

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

June 15, 2022

Good morning, Chair Joseph and members of the Education Committee. My name is Christopher Tricarico, and I am the Senior Executive Director of the Department of Education's (DOE) Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS). Joining me today is Kevin Moran, Chief School Operations Officer for the DOE. Thank you for inviting us to discuss the DOE's School Food Program.

To begin, I want to emphasize that Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks are committed to ensuring every student has equal access to quality, nutritious meals to help them succeed in and out of school. The Chancellor has set forth an ambitious vision to transform our school system that encompasses four pillars: (1) reimagining the student experience, (2) scaling, sustaining, and restoring what works, (3) prioritizing wellness, and (4) engaging families to be our true partners. Those pillars are at the heart of our school food program and are reflected in these priorities:

- providing meals that are both delicious and adhere to high nutritional standards
- transforming our students' dining experience
- incorporating community engagement and student feedback to improve our menus
- promoting equity across the system

I would like to personally thank the Council for its longstanding commitment to ensuring that students have access to healthy meals, as well as successfully advocating for universal free lunch, breakfast in the classroom, and funding the first year of our halal and kosher meals pilot programs. We look forward to our continued collaboration. I would also like to thank the school food advocates who we closely work with and who are great partners to us.

We are proud of the innovative work carried out by our over 8,000 dedicated employees in 1,300 kitchens. We serve more than 800,000 meals per day to students attending over 2,000 schools, including charters and non-public schools. All meals adhere to rigorous nutritional and health standards from the New York City Department of Health and go beyond the USDA National School Lunch Program's Standards. Our free breakfast, lunch, and after-school menus offer delicious, healthy options that appeal to students of all ages and diverse backgrounds.

Each day, our school food service workers prepare free breakfast—which can include fruits, yogurt, bagels, cereals, and more—available to every student to help ensure that they start the day with a **healthy and nutritious** meal. Further, we are proud to offer universal free lunch, ensuring every student has access to high-quality meals throughout the day. All of our ingredients adhere to strict standards regarding sodium, fat, sugar, and calories to ensure healthy meals for our students. For example, we only purchase antibiotic free chicken tenders with sodium not exceeding 480 mg, saturated fat under 10 percent of total calories, and breading containing at least 51 percent whole grain. We also feature whole fresh fruit and fresh vegetables, around 20 percent of which come from New York State. We have made a lot of progress

over the years in creating delicious, healthy, culturally responsive, positive dining experiences for our students and we are always looking for ways to improve.

In addition to nutrition, the DOE is laser focused on **equity**. Our citywide menus include two meatless days, 100 percent antibiotic-free chicken, scratch recipes, and fresh vegetable and fruit with every serving. The menus are available in nine languages, posted on our website, accessible through our school food app, and are carefully planned by our team of professional chefs. These menus are identical in all districts. Beginning this fall, our new Cook Ambassadors—one in every district—will make certain cooks are continually trained in recipe execution, ensuring all menu items are made uniformly. Cook Ambassadors will also be trained in scratch cooking techniques, food safety, and customer service.

Furthermore, the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity (TRIE) neighborhoods are prioritized when selecting schools for new programs. These neighborhoods are defined as the most impacted by COVID-19, in addition to communities that have a high percentage of other health and socioeconomic disparities. All upcoming Cafeteria Enhancements Experience (CEE) sites and summer meal sites prioritize these TRIE neighborhoods. CEE is a renovation of the service line that allows more daily choices for students, as well as newly updated furniture and artwork created by students from each school. We are in the process of completing 40 more CEEs during this Capital Plan. We also plan to renovate all middle and high school cafeterias and are very excited that \$50 million was just added to the Capital budget for these renovations.

We are also proud of the work we have done in over 60 **halal** sites since the Council pilot in 2019. All of those sites now have certified kitchens and staff that serve approved halal food. We partner with imams from across the city to support this initiative and are in the process of certifying 15 more sites that will begin serving halal meals in Sept 2022. Any schools interested in becoming a halal-certified site should engage their school community and reach out to my office.

The Chancellor's prioritization of **community engagement** has renewed our focus on incorporating feedback, which is the foundation of our School Meals Program. To this end, we have embarked on an extensive community engagement plan in which OFNS representatives attend all Community Education Council (CEC) meetings. The OFNS representatives provide a brief overview of our School Meals Program, then answer questions and gather feedback that is synthesized and becomes the basis of our decision-making around our menus.

This engagement will continue in the fall when OFNS will join CEC, Parent Teacher Association (PTA), School Leadership Team (SLT), and other community-based meetings. Additionally, starting in September, we will once again be meeting regularly with Student Ambassadors and student councils to hear directly from them. Student taste testings, which have been taking place all year, will also continue in the fall as we work through new recipes and menu items.

Turning to our **Summer Meals** program, we look forward to offering free breakfast and lunch to anyone 18 years old and younger across the city during July and August. Our priority is to be flexible in addressing the needs of particular communities, and we are committed to expanding our reach and adding

as many sites as possible. To this end, we are accepting applications for summer meal sites throughout June as NYCHA and the Parks Dept. continue to hire seasonal staff throughout the month.

Finally, I want to recognize our amazing school food service workers, who demonstrated their ongoing **commitment to communities during the darkest days of the pandemic**. In a herculean effort, we transformed our school food operation to provide delicious, nutritious meals to the entire city. From May 2020 through August 2021, our food service workers prepared and served over 100 million meals, providing three meals a day to anyone who needed them, children and adults alike. We are incredibly proud of their work.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate my gratitude for our close partnership with Mayor Adams' office and this City Council. Students need to feel healthy and well-nourished to thrive at school and beyond. Thanks to the hard work of our food service workers, we strive to make this a reality every day across this great city.

We look forward to continuing to work together to ensure the health and well-being of all our children. Thank you and we are happy to answer your questions.

Cafeteria Culture (CafCu) Testimony -

New York City Council, Committee on Education - Hearing, June 15, 2022

Good afternoon, Chair Joseph and Council Members *on the Committee of Education*.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I am Debby Lee Cohen, Executive Director and Founder of Cafeteria Culture, the environmental education organization founded as Styrofoam Out of Schools. I am also Co-Director/Producer of the award winning movie, **MICROPLASTIC MADNESS**, starring Brooklyn's 5th grade students from PS 15, a parent, educator, and Stage IV cancer patient.

Our Cafeteria Culture team is deeply concerned about the negative impacts of the climate emergency on our City's children, especially our most vulnerable students from lower-income, Black, Brown, NYCHA and immigrant communities. We teach timely, interdisciplinary, hands-on, climate education that is shared for free with all teachers. We also partner with students in our programs, their teachers, school staff, and DOE **Offices of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS)** and Sustainability directors to lead low-cost pilots to reduce school cafeteria wasted food and single-use plastic packaging and plastic food service ware. ***I am testifying today to highlight the positive outcomes of our 13- year partnership with OFNS, including our most recent collaboration on the first citywide Plastic Free Lunch Day, and to urge the Council to increase financial support for small nonprofits organizations, like Cafeteria Culture, that are leading low-cost, cutting edge pilots that are accelerating urgently needed institutional change and benefiting our students.***

Cafeteria Culture (CafCu, founded as Styrofoam Out of Schools) works with youth to creatively achieve zero waste/ climate smart schools communities and a plastic free biosphere. We teach innovative environmental education that fosters youth-led solutions by merging citizen science, civic action, media and the arts. By partnering with School Food Directors and students, we catalyzed the elimination of styrofoam trays from New York City schools and other cities.

We are ready to catalyze the elimination of the remaining single-use plastics from NYC school cafeterias, revive refill and reuse models and pilot new methods for dramatically reducing wasted food.

On May 16, 2022, Cafeteria Culture In partnership with OFNS, Office of Sustainability, students, and school staff, led the first New York City-wide Plastic Free Lunch Day. **Over 750 NYC elementary schools had school lunch prepared without plastic on this day, providing a first glimpse of a plastic-free school cafeteria future. All schools were encouraged to join in the plastic free action. I encourage you to [watch our short video](#), created by Cafeteria Culture in partnership with NYC Department of Education (DOE), to see what the buzz was all about. www.plasticfreelunch.org**

At PS 15 in Brooklyn, the number of plastic items from school lunch was reduced by 72%, or 362 items, a reduction of more than 2 pieces of plastic per meal. Public school cafeterias across the US serve close to 5 billion lunches per year. If every school reduces just 2 pieces of plastic per lunch, we can eliminate 10 BILLION pieces of plastic per year in the US! We believe this is possible - and with NYC continuing to take the lead!

The Plastic Free Lunch Day initiative builds upon 13 years of collaborative efforts between **Cafeteria Culture** and school food directors to eliminate single-use plastics from school cafeterias. Cafeteria Culture was founded as the grassroots Styrofoam Out of Schools in 2009 with a small group of parents, teachers and students. who decided to to work *with* school food directors, rather than to fight. That campaign resulted in the elimination of 850,000 styrofoam trays used per day in DOE schools, as well as elimination of a half a billion styrofoam lunch trays per year from schools across the US. It paved the way for the City's first School Organics Collection Program, as well as the passage of the NY City and NY State styrofoam ban laws.





Creatively working with youth to achieve zero-waste, climate smart school communities and a plastic free biosphere,

Cafeteria Culture has been on the forefront of ridding plastic from public school cafeterias, embracing strategies that are rooted in creativity and collaboration with key decision makers and students!

