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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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March 21, 2022
Start: 9:32 a.m.
Recess: 7:02 p.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 1)

B E F O R E: Rita C. Joseph,
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Shaun Abreu
- Joann Ariola
- Alexa Avilés
- Gale A. Brewer
- Carmen N. De La Rosa
- Eric Dinowitz
- Oswald Feliz
- James F. Gennaro
- Jennifer Gutiérrez
- Shahana K. Hanif
- Kamillah Hanks
- Shekar Krishnan
- Linda Lee
- Farah N. Louis
- Christopher Marte
- Julie Menin
- Mercedes Narcisse
- Lincoln Restler
- Kevin C. Riley
- Rafael Salamanca
- Pierina Ana Sanchez

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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COUNCIL MEMBERS: (CONT.)

Lynn C. Schulman
Althea V. Stevens
Sandra Ung

A P P E A R A N C E S

1
2
3 Nina Kubota
4 President and CEO of the New York City School
5 Construction Authority

6 Cora Liu
7 Vice President of Capital Plan Management for the
8 SCA

9 Dan Weisberg
10 First Deputy Chancellor from the New York City
11 Department of Education

12 Michael Mulgrew
13 United Federation of Teachers

14 Mark Cannizzaro
15 Council of School Administrators and Supervisors

16 Donald Nesbit
17 Vice President Local 372

18 David Banks
19 Chancellor of New York City Public Schools

20 Dan Weisberg
21 First Deputy Chancellor

22 Lindsey Oates
23 Chief Financial Officer

24 Kevin Moran
25 Chief School Operations Officer

Dr. Cristina Melendez
Executive Director of Family and Community
Empowerment

Mark Treyger
Senior Advisor and Executive Director of
Intergovernmental Affairs

Tom Sheppard
CEC President Appointee and current Vice Chair on
the New York City Panel for Educational Policy

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Shirley Aubin
Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council

Chauncy Young
New Settlement Parents Action Committee

Natasha Capers
Public School Parent and Director of the New York
City Coalition for Educational Justice

Inshirah DuWors
Parent Leader with the Alliance for Quality
Education

Ellen McHugh
Citywide Council on Special Education, CCSE

Amy Tsai
New York City Coalition for Educating Families
Together

Tameesha Simon
Good Shepherd Services

Rebecca Charles
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York

Gregory Brender
Day Care Council of New York

Randi Levine
Advocates for Children

Jeanne Alter
Kennedy Children Center

Isabella
Girls for Gender Equity

Quadira Coles
Girls for Gender Equity

Christopher Treiber
Interagency Council of Developmental Disabilities
Agencies

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

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Batcho Bamba (SP?)
Urban Youth Collective

Star Eva Mendez
Urban Youth Collective

Alakai Sullivan
Urban Youth Collective

Dr. Deloris McCullough
Bellevue Daycare Center

Sophia Francis
Cortelyou Early Childhood Centers

Dr. Angela White
4410 Preschools at Rising Ground

Maggie Moroff
Advocates for Children

Lori Podvesker
Include NYC

David McGillan
Salvadori Center

Kenneth Jones
Salvadori Center

Leonie Haimson
Class Size Matters

Michael Kohlhagen
Center for Educational Innovation

Paulette Ha (Lucas Healy)
D75 Student

Lana Bilic
Children's Aid

Dr. Brenda Triplett
Children's Aid

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Lennia Clark
Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

Kaveri Sengupta (SP?)
Coalition for Asian American Children and
Families

Madeline Borelli
Teachers Unite

Caitlin Delphin
Teachers Unite

Lauren Clavin
Teachers Unite

Edward Curtis
Mathematics for Secondary Education Student at
the Borough of Manhattan Community College

Zemia Gene (SP?)
Ya-Ya Network

Isabelle Aria (SP?)
Organizer from Ya-Ya Network

Dante Bravo
United Neighborhood Houses

Jamie Hastings
Arthur Miller Foundation

Fabiola Toribio
Catholic Guardian Services

Liza Schwartzwald
New York Immigration Coalition

Michael De Vito Jr.
NYCID

Savannah Dockery
IS Action Committee

Alyssa Figueroa
Urban Youth Collaborative

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

1
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3 Tanisha Grant
Parent Supporting Parents New York

