



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Testimony of the New York City Department of Education on
Proposed Int. No. 1028-A
Before the New York City Department of Education**

April 19, 2017

Good afternoon Speaker Mark-Viverito, Chair Dromm, and all the Members of the Education Committee here today. I am Elizabeth Rose, Deputy Chancellor for Operations at the New York City Department of Education (DOE). Joining me are Dr. Laura Feijoo, Senior Supervising Superintendent in DOE's Office of School Support and Supervision and Lindsey Harr, Executive Director of the DOE's Office of School Wellness Programs. We appreciate the opportunity to discuss our work to support sexual health education as part of comprehensive health education in New York City public schools, and to comment on Proposed Intro Number 1028-A, which requires the Mayor to establish a sexual health education task force.

New York City is proud that we mandate the inclusion of sexual health topics as part of the one-semester Health class required for middle and high schools students. The inclusion of sexual health education goes beyond the New York State requirement for comprehensive health education and is something we have mandated since 2011. Comprehensive, medically accurate, and age-appropriate health education, from kindergarten through high school, is a critical part of a student's education. To succeed in the classroom and in society, students must be prepared to make healthy, informed choices; develop nurturing relationships; and thrive in a diverse and challenging world.

New York State requires health education at each grade level. In the elementary grades, health education must be provided every year, either incorporated into regular classroom instruction, or delivered by a cluster teacher. In middle school and again in high school, students are required to have one, semester-long comprehensive health education course with 54 hours of instruction, provided by a certified health education teacher. In grades K-12, students must also receive lessons each year on HIV/AIDS: five lessons each year in grades K-6 and six lessons each year in grades 7-12.

To support health education instruction, including sexual health topics, the DOE recommends curricula that align with National Health Education Standards, New York State Health Education Standards, and National Sexuality Education Standards. These curricula are developed by experts and are regularly reviewed and updated. In middle and high school, our recommended curricula are research-based and meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) *15 Characteristics of Effective Health Education*.

While DOE policy permits schools to select their curricula in all subject areas, we recommend expert-developed, national health curricula to make it easy for teachers and administrators to provide standards-based, age-appropriate, medically accurate health instruction for students.



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

The DOE currently recommends the following curricula:

- For high schools, *High School HealthSmart; Reducing the Risk*, an evidence-based, sexual health curriculum; and *Understanding Self-Identity*, which complements *Reducing the Risk* to support the inclusion of LGBTQ youth;
- For middle schools, a combination of *Middle School HealthSmart* and selected lessons from *Draw the Line, Respect the Line*, which is a sexual health curriculum; and
- *HealthTeacher* in elementary schools, as well as a pilot of an evidence-based curriculum, *The Great Body Shop*, which includes lessons aligned to National Sexuality Education standards.

In all grades, the DOE's HIV/AIDS Curriculum provides the required annual HIV lessons for students in grades K-12. Our curricula include age-appropriate lessons about identity, respect for self and others, and healthy relationships. Training and additional resources help teachers provide health lessons that are LGBTQ-affirming and inclusive of all students.

In addition, since 2015, male and female condom demonstrations are allowed in high school health education class because we know that correct and consistent condom use is key to preventing unintended pregnancy, HIV, and other STIs. The High School Condom Availability Program offers high school students access to free condoms and supports from specially trained school staff.

Within each of our recommended curricula, students have opportunities to develop skills related to communication and relationships, setting and protecting boundaries, negotiation, stress management, advocacy, goal-setting, and resisting negative social pressures. They apply those skills as they learn about specific topics, including sexual health, gender identity, sexual orientation, violence and injury prevention, emotional and mental health, and more. The DOE recognizes the importance of individual values and the wide range of diversity in our families. Parents can opt their children out of certain prevention lessons, but not out of all sexual health lessons.

To identify the best curricula and make these recommendations, we engage in a formal review process with education and medical experts, and in consultation with parents and community members. We work with these stakeholders to evaluate and identify curricula that are aligned with State and national standards.

Here is one example of how this review and recommendation process works: The DOE Office of School Wellness Programs convened a review committee over five days in December 2015 and January 2016 at the LGBT Center in Manhattan to make an updated recommendation for the elementary health curriculum.

A State health education expert led the review committee with 33 participants, including teachers; parents; DOE staff; Department of Health and Mental Hygiene staff; and other experts



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

including representatives from Planned Parenthood NYC, Teacher's College, Peer Health Exchange, and other organizations. All participants were trained on health education standards and the use of a health curriculum assessment tool to evaluate a range of research-based curricula. As a result of that review, DOE is piloting a new K-5 health education curriculum in selected elementary schools this year and will use teacher and administrator feedback to inform next steps.

To further strengthen our engagement of stakeholders and experts, and as part of our five-year CDC grant to focus on improving sexual health education programs and policies, we are in the process of establishing a standing committee that can work with us on an ongoing basis to review additional health education resources, share strategies for implementation, and promote the curricula, materials, and supports that are available to help schools provide high quality health and sexual health education.

Our first annual report on health education instruction submitted to the City Council last fall has helped us raise awareness of the gaps in implementation that still persist. While the report showed that virtually all of last year's 12th graders met the high school health education requirements, only 57 percent of 8th graders had the required course. The report also showed that last year there were 153 licensed health educators teaching in NYC schools, about five percent of the total number assigned to teach health education. We provide free training and curricula citywide throughout the year to help teachers be prepared, comfortable and knowledgeable to provide health instruction.

We are also ramping up how we use national CDC surveys to track health and sexual health education trends over time. In the most recent administration of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), which is completed by a representative sample of high school students, we asked two new questions to capture in what grade and setting students learn about sexual health topics—two key pieces of information on what students report experiencing in our schools. This and other data will be shared with superintendents and principals to highlight trends in risk behavior as well as student supports. We have also strengthened our recent administration of the CDC's School Health Profiles Survey, which captures more detailed information on the provision of health education from a representative sample of secondary principals and teachers from more than 400 City schools. Data analysis from the collective responses of students, administrators, and educators, along with health education reporting data, should give us a more comprehensive picture of health education, including sexual health, than what we have previously had.

We recognize that we have more work to do to address these challenges and to ensure that schools are prepared and supported in providing health and sexual health education. To that end, we are: convening principal focus groups to learn more about the challenges—and successes—in providing health education; working with superintendents and Field Support Center staff to foster stronger understanding of and support for health and sexual health education requirements; exploring options to increase teacher training opportunities; and providing schools with tools to better engage families on these important topics.



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

I would now like to turn to the proposed legislation.

Intro. No. 1028-A requires the Mayor to appoint members to a sexual health education task force to review both DOE's recommended sexual health education curricula and the implementation of sexual health education at all grade levels. We share the Council's goal of ensuring that all students receive high-quality sexual health education that is inclusive, standards-based, and age-appropriate, but any taskforce should build on, not duplicate, work already being done by the DOE in this area. We believe that curriculum review is best done by professional educators and falls within the purview of the DOE.

Additionally, I would be remiss if I did not caution that there are several operational concerns that would confront the task force as currently described in the legislation. In particular, it would be extremely burdensome, if not impossible, for a task force to review implementation of curricula at 1,600 schools given that our data system only captures scheduling of courses, not individual topics within courses. This is the case in all subject areas, not just health. Much as we cannot track when a social studies educator teaches a particular topic in history, we cannot track when a teacher teaches sexual health education, a topic which is part of a comprehensive health education.

With that said, we welcome the opportunity to meet with the Council to share further details about our curricula review process and outcomes, which have led to our current selection of national, research-based curricula. We believe that the task force could play a beneficial role in helping families and communities better understand what age-appropriate, standards-based sexual health instruction is; why it is a critical component of every child's education; and what curricula, resources and supports exist to help schools provide equitable access to health instruction. By providing an analysis of the health education data we report to the Council in combination with other public health data that DOE and NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene jointly collect, such as data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and School Health Profiles, this task force can be a strong ally for the necessity of comprehensive health and sexual health education. Furthermore, the taskforce can provide a much-needed platform for community members, including parents and students, to articulate why sexual health instruction is so critical to the health, safety, and success of our students.

We know that we have work ahead of us in order to ensure that all students are receiving high-quality health education. We appreciate the Council's leadership and partnership on these important issues. We look forward to further discussions with the Council on this legislation.

Thank you for your attention, and now you will hear from my colleague Robert Sanft.



**Testimony of the New York City Department of Education
on Intro. No. 1347**

Before the New York City Council Education Committee

April 19, 2017

Good afternoon Chair Dromm and Members of the Education Committee here today. My name is Robert Sanft, and I am Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Student Enrollment at the New York City Department of Education (DOE). Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Intro. No. 1347, which requires the DOE to include information regarding the Gifted and Talented (G&T) examination and programs along with Pre-K for All materials given to parents.

Gifted and Talented (G&T) programs are one way that the DOE supports the needs of students in every district. These programs deliver accelerated instruction aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards.

Eligibility for a DOE Citywide G&T school or a district G&T program is based on a student's score on the G&T test. The current G&T test includes both a verbal and nonverbal section: The Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) that tests verbal reasoning, comprehension, and receptive language abilities; and the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) that examines nonverbal critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. We continually review ways to ensure the G&T tests are equitable and maintain the high standards of the program. The test is offered annually and students must complete a Request for Testing (RFT) application in the fall in order to take the test.

As you already know, we now have G&T programs located in every district for the first time in over five years. For the 2016-2017 school year, we opened new third grade G&T classes in Community School Districts 7, 12, 16, and 23—each of which did not previously have G&T programs. For these particular programs, students are admitted based on multiple measures centered on research-aligned indicators for success in gifted programs. These indicators include: demonstrated academic performance based on report card grades, attendance; and gifted behavior indicators such as being highly curious, motivated, and a fast learner.

We take a number of steps to ensure that families have access to all of the information they need to find a high-quality elementary school option that best meets their child's needs, including information on the G&T test and programs. To support this effort, we have developed a comprehensive family outreach strategy.

Each year we publish and translate into nine languages a Kindergarten Directory and G&T Handbook that include important information for parents. These publications are distributed directly to all Pre-K for All sites—including NYC Early Education Centers, elementary schools, and standalone Pre-K Centers—along with shelters and libraries. These resources are also available at Superintendents' offices and the 12 Family Welcome Centers across the City. Family Welcome Center staff are able to assist all families with elementary school applications and requests for testing.

Electronic versions of the Kindergarten Directory and G&T Handbook are also available in English and the nine translated languages on our website. All families may sign up for admissions information and



**Department of
Education**

updates via an email service. Additionally, key announcements are posted via Facebook, Twitter, and on our website. Lastly, we work with school-based staff, community organizations, shelters and libraries to distribute admissions information as well.

In addition to our standard publications, for the first time this fall, the DOE mailed postcards with information on the G&T RFT process to all families of students enrolled in pre-K. These postcards provided essential information about requesting testing.

This year, we also piloted new “It’s Elementary” school admissions events for families. In place of separate, borough-wide pre-K, kindergarten, and G&T events, we held 32 district-based events. These family events consisted of presentations about all three elementary school processes, as well as opportunities to ask questions, work with DOE staff to find your zoned school and other school options, and complete a G&T RFT. Parents are more likely to learn about G&T when it is presented at the same event as pre-k and kindergarten information. We have interpretation services at all public DOE admissions events, including the “It’s Elementary” events.

Additionally, we recently implemented a new initiative in partnership with the Department of Homeless Services and the Human Resources Administration to encourage incoming pre-K and kindergarten students to submit a Request for Testing at their shelter. We trained shelter staff and DOE Family Assistants to engage and support families in this process.

Our efforts are having an impact: this year we saw an increase in the number of students entering kindergarten who took the test—16,582 tested in the 2016-2017 school year; whereas 14,477 tested in 2015-2016 school year, an increase of 14.5 percent. In particular, the number of students entering kindergarten and testing increased in all six community school districts in the Bronx, and in 10 of 12 community school districts in Brooklyn. However, the number of students entering kindergarten with eligible scores did not increase Citywide nor in these districts.

Finally, with respect to the proposed legislation, we support the goal of ensuring that families of pre-K students are aware of G&T testing opportunities. I would like to thank Council Member Cornegy, in particular, for his leadership and partnership on this issue. We look forward to building on our successes and working with families, communities, and the City Council to ensure that all students have equal access to the highest-quality education.



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**Testimony of Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams
City Council Committee on Education
April 19, 2017**

Good afternoon, Chair Dromm and members of the City Council Committee on Education. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and a special thank you to Council Member Robert Cornegy, Jr. for introducing this important piece of legislation concerning equality of access to the New York City Department of Education's (DOE) Gifted and Talented programs. I also want to thank Council Members Margaret Chin, Laurie Cumbo, Mathieu Eugene, Rosie Mendez, Donovan Richards, Ydanis Rodriguez, Helen Rosenthal, Ritchie Torres, and Ruben Wills for their co-sponsorship of this bill.

Intro No. 1347 is an important step toward having a gifted and talented program that is truly equitable, but it is only one step of many that will be needed to reach that goal. Along with Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr., I have formed a taskforce comprising parent leaders who will explore ways to improve access and equity in the City's gifted and talented programs. At two public hearings, we heard from parents and experts about their personal experiences navigating the current system. Many of the parents stated that they learned about the gifted and talented programs and the testing by chance or through sources other than the DOE. The legislation before you today will help address that very concern. Gifted and talented programs should not be treated like a government secret. All parents should be made aware of their existence and all parents should be informed on multiple occasions through multiple methods about testing dates and procedures. By the time a student enters the DOE system, their parent or guardian should have been actively informed about these programs and had an opportunity to have any questions addressed.

The City's gifted and talented programs are often the gateway to New York City's specialized high schools, which, in turn, are gateways to Ivy League colleges for New York City students. We cannot allow lack of awareness to be the reason why a student is not tested and is ultimately left behind on the pathway to the Ivy League. Beyond the critical need for sharing information with all families, the DOE should explore other ways to make this process easier for families to

navigate, such as opt-out testing, in which students are scheduled to be tested unless their parent or guardian specifically opts out of the process. This will ensure that the only students who are not tested are students whose family knows they are not being tested.

For too long, the major determining factors in acceptance to gifted and talented programs, as well as the City's test-in specialized high schools, have been the family's ability to provide extra resources to their child in the form of test preparation, and/or the school the student attends. In essence, this means that affluence is the real test for gifted and talented programs, not the innate abilities of the child. In addition, many programs don't begin until the third grade, meaning that students who lack resources are already behind their peers. Earlier testing, before a gap in educational outcomes can be a determining factor and equity in access to preparatory classes, can help mitigate these factors.

Every year, New York City goes through the same disturbing exercise: the results of the specialized high school exam are posted and we look on in shock that minority students are once again underrepresented in the schools' freshman class. In 2015, Black and Latino students made up 23.1 percent and 23 percent of the test takers respectively, while they received only 4.9 and 6.8 percent of the offers. Of the 5,104 offers, only 595 went to those students. In 2016, those numbers barely moved, with Black and Latino students comprising 21.9 and 22.5 percent of test takers while receiving 4.1 and 6.3 percent of the offers, a grand total of 530 out of 5,106 offers. In 2017, we saw very similar numbers with Black and Latino students being 21.0 and 23.7 percent of test takers while receiving 3.8 and 6.5 percent of the offers, resulting in just 524 out of 5,078 offers.

The fact that this happens every year suggests that our current approach to rectifying this injustice is not working. We need a new approach, but we also need the right approach. We cannot continue to do the same thing every year and expect different results. We cannot leave anything on the table. If we truly want a gifted and talented system that is available to all, we need to look at access to the gifted programs, the quality of the programs themselves, the timing of the tests, how these programs feed into the specialized high schools, and why the very access to these programs has for far too long been based on things that have absolutely nothing to do with whether a child is gifted and talented.

There is a comprehensive solution to this problem, and passing this legislation is a step toward that solution.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.



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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Testimony for the Committee on Education
April 19, 2017

My name is Gale A. Brewer and I am the Manhattan Borough President. Thank you to Chair Dromm, and the Committee on Education for holding this very important hearing and for the opportunity to testify today.

I will focus my comments on one of the bills being considered today, Intro 1028, which would create a sexual education task force, bringing together New York City (NYC) public school staff, the staff from the Department of Mental Health and Hygiene and sexual health education experts to review the current sexual health education curriculum and its implementation in NYC public schools, and make recommendations for improvement.

As a city that has the responsibility of educating over 1 million students we also have a responsibility to build and implement curriculum that is culturally responsive, and represents our students' social, cultural and sexual identities.

New York City public school students are required to take a health class, where students learn about healthy relationships, intimate partner violence, consent, and how to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. It is of utmost importance that we are providing that same education and affirmation to our LGBTQ students- and that the sex education curriculum includes positive examples of LGBTQ relationships.

We know currently the sex education curriculum in NYC public schools largely leaves out our LGBTQ students. A recent survey of NYC public school students by youth at the New York Civil Liberties Union found that just 36% of students had learned about LGBTQ issues and relationships in their sexual education classes, and half of students surveyed said their primary source of information about sex was their friends.

According to a 2014 report by the Urban Institute on LGBTQ teen relationships, 42.8 percent of LGBTQ youth reported dating violence in their relationships. Further, 23.2 percent of respondents reported sexual victimization in their relationships. Even more alarming, transgender youth reported the highest rates of dating violence, with 88.9 percent reporting physical dating violence.

This is unacceptable. Our students must have access to inclusive and comprehensive sex education- it is a matter of both their physical and emotional safety.

I fully support Intro 1028, and look forward to its implementation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, I look forward to working with you all.



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April 19, 2017

TESTIMONY OF BOROUGH PRESIDENT DIAZ

RE: City Council Intro 1347

I testify today in support of Council Member Cornegy's Intro 1347 which would require the Department of Education to include materials about the gifted and talented (G&T) exam and programs along with universal Pre-K information.

I have recently formed a gifted and talented task force along with my colleague, Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams. Parents have informed our task force of several disturbing trends. First, parents state that they have not received or have had to proactively seek and request the informational materials about the Gifted and Talented Programs and the exam. Our task force has even heard testimony about teachers not being informed about the test. This is unacceptable.

Parents have unequivocally expressed to the task force that we must do a better job at disseminating information about Gifted and Talented programs because we have a communication issue in our schools.

This bill seeks to address that crucial issue.

We need to increase the numbers of students taking the test in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, and the first critical step is through better communication about the programs and testing. We should ensure appropriate materials are widely disseminated, and in multiple languages.

Gifted and talented students should be challenged in programs that push them to excel and learn. Our task force has heard again and again that a rigorous curriculum is required for success on the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT) and in high school, and we need to do everything we can to make sure students get the skills they need. Gifted and talented education is a key piece of this educational puzzle because it provides academic rigor for young children that paves the way for later success.

For instance, anecdotal testimony to our task force from many alumni of the specialized high schools in New York City points to their and their peers' gifted educational experiences in New York City public school prior to high school as pivotal in allowing them to excel later in life. The later achievements of New York City Gifted and Talented program alumni include success on the SHSAT, in high school, at the country's best colleges, which accept students from New York City's Specialized High Schools, and in their careers.

We need to correct this problem of poor communication about gifted and talented programs and testing immediately, and we need to make best efforts to inform parents about the test so that their

children can have a chance at a gifted and talented education and the later successes that flow from a challenging early education.

Additionally, our task force is reviewing options for casting a wider net with gifted and talented testing based on research and anecdotal testimony. Making information about the test more widely available is a sensible incremental step.

The low numbers for Black and Latino students in gifted programs (less than 30 percent of the G&T population, although they comprise 70 percent of New York City students) may be explained in part due to the communication issue that parents have articulated to the task force.

No parent should be deprived of information about gifted and talented programs. In order to ensure students from all neighborhoods get access to gifted and talented education, we must make these programs well known. Council Member Cornegy's legislation is a great first step towards making this happen, and I urge the City Council to pass this piece of important legislation.

Thank you.

**Planned Parenthood of New York City
NYC Council Committee on Education — Introduction 1028-A and Resolution 1415
April 19, 2017**

Good afternoon. I am Francisco Ramirez, Vice President of Education at Planned Parenthood of New York City (PPNYC). I am pleased to submit testimony for today's Education Committee oversight hearing in support of Introduction 1028-A and Resolution 1415. 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 health 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. PPNYC's mission is to empower individuals to make independent, informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives through information and health care, and 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. 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. Our education programs reach New York City's youth in the communities they live, and by those they can trust and identify with. The Youth Health Promoters are peer educators who lead neighborhood outreach and workshops on sexual and reproductive health care and teens' rights, and our Adult Role Models (ARMs) 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 serves professionals in all five boroughs, helping to expand the number of trusted adults young people can turn to for accurate sexual health information. PPNYC is proud to be an innovative health education provider that serves New York City's youth through community-centered approaches.

As one of the nation's most trusted sexual health education and service providers, we know what comprehensive sexuality education requires and we see firsthand what gaps remain in New York City schools. We applaud the Council's introduction of legislation 1028-A to establish a task force to assess these gaps citywide and provide concrete recommendations for improvement. 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.

Comprehensive sexuality education promotes positive social and emotional development and has been linked to academic achievement,¹ healthy relationships, decreased rates of school absenteeism² and sexual

¹ Pregnancy and STDs can lead to stress, anxiety, pain, and needed doctor visits for treatment, all of which could impact attendance and performance in school. See: "Health-Risk Behaviors and Academic Achievement." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2010. http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health_risk_behaviors.pdf. Accessed 5/23/2010.

² Bridges, E., Alford, S. "Comprehensive Sex Education and Academic Success: Effective Programs Foster Student Achievement." Advocates for Youth, August 2010. Accessed January 18, 2017. http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/comprehensive_sex_education_and_academic_success.pdf

risk-reduction.³ Yet for sexuality education to be comprehensive, it must cover core learning components in accordance with the National Sexuality Education Standards,⁴ be inclusive of students' identities and backgrounds, and include a sufficient number of lessons to adequately cover content, which many New York City schools are failing to do. PPNYC's sexuality educators work with schools across the city to provide DOE-approved evidenced-based programming, and have often encountered schools that place limitations on sexual health lessons and restrictions on what students are allowed to learn. Recently administrators at a Queens middle school prohibited our educators from teaching age-appropriate lessons on reproduction and minors' health rights during workshops on anatomy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV, and canceled 7th and 8th grade workshops on HIV and STI prevention. Reproduction is a key component of anatomy and effective STD and HIV prevention,⁵ and learning one's rights as a minor is vital to safely accessing services. When schools are unwilling to follow New York City sexuality education guidelines and there are no measures in place to hold those schools accountable, students are denied critical health education, and their health and wellbeing are put at risk.

Students across New York City have also shared firsthand experience of significant inconsistencies in implementation of the city's health education requirement. The Sexuality Education Alliance of NYC (SEANYC)'s Youth Advisory Council recently conducted a poll of 314 middle and high school students in New York City⁶ and found that many students are not receiving the sex ed they deserve. Among students polled, regardless of whether they received some sex education in school or elsewhere, an overwhelming majority did not learn about consent (59%) and almost two-thirds of students did not learn about gender identity/expression in school or elsewhere (63%), both core components of comprehensive sexuality education.

Furthermore, only 64.5% of students polled reported receiving any sexuality education classes in school. Among students who did report receiving sex ed in school, there were significant disparities in what topics they learned. While 93% of students who said they received sex ed in school reported that they learned about HIV, only 62% said they learned how to put on a condom, critical for effective HIV prevention. When asked how their schools could improve sexuality education, many students shared they want more sexuality education classes starting in earlier grades, more trained health teachers, and more inclusive and open environments for learning that include LGBTQ inclusive material.

"Making sex ed an actual class, not just a health class, not just making it a week lesson in a semester-long health class." – 11th Grader, Brooklyn Public School

"Expanding the topics taught and getting actual sexual and reproductive health educators." – 12th Grader, Bronx Public School

"More LGBT sex ed." – 11th Grader, Staten Island Public School

"Teach it every year in school." – 10th Grader, Queens Charter School

³ The National Campaign to End Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy examined studies of prevention programs. 40 percent delayed sexual initiation, reduced the number of sexual partners, or increased condom or contraceptive use. 60 percent reduced unprotected sex. "Science and Success: Sex Education and Other Programs That Work to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, HIV, and Sexually Transmitted Infections." Advocates for Youth, 2012, THIRD EDITION. Accessed April 17, 2017.

⁴ "National Sexuality Education Standards: Core Content and Skills, K-12 [a special publication of the Journal of School Health]." Future of Sex Education Initiative, 2012. Accessed April 17, 2017. <http://www.futureofsexeducation.org/documents/josh-fose-standards-web.pdf>

⁵ The National Sexuality Education Standards states that young people in this age group should be able to define sexual intercourse and its relationship to human reproduction; explain the health benefits, risks and effectiveness rates of various methods of contraception, including abstinence and condoms; and describe the signs and symptoms of a pregnancy. See Future of Sex Education Initiative, 2012. <http://www.futureofsexeducation.org/documents/josh-fose-standards-web.pdf>

⁶ Poll results available at SexEdNYC.org

Int. 1028-A recognizes the immediate need to address the current state of sexuality education in New York City. The legislation calls for a thorough assessment of how sexual health education is being implemented in public schools, along with timely recommendations to improve that effort through a sexual health education task force. PPNYC commends the Speaker for advancing this legislation and for calling for comprehensive sexual health education in all grades and all schools during her 2017 State of the City address. We see this legislation as an important tool for improving New York City's health education, and urge that it be coupled with an administrative initiative that dedicates resources to training and teaching staff, expands sexuality education to all grades K-12 including District 75 schools, and establishes enforcement measures to ensure every school provides comprehensive programming in accordance with the National Sexuality Education Standards.

