings**

**(March 21, 2017)**

**Good morning. My name is Demond Pearson. I am the Program Director for Good Shepherd Services' Community Schools program at Boys and Girls High School in Brooklyn located in Council Member Robert Cornegy's Council District.**

**I have been working with Good Shepherd for eighteen years in a school setting where I have worked in a YABC and now a Community School. I want to thank the committee for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to share testimony on my experience. As the Community School Director, I am a member of the School Leadership Team (SLT) and Parent Teacher Association meetings, as well as offer workshops for families and opportunities for parents to become more involved in their child's education.**

**Good Shepherd Services (GSS) goes where children, youth, and families face the greatest challenges and builds on their strengths to help them gain skills for success. Good Shepherd currently operates Community Schools at Essence Middle School, Boys & Girls High School, Clinton High School, Bushwick Leaders High School and PS 297. GSS has been funded through both New York City and New York State to provide services in Boys and Girls Community High School, but unfortunately, the funding from the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) ended 6/30/16. Without the funds, GSS will need to cut some of the services we provide to the school. We are grateful that the NYC Department of Education is willing to cover costs previously paid for by NYSED for a one year period. With these funds GSS can continue to provide the school, students, and families all of the services it has previously provided.**

**Since Good Shepherd Service has been working in Boys in Girls Community High School since 2011, we have already established activities and a system that will be able to continue with the additional funding from the NYC Department of Education.**

**1) GSS developed a formal referral protocol wherein anytime a student requires external supports, they can be referred to our staff who assess their needs, connect them to appropriate resources, and follow up with them to ensure a connection was made.**

2) The agency developed a partnership with Lutheran Medical Center, who maintain an onsite medical clinic in the school building, to refer youth in need of ongoing mental health supports.

3) GSS provides youth with individual and group counselling supports on identified areas of need.

4) Community school staff are members of the Attendance Team and are responsible for all attendance outreach at the school, including phone calls, letters, and home visits.

**We have also seen success around chronic absenteeism, graduation and post-secondary planning which include:**

- **The percentage of students who are chronically absent (missing 10% of school days or more) has gone down by more than 20% points since 2014.**
- **4-year graduation rate has gone up 15% points since 2014.**
- **The percentage of student enrolling in postsecondary education within six month of graduate rose from 20% in 2014 to 34% in 2016.**

**Good Shepherd is eager to continue to provide our array of services at Boys and Girls Community High School, where we have been in partnership with the school since 2011, and together with the Coalition of Community Schools Excellence in requesting that the Council ensure that the DOE funds both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools for another year.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to testify about Community Schools. I look forward to answering any questions you might have about my testimony. Again, thank you for your time and dedication to this very important issue.**



We see what can be.

**Testimony of Melody Ruiz, Senior Career and Internship Coordinator at Good Shepherd Services' Young Adult Borough Center program at Stevenson Educational Campus**

**The Committee on Education on the subject of the New York City Council Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget, Mayor's FY'17 Preliminary Management Report and Agency Oversight Hearings**

**(March 21, 2017)**

Good morning. My name is Melody Ruiz. I am the Youth Internship and Career Coordinator for Good Shepherd Services' Young Adult Borough Center (YABC) Learning to Work (LTW) program at Stevenson Educational Campus in the Bronx located in Council Member Annabel Palma's Council District. I want to thank the committee for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to share testimony on my experience.

I have been working with Good Shepherd for eight and a half years where I first started as a Career Development Facilitator at Monroe YABC High School and moved to Stevenson YABC where I am now as an Internship Coordinator in 2010. I was recently promoted to Senior Career and Internship Coordinator.

Good Shepherd Services goes where children, youth, and families face the greatest challenges and builds on their strengths to help them gain skills for success. Good Shepherd is the largest provider of the New York City Department of Education's Multiple Pathways programs which serves overage, under-credited high school students ages 17½ and 21 who have earned at least 17 credits and are in the fifth year (or more) of high school. Good Shepherd operates 12 YABC LTW programs located throughout the Bronx and Brooklyn and began providing services for YABCs 10 years ago. Since that time, Good Shepherd has provided quality programming serving overage and under-credited youth who attend school at night through student support services, youth and leadership development, postsecondary college and career planning, enhanced work readiness skills development, and work-based experience opportunities.