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Carolyne O'Neill
Generation Citizen

Katherine Hoy
AHRC New York City
Jennifer Veloz
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

Melinda Andra
Legal Aid Society

Rasheeda Brown-Harris
Bronx Legal Services

Caroline Scown
Chinese American Planning Council

Bella Week
Teachers Unite

Liz Accles
Executive Director of Community Food Advocates

Kevin Dahill
Fuchel Counseling in Schools

Riza Jay
Parent of a Child with Special Needs

Bishop Richard Wheelhouse
Charity Baptist Church

Lady Noro Wheeluce (SP?)
Charity Baptist Church

Herman Younger
Parents Action Committee

Alex Mojica
Senior at Bronx Academy for Software Engineering

Jolie Santiago
Sophomore in High School in Brooklyn

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

1
2
3 Cruz Soriano
Youth Leader at Make the Road

4
5 Delia Davis
Senior in High School and Youth Leader with
6 Sisters and Brothers United and Dignity in
Schools New York

7 Tosh Sutton

8 Kimberly Olsen
New York City Arts and Education Roundtable

9
10 Sami Abu Shumays
Flushing Town Hall

11 Jolene Gunther-Doherty
The Guild For Exceptional Children

12
13 Felix Arias
Dominican Women's Development Center

14 Alexandra Carmona
Sisters and Brothers United

15
16 Sequazia George (SP?)
Sisters and Brothers United

17 Anthony Morales
Make the Road New York Urban Youth Collaborative

18 Naftuli Moster Yaffed

19
20 Linda Rosenthal
Volunteers of America Greater New York

21 Robert Scott
Tenant Association Vandyke Houses

22
23 Quamid Francis
City Year New York

24 Amal Abdulla Yemeni
American Merchants Association

25

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Jocelyn Palafox Diaz
Make the Road New York Urban Youth Collaborative

Daniella Rodriguez
Make the Road New York Urban Youth Collaborative

Luna Quavez (SP?)
Make the Road New York Urban Youth Collaborative

Fernando Palafox
Make the Road New York Urban Youth Collaborative

Steven Morales
All our Kin

Nelle Stokes
Executive Director of Magic Box

Elizabeth Bird
Educational Alliance

Rebecca Florenza (SP?)
Public School Parent and an Educator in Early
Childhood

Carolyn Ramirez
Make the Road Urban Youth Collaborative

Nia Morris
Make the Road Urban Youth Collaborative

Brielka Rodriguez (SP?)
Make the Road Urban Youth Collaborative

Iesha Ejos (SP?)
Make the Road Urban Youth Collaborative

Ashley Perez
Sisters and Brothers United

Lisa Gilday
Birch Family Services

Tracy Weber-Thomas
Joe Torre Safe at Home Foundation

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

1
2
3 Estela Cohetero
Academy of Medical and Public Health Services

4
5 Ogi Funta Morena (SP?)
Muslim Community Network

6
7 Stephanie Nilva
Day One New York

8
9 Steve Held
Just Kids Early Childhood Learning Center Far
Rockaway

10
11 Nancy Katz
Seat in the Middle

12
13 Molly Schiff
Theater Teacher at a 6-12 school in the Bronx in
District 16

14
15 Sara Landis

16
17 Cheryl Saunders
Special Ed Teacher Retiree

18
19 Ashley Conrad
Freedom Agenda as the Community Organizer and a
Native New Yorker

20
21 Comfort Menza
Parent and Resident of Bronx

22
23 Crystal Reyes
Sisters and Brothers United

24
25 Cynthia Sanchez
Sisters and Brothers United

PJ
Education Policy Analyst at Community Service
Society of New York or CSS

Teri West
Director of Government Contracts and School
Partnerships at New York Edge (on behalf of
Rachael Gazdick)

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Debra Gray-Parker
President at PS IS323 in Brooklyn

Jackie Schiffer
Management of 50 plus arts education programs
across New York City's five boroughs

Mark Gonsalves
Parent of Two Children

Juan Carlos Salinas
Director of Education at Jamaica Center for Arts
and Learning