When students feel like they have a positive impact on the systems that are broken — systems that are not necessarily working for *them* — and are offered opportunities to bring whatever special gifts that they have to address the problem, they are genuinely excited and engaged. We have witnessed this over and over. You can see for yourself by watching Microplastic Madness. Please contact us for a screener link.

Our school programs provide unique opportunities for students to address the climate emergency through small pilots that are successfully reducing plastic packaging and plastic food service ware used in our public school cafeterias. Additionally, our executive team, including myself, comes from professions of media production. We teach our students video production basics and storytelling, as well as professionally document the process and the outcomes of our programs. By sharing the data and the stories of our partner students and school communities, people outside of these communities can actually visualize what positive change looks like, helping to accelerate change,

From a recent article in Chalkbeat (June 14, 2022) about *cogenerative dialogues*:

“Giving students a say — “in a world where they’ve been robbed of agency and power and they’re just passively receiving information” — can be transformative, he [Christopher Emdin, who helped popularize cogenerative dialogues] believes. “It gives the opportunity to meet those emotional and psychological needs while delivering the content.”

The small pilots led by Cafeteria Culture with students, school staff and school food and sustainability directors are benefiting students on multiple levels, while accelerating change. These collaborations also offer an engaging and tangible entry point for OFNS kitchen staff and managers to join in urgently needed collective action to ditch single-use plastics on an institutional scale. People can extrapolate to bigger ideas and actions when they can actually see what a systems-wide change can amount to.

Both the negative environmental and health consequences of our City’s plastic procurement cannot be underestimated. **Reducing the production, use and disposal of plastic advances climate goals.** *Plastic begins as a fossil fuel and emits CO2 and greenhouse gases from processing to end of life.* The US produces more plastic waste than any other country. School cafeteria foodware and packaging is a major contributor. Plastic Free Lunch Day is an important step to reducing unacceptable amounts of school cafeteria plastic which contributes to global plastic pollution and a looming health crisis.

Removing plastics from school food protects our students from the toxins that migrate from plastic foodware and packaging into food and beverages. Plastic has become so commonplace that we don’t question its safety, yet recent studies reveal how thousands of toxic chemicals from plastic readily migrate into food and beverages.

I will also be testifying on behalf of Cafeteria Culture later today to the Sanitation Committee in support of the universal organics collection bill and zero waste bills. **Exporting unacceptable amounts of garbage, including school generated garbage, that goes to incinerators and landfills is disproportionately hurting Black, Brown and marginalized communities. It is time to invest in innovative, interdisciplinary public school education to turn off the tap of plastic production, use, and disposal, and to dramatically minimize our public school contribution to the global interconnected climate and plastic crises and the looming health crisis due to our use of plastics in school food service.**

Thank you,

Debby Lee Cohen and the Cafeteria Culture team

Oversight Hearing on School Food Testimony to the Education Committee

**Testimony Submitted by
Ally Miller, Institutional Giving Manager, Edible Schoolyard NYC
Before the NYC Council Committee on Education
June 15, 2022**

My name is Ally Miller, from Edible Schoolyard NYC. Thank you to Chairperson Rita Joseph as well as the members of the NYC Council Committee on Education for holding today's hearing and the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Founded in 2010, Edible Schoolyard NYC's (ESYNYC) mission is to support edible education for every child in New York City. We partner with NYC public schools to cultivate healthy students and school environments through hands-on cooking and gardening education, which includes in-school classes, extracurriculars and after-school programming, and family and community engagement. We currently work with 10 schools, serving 3,500 students in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the Bronx, in neighborhoods disproportionately affected by food, health, and education system inequities. Our 10 school sites are located in districts 8, 10, 14, 16, 34, 36, 37, 42, 44, and 47.

Our programs sit at the intersection of food, health, education, and environment. In our programs, students work in the garden to care for the crops we harvest; cook plant-forward recipes, and learn about the connections between food, the environment, our communities, and our health. At the heart of our school programs are our gardens, which serve as a food production space and site for environmental learning, as well as a joyful and welcoming green space and outdoor classroom for the entire community--a place that has been increasingly valuable after a full year of remote and hybrid learning. Our programs support students to increase their preference for fruits and vegetables, grow socially-emotionally, enrich their core academic classes, and develop a commitment to food and environmental justice. We also work to expand families' access to plant-forward foods and support schools in prioritizing and implementing food and health activities.

ESYNYC also provides Professional Development workshops to educators across the city, teaching and inspiring them to implement food education in their own classrooms. We also collaborate with food and education organizations, coalitions, and community leaders to advocate for food education, school gardens, and plant-forward food access for every child. We are proud members of the New York City Food Policy Alliance and the Food Education Coalition.

Schools are critical spaces for students to both receive and learn about food. For many NYC students, the bulk of their food and nutrition comes from schools. As an organization that invests food and education resources into disinvested schools, we are able to see the potential of a brighter food future for New York City's students, when schools receive the resources they need to be hubs of health, nutrition, food, and community.

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Oversight Hearing on School Food Testimony to the Education Committee

New York City emerged as the first American epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic and two years later our school communities are still reeling from the health, economic, and educational crises exacerbated by the pandemic. During the pandemic, food insecurity rose dramatically in NYC, and frequent school closures exacerbated challenges for students, as they received fewer school meals and lost valuable academic and social-emotional learning opportunities. These consequences were experienced even more acutely by BIPOC students, as in-person schooling during 2020-21 was less available for Hispanic (3%), Black (1%), and economically disadvantaged (4%) students, compared to white students (13%) (NYS Education Department, July 2021). We observed this at many of our partner schools, where few classes were able to be in-person during the 2020-21 school year.

In 2021-22, schools, especially BIPOC school communities, have needed critical support to recoup health and educational losses. ESYNYC has been fully in-person and centered in school communities to build back from the challenges of the pandemic. We have renewed our school garden spaces for social-emotional and outdoor learning; we have expanded our work to new schools to support their food education initiatives this spring; we have increased our food distributions to support food security during and outside of the school day; and we have enhanced school cafeteria environments with supplemental, plant-based tastings and food activities.

With a new Mayoral administration fully committed to increased access to healthy, nutritious food, we have seen significant progress including the expansion of the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) to include fresh produce in the food options for EFPs, the support of the Good Food Purchasing Program, increased plant-forward menu options and Vegan Fridays. We specifically applaud the DOE's Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) for their incredible effort to keep students and families fed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and their commitment to maintaining nutrition standards throughout this time. We also praise their work to improve collaboration with partners and provide greater transparency. They host quarterly community partner meetings, are available to meet with individual advocates and school partners, and engage directly with the NYC Food Policy Alliance and other networks that are working to ensure high quality, nutritious, and delicious school meals for all NYC students.

We believe deeply that school food, provided by the Department of Education and served during school breakfast and lunch, is most successful when paired with food education at school as well. To support students' nutritional needs, healthier school environments, and food education for students, we ask New York City Council and the Education Committee to consider the following recommendations:

Food Education and Student Voice in School Cafeterias and Beyond

- **Invest \$37 million so that all schools can have sustained, flexible funding to provide vital food ed programming.** For example, flexible funding—at \$20,000 per school—would enable schools to build and maintain school gardens and outdoor classrooms, hire a School

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Oversight Hearing on School Food Testimony to the Education Committee

Wellness Coordinator, provide per session pay for teachers who lead after school programs, or partner with a food ed organization to help teachers effectively integrate food and nutrition education into their curriculum. This type of programming is critical for schools to implement food education programming such as ours. Examples of programming it could provide include technical and hands-on assistance to implement cafeteria composting, outdoor garden education, and healthy cafeteria menu tastings.

- **Funding for cafeteria-based nutrition education.** We work directly with OFNS' Garden to Cafe program at our school sites. The Garden to Cafe program brings local, nutritious food tastings and food education directly to the school cafeteria, to make the school cafeteria a healthier environment for students to enjoy, taste, and learn about nutritious foods. We also provide similar programming at schools where Garden to Cafe does not take place. Every student in NYC deserves this type of cafeteria programming. We encourage City Council to provide greater funding for this program within OFNS, or to provide flexible, sustainable funding to schools to implement food education programs, led by their own staff or community-based organizations.
- **Provide opportunities for student-driven school food menus.** We encourage NYC Council to provide resources and legislation to require student-driven school food menu items. When students have a voice in choosing what they eat at schools, more students participate in and enjoy school lunches. This supports culturally-relevant food choices for students as well. We encourage OFNS to expand student field trips to OFNS kitchens and headquarters, where students get to try items that could go on the menu and dictate food decisions. We also encourage OFNS to collect and use broad feedback from students in their menu offerings, especially regarding cultural food needs of the diverse student population of New York City.

Additional Support for Cafeteria Staff and Services

- **Hire Additional School Food Managers to Enhance Capacity and Increase Participation:** The Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) at the NYC Department of Education has worked tirelessly to make sure that students have the food they need to succeed in school. Despite the improvements that OFNS continues to make to their menus, challenges for school meal delivery and participation will persist without the necessary investments and support to implement them. OFNS needs an additional investment of \$3.5 million for more school food managers to better serve their school communities, implement appealing menus, provide professional development, partner with school leadership and community partners to create positive meal experiences, and increase participation in the school meals program. We were disappointed to see that funding for these additional managers was not included in the FY23 NYC Budget. Funding for an additional 60 managers, at \$57,291 per manager, would enable OFNS to better achieve these goals, helping to ensure that children are well-fed and ready to learn. In addition, it is critical to ensure that those school food

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Oversight Hearing on School Food Testimony to the Education Committee

managers as well as kitchen staff and teacher aids have sufficient training centered around wellness and supporting healthy nutritious meals for students.