The need for a bold sexual health education policy in New York City is urgent. Rates of STIs are increasing dramatically among young people,⁷ one in three New York City teens report experiencing abuse in their romantic relationships,⁸ and LGBT youth are significantly more likely to experience sexual assault and bullying than their peers, according to the CDC.⁹ As the Trump administration works to roll back protections for LGBT students and fosters hateful rhetoric against marginalized communities, it is critical that all schools teach tolerance, understanding of values and cultures,¹⁰ and provide lessons on sexuality, gender identity and expression, gender-based assault, and consent that are inclusive of all genders. We need comprehensive sexuality education more than ever to provide an evidence-based and medically accurate model for healthy behaviors and lifestyles and to support all young people's growth and empowerment.

With this understanding, PPNYC also strongly supports Resolution 1415, which calls upon the New York State Education Department to convene a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards across subject areas and address racism, gender inequity, and discrimination embedded in current curricula. In order for young people to thrive, they must have an education that values inclusion and supports and reflects their gender, identity, race, abilities, cultural background and lived experiences.

In an effort to support and strengthen proposed legislation 1028-A, we recommend the task force include broader representation of youth input, and encourage the addition of more than one student representative to the committee. We also recommend that there be public response mechanisms put in place for all New York City students, as well as parents and teachers, to provide feedback throughout the task force's review and recommendation process, and that all task force members commit to adhering to the National Sexuality Education Standards for curriculum review.

PPNYC is proud to support the proposed legislation and looks forward to the quick passage of this bill. In addition to the aforementioned legislation, a clear public policy that is sufficiently funded and includes an achievable timeline for implementation of K-12 standards, along with accountability measures for enforcement and evaluation will help to ensure that every school has the ability to provide supportive and

⁷ "2015 STD Surveillance Report Press Release." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2016. April 18, 2017. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/2016/std-surveillance-report-2015-press-release.html>.

⁸ "Statistics." Day One. Accessed April 18, 2017. <http://www.dayoneny.org/statistics>.

⁹ "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 April 18, 2017. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/2016/lgb-youth-report-press-release.html>.

¹⁰ "Values." Advocates for Youth. Accessed April 18, 2017. <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/values-lessons>

Planned Parenthood of New York City

inclusive education to all of its students. New York City cannot wait to move forward on a robust sexual health education initiative. Current gaps in New York City's sexual health education have been well documented by both the Department of Education¹¹ and New York City students, and as we anticipate renewed federal attacks on health education, New York City must enact strong protections to support New York's youth.

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

¹¹ A recent DOE report found that almost half of 2016 graduated eighth graders (43%) did not receive a single semester of health during middle school, in violation of state law, and only 7.6% of the 15,397 NYC public school instructors assigned to teach health have attended any training on sexual health education in the last two years. See "Health Data." Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, NYC Department of Education. Accessed April 18, 2017. <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/city/publicaffairs/Health+Data.htm>



**Anna Garrison-Bedell, NYCLU Teen Activist Project
Proposed Int. 1028-A Testimony
NYC Council Committee on Education Hearing**

Good afternoon everyone, my name is Anna Garrison-Bedell and I am a sophomore at Bard Early College High School – Queens and a member of the NYCLU’s Teen Activist Project. Thank you to the City Council Members for holding this meeting. I am here to show my support of Int. 1028-A. I strongly believe that the creation of this task force will benefit all New York City public school students.

As a member of the NYCLU’s Teen Activist Project, I have seen firsthand the benefits to providing students with comprehensive sex ed, both in middle and high school, as well as the need for improvement across the board. By having a task force put in place to ensure that schools receive the same quality sex education, New York City can be a leader that other cities can look to for guidance. I’d like to share some information with the City Council Education Committee so that they can take this into consideration should a task force be put in place.

I have had three comprehensive sex education courses in my life: one in sixth grade, one in eighth grade, and one in ninth grade. Some people think that teaching sex ed in earlier grades is a bad idea, but in my experience, the sooner we teach students about their bodies, appropriate boundaries and healthy relationships, the better they understand their own feelings, values about their relationships, how to approach their sexuality and how to assess sexual risks when they are older.

The New York City Department of Education (DOE) currently requires health education to be taught in both middle and high school. I consider myself lucky to have received three courses of sex ed, but there are many students in New York City that are not so lucky. Some students do not even receive sex education until their senior year. This is unacceptable. This task force should ensure that public schools are following the requirements and that sex education is included in these health courses. New York City public schools must be held accountable and this requirement needs to be enforced.

This task force will have a number of different representatives, but I noticed that only one student voice is considered. It is essential that young people’s voices are heard and represented and there are a diverse range of identities that must be included. I believe that there should be more than one public school student that is a part of this task force that can share thoughts, ideas and insights into the decisions that are made on behalf of youth in New York City.

Lastly, I appreciate that this task force would include one representative that specializes in LGBTQ-GNC issues. As a member of the NYCLU’s TAP program, we recently surveyed New York City public school students and found that only 36% were learning about LGBTQ issues and relationships in their health and sex ed courses. It is so important that New York City health and sex ed courses discuss LGBTQ identities, and not just in high school but even in middle school. If this were the case, students would understand the fluidity of sexuality better as well as how to come to terms with it. In my experiences, friends from other schools didn’t come out until high school because they were scared of facing harassment and bullying and even then they felt scared and uncomfortable.

Most sex education is based on heterosexual relationships and pertains mostly to heterosexual students, which is extremely harmful to the LGBTQ youth who need to learn about their bodies and their relationships just as much as heterosexual cisgender students. If LGBTQ students do not feel included or are not well informed on issues and risks that apply to them, they are more likely to become depressed, confused, and more likely to take risks. Students who do not identify with the LGBTQ community will

also benefit from hearing inclusive sex education so that they will understand the community more and are able to feel freer about their sexuality as well.

It is crucial that the Council supports the proposed Int. 1028-A. This task force can not only hold New York City public schools accountable in ensuring that all students receive sex education as required, but can work hard to improve the current curriculum overall. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



Testimony of the National Institute for Reproductive Health
before
The New York City Council Committee on Education
regarding
Int. 1028-A and Res. 1415
April 19, 2017

Thank you Chairman Dromm and members of the Committee for considering the two bills before this committee and listening to the advocates, educators, and students here today. Thank you as well to Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, who has led the charge for comprehensive sexuality education. 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 vital to that mission is making sure young people are equipped with the education and tools to make the decisions that are best for their health, safety, and happiness. To that end, we strongly support Int. 1028-A and Res. 1415 as important steps towards finally making fully-resourced K-12 comprehensive sexuality education a reality 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 ensure that NYC is creating 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. We believe that this requirement does not go far enough and that sexuality education must also be expanded to all grades. SEANYC recommends that Department of Education Chancellor Carmen Fariña 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.

While we have broader ambitions for what sex ed in New York City should look like, we have time and again heard from students, educators, and parents that schools across the city are simply not meeting the modest sexuality education requirements the DOE currently has in place. A poll conducted by SEANYC's Youth Advisory Council this past summer found that only 64.5% of students surveyed had received sexuality education. That deficiency creates a serious risk for student safety and health; troublingly, 59% of students reported that they had never learned about consent in school or elsewhere.

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.¹ 43% of 8th 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 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.

With that in mind, the sexual health education task force created by the proposed legislation will guide the Administration in rectifying this issue and establishing New York as the leader we know it can and should be. We appreciate that the bill would establish a task force with a diverse field of experts, though we urge the task force include more than one student representative on the committee. We also recommend that there be public response mechanisms put in place for students, parents, and teachers to weigh in on the process, and that the task force commit to adhering to the National Sexuality Education Standards as a guide for its curriculum review. We are pleased that this bill commits the task force to an expedient timeline for its work, and we hope that the Council and Administration prioritize the task force and give its members appropriate resources to do its work.

NIRH also strongly supports the Council's Resolution 1415, calling upon the New York State Education Department to convene a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards across subject areas. In order for young people to thrive, they must have an education that supports their gender, identity, race, abilities, and cultural background. Marginalized students are often at greatest risk of peer aggression, bullying, and mental health concerns because of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, religion, or disabilities, and deserve curricula that reflects and values their lived experiences.

In February, the Independent Budget Office reported that STI cases in New York City had reached their highest numbers in 30 years.² The DOE and this 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 enthusiastically supports Int. 1028-A and Reso. 1415.**

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

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 "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/>



STATEMENT OF INWOOD HOUSE

@ THE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

before the

EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

Regarding the proposed creation of a

SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION TASK FORCE

Int. No. 1028-A

April 19, 2017

Submitted by

Dr. Jeremy C. Kohomban, President and CEO, The Children's Village

&

Pat Maloney, PREP Project Director

Inwood House Division

2139 Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard, NY, NY 10027

The Children's Village, Inwood House and Harlem Dowling were founded in the early 1800's to serve New York City's children and families. Today, we provide a broad continuum of both residential and community-based services to more than 17,000 children and families each year.

Since 1830, Inwood House has served and specialized in meeting the needs of pregnant, parenting and homeless youth in New York City. Expanding its reach, it was among the first to teach comprehensive sexual health, pregnancy and STI prevention in NYC schools during the 1970's. It has continued to do so over four decades, and today our prevention staff are in 10 public schools, at 2 residential campuses, and in a NYCHA community center.

The need for comprehensive sexual health education in New York City public schools is more urgent than ever, which is why we are grateful to Education Committee Chair Daniel Dromm for convening a hearing to discuss Int. No. 1028-A, a bill that is an important step in achieving that goal. We also thank Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and all of the Council Members who have signed on to this proposed legislation.

This statement is being submitted in strong support of Int. 1028-A. As a member of the Sexuality Alliance of New York City (SEANYC) – a broad coalition advocating for comprehensive, K – 12 sexuality education that meets National Sexuality Education Standards - we are joined by many others today in encouraging passage of this bill so that all youth in New York City's public schools have the information and skills they need to make healthy decisions.

Thanks to a previously passed City Council bill (Int. No. 952), the Department of Education (DOE) recently released reports revealing that many students are not receiving even the bare minimum of recommended sexual health education. In 2016, 43% of graduated 8th graders had not received a single semester of health during middle school, as mandated by state law. There are only 153 licensed health educators in all of New York City's public schools, which serve 1.1 million students. Further, only 7.6% of all health education instructors have attended any training on sexual health education in the past two years. This means that students are often not learning sexual health or are being taught by unlicensed, untrained educators.

Clearly, schools need resources to hire more health educators, train current teachers, and implement accountability measures so that students can receive the health education they deserve and that is required by state law.

Int. No. 1028-A recognizes the immediate need for a thorough assessment of how sexual health education is actually being implemented in public schools citywide and calls for timely recommendations to improve that effort through establishing a sexual health education task force with a minimum of 8 members: 3 experts from the field, 1 teacher, 1 non-teaching staff from a school, 1 high school student, 1 LGBTQ-GNC expert, and 1 representative from DOHMH. The bill accurately defines and reflects the key components of comprehensive sexual health education.

In considering this bill for passage, we recommend that:

- o To ensure broader representation, more than 1 student is included on the task force, as well as expert sex education advocates in N.Y.C.
- o All experts chosen are carefully vetted and fully committed to adhering to both national standards and inclusivity in delivering sex education
- o There are multiple and well-publicized mechanisms in place to give parents and public school students an opportunity to offer their feedback throughout the review process
- o Professional development guidelines leading to competent and comfortable sexual health instructors be carefully considered and incorporated in to the task force's recommendations
- o Sensitivity training and an awareness of students' rights to information/confidential services are a part of professional development
- o Progress of the task force is supported, monitored regularly, and the timeframe for a December 2017 submission of recommendations is met

Each day our students are faced with negative pressures and risks such as sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancy/parenting, coerced sex, bullying, harassment, substance abuse, and physical violence. The work of this task force and the provision of medically accurate, age-appropriate, inclusive, non-judgmental sex education are essential keys to protecting our students and giving them the tools they need to be safe, healthy and lead productive lives.



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**Committee on Education
Testimony Submitted to
NYC Council, Committee on Education
Testimony Submitted by
Marissa Muñoz
Senior Director of Education Policy
Hispanic Federation
April 19, 2017**

Good afternoon, my name is Marissa Muñoz and I am the Senior Director of Education Policy at the Hispanic Federation (HF). Chair Dromm and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Hispanic Federation and our member agencies.

Hispanic Federation is the premier Latino membership organization in the nation founded to address the many inequities confronting Latinos and the nonprofits that serve them. For more than 25 years, Hispanic Federation has provided grants, administered human services and coordinated advocacy for our broad network of agencies that serve more than 2 million Latinos in areas of immigration, health, education, economic empowerment, and civic engagement.

Distribute Information Regarding the Gifted and Talented Programs and Exam

Helping close the Latino achievement gap is important to the mission of the Hispanic Federation. It is our goal to ensure that more students are enrolling in and graduating from college. However, that cannot happen when standards and expectations are disproportionately lower for some communities than others. Unfortunately, this is evidenced by the lack of gifted and talented programs in predominantly Latino and African American communities. Sixty-one percent of students in the Bronx are Latino and 28% are Black. Yet, before the 2016 school year, there were no Gifted and Talented programs in the Bronx. This year, with increased demand from parents and community members, the Bronx launched four innovative pilot Gifted and Talented programs that use indicators for success rather than the traditional Gifted and Talented exam. We need to leverage this momentum and consider scaling this practice across predominantly underserved neighborhoods across all five boroughs. Citywide, Black and Latino students make up over 67% of the student population. However, across the city, only 22% of students enrolled in Gifted and Talented programs were Black or Latino. The gap is glaring. We need to ensure that high standards are being implemented and that teachers and administrators have high expectations for all students, allowing them to have access to greater opportunities, regardless of their zip code.

We must close the achievement gap now. One of the first steps in doing so, is sharing information to students and parents in their native language. The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) should also hold borough-wide information sessions, with translators. Professional development should be provided to Parent Coordinators to train them on the gifted and talented requirements and the application process. There should

also be a strategy to identify and provide additional outreach to students that show promise. The message communicated needs to include the value of this program, and its positive academic impact on the student.

Lastly, the NYC DOE has demonstrated extreme collaboration by partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs) in creating community schools. They should leverage those partnerships to distribute the information to students and parents, as well as other CBOs to deliver the message in underrepresented communities. These organizations understand the needs of the community and these partnerships would help ensure that more students, especially those of color, are aware of the program, and thus participating.

New York State Education Department to Convene a Task Force to Assess the Cultural Relevance of State Learning Standards

We applaud the New York State Education Department for recognizing the need for a more culturally relevant curriculum and for considering the creation of a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards across subject areas. The Hispanic Federation is a part of the New York City Coalition for Educational Justice which advocates for a culturally responsive education.

New York State and New York City (NYC) are extremely diverse, with over half of the state student population, and over 60% of the New York City population identifying as Latino, Black, Asian, Multi-racial and American Indian.

However, while New York City schools are some of the most culturally and linguistically diverse in the nation, enormous achievement gaps remain. In 2016, only 67% of Black and Latino students and 31% of English Language Learners graduated from high school in four years, compared to 82% of White students. Lack of high standards and expectations are just one contributing factor.

Research demonstrates that for students of color as well as White students, a culturally relevant curriculum decreases dropout rates and suspensions, and increases student participation, confidence, academic achievement and graduation rates. Culturally relevant curriculum allows for a rigorous, student-centered education that cultivates critical thinking, fosters positive academic, racial and cultural identities, develops students' ability to connect across cultures, and empowers students as agents of social change.

Even in such a diverse and progressive community, it is astounding that Latino and Black history courses take a back seat to the more traditional history that excludes or limits the presence of these populations. For example, there is little to no mention of Cesar Chavez, a Mexican-American farm worker, labor leader, and civil rights activist who co-founded the National Farm Workers Association and devoted his life to fighting for workers' rights. Similarly, African American content in history is often limited to slavery and civil rights sections.

Culturally relevant curriculum and instruction is more important now than ever, as studies have shown that it increases empathy and understanding across cultures. Given the toxic political climate, it is critical that the NYC Department of Education become a national model of equity by embracing culturally responsive education to eradicate racial disparities in public education.

Create a Sexual Education Task Force to Review Sexual Education Curriculum

Similarly, there is a need to ensure that the Sexual Education curriculum for our young people is comprehensive and addresses pregnancy prevention, healthy relationships, and is inclusive of the LGBTQ+

community. Sexual Education curricula are often known to be outdated and limited to abstinence only models. Given the changing landscape, it is important to apply an intersectional lens to the curriculum to reflect our society today. The creation of a task force to review the current curriculum would be a transformative first step and sends a clear message that young people deserve honest, effective sex education.

We at the Hispanic Federation believe that the key to knowledge is power. It is best for young people to have the information and support they need to stay healthy.

The Hispanic Federation believes that a comprehensive sexual education curriculum will help reduce pregnancy rates. Each year, 750,000 teenagers become pregnant nationally. Although pregnancy rates have dropped across the board, Latinas still experience higher rates of pregnancy among young people than any other racial/ethnic group. According to a researcher at UCLA, education and access to contraceptives play a larger role in teen pregnancy rates than do cultural or religious differences.

We believe that a comprehensive curriculum that addresses gender norms and power inequities in relationships will reduce dating violence. Approximately one in ten high school students across the nation have experienced physical violence from a dating partner in the last year. Based on a study done at Emory University, sex education programs that addressed gender norms and power inequities were five times more effective than those that did not include those items.

Eighty-two percent of LGBTQ+ students across the nation have experienced harassment due to their sexual orientation. We believe that comprehensive sex education that incorporates sexuality education, including differences between gender identity, gender expression, sex assigned at birth, and physical and romantic attraction will help create a culture of acceptance within the school community, thereby reducing harassment and suicide rates. In fact, suicide is the second leading cause of death for people between the ages of 15 and 24.

As stated before, it's important that students respect and value each other's differences. This extends beyond the school curriculum to the sexual health curriculum as well. Tolerance and understanding need to be a part of all curricula, especially this one. If we start early, we can help minimize this behavior, and create a safe space, a safe learning environment, for all students.

In summary, the Hispanic Federation would like to thank you for inviting us to testify on the laws and resolutions being considered today. It is important for us to have a voice in matters that clearly impact youth throughout the city. And, it is our mission to ensure that Latino students have access to a high-quality education, including access to gifted and talented programs as well as a curriculum that is inclusive and values different cultures, including their own.

Bank Street College of Education
Center on Culture, Race & Equity
610 West 112th Street
New York, NY 10025

April 19, 2017

Dear Honorable New York City Council Members:

On behalf of Bank Street College of Education, I would like to thank you for inviting us today. We are honored to contribute to the conversation about content, curriculum, and policies that challenge racism, ableism, sexism and affirm the rights of the LGB and transgender nonconforming individuals. The work of creating truly equitable and inclusive learning environments requires an unwavering commitment to children and communities, and we are deeply encouraged by the administration's efforts to address this issue.

My name is Josh Thomases and I am the Dean of Innovation, Policy and Research at Bank Street College of Education. For 100 years, Bank Street has played a pivotal role in improving the education of children by meeting students and educators "where they are" to help develop their academic, social, and emotional intelligence in support of a democratic and equitable society.

I worked previously at the New York City Department of Education, where I conceived of and launched the Expanded Success Initiative, which focused on college readiness for Black and Latino young men. This work, along with my experience as a teacher and leader at El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice, has informed my approach to equity transformation. Creating truly equitable learning environments for children requires an understanding of the power of policy and the implications for individual practitioners on a daily basis. With an understanding of system-level transformation, and in keeping with Bank Street's longstanding commitment to social justice, I worked to launch and support the Center on Culture, Race and Equity at Bank Street. I am joined today by Dr. Veronica Benavides, the Deputy Director of the Center on Culture, Race and Equity. Dr. Benavides brings a wealth of experience and knowledge as a practitioner and academic in the field of culturally relevant education.

[The Center on Culture, Race & Equity at Bank Street](#) (CCRE) was founded by Dr. Faith Lamb-Parker to create just and equitable learning environments so that children of all backgrounds can thrive and realize their full potential. Unfortunately, children in the United States must learn to navigate a highly racialized, gendered and biased society. Whether children ultimately benefit from this societal structure, or suffer the innumerable consequences, they are all deeply impacted. We believe that adults are uniquely positioned to either perpetuate the inequitable systems we inherited, or to interrupt inequity through intentional practices and policies. We support educators, social and health services leaders, practitioners, community members, and families in courageously addressing inequity and sustaining meaningful change. Our strength-based approach supports adults in viewing the knowledge and abilities of children and families as resources for meaningful change, rather than viewing them as problems to be "fixed."

Systematic analyses by a range of researchers on the issues of race and culture have shown that despite improvements in representation over the years, deep patterns and narratives that reflect Euro-American experiences and worldviews dominate K–12 textbooks and materials (Sleeter 2011, Byrne 2001). White figures receive the most attention in K–12 curriculum and are often portrayed as heroes and creators; African Americans are the next most represented racial group, and are mainly featured in relationship to slavery; Asian Americans and Latinos are often peripheral figures with little historical or contemporary context; Native Americans appear mainly in the past, in relationship to colonization (Sleeter 2011). Women’s, gender, queer and dis/ability studies receive little to no historical or contemporary coverage in traditional school settings. These types of intentional and deliberate educational choices have a profound impact on students.

Research supports that the use of ethnic studies curricula and curricula that elevate the narratives of traditionally marginalized groups promote academic achievement for students from those groups. There is a clear body of research documenting the relationship between the racial/ethnic identity of students of color and academic achievement (Sleeter 2011, Altschul, Oyserman, and Bybee 2006, Chavous, Hilken, Schmeelk, Caldwell, Kohn-Wood, & Zimmerman 2003, Carter 2008). Research has also demonstrated that white students who engage in content and curricula that feature the stories and histories of underrepresented groups, show gains in their regard for people of different racial backgrounds and increased values of racial fairness (Hughes, Bigler, & Levy 2007).

At CCRE, we recognize the importance of culturally relevant materials and content. At the same time, we also recognize that the benefits of such an approach can be limited without teachers who are prepared to teach differently, including taking a clear-eyed look at their own position and context related to race, gender, and ableism. Research (Bigler 1999) and our experiences in the field have shown that simply infusing surface-level diversity into the curriculum makes little impact on student attitudes and outcomes. Because adults play a critical role in shaping students’ experiences and beliefs, we work with adults to shift their mindset and behavior. To create impactful and sustainable culturally relevant learning environments in schools, CCRE works on three levels: personal, professional and institutional.

As an educator, exploring one’s **personal** relationship to racism and discrimination in our society is a critical step in transforming students’ learning environments. Several studies have shown that teachers from a range of social, racial, and gender backgrounds exhibit biases against children of color—Black boys, in particular—that result in lowered academic expectations, differential treatment, and higher levels of suspension (Gilliam, Maupin, Reyes, Accavitti & Shic, 2016, Yates & Marcelo 2012). Knowing that we all have biases that impact and inform our work inside and outside of schools, we guide educators through an honest exploration of self that ultimately leads to a paradigm shift. When exposed to strength-based thinking and practice, educators begin to make new associations, break from deficit-based thinking, and challenge long-held stereotypes.

Culturally relevant curriculum is most impactful when it is paired with pedagogical strategies, such as critical thinking skills and analytical writing, and taught by educators who are equipped to build authentic relationships with their students (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). For that reason, we not only guide educators in exploring their own biases and attitudes toward diverse groups of students, but

also equip educators with tangible skills and practices that will advance their **professional** practice in classrooms and schools. These skills and practices include culturally responsive pedagogy, dramatic play, and authentic family engagement, among others.

These individual-level skills and practices are strengthened when they are supported by **institutional** systems and policies that advance equity within schools and communities. A study of nationally available data on chronic absenteeism found that students may stay away from school for long periods of time to avoid harassment, bullying, embarrassment and unsafe situations (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012) and highlights the importance of systems and structures in promoting student attendance among marginalized students. School policies and systems, like mentoring models, culturally responsive mental health services, and restorative justice practices, are critically important in protecting students from threats that may impede student learning and growth. For that reason, CCRE works with schools and organizations to create policies and systems that are reflective of their values and vision for equity.

Our research-based model for transformation has been successful in a variety of contexts, in California, Louisiana, New York, Washington, DC, and Liberia. Our work in Washington, DC highlights the transformative power of the CCRE model.

In 2015, CCRE collaborated with District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) to support the shifts in personal, professional, and institutional practice described above at three of the lowest performing DCPS elementary schools. We worked with 29 classroom teachers and 17 school leaders and other staff members (i.e. specialists, counselors, cafeteria workers, security guards, etc.) over six months of professional development. We also held two focus groups for parents of boys' at the schools.

Qualitative data collected from participants showed significant shifts in adult's' knowledge and awareness across multiple domains, particularly related to the development of African American boys, including:

- issues of race, gender, and stereotyping as it relates to boys' development and learning,
- the value of children and families' culture and supporting boys' social and emotional needs, and
- the need for adults to be advocates/agents for change within their school, homes, and communities.

As one school principal noted, "The greatest outcome for our leadership team was the paradigm shift from a deficit to a strength-based mindset. It has helped us to realize that we have wrapped all our interventions in addressing behavioral concerns around deficits—seeking to 'fix' students by addressing their shortcomings, learning gaps, and behaviors." Our most successful school saw a 20% year-over-year decline in behavior referrals, including incidents such as classroom disruption, fighting, defiance, and physical aggression, demonstrating what is possible when we all face this work head on—bravely having the tough conversations and shifting our practices.