Keith Fuller
Make the Road New York Urban Youth Collaborative

Zuleima Dominguez
Make the Road New York Urban Youth Collaborative

Jasmine Cortes
Youth Leader with Make the Road New York in
Staten Island

Christian Flores
Urban Youth Collaborative

Alisha Bedevis (SP?)
Senior at West and Secondary School

Beatrice Weber
Parent Ambassador for YAFFED

Jennifer Stuart
Parent

Salma H.
Organizer with the Ya-Ya Network

Christine Ramirez
Parent Association President from PS35 District 9

Shindi Whiteman (SP?)
Parent Ambassador for the Advocacy Organization
Yaffed Young Advocates for Fair Education

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Faith Jones
9th grader at Brooklyn High School and a member of
Youth Advocates

Alexander Rehov Martinez
Sophomore at Central Park East High School and a
member of the Youth Advocates

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SERGEANT LUGO: PC recording done.

SERGEANT POLITE: Recording to the cloud all set.

SERGEANT LUGO: Thank you. Good morning everyone. Welcome to today's remote New York City Council Fiscal 2023 Preliminary Budget Hearing of the Committee on Education. At this time, would all panelists please turn on your videos.

To minimize disruption, please place electronic devices to vibrate or silent. If you wish to submit testimony, you may send it to testimony@council.nyc.gov. Again, that's testimony@council.nyc.gov.

Thank you for your cooperation. Chair Joseph, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Wonderful, good morning. So, I'm ready to start. Here is my gavel {GAVEL}. Alright, give me one second. Alright, uhm, good morning and welcome Education Chair's first hearing on Fiscal 2023 Preliminary Budget. First, this morning we'll hear from School Construction Authority President and CEO Nina Kubota and First Deputy Chancellor David Weisberg on Proposed Amendment to the Fiscal 2020-2025 Capital Plan. After that, we will hear from Chancellor David Banks, First Deputy

1
2 Chanceller David Weisberg and DOE Chief Financial
3 Officer Lindsey Oates who will testify on the DOE's
4 Preliminary Expense Budget.

5 Finally, we will hear public testimony, which is
6 scheduled to begin shortly after. The first portion
7 of the hearing will focus on Proposed February Plan
8 Amendment to the Fiscal 2020-24 five year capital
9 plan or February plan which approximately \$20.6. The
10 February plan proposed an increase to \$1.3 billion
11 when compared to the Adopted plan.

12 The increase is due mostly to an addition of
13 \$918.7 million in the capacity program and \$364.2
14 million in Reso A projects by Council and Borough
15 Presidents. We are excited to have DOE and CSA come
16 before the Committee for the first time with lower
17 class size targets, now reflected in Blue Book.

18 As an educator, class size has long been a top
19 issue of mine and will continue to be on this
20 Committee. We are also pleased to see increased
21 investment in class reduction. In the plan
22 amendments as well as investments in 3K and PreK for
23 all. We look forward to working with the CSA to
24 bring SCA to bring more transparency until it arrives
25 at the current \$45,883 seats in the plan. And to

1
2 establish what the needs are to reach these new class
3 size targets.

4 Somehow keeping rules, I would like to remind
5 Council Members that this first portion of the
6 hearing is reserved for capital, so please keep your
7 questions related to the capital budget. Council
8 Members will be limited to three minutes for the
9 first round of questions. We will have a second
10 round of questions only if time allows.

11 Before I conclude, I would like to thank my
12 Committee Staff Chelsea Baytemur, Masis Sarkissian;
13 if I missed, sorry. Dohini Sompura, Malcom Butehorn,
14 Jan Atwell and Frank Perez. I would also like to
15 thank my staff, Sam Weinberger, Kanna Irving(SP?),
16 Vinuri Ranaweera, ,Juvani Pequant(SP?), Joelle
17 Disere(SP?) and Tiquan Coleman(SP?). I would also
18 like to introduce my colleagues who have joined us
19 this morning. Council Member Hanks, Council Member
20 Narcisse, Council Member Hanif, Stevens, Council
21 Member Brewer, Council Member Sanchez, Council Member
22 Gutiérrez, Council Member Avilés, Council Member
23 Riley, Council Member Salamanca, Council Member Ung,
24 Council Member Schulman, Council Member Louis and
25

1
2 Council Member Ariola. And I will continue to call
3 Council Members as they arrive and thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. Uh, good
5 morning everyone. My name is Malcom Butehorn and I
6 am Counsel to the Committee on Education.