- **More stable staffing model for OFNS cafeteria staff, school wellness coordinators, and school food managers.** As noted above, OFNS school food managers are divided among too many schools at one time to provide a deep impact. Similarly, school wellness coordinators and cafeteria staff are transitioned to different schools too often, which then requires retraining new staff and reforming relationships with students and families. We encourage NYC council to invest more resources and funding into OFNS, to improve hiring and retention at the office.
- **Technical assistance for cafeteria staff and OFNS to implement and enhance Good Food Purchasing guidelines.** While we are encouraged by the city's adoption of the Good Food Purchasing guidelines, we recognize that it takes significant training, systems support, and funding to actually implement the guidelines into OFNS purchasing. We urge the city to provide greater support and technical assistance to OFNS staff to implement Good Food Purchasing guidelines within school cafeterias.
- **Technical Assistance and Funding to implement cafeteria composting.** We are encouraged by the recent push for all NYC cafeterias to compost. Composting makes a large difference in the sustainability of school cafeterias and helps to establish a culture of environmentalism in schools. However, cafeteria composting is a major undertaking, and needs significant school support to create and manage cafeteria composting systems for students, teach about the composting, train students to separate their compostable and non-compostable items.

Emergency and Summer School Food

- **Make summer feeding sites consistent and accessible year over year.** We have worked with many schools that have been summer feeding sites, and we know how impactful and important these sites are when they are well-executed. The Department of Education must lead expanded marketing for summer feeding sites, and they must determine which schools will be summer feeding sites earlier in the year, so that there is time to be communicated to students and families. Whenever possible, summer feeding sites should remain the same year over year to promote continuity. Lastly, more summer feeding sites must be added to ensure that sites are accessible and within walking distance to every NYC student.
- **Update Intro. 416 to include lessons learned from the pandemic.** We are supportive of NYC Council's initiative to require an emergency food delivery system to NYC students in case of city-wide emergency. The Covid-19 pandemic has taught us the very real possibility of city-wide emergencies, and we know that with continuing health and Covid-19 challenges, as well as rapid climate change, our city will face more emergencies in the future. We believe there is room for improvement within the legislative language of this bill. Firstly, we recommend that this bill includes the compiling of learning from the Get Food Program pilot during the pandemic, including an internal evaluation of the program. There was a public

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Oversight Hearing on School Food Testimony to the Education Committee

hearing regarding the Get Food Program scheduled for spring of 2021 that never came to pass and has not been rescheduled, and we have not seen any internal evaluation of the program. These listening sessions and evaluation findings will lead to learnings that must be included in Intro. 416. We know that, among many other learnings, the Get Food Program struggled with accessibility, marketing, and inclusion of culturally-appropriate and fresh foods, especially fruits and vegetables. We urge NYC Council to expand the legislative language of the bill to address these challenges, among others that community members will raise in a hearing and will be found in an internal evaluation.

We are grateful to the City Council and to OFNS for their shared commitment to quality food and food access in New York City schools, and we look forward to working with you to continue growing healthy students and families. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Ally Miller, Edible Schoolyard NYC

Joint testimony of the NYC Food Ed Coalition

New York City Council Committee on Education Hearing on Oversight - School Food June 15th, 2022

Thank you Chairperson Rita C. Joseph as well as the members of the NYC Council Committee on Education for holding today's oversight hearing and the opportunity to submit this testimony. Thank you also for your partnership and support for the Food Ed Hub, which was established in 2019 with the support of the City Council, and convenes the NYC Food Ed Coalition. We appreciate your renewed support for the Food Ed Hub in FY23, and we look forward to continuing our work together to ensure that all NYC students have quality food and nutrition education ("food ed") and sustainably-produced, culturally-responsive, healthy school food.

The NYC Food Ed Coalition is a diverse group of over 300 program leaders, school community members, advocates, and other stakeholders working in communities throughout the five boroughs. We applaud the Office of Food and Nutrition Services for their incredible effort to keep students and families fed during the Covid-19 pandemic, and their commitment to maintaining nutrition standards. We also praise their work to improve collaboration with partners and provide greater transparency. They host quarterly meetings, are available to meet with individual advocates and school partners, and engage directly with the Food Ed Hub and other networks and organizations that are working to ensure quality food ed and healthy school meals for all NYC students.

We are excited about our productive conversations with city leaders and agencies around school meals. From adding plant-forward menu options, increasing meal participation through cafeteria redesigns, developing good food purchasing standards that can support NY farms, and taking lessons learned from the pandemic to ensure healthy food access for students and their families, we are optimistic about the road ahead for a healthy NYC. The Food Ed Coalition is ready and willing to be a resource for the Council to help inform effective solutions to the challenges we face in food access, and we look forward to working with the Council on your efforts.

As the Council seeks to make positive changes for school food, the cafeteria experience, academic achievement, and the long-term health outcomes of our students, it is important that you provide the appropriate investments and support to ensure success.

The Coalition has identified three priorities for both school food and food ed that the City Council must support:

1. Hire Additional School Food Managers: Enhance Capacity and Increase Participation

The Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) at the NYC Department of Education has worked tirelessly to make sure that students have the food they need to succeed in school. Despite the improvements that OFNS continues to make to their menus, challenges for school meal delivery and participation will persist without the necessary investments and support to implement them. **OFNS needs more school food managers to better serve their school communities, implement appealing menus, provide professional development, partner with school leadership and community partners to create positive meal experiences, and increase participation in the school meals program.** Funding for an additional 60 managers would enable OFNS to better achieve these goals, helping to ensure that children are well-fed and ready to learn.

2. Provide Flexible Food Ed Funding to All NYC Schools: Tailored Programming to Meet Local Needs

Great food ed is a critical ingredient for a healthy school community, and is vital to support school meals and increase participation, especially for new menu items and initiatives like Plant-Powered Fridays. Through food ed, students have engaging experiences gardening, cooking, and critically thinking about our food supply. Students gain knowledge and skills to make food choices that promote health, ecological sustainability, and social justice. They gain confidence to navigate our challenging food environments and persuasive marketing of unhealthy processed food, and they become healthy food leaders in their households and communities.

Food ed is crucial to all NYC students' health and wellness, now and throughout their lives. NYC is failing in this regard: 44% of our public schools do not partner with a food ed organization, and approximately two-thirds of middle school students do not receive the full state-mandated Health Education course, which includes some food ed. **All schools should have sustained, flexible funding to provide vital food ed programming.** For example, flexible funding could enable schools to support staffing and professional development to partner effectively with OFNS to provide a positive

cafeteria environment, to increase freshly prepared meals, or to build and maintain school gardens and outdoor classrooms that connect students to their food. Schools could hire a Wellness Coordinator to organize their efforts, provide per session pay for teachers who lead after school programs, or partner with existing food ed organizations to help teachers effectively integrate food ed into their curriculum.

3. Improve and Expand the Outdoor Learning Initiative: Equitable Access to and Utilization of Green Spaces

We appreciate the progress the City has made to support outdoor learning and school gardens during this unprecedented time—which are integral for hands-on learning and food ed—and there are additional steps that the City should take to seize this momentum. First, schools need resources and support beyond physical spaces to learn outdoors. **Schools need formalized support for teachers to integrate food, nutrition, health, sustainability, and environment curriculum across the academic subjects** rather than relying on them to figure out how to do it on their own. Second, schools who have allocated their own funding to outdoor learning have discovered that there are not enough vendors to provide the appropriate services or supplies, as well as limited resources and guidance for outdoor space construction through the SCA. **The DOE should create a streamlined, expedited vendor process for school gardens and outdoor learning, and name specific contacts who will provide direct support for these projects.**

We are grateful to the City Council for its commitment to healthy food access and quality food and nutrition education in New York City schools, and we look forward to working with you to continue growing healthy students and families.

[The NYC Food Ed Coalition](#)

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Thank you, Ms. Chairwoman and Education Committee members.

I'm G. Buckley, a 10-year-old New York City resident, and I'm speaking because we have to help stop gun violence in schools.

One way we can do this is by installing locking doors. If we installed locking doors in schools, we could trap intruders long enough for the police to get there in time and take over the scene. Another way we can make schools a safer environment for kids is by adding one or two more security guards in every school. This would be tougher for intruders to get inside the school. And these security guards should be armed with a taser at all times when on duty.

Arming our teachers would not help.

One more way we can make schools safer is by adding scanners at entrance doors. Not just scanners in a fourth or a half of schools. We need scanners in ALL schools. It does NOT matter if the school is Catholic, private, all boys, all girls, or public or co-ed, we need scanners at the entrance doors of ALL schools.

I made this poster about two days after the Uvalde shooting. At our local park, dozens of kids and some adults signed it. I told some of the kids that I would speak to lawmakers, and they asked if the lawmakers could speak with them.

TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF LOCAL 372 | NYC BOARD OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES
DISTRICT COUNCIL 37 | AFSCME

TO EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING ON SCHOOL FOOD

JUNE 15, 2022

10:00 AM

Education Committee Chairwoman Rita Joseph, and distinguished members of the City Council, I am Donald Nesbit, Executive Vice President of Local 372 - NYC Board of Education Employees, District Council 37 | AFSCME. I am here today to provide testimony on behalf of the approximately 24,000 members, including the 9,000 school food workers we represent under the leadership of our President, Shaun D. Francois I.

On a normal school day, children need food in order to concentrate and learn in the classroom. Local 372 is extremely supportive of the breakfast program, as well as universal lunch – every child deserves to come to class with a full stomach. Local 372 School Lunch Workers work hard each day – both in good times and as essential workers – to serve breakfasts and lunch, all which must fit into federal nutritional standards and guidelines.

However, this is demanding work. While current practices meet the Department of Education’s Office of SchoolFood staffing standards, these current guidelines spread school lunch employees too thin between the “Breakfast in the Classroom” program and preparing for lunch. On top of these core responsibilities, these workers served tens of millions of additional meals to students, their families, and members of the community in need throughout the pandemic. Due to inadequate staffing level mandates and the additional strain on the workforce, School Lunch Workers must come to work earlier and stay later (without extra compensation) simply to make sure food is ready to feed all one million children when that bell rings.

Furthermore, well-intentioned lawmakers introduce legislation (for example, Int. 199 to require letter grades for sanitary inspections) that would broaden the scope of School Lunch Workers’ duties and place workers at additional risk of discipline or liability outside the scope of employees’ work schedule or CBA. As it is, School Lunch Workers are already struggling to fulfill their current obligations, and adding more to their plate will make it nearly impossible for these workers to accomplish their jobs effectively.

Before even considering expanding their roles, the strain on the workforce must be alleviated by hiring more school lunch staff. Local 372 respectfully requests an additional 1,000 School Lunch Workers so we can reduce the strain on current workers while still continuing to fulfill the breakfast and lunch initiatives set by the City, including more cooking from scratch and “vegan Fridays”.

Another struggle faced by our school lunch employees, which also has a direct impact on sanitation and hygiene in the school cafeterias and kitchens is the inadequate air conditioning or ventilation. Updating the non-existent and inadequate cooling and air exchange systems in public schools kitchens has been a persistent struggle faced by School Lunch Workers for decades. The vast majority of schools built from the 1930s through the 1990s lack the proper design and operation for acceptable indoor air circulation. Due to the age and condition of these buildings, many lack the necessary electrical capabilities to simply install cool units in kitchen spaces. Many of these kitchens Local 372 workers are in every day have little to no cooling or ventilation and can reach over 130 degrees!

Working under these high temperatures is dangerous. It can lead to workers passing out on the job, experiencing heat stroke, and potentially harming themselves on the job. Heat stroke is the most serious illness associated with work in hot environments. Workers suffering heat stroke may become delirious, confused, convulsive, or comatose, and it can often be fatal. We cannot wait until there is a fatal occurrence for the ventilation issues in our schools be addressed. Proper air conditioning would filter out heat, fumes, and airborne pestilence.

City Comptroller Brad S. Lander issued a report in March 2017 detailing the significant lack of air conditioning in schools. The former Mayor and other City officials rallied their support to install air conditioning in teaching spaces. That same energy and leadership are required to support the health and safety of thousands of School Lunch Workers. Then-Council Members Treyger, Kallos, and Yeger wisely recognized this fact and introduced Resolution 1145-2019, calling on the Department to install air conditioning or cooling systems in New York City public school kitchens. Remediation requires a holistic effort: the DOE and the SCA must comprehensively evaluate the school system’s outstanding kitchen ventilation needs throughout all five boroughs, and more funding must be allocated towards a remediation plan pursuant to that evaluation.

In addition to ventilation, Local 372 supports School Transformation and Redesign of Cafeterias (“STARCafé”), which focuses on cafeteria redesign in order to help increase school lunch consumption, healthy eating habits, and other issues.

Providing healthy food options has also been one of Mayor Eric Adams' priorities. In early February, the Mayor implemented a new policy of providing vegan menu options on Fridays. While implementing this policy is a good first step, providing education on healthy eating habits should also be a focus to help our children be mindful of their eating habits and make healthy choices. Children would be more inclined to eat healthier options if they knew what foods are beneficial to eat, especially in younger children. For example, if you tell a young child that eating carrots is good for their eyes, they are more likely to want to eat carrots as compared to a child who is unaware of their benefits.

In conclusion, School Lunch Workers are critical to a functioning school system. These workers come in every day, many work extra hours without pay or outside of their title, all to ensure that New York City's students are well fed and able to learn. Local 372 extends its gratitude to the City Council for your support for these workers. The City's children are our lives' work, and in order for this important work to succeed, we need adequate staffing, a safe working space, and nutritional education.

On behalf of the 24,000 members of Local 372, NYC Board of Education, District Council 37 | AFSCME, I thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Testimony of Timothy L. Jackson, University Distinguished Research Professor and Full Professor of Music Theory, University of North Texas, Concerning anti-Semitism at CUNY

I believe it to be very important to bring the anti-Semitic attack by Philip Ewell (Hunter College and the Graduate Center, CUNY) on music theorist Heinrich Schenker and Schenkerian scholars, and me and other professors and educators, supported by academic fraud, to the attention of the New York City Council.

I myself am a graduate of the Department of Music of the CUNY Graduate Center, earning my Ph.D. in Music with a doctoral dissertation supervised by Carl Schachter.

While this kind of anti-Semitism may not be as obvious as other forms, I am convinced that it is nonetheless an important symptom of the much larger problem of anti-Semitism at CUNY - and also at my own university, the University of North Texas.

For a clear and concise explanation of the anti-Semitic claims disseminated by the Graduate Center Music Department and some of the CUNY colleges in support of Ewell, please refer to this article by Ricki Hollander, which first appeared in the Jewish News Syndicate, and has been reprinted in the Jewish Star, and elsewhere:

<https://www.camera.org/article/white-supremacy-and-the-jews-the-dispute-over-a-musical-theorist/>

Please see this article by Prof. Chaouat, an expert in contemporary anti-Semitism at the University of Minnesota:

<https://quillette.com/2021/02/09/the-attack-on-timothy-jackson-is-an-assault-on-liberal-education/>

Also, my own op-ed in The Times of Israel: <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/and-then-the-anti-racists-came-for-the-jewish-music-theorist-heinrich-schenker-and-me/>

One of the most pernicious claims, which appears in an article posted by CUNY, “A Black Professor Pulls Back the Curtain on Racism in Music Theory,” by Beth Harpaz—is that Schenker, a Jew living in Austria in the early 20th century, “supported the white supremacist and German nationalist movements that presaged Hitler.” In fact, Schenker had unequivocally condemned Nazism in April 1933 (only two and a half months after Hitler became chancellor, which was, in fact, much earlier than many other luminaries had denounced him) and encouraged his non-Jewish close friend Reinhard Oppel to dissociate himself from the Nazis. Schenker never supported nor endorsed any proto-Nazi movements. Such claims, based on academic fraud and misrepresentation, stain CUNY’s reputation as a serious research university and must be retracted.

Indeed, CUNY should apologize for the false statements disseminated in the Harpaz article and elsewhere on its various websites based on Ewell's "research"?: for example,

“music theorists and biographers have “whitewashed” Schenker’s racism, dismissing it as irrelevant in relation to his venerated theories on musical structure. [False. Ewell publicly accused, among others, Allen Forte and Ernst Oster of suppressing Schenker's racism in the published translation of Schenker’s *Free Composition*. They did nothing of the kind. Ewell pretended that the passages in *Free Composition* that were shifted into appendices contain racist views. They do not. In his *MTO* [Music Theory On-line] article, Ewell went further to associate Schenker's Jewish emigre students with contemporary American Nazis led by Fritz Kuhn to make them complicit in the persecution of Blacks in America. They themselves were subjected to prejudice in academe for being Jewish refugees!] Yet Schenker himself “argued explicitly that his views on race and music were to be considered together.” [False. Schenker never made any such statements. For Schenker, race was irrelevant to the analysis of music. His animosity was directed against *nations* allied against Germany and Austro-Hungary in WW 1, especially France and the French. His criticism of the Slavs was motivated by pogroms in Slavic lands and the Serbian and Russian alliance against Austro-Hungary in WW1.] Schenker, living in Austria in the early 20th century, “supported the white supremacist and German nationalist movements that presaged Hitler.” [Unequivocally false and defamatory as noted above. Schenker encouraged his friend Oppel to disassociate himself from the Nazis and he never supported or endorsed any proto-Nazi movements.] “It is time that Germans freed themselves from the illusion that all men and all nations are equal,” Schenker wrote. [Taken out of its proper context.] Schenker referred to “primitive” and “inferior” races, and opposed racial intermarriage as “mongrelization.” [False. Based on a clear misreading of what Schenker wrote, which is the exact opposite what is being claimed.]

While the nuances of Schenker's often complex views are open to different interpretations by different scholars, ALL serious music historians in America, Europe, and Israel (and elsewhere) agree that Schenker was NEVER a Jewish Nazi nor a white supremacist, as Ewell claimed.