We want to commend the Council for considering Resolution 1415 and for pushing for a statewide taskforce. We affirm the need for culturally relevant curriculum and would offer three recommendations to further strengthen the current proposal:

1. Create clear expectations for how people are represented and studied. The power of the standards is in their clarity. The standards should affirm that peoples with marginalized histories must be studied in their fullness within the American experience and not just at their special month or moment and should provide clear examples of what this looks like.
2. Create flexibility for school level adjustments to reflect the centrality of the culture, histories and stories of the students themselves. Similar attempts for inclusivity in the past have often crashed against the mathematics of time: we don't have more time so if we add more of one group, we must take away from another. This is a false dichotomy that misunderstands the challenge of reframing the curriculum. One way to address this is by setting clear expectations and then allowing for some local flexibility.
3. Train and support leaders, teachers, and school staff. The implementation of new expectations must be paired with support for teachers that shift the ways we as adults think about our privilege and identity and how we work with the children and families in our schools. This is what has become so clear in our work at CCRE. We have consistently found that the adults in schools want to take this work on—educators believe in working toward a more equitable society. We need to provide space for them to do this work themselves so they can lead the transition to the kind of classrooms we want for all our children. It simply will not happen without that kind of intentional support.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to supporting the Council in these efforts.

Supplemental Materials

We are providing the Council a set of documents that might be helpful in your efforts to convene a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards across subject areas in elementary, middle, and high school and to explore the grounding of standards in core content that challenges racism, ableism, and sexism, and is LGB and TGNC-affirming. We would also welcome the opportunity to work more closely with your Committee and your staff on this important issue.

- [*Providing a Head Start: Improving Access to Early Childhood Education for Refugees*](#), a report on the work of CCRE, formerly the National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness.¹
- [*Supporting the School Readiness and Success of Young African American Boys Project: Reflections on a Culturally Responsive Strength-Based Approach*](#), a report on the work of CCRE, formerly the National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness.²
- The CCRE slide deck highlighting our mission, approach, and current work. (attached)

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¹ <https://www.bankstreet.edu/campus-beyond/news/2016/03/22/bank-street-participates-in-newly-released-study-o/421/>

² <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/docs/young-african-american-boys-project-guide.pdf>


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***The Center on Culture, Race &
Equity at Bank Street***

Spring 2017

What We Believe

Race and culture matter.

The harshest and most marginalizing effects of implicit bias in school systems fall along the lines of race. To mitigate the effects of implicit bias, we must examine the role of race in our schools and communities. Our work is deepened when we examine race in the context of other identities.

Systems change starts with self.

Change requires careful strategic planning and management. However, the first step is transformation on an individual level through critical reflection on one's identities, personal, and professional practices.

Strengths-based thinking is central to success.

Our interaction with children and communities is rooted in the way we view them. By focusing on the strengths of children and adults, we ensure that we are building from and with people to promote learning and growth.

Families and community members are partners.

Educators and professionals must co-construct learning experiences with families and community members to realize the full potential of a child.



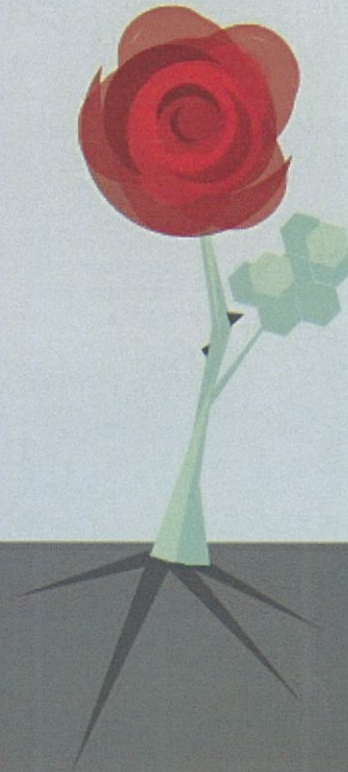
How do we fix a broken system?

The challenge of providing a quality education to all children can, at times, seem impossible. With issues like poverty and inequitable access to resources contributing to disparities in student performance, how can we begin to change the system?

CCRE focuses on changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties as a lever for change. Our work begins with changes in hearts and minds, then changes in practice, then changes in systems.



Our Work Shifts Deficit-Based Thinking to Strengths-Based Thinking



“You see, you wouldn’t ask why the rose that grew from the concrete had damaged petals. On the contrary, we would all celebrate its tenacity. We would all love its will to reach the sun. Well; we are the roses, this is the concrete, and these are my damaged petals.”

- Tupac Shakur

CCRE Model Results in 22% Decrease in Discipline Referrals, Overall

In 2015, CCRE worked with Turner Elementary to transform school experiences for African-American boys by training teachers in our strengths-based model for school improvement.

As a result of the training, discipline referrals drastically decreased:

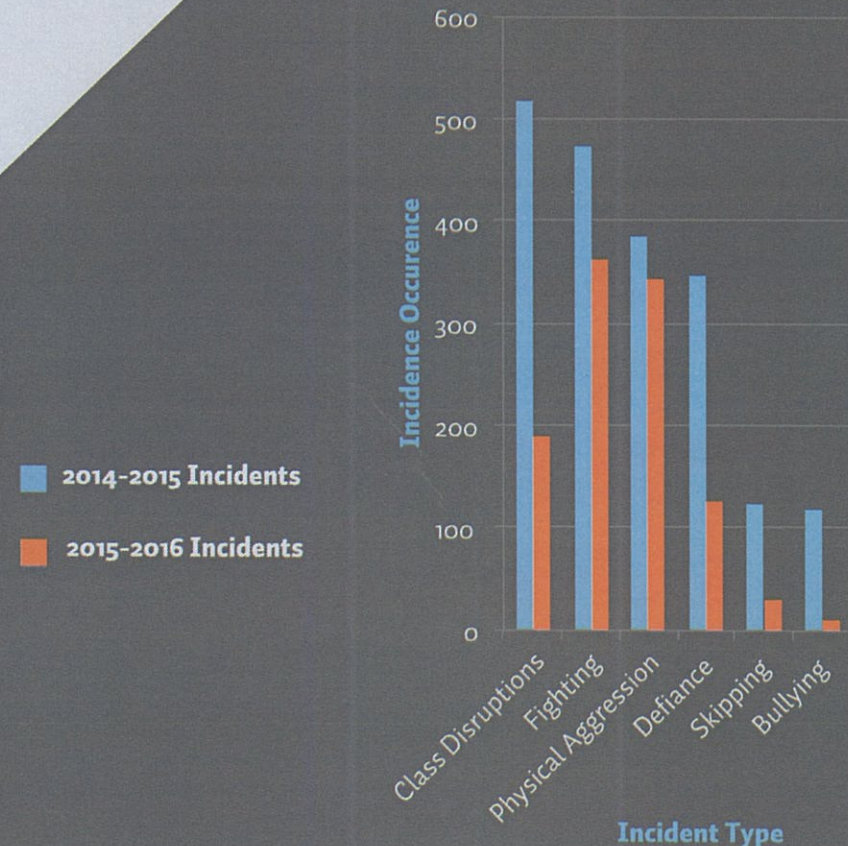
64% drop in classroom disruptions

74% drop in skipping class

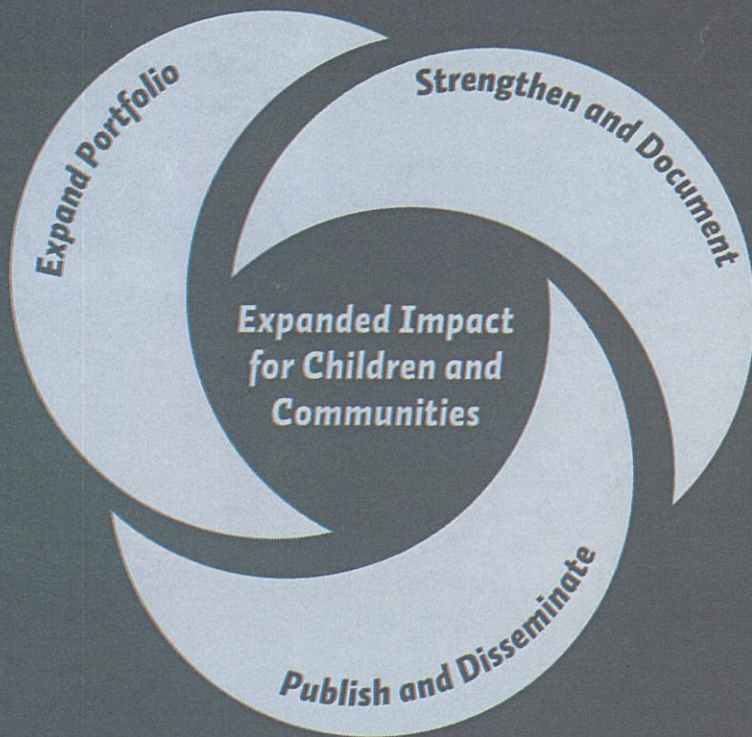
30% drop in profanity

90% drop in bullying

Incidents 2014-2016



Our Goals for Expanded Impact



Strengthen and Document the CCRE Model

CCRE has developed a successful model for transforming adult mindsets and outcomes for students. We plan to (1) strengthen the model through the continuous improvement cycle (Moen & Norman, 2006), and (2) we want to document the impact of the model on learning environments.

Expand the CCRE portfolio of Projects

CCRE has a strong number of projects that impact early childhood learning environments. Our goal is to expand our impact to pre-natal through 12th grade. We also plan diversify our portfolio by working with a diverse range of stakeholders (i.e. refugee communities, indigenous populations, rural populations, etc.).

Establish and Disseminate CCRE Best Practices

CCRE plans to expand access to best practices by publishing and disseminating both academic and lay articles/tools that can be accessed by a wide range of stakeholders.



**The Center on Culture, Race &
Equity at Bank Street**

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Phone: (212) 961-3385

For more information, visit us at www.bankstreet.edu/ccrp.



**WOMEN'S
CITY CLUB**
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Shaping Policy
Improving Lives
wccny.org

Proposed Int. 1028-A and Reso. 1415 Testimony
NYC Council Committee on Education Hearing
Submitted by Women's City Club of New York
April 19, 2017

Good afternoon. I am Amy Schwartz, a member of the Public Policy Committee of the Women's City Club of New York (WCC). WCC is an active member of the Sexuality Education Alliance of NYC (SEANYC). I would like to thank the Education Committee Chair Daniel Dromm for convening this hearing, the Speaker of the City Council and all of the Council Members who have signed onto Int. 1028-A and Reso. 1415. I am very grateful for your continued support of comprehensive education.

I am also a parent of a New York City public high school student, and I can attest from first-hand experience, that the need for comprehensive sexual education in our public schools is more urgent than ever. Proposed Int. 1028-A is a critical step in achieving that goal.

Entering its second century, WCC is a century-old organization that shapes public policy through education, issue analysis, advocacy and civic participation. WCC has long been at the forefront of improving standards for public school education as well as meeting the health needs of women and children throughout the five boroughs. In 2011, WCC spearheaded an advocacy campaign to hold NYC Department of Education accountable for providing state-mandated school-based physical education, producing a series of policy reports, press releases and public education programs. In 2015, the New York City Council unanimously passed legislation to ensure that public school students are receiving state-mandated physical education and will require the New York City Department of Education (DOE) to report information about physical education in each school.

Most recently, WCC created the Sex Education in NYC Public Schools Task Force amid concern the 2012 sex education mandate, which was introduced by the DOE, had not accomplished its intended goal: to provide comprehensive sexuality education to middle and high school students. In particular, DOE 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.¹ 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.

As a parent, I shuddered when my teenage daughter confided how little she learned of sexual health in public middle school, and the inadequate training given to those responsible for teaching her vital education on sexual

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>

health. I was disappointed when I saw the reproduced copies of scant information on sexually transmitted diseases and birth control options, and nothing about sexual orientation or emotional well-being. Equally as disturbing, my daughter, who is now a junior in high school, will complete her public-school education without having been taught by a qualified professional the lessons for developing healthy relationships, building self-esteem and positive body image and learning about keeping a healthy lifestyle.

However, Int. 1028-A offers hope that the many other New York City public school students could still receive a more comprehensive sexual health education. It recognizes the immediate need for a thorough assessment of how sexual health education is actually being implemented in public schools citywide, and calls for timely recommendations to improve that effort through the establishment of a sexual health education task force. The bill also accurately defines and reflects the key components of for comprehensive sexual health education.

While in support of Intro. 1028-A, WCC requests your attention to several areas to consider in moving forward.

First, we encourage the following considerations for the task force. WCC requests that more than the required one student be on the task force. Additional students on the task force reflects the growing diversity of the student population. We also would like for sex education advocates to be under consideration for positions on the task force and that all experts chosen for the task forces to be carefully vetted and committed to adhering to both national standards and inclusivity.

Second, in regards to teacher training on sexuality education, WCC requests that the task force include professional development recommendations that ensure competent and comfortable sexual health instructors. The recommendations should include sensitivity training and awareness of students' rights to information/confidential services.

Third, WCC also voices strong support of the December 1st deadline for this task force to report its findings, as it is in the spirit of the urgency and priority of the subject.

In conclusion, 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 on proposed int. 1028-A.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.



Proposed Int. 1028-A Testimony
NYC Council Committee on Education Hearing

Good afternoon. My name is Aviva Zadoff, and I am the chair of the Reproductive Initiative at the National Council of Jewish Women NY Section. Thank you to Education Committee Chair Daniel Dromm for convening this hearing, and the entire Committee for their continued support of comprehensive education. Thank you Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, and all of the Council Members who have signed on to Int. 1028-A,

Comprehensive sexuality health education policy continues to be an imperative in the larger fight for reproductive justice and it is now more urgent than ever for New York City to lead the way on this issue and that is that is why I am here to speak in support of Int. 1028-A, an important step in achieving that goal.

National Council of Jewish Women New York (NCJW NY) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW NY strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms and as such NCJW NY is committed to seeing comprehensive sex education enacted in all NYC schools.

NCJW NY is a proud 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.

The New York City Department of Education (DOE) currently requires one semester of health education in middle school and one semester in high school with a portion of each of these semesters devoted to covering sexuality education. The DOE recommends the use of the *HealthSmart* program, or a curriculum of similar standards. **However, due to a lack of accountability, adequate resources, and enforcement, students' experiences vary widely when it comes to sexual health learning.** According to the DOE's own recent reports, almost half of 2016 graduating eighth graders (43%) did not receive a single semester of health during middle school, as mandated by state law.

SEANYC's Youth Advisory Council conducted a poll being released today of over 300 middle and high school students in New York City and found that many students do not have the information they need to make healthy decisions for themselves and their bodies. Of NYC students who said they received sex ed in school or elsewhere, almost two-thirds (59%) had not learned about consent and 63% had not learned about gender identity. Also concerning was that only 66% of students said they knew where to go for sexual and reproductive health services, leaving many students disconnected from available care.

SEANYC's poll also found glaring gaps in New York City schools' provision of sexuality education among students we spoke to. Of 314 students surveyed, only 64.5% reported ever having a sexuality education class in school. And of those who did receive sex ed in school, there were significant

disparities in what topics students reported learning. While 93% of students said they learned about HIV, only 62% said they learned how to put on a condom, critical for HIV and STD prevention. Furthermore, almost half of students (43%) said they did not learn about gender identity/expression in their school's sex ed.

These findings, coupled with the DOE's own data, reveal the inconsistencies in the administration of sexuality education throughout our schools. New York City must implement a program in all schools and all grades that is funded and includes robust training and resources for teachers, along with effective enforcement measures to ensure accountability. Bill Intro. 1028-A, recognizes the immediate need for a thorough assessment of how sexual health education is actually being implemented in public schools citywide, and calls for timely recommendations to improve that effort through the establishment of a sexual health education task force.

While we strongly support the creation of a task force that would provide recommendations for improving sexual health education in New York City, it is also imperative that this administration take immediate steps to implement sexuality education in all middle and high schools and expand to all grades kindergarten through 12th.

Having a requirement of a student representative on the task force is significant, and to ensure broader representation and consistency of youth input, we would encourage the task force to include more than the required one student on the task force. We also would like for sex education advocates to be under consideration for positions on the task force and that all experts chosen for the task forces to be carefully vetted and committed to adhering to both national standards and inclusivity. We also recommend that there be public response mechanisms put in place for all New York City students, as well as parents and teachers, to provide feedback throughout the task force's review and recommendation process,

NCJW NY would also like to voice strong support of the December 1st deadline for this task force to report its findings. We appreciate the urgency that this bill puts on improving sexuality education, and believe that this deadline ensures that we continue to move forward towards improving sexuality education in NYC. We would like to see the progress of the task force be regularly monitored and the timeframe for submitting findings and recommendations adhered to. In light of the risks and pressures experienced by students on a daily basis (such as unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, coerced sex, bullying, harassment and physical violence), we would like to see this task force be regarded a priority and supported so that it can successfully complete the work spelled out in Int. 1028.

Lastly, considering the DOE's report findings that only 7.6% of all health education instructors have attended any training on sexual health education in the last two years, we recognize the importance of strengthening requirements and opportunities around sexual health professional development, and look forward to the creation of a task force that will prioritize teacher training and resource needs.

NCJW NY is proud to support the proposed legislation and looks forward to the quick passing of this bill. In addition to the aforementioned legislation, 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 on proposed int. 1028-A.

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

3/19/17

border crossers

Good morning. My name is Roberto Soto-Carrion and I am the Project Manager and a trainer at Border Crossers. At Border Crossers, our mission is to train and empower educators to dismantle patterns of racism and injustice in our schools and communities. We see racism at the center of intersecting systems of oppression and work collaboratively with teachers and school leaders in New York to develop spaces for critical conversations around race, racism, and oppression. In our trainings, we analyze the ways racism manifests in our schools and discuss strategies to disrupt these processes and create spaces in which young people can thrive in racially equitable and liberating schools.

At Border Crossers, we envision a world where all young people are afforded their full humanity in schools. We believe this begins with a basic acknowledgement that if we do not actively work to disrupt and dismantle racism in our schools and communities, we are complicit in the reproduction of oppression against our youth.

Research demonstrates that students benefit greatly from racially equitable environments in many ways. They are more likely to experience a sense of belonging and engagement when they see their culture, history, and identities reflected in their curriculum. Stronger relationships between teachers and students lead to improved student outcomes. When students of color experience fewer racial microaggressions and decreased stereotype threat, we see greater academic success, resiliency, and well-being. Furthermore, we anticipate that these environments will equip young people with the skills they need to become the racial justice leaders of the future.

In our workshops with educators throughout New York State, Border Crossers highlights a quote by the poet and essayist Adrienne Rich which reads, “When someone with the authority of a teacher describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.”

Unfortunately, many young people in the New York Education system are not seeing themselves reflected in the mirror. As racial justice trainers, we stress the importance of including curriculum materials that reflect the experiences and diverse racial identities of all New York students. This looks like stories that are not centered solely around white protagonists, history textbooks that don’t begin African history with the tale of enslaved peoples, and an overall curriculum that does not ignore the lived realities of students of color.

At Border Crossers, we acknowledge the need for curriculum that is culturally responsive. We are continually solicited with requests to support curriculum development and teacher training

that is culturally sustaining, as most educators are not equipped with the tools or training to assess their classroom, materials, and curriculum utilizing a racial equity framework. Even when teachers do have the tools and training, we see that they frequently struggle to find ways to integrate culturally responsiveness into their curriculum when they are being held accountable to learning standards and testing requirements that do not support this. As such, teachers often ask us how they can combat racism in their schools when they come up against biased standards and a curriculum that invisibilizes the diverse identities of so many of their students.

In order to achieve a more just and equitable schooling for all children, we believe teacher pedagogy and curriculum must incorporate accurate and representative history and take into account and foster linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schools. We see culturally responsive education as a needed response to demographic and social change, as well as to systemic racism within our educational system and greater society.

At the most foundational level, we know that if students are able to relate course content to their cultural context, they become more engaged learners. We also know that in order to support equitable outcomes for students, we must have accountability measures in place that are aligned with a racial equity framework. To this end, it is crucially important that we are assessing educational standards for cultural relevance and providing educators with tools that support and affirm the racial identities and cultural styles and strengths of their students.

Border Crossers advocates for school curriculum that connects students' histories and worlds to their respective subject matter and that legitimizes and acknowledges students' real life experiences. Moreover, we believe a culturally relevant curriculum must also address how students' intersecting identities directly impact their life experiences and their schooling.

We support the resolution calling upon the New York State Education Department to convene a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards across subject areas in elementary, middle, and high school. We believe these standards must be strategically examined and re-designed to intentionally challenge and combat systems of oppression, while affirming the lived realities and identities of all New York students, their families, and their communities.

Thank you.



Natalie McCabe Zwerger, M.Ed, Esq.
Director, NYU Center for Strategic Solutions
April 19, 2017

Res. No. 1415: Calling upon the New York State Education Department to convene a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards across subject areas in elementary, middle, and high school and explore the grounding of standards in core content that challenges racism, ableism, and sexism, and is LGB and TGNC-affirming.

As the Director of a national equity and racial justice center, I have the privilege of working with educators, school administrators, and staff on addressing the impact of race, power, and privilege in teaching and learning. I have worked with thousands of educators across the country and have yet to meet one who does not consider themselves to be culturally responsive. I do, however, meet many folks who struggle with how to operationalize the idea of cultural relevance. What does it require of them? What is incumbent upon them everyday? How does it relate to larger practices within a school?

I frame this work telling educators I think all schools are culturally responsive. All educators are culturally responsive. The heart of the work, though, lies in answering the question, to whose culture are we most responsive? The flip side of that question being, to whose culture are we least responsive? How are we fostering and promoting a positive climate that attends to race, culture, language, class, (dis)ability, gender, gender identity, sexuality, and religion of staff, families, and students? This is the work of being culturally relevant. Schools need concrete understandings of what curriculum, pedagogy, and school environments must look like in terms of cultural relevance in order to provide our students with the education, to which they are entitled.

I start with the work of Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings and Dr. Geneva Gay to ground them in understandings of the research and foundations of this work. Dr. Ladson Billings named three components of culturally relevant pedagogy: the first being academic achievement, sociopolitical consciousness, and cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In terms of academic achievement, educators must ask of each of their students, when and how often does this student feel brilliant on any given day here at school? When does this student experience success and joy? If we struggle to name these moments or frequent moments, and we are talking about students who are members of marginalized groups, then we know we have much work to do. Dr. Ladson-Billings also names sociopolitical consciousness which she suggested was teaching that prompted “students to recognize, understand, and critique current and social inequalities”

(Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 476). How relevant given this country's current sociopolitical climate! Whether we invite it in or not, history and the deep historical entanglements of racialized stereotyping and the current sociopolitical climate find their way into our schools. The question is - are we responding to them? Are we shifting curriculum to promote in our students the belief that they can be agents of change? That they do not have to passively accept institutional racism and systems of inequity as the reality they will face once they graduate? Finally, there is this idea of cultural competence. Teachers must understand how *who they are* impacts *how they teach*. Particularly, when they are teaching across race, ethnicity, culture, and other identities.

Dr. Geneva Gay's work on culturally responsive teaching lays a foundation for how we can analyze current learning standards. She outlines the following as what culturally responsive teaching is contingent on:

- "Seeing cultural differences as assets;
- Creating caring learning communities where culturally different individuals and heritages are values;
- Using cultural knowledge of ethnically diverse cultures, families, and communities to guide curriculum development, classroom climates, instructional strategies, and relationships with students;
- Challenging racial and cultural stereotypes, prejudice, racism, and other forms of intolerance, injustice, and oppression;
- Being change agents for social justice and academic equity;
- Mediating power imbalances in classrooms based on race, culture, ethnicity, and class; and
- Accepting cultural responsiveness as endemic to educational effectiveness in all areas of learning for students from all ethnic groups (Gay, 2010, p. 31)."

That's the framework for how to think about curriculum, pedagogy, and climate in schools. It is how we should approach developing an *equity lens* that teachers can apply to all their work with students and families.

Now, I am not only an educator but also a lawyer, so I came with some evidence for you on the transformational power of culturally responsive teaching. A meta-analysis was published in 2016 that outlined some of the impact, "not only in terms of traditional student achievement but also in other facets of student success such as motivation, empowerment, critical discourse, and agency." (Aronson & Laughter, 2016, p. 178) Culturally responsive and relevant education sees the following impacts:

- Students of color feel the curricula better reflects their lives, interests, and passions (Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2006);

- Positive impact on skills and conceptual understandings (Aronson & Laughter, 2016, p. 196);
- Increased student engagement and feelings of self-efficacy (Aronson & Laughter, 2016, p. 197);
- Students report greater cultural connection and myriad ways of developing knowledge (Aronson & Laughter, 2016, p. 198);
- Increased sociopolitical awareness and understanding (Gutstein, 2003);
- Deeper understanding of the impact of bias (Adams & Laughter, 2012; Laughter & Adams, 2012); and
- Greater empowerment of students (Robbins, 2001).

Apart from all that evidence, I can attest to increased feelings of teacher efficacy, reported perceptions of safety of school community members being their authentic selves, and more intentional relationship building.

It would also be foolish to think the impact of culturally relevant and responsive education is limited to curriculum and instruction. It is about shifting mindsets and experiences. It is deeply related to the need for more Black and Latino teachers in our schools. If we do not see the connection between the inequities faced in Pre-k to 12 and the struggles we find in increasing the hiring of teachers and administrators of color, then we are not being honest. We have to do better addressing inequity, promoting racially just schools and teaching, and growing and developing out future educators of color.

I will close by sharing that I was in an elementary school this morning looking at a piece of opinion writing by a second grader who wrote, “ In my opinion what the president is doing is hurting because he is separating kids families. That’s not good. Kids are suffering this sacrifice.”

Sage words. Words we need to hear. Words it is incumbent upon us to address by providing spaces that attend to the varied injustices of this world. We have to do better for our kids and this movement to analyze learning standards through the lens of cultural responsiveness, asking how can we better promote a positive climate for all racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students, is one of the many steps to this work for equity.

Proposed Res. No. 1415
New York City Council Committee on Education Hearing

April 19, 2017

Angelique Beluso
Young Women's Advisory Council Member, NYC Young Women's Initiative
Girls for Gender Equity

My name is Angelique Beluso, I am 23 years old, a graduate of Hunter College, a Reproductive Justice Leadership Institute Fellow with the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum and currently the Community Organizer at Planned Parenthood of New York City.