**There are no typical days in this work. On average my case load ranges from 12 to 24 youth. My work hours range from 35 to 40 hours a week which also includes weekend volunteer events for youth to complete community service hours. In this role, I am responsible with** working with interns on their work portfolios consisting of their resume, cover letter, thank you letters and references; meeting with students to discuss their internship placement, as well as their academic performance; speaking with work site supervisors regarding the performance of interns; outreach to community stakeholders and business partners to increase the worksite pool; facilitating work readiness seminars for the Learning to Work (LTW) interns.

It is also my role to help youth understand the real world of work and provide them the tools they need to reach their full potential. The greatest challenge many of my students center around a financial need as many of them are the bread winners for their families.

I kindly request that the Council help ensure that the Learning To Work contracts be funded at a higher level. The city wide LTW Coalition has determined that an investment of \$10.8 million is necessary to fund the current LTW contracts at their current funding levels, but even that is insufficient for the demands of the program, given that there have been cuts to LTW budgets in the last 10 years. As the Council knows, this is another example of why the human services sector has come together under the Sustain our Sanctuary Campaign to request a 12% increase on all City human services contracts. This investment is vital especially since many contracts, such as Learning to Work, have been cut and otherwise underfunded, even if through a lack of cost escalators, for years.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the LTW component of the YABC model. I would I look forward to answering any questions you might have about my testimony. Again, thank you for your time and dedication to this very important issue.



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Melody Benitez

Address: 224 W 29th St, 14th FL NY, NY 10001

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Lunch 4 Learning **THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shamsheer Santhi (student)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Lunch 4 Learning

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Lunch 4 Learning **THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Even Phillips (student)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Lunch 4 Learning

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Lunch 4 Learning **THE COUNCIL**  
**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ksenia Novikova (student)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Lunch 4 Learning

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Lunch 4 Learning **THE COUNCIL**  
**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kristina Skinska

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Lunch 4 Learning

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Lunch 4 Learning **THE COUNCIL**  
**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Johnny Zheng (student)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Lunch 4 Learning

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DR. JAMES FAIRBANKS

Address: 1220 SHAKESPEARE AVE BK

I represent: PARENT ACTION COMMITTEE

Address: NEW SETTLEMENT APTS.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Estefany Valera

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Make The Road New York

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ISAIAH QUIRONES

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Make THE ROAD New York

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: NYASIA CASTRO

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: THE POINT

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Aaliyah Daniels

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: THE POINT

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mark Tehwitzil

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Sistas and Brothas United

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ashanique Palmer

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: FUTURE OF TOMORROW

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Lunch & Learning **THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RISA FRIDY, MD

Address: 200 N. END AVE #12N, NEW YORK, NY 10282

I represent: Lunch & Learning

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Lunch & Learning **THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Pamela Stewart-Martinez

Address: 1041 PUGSEY AVENUE

I represent: LUNCH & LEARNING

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kesi Foster

Address: 726 Broadway

I represent: URBAN YOUTH COLLABORATIVE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kodiako Kang

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Make the road / UYC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christine Rodriguez

Address: 1498 Jefferson Ave

I represent: Make the Road NY / urban youth collab

Address: NY

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



THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. RJ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Annemarie LADVAN

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: teachers unite / Megan Moskop / Sarah M. / E.M. Eisen-Markowitz

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 03/21/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jorge Santana

Address: 25 Broadway Floor 12 NY NY 10012

I represent: Teach For America - New York

Address: 25 Broadway Floor 12 NY, NY 10012

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. RJ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CHEMAR PASSARD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: ACADEMY FOR WRITERS / DSC-NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rashida Latef

Address: 263 W. 86<sup>th</sup> Street

I represent: WSCATH/Lunch & Learning

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. RJ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chelsea Gregory

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Academy for Young Writers

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. RJ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marisel Martinez

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: James Baldwin School

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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



THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Educational Budget Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Elizabeth Adams

Address: 627 Classen Avenue Brooklyn

I represent: Planned Parenthood of NYC

Address: 26 Bleecker Street, NY NY 10012

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Liz Accles

Address: Community Food Advocates 110 Wall St

I represent: Lunch 4 Learning

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Restorative Justice Initiative Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nicole Riley

Address: Edward Reynolds High School

I represent: Teachers Unite & DSC-NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DeJohn Jones

Address: 216 St. Anthony

I represent: Democratic Action Committee

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms  
**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Priscilla Curiel

Address: 1512 Townsend Ave

I represent: Dignity in Schools (DSC) & PAC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms  
**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yanuyah Pearson

Address: 49 W. 38 NYC

I represent: Ramapo for Children

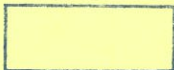
Address: 49 W. 38<sup>th</sup> Street, NYC, NY 10018

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



THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chaim Fishman

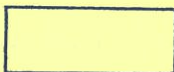
Address: 1341 55th Brooklyn, N.Y.