In order make the Jewish Schenker into a Nazi white supremacist Ewell had to de-Judaize him, and deny his profoundly Jewish identity and clearly articulated Jewish faith. Then Ewell went even further to associate Schenker's mostly Jewish emigre students here with American Nazis of the 1930s. In so doing, Ewell defamed Schenker and his students, and CUNY greatly amplified his false accusations and misrepresentations in various statements disseminated on its websites.

Furthermore, in order to do accomplish his goals, Ewell has also engaged in academic fraud, deliberately manipulating his sources to invert their meanings. My own view of this academic fraud is presented in my article in *Quillette Magazine*: <https://quillette.com/2021/12/20/the-schenker-controversy/>

I hope that your committee looking into the allegations of anti-Semitism at CUNY will include the music departments at the Graduate Center and Hunter College within its purview. I will be happy to provide a full and detailed accounting of the many false and misleading statements, especially offensive to Jews, published by CUNY on its websites.

Sincerely,

Tim Jackson, Ph.D.

University Distinguished Professor of Music Theory
Professor of Music Theory
College of Music
University of North Texas
Denton, TX 76203

To further support Prof. Jackson's testimony to the Committee Investigating anti-Semitism at CUNY,

Here you can see how UNT's (the University of North Texas's) now rejected "Motion to Dismiss" - dismissed on all points in Federal Court – sought to employ Ewell's MTO article as "research" to buttress its claims. Next we have this letter from Hunter College, CUNY's "Research Integrity Officer" (see below) claiming that Ewell's MTO article is, in fact, just an "opinion paper" and "not research," and therefore there is no need to investigate it for scholarly fraud (see below). And THEN we have CUNY on its various websites stating that Ewell's "research" article in JMT is "peer reviewed," and disseminating statements such as "Schenker, living in Austria in the early 20th century, supported the white supremacist and German nationalist movements that presaged Hitler."

The Society for Music Theory's "SMT Policy on Ethics" states, "The Society for Music Theory upholds and promotes the following basic principles of ethical conduct in our profession. . . . **honesty and integrity in scholarly investigation and in the evaluation and transmission of the results of scholarship.** . . ."³⁶ The SMT borrowed these guidelines from the American Musicological Society's "Guidelines for Ethical Conduct." The AMS guidelines elaborate further: "Relevant supporting evidence should be presented in a well-reasoned manner, **free of misrepresentation and distortion; evidence that contravenes one's operating hypothesis should not be suppressed.**"³⁷ The AMS Guidelines continue: "Members of the AMS should be equally scrupulous when translating the words and ideas of others from one language into another."

36. [https://societymusictheory.org/administration/ethics_policy].

37. [<https://www.amsmusicology.org/page/ethics>]

-----Original Message-----

From: Suzanne Babyar rothbart <sbabyar@hunter.cuny.edu>

To: lw111989@aol.com <lw111989@aol.com>

Sent: Thu, Jan 20, 2022 5:09 pm

Subject: Re: Request to Investigate Professor Philip Ewell for Academic Fraud

Dear Dr. Fruehwald:

I have consulted with several administrators who deal with academic fraud in research. Dr. Ewell's opinion paper does not constitute research.

No further steps will be taken at the institutional level. I will, however, send a report to our Provost and President along with the documentation you provided.

Thank you for taking the time to bring this to our attention.

Respectfully,

Suzanne Babyar, PT, PhD
Research Integrity Officer
Hunter College



ReplyForward

Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Education**Oversight Hearing on School Food
June 15, 2022**

Chairperson Joseph and distinguished members of the Committee on Education:

My name is Julia McCarthy, and I am a Senior Program Officer with the New York Health Foundation (NYHealth) in the *Healthy Food, Healthy Lives* program. I am grateful for the opportunity to testify today on the topic of school food in New York City.

NYHealth is a private, independent foundation that works to improve the health of all New Yorkers. Our *Healthy Food, Healthy Lives* program seeks to advance policies and programs that connect New Yorkers with the food they need to thrive.¹ Supporting healthier, culturally responsive food in public institutions, like schools, is a core strategy of this program.

NYHealth Has a Long-Standing Commitment to Improve School Meals

NYHealth has a long, successful history working to improve both access to and quality of school meals. For example, in 2017, NYHealth's support to Community Food Advocates helped to secure universal free school meals for New York City's 1.1 million public school children. We have backed successful efforts to increase State funding for farm-fresh, local products in school meals. And currently, we are working with the New York City Mayor's Office and State officials to enable municipal agencies, like the New York City Department of Education's Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS), to purchase better quality food—food that aligns with the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP). GFPP is a leading model for this change, guiding public institutions to make purchases that align with nutrition, local economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, and animal welfare. We are also supporting an advocacy campaign that would expand free school meals for all students statewide, building upon New York City's success.

School Meals Reduce Hunger and Increase Dietary Health

School meals have been a signature issue for NYHealth because these meals reduce hunger, increase food security, and increase healthy eating. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed just how critical school meals are. Research from our Foundation shows that during the initial months of the pandemic, school meal programs were the most-used food access points for New Yorkers in need.²

Prior to the pandemic, one in ten New York City residents was food insecure, meaning they had limited or uncertain access to nutritionally adequate and safe foods.³ Data that our Foundation published early in the pandemic shows that statewide, rates of food insecurity for Black and Hispanic New Yorkers and for families with children were even higher during the last two years, with up to a quarter of these families

¹ New York Health Foundation. *Healthy Food, Healthy Lives*. June 2022. <https://nyhealthfoundation.org/what-we-fund/healthy-food-healthy-lives/>.

² New York Health Foundation. *Food scarcity in New York State during the COVID-19 pandemic*. October 8, 2020. <https://nyhealthfoundation.org/resource/food-scarcity-in-new-york-state-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/#introduction>.

³ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Center. *Definition of food security*. April 2022. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/definitions-of-food-security/>.

reporting food scarcity.⁴ More recent data from a soon-to-be-released NYHealth poll conducted in late 2021 found that more than half of food-insecure New York City families with children reported that children in their household were hungry, but they couldn't afford more food. Nearly 80% of these families reported that it was "sometimes" or "often" true that they couldn't afford to feed their children a balanced meal. To make ends meet, 83% relied on low-cost foods to feed their children.

National research has shown that school meals can improve dietary quality for children at risk of hunger. School nutrition standards strengthened at the federal level have succeeded in reducing the risk of obesity for children in poverty; without these standards, obesity rates among this cohort would have been 47% higher.⁵ New York City has set an even higher bar with nutritional standards that exceed the federal ones. Now, students who eat school meals every day have better diets than students who do not. They eat more fruits, vegetables, fiber, and whole grains, reducing the long-term health effects and health care costs of diet-related diseases.⁶ Equally important, these students also see improvements in academic performance and behavior.⁷

OFNS Can Formalize Lessons Learned During COVID-19 School Closures

NYHealth applauds OFNS's continued focus on the role that school meals play in maintaining students' health and preventing disease, *especially* in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. School nutrition staff worked tirelessly to serve millions of meals that met New York City's high nutrition standards during school closures, keeping many students and their families from going hungry.

Despite OFNS's herculean efforts, looming federal policy changes will create barriers to school meal access. With federal waivers set to expire June 30, 2022, OFNS operations will revert to pre-pandemic operations, limiting the manner in which the agency can serve meals. We recommend that OFNS, in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Food Policy, develop a plan for future school closures. This plan should consider planned closures like winter and summer breaks, as well as emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research conducted by the Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy at Teachers College, Columbia University, funded by NYHealth, provides insight into how OFNS can continue to improve school meal distribution. In focus groups, more than 100 parents explained that while they were grateful for the meals provided, certain changes could help improve access to and participation in school meals during future school closures. Parents reported that they were more likely to continue to participate in school meals even when cafeterias closed if: 1) pick-up locations were close to their homes; 2) menu options were clearly communicated; 3) meals served were consistent with communicated menus; and 4) a variety of meals, including hot meals, were available.

To inform a plan for future school closures, parents recommended that OFNS:

- **Offer flexible pick-up times in welcoming locations.** Many parents stopped participating in school meal programs because the time or location was inconvenient for daily pickup. Offering meals at convenient community locations all year round, as the summer meals programs already do, could help ensure students continue to access needed meals.

⁴ New York Health Foundation. Food scarcity in New York State during the COVID-19 pandemic. October 8, 2020. <https://nyhealthfoundation.org/resource/food-scarcity-in-new-york-state-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/#introduction>.

⁵ Kenney et al. Impact of The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act on obesity trends. *Health Affairs*. 2020;39:7. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/full/10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00133>.

⁶ Au et al. Eating school meals daily is associated with healthier dietary intakes: The Healthy Communities Study. *J Acad Nutr Diet*. 2018; 118(8):1474-1481. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6064655/>.

⁷ Hecht et al. Impact of the Community Eligibility Provision of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act on student nutrition, behavior, and academic outcomes: 2011–2019. *Am J Pub Health*. 2020; 9: 1405-1410. <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2020.305743>.

- **Strengthen communication about meal availability.** Parents suggested that increasing signage at meal distribution sites, providing information in multiple languages on site, and communicating changes in real time via social or other media could help to strengthen awareness of and participation in meals when schools are closed.
- **Increase the variety of meals offered.** Many parents want more meals that are hot, meet their religious or dietary needs (including allergies), and reflect the cultural variety of New York City.
- **Ensure consistent implementation.** Parents noted that their experiences differed depending on the specific site, suggesting that certain schools had less appealing options and less variety over time.