I am here today as a member of the Young Women's Advisory Council of the Young Women's Initiative, an initiative launched by Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and the New York City Council to identify the gaps in services for young women age 12-24, with a focus on women of color. YWI brings together leaders and organizers who work with teens and young adults, with the goal of crafting policy recommendations and programming that address racial, gender and other disparities. This is being done with young women at the center of the conversations in partnership with Girls for Gender Equity.

As an anti-violence and education organization, Girls for Gender Equity is committed to centering young people of color as experts of their lives. 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. To support with our self-determination, we must receive quality education that is reflective our our lived experience.

I am here to ask you to call on the New York State to convene a task force that will assess the cultural relevance of curricula across subject areas in middle and high school. This task force will explore the grounding curriculum in core content that challenges racism, ableism, and sexism and will be sure to be LGB and TGNC affirming. The taskforce will also attest that curriculum be grounded in intersectionality that will allow all students to examine systems of oppression across academic disciplines.

This is especially important to me because throughout middle school and high school, while my education was filled with rich texts from authors such as Shakespeare, George Orwell and Virginia Woolf, it was missing texts that represented me and my experience as a bi-racial woman of color. I grew up struggling to understand what it meant to be a young Puerto Rican AND Filipino woman growing up on the Bronx.

Without representation in the literature I was reading in school, understanding of race and gender amongst my peers were subject to binaries and myths. In elementary school, I was deemed 'not filipino enough' amongst my Filipino peers because I didn't look like them. In middle school, I was deemed not Puerto Rican enough because I couldn't speak the language. All my life, I was always seen as "Not enough" because I did not possess the qualities or the characteristics of a 'typical Filipino or Puerto Rican'. Being mixed race paved a lonely road for me.

However, had there been more texts in school that spoke to what it meant to be a woman of color, I would've learned earlier that being a woman of color goes much deeper than what I was taught. In college, texts by Gloria Anzaldua, Audre Lorde and Mitsuye Yamada have not only inspired me, but taught me to embrace my identity for all of its worth. Texts with such an intersectional feminist lens will teach other young women/GNC and trans students of color to understand their identity, examine systems of oppression and become empowered by their identities. When young women/GNC and trans students of color are empowered by their identities, their abilities become limitless and this is what we ultimately want for our students.

I ask that you please consider convening a task force that will assess the cultural relevance of curriculum across middle school and high school. It will allow for more of an intersectional lens on the literature being taught and teach students the ability to examine systems of oppression. Now more than ever, it is essential that New York State and New York City lead the way in proactive legislation that will advance young people's lives despite federal shifts undoing progressivism.

In response to Proposed Initiative No. 1028 A, I am here to discuss the importance of a Sexual Health Education Task force. More specifically the importance of having a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Gender Non Conforming, LGBT/GNC for short, inclusive sexual health education.

My name is Elizabeth Munsky, I am the Educational Program Manager at Live Out Loud, a non-profit that works with LGBT/GNC students, and the schools they attend.

To help illustrate the importance of an inclusive sexual health education I would like to share a few stories from our work in New York City High Schools.

One of Live Out Loud's programs partners with high school Gender and Sexuality Alliances, groups where LGBT/GNC students and their allies meet to discuss different topics/current events and/or programs pertaining to the LGBT/GNC community as a whole and within their schools. During this particular meeting, the curriculum was an introduction to LGBT/GNC terminology. The curriculum delves into the definitions and intricacies of sexual orientation, gender and gender identity. While the students in the Gender Sexuality Alliance knew most of the terms, and in fact started listing out more, they discussed a lack of correct and legitimate information known by their peers. The students discussed the dangers that came with the lack of correct information, mainly anti-LGBTQ bullying. I would like to layout some of the bullying that students have experienced.

- Being physically shoved while being called a "Fag"
- Being singled out in the hallway for having a LGBT/GNC pride ribbon on their backpack
- Being called disgusting and many other words that I do not need to repeat
- One form of discrimination that students hear on a daily basis is the term many students say without thought, "That's so Gay", meaning "That's so "weird, strange, stupid, or just plainly something bad."

Students said these experiences leave them constantly on guard and defensive. The students explained that these feelings are a distraction. These feelings distract them during class, in the hallways, during afterschool programming, while doing their homework, at home, on the weekends. These feelings can distract students throughout all of their day. Students have opened up about not feeling comfortable in school because of how other students have treated them and the words they hear in the classrooms and hallways. Gender and Sexuality Alliances should not be the only place LGBT/GNC students feel safe, and they should not be the only place students have the opportunity to learn about what it means to be LGBT/GNC.

During a discussion about LGBT/GNC history one student began talking about their own exposure to the Transgender Community; this student, a senior, identifies as a Transman. He began to explain how confused he was about his own identity. How, had he known more, or anything at all, about the Transgender community via a more inclusive sexual education, he would have had a much easier time coming to understand the who he is, and what that means. Again, a feeling that left him distracted, unable to focus on his education.

During this same meeting another student mentioned how she didn't understand what the word Transgender meant and felt it was unfortunate that she had to look it up herself to understand. She wanted a better grasp of what Transgender meant and as a student, she believes she should have been taught about something, the Transgender community, that is very much a part of our society and culture. She went a little further to say how, as a member of the community, she knew where to look for resources on what it means to be Transgender, but if it were not for her connection to the community she would have simply searched on the internet and opened the first article that popped up. She discussed the danger in this, that many resources that claim to legitimate are hate based websites, anti-LGBT/GNC based websites. She discussed how fearful it made her to think that this was the only information many of her peers had.

The inclusion of LBGT/GNC information in our health classes can benefit all students within our schools. It will help to decrease anti-LGBT/GNC bullying by offering correct, legitimate and unbiased information. It will help decrease the distractions that exist for LGBT/GNC students and their allies, therefore allowing them to focus on their schoolwork as opposed to focusing on the homophobia and transphobia they must navigate currently.

Beyond the support, affirmation and relief LGBT/GNC inclusive sexual health education can bring, it is important to look at the health disparities that exist for LGBT/GNC individuals, both youth and adults. As the lessons we learn in our sexual health classes become our foundation as adults. Having a LGBT/GNC inclusive sexual health education will help reduce the disparities I am about to discuss simply by making students aware and by giving them a place/person to ask questions to.

A disparity that is generally known is the higher rate of HIV/AIDS transmission in the Men who have sex with Men community. In 2015 2/3rds of all HIV Diagnoses in New York State were from Men who have sex with Men. If this large of a disparity exists where is the conversation for our students? Where is their opportunity to discuss the very real dangers that exist in their lives?

The discussion of safe and healthy relationships with someone of the same sex is often not discussed in our health classes. Not only does this leave the students who are LGBT/GNC with a dangerously large lack of information, it also leaves them with the feeling that their sexual health is something that should not be discussed, that they should not ask questions about.

Some other health disparities in the LGB/TGNC community are higher rates of Intimate Partner Violence, including dating violence in the teenage years, higher rates of tobacco use, higher rates of obesity, higher rates of teen pregnancy, higher rates of suicide and drastically lower rates of seeking medical attention.

When our health classes solely discuss relationships involving partners of the opposite sex, Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender/Gender Non Conforming students are once again left without the information they need to remain healthy and safe. Beyond the lack of information,

it increases a student's understanding that who they are is something that we do not discuss, something that does not have a space at their school.

Part of this proposed initiative discusses "age-appropriateness", this is often a conversation that follows a proposal to include LGBT/GNC topics in schools. One important distinction I would like to make is that discussing LGBT/GNC topics does not mean that we are discussing sex. Just as discussing heterosexual relationships includes discussions of love, of respect, of support, of emotional connection, and most importantly of family.

Teaching all students about the LGBT community and other minority communities leads to greater understanding and empathy with the perspective of that community. If bullying and racism and prejudice are all a form of and demonstration of ignorance, then the best way to combat that is through education. Including the history of these minority groups, therefore, becomes that much more important.

Having LGBT/GNC inclusive health curriculum will allow all students to perform to their highest potential, to be proud of who they are and live a healthy life.

I would like to thank all those who invited us here to speak, and all of those who are taking the time to listen.

Asexual Inclusive Sex Ed

Prepared by the Asexual Visibility and Education Network and Aces NYC

Why Include Asexuality?

Roughly 1% of the population is asexual¹, which means that most health education teachers will have asexual students at some point in their careers. These students are still likely to engage in sexual behavior at some point in their lives, and are more likely to do so in risky ways if they feel that their asexuality is a problem to be fixed.

Key Terms:

Asexual:

A person who does not experience sexual attraction.

Romantic Attraction:

The desire to form a romantic though not necessarily sexual connection with someone.

1. Bogaert A.F. (2004) Asexuality: Its Prevalence and Associated Factors in a National Probability Sample. *Journal of Sex Research*, 41, 279-287

Asexual Inclusive Sex Ed

Prepared by the Asexual Visibility and Education Network and Aces NYC

Making Health Education More Affirming and Inclusive

Include Ace Terminology:

Many ace students are looking for signs that their experiences are valid and that they are not alone. Simply including "asexual," "demisexual" and "grey-a" in a list of sexual orientations can send a powerful message to ace students. This also provides students who may not know about asexuality new knowledge about the range of sexual desire they or others may feel.

Discuss Gender Expression:

Being ace raises complex questions around gender, and many aces choose to express themselves as masculine, feminine, or gender non-binary in ways that defy traditional norms. Acknowledging that gender expression is something that everyone must explore and discover for themselves can help create a safe classroom for all students.

Clearly Distinguish Sex and Emotional Intimacy:

Most aces desire and build emotionally intimate relationships. These relationships may look like romantic partnerships, close friendships, connections with family and community, or deep relationships with themselves. Talking about ace experiences of intimacy reinforces that ace students are not broken and creates a useful conversation for all students.

Discuss Consent:

Many people (not just aces) enjoy cuddling, kissing, and other forms of touch in situations where they do not want to have sex. Encourage students not to make assumptions about the kinds of touch that others enjoy, and to ask for verbal consent ("Would you like a hug?") early and often. Make it clear that desire for touch does not imply desire for sex, even if sex has already happened in a relationship.

Talk about Romantic Orientation:

Separating sexual from romantic orientation helps students imagine the complex ways that intimate relationships might or might not involve sex.

Avoid equating asexuality and celibacy:

Celibacy is a choice to not engage in sexual activity, while asexuality is a lack of sexual attraction. A celibate person may experience sexual attraction and choose not to act on it. An asexual person may choose to have sex for reasons other than sexual attraction.

Avoid statements like "all people have sexual feelings":

These statements reinforce a common message that asexuality does not exist, and that a lack of sexual attraction is a problem that must be fixed.

Avoid stating that asexual people never have sex:

Some asexual people choose to have sex, either as a way to connect with a partner, out of curiosity, or because of natural sexual fluidity. Others never have sex and focus on other forms of physical and emotional intimacy.

Avoid statements like "asexual people are ok being alone":

While this is true for some aces (and is also true for some sexual people), it falsely implies that aces are destined to spend their lives in isolation.

For more information:
www.asexuality.org

THE ASEXUAL
VISIBILITY & EDUCATION
NETWORK



Proposed Int. 1028-A Testimony
New York City Council Committee on Education Hearing

April 19, 2017

Elanie Paredes
Young Women's Advisory Council Member, New York City Young Women's Initiative
Girls for Gender Equity

Good afternoon, my name is Elanie Paredes. I am a nineteen years old and I am a rising junior at Barnard College where I am studying Political Science. Thank you to the Council Members who have put in countless effort and time into the issues that daily affect New York City residents. With much gratitude, I applaud New York City Council Members dedication and notable work.

Today, I represent the Young Women's Advisory Council at Girls for Gender Equity. We are part of the Young Women's Initiative (YWI) that was launched by Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and the New York City Council to identify the gaps in services for young women ages 12-24, with a focus on cis and trans women of color. YWI brings together leaders and organizers who work with teens and young adults and advocates for them in all aspects of our society, with the goal of crafting policy recommendations that address racial, gender and other disparities. This is being done with young women at the center of the conversation as active and consistent participants in discussions.

Girls for Gender Equity is also a member of the Sexuality Education Alliance of NYC, a broad coalition working to pass and implement comprehensive sex education in grades K-12.

Comprehensive sexuality education is deeply important to me and my community, especially young people of color who identify as trans or gender non-conforming. As I reflected on the sex education that I received in school, I realized that it was not until I attended an independent high school that I actually received sex education. Even then, the curriculum at my high school was not LGB and TGNC inclusive and was made to serve the white students of this predominantly white institution. While I was fortunate enough to receive sex education and have access to a social worker at my school, I still felt like something was missing. There is an incredible stigma attached to sex that kept my peers and I from talking about it and from seeking advice. When we evaluate the way that sex education is being implemented we must ensure that it is being delivered through a de-stigmatizing and culturally informed lens. In addition to providing young people with the proper

information they need to make safe and healthy decisions, we need to empower them to speak up and to feel comfortable talking about sex and sexuality in school and in their communities.

It is outrageous that I had not received sex education from K-8th grade. Many of my peers in middle school were already having conversations about intimacy, sexuality, and gender but only had the internet and media as resources for information. We should not leave the education of our young people up to the media, instead schools should be taking the lead on these conversations with a scientifically correct, culturally informed, LGB and TGNC inclusive, and de-stigmatizing curriculum. If we want to develop our young people to be the leaders of their own lives we must start with comprehensive sex education.

The assessment of sex education and its implementation in public schools is crucial to ensuring that all students in New York City are receiving the proper information to lead healthier lives. As this task force is being established, I urge you all to consider the following questions: Who is at the table? And Who is missing? Having the voice of one young person is merely not enough to represent the diverse needs of young people in this city. The task force should include the voices of multiple young people in order to effectively serve the needs of students.

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 on proposed int. 1028-A.

I thank the New York City Council for working with the Young Women's Advisory Council on making this a possibility through the Young Women's Initiative and look forward to working together to ensure that cis and trans girls of color and gender non-conforming youth of color receive adequate and comprehensive sex-ed.

ACRIA

Int 1028-2015

Good afternoon. I am Deborah A. Levine, LCSW, and 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 the comprehensive sexual health task force in New York City public schools is more urgent than ever and the creation of the sexual education task force .

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 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.

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 enacting 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 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

ACRIA

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. 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 Int. No. 1028-A the creation of a task force that would be comprised of a minimum of eight members, including at least three experts in sexual health education, one teacher from a New York City (NYC) public school, one staff person from an NYC public school who is not a teacher (such as a guidance counselor or social worker), one expert in the field of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and gender non-conforming health education, and one representative from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Members will be appointed by the Mayor after consultation with the Speaker of the Council. The task force would be responsible for reviewing the current recommended sexual health education curriculum and its implementation in NYC public schools as well as making recommendations for the improvement and expansion of the curriculum and implementation in grades kindergarten through twelve. The task force, in conducting its review, would provide an opportunity for students and parents to provide comments and feedback. The task force would be required to submit a report to the Mayor and the Speaker by December 1, 2017 with its findings and recommendations, and may subsequently make ongoing findings and recommendations as deemed necessary by the task force.

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

One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.

TEACHFORAMERICA

**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION HEARING**

FOR THE RECORD

**TESTIMONY OF
TEACH FOR AMERICA – NEW YORK**

WEDNESDAY APRIL 19, 2017



AN AMERICORPS PROGRAM

One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.

TEACHFORAMERICA

Introduction

Good afternoon Chairman Dromm, members of the Education Committee and Council Members. Thank you for the opportunity to share our testimony with the Council's Committee on Education this afternoon.

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 and communities. 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. While the core of our work is to support the professional and leadership development of our corps members as culturally responsive educators, we fully support the Council's charge for the New York State Education Department to establish a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards and for the New York City Department of Education to distribute information regarding gifted and talented programs.

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 (60% of whom identify as people of color) 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. An additional 300 Teach For America alumni serve as school administrators, district leaders and superintendents. Teach For America meets critical needs in NYC 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.

Culturally Relevant Learning Standards

Given the demographics of the communities we serve, our teachers are expected to continuously reflect on their practice and develop their abilities to be culturally responsive. Teach For America – New York supports its educators to teach with society in mind, pushing teaching practices to reflect larger societal assumptions, some of which are damaging to our students and their communities. This pedagogical approach requires understanding the many ways that certain groups of people are oppressed by social constructs. Teachers must become aware of ways that racial and gender dynamics in the school and community influence the ways that students talk to one another and work together; they understand that students must have access to a curriculum that promotes criticality of the world around them.

Having curricula with standards that are culturally relevant, particularly for historically marginalized groups of students including those who identify as LGBTQ and gender non-conforming is critical in order for students to learn about and interrupt patterns of inequity and bias. Culturally relevant pedagogy enables students to be affirmed and poises them to overcome challenges in our society that can limit their access to opportunities. We applaud the council education committee's charge to the New York State education department to form a task force to assess the cultural relevance standards in the curricula adopted by schools and districts.



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One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.

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Gifted and Talented Programs

Studies show 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, “teachers of color can better identify and promote giftedness in students of color: These students score higher on standardized tests when taught by teachers of color. These teachers can improve outcomes for their students of color by holding them to a high standard, recognizing their talent, developing meaningful relationships, acting as role models, and providing culturally relevant teaching that draws from their own experiences.”¹ It is for this reason that we support the education committee’s call to the department of education to report statistics from gifted and talented programs and associated testing results. Only through ongoing and accurate reporting may city and education leaders ensure that all students – especially our most vulnerable students – receive the same opportunities to grow and become the leaders our city needs.

A Partnership for the Future

Teach For America is committed to building on our progress and we hope to partner with the New York City Council to ensure that all students in New York City have access to great neighborhood schools. Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective.

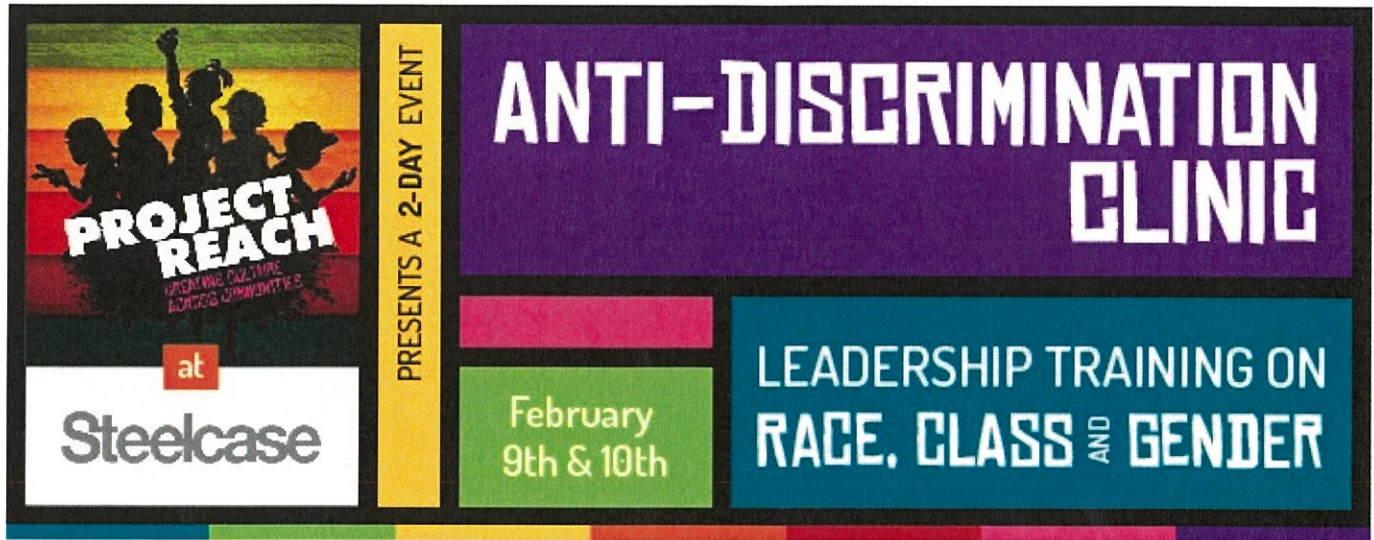
¹ Center for American Progress: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/news/2016/09/27/144865/top-5-ways-for-public-schools-to-better-support-talented-students-of-color/> (September 2016)



AN AMERICORPS PROGRAM



With the support of Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and the New York City Council



Steelcase WorkLife Center and Project Reach to host 2-day Anti-Discrimination Clinic

A 12-hour leadership training on Race, Class, and Gender

Forty-five years ago (1971), Asian American community activists started Project Reach to provide services to Chinese immigrant youth, a direct response to the rise in Chinese youth gangs. Over 30 years ago (1985) in an action unprecedented among race-segregated youth programs, Project Reach opened its door to all young people and put in place an innovative and dynamic youth organizing training space where understanding and confronting discrimination and systemic oppression would form the foundation of its core youth organizing training curriculum.

Today, through its Social Justice Boot Camp and OUTRIGHT Consortium collaborations, Project Reach works with over 35 community-based organizations and schools in all 5 NYC boroughs and representing all 6 major racial communities. Through out-of-the-city Social Justice Boot Camp retreats in the Catskills, 5-borough youth summits, city-wide traveling, LGBT dinners, adult roundtable brunches, and cross-community exchanges (Shinnecock Reservation, Block Island School, RI, Catskills Mountain youth), Project Reach brings together young people and adults who would otherwise never meet.

Inter-group crisis intervention, awareness-building workshops, train-the-trainer series and clinics, and technical assistance to schools, community organizations, and other professional institutions have informed Project Reach's work and development of its nationally recognized "organizing readiness" model and community empowerment curriculum. (visit our website at www.projectreachnyc.org)

Drawing from its over 35 years of anti-discrimination and social justice training, Project Reach will offer a unique opportunity to individuals, organizations and schools to experience its most successful and impactful workshops. All people who are committed to ending discrimination and fighting for social justice are encouraged to attend.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION Training Series

What: A 12-hour, 2-day, interactive, participant-centered, anti-discrimination training for communities and schools facing bullying/identity destruction, inter-group conflict, and community disempowerment but who are committed to ending discrimination and injustice and to institutionalizing substantive and sustainable culture change. **Training will be limited to 40 attendees** reflecting the geographic and racial diversity of New York City.

When: **Tuesday and Wednesday, February 9th and February 10th, 9am – 4pm.**

Who: Principals, teachers, guidance counselors; Executive Directors, service providers, social workers, after-school staff; Parents and guardians of schools and community-based organizations in all 5 boroughs.

Requirements for participation: Attendance at both all-day sessions. **Registration Deadline: Wed, Feb 3, 2016**

Where: **Steelcase WorkLife Center, 4 Columbus Circle (corner of W. 58th St/8th Ave), NYC 10019**

Trainers: Don Kao, Katherine Chambers, Francis Ward – *With over 35 years of training experience collectively, Project Reach's training team has worked with educational, professional, community-based, and activist communities in New York City and nationally providing crisis intervention, program/organizational development, and technical assistance services.*

Session I

Diversity and Discrimination: *Is there really a difference?*

Have we achieved diversity? Does discrimination still exist? In this participant-centered, interactive workshop, we will use a boat, index cards, and masking tape....it's about "them" and it's about us. Come take the plunge and learn how misunderstanding "diversity" divides our multiracial, multi-gender, and seemingly disparate communities. We will look at discrimination outside ourselves and within our communities. Leave your guilt and fear at the door. This workshop is about developing practical responses to difficult situations.

Identity Crisis...or An Issue of Power and Privilege

What is Identity? Is Identity important? Using colored dots, an 8-foot Identity Chart, and self-disclosure, participants will introspectively map out what is important, safe, and empowering in their lives in order to better understand issues of power and privilege. How does our own perception of self impact the ways in which we work, address issues of cultural competence, and grow our abilities and skills in examining and challenging identity destruction and individual, community, and social disempowerment.

Session II

The Color Line: *“Does skin color REALLY matter?”*

“Do you treat people according to the color or shade of their skin?” In these times when increased diversity would suggest that interracial dating, trans-racial adoptions, and multiracial families are more accepted, what impact does the media’s promotion of beauty standards have on how we feel about our own and other’s race and skin color. This audience-driven workshop promises to explore how we “see” skin color and how our experiences, past and present, inform a more challenging and layered understanding of what racism and skin color have to do with dividing or building community.

The "Class" Closet: *Being “Out” about Race and Class*

The "class" closet - why is class background never really discussed? What is the relationship between race and class? Come join us in opening the last closet door...let's bring "class" back into the classroom. In this interactive workshop, a color line and class disclosure will provide a unique opportunity to understand ourselves and the impact of class and race on our work in People of Color, White, and multiracial communities.

Session III

Homophobia/Heterosexism 101: *For Straights ONLY...and anyone who ever thought they were!*

An introspective, challenging, and engaging safe space where earliest memories, fears and apprehensions, and self-initiated disclosure will form the medium from which we will explore the root causes of homophobia and heterosexism and the all-to-often failure to recognize their interconnection to sexism and misogyny.

TRANSformative 101: *Sex and Gender...the underpinnings of Sexism, Misogyny and Transphobia?*

What is the difference between sex and gender? How do decisions about gender identity and gender expression promote liberation and freedom of choice but also perpetuate rigid gender conformity – particularly when one’s sex and gender do not match. How can what we learn from transgender and intersex communities, inform more effective and substantive strategies to ending sexism and misogyny.

Session IV

Model Minority or Manipulated Minority?