7 Before we begin, I want to remind everyone that
8 you will be on mute until you are recognized to
9 speak. At which time, you will be unmuted by the
10 someone on our team.

11 If you mute yourself after you have been unmuted,
12 you'll need to be unmuted again by us. Please be
13 aware that there could be a delay in muting and
14 unmuting, so we ask that everyone be patient. We
15 will first have the capital portion of this
16 preliminary budget hearing and receive testimony from
17 the School Construction Authority.

18 For this portion of the hearing, Council Members
19 will be limited to three minutes for Q&A. We are on
20 an extremely tight schedule this morning with the
21 Administration, so Council Members please hear me,
22 you will be limited to three minutes for Q&A with the
23 SCA and DOE Capital people.

24 Council Members, you will remain unmuted during
25 your questioning. If we detect loud background

1
2 noises, we will have to mute you and then unmute you
3 for further questioning. I will now administer the
4 affirmation to the Administration witnesses,
5 including those available for Q&A. I will call on
6 each of you individually to respond.

7 Do you affirm that your testimony will be
8 truthful to the best of your knowledge, information
9 and belief? Nina Kuboto, President and CEO of the
10 SCA?

11 NINA KUBOTO: I do.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Cora Liu, Vice President
13 Capital Plan Management SCA?

14 CORA LIU: I do.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Dan Weisberg, First Deputy
16 Chancellor?

17 DAN WEISBERG: I do.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Kevin Moran, Chief Schools
19 Operations Officer?

20 KEVIN MORAN: I do.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: John Shea, Chief Executive
22 Officer, Division of School Facilities?

23 JOHN SHEA: I do.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Anuraag Sharma, Chief
25 Information Officer?

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ANURAAG SHARMA: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Thomas Taratko,
Chief Executive Officer, Office of Space Management?

THOMAS TARATKO: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Rebecca Rawlins, Chief
Executive Officer Office of District Planning. I
think I heard her.

REBECCA RAWLINS: I —

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Oh, sorry.

REBECCA RAWLINS: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And then finally
Scott Strickland Deputy CIO?

SCOTT STRICKLAND: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. President Kubota
when you uh, you may begin when ready.

NINA KUBOTA: Great. Can you hear me? I just
want to make sure.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can.

NINA KUBOTA: Okay, sorry.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, that's alright thank you.

NINA KUBOTA: Good morning. Good morning Chair
Joseph and members of the Education Committee. My
name is Nina Kubota and I am the President and CEO of
the New York City School Construction Authority. I

1
2 am joined by my colleague Cora Liu, Vice President of
3 Capital Plan Management for the SCA as well as First
4 Deputy Chancellor Dan Weisberg from the New York City
5 Department of Education.

6 We are pleased to be here today to discuss the
7 February 2022 Proposed Amendment to the current
8 Fiscal Year 2020-2024 Five-Year Capital Plan. I, or
9 my members of my team, have met with many of you and
10 we look forward to building upon our shared
11 commitment to build modern and safe facilities for
12 our public school students to learn and grow.

13 The City Council, the SCA, and the DOE have a
14 long history of a – [LOST AUDIO 8:39-8:48]

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I no longer hear her.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I thought it was me.
17 Uh, Monday morning. Oh, it looks like she's off the
18 Zoom. Uhm, alright, just bear with us one moment.
19 [9:05-9:17].

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: While we wait, I want to
21 recognize Council Member Lee and Council Member
22 Menin. [9:21-10:06]

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: So, it seems like we are
24 experiencing technical difficulties. We're going to
25

1
2 be working on it right now and hopefully get back
3 soon. Thank you. [10:15-11:30].

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, we're talking with
5 Intergov. Just bear with us a moment.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Alright, thank you. [11:36-
7 12:18]

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: It seems like the livestream
9 is back up. [12:21-14:07].

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, Chair, I see her name
11 pop in. Oh, there she is okay and Nina, I'm hanging
12 up on your people on the phone, sorry. Okay, so if
13 you just want to go ahead and thank you.