New York City Council Can Support OFNS's Ongoing Efforts

OFNS has worked tirelessly to make sure that students have the food they need to succeed in school. Additional support from the New York City Council could help to ensure that children are well-fed and ready to learn. Specifically, the City Council can:

- **Provide additional City funding.** Local funding could help mitigate the impact of higher food prices and help OFNS hire additional school food staff. Additional school food managers would enable OFNS to better serve school communities, implement appealing menus, provide professional development, partner with school leadership to create positive meal experiences, and increase participation in the school meals programs.
- **Advocate for school meal waivers to be made permanent at the federal level.** Federal waivers made meal provision to students easier during the pandemic, enabling OFNS to serve additional sites across the City and serve in bulk. Early research from the Tisch Food Center and other national partners suggests these measures, if made permanent, could increase participation in school meals programs.
- **Support efforts, like the push for universal school meals, at the State level.** Statewide universal free school meals build upon New York City's work to expand school meal coverage and could provide economies of scale across the State, including to OFNS. In the absence of federal action, New York State can still provide healthy school meals for all students. New York City Councilmembers can voice their support for free school meals for all statewide.

NYHealth is grateful for the shared recognition of the important role school meals play in promoting food security and dietary health. We look forward to continuing to partner with the City and with anti-hunger organizations to strengthen school meal programs and support New York students' health.

NEW YORK CITY FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

Testimony Submitted by

Leah Kabran Eden, Grassroots Advocacy Director of Equity Advocates

On behalf of the NYC Food Policy Alliance

Before the NYC Council Committee on Education

Oversight Hearing on School Food

June 15, 2022

My name is Leah Kabran Eden and I am the Grassroots Advocacy Director of Equity Advocates. Thank you to Chairperson Rita C. Joseph as well as the members of the NYC Council Committee on Education for holding today's oversight hearing and the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Equity Advocates builds the capacity of nonprofit organizations to address the underlying causes of food inequity through policy and systems change. We partner with New York-based organizations working to alleviate hunger and poverty, providing them with the tools they need to be more civically engaged—including policy education, advocacy training and coalition-building services. Through this work, we are building a nonpartisan grassroots coalition of powerful advocates and leaders within the food movement.

New York City emerged as the first American epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic and two years later our communities and students are still reeling from the twin economic and public health crises caused by the pandemic. In response, Equity Advocates began to convene the NYC Food Policy Alliance: a multi-sector alliance of 40+ food system stakeholders from across New York City, including frontline CBOs directly impacted by food insecurity. The Alliance's mission is to identify and advocate for public policies and funding that promote access to healthy and affordable food to both respond to today's crisis as well as address the ongoing vulnerabilities and injustices of the food system.

With a new Mayoral administration fully committed to increased access to healthy, nutritious food, we have seen significant progress including the expansion of the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) to include fresh produce in the food options for EFPs, the support of the Good Food Purchasing Program, increased plant-forward menu options and Vegan Fridays. We specifically applaud the DOE's Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) for their incredible effort to keep students and families fed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and their commitment to maintaining nutrition standards throughout this time. We also praise their work to improve collaboration with partners and provide greater transparency. They host quarterly community partner meetings, are available to meet with individual advocates and school partners, and engage directly with the NYC Food Policy Alliance and other networks that are working to ensure high quality, nutritious, and delicious school meals for all NYC students.

NEW YORK CITY FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

To continue and improve upon these efforts, members of the NYC Food Policy Alliance have identified the following priorities:

Commit to a Formal Evaluation on the Impacts of COVID-19 on School Food Services

DOE was a critical player in making sure NYC students and their families were fed through the pandemic. Knowing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on school food services is key in making better policies and decisions in the future. OFNS did a commendable job during a time of great difficulty and uncertainty, but there were also significant challenges that must be addressed. As we look to the future we have to review and learn from that experience. With other issues, climate change, the idea of a future emergency is almost guaranteed. We want to be better prepared. There have been limited external evaluations (Tisch) - but the City should do its own internal formal evaluation to ensure a full picture of what happened and intentionally weave these learnings into future school food service strategies for today and emergency plans for future needs.

We stand in support of the recently introduced legislation Int. 0416, which would require the Office of Emergency Management, in consultation with the Mayor's Office of Food Policy and the Department of Education (DOE) to develop a plan to feed students in event of an emergency or public health crisis that closes schools. This school food plan would enhance the City's emergency contingency plan that already exists and provides an opportunity to update the Office of Emergency Management's food and water access plan to speak to the nuances of student needs and incorporate learnings from the past two years. It is critical that when the Office of Emergency Management creates or updates this school food plan, there needs to be a robust and transparent evaluation of the City's school food services and other City programs during the pandemic that integrates data, best practices and lessons learned from emergency school food and grab and go meal operations. We recommend that the OFNS and MOFP and other relevant stakeholders that were part of the 2020 Food Czar team review, and publicly share data about school food services during the pandemic.

We recommend the following amendments to Intro. 0416 to ensure that school food services are more effective in future emergencies. A school food plan needs to be deeply informed by the successes and challenges of the City's pandemic response to ensure students and their families were fed AND the experiences of students, families, teachers and school staff as well as the numerous CBOs that supported feeding students and their families during the pandemic:

- Formal Evaluation of Pandemic School Meal Service: Require DOE's OFNS, MOFP and other relevant stakeholders that were part of the 2020 Food Czar team partner to conduct a formal evaluation of food meal services during the pandemic when schools were shuttered. This evaluation effort should acknowledge and build upon external research with parents in focus groups that has been conducted by the Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy. Importantly, learnings from this and future evaluations should be shared publicly with a broad set of stakeholders so learnings and best practices can be widely dispensed and acted upon.

NEW YORK CITY FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

- Consistent Communication & Coordination: The success of the school meal services was in large part a result of clear and consistent communication from OFNS, schools, support staff, and its network of CBOs and community partners. Incorporating plans to communicate details on school meals with regular school communications and informing all DOE staff and employees should be mandated. Pre-existing relationships and an investment in community building proved crucial and the plan should encourage the City and OFNS to continue to invest and support this kind of community coordination and relationship building. The plan should include details on how the City will support CBOs that provide both food and water but also PPE, masks, diapers, formula and other essentials.
- Interactive Community Input: Understanding the concerns of NYC families should be a priority in real time. Parents were grateful for the meals. However, there were a number of concerns that parents had which went unaddressed for long periods of time, if at all. Parents were also unclear on the process of advocating for their needs. Foremost, of these were four concerns: 1.) the service hours of 9am to noon made it difficult to obtain meals during synchronous remote learning, 2.) the limited & inconsistent variety of foods found at many locations, 3.) the limited appeal and size of meals for many children, and 4.) an inability to choose the items picked-up (e.g. lack of labeling or packaging practices). It would be important to enable students and their families to have a formal process of providing feedback – along with a transparent process for addressing concerns (e.g. regular surveys on meal quality & options, hours, and service quality). Addressing these concerns in real time would likely increase the likelihood of maintaining or increasing participation.
- Federal Action: NYC was able to take advantage of several USDA waivers to streamline food service, minimize COVID-19 exposure and support families throughout the pandemic. Waivers that allowed for non-congregate meal service, feeding families through companion waiver, meal pattern flexibility, meal time flexibilities and more were of great benefit during the pandemic. A school food plan must include the steps the City should take following an emergency to advocate at state and/or federal level for specific waivers needed to respond to school closures. In the case that these waivers are not extended and/or they do not come through immediately, the plan should outline various work arounds the City could take to feed students until waivers are approved.
- Culturally Responsive Meals: We were disappointed to see the bill language does not specifically call out that the plan should be required to outline how the City and OFNS will address culturally appropriate meals and food during an emergency. We heard from Alliance members that the quality of Kosher and Halal meals at grab and go sites was very poor and did not change over the entire course of the pandemic, leading to a decline in participation in this program. Plant-based daily meals should extend beyond hummus & pretzels and peanut butter & jelly, as these are snacks not adequate meals. Religious and other dietary guidelines are requirements, not choices for many New Yorkers. The plan needs to outline how OFNS will use lessons learned during COVID-19 pandemic to design a plan to provide culturally responsive meals during an emergency including for kosher, halal, plant-based, religious or dietary needs (e.g. puree meals for District 75, variety of nut-free or allergy-free

NEW YORK CITY FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

options). Those requirements don't simply disappear in an emergency. NYC has the largest population of both Jewish and Muslim residents in the country, meaning in an emergency, a significant number of New Yorkers would require culturally appropriate meals. In addition, culturally relevant plant-based meals would meet the needs of people practicing Hinduism, Rastafarianism, Jainism, Buddhism, 7-Day Adventists, and Veganism since these religions and philosophies call for animal-free diets. The plan should include details on how the City will support CBOs that can serve specific populations and/or provide other preferences and needs.

- Promotion and education: Participation in grab and go meals at schools was very low compared to the number of students that participated in school lunch and breakfast before the pandemic. We heard from many partners that many NYC families simply did not know what and when meals were available during the pandemic. Signage about the program was inconsistent and not always available in multiple languages appropriate for neighborhoods. The evaluation must review the grab and go meal sites at schools set up around the City, as well as marketing efforts conducting and potential funding needs to determine if they met their communities needs.