— *The History of Racism in the U.S.: an Asian American Perspective*

*Through a quote, slide show, and 10-foot multiracial history time line, we will examine the origins of the “model minority” myth; explore the 170-year history of racism against Asians in the U.S.; see how racist media depictions of Black people (though political cartoons) were used to discredit and justify the exclusion of Asians from the U.S.; and better understand the ways Asians have been used to undermine other People of Color communities and movements for social change. In addition, the use of the multiracial history time line will reveal the interconnections of Native American, African American, Latina/o, Asian/Pacific Islander and Women’s herstories/histories to more clearly substantiate the “**changing face of racism**” over the past 500 years in the United States and world-wide.*

To registration and for more information, please email
donkao@projectreachnyc.org or katherine@projectreachnyc.org

or

Call Francis at Project Reach - (212) 966-4227 or Don - (917) 749-6116

Send completed registration forms by **Wed, Feb 3, 2016** to **email:** donkao@projectreachnyc.org;
fax: (212) 966-4963 or **mail:** Project Reach, 39 Eldridge Street, 4th Floor, NYC 10002



Project Reach's two significant city-wide and interconnected initiatives:

TRANS Satellite Safe Spaces
in all 5 boroughs

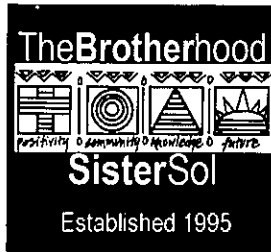
*The **TRANS Satellite Safe Spaces** initiative will provide cultural competency training in our partner organizations/schools at every level (Board members, executive directors, principals to line staff, parents and young people), raise the awareness about the needs of transgender, gender nonconforming and intersex youth and institutionalize policy, facility and programmatic changes, resulting in a safer space for these young people particularly those who are immigrant, undocumented and in-the-closet.*

Youth-led
“Give Back the Night” Campaigns

*The **“Give Back The Night” Campaign** will provide young people the opportunity to learn about the women-led “Take Back The Night” movement and create a campaign of their own that interrupts sexual harassment, sexism, misogyny and other forms of violence against women. Where historically women have taken the lead, these campaigns seek to place the burden on boys, young and adult men to identify sexism, misogyny and homophobia and develop concrete ways to challenge and end all forms of violence against women.*



A program of the Chinese American Planning Council



FOR THE RECORD

Remarks prepared by Cidra M. Sebastien, Associate Executive Director
cms@brotherhood-sistersol.org 212-283-7044
April 19, 2017

We believe the New York State Department of Education should convene a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards across subject areas (K-12) and explore the grounding of standards in core content that challenges racism, ableism, sexism, xenophobia, and is LGB and TGNC-affirming. In fact, this statement is a direct quote from one of the recommendations published by the Young Women's Initiative in May 2016. Such a task force is necessary and overdue. This matter is deeply connected to the mission of The Brotherhood/Sister Sol.

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol has played an integral role in New York City's Young Women's Initiative, specifically in the area of education. Associate Executive Director Cidra M. Sebastien was an appointed Steering Committee Member and Co-Chair of the Education Committee. Additionally, two youth members of Bro/Sis were appointed to the initiative's YWAC/Young Women's Advisory Council.

During a year long process and with the leadership of City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and YWI Co-Chairs Joanne Smith, Danielle Moss Lee and Ana Oliveira, initiative members met with a range of key stakeholders including students and representatives from several agencies including the DOE. There were clear recommendations formally submitted by YWI in May 2016 the matter of curriculum which include:

- Call on New York State to convene a task force to assess cultural relevance of curricula across subject areas in middle and high school. Explore the grounding of curricula in core content that challenges racism, ableism and sexism, and ensure that it is LGBQ and TGNC-affirming. Additionally, incorporate five or more books, materials, essays, videos, etc. in current curricula from a non-majority perspective each year in middle and high school.
- Require comprehensive sex education in New York City public schools in every grade, every year, that is medically accurate, age-appropriate and inclusive of issues that young people regularly experience such as consent, negotiation, LGBQ and TGNC experience, gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Any expansion of the current sex education mandate should include proper teacher training, appropriate funding and a comprehensive evaluation of its implementation.
- Expand access to arts education for young women and girls in schools, juvenile detention facilities and community-based organizations.
- Work with teacher training programs at CUNY to pilot trainings for educators focused on cultural humility and teaching content from an intersectional feminist lens. Once piloted, this program could be used as a model across other teacher-training institutions.
- Work with community-based organizations and teacher-leaders to deliver professional development to faculty across the academic disciplines, focused on undoing implicit bias and teaching from an intersectional feminist lens.

Furthermore, it is the belief of The Brotherhood/Sister Sol that the New York State Department of Education convenes the task force so that it includes students, educators, community partners, and experts in curriculum development in the areas of race, culture, gender, and class. Curriculum that is youth centered, culturally relevant, femme and girl empowering, and focused on bias reduction, dismantling racism, misogyny, xenophobia, transphobia, heteronormativity, will be beneficial to all students in the state of New York.

About The Brotherhood/Sister Sol
www.brotherhood-sistersol.org

Founded in 1995, The Brotherhood/Sister Sol (Bro/Sis) provides comprehensive, holistic and long-term support services to youth who range in age from 8 to 22. Our Theory of Change is to provide multi-layered support, guidance, education and love to our membership, to teach them to have self-discipline and form order in their lives, and then to offer opportunities and access so that they may develop agency. We achieve this through the facilitation of programs and activities that focus on our members' culture and identity. We serve 1000 NYC youth throughout the year, largely at our Harlem headquarters and through school partnerships in four boroughs. Our members learn from culturally relevant curriculum to develop critical thinking and global awareness skills through leadership development, drug awareness, conflict resolution, community service, and other activities. Our Curriculum Focus Issues include Pan African and Latinx History, dismantling sexism and misogyny, leadership development, educational achievement, and political education and social justice.

Over the past 22 years, we have published 5 books including two curricula on our work. Through our Liberating Voices Liberating Minds Institute we offer training and resources to educators, youth workers, schools and community organizations committed to practicing education that transforms minds, lives and communities. Over 2000 people working in over 250 different spaces have experienced LVLM. In addition, Bro/Sis administers a farmers market and environmental program that served over 2000 community residents and sold nearly 34,000 lbs. of produce last season.

Since our inception, we have partnered with NYC public schools to facilitate our Rites of Passage programs. In 2014, we began a partnership with DOE and the Expanded Success Initiative (ESI) to bring elements of our model to three new schools.

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol is seen as a leader in youth leadership development, violence reduction, culturally competent curricula development and policy. Associate Executive Director Cidra M. Sebastien was appointed to the Steering Committee of the Young Women's Initiative and to be the Co-chair of the Education Committee (Executive Director Khary Lazarre-White is a member of the Young Men's Initiative Advisory Board). Together with experts in women's issues and racial and gender inequality, the Young Women's Initiative will also determine needs for programming, policy changes, data collection, and long-term research geared towards closing the gaps in outcomes experienced by young women and girls, and young women and girls of color in particular, in New York City. Cidra M. Sebastien was also a co-planner for the inaugural Black Girl Movement: A National Conference in 2016. This is a three-day gathering at Columbia University in New York City to focus on Black girls, cis, queer, and trans girls, in the United States.

For Resolution 1415 - students in favor

Testimony of Fatimata Ly and Fatima Bartley, 8th Graders, at Achievement First Endeavor Middle School

4/19/2016

FOR THE RECORD

Fatimata Ly

Hello my name is Fatimata Ly

Fatima-

And I'm Fatima Bartley.

Fatimata- We are 8th grade representatives, from the Civic Engagement Class and Student Government, at Achievement First Endeavor Middle School. Thank you city council members for hearing us today.

Fatimata Ly-

We believe that schools should provide culturally responsive teaching for students. We think it is important for teachers to get trained in the skill of culturally responsive teaching. We think it is important for teachers to be able to connect with students on a deeper level, not just academic.

Fatima-

It would be easier for the students to connect to the lessons when they reflect who they are and their experience. We know this to be true because of our personal experiences. Our advisor and teacher, Ms. Ghrebmichael has helped us to learn tools to advocate for our beliefs. She has taught us to learn from history and see the beauty that we have to offer.

Our history teacher, Mr. Miller, is a white male and he listens to our perspectives and thinks about both sides of the spectrum. When we were talking about World War II, he highlighted the complexities that African Americans fighting in WWII. He noted that they were hero's when in Europe and fighting for democracy, but then blacks had to come back to the oppression of the Jim Crow South. It was interesting to learn how African Americans were involved in this crucial part of United States history. We could see ourselves reflected in US history. Mr. Miller also has allowed us to debate the differences between freedom and equality and how it relates to us now. He allows us to speak in our own words and disagree with him. He also talks about his whiteness and his role in society.

Fatimata-

We believe that this is so important. In April, our civic engagement class group joined Empowered Ed in petitioning to advocate for culturally responsive teaching. We received 85 signatures from students, teachers, family members, and business owners in our community. The petition called for professional development in culturally responsive teachings four times a year. This development includes teacher trainings on understanding and responding to different experiences of students and parents, developing culturally responsive lesson plans and undoing implicit bias.

We know that this will make a difference in getting students to connect to school. When we have had teachers that talked about our different experiences and included our stories in class lessons it made a difference.

Both: Thank you for letting us speak and for listening to our story.

FOR THE RECORD

TESTIMONY

FOR THE RECORD

Proposed Int 1028-A
Res 1415

**Public Schooling, Sexual Health, HIV Education, and LGBT Inclusion
in New York:
Research and Recommendations**

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Submitted to:
NYC Council Hearing on Sexual Health Education and LGBT Content in the State
Learning Standards
Wednesday, April 19, 2017, 1:00pm
Committee on Education
Council Chambers – City Hall

QuERI

The Queering Education
Research Institute©
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Social Science & Public Policy Center
at Roosevelt House

HUNTER
The City University of New York



Sexual Health, HIV Education, and LGBT Inclusion in New York: Research and Recommendations

Sexual Health and HIV Education

Over the past 20 years, focus on HIV Education in school settings has slowly slipped from public consciousness. Correspondingly, the quality and content of HIV education offered in public schools has declined, and in many instances it has remained stuck in the 1990s.

From current research exploring the teaching of HIV Education in public schools nationally, we know that while the basics of HIV transmission are still regularly included in lessons, topics like sexual orientation and skills such as condom use, partner communication, and accessing testing are not (Walsh-Buhi et. al., 2017). Comparing current research to that of the Kaiser Family Foundation 15 years ago provides a window to the decreased emphasis on skill based HIV instruction. In their 2004 study, Kaiser found that around 68% of in-schools HIV education curricula included condom use and 59% included partner communication. In research published in 2017, the researchers found that less than 50% of in-school programs are including these topics (Walsh-Buhi et. al., 2017), and only 87% of high school students report learning anything at all about HIV in school, the lowest percentage since 1997 (Herr et. al., 2012).

This decline in the quality of HIV education in public schools likely has two root causes: the 1998 move to federally funded abstinence-only-until-marriage (AOUM) sexual health programs, and the improvements in HIV treatment, removing the most visible signs of illness from public view and reducing the death rate for those infected with HIV.

From 1998 to 2009, federal funding for sexuality education focused exclusively on abstinence-only-until-marriage (AOUM) programs which research has consistently proven to be ineffective for reducing rates of sexually transmitted infections, delaying onset of adolescent sexual activity, reducing rates of sexual risk behaviors, and pregnancy (Schalet et. al, 2014). Additionally, these programs ignore the needs of non-heterosexual youth, are rooted in the belief that sex belongs only within heterosexual marriage, that teaching about the use of condoms is morally wrong, and often teach gender stereotypes as fact. Within this framework of belief, HIV education in many schools shrank in scope to address only an abstracted discussion of viral transmission with little practical instruction, and sexual acts other than heterosexual intercourse within marriage were absent or demeaned. AOUM programs, while today no longer the solely allowable curricula, are still widely used and teaching materials from those programs are still in circulation even in schools that no longer declare themselves to be providing AOUM instruction.

Though New York State rejected AOUM funding in 2007, a recent report by The Guttmacher Institute (2016) compared New York sex education standards to those of other states and New York did not fare well. Nine states require the inclusion of LGBT identities in sex education curricula. Eight states have set standards that require sex education curricula to be culturally appropriate and unbiased, and three require that it

does not promote religion. New York makes none of these requirements. In fact, other than requiring instruction in HIV --which is not required to be medically accurate and for which there is an “opt out” option-- New York has no requirements at all for the content of its sexual health education. New York is also not one of the 24 states (and DC) that mandate sex education, so individual school districts decide if sexual health is taught and what is taught-- with the exception being New York City, which has its own sex education mandate.

Meanwhile, nationally nearly half of all high school students report having engaged in sexual activity, but less than two thirds of those sexually active report using condoms (Walsh-Buhi et. al., 2017). Young people ages 15-24 acquire half of all new cases of sexually transmitted disease (Walsh-Buhi et. al., 2017; Schalet et. al, 2014) with youth ages 13-19 especially vulnerable to HIV infection (Herr et al., 2012). HIV infection rates among adolescent and young Black men increased 48% from 2006-2009 (Schalet et. al, 2014, using CDC 2011 data). 81% of youth newly infected are gay or bisexual young men. Among youth who were diagnosed with HIV in 2014, only 68% were linked to care within 1 month and only 44% had a suppressed viral load—the lowest rate of any age group (CDC, 2015).

23.5% of new HIV infections in New York State occur in youth ages 13 to 24 (NYSDOH, 2016), which is slightly higher than the national average of 22%.

QuERI Research on New York HIV and Sexual Health Curricula

In 2015, we at the Queering Education Research Institute, housed at Hunter College, CUNY, began researching HIV Education and Sex Education materials in use in New York State classrooms.

Methods Synopsis: The data we are using in this study are the sexual health curricular materials from 109 school districts across the state. The extensive data were collected by the NYCLU through FOIA and given to QuERI Fall, 2015. Our initial analysis began with a randomized data pull of 27 districts including over 8000 sheets of curricular material. Of those sheets, we are calculating the ratio of sheets with LGBT mention to those without mention at 86: 8,130. Mention was most often limited to gay men and in association with HIV risk. Additionally, we pulled and analyzed all sheets relevant to the pre-determined categories “Heteronormativity” and “Gender Binary.”

Changes in the State Education HIV Regulation

I presented the preliminary results of this QuERI study last summer at the 2016 International Sex Education Policy Forum in Sweden. In the fall of 2016, I shared that presentation with New York State Assembly Member Daniel O’Donnell. Based on this research, Assembly Member O’Donnell wrote to Education Commissioner Elia requesting that 8 NYCRR 135.3 be amended to require medically accurate HIV education in New York schools. The 1987 regulation, while at the vanguard 30 years ago, now puts New York students at risk by not requiring that HIV education be both current and medically accurate. In a February 2017 response from Elia, she stated that the New York

State Department of Education agrees that the HIV Education Regulation needs to be updated to require that HIV instruction be medically accurate and current. We hope this amendment will go before the Regents this spring, 2017.

Research Findings

HIV Education in New York

We found the majority of HIV lesson plans to be outdated, some dating as far back as the 1980s, with a large concentration of the materials still in use produced in the 1990s. These materials included statistics sheets bearing numbers out of date for 20 to 30 years, worksheets and information sheets including fear language and excessive caution around contact with “homosexuals,” and classroom exercises reflective of the heightened fear and stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS in the early years of the epidemic. On average, materials in use in sexual health were 12 years old.

One lesson plan on HIV included a “History of HIV/AIDS” that started in 1981 and concluded in 1986. The handout appeared to have been typed many years ago on a typewriter and reproduced over the decades. In a lesson plan entitled “HIV and Homosexuals” there was a class activity that involved reading and answering letters addressed to a fictitious “AIDS Advisor.” “Dear AIDS Advisor, I’m 16 years old. My brother, who is 23, just told our family that he is a homosexual and has AIDS. My parents won’t even mention his name anymore. It’s as if he doesn’t even exist!” Such shunning as referenced in this class exercise, while painfully common in the US in the 1980s and early 1990s, is much more rare today. Classroom activities such as these can increase fear in young LGBT students that their identities, if discovered, will lead to their loss of friends and family. The message delivered is that disclosure of sexual orientation and of HIV status results in significant harm and that these things should be kept secret.

HIV Quizzes asked students multiple choice and short-answer questions about Kaposi Sarcoma (often spelled incorrectly), AIDS Dementia Complex, blisters that break into open sores, wasting, and night sweats. These symptoms of AIDS are rarely seen in the US today and reflect the experience of HIV infection in the 1980s and early 1990s. Additionally, testing students on these medical conditions--thus requiring them to memorize the material--is intended to frighten them into abstinence and does nothing to equip them to make sound decisions.

Many of the fact sheets had incorrect information on the virus and incorrect terminology. There was some incorrect information on the transmission of HIV, on casual contact with bodily fluids, and on the “window” of time between infection and detectability. There were few materials fully explaining the differences between HIV infection and AIDS. Fact sheets presented the progression of the disease as though AIDS and death are always the outcome, which today is no longer true. Materials discussing condoms were few and we found no materials with skill-based instruction on acquiring or using condoms. Education resources on HIV testing were rare, and significantly out of date. Possibilities for treatment, living with and managing HIV infection were not presented in any of the lessons we reviewed.

Sexual Health and LGBT Inclusion in New York

Only 28% of the school districts addressed sexual orientation in the sexual health materials. Mentions of gay men and their risk for HIV were often the only non-hetero inclusion in any of a school's sexual health materials. LGB people were also sometimes present through definitions of homosexuality and bisexuality, which were most often defined medically. "Homosexual: a person attracted to members of the same sex" was the most commonly defined term and the most common definition. Outdated and stigmatizing terms such as "transvestite" or medicalized and limited terms like "transsexual" were used to describe transgender persons, if they were mentioned at all. Definitions of sex and gender were incorrect on a number of handouts, with one sheet titled "Gender Versus Sex" defining Gender as "the biological basis of someone's sexuality" and Sex as "the psychosocial aspect of how we view ourselves as more than a reproductive being: Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian Woman, Gay man, Bisexual." One sheet listed "the four different categories of sexual attraction: heterosexual, lesbian/gay, transgendered, bisexual." These are incorrect definitions confusing biology with sexual attraction with sexual identity with gender identity.

Some short answer quizzes on definitions were incorrectly framed: "homosexual v heterosexual v bisexual"; "Transvestite v transsexual/transgender." These terms/concepts are not in opposition to each other and such framing makes no sense. No answer key was provided. There were also True/False quizzes: "In general, homosexuality is considered a mental illness and can be cured with therapy." No key was provided but we can hope the accepted answer was "F." This same quiz was also submitted by other school districts. In another district, the T/F quiz stated "Homosexuality is abnormal." We again can hope the answer accepted as correct was "F." "Only homosexuals get AIDS" was a common T/F question.

The terminology used in most lessons marks LGBT persons as a different group and one outside the school community, implicitly assuming the heterosexuality of all students. The focus was almost entirely on gay men and HIV, with no discussion of lesbian sexuality and no discussion of the sexual health needs of transgender people. Queer or fluid sexualities were completely absent.

There were a few schools represented in the data that address LGBT identities with a focus on increasing tolerance. In one district, an in-class group assignment asks students to examine a list of experiences of LGBT people: LGBT people are given/ or denied a parade permit, a lesbian is outed and fired, students form a GSA, governments criminalize homosexuality, a mother loses her child because she is a lesbian, a man is beaten and called "faggot". Students then watch a video on human rights and discuss whether or not sexual minorities have or should have rights. Follow up questions lead the students to a conclusion that LGBT rights are not "special" rights, but human rights. One district submitted a lesson plan that used the NYS Sexual Orientation Non-discrimination Act (SONDA) to discuss legal and illegal treatment based on sexuality. In another district, the health class was also a character education course where they observed Day of Silence and discussed bullying, and observed World AIDS Day and had conversations on being nice to others.

Educators employing these lessons are mindful of the need to shift the cultural norms of schools in a way that allows as many students as possible access to social, emotional and intellectual health and well-being. They are CHOOSING to have these conversations — there are no requirements in NYS for them to address LGBTQ students in any context. However, it is imperative to examine what can and cannot be done within a “tolerance” or “acceptance” framework. Acceptance or tolerance is limiting because it does little more than tell LGBTQ kids—or any marginalized group—that they have permission to be present (Payne & Smith, 2012). These approaches are inherently othering. Within these frameworks, someone must always *be tolerated* by the dominant group, which makes it inevitable that “objects of tolerance are marked as deviant, marginal, or undesirable by virtue of being tolerated” (Brown, 2006, p. 14).

The frequent pairing of LGBTQ identities and experiences with harassment, disease, and death continue to mark LGBTQ people as deviant and as victims. This “systematic inclusion... functions to include discussions about queer people, but only in a negative connotation. When this kind of inclusion is in place, queer people are only present in the school and the curriculum through discussions about dangerous pathological behaviors” (Hackford-Peer, 2010, p. 547). These forms of inclusion equate LGBTQ identity with significant danger and deviance and provide little affirmation (Payne & Smith, 2012).

LGBTQ students who attend schools with abstinence-only types of sexual health programs face greater in-schools harassment and bullying (Schalet et. al., 2014). Increased bullying and harassment also increases sexual and substance use risk. Though New York State rejected AOUM funding in 2007, many of the curricular materials in classrooms today date back to the 1990s and carry with them the value system central to AOUM initiatives. The continued focus on penile-vaginal penetration and the ignoring of other forms of sexual engagement can put LGBTQ young people at risk for other infections such as HPV and Herpes, and the constant association between “homosexual” sex acts and HIV provides no room for envisioning a responsible, happy, and disease free gay sexuality. Alternately, LGB students who have received “gay-sensitive” HIV instruction have reported lower levels of sexual risk taking and substance use (Schalet et. al., 2014).

Some schools chose to have their required HIV instruction provided by an outside source such as a not-for-profit agency. While this likely increases the accuracy of the instruction, it puts key curricular content outside of the control of the school, sends the message to students that this content is not important knowledge for health teachers, that HIV, and by association LGBT health, is “outside” of regular health education further marking it as not normal. This is not a long-term solution.

Teacher Pre-service Preparation to Support LGBT Students:

Research has noted that negative attitudes toward LGBT people are prevalent among pre-service and licensed teachers (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008; Others). LGBT topics receive little attention in teacher preparation programs, or are ignored all, so there are few opportunities provided to new teachers to consider how their negative attitudes impact *all* their students. Research indicates that nationally, around of 40% of public university teacher preparation programs make no mention the LGBTQ student experience. Of those

programs that did claim to include it, 72% ranked it as their lowest priority in diversity curricula, or could not identify how it was addressed. Analysis of course content indicated that little is being done to prepare teachers to reform curriculum content to affirm LGBTQ youth (Sherwin & Jennings, 2008). If and how LGBTQ people and issues are addressed in teacher education varies greatly, often driven by the expertise and values of the education faculty. It should not. QuERI is currently researching education programs in NYS to determine how they are addressing it.

Implications and Recommendations

- We support: **Proposed Int 1028-A** to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to creating a sexual health education task force.
- We support: **Res 1415** - calling upon the New York State Education Department to convene a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards across subject areas in elementary, middle, and high school and explore the grounding of standards in core content that challenges racism, ableism, and sexism, and is LGB and TGNC-affirming,
 - *We recommend that this be tied to the re-convening DASA Task Force.*

HIV & Sexual Health

Encourage NYSED:

- To amend NYSED 8 NYCRR 135.3 to require medically accurate HIV Education
- To establish state education standards for the delivery of medically accurate and non-stigmatizing HIV Education
- To require K-12 health educators participate in professional development on the delivery on LGBT inclusive and sensitive HIV education.
- To require LGBT health content be included in preparation and testing for certification of NY K-12 health educators

Teacher Preparation:

Encourage NYSED:

- To expand NY teacher certification requirements to include a full-semester, LGBT-inclusive, multicultural education course for all K-12 pre-service education students.
- To form a New York Dignity Act Curriculum Committee that will develop rigorous, pedagogically-sound, and academically-relevant tools for including LGBT students in curricula.

In order to prepare educators to better support LGBT students, we are recommending that teacher certification requirements be expanded to require a full-semester multicultural education course. This course would provide education students with tools to critically examine practices which marginalize K-12 students based on their identities and/or personal characteristics. A semester-long course on multicultural, anti-bias education would allow time to engage students in projects and assignments that challenge them to

use their new knowledge to create anti-oppressive educational tools and practices as well as reflect upon their own biases and prejudices.

Mandated pre-service multicultural education has the potential to be the tipping point in creating long-term, sustainable change for youth in New York. This could develop a workforce of school professionals who have received substantial education on issues of gender, sexuality and schooling—a well as education on culturally competent pedagogy and other methods for disrupting bias, harassment, and violence in school environments.

Studies indicate that teacher development is necessary for long-term school change (Terry, 2010) and effective school change must be understood as a systemic process that occurs over time (Payne & Smith, 2013; Payne & Smith, 2012; Terry, 2010). In time, the education workforce will all have had substantive conversations on gender and sexuality, as well as race, ethnicity, language, religion, nationality, and other categories of difference prior to entering the classroom.

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Special thanks to 2015-2016 undergraduate research assistant Ariel Yardeni for her work on the NYS Sex and HIV Education Curricula Research Project.

PEER HEALTH EXCHANGE

Proposed Int. 1028-A Testimony NYC Council Committee on Education Hearing

Good afternoon. My name is Rachael Morgan Peters, New York City Executive Director at Peer Health Exchange. Thank you to Education Committee Chair Daniel Dromm for convening this hearing, and to the entire Committee for their continued support of comprehensive health education. Thank you Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, and all of the Council Members who have signed on to Int. 1028-A and Reso. 1415.

Today, the need for comprehensive sexual health education in New York City public schools is more urgent than ever, and that is why I am here to speak in support of Int. 1028-A, an important step in achieving that goal.

Peer Health Exchange 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.

Peer Health Exchange is a nonprofit organization that works in public high schools in New York City and across the country to empower young people with the knowledge, skills, and resources to make healthy decisions. We train college student volunteers to teach a skills-based health curriculum to ninth-grade students. Along with mental health and substance use, sexuality education is a core part of our program, giving young people tools to navigate decision-making around sex, relationships, and their health over the course of their lives.