14 NINA KUBOTA: Great. Good morning Chair Joseph
15 and members of the Education Committee. My name is
16 Nina Kubota and I am the President and CEO of the New
17 York City School Construction Authority. I am joined
18 by my colleague Cora Liu, Vice President of Capital
19 Plan Management for the SCA as well as First Deputy
20 Chancellor Dan Weisberg from the New York City
21 Department of Education.

22 We are pleased to be here today to discuss the
23 February 2022 Proposed Amendment to the current
24 Fiscal Year 2020-2024 Five-Year Capital Plan. I, or
25 my members of my team, have met with many of you and

1
2 we look forward to building upon our shared
3 commitment to build modern and safe facilities for
4 our public school students to learn and grow.

5 The City Council, the SCA, and the DOE have a
6 long history of a
7 strong partnership and we have always been grateful
8 of the generous funding Council Members have provided
9 to our schools through Reso A funding. We have been
10 successful, in large part due to our ongoing
11 collaboration and pragmatic approach to providing our
12 students with the spaces and the tools they need to
13 succeed and we look forward to our continuing and
14 growing partnership.

15 Before I get in to the specifics of what is
16 contained in the February 2022 Amendment, I want to
17 talk briefly about our Five-Year Capital Plan, its
18 structure, and our process. The SCA operates on a
19 fixed five-year capital plan as set forth in our
20 enabling legislation. Our Plan is broken out into
21 three major categories: Capacity, the creation of new
22 seats, Capital Investment, improvements to our
23 existing buildings, and Mandated Programs which are
24 projects that are required by code or local law.

1
2 Capacity projects are created in order to address
3 seat need that has been identified through our
4 demographic projections or in an effort to target
5 overcrowding in specific schools located in districts
6 that otherwise have no funded seat need.

7 Additionally, capacity projects are also created with
8 a focus to replace buildings due to a terminating
9 lease or that otherwise might need to be replaced.

10 Lastly, there has been a capacity program
11 recently created and then increased to address the
12 capacity needs of a school in order to remove
13 transportable classroom units, also known as TCUs.

14 For our roughly 1,500 existing buildings, a
15 capital project is created and funded in a few ways.

16 A Capital Improvement Project is created
17 predominately as a result of our annual Building
18 Condition Assessment Survey process. The SCA sends
19 teams of architects and engineers to survey every
20 school building yearly. They do an extensive review
21 of each component of the building and then rate them
22 on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the most critical.

23 This data directly informs which projects are created
24 and makes up a bulk of the CIP work that we
25 undertake.

1
2 In addition to our BCAS process, we work closely
3 with our partners at the Division of School
4 Facilities in the DOE and if it is determined that
5 needed work is beyond maintenance, it may be referred
6 to us for a larger scale capital project. Another
7 major component of the CIP Program is the funding
8 dedicated to school enhancement projects. This
9 funding focuses largely on interior spaces of the
10 building and provides upgrades to bathrooms, science
11 labs, gymnasiums, and auditoriums to name a few. It
12 also allows for the conversion of spaces in a school
13 building to better meet the needs of students and
14 staff. Beyond our steadfast focus to keep our
15 buildings water tight and in a state of good repair,
16 city-wide initiatives such as the recent Air
17 Conditioning program and Physical Education for All
18 as well as funding from elected officials are the two
19 other main avenues that a project could be funded
20 through the five-year capital plan.

21 As I mentioned, we plan and budget in five-year
22 cycles with yearly amendments. The process starts in
23 November with the publication of our proposed
24 amendment. We then engage with each Community
25 Education Council to discuss the amendment and to

1
2 solicit feedback and input on the Plan from CEC
3 members, as well as other stakeholders including
4 Council Members, other elected officials, and
5 community groups. Public feedback is an important
6 component of our annual capital planning process.

7 After this collaborative process, we release an
8 updated amendment in February. This February
9 Amendment, which is what we are discussing today,
10 then goes to the Panel for Educational Policy for a
11 vote and adoption in the spring. The proposed
12 amendment then comes before the City Council to be
13 voted on and adopted as part of the budget process in
14 June.

15 The February 2022 Proposed Amendment to the
16 Fiscal Year 2020-2024 Plan totals \$20.6 billion and
17 is the largest capital plan in history.