Hire Additional School Food Managers to Enhance Capacity and Increase Participation

The Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) at the NYC Department of Education has worked tirelessly to make sure that students have the food they need to succeed in school. Despite the improvements that OFNS continues to make to their menus, challenges for school meal delivery and participation will persist without the necessary investments and support to implement them. OFNS needs an additional investment of \$3.5 million for more school food managers to better serve their school communities, implement appealing menus, provide professional development, partner with school leadership and community partners to create positive meal experiences, and increase participation in the school meals program. We were disappointed to see that funding for these additional managers was not included in the FY23 NYC Budget. Funding for an additional 60 managers, at \$57,291 per manager, would enable OFNS to better achieve these goals, helping to ensure that children are well-fed and ready to learn. In addition, it is critical to ensure that those school food managers as well as kitchen staff and teacher aids have sufficient training centered around wellness and supporting healthy nutritious meals for students.

Use the Power of the City to Advocate for the Expansion of the Child Nutrition Waivers

As previously stated, NYC was able to continue school meal service operations in part due to several nationwide child nutrition waivers, including those that allowed for non-congregate meal service, companion waivers, meal pattern and meal time flexibility, and more. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress gave the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) the authority to issue nationwide child nutrition waivers to address access and operational challenges created by the pandemic. This authority was established through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (Public Law 116-127), extended for Fiscal Year 2021 through the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act (Public Law 116-159) and again extended to June 30, 2022 through the

NEW YORK CITY FOOD POLICY ALLIANCE

Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 117-43). Without these waivers, the child nutrition programs would not have been able to adequately respond to the fallout from COVID-19. NYC schools continue to rely on these waivers to alleviate child hunger and advance racial equity and child well-being. The current waivers expire on June 30th. We call on Mayor Eric Adams, Chancellor David Banks, Speaker Adrienne Adams and each member of the NY City Council to raise your voice and advocate to Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand as well as the NY Congressional Delegation to demand Congress further extend USDA's nationwide waiver authority through School Year 2022-2023. These child nutrition waiver extensions are critical to ensure USDA has continued flexibility to respond to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic and its aftermath, and to ensure school meal programs continue to operate and provide healthy meals to students and their families.

We are grateful to the City Council and to OFNS for their shared commitment to quality food and food access in New York City schools, and we look forward to working with you to continue growing healthy students and families. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Leah Kabran Eden

Equity Advocates on behalf of the NYC Food Policy Alliance

For more information please contact:
Leah Kabran Eden, leah@NYEquityAdvocates.org

TESTIMONY: UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK**Oversight – School Food**

**New York City Council Committee on Education
Honorable Rita Joseph, Chair**

**Submitted by:
Ariel Savransky, UJA-Federation of New York**

June 15th, 2022

Thank you, Chairperson Joseph, and members of the Committee on Education, for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to testify. My name is Ariel Savransky, and I am a Senior Advocacy and Policy Advisor at UJA-Federation of New York.

Established more than 100 years ago, UJA-Federation of New York is one of the nation’s largest local philanthropies. Central to UJA’s mission is to care for those in need—identifying and meeting the needs of New Yorkers of all backgrounds and Jews everywhere. UJA has more than 50 thousand engaged donors in the New York area, supports an expansive network of nearly 100 nonprofit organizations serving those that are most vulnerable and in need of programs and services, and allocates over \$150 million each year to strengthen Jewish life, combat poverty and food insecurity, nurture mental health and well-being and respond to crises here and across the globe.

New York City emerged as the first American epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic and two years later, communities and students are still reeling from the twin economic and public health crises caused by the pandemic. Food access continues to be a concern among New Yorkers. While food insecurity in the city has subsided somewhat from the peak seen early in the pandemic, it continues to be much higher than the levels seen prior to the pandemic. Food insecurity rates have increased by over 36% for all New Yorkers and 46% for children since the start of the pandemic.

UJA appreciated the City’s commitment to ensuring that children had access to meals even when they were not physically attending school through the grab and go model, including access to Kosher and Halal meals. Additionally, with a new Mayoral administration fully committed to increased access to healthy, nutritious food, the City has recently invested in significant efforts to fight food insecurity through increasing funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) and expanding the program to include fresh produce in the food options for emergency food providers.

To continue and improve upon these efforts, UJA, as a member of the NYC Food Policy Alliance – a multi-sector alliance of 40+ food system stakeholders from across New York City

with the goal of identifying and advocating for public policies and funding that promote access to healthy and affordable food to both respond to today's crisis as well as address the ongoing vulnerabilities and injustices of the food system – has identified the following priorities:

UJA supports the recently introduced legislation Intro 0416, which would require the Office of Emergency Management, in consultation with the Mayor's Office of Food Policy (MOFP) and the Department of Education (DOE) to develop a plan to feed students in the event of an emergency or public health crisis that closes schools. This school food plan would enhance the City's emergency contingency plan that already exists and provide an opportunity to update the Office of Emergency Management's food and water access plan to speak to the nuances of student needs and incorporate learnings from the past two years. It is critical that when the Office of Emergency Management creates or updates this school food plan, there is a robust and transparent evaluation of the City's school food services and other City programs during the pandemic that integrates data, best practices and lessons learned from emergency school food and grab and go meal operations. OFNS did a commendable job during a time of great difficulty and uncertainty, but there were also significant challenges that must be addressed. It is critical that the DOE conduct an internal evaluation to review and learn from the grab and go program so that the city is equipped to respond to future crises and can incorporate lessons learned into future school food service strategies for today and emergency plans for future needs.

UJA recommends the following amendments to Intro 0416 to ensure that school food services are more effective in future emergencies:

- 1) Conduct a formal Evaluation of Pandemic School Meal Service: The plan should require DOE's OFNS, MOFP and other relevant stakeholders that were part of the 2020 Food Czar team to partner to conduct a formal evaluation of meal services during the pandemic when schools were closed. This evaluation effort should acknowledge and build upon external evaluations that have been conducted including that by the Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy. It is important that learnings from this evaluation effort are shared publicly with a broad set of stakeholders so best practices can be built upon.
- 2) Communication & Coordination: The success of the school meal services was in large part a result of clear and consistent communication from OFNS and its network of CBOs and community partners. Pre-existing relationships and an investment in community building proved crucial and the plan should encourage the City and OFNS to continue to invest in and support this kind of community coordination and relationship building by making clear how the City will support participating CBOs.
- 3) Federal Action: NYC was able to take advantage of several [USDA waivers](#) to streamline food service, minimize COVID-19 exposure and support families throughout the pandemic. Waivers that allowed for non-congregate meal service, feeding families through companion waivers, meal pattern flexibility and mealtime flexibilities were of great benefit during the pandemic. A school food plan must include the steps the City would take following an emergency to advocate at the state and/or federal level for specific waivers needed to respond to school closures. In the case that these waivers are not extended and/or they do not come through immediately, the plan should outline various workarounds the City could take to feed students until waivers are approved.

- 4) Culturally Responsive Meals: UJA was disappointed to see that the bill language did not specifically require that the plan outline how the City and OFNS will address culturally appropriate meals and food during an emergency. UJA agencies reported that the quality of Kosher and Halal meals at grab and go sites was very poor and did not change over the entire course of the pandemic, leading to a decline in participation in this program. Religious and other dietary guidelines are requirements, not choices for many New Yorkers. The plan must outline how OFNS will use lessons learned during COVID-19 pandemic to design a plan to provide culturally responsive meals during an emergency. New York City has the largest population of both Jewish and Muslim residents in the country, meaning in an emergency, a significant number of New Yorkers would require culturally appropriate meals. The plan should include details on how the City will support CBOs that can serve specific populations to ensure that those individuals requiring culturally competent meals have access to them.
- 5) Promotion and education: Participation in grab and go meals at schools was very low compared to the number of students that participated in school lunch and breakfast before the pandemic. Many New York City families simply did not know the details of the grab and go program, including what meals were available and when those meals were available. The evaluation must review the grab and go meal sites at schools set up around the City to determine if they met the needs of the communities in which they were located so that going forward, appropriate meals are available where needed.

UJA is grateful to the City Council and to OFNS for their shared commitment to quality food and food access in New York City schools. UJA looks forward to working together to ensure that all students have access to the food they need should another emergency arise.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Please reach out to Ariel Savransky at savranskya@ujafedny.org for any questions.

The issue in School Meals & How it's Always Overlooked

Good Morning to all students and faculty members, and good morning to council member Rita Joseph. My name is Roma Yang and I am here on behalf of Union Square Academy for Health Sciences, but I'm also here as a student myself to speak on the food we consume everyday in school. Most of New York City's school meals are usually provided at no cost because of the amount of low-income families residing in all 5 boroughs, I personally remember paying for lunch only once ever in my life and that was back in elementary school. The only honest opinion or review one can really get is from the student who has consumed these school meals on a daily basis. Many students rely on school meals being their important meals of the day which is why making sure school meals should be filling and as nutritious as possible. When I was asked what changes we'd like to see in nyc schools in the future, I mentioned school lunches, there are a large number of students in many schools and it's understandable that it's hard to prepare hot lunches for a massive group of students. However, so far the school lunches I've had over the years have not been as filling as they should be nor are they super nutritious, recently, they've also gotten rid of the salad options which I found very unnecessary. To see this change in nutritious school lunches that are also appetizing sooner than later would be phenomenal.