As you know, The New York City Department of Education (DOE) requires one semester of health education in middle school and one semester in high school, and the DOE calls for a portion of each of these semesters to include sexual health education. However, due to a lack of accountability, resources, and enforcement, students' experiences vary widely when it comes to health education - including sexual health learning. According to the DOE's own recent reports, virtually all NYC high school students receive health education. But, that data is not broken out by grade level and, as we learned from the DOE at the last hearing, about half of all students receive their health education in junior or senior year, despite the Office of School Wellness's strong recommendation that health instruction take place in grade 9 or 10. In SEANYC's student poll, we also heard from young people themselves that they want more sexuality education classes that start in earlier grades and are more inclusive of LGBTQ identities. Our program seeks to close that gap.

Peer Health Exchange partners with 45 high schools across the city, reaching over 5,800 9th graders this year who would not be receiving health education, or whose school has identified a need for extra support in talking about critical health issues like sexual health, inclusive of sexual identity.

Throughout all NYC public schools, there are only 153 licensed health educators, meaning that health education classes are often taught by a teacher teaching out of license (which is allowed). Only 7.6% of all health education instructors - including those for whom this is not their area of expertise - have attended any training on sexuality education in the last two years. Students are often not learning sexual health, or are being taught by instructors who are unlicensed and untrained. Schools need the resources to hire more health educators, train current teachers, and

PEER HEALTH EXCHANGE

implement accountability measures so they can provide the health education that students deserve, and that is required by state law.

Today we are focused on sexuality education, but sex ed should not be discussed in a vacuum. Young people must learn about their mental health, sexual health, sexual identity, substance use, and how to access resources, from mental health counselors to adolescent-friendly health clinics, in conjunction. These issues are tied together and we need to see young people as their whole selves, capable of making informed decisions about their health. Young people deserve equitable opportunities to learn about and act for their health, especially their sexual health.

Bill Int. 1028-A recognizes the need for a thorough assessment of how sexual health education is actually being implemented in public schools citywide, and calls for timely recommendations to improve that effort through the establishment of a sexual health education task force. It is also imperative that this administration take immediate steps to expand sexuality education to all grades, kindergarten through 12th.

Peer Health Exchange partners closely with NYC schools and the Office of School Wellness, a wonderful resource to NYC schools. We meet with hundreds of principals annually and believe they would love to offer high quality health education to their students. We understand that these desires are not enough in a world of competing priorities with real consequences for principals. New York City must implement a health education program in all schools and all grades that is funded **and** includes robust training and resources for teachers, along with effective enforcement measures to ensure accountability.

Peer Health Exchange believes in the potential of every young person, and works to empower them to make active, informed choices about their health. Thus, in an effort to support and strengthen the proposed legislation, we strongly recommend the addition of more than one student representative to the committee. We also recommend that there be public response mechanisms put in place for all New York City students, parents, teachers to provide feedback, and that all task force members commit to adhering to the National Sexuality Education Standards for curriculum review.

Peer Health Exchange supports the December 1st deadline for this task force to report its findings. We appreciate the urgency that this bill puts on improving sexuality education, and believe that this deadline ensures that we continue to move forward towards improving sexuality education in NYC. In light of the risks and pressures experienced by students on a daily basis (such as unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, coerced sex, bullying, harassment, and physical violence), we would like to see this task force prioritized so that it can successfully complete the work spelled out in Int. 1028.

Lastly, considering the DOE report's findings that only the majority of health education instructors have not attended any training on sexual health education in the last two years, we look forward to the creation of a task force that will prioritize teacher training and resource needs.

Peer Health Exchange also strongly supports the Council's resolution 1415, calling upon the New York State Education Department to convene a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards across subject areas. In order for young people to thrive, they must have an education that supports their gender, identity, race, abilities, and cultural background.

Empowering young people to make healthy decisions

PEER HEALTH EXCHANGE

Marginalized students are often at greatest risk of peer aggression, bullying, and mental health concerns because of their racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, or religious identity, or disabilities, and deserve curricula that reflects and values their lived experiences.

Peer Health Exchange is proud to support the proposed legislation and looks forward to the quick passing of this bill. We respectfully request the Council's support on proposed Int. 1028-A.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Rachael Morgan Peters, MPH, LMSW
New York City Executive Director

Peer Health Exchange, Inc.
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COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 16

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TO: Council Members Cornegy, Wills, Torres, Richards, Cumbo, Mendez, Chin, Rodriguez, Rosenthal and Eugene

FROM: Community Education Council 16

RE: Int. No. 1347: In relation to requiring the department of education to distribute information regarding the gifted and talented programs and exam.

CEC 16 represents the voices of students and families in the Bedford Stuyvesant community. From Shirley Chisholm, the first Black Congresswoman, to Chris Rock and Sean Carter (aka Jay-Z) our district has a rich legacy of leadership and achievement.

And yet in the past ten years, as Bedford Stuyvesant has experienced a revitalization in business, art and culture, enrollment in our public schools has decreased as families seek better options outside of the district. This divestment must end. The department of education must improve the quality of instruction and program offerings in Bedford Stuyvesant, so that parents have better options within this flourishing district.

In the past two years, CEC 16 has worked with Councilman Cornegy and the department of education, under Chancellor Carmen Farina's leadership, to add Gifted & Talented programs in Bedford Stuyvesant. This past Fall 2016, the department opened a 3rd grade Gifted & Talented program at PS 26, Jesse Owens School/16K026. And in September 2017, district 16 will also have a 6th grade Gifted & Talented class in the same building at Madiba Prep/16K681. We look forward to the department of education providing continued professional development and resources to ensure that these programs are high quality. CEC 16 also continues to support Superintendent Rahesha Amon-Harrison and her efforts to provide more high quality community school programs throughout the district.

Finally, CEC 16 supports the City Council Committee of Education's amendment to require Gifted & Talented program and exam materials to be distributed with all universal pre-k materials and information. We believe that this amendment will allow all families the opportunity to participate in a continuum of Gifted & Talented options from kindergarten through middle school within district 16.



**Testimony of Claribel Marmol
Family Planning Health Educator
Community Healthcare Network
Hearing before the New York City Council Committee on Education
RE Proposed Int. No. 1028-A and Reso. 1415: Creating a sexual health education task force
New York City Council Chambers
Wednesday, April 19, 2017**

Thank you, Chairman Dromm and members of the Committee for the opportunity to speak this afternoon. My name is Claribel Marmol and I am a Family Planning Health Educator at Community Healthcare Network. CHN has been in existence for over 30 years. Today we operate a network of 12 Federally Qualified Health Centers in the boroughs of the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn, including two mobile health van and two school-based health centers. We provide comprehensive services including primary care, behavioral health and social services, to over 85,000 individuals each year.

CHN is also a member of the Sexuality Education Alliance of New York City (SEANYC). As part of this, CHN is committed to enacting comprehensive sexuality education in NYC schools. At CHN, we have a robust sexual and reproductive health program in which we provide clinical and educational services and counseling. We also offer no-cost sexuality education to schools and community-based organizations throughout NYC. We are very proud and excited to be reaching so many young people, but we are doing the job of our public schools. Most of the public schools we work with reach out to us because they do not feel equipped to provide comprehensive sexuality education. Generally, this is because of a lack of staff training, discomfort with sexual health content, or a conflict in staff values.

For the last few years, I have provided education and counseling to patients in our health center in the South Bronx, as well as facilitated sexual health workshops in schools. Most recently I have been working on developing a youth-led media campaign on sexual and reproductive justice. Through this campaign we hosted a series of focus group discussions with youth and parents in the Washington Heights community.

I can tell you that young people and their parents want this education. Young people expressed that many of their health classes only provided surface level information about sexual health, but lacked in-depth knowledge of things like:

- Resources outside of the school where young people can receive sexual health services
- Education on healthy relationships and communication. Young people want to learn how to talk to their peers, partners, and parents about sex.
- **Students also want teachers that are highly qualified to teach about sexual health. "Not just the gym teacher."**

Moreover, parents also believe that information about sexual health resources and access may only be effective if coming from school and from a trained teacher because often their kids are receiving inaccurate information from the internet and from other teens -- leading to unsafe or risky sexual encounters.

On behalf of CHN, we fully support the New York City Council in passing proposed Intro. 1028-A, and strongly support the Council's resolution 1415. Creating a taskforce with experts in the field of sexual health, education, and LGBTQ issues, will ensure that sexually active young people are able to make informed choices about their health. These bills will reinforce the idea that comprehensive sexuality education is critically important to healthy adolescent development.

In addition to the bills before you, CHN also recommends requiring adherence to the National Sexuality Education Standards for all public school students, from kindergarten through 12th grade. Additionally, the Department of Education needs to create a meaningful implementation plan for the National Sexuality Education Standards.

In closing, I strongly encourage the New York City Council to pass these bills. Thank you for holding this hearing today.

Testimony

Good afternoon, I am Vanessa Flores, a 17 year-old Mexican-American, High school senior. I have always thought that sexual education is very important so much so that I decided to speak on my own personal experiences at the 2017 Civil Liberties and Public Policy conference two weeks ago. I touched upon how due to my culture's own traditional belief; I was not given the "talk" about my body and what was to come as I reached puberty. I also talked about how I had to reach out to outside resource to get the proper education I needed on my changing body, as in organizations or from my other peers who were the same age as me.

As for my school life: In my 4 years of attending Manhattan Center for Science and Math, I was educated on geometry and chemistry as a freshman. As a junior I was taking AP Calculus AB and electives because I already took all the science courses required for me to graduate. So I took electives, one elective in particular was called Anatomy and Physiology. We learned about the human body and the functions of all our systems, not all our systems though, because with the little I learned about the reproductive system it seemed as if I didn't learn about it at all. It wasn't until a good amount of students wanted to learn more that our teacher agreed with us and taught a week long lesson about the reproductive system, its functions and anything relating to it. After that week, I felt so informed about my body and it brought such an immense feeling of awareness. I was finally comfortable with myself because I knew what to expect from own body. It was just disappointing that I had to ask to be this informed.

Currently, I am taking AP Calculus BC and AP Computer Science Principles. Yes my school encourages us to learn beyond a typical High School grade level, which is why I've been able to take advanced courses. Yet I barely got a basic level of education on sexual education in my required health class. I took "health" class in my first semester of senior year and it was the first official health class I took since the start of high school. There are about 2 teachers who are dedicated to solely teach health and about 3 others who primarily teach a different subject. Even though it was a health class and we eventually about a week or two on each topic such as: nutrition, mental health, physical health, safety, and socialization. We then spent 3 days on different birth control methods, STI's, and a speaker who demonstrated how to properly put on a condom. It was one semester to cover everything we needed to learn about our health. Needless to say, one semester was definitely not enough to truly learn everything we needed to learn about our health. We are a generation growing up around technology, as much as we use the internet to write and read articles, learning about our bodies should not be left to the internet in order to be informed. We have spent the majority of our life in school since kindergarten up to the 12 grade or even through college, from roughly 8 am to 3pm Monday through Friday. So why do we end up having to learn about sexual education outside of school as if it were

an extra-curricular. We take for granted that we know how our body works. We only know how it works because we learned from our experiences. We know that something is hot because we learned that when you touch it, it's painful. We know what makes us happy because we learned what makes us smiles. But we shouldn't know that an unintended pregnancy happened after we learned that there was no birth control used. We shouldn't have to know these things only after we learned from the consequences. I hope that through my experience you are able to see the importance of bill number 1028-A and how beneficial it will be for students to learn about their bodies, to be more informed and to be comfortable with their actions because they'll already know what to expect.

-Vanessa Flores

Greetings,

My name is Jontae Zapata, I am 18 years old. I attend Bronx Aerospace H.S. in Evander Childs Campus. I am also a peer leader for TORCH and a member of SEANYC Youth Advisory Council. Thank you to education committee chair Daniel Dromm for convening this hearing and all of the council members who have already committed to signing on to Bill 1028-A.

As a facilitator for TORCH and a student of NYC, I've experienced firsthand the effects of a lack of sexuality education in schools. Students display an array of stigma revolving around the various layers of sexuality like gender identity, expression and sexual orientation. Simultaneously, well-meaning adults and teachers fall into this category just as easily. Luckily, Bill 1028-A is the first step to changing this.

Lessons in the currently provided Health classes hardly seem didactic and a task force of well-informed individuals here to evaluate sex ed would be revolutionary. A city as powerful, opportunistic, and progressive as NYC should not fall behind in teaching its youth. Real sexuality education is not being taught and the leaders of the future will suffer the consequences.

Young educators, such as myself, who work towards spreading information and increasing awareness about sex education is a good start at change but Bill 1028-A is the next big move forward. I am personally asking you not to stop the flow of change. Everyone deserves access to accurate and comprehensive information so that we can make healthy, informed decisions for our bodies.

Thank you,
Jontae Zapata

Good afternoon,

My name is Ashley Vasquez. I'm here today to tell you how much sex education means to me. I'm only 17 years old and to be honest, I could be doing anything, but I'm here writing to you.

All of my life I had to walk around learning about sex from my friends, the media and my peers. Never once did an adult sit and talk to me about sex. Not my parents, nor my teachers. During my last year of 8th grade, I finally had a health class...but that still wasn't sex education.

I don't think adults see the importance of sex education and it's because of this, I had to wait until freshman year of high school to find a program like TORCH. TORCH taught me everything I know today. Thanks to his program, I am well educated not just on sexual health, but also, self-worth.

While my school has a health clinic, they don't offer sexual health classes. My question to politicians and educators is how can you have services for treatment but no education as prevention? As a teen, I know that others are going to have sex, and adults know it too. Why not teach us about it instead of having us figure things out on our own, usually with misinformation?

Sometimes I really don't understand. How hard can it be to help the next generation do better?

- Ashley Vasquez

Good afternoon,

My name is Ashley Allen. I am 16 years old and a junior at life sciences secondary school. In 2016 I was given the opportunity to become a sexual peer leader and join SEANYC. As part of SEANYC Youth Advisory Council I am able to use my voice and advocate for better sex education in public school. The council is important to me because other NYC students are given a platform to share their experience and participate in events hosted by the council.

In our poll, we asked students to write an answer to the question: "how can your school improve sexuality education?" Responses that really stuck out to me were, "Teach or every year in school." and "They can start teaching at younger ages." Sex is a topic that has many subtopics and it can't be taught in 30 minutes, one time. It has to be broken down and taught over a long period of time to be remembered and understood.

As a student of a public school, Life sciences, in New York City, I know that real sexuality education is not being taught to every student. In my public school I haven't been taught sexual education. We have at least 4 pregnancies a year, 75% of the high school population has or had an std. I depended on my friends for information, that wasn't the best idea. When I was 15 my best friend and I decided to get birth control together, she told me that her grandmother said birth control can cause your period to stop and your vagina is going to fill up with blood. After hearing that I knew I had to talk to someone professional about sex. Luckily I landed a job as a Peer sexual educator, but everyone isn't this fortunate. I hope today has made everyone in this room realize how important accurate sex education is. I won't need to know how to calculate angles the rest of my life but I will need to know consent, how to use a condom, sexual orientation and more. Pass the bill please.

-Ashley Allen

Good afternoon,

I am Amber Peralta, a 17 year old, H.S. senior, TORCH peer leader, and SEANYC member. Both organizations inform youth about the importance of sexual health and our autonomous voices.

I am here to speak in support of Bill 1028-A and the urgent need for comprehensive sex education in NYC Public schools. Sex is everywhere we look, thanks to the media over sexualizing bodies and placing sex on a pedestal. Almost every show has some type of sex scene and the ratings are sky high. However, when teens in urban NYC areas have sex, we get a bad name and a stereotype that follows.

I received health class the first semester of my senior year and it was extremely basic. Students were given worksheets by our gym teacher. There were no lessons, just worksheets. The class bounced around from topics like drug abuse to rape to drunk driving and then back to drug abuse. There was little to no education on consent, gender identity, sexual orientation, or other components of sex education. This is extremely appalling and discouraging because consent is needed before, during, and after sexual and non-sexual acts. Everyone should be educated on the importance and mandate of consent.

In conclusion, NYC sex education classes are unacceptable because they are not providing all of the important topics that relate to youth and sex. These classes are also taught by teachers who are not dedicated sex educators, but gym/health teachers. I hope that Bill 1028-A passes and addresses all of these concerns.

-Amber Peralta

Hello,

My name is Allinda Smith, I am 17 years old, a junior at Brooklyn Institute for Liberal Arts and a peer leader at the TORCH Program. As a teen in NYC I think it's very important to have a detailed and comprehensive sex education curriculum in all schools, therefore I support the 1028-A Bill.

Teens are going to have sex. This is not an opinion, but rather a fact, regardless of what adults say. Instead of keeping the topic of sex taboo or having teens figure things out on their own, it should be taught in schools. You can't practice what you do not know. I had health class in 9th grade for **one** semester and it was just workbooks. There was no dialogue or Q&A.

If the sex education in my school is an indication of other schools, then one should not be surprised when unintended pregnancies or other outcomes arise. You can't practice what you don't know.

Thank you,

Allinda Smith

My testimony is in regard to Resolution No. 1415: *Calling upon the New York State Education Department to convene a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards across subject areas in elementary, middle, and high school and explore the grounding of standards in core content that challenges racism, ableism, and sexism, and is LGB and TGNC-affirming.*

Why is representation important? Imagine you show up to a party wearing a blue shirt, and everyone is wearing white. You hesitate for a moment, wonder if you missed something noted on the invite, you start to feel uncomfortable and feel you stand out for the wrong reasons. All of the sudden, you spot another person wearing a blue shirt, and another person wearing green pants, you sigh with relief and no longer feel like the outsider, you start to mingle and feel comfortable navigating the space. I know this is a simple analogy, but it is a similar feeling to opening up a book in school and never seeing someone like yourself.

My name is JD and I'm the Manager of Youth Programming at Live Out Loud, a non-profit that works with Gender & Sexuality Alliance clubs in high-schools to inspire and empower LGBT youth in NYC. We cover different topics each month, from How to Address Conflict, to Intersectionality, to LGBT history.

In the month of December, we covered LGBT history during our meetings. We spoke about the Stonewall Riots, which took place right here in NY, in Greenwich Village, about the AIDS epidemic and ACT UP, how LGBT folks and their allies stopped traffic right outside this building, on Park Row, demanding change. The students didn't know about those events, or that the Pride Parade is a commemoration of the riots; they had no idea how influential their own city was in the fight for LGBT rights. At the end of the meeting, we went around saying one word to describe how we were feeling, and one student after another said inspired, empowered, or informed.

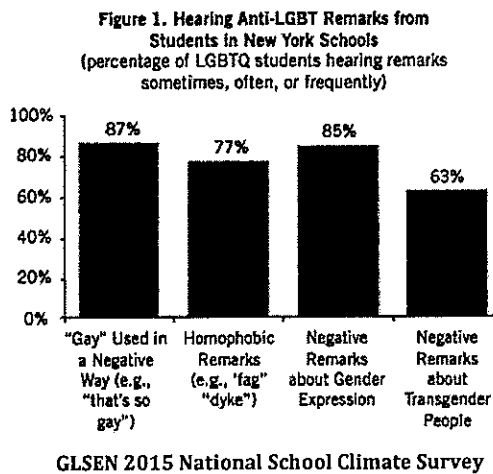
The lesson plan I've created for the month of April is called LGBT Historical Figures. I discuss with the students the vital roles of LGBT individuals in history, from Alan Turing helping the allies win the World War by breaking the Nazi code, and inventing the predecessor of the modern computer, to Bayard Rustin organizing the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, where Martin Luther King gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech and launching the A. Philip Randolph Institute to promote racial justice and secure jobs and freedom for all Americans.

So many students have come up to me after the meetings, thanking me for teaching them about the roles of LGBT people in history, people they might've heard of, but never knew were LGBT, or people they have never heard of, and are now proud to be part of their community.

Frankly, I didn't think I was going to get this much positive feedback, after all, who wants to voluntarily stay after school listening to someone speak with PowerPoint slides after doing that all day? That alone should tell you how thirsty these students are for learning about people like them, for finding out that LGBT people have changed the world, **for encouragement to go out and do the same.**

What is the point of going to school? To me, going to school means going into a space where people help you reach your full potential. A place that shapes you into being a contributing member of society and encourages you to leave the world a better place than you found it. **A place where you are empowered, inspired, informed.** If you don't teach LGBT students about themselves, you cannot achieve these goals.

According to GLSEN's 2015 National School Climate Survey, 87% of LGBT students surveyed in New York State heard "gay" used in a negative way, and 77% percent heard homophobic remarks in school.



If we fail to cover LGBT culture as well as other minorities, how do we expect the larger student body to acknowledge and appreciate their contributions to society? If bullying and prejudice are a demonstration of ignorance, isn't education the answer?

So going back to my original analogy, what do you think happens when a student walks into a classroom, and everyone is wearing white? And they're only taught about people wearing all white? And they don't see in their textbooks someone with green pants, or a blue shirt? Would you feel included? Welcomed? Or would you feel uncomfortable, like an outsider who walked into the wrong place?

Thank you for inviting me here today, and taking the time to listen to my testimony.

Testimony for the New York City Council Committee on Education

Re: Resolution Number 1415

April 19, 2017

By Jaleel Francis

Advocacy Intern, Children's Defense Fund-New York

Good afternoon. My name is Jaleel Francis and I am a current high school student at Innovation Diploma Plus and an Advocacy Intern with the Children's Defense Fund-New York. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My comments will focus on Resolution 1415 and the need for culturally relevant learning standards.

As both a high school student and an advocate for restorative practices and school discipline reform, I know that we need culturally responsive education in our schools. Many of our schools fall short in accommodating students' learning needs or providing the resources and kinds of teaching that make us connect with our education system. When you construct a lesson relevant to a student's life and culture it minimizes the chance of students becoming disinterested or disruptive because it helps students and teachers build relationships and respect for one another. It shows the student that teachers care about their lived experiences and culture. It also makes school more enjoyable, and enables students to be more engaged and honestly feel like the lesson is worth learning.

As a current student sometimes I even find myself asking my teachers "how is this relevant to me"? And "when will I ever need to use this"? The answer I typically get is "you need this to graduate".

For some students who have difficulties learning and staying engaged that answer isn't enough to make them attend school. I have seen peers of mine drop out and they explain that it's because school wasn't for them. I know from my research that this happens at a systemic level and these are not just isolated incidents. I know that learning standards that are disrespectful of students or not relevant to their lives contributes to school pushout and the school to prison pipeline in New York City. Our current educational system expects us to excel in areas that have no meaning to us even though research has proven that you learn best when the subject interests you, and can even improve the academic performance of students who have learning disabilities.

With more attention paid to culturally relevant learning standards and the creation of this taskforce, we have the opportunity to make all students feel like they belong in school and help them thrive in areas that before could have led to them being pushed out.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak today.



BROOKLYN TECH

ALUMNI FOUNDATION



29 Fort Greene Place, Brooklyn NY 11217 Phone: 718.797.2285 | www.bthsalumni.org

TO: Hon. Robert Cornegy

FROM: Brooklyn Tech Alumni Foundation

DATE: April 9, 2017

RE: Support for Intro 1347 – requiring distribution of information regarding gifted & talented programs

FOR THE RECORD

The Brooklyn Tech Alumni Foundation strongly supports Intro 1347 (CM Cornegy), which would require the New York City Department of Education to distribute information regarding the NYC Gifted and Talented program and exam to parents along with information on universal pre-kindergarten.

Our Foundation has been actively engaged on the issue of unequal access to the City's gifted and talented programs and the related issue of diversity in NYC's specialized high schools for the past several years and we are proud to say that we have been making definitive, positive progress in the fight to increase representation from historically underrepresented communities in the specialized high schools. Along with proactive STEM education programs, mentoring and test preparation, one of the key elements to our organization's approach has been a concerted effort to increase outreach and communication in underrepresented schools and neighborhoods.

So while our work has focused on middle schools and the specialized high school entrance exam, we believe your proposal to exponentially increase outreach/communication through the mandatory distribution of gifted and talented information at the earliest possible time in a child's education is exactly the right approach and we fully support Intro 1347.

As the Foundation recently testified to the Brooklyn and Bronx Borough Presidents' Task Force on Gifted & Talented education, it is a sad fact that a child's zip code is closely correlated with his or her chance to succeed educationally, and ultimately economically, in our city. Too few middle schools serve as feeders into the city's eight test-in specialized high schools, in part because of the lack of both Gifted & Talented programs (as you have so forcefully and accurately pointed out) and the absence of enhanced academic classwork for high performing students with the potential to succeed on the rigors of the test and in the challenging curriculum offered in those schools.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon the City to identify at an earlier age those students with high potential, and nurture those students through the enhanced academics and the test preparation available to students in more affluent districts. Every New York City public school student deserves the chance to succeed in grade school, middle school, high school and beyond and again the Brooklyn Tech Alumni Foundation supports Intro 1347 as an important first step in this effort.

For more information, please contact: Liz Sciabarra at 718-797-2285 or our government affairs representatives, Yoswein New York, at 212-233-5700.

FOR THE RECORD

Good afternoon, I am Jeremy Siegel, and I am a middle school teacher in Manhattan. Thank you to the entire Committee for taking the time to consider these important issues.

I have taught sexual health at the middle school level for four years. People often ask me if my classroom is out of control during sex-ed. In my experience, the situation is just the opposite of what people expect: my students are more engaged, more actively participating during sexual health than during any other unit. And that is because they want to know. It is not a childish curiosity about a taboo topic that drives their interest. Rather, through their questions, my students tell me they are looking for skills to help them navigate the changes of adolescence.

And this, in my mind, is the real goal of comprehensive sexual health education: To support students through a safe development physically, socially, and emotionally. We do this by providing students with a positive foundation of information and values that they can have time to adopt, internalize, and carry into adulthood.