18 The funding breaks down is as follows: The
19 Capacity Program, totaling \$9.84 billion; the Capital
20 Investment category, with \$7.26 billion; and finally
21 our Mandated Programs at \$3.51 billion. Here are a
22 few highlights of our February 2022 Proposed
23 Amendment to the Capital Plan: \$8.44 billion for
24 over 60,000 seats in fulfillment of the city's
25 commitment to reduce overcrowding as well as advance

1
2 equity; \$1.40 billion in support of Early Learn, 3-K
3 and Pre-K for All Initiatives; \$194 million for
4 electrical work to support air conditioning in all
5 classrooms.

6 Our seat need is determined through supply and
7 demand analysis. On the demand side, the total
8 projected enrollment includes two components:
9 demographic projections and projected housing
10 development. Our demographic consultant, who has
11 been working with us for over a decade, takes in to
12 account birth rates, past enrollment and population
13 shifts. We then work with other city agencies to
14 collect comprehensive permit and planning data on the
15 future housing development and rezoning citywide.

16 On the supply side, we use our Blue Book as the
17 basis to determine number of seats available in our
18 portfolio and add on new school buildings in the our
19 pipeline. We then compare the demand and supply and
20 identify areas where there is a gap. Working with
21 our partners at the DOE, we overlay this with impacts
22 from ongoing portfolio changes. At the end of this
23 process, we produce our recommendation for seat need.
24 This is repeated annually, so that we can closely

1
2 monitor the trend and identify any shift that may
3 trigger a change in seat need.

4 Over the past several years, we have seen a
5 decline in both public school enrollment and the
6 city's birth rate which has led to a decreased need
7 for new capacity. This pattern, combined with
8 persistent overcrowding in certain sub-districts,
9 required a shift in funding to meet capacity needs in
10 targeted areas of the city. In order to respond to
11 the changing needs of our city, we have strategically
12 shifted funding from the New Capacity Program to
13 other capacity programs such as Facility
14 Replacements, Class Size Reduction, and Capacity to
15 Support the Removal of TCUs.

16 By reallocating this funding across all capacity
17 programs, we will be able to advance equity across
18 school districts. We remain committed and are well
19 on our way to identifying locations for all new seats
20 funded in this plan through the New Capacity program.
21 Of these 45,883 seats, there are 23,990 seats already
22 in progress and another roughly 7,000 currently in
23 the pipeline. That means that we are nearly two-
24 thirds of the way toward identifying these needed
25 seats.

1
2 Last year, we received over \$800 million to
3 support the Early Education Initiatives which sought
4 to expand 3K citywide as well as upgrade certain
5 Early Learn centers as part of the ACS transfer of a
6 number of sites into the DOE's portfolio. This
7 September, we will be opening one of the largest new
8 Pre-K centers located at 47-01 111th Street in
9 Corona, Queens. This exciting project has been a
10 partnership with The Hall of Science, the City
11 Council, and other local elected officials and the
12 community.

13 Additionally, we are scheduled to open over 2,900
14 3K seats at 23 sites across all five boroughs this
15 fall. In addition, we are opening 11 new schools
16 this September totaling 5,706 seats citywide. One of
17 the 11 schools that we are proudest of is a 456 seat
18 D75 school located on the Petrides campus in Staten
19 Island. This state of the art facility will provide
20 specialized educational spaces and the resources for
21 students with severe disabilities and physical needs.
22 This building is part of our continued commitment to
23 providing the D75 community with the facilities
24 necessary to advance learning and educational
25 opportunities.

1
2 Our Capital Plan recognizes a need of over 3,000
3 dedicated D75 seats and we are working steadfast to
4 fulfill that commitment. This year, we were happy to
5 have broken ground on the largest project in our
6 history. A much needed 3,066 seat high school on
7 Northern Boulevard in Queens. Last month, we were
8 joined by Council Member Stevens and Chancellor Banks
9 at his first groundbreaking event at Edward L. Grant
10 in the Bronx, which was promised in partnership with
11 the Council as part of the Jerome Avenue Rezoning.
12 We also broke ground last week with Council Member
13 Ariola on PS 47, in Broad Channel, replacing a
14 building that was devastated by Superstorm Sandy in
15 2012.