My name is Aideen Dela Cruz and I am a senior physical therapist in the NYC Dept of Education for 16 years. I am also the vice chair of PTs for the PT and OT chapter in the UFT and one of the founding leaders of the grassroots group, OTs and PTs for A Fair Contract.

In 1975, President Ford signed into law the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142), now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The law guaranteed access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) to every child with a disability.

So many things have happened since then for our students with special needs. The DOE has offered a smaller class setting appropriate for these students when necessary. They are also offered physical, occupational, speech, vision, and hearing therapies as well as counseling as mandated in their IEPs. They have been offered school buses to and from school, use of elevators in order to access their school environment, testing accommodations, access to special education teachers, paraprofessionals, adaptive equipment, adaptive PE teachers, nurses, and so much more. However, one thing that has been bothering me for years is that the NYC Dept of Education has failed to provide one very vital thing for our most vulnerable students to thrive in our schools.

In 1946, the school lunch program was made official when President Truman signed the National School Lunch Act. This act ensures all students all over the United States a balanced meal while in the school. This act is supposed to cover all students but it sadly does not cover special education students who are on special diet due to sensory and/or medical issues like being fed through a g-tube, have weakness in their oral-mandibular muscles making chewing difficult for them, have issues with swallowing, and etc.

I have personally seen students starve during the school day because they cannot eat the food offered in the cafeteria. I have seen students who at 1 PM would sleep in the classroom because their bodies have shut down from not having fuel throughout the day. Some lucky students have parents and guardians who would make sure that they have an appropriate packed lunch or snacks to eat in school. But alas, I have also witnessed a lot of students whose parents and guardians, for whatever reason, fail to send food for these kids. School staff can only do so much in reminding parents and guardians to send food for their kids who have special dietary needs.

Now I implore you all, do not forget this small population of special education students who are in need of special diets as you talk about budgets. Maybe there is a way to place in their IEPs what kind of food should be given to these individuals during the school day as directed by their medical providers and maybe there is a way that the DOE can supply these. All students deserve a balanced meal and all means that the special education students are included in that.

In attendance at DOE Public schools my entire life, school lunch hasn't been a meal to look forward to at all. Making sure students eat is the number one priority as well as what they eat is nutritious. School lunch has been avoided by so many people due to the lack of presentation, many students cannot afford bringing lunch from home or even buying lunch after school. Personally I have struggled with this being that I don't enjoy the presentation and smell of the food. Accommodating everyone is a major factor but also looking at the rates of how many kids actually eat school lunches is a big factor. There has been many times where I have gotten a spoiled milk or raw sandwich/burger. This is unacceptable and would most definitely turn many students and parents the wrong way. There needs to be a change in the food menus in order to make the food look pleasant and enjoyable.

Celine

Date: June 14, 2022

Dear New York City Council:

My name is Danny Hwang. I am a Science Teacher and Dean at Union Square Academy for Health Sciences, a high school in District 2 of Manhattan. I want to convey to the Council my observations and interactions seen and heard in the cafeteria of the Washington Irving Campus Building. Why I wish to convey my perspective is because a number of our students have expressed dissatisfaction with their breakfast and lunch experience, both in terms of food availability and treatment by the staff, that it upsets me to the brink of advocating for my students.

As a supervisor during both breakfast and lunch, I have seen students walk up to empty cooler bags during breakfast (8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.) and empty shelves in the cafeteria during lunch (11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.). For breakfast, I have seen the sack breakfast bags go empty at around 9:20-9:30 a.m. Approximately 100-200 students come in late between the hour of 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. I have seen students look into the blue cooler bags to see it empty and then proceed to the elevator or go up the stairs to class. I noticed most of the students do not ask if more food is available, but when I approach them and ask if they want a breakfast bag, they often tell me yes.

During lunch, I see students in the cafeteria at the start of the lunch period waiting in front of the shelves to grab the three peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and the hot food, particularly chicken fingers and fries. I noticed the students do not care for the Bean Burritos, the vegetarian wraps, cheese sandwiches or the vegetables like carrots, corn, and green beans. I have noticed the popular items are Chicken Fingers and French Fries, apple slices, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, mandarins, Grandma Chocolate Chip Cookies, and the Chicken Thighs.

What I typically see at 11:45 a.m. is the staff no longer putting out more food. I have been told that the reason is they no longer see kids waiting at the shelves. What I heard from the students regarding this is they don't want to stand there waiting and that they have been told there is no more food for them. When I inquired about the latter, I was informed that the rest is for the next school.

What upsets me is when I see a few students come down to get food after tutoring with a teacher or some other personal reason to be told sorry, grab whatever is left. What is left are items they do not want to eat or foods incompatible to them. For example, I heard one student directed to grab the white cheese slice sandwiches, which are often untouched, but that student was lactose-intolerant and so walked away. I noticed some of our kids do not pursue further or advocate for themselves. They accept what is and walk away. This upsets me. It upsets me when I see our students watching the cafeteria staff arrange more chicken fingers and fries onto those paper boat trays in the back, but are told those are for the next school.

In short, a number of our students walk away without eating. A number of our students do not get the food they want to eat because either they came in late and/or the demand exceeded the allotted supply. This upsets me because I imagine a student coming to school not having eaten breakfast or lunch. How will that student perform for the rest of the day both academically and physically in gym class? I know

how I felt when I attempted to request a food item from a cafeteria staff member on behalf of a timid student only to be told sorry, you'll have to choose from what's left or in the case for one particular staff member, she just walks away from me after hearing my request to never come back to us. We stood there for 10 minutes like fools.

I have brought this up multiple times to our Campus Building Manager, Cameron Jones. And I must say, he has been doing everything in his power to help. I have seen a cafeteria staff member now come down in the mornings to check on the cooler bags and refill them. I have even seen Cameron himself come over and check on the breakfast inventory.

I want to add that not all cafeteria staff have ignored me, the kids, or told them no. I know of at least two cafeteria staff members that will go in the back and grab a chicken finger and fries or peanut butter and jelly sandwich for a kid that asks or when I ask for them.

I am writing this letter because I do not want to see another day where our kids, even a single human being, walk away hungry. I do not want their lack of eating during school to impact their learning, performance, or their feeling of being welcomed and supported in their school. That is why I am writing this letter asking for your help to change the way things are currently being done. I do not want anyone to get in trouble or fired. I am just asking for things to be done differently and change what is currently being provided for our young kids. Please.

Sincerely,

Danny Hwang
Dean

Hello, my name is Julia Larsen. I am a New York City resident and a member of DSA's NYC chapter. I am here to voice my opposition to Mayor Eric Adams' executive budget, and to call on the City Council to pass a budget that meets the needs of all New Yorkers.

Two years into the pandemic, working-class New Yorkers are in crisis. COVID-19 cases are surging, landlords are raising rents and families struggle to stay in their homes. But the mayor continues to favor the wealthy and powerful over everyday New Yorkers. His budget makes devastating cuts to vital city services, like housing, healthcare, sanitation, and education, while leaving the NYPD's \$10-billion¹ budget intact.

Today, I urge the Council to fight against the mayor's program of austerity and punishment. Instead of cutting funding for housing, the Council must invest \$4 billion into permanent, affordable housing, including \$1.5 billion for NYCHA² and \$2.5 billion for HPD.³ The Council must also reject Adams' cuts to our public education system, by investing \$122 million into CUNY,⁴ and funding DOE⁵ mental health counselors and social workers, rather than filling school police vacancies. I also urge the Council to act on two deadly crises facing our city: climate catastrophe and the overdose epidemic. We need \$3.1 billion for the Streets Plan,⁶ \$1.8 billion for green public schools, \$250 million for Fair Fares,⁷ and \$10 million to expand life-saving safe consumption sites⁸ to all five boroughs.

Finally, the Council must reject the mayor's regressive return to law and order. I urge the Council to reject the proposal to add hundreds of new COs⁹ for solitary confinement, a practice the UN¹⁰ defines as torture. I also urge the Council to demonstrate their commitment to racial justice by cutting failed NYPD criminalization programs like the ineffective and violent plainclothes units, the so-called Subway Safety Plan, and ending all NYPD response to mental health calls.

Thank you, Council Members and Committee Chair Brannan, for hearing my testimony.

¹ When accounting for additional costs the NYPD accrues during a fiscal year such as pension and overtime, their expense budget totals around \$10 billion.

² NYCHA: New York City Housing Authority

³ HPD: New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development

⁴ CUNY: City University of New York

⁵ DOE: Department of Education

⁶ In 2019, the Council passed the Streets Plan (also known as the Transportation Master Plan), which creates 500 miles of protected bike lanes, 500 miles of bus lanes, and vastly expands open pedestrian space. Read more about the Streets Plan [here](#).

⁷ Fair Fares is a city-run program that provides half-price MetroCards for low-income New Yorkers. Increasing funding for Fair Fares to \$250 million would double the income cutoff for eligibility, so more New Yorkers can qualify for the program.

⁸ In December 2021, NYC opened its first safe consumption sites in East Harlem and Washington Heights. As of March 2022, these two sites saved [200 lives](#) by reversing overdoses.

⁹ COs: corrections officers

¹⁰ UN: United Nations

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Appearance Card

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 in favor in opposition

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Name: Kevin Moran

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Dept. of Education

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Name: Julia McCarthy

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Date: 6/15/2012

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Name: Donald Nestor

Address: 125 Broadway Street NY NY 10007

I represent: Vice President, NY Health Foundation

Address: _____

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