So does comprehensive sexual health education work? I can answer with a resounding yes. My students are knowledgeable about their bodies, but more importantly, my students are also skilled. They can identify trusted adults to talk to about problems, know how to refuse an unwanted advance, and know where to access sexual health resources.

This all sounds great, but we only actually get these benefits if all students in New York City are actually getting the education, which is what the task force will be able to determine. I know at my school, my students only started receiving comprehensive education because I spoke up about the need for it. Mandating sexual health education is not enough, the task force is needed to make sure it happens. Further, I have only been able to do what I do in my classroom because of the excellent training I received. The task force will be able to determine how current gaps in teacher training can best be filled.

I am also encouraged that the task force includes a high schooler who will be able to share what students themselves want to gain from their sexual health class. Again, in my experience, students want to know about the body and sexuality, but moreso they are really looking for skills that they can apply in real life. In my mind, this need doesn't begin in middle school, but rather extends to the earliest ages, when emotional intelligence and empathy are developed. We need a task force that will design a system that begins in kindergarten, giving students a foundation in important concepts like body boundaries and asking appropriate questions. I know that if my students came to me in middle school already having this foundational knowledge from elementary school, they would be more capable of achieving the health goals we have laid out for them. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Proposed Int. 1028-A Testimony
New York City Council Committee on Education Hearing

April 19, 2017

Léa Jean-François
Young Women's Advisory Council Member, New York City Young Women's Initiative
Girls for Gender Equity

Hello, my name is Léa Jean-François. I am a seventeen year old woman attending Curtis High School, a large high school located in the North Shore of Staten Island where I have found a place in the International Baccalaureate program and countless clubs and community activities. Thank you to the Council Members who have put in countless effort and time into the issues that daily affect New York City residents. With much gratitude, I applaud New York City Council Members dedication and notable work.

Today, I represent the Young Women's Advisory Council at Girls for Gender Equity. We are part of the Young Women's Initiative (YWI) that was launched by Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and the New York City Council to identify the gaps in services for young women ages 12-24, with a focus on cis and trans women of color. YWI brings together leaders and organizers who work with teens and young adults and advocates for them in all aspects of our society, with the goal of crafting policy recommendations that address racial, gender and other disparities. This is being done with young women at the center of the conversation as active and consistent participants in discussions.

Girls for Gender Equity is also a member of the Sexuality Education Alliance of NYC, a broad coalition working to pass and implement comprehensive sex in grades K-12. Comprehensive sexuality education is deeply important to me and my community, especially young people of color who identify as trans or gender non-conforming. When I was in high school, I was given the proper review of what it means to be sexually healthy. I was taught a foundation of consent: where I can get contraceptives, what being a mature sexual adult looks like, and other resources I can take with me when I go to college. My school was lucky enough to partner with a hospital on Staten Island and have some representatives from the hospital come in and inform us about a range of topics from where students can get birth control for a reduced price and what HIV is. However, this did not happen until the second semester of my last year in high school. So, by the time my class was taught this, a majority of us had been in relationships and had to figure out all of that information on our own. Sexual education is crucial, and if not taught at an earlier age can in an instant change one's future. Moreover, my high school is a community based school, and majority of what makes up my school is the work of other organizations. Unfortunately, not every school can partner with a hospital or receive representatives. However, if a sexual education platform is created across New York City, it can be taught by teachers in schools starting in elementary school. Young people *need* comprehensive sexuality education and the opportunity to work with fellow peers on the Sexual Health Education Task Force. Although I received a rather late form of sex ed, I am grateful for it and recognize that I am a cisgender woman. I wondered during class, what about other students who are trans or gender non-conforming? Is the health center in my school or the one recommended useful for them? Moreover, there was no discussion of being transgender in my sex ed class at all! I think it is important to create an inclusive form of sex ed so that more than a select few can benefit from it.

Sexual education is extremely important and should be taught at an earlier age, so throughout high school, students can understand what it means to be sexually healthy. Lastly, it is important to create an inclusive form of sex ed so that it is affirming for all sexualities and gender identities.

It is important to pass bill, Int. 1028-A, which recognizes the immediate need for a thorough assessment of *how* sexual health education is actually being implemented in public schools citywide, and calls for timely recommendations to improve that effort through the establishment of a sexual health education task force with a minimum of 8 members: 3 experts from the field, 1 teacher, 1 non-teaching staff from a school, 1 high school student, 1 LGBTQ-GNC expert, and 1 representative from DOHMH. However, it must be amended that there should be at least two high school students on the task force. From my experience as a young person, creating institutional change is more effective when there's at least two of us at the table.

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 on proposed int. 1028-A.

I thank the New York City Council for working with the Young Women's Advisory Council on making this a possibility through the Young Women's Initiative and look forward to working together to ensure that cis and trans girls of color and gender non-conforming youth of color receive adequate and comprehensive sex-ed.

Proposed Res. No 1415
New York City Council Committee on Education Hearing

April 19, 2017

Jadayah Spencer
Young Women's Advisory Council Member, NYC Young Women's Initiative
Girls for Gender Equity

Good afternoon, my name is Jadayah Spencer. I am 21 years old and a graduate of New York University. At the United Nations, I serve as Chair of the Youth Steering Committee in the Department of Public Information, having assisted that department in New York and South Korea. Lastly, as of a few weeks ago, I am the Executive Director of the International Youth Leadership Institute. Thank you for taking the time to hear us today. It is an honor to come today before the members of the Council that are tasked with overseeing the educational structures in one of, if not the greatest, most diverse and influential cities in the world.

Today, I represent the Young Women's Advisory Council of the Young Women's Initiative, an initiative launched by Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and the New York City Council to identify the gaps in services for young women age 12-24, with a focus on women of color. YWI brings together leaders and organizers who work with teens and young adults, with the goal of crafting policy recommendations and programming that address racial, gender and other disparities. This is being done with young women at the center of the conversations in partnership with Girls for Gender Equity. As an anti-violence and education organization, Girls for Gender Equity is committed to centering young people of color as experts of their lives.

Today I am here to ask you to call on New York State to convene a task force that will assess the cultural relevance of curricula across subject areas in middle and high school. This task force will explore the grounding curriculum in core content that challenges racism, ableism, and sexism and will affirm students across spectrums of gender and sexuality.

I think it's always important to have shared definitions for the words we use. You all are part of the Education Committee, and the word Education has two different Latin roots: there's "educare," which means to train or to mold, and "educere," meaning to lead out. To bring out of someone, that which is already in them.

Every child has within them an innate curiosity, and an innate capacity with which to acquire knowledge, which satisfies that curiosity- if only for a moment. New York City makes a promise to its children and youth that it will offer an education that will serve as a stepping stone towards achieving greater heights.

But an education that doesn't honor and tell the stories of all our city's people, is an education that is inherently incomplete. An incomplete education endangers and oppresses students from marginalized groups by erasing their stories and uplifting narratives that they cannot relate to.

This beckons the question: If students cannot see themselves in the education they are receiving, how can we make the case that their education is relevant, and actually prepares them for what lies ahead in an ever-changing economy?

As a young girl growing up in Bed-Stuy Brooklyn, I loved to learn. However my parents felt that what I was learning in school was insufficient, and made sure to supplement my formal education with out-of-the-classroom experiences, including trips to museums, libraries, and cultural events, among many other things, all with the goal of piquing my curiosity and teaching me about my own people's rich history—something they couldn't count on our school system to do. Students in NYC classrooms today, however, are still learning "Columbus sailed the ocean blue in 1492."

I think of the power of *Hidden Figures*, a movie which tells the story of three Black women who help put the first American, the first person on the moon. And how news stories are reporting that the telling of this story alone, is correlated with an uptick in interest in STEM careers among Black and Brown youth and girls. As wonderful as it was, it shouldn't take having a movie come out, for us to consider the impact of representation.

The New York Times recently published a story highlighting a new study which found that black boys who had a black teacher during their elementary school years were less likely to drop out of high school and more expected to attend college. Recalling our initial definition of education—bringing out of someone that which is already in them— I think the question of educational curricula within our schools, might be better framed as "What kind of person do we want a New York City education to produce?"

Do we want to produce a person who is culturally aware, knowledgeable and appreciative of the differences that exist between people? Do we want to produce students who can carry New York's torch of leading economies and impacting cultures worldwide? Do we want NYC Public schools to be more safe and uplifting spaces where every child can unlock the potential within them? I have been all over the world, studying issues in education in each country I go to. And every time, I think about how the education I observe in that country, compares to the public school education I received growing up at here home. I've learned that even in China, the writings of Alex Haley have been taught in classrooms. Even in Tanzania, contributions of people of color to the field of solar energy and mathematics are taught.

We simply cannot afford to fall behind. As a youth in New York City, I am strongly recommending that you convene a task for that will serve to analyze and improve our curriculums across middle school and high school.

By doing so, we empower students of our great city to have a deeper understanding of themselves and the world, as well as the endless possibilities that exist for them.

I thank the New York City Council for working with the Young Women's Advisory Council on making this a possibility through the Young Women's Initiative and look forward to working together to ensure that cis and trans girls of color and gender non-conforming youth of color are affirmed throughout their educational journey.

Hello, and good afternoon to you all. My name is Sherell Farmer, I am 16 and a junior at Midwood High School at Brooklyn College. I am also a member of the New York Civil Liberties Union's Teen Activist Project, more commonly known as TAP and the Sexuality Education Alliance of New York City (SEANYC) Youth Leadership Council. In school & my various organization time & time again we speak on the multiple improvements that we see need to be made in NYC public schools, namely in sex ed. Thus, I'd like to thank the council members, specifically those who have signed on to Bill 1028-A, and those looking to learn more about Bill 1028-A. for giving me the chance to speak and submit testimony today.

It's impossible to avoid sex. And I say that to mean that since the time we watch our first sitcom the topic is dropped, scenes are shown and in the streets of our boroughs, we hear those around us discussing it and eluding to it topic. Consequently, we become curious and in a strange way knowledgeable. I've known what sex is longer than I can even image, but I was didn't first learn about it in a classroom or from my parents. The information I've received from the media, random friends, and everywhere else, has always been accurate, but thankfully, the various organization I'm involved in have always guided me and ensured that I'm probably informed.

However, not all teens are in such great & informative organizations – but all teens do attend school, and the majority in New York City attend public & charter schools. Ensuring that our schools have informative, comprehensive, accurate, and engaging sex education would help feed knowledge to students to who don't receive the knowledge from their parents or another safe source. Our teacher should not be televisions or google as neither of those sources are always right and neither of those can answer all of our question.

The implementation of the task force would thus be a great move that we, as students, receive the type of sex ed that we deserve. A survey that we conducted at SEANYC demonstrated that many students don't receive sex ed until 12th grade – 4 years too late. By the 12th grade many students could've long engaged in sex, uniformed and potentially unprotected, This is often the case in my school, with many on teams never receiving sex ed until their senior year of high school. Although I was personally fortunate enough to receive sex ed in the 9th grade the unit was merely a week in health class, and that week was not exactly informative. I recall being shown needless statistic after statistic, being told the name of birth control methods but never what they were, and a video of child birth. A condom demonstration was never even performed. Furthermore, my school, though apparently very open about condom distribution doesn't do a very good job of informing its students – I didn't find out that I could get condoms at school until this year. My school succeeds in preparing me in math, history, English and other core subjects, but if I was to go forward in life primarily on the sexual education I got in school I'd be at great risk. A task force could work on all of these vices ensuring that sex ed in schools is more than a snippet of knowledge but enough to take us through a lifetime.

In making the task force I think that it's essential that we include more than one students as how can we speak on students' needs and education without including students. We are the ones

actually experiencing it and therefore we need to have a seat at the table to decide what happens there. One student being on the task force would not be enough as our experiences vary by school, thus, multiple students are needed to establish multiple perspectives.

Creating a task force, that is youth inclusive, to investigate the state of sex ed in our city should not be a question and I hope this hearing shows the council that it needs to become action. Thank you for allowing me to speak today.

Subject: Testimony for bill Int. 1028-A

Hello,

My name is Alessia Milstein and I am a current junior in a New York City Public High School. I am also a proud member of the Sexuality Education Alliance of New York City's Youth Council. Sadly the motivation for me to join this council was the poor sex education I have received thus far. In my experience all I have been taught is all the ways sex can kill me and how to have proper hygiene. Although the lessons are important, my sex education has sorely lacked topics like sex education for the LGBTQ+ community, education surrounding consent, and various types of birth control. I have been lucky enough to have sufficient sex education in my New York Public Middle School yet many of my friends had no version of sex education till high school. I am also lucky to even have had a form sex education in 9th grade while only 63.5% of the 314 students surveyed by SEANYC had any sex education in high school. This lack of sex education results in outcomes like higher percentages of teen pregnancies, STD's, and ill-informed people entering the world. New York City is supposed to be the most progressive, accepting, and best city in the nation. We have a duty to spearhead what will hopefully become a nationwide movement to meet the National Sex Education Standards and improve them. I am sending you this in support of bill Int. 1028-A. This bill is a necessity and would greatly improve NYC youth as a whole. It should also be noted that the task force created from this bill should have NYC students, in the end it is our education being reviewed. We deserve more than one seat at the table. Thank for letting me send you this testimony and I hope it helps put the issue of poor sex education into perspective.

Sincerely,

Alessia Milstein

Culturally Relevant Education Testimony

Ocynthia Williams

Resolution 1415

Good Afternoon,

My name is Ocynthia Williams, a founding member of the New York City Coalition for Educational Justice, and co-director of the Harlem Renaissance Education Pipeline, Cradle 2 Career, Collective Impact Partnership. We're working to improve educational outcomes for students in Harlem's District 5. I'm testifying today in support of Resolution 1415.

I want to thank Speaker Mark-Viverito, Council Member Palma, and Levin for sponsoring this much needed resolution. Calling for the NYS Education Department to convene a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards across subject areas, and all grades, is more important now, than ever.

We are at another critical moment in our history where racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, sexism, and so many other phobia's are at the forefront in our nation. In the halls of our Federal government, we are witnessing, out in the open, that if you are different than Anglo-Saxon European white, you are not valued as much as a human being. It's scandalous, but true. As we stand on the shoulders of those who have fought to eradicate this kind of thinking and belief, we have the opportunity to lift up their fight and help to end this mindset and make sure that the future leaders of our country know better, and value the life of all people, no matter their race, color, religion, who they love, or how they identify themselves. There is no better place to start and change this mindset than in schools, and what we teach our babies.

I'm the mom of six children who all attended NYC Public Schools, and I can tell you they were not taught our true history! Sure they learned a little about Black History during the 28 days we celebrate Black History month, but the vast majority of their history was taught by me, and my family! That shouldn't be, and it can't continue to be if we're to survive as a people. I taught my kids that people

are people, period! It didn't matter if they were different! And I can tell you, my house was always filled with their friends from all different backgrounds, and cultures, and we learned from each other.

I don't want to have to buy books like James Loewen's Lies My Teacher Told me, or Zinn's A People's History of the United States for my grandkids to know their true history and the contributions our people contributed to our society. I want them to learn in class from a relevant curriculum. I want their classmates, whomever they may be, to learn about it from the curriculum that is being taught in school. I want there to be relevant questions on the standardized testing and testing for the admittance to specialized High Schools.

I want to see this task force bring back recommendations that are honest and truthful about the state of our current curriculum, and provide solutions that are reflective of the children our schools serve today. I hope they recommend that all involved in public education, from State Ed, to Districts, and local school boards are all trained in culturally relevant standards. It is going to take every person in the school building, every person making decisions about our kids curriculum and learning, to understand and believe that our kids are relevant, and the kind of education they receive must reflect who they are as students. Our kids deserve to be treated with respect, valued for who they are and what they bring to the classroom and society. Thank you.



**NYC Council Committee on Education — Introduction 1028-A and Resolution 1415
April 19, 2017**

The Sexuality Education Alliance of New York City (SEANYC) is pleased to submit testimony for today's Education Committee oversight hearing. SEANYC thanks our strong supporters, Chair of the Education Committee, Council Member Daniel Dromm for his leadership in convening this hearing, as well as Council Members Laurie Cumbo and Annabel Palma for introducing Introduction 1028-A and Resolution 1415, respectively. Thank you also to Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and the entire Committee for their continued support of comprehensive education.

The Sexuality Education Alliance of New York City (SEANYC) is a broad coalition that advocates for comprehensive, K-12 sexuality education that meets the National Sexuality Education Standards for all New York City youth. We aim 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 proponents of comprehensive and inclusive education and positive social and emotional learning, SEANYC is proud to testify in support of Intro. 1028-A and Reso. 1415, legislation that would help New York City to better assess current gaps in education and concrete measures for improvement.

SEANYC also runs a youth leadership arm called the Youth Advisory Council (YAC), comprised of New York City students affiliated with community-serving organizations including Planned Parenthood of New York City, the TORCH Program of the National Institute for Reproductive Health, Children's Aid Society, and the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU).

Recently SEANYC's youth leaders conducted a poll of 314 public and charter school students who completed grades 6–12 during the 2015-2016 school year¹ and found that many students are not receiving the sex ed they deserve. Among students polled, regardless of whether they received sex education in school, many indicated they did not have the information they need to make healthy decisions for themselves and their bodies. In fact, 59% of students did not learn about consent in school or elsewhere and 63% of students did not learn about gender identity or expression in school or elsewhere.

¹ Poll results available at SexEdNYC.org

Furthermore, only 64.5% of students polled reported receiving any sexuality education classes in school. Among these students, there were significant disparities in what topics students learned. While 93% of students that said they had sex ed in school reported that they learned about HIV, only 62% said they learned how to put on a condom, critical for effective HIV prevention. 43% of students did not learn about gender identity/expression in school and 38% of students did not learn about consent in school.

When asked how their schools could improve sexuality education, many students shared feedback that they wanted more sexuality education classes starting in earlier grades, more trained health teachers, and more inclusive and open environments for learning that include LGBTQ inclusive material.

“Throughout my whole high school experience I have not had sex ed. So a sex ed class should be provided so we are to educate ourselves professionally and not by things are friends say.”

– 12th Grader, Bronx Public School

“Having a real health teacher.” – 12th Grader, Manhattan Public School

“They can go beyond heteronormative teachings and be more open about asking questions.”

– 11th Grader, Brooklyn Public School

“By being more open about it and stop being so negative towards sex.” – 12th Grader, Queens Public School

“More LGBT sex ed.” – 11th Grader, Staten Island Public School

The need for comprehensive sexuality education is urgent and SEANYC applauds Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito for working to help close current gaps in the provision of health education. Intro 1028-A calls for a thorough assessment of how sexual health education is implemented in all public schools, along with timely recommendations to improve that effort through a sexual health education task force. The Mayoral-appointed eight-member task force would include three experts from the field, one teacher, one non-teaching staff from a school, one high school student, one LGBTQ-GNC expert, and one representative from DOHMH. This legislation is an important tool for improving New York City’s provision of health education and SEANYC commends the Speaker and Council for prioritizing this issue. We also recognize that to achieve our goals of comprehensive sexuality education in all grades, this administration must take immediate steps to implement sexuality education in all middle and high schools and expand to all grades kindergarten through 12th.

The need for a robust sexual health education policy in New York City is urgent. One in three New York City teens report experiencing abuse in their romantic relationships,² LGBT youth are significantly more likely to face sexual assault and bullying than their peers,³ and rates of sexually transmitted infections are increasing dramatically among young people. The City’s Independent Budget Office’s recently found that chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis have reached their highest reported levels in 30 years in New York City. New York City needs a holistic approach to combatting sexually transmitted infections and helping young people to lead healthy, safe and empowered lives.

² “Statistics.” Day One. Accessed April 18, 2017. <http://www.dayoneny.org/statistics>.

³ “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 April 18, 2017. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/2016/lgb-youth-report-press-release.html>.



**NYC Council Committee on Education Hearing
Testimony on Proposed Int. 1028-A and Reso. 1415**

Good afternoon. My name is Jacqueline Matuza and I'm a member of the Sexuality Education Alliance of New York City (SEANYC). Thank you to Education Committee Chair Daniel Dromm for convening this hearing, and the entire Committee for their continued support of comprehensive education. Thank you Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, and all of the Council Members who have signed on to Int. 1028-A and Reso. 1415.

Having worked for several years within the New York City public school system I know that the need for comprehensive sexual health education is more urgent than ever. That is why I am here to speak in support of Int. 1028-A, an important step in achieving that goal.

SEANYC is a broad coalition that advocates for comprehensive, K-12 sexuality education for all New York City youth that meets the National Sexuality Education Standards. I have been a member of SEANYC for several years. As a professional I have provided and overseen sexuality education programs for youth in New York City and have provided services to students through high school resource rooms. In the resource room I have connected young people to healthcare services and have demonstrated the proper use of condoms as part of the Condom Availability Program. In and out of the classroom I've discussed how to have open communication with a partner and what makes a healthy relationship. I have heard the stories from young people who come to visit after the semester has ended to share how helpful it was to participate in our program. Because I've seen first-hand the positive effects it can have for youth, I'm committed to enacting comprehensive sexuality education in NYC schools.

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. The DOE recommends the use of the HealthSmart program, or a curriculum of similar standards. However, due to a lack of accountability, adequate resources, and enforcement, students' experiences vary widely when it comes to sexual health learning. According to the DOE's own recent reports, almost half of 2016 graduated eighth graders (43%) did not receive a single semester of health during middle school, as mandated by state law. Too many of our students are not receiving even the bare minimum of recommended sexual health education.

In order to improve implementation and the actual experience our young people are having, we need to know what is and is not being done. Bill Intro. 1028-A, recognizes the immediate need for a thorough assessment of how sexual health education is actually being implemented in public schools citywide, and calls for timely recommendations to improve

that effort through the establishment of a sexual health education task force. The bill also accurately defines and reflects the key components for comprehensive sexual health education.

While I commend the Speaker and Council on this legislation and strongly support the creation of a task force that would provide recommendations for improving sexual health education in New York City, it is also imperative that the administration take immediate steps to implement sexuality education in all middle and high schools and expand to all grades kindergarten through 12th. New York City students need comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality education in all NYC schools. When I worked with students my staff and I regularly heard comments like “I really wish we had this 3 years ago.” We know that we can best help young people to make good decisions about their reproductive health before they are sexually active. New York City can and should be a leader in ensuring our young people have the skills, knowledge, and tools they need to be healthy and this means providing age-appropriate sexuality education to all students.

Recently, SEANYC’s Youth Advisory Council conducted a poll of over 300 middle and high school students in New York City and found that many students do not have the information they need to make healthy decisions. Among all students polled, the vast majority shared they had not learned critical components of sex ed, including skills to develop healthy relationships and lessons on LGBT health. Of NYC students who said they received sex ed in school or elsewhere, almost two-thirds (59%) had not learned about consent and 63% had not learned about gender identity. Also concerning was that only 66% of students said they knew where to go for sexual and reproductive health services, leaving many students disconnected from available care.

These findings, coupled with the DOE’s own data showing that almost half of middle schoolers have graduated without receiving a semester of health, reveal an urgent need to improve sexuality education across New York City. Cities across the country, including Boston, Chicago, and Broward County have all enacted comprehensive K-12 sexuality education programs in recent years, yet New York City continues to fail to meet its own minimal goals for middle and high schools. New York City must implement a program in all schools and all grades that is funded and includes robust training and resources for educators, along with effective enforcement measures to ensure accountability.

In an effort to support and strengthen the proposed legislation, we recommend the task force include broader representation of youth input, and encourage the addition of more than one student representative to the committee. We also recommend that there be public response mechanisms put in place for all New York City students, as well as parents and teachers, to provide feedback throughout the task force’s review and recommendation process, and that all task force members commit to adhering to the National Sexuality Education Standards for curriculum review.

I strongly supports the December 1st deadline for this task to report its findings. We appreciate the urgency that this bill puts on improving sexuality education, and believe that

this deadline ensures that we continue to move forward towards improving sexuality education in NYC. We would like to see the progress of the task force be regularly monitored and the timeframe for submitting findings and recommendations adhered to. In light of the risks and pressures experienced by students on a daily basis (such as unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, coerced sex, bullying, harassment and physical violence), we would like to see this task force prioritized so that it can successfully complete the work spelled out in Int. 1028.

Lastly, considering the DOE's report findings that only 7.6% of all health education instructors have attended any training on sexual health education in the last two years, I want to recognize the importance of strengthening requirements and opportunities around sexual health professional development, and look forward to the creation of a task force that will prioritize training and resource needs. As someone who has spent a career developing my skills as a sexual health educator and trainer I know how important it is to ensure that the right professionals are in place to provide sexual health education and to staff the Condom Availability Program and Resource Room and that these professionals are then provided with regular professional development and technical assistance. Many students have told me that they have chosen not to utilize the Resource Room at their school because the staff member was judgmental, refused to provide condoms to students they felt "didn't need them," and were unable to answer any questions they had about accessing reproductive health services.

I also strongly support the Council's resolution 1415, calling upon the New York State Education Department to convene a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards across subject areas. In order for young people to thrive, they must have an education that supports their gender, identity, race, abilities, and cultural background. Marginalized students are often at greatest risk of peer aggression, bullying, and mental health concerns because of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, religion, or disabilities, and deserve curricula that reflects and values their lived experiences.

I am proud to support the proposed legislation and look forward to the quick passing of this bill. In addition to the aforementioned legislation, 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, I respectfully request the Council's support on proposed Int. 1028-A.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

With this understanding, SEANYC also strongly supports Resolution 1415, which calls upon the New York State Education Department to convene a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards across subject areas and address racism, gender inequity, and discrimination embedded in current curricula. In order for young people to thrive, they must have an education that values inclusion, acknowledges their history, and supports and reflects their gender, identity, race, abilities, and cultural background and lived experiences.