16 While creating seats is a vital part of what we
17 do, we cannot forget that 200 of our buildings are
18 over 100-years-old and the majority of our buildings
19 are over 50-years-old.

20 The Plan directs a total of \$7.26 billion for
21 capital investments. The Capital Investment portion
22 of the Plan includes two main categories: \$3.27
23 billion for the Capital Improvement Program, which
24 includes upgrades and necessary repairs such as roof
25 and façade work, structural repairs, and safeguarding

1
2 our buildings against water infiltration; and \$2.81
3 billion for School Enhancement Projects, which funds
4 the realignment of existing facilities to better suit
5 instructional needs, along with bathroom upgrades,
6 science labs, accessibility, and other necessary
7 improvements.

8 Every year, we make progress on removing TCUs.
9 This Plan dedicates \$352 million for the ongoing
10 removal of these units with dedicated capacity
11 funding allocated to construct needed seats to allow
12 for the removal of the TCUs. To date, we have
13 removed 266 of the original 354 TCUs. Of the 88
14 remaining TCUs, we have plans in process to remove
15 another 45 and we are developing plans to remove the
16 last 43. Other highlights in our capital investment
17 category include: \$200 million for safety and
18 security; \$142.1 million for specialty room upgrades;
19 \$100 million for athletic field upgrades; and \$61.5
20 million for bathroom upgrades.

21 The February – the Proposed February Amendment
22 allocates \$1.02 billion for technology which includes
23 funding for Emergency Remote Learning student
24 devices, increasing bandwidth in school buildings,
25 and creating a disaster recovery data center. Since

1
2 the start of the pandemic, ensuring that all students
3 have access to remote learning devices has been a
4 priority. The DOE has purchased over 500,000 LTE
5 enabled iPads.

6 Prioritizing equity, the DOE started distributing
7 centrally-purchased, internet-enabled devices to our
8 most underserved students. The DOE continues to fill
9 device requests as they are received from schools to
10 ensure families have what they need to participate.
11 We are grateful for the Council's longstanding and
12 continuous investment in technology for our schools.

13 The Amendment continues to recognize the
14 importance of ensuring access for all students and
15 has emphasized accessibility as a major priority. As
16 a direct result of support from the Council and our
17 community partners, the February Amendment continues
18 to include \$750 million towards the critically
19 important work of making our school buildings more
20 accessible. We greatly appreciate the Council's
21 support in this area. In recognition of this
22 critical work, the DOE has established an Office of
23 Accessibility Planning within the DOE's Division of
24 Space Management and School Facilities.

1
2 Working together, the DOE and SCA have planned
3 and approved 57 new accessibility projects in our
4 historically underserved districts. We are committed
5 to making a third of the buildings in every district
6 fully accessible and at least half of elementary
7 school buildings fully or partially accessible.

8 The Mandated Programs with \$3.51 billion
9 allocated, includes \$650 million for boiler
10 conversions in buildings currently using Number four
11 oil. The remaining funds are assigned to cover other
12 required costs, including code and local law
13 compliance, the SCA's wrap-up insurance, and
14 completion of projects from the prior Plan.

15 Many factors contribute to the successes we have
16 experienced in implementing our capital plans, but
17 one of our strongest core values is our commitment to
18 our MWLBE contractors. The SCA is continually
19 developing a larger and more diverse group of
20 contractors who can bid on our work and complete
21 large and complicated jobs. We have been incredibly
22 successful in increasing the participation of
23 minority-owned businesses. In this Plan so far, the
24 SCA has obligated over \$919 million in prime
25

1
2 contractor obligations and \$810 million in sub-
3 contractor awards to MWLBE firms.

4 In this fiscal year alone, to date the SCA has
5 obligated roughly \$135 million to MWLBE firms in
6 prime contract awards, of which \$32 million were in
7 our Mentor Program. Our Mentor Program seeks to
8 cultivate smaller, MWLBE firms by providing them with
9 the skills and experience needed to develop and grow
10 within the construction industry and to establish
11 long-term business relationships with the SCA. We
12 currently have 150 firms in our mentor program and
13 roughly 85 percent of those firms have won contracts.
14 We intend to award \$100 million in our Mentor Program
15 to small contractors by the end of the fiscal year.