I represent: YAFFEO

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amanda Matus

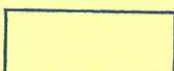
Address: 3400 Ft Independence St, Bx, NY

I represent: Sex Ed Alliance & Girls For Gender Equality

Address: Brooklyn, NY

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

universal free school lunch  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Janet Poppoendieck

Address: 282 16th St, Brooklyn NY 1125

I represent: CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute

Address: 55 West 125th St, NY NY 10027

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MENDEL YUGEL

Address: 627 EAST NY AVE BKLYN N.Y.

I represent: IAFFED

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SANTINA PROTOPAPA

Address: 307 E. 94th St

I represent: Lincoln Center Education

Address: 70 Lincoln Center Plaza

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rachel Sabella

Address: Food Bank For NYC

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Lunch/  
Food  
panel*



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 3.21.17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DEBORAH Levine 100 Einstein Lp  
BRONX NY 10047

Address: 575 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NY 10018 WK 10475

I represent: ACRIA

Address: 575 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NY 10018

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. testimony Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rachel Pratt

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: New York Road Runners

Address: 156 W. 56<sup>th</sup> St. 3rd Fl

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Andrea Bauer

Address: 70 W 36th St 5th Flr NY NY 10018

I represent: United Neighborhood Houses

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jessira Pavone

Address: 52 Chambers Street

I represent: DOE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms*  
**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Arts Edu  
Funding

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sharon Coun's

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: New York City Center

Address: 130 W 56th St, New York NY

*Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms*  
**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katherine Terenzi, Center for Popular

Address: 449 Troutman St, BK. Democracy

I represent: Center for Popular Democracy

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: MICHAEL DEJITO JR  
Address: 259 LIVERMORE AVE SI NY 10314  
I represent: NYCID  
Address: 130 Stuyvesant Pl SI NY 10301

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition Restorative

Date: Justice

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: Charlotte Pope  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
I represent: Children's Defense Fund - New York  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: Raymond J. Orlando  
Address: 52 Chambers Street  
I represent: NYC DOE  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor     in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dr. William CRAW

Address: 1000 Fifth Ave

I represent: The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Address: Ny ny 10028

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor     in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DR JERRY JAMES

Address: 508 NINTH AVE 10018

I represent: Center for Arts Education

Address: 266 West 37th St. 10018

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor     in opposition

Date: 3/21/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Allison Demas

Address: 8808 Colonial Road, Brooklyn NY 11209

I represent: The Center for Arts Education

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: March 21, 2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Charles C. Small III

Address: 25-20 99th Street 1st Fl

I represent: Queens Community House

Address: 108-05 66th Drive

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jahmila Joseph

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: Assistant Associate Director, DC 37

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Donald Nesbit

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: Vice-President, L.372, DC37

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Andrew Buckley

Address: 337 ~~33027~~ Alexander Ave Bronx NY 10454

I represent: East side house settlement

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms*  
**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Terry Kim, Senior Policy Analyst

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Childrens Aid Society

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms*  
**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Carmen Alvarez

Address: Vice President Special Ed

I represent: VFT

Address: 52 Broadway

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

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ellen Berland Giblin

Address: 146 Central Park West

I represent: YAFFEN

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kenya Johnson

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: UFT

Address: 52 Bway

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nottuli moster

Address: 25 west 45th street

I represent: Yaffed

Address: same

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



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: Abigail Beatty

Address: 25 West 45th Street

I represent: Yaffed

Address: Same as above

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: Grant Cowles

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Citizens' Committee for Children

Address: 14 Wall Street

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: Chancellor Carmen Fariña

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYC DoE

Address: 72 Chambers NY NY 10007

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

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Raymond Orlando

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYC DOE

Address: 52 Chambers St NY NY 10007

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ursulina Ramirez

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYC DOE

Address: 52 Chambers NY NY 10007

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/21/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kimisabet

Address: 151 W. 30th St., 5th Floor, NY, NY 10001

I represent: Advocates for Children of NY

Address: same



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor     in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Kelly Dugan

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Good Shepherd Services (Transfer School)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor     in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Julio Pena

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Good Shepherd Services YABC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor     in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Melody Ruiz

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Good Shepherd Services YABC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor     in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Demand Pearson

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Good Shepherd Services (Comm School)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

COMMISSION ON

500