In an effort to support and strengthen proposed legislation 1028-A, we recommend the task force include broader representation of youth input, and encourage the addition of more than one student representative to the committee. We also recommend that there be public response mechanisms put in place for all New York City students, as well as parents and teachers, to provide feedback throughout the task force's review and recommendation process, and that all task force members commit to adhering to the National Sexuality Education Standards for curriculum review.

SEANYC supports the December 1st deadline for Intro 1028-A's proposed task force to report its findings. We appreciate the urgency that this bill puts on improving sexuality education and believe that this deadline ensures that we continue to move forward towards improving sexuality education in NYC. We would like to see the progress of the task force be regularly monitored and the timeframe for submitting findings and recommendations adhered to.

SEANYC is proud to support the proposed legislation and looks forward to the quick passage of both the Resolution and Introduction. In addition to the aforementioned legislation, we call on New York City to enact a bold policy initiative that allocates resources to the implementation of sexuality education in all schools and all grades K-12, including District 75 schools, with adequate funding for training and teaching staff, and robust enforcement measures for accountability and evaluation. 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.

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The Sexuality Education Alliance of New York City (SEANYC) advocates for comprehensive, K12 sexuality education that meets the National Sexuality Education Standards for all New York City youth. SEANYC fosters communication between advocacy groups and direct service organizations to better support each organization's work around sexuality education, and serves as a resource for policymakers and agencies in New York City and State.

Lucia Diaz
NYC City Council Hearing on Resolution 1415
April 19, 2017

My name is Lucia Diaz and I am the mother of an 11-year old daughter in NYC public schools, and a member of Make the Road New York and the Coalition for Educational Justice. I am here to testify in support of City Council Resolution 1415, calling on the State Education Department to create a task force to review state standards and make them more culturally relevant.

I am Latina, and I love that New York City has so much cultural diversity; students in the public schools speak 180 different languages; 41% are Latino, 27% African American, 16% Asian, 13% Muslim. Many children in immigrant families were born here, like my daughter, and don't know much about their parents' country of origin.

As parents, we teach our children at home about the culture of our countries, but we need the schools to be as multicultural as the students themselves are.

Right now we see that in the media, our children are hearing racist messages from the federal government and the society saying that they are not welcome here, they are not valued, and this damages the emotional stability of our children. Our public schools must teach our children that they are important and that they are essential parts of New York society as great entrepreneurs, politicians, artists and more; and that they are an important part of the United States economy; and that their culture and their people are valued and important. This can't happen just on holidays or in special months; it must be integrated through the curriculum, projects and materials of every class and every grade.

We know that in this moment there are many children suffering anxiety, fear and pain because of what is happening at the national level. They are coming to school with questions, but the school staff is often uncomfortable, or unprepared to answer the questions that the children have about what they're seeing, hearing, or feeling. Teachers should be prepared to facilitate conversation, and use this moment to teach and help students grow up in a safe and healthy environment.

As parents, we want our children to graduate high school prepared for college and careers, and a productive life of learning and leadership, and that they can be in relationship with each other, without any type of discrimination and then can live in peace and harmony.

Martin Luther King said the function of education is to teach children to think intensely and think critically: "Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education." The City Council's proposal for a NY State task force to review state standards and curriculum for cultural responsiveness will help make that a reality.

Thank you.

Maria Gil
Testimony to NYC Council on Resolution 1415
April 19, 2017

My name is Maria Gil, I am a mother of six girls and a member of Make the Road New York and the NYC Coalition for Educational Justice. I would like to testify in support of the Council's resolution regarding a state task force to make state standards more culturally responsive.

For approximately 18 years I have served as a volunteer in the schools my daughters have attended. Throughout those years I have experienced the lack of a Culturally Responsive Education. These difficult experiences caused by indifference inside of schools have marked my life, my daughters and my community. Now that we see an increase in racism in this country, I think it is time to really have an education that is culturally responsive. I have always desired children to be able to come into their classrooms and feel welcome and at home, in a cultural environment where they see themselves reflected.

Recently, I asked my oldest daughter; who is a student at Lehman college. If throughout her elementary, middle school or high school years had she ever felt completely included within the schools curriculum, environment and community as a Latina who is Mexican-American. Her response was NO, not really. She told me that the teachers always thought she was a good student, but never saw her heritage represented in the curriculum, books and materials. She also felt that the school staff never saw the potential she could have had developed or the potential she already had. This same perception was also projected to the other students as well.

I am here because I want very deeply for all children, no matter what race or religion or gender, to feel welcome in their schools and have the right to a good quality education that every one deserves.

Thank you.

**Proposed Int. 1028-A Testimony
NYC Council Committee on Education Hearing**

Good afternoon. My name is Mariama Sillah, I am 17 years old, I am a high school student attending High School for Environmental Studies and I'm here on behalf of Planned Parenthood of New York City today. Thank you to Education Committee Chair Daniel Dromm for convening this hearing, and all of the Council Members who have signed on to Int. 1028-A.

The need for comprehensive sexual health education in New York City public schools is dramatically increasing as our society is continuing to progress. I am here to speak in support of Int. 1028, an important step in achieving the goal of comprehensive sexual health education. I am a Youth Health Promoter for Planned Parenthood of New York City and what I do is visit organizations and schools all over the city and teach all aspects of sexual health including anatomy, gender roles, STIs, Sexual Orientation, Sexuality, etc. As a Youth Health Promoter, my sole job is to instill the knowledge I've learned to youth of New York City. Being a Youth Health Promoter is important to me because it's one of the main jobs that helps inform youth on things they are often ignorant of. Knowledge is the most important and powerful catalyst for change and being a Youth Health Promoter grants people that knowledge.

The biggest reason why I became a Youth Health Promoter is to assist people like me. Growing up, I was raised in a household where sexual education was a taboo topic and I didn't learn anything about it in school. I spent most of my childhood confused and left in the dark about something as important as sexual health. When I first started working as a Youth Health Promoter, I was introduced to a whole new world of sexual health. I was trained and taught everything there was to know about sexual health and in that moment I really understood and realized what most of the youth of our society was really missing out on. Becoming a Youth Health Promoter has one of the best decisions of my life, I am open to a whole new world of connections and it has made me recognize skills I never knew I had as well as work on ones I lack.

As a student of a public school in New York City and a Youth Health Promoter, I know that real sexuality education is not being taught to every student. In my sophomore year of high school, I took a health class and the teacher took a week of the class to teach about sexual health. What the class learned was a very vague, incomplete version of what sexual health was. There was a lack of explaining about puberty, anatomy and the act of sexual intercourse itself. Many of my classmates including myself were unaware that it was sexual education we were actually being taught. The information taught wasn't enough for me to know what kind of healthy decisions I should or even could make about my body. The whole experience is part of the reason why I

Planned Parenthood of New York City

decided to become Youth Health Promoter in the first place. Public schools in New York City are lacking in the quality of sexual education being offered in New York City. As a Youth Health Promoter, students constantly ask me about places they can go to if they are having trouble with an aspect of their sexual health. The fact that students aren't being taught that kind of information really shows how much there is a lack in comprehensive sexual health education.

New York City students need K-12 comprehensive sexuality education in all schools. We deserve access to all the information we need to make healthy, informed decisions about our bodies. Sexuality education is important to me because it is a step towards removing ignorance in our society. It also can prevent things like teen pregnancies and contraction of STI's as youth will be informed on how to avoid those things.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

The New York City Charter School Center
Patricia Tudosa, Program Manager, Policy & Advocacy
Testimony Presented to the New York City Council Education Committee
Oversight Hearing on Preliminary Budget-Capital
April 19, 2017

FOR THE RECORD

The New York City Charter School Center respectfully submits the following testimony in support of Introduction of 1347-2106, a Local Law requiring the DOE to distribute gifted and talented program materials as part of the dissemination of universal pre-kindergarten materials. The Charter Center thanks the New York City Council Committee on Education Chair Danny Dromm for providing the opportunity to comment, Councilmember Cornegy for his sponsorship of the legislation and his push to create more gifted and talented seats in underserved neighborhoods, and the Speaker of the NYC Council, Melissa Mark-Viverito, for prioritizing the issue in her State of the City address.

New York City needs to create more high quality public school seats. Some proven methods to achieve this goal include charters, magnets and gifted and talented (G&T) programs. But unlike magnet and G&T programs, only charter schools are prohibited from creating academic screens as a condition of enrollment. In middle and high school, one in three seats offered by the DOE have a selective admissions process and most elementary schools admit students from a neighborhood enrollment zone, which serve a similar function; perpetuating the same dramatic inequalities of access as the housing market itself. (To see the private side of public education, just try changing the lines of an affluent school zone and listen to parents describe how much they spent to reside there.)

Charter schools have thrived in neighborhoods like Central Brooklyn, Harlem and the South Bronx precisely because the dearth of high quality public school options. In Harlem (CSD 5), for example, charter school student enrollment as a proportion of total public school enrollment has increased nearly 30 percentage points between 2008 and 2016. It is hardly surprising that families continue to seek seats in charter schools: In 2016, charter school students in Harlem (CSDs 4 & 5) significantly outperformed their district peers in the ELA and math assessments by 17.8 and 34.5 percentage points, respectively.

Though the expansion of gifted and talented programs into lower income communities has the potential downside of creating more screens and separating potentially high-achieving students from their classmates, we do not believe that is reason enough to deny families throughout NYC the same choice that middle class and wealthy parents have taken for granted for decades.

We are confident that the task force created by Bronx Borough President Diaz and Brooklyn Borough President Adams can identify creative solutions, and we encourage its members to look to some of the innovative models used by charter school leaders. Brooklyn Prospect Charter

School, for example, has created an inclusive honors program that keeps students at different achievement levels in the same class to ensure diversity of thought within the classroom.

Therefore, we stand fully in support of any all initiatives meant to expand opportunity into areas of New York City that have traditionally been left behind. We applaud Councilmember Cornegy for taking up this issue, and urge the entire Council to stand behind it.

I would also like to take the opportunity to comment briefly on the other initiative before the Council today on convening a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards across subject areas. This is another area in which charter schools, by design, have shown great programmatic and curricular flexibility. Schools like the South Bronx Community Charter School, which explicitly honors the various identities of its students, or Amber Charter School, where “all students learn verbal communication skills in Spanish and gain cultural understanding of the countries that have Spanish as their main language”¹ can provide excellent templates for what is possible in public education. We are heartened to see these efforts take off.

Once again, I would like to thank the Chairman for the opportunity to testify, Councilmembers Cornegy and Palma for their initiatives to better our public school system for the benefit of all New York City and Speaker Mark-Viverito for her leadership.

¹ <http://www.ambercharter.org/Page/83>

FOR THE RECORD

Monique Watson
1426 Beach Avenue Bronx, NY 10460
District 18-Annabel Palma
Support for Res 1415-2017

FOR THE RECORD

First and foremost I would like to thank my City Council Member Annabel Palma for introducing resolution 1415-2017 to the Education Committee. As one of her constituents I am here to voice my support for this resolution as I believe that culturally relevant teaching creates quality schools and informed, empowered students. It challenges the racism in our society. It challenges the xenophobic feelings we have been seeing on a national level. It challenges the level of disrespect people with disabilities and the LGBT community have experienced for far too long. It creates a space where student's identities are affirmed. I have attended public schooling my entire life. Most of my schooling lacked culturally relevant teaching and I still feel the effects of this lack of relation, lack of acknowledgement of my unique cultural experience and lack of positive cultural affirmation. Growing up as a youth in foster care education was my key to overcoming obstacles. However, there were limited times in my classrooms where I felt I could really be me. This started early on. As a small child living in Bushwick, Brooklyn I grew up in an educational environment where I always wondered if something was socially acceptable. I noticed the same in my peers. Where we being too black, too Hispanic, did we talk with an 'accent', the list goes on. As I got older this manifested into me participating in classroom activities and discussions paying close attention to my mannerism and my tone as I did not want to come off as the "angry black girl" or the "ghetto minority". I experienced micro-aggressions from my peers and my teachers on a regular basis. Here I was in an environment where I was supposed to feel supported and I felt caged in. At the same time I watched the ease at which my white peers navigated social circles. Once I went off to college I realized just how much I didn't know about not only my culture but the cultures and histories of other people I shared the classroom with over the years. This troubled me as a history major. I realized at that point that we are doing our children an educational disservice. We have some work to do. The information I discovered and the experiences I had in a more inclusive setting over the following 4 years opened my eyes and allowed me to leave with a higher self-esteem, a higher cultural awareness and an appreciation for differences. The journey of self-exploration, self-reflection and personal empowerment starts way before college and our school curriculum should reflect this. Although funding has been allocated towards expanding the Critically Conscious Educators Rising Series by Speaker Mark-Viverito it is not enough to ensure all students have access to a curriculum that promotes the culture of tolerance and acceptance we so desperately need. I believe this resolution asks the state to take a real good look at the social-emotional needs of our students and move towards creating an education system that prepares students to live in an increasingly global society.

FOR THE RECORD

FOR THE RECORD



Submission to the New York City Council

Committee on Education

Regarding Int. 1028-2015: Creating a Sex Education Task Force, Int. No. 1028-A: and Int. No. 1028-A: Mandating distributing Gifted and Talented Program Information with Pre-K Parent Materials, and Resolution 1415-2017: Creating a Cultural Sensitivity Task Force

By the United Federation of Teachers

April 19, 2017

The United Federation of Teachers wishes to thank Chairman Danny Dromm and the members of the Education Committee for the opportunity to share our views on supporting sex education for the city's children, challenging the system to address our learning standards from a culturally sensitive perspective and promoting greater equity for the gifted and talented program.

We particularly wish to thank Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito for the vision that she laid out in her State of the City message, underscoring the importance of addressing the social-emotional educational needs for our students together with their need to achieve at high levels academically.

Int. 1028-2015: Creating a Sex Education Task Force

We support Int. 1028-2015 sponsored by Councilmember Laurie Cumbo recommending creating a sexual education task force to review and recommend sexual health curriculum in New York City public schools. While the Department of Education requires sex education as part of its comprehensive health education standards for students in grades 6 through 12, sex education is just one segment of this curriculum. We believe there's a real opportunity to provide more in-depth curricula, address a growing range of education issues concerning sexuality and healthy relationships and to expand developmentally appropriate lessons at earlier ages.

As a union of professionals, we would like the task force to review the staffing gap. By its own reporting, the DOE has only 153 licensed health educators; this number falls far short of the staffing needed to meet current health and sex education requirements and makes it impossible to expand to students in younger grades. Sex education doesn't register on the radar in Comprehensive Education Plan for most schools — effectively, it's not a priority. From an implementation standpoint, it's unrealistic to expect school leaders to include staffing lines for more licensed health educators, without raising the priority or providing incentives. In the

union's current issue of the *New York Teacher*, our vice president of academic high schools, Janella Hinds, pressed the issue of consent education as a follow up to our December 2016 Delegate Assembly, where the governing body passed a resolution seeking to expand this aspect of sex education.

Our collective bargaining agreement supports including educator voice with respect to education policy and programs that impact our members and students. We agree with the diversity of voices recommended in the proposed bill, but would certainly be open to more teachers at the table.

Int. No. 1028-A: Distributing Gifted and Talented Information in Pre-K Materials

The UFT has long been a proponent of equity and access to a high-quality public education. Gifted and talented programs in our city's schools have an equity problem. So, we're pleased that Councilmember Robert Cornegy has focused a spotlight on this issue by sponsoring Int. No. 1028-A requiring the DOE distribute gifted and talented information to parents with its pre-K materials. While this goes a long way to mitigating the lack of access to information to underserved families, we remain concerned that the information provided to parents is centered on testing. The union has gone on record with this committee on several occasions expressing our objection to high stakes tests, particularly for students in pre-K through the second grade.

As reported this past March in *Chalkbeat*, "New York City's gifted programs are starkly segregated by race and class. A majority of city students are black or Hispanic. But those students make up only 27 percent of gifted enrollment. And while 77 percent of students citywide are poor, the poverty rate in gifted programs is about 43 percent."¹ High achieving Black and Latino students are not identified for these opportunities at the same rate as their white and Asian peers and are therefore significantly underrepresented in city gifted programs. Borough Presidents Eric Adams and Reuben Diaz formed a task force to address the gifted and talented equity issue in their respective boroughs.

Over the last 20 years, as many school districts across the nation have focused on raising standards for all students, there was an over-emphasis on testing. Admission into the city's gifted and talented programs relies heavily on the scores youngsters receive on two tests. Our early elementary teachers agree with the experts, that there are better ways to identify exceptionally bright students.

The *New York Times* in its article, "Why talented Black and Hispanic students can go undiscovered," reported on Florida's Broward County and how it shifted its gifted admissions policies to include children who scored relatively high on the district's standardized test, but had missed the cut score. It noted that Black and Hispanic students who were subsequently added particularly benefited, resulting in significantly higher proficiency in reading and math.² As we've previously published in our *New York Teacher* publication, citing alternatives to test-based admission, gifted students "need challenging, inquiry-based, accelerated instruction to help them reach their potential."³

As a city, we finally got it right that providing families with access to universal, high-quality, full-day pre-K is among the most important things we can do to help prepare young children for school and beyond, especially for those living in poor communities. We have the opportunity to take this to the next level and let all, not just some, parents know how to navigate the gifted and talented landscape.

Resolution 1415-2017 – Assessing Cultural Sensitivity in State Learning Standards

Ensuring that our state learning standards provide our children with what they need to achieve and exceed academic proficiency across all required curricula is important to our members. We also believe, however, that our approach to delivering instruction and in engaging with parents and guardians should acknowledge students' diverse perspectives and cultures. We support Councilmember Annabel Palma in her Resolution 1415-2017 calling upon the New York State Education Department to convene a task force to assess the cultural relevance of state learning standards across subject areas in elementary, middle, and high school. Additionally, to explore the grounding of standards in core content that challenges racism, ableism, and sexism, and is LGB and TGNC-affirming.

This resolution aligns with the union's anti-bullying BRAVE initiative: Building Respect, Acceptance and Voice through Education. BRAVE has brought a wealth of information to our school communities about the importance of cultural sensitivity and the social-emotional damage that can undermine our students' ability to grow, develop and learn when we don't take these issues seriously. Our parents and students come from an ever expanding group of nations and cultures. Engaging them in ways that promote understanding will deepen their connection to their academic instruction and to their school communities.

Advancing a culturally-sensitive approach in all curricula and communications just makes sense. The language we use in our instruction, our documents and any corrective measures can all be tempered through enhanced cultural competence on the part of the Department of Education.

Closing Thoughts

These proposed bills and the resolution can play a role in laying the foundation for a child's social, emotional and intellectual development, including critical thinking, responsible decision-making and feeling like a valued and respected member of the school community. Our children and young adults deserve to be healthy and safe. We need to do all we can to reduce the pressures that take away students' voice, respect and dignity.

If we are serious about helping our students to become college- and career-ready, we must support a more holistic, equitable approach to their education.

Notes

¹ “Parents and city officials hope to tackle inequity in gifted education/specialized high schools,” *Chalkbeat*, March 14, 2017 (<http://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2017/03/14/parents-and-city-officials-hope-to-tackle-inequity-in-gifted-education-specialized-high-schools/>).

² “Why talented Black and Hispanic students can go undiscovered,” *New York Times*, April 10, 2016 (https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/10/upshot/why-talented-black-and-hispanic-students-can-go-undiscovered.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FGifted%20Students&action=click&contentCollection=timestopics®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=2&pgtype=collection).

³ “Another kind of special education,” *New York Teacher*, Dec. 3, 2015 (<http://www.uft.org/insight/another-kind-special-education>)

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1028 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Elizabeth Minsky

Address: 45 W. 36th St NY, NY

I represent: LIVE OUT LOUD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1347 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jeff Lowell

Address: 209 Teralemon St

I represent: Brooklyn Borough President

Address: Eric L. Adams

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1347 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Victoria Reing, Esq. Director of Policy

Address: 851 Grand Concourse

I represent: Office of The Bronx Borough President

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. 1415-2017

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katherine Anderson

Address: 3914 St. Nicholas Ave. Apt 115 10002

I represent: Project Reach

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1415 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: April 19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jadayah Spencer

Address: 260 Heckman St. Apt 3C, Brooklyn, NY 11216

I represent: YWAC / GGC

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ayisha Idris

Address: _____

I represent: Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President

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. 1028 Res. No. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/18/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Francisco Ramirez

Address: 5 Minetta St. Apt. 4B, 10012

I represent: Planned Parenthood of NYC

Address: 26 Bleeker 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: Kenyatta Reid

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. 1028-A Res. No. 1415-2017

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Roberto Soto-Carrion

Address: _____

I represent: Border Crossers

Address: 71 5th Ave. 6th Fl

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. 1028A Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Danielle Cascardi-Micca

Address: _____

I represent: National Institute for Reproductive

Address: 14 Wall St Health

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1028 A Res. No. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Richard Moruan Peters

Address: 16 Webster Place Brooklyn NY 11215

I represent: Peer Health Exchange

Address: 55 Exchange Place Brooklyn NY 10005

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1415 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Orynthia Williams

Address: _____

I represent: Harlem Renaissance Education

Address: Harlem, NY Pipeline

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. 1415 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARSHA JEAN-CHARLES

Address: 512 WEST 143RD STREET

I represent: THE BROTHERHOOD / SISTER SOL

Address: same as above

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Celia Green

Address: 157 E 46 St Brooklyn NY

I represent: CEJ + D75 CEC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1415 Res. No. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Natalie McCabe Zwerger

Address: 726 Broadway, 5th floor NY, NY 10003

I represent: NYU Metro Center

Address: same as above

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. 1028-A Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Anna Garrison-Bedell

Address: ~~Queens~~ Queens, New York

I represent: NYCLU's Teen Activist Project

Address: 125 Broad St NY, NY 10004

Please complete **THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK** *Sergeant-at-Arms*

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: 4-19-17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Veronica Benavides

Address: 610 W 112th St

I represent: Bank Street College

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: 4-19-2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Josh Thomas

Address: 610 W 112th

I represent: Bank Street College of Education

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. 1028-A# Res. No. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: 04/19/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marissa Muñoz

Address: 55 Exchange Place, NY, NY 10015

I represent: Hispanic Federation

Address: See above

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Natasha Capers

Address: 80 Osborn St

I represent: Coalition for Educational

Address: 726 Broadway Justice

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mustafa Sullivan

Address: 2427 Morris Ave Bronx

I represent: FIERCE

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Fatimata Ly and ~~Fatima Bartley~~

Address: 510 Waverly Avenue, Bklyn NY

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Fatima Bartley

Address: 510 Waverly Avenue, Bklyn NY

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lindsay Harr

Address: _____

I represent: NYC DOE

Address: 52 Chambers St. 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: Laura Feijoo

Address: _____

I represent: NYC DOE

Address: 57 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: Elizabeth Rose

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: Robert Saft

Address: _____

I represent: NYC DOE

Address: 52 Chambers St. 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. 1415-2017

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Monique Watson

Address: 1426 Beach Avenue Apt 15

I represent: District 18

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1347 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tanya St. Julien

Address: 85 Bainbridge Street

I represent: CER 16 -

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1028-A Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Aviva Zadoff

Address: 3640 Johnson Ave Bronx NY 10463

I represent: National Council of Jewish Women NY Section

Address: 241 W. 72nd St. New York NY 10023

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. 1028A Res. No. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jeremy Siegel

Address: 217 W 106th St New York, NY

I represent: N/A

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: Anna Commitante

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. 1347-206 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Patricia Tudosa

Address: 111 Broadway #604 New York 10006

I represent: Nyc Charter School Center

Address: 111 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. 1415
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JD Valladares - Williams

Address: 191-11 37th Ave IT Flushing NY 11358

I represent: LIVE OUT (and non-profit)

Address: 45 W 30th St New York NY 10018

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1028 A Res. No. 1415
 in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amy Schwartz

Address: 1700 York Ave, 105

I represent: WCC / SEANLC

Address: 170 W 40th St, NYC

**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. Elizabeth Payne

Address: LGBT Policy Center, Hunter College

I represent: Queering Education Research Institute

Address: _____

Education

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1028A Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bequeline Maturza

Address: 407 Harrock St, 3 Brooklyn, NY 11210

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1028A Res. No. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: 4-19-2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mariama Sillah

Address: 1197 Grandconcourse APT 4H Bronx NY 10452

I represent: Planned Parenthood Youth Health Promoter

Address: 26 Bleeker NY NY 10012

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: APRIL 19, 2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dr. Debbie Almontaser, Ed. D.

Address: 719 Westminister Rd

I represent: Bridging Cultures Group / Muslim Net-Community work

Address: 239 Thompson St. NY, NY 10012

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. 1028-A Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stephanie Escobar de Mecca

Address: 14 Wall St, Suite 3B

I represent: Teens of TORCH Program

Address: 14 Wall St, Suite 3B

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1028 Res. No. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Jay

Address: 204 St Johns Pl, Apt 2

I represent: Asexual Visibility & Education Network

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1028-A Res. No. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Claribel Marmol

Address: 970 Kelly St. Apt C/D Bronx NY

I represent: Community Healthcare Network

Address: 60 Madison Ave 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. 1415

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jaleel Francis

Address: Children's Defense Fund - New York

I represent: (Jaleel is a student and will

Address: be here after 3pm)

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1028-A Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Elanie Paredes

Address: 75 W 230th St, Bronx, NY, 10463

I represent: Girls for Gender Equity / YWI

Address: Brooklyn, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1415 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/19/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Angelique Beluso

Address: _____

I represent: Young Women's Initiative

Address: Girls for Gender Equity
Brooklyn, 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: DEBORAH LEVINE

Address: _____

I represent: ACRIA / LOVE HEALS

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. 1028-A Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PAT MALONEY

Address: 2139 Adam Clayton Powell Blvd

I represent: INWOOD HOUSE / CHILDREN'S

Address: 2139 Adam Clayton Powell Blvd VILLAGE

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