16 While we are incredibly proud of our
17 accomplishments, we continue to identify more ways to
18 build on these successes. As a way to further
19 support and develop our mentor firms, our maximum
20 contract value that they are able to bid on will be
21 increased to \$3 million in July.

22 In conclusion, I can't overstate the importance
23 of the partnership between the City Council, the SCA,
24 and the DOE. This partnership is vital to the
25 successful implementation of our Capital Plan which

1
2 seeks to provide the state of the art educational
3 facilities that our students need to succeed. I
4 thank you for allowing me to testify before you today
5 and I, along with my colleagues at the Department of
6 Education, will be happy to answer any questions you
7 may have.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: All yours Chair.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Good morning.
10 Thank you for your testimony. Uhm, I had a few
11 questions uhm, I wanted to know for example in my
12 district, I have a school, PS6 on Snider and it
13 hasn't seen uhm, investment, capital investment in
14 over 25 years. So, we wanted to know, how does the
15 SCA decide which playgrounds are prioritized,
16 investment, funding plan and excluding TCU related
17 work?

18 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you for that question Chair.
19 Actually, I think you and I met a couple weeks ago
20 and we were able to look into PS6 in particular, we
21 did notice that there was a broken slide. It's been
22 removed and a new one is on order. But that's it, I
23 think you're pointing to a larger question, which is
24 we have - I spoke about it briefly during my
25 testimony assisting by which we have architects and

1
2 engineers go out and look at all of our school
3 buildings every year. And the architects and
4 engineers rate each component on a scale of one to
5 five, five being the worst.

6 And so, that helps us prioritize which systems
7 are in need of repair. I will say that there is \$72
8 million in our capital plan just for playground
9 upgrades, not associated with TCU removals. And you
10 know while we recognize how vital outdoor play is for
11 our students, there is limited funding and you know,
12 we work to ensure that we are addressing as many
13 playgrounds as possible.

14 We can't forget that 200 of our buildings are
15 over 100-years-old and the majority are over 50-
16 years-old. So, the plan does direct \$7.26 for
17 capital investments but the majority of the funding
18 is to ensure that our buildings remain water tight.

19 And I will say that we have increased the funding
20 in the playground category by almost \$40 million.
21 Most of which is due to the increase from the
22 Stormwater Resiliency Program, which we were just
23 given additional funding for.

24 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Uhm thank you. No, for
25 example, I noticed that this 22 playground with the

1
2 projects in process, will they continue to be open to
3 the public or are there additional in review for
4 inclusion in the School Yards to Playground Program?

5 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you for that. I'm going to
6 kick that over to my partners at the DOE since the
7 funding to keep them open is through operational
8 dollars.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Alright, if we can go ahead
10 and unmute John Shea.

11 JOHN SHEA: Okay, there we go. Thank you Chair
12 Joseph for the question. The School Yards to
13 Playground Program, we have two types of programs
14 where we share outdoor space with the public. We
15 have the jointly operated playgrounds with the Parks
16 Department and then we have a program called, School
17 Yards to Playgrounds, which we open DOE playgrounds
18 to the community after school hours on the weekends.
19 We have over 250 of our school buildings in the
20 School Yards to Playground program already and we're
21 always looking at that list when playgrounds get
22 renovated, sometimes people ask us to put those in
23 the playgrounds and that is all funding dependent.
24 We work very closely with OMB and the Council to try
25 to identify sources of funding. There are real costs

1
2 associated with having custodial staff come in and
3 open those playgrounds and cleanup after the
4 community is finished with them and have them get
5 ready for school children the next day. So, we will
6 continue to review the list and work with OMB and the
7 Council to try to identify funding sources for those
8 playgrounds and if we find it, we're happy to open
9 it.

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yeah, because the open space
11 is very important, especially in our communities
12 where green space is not available to our New York
13 City students. So, having these playgrounds
14 available and open for the students are very
15 important, especially around the city and I'm sure my
16 colleagues could attest to that as well.

17 JOHN SHEA: Absolutely, we agree.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: One of the things I've
19 noticed in visiting buildings and working buildings
20 in the last 22 years and you mentioned that in your
21 testimony, the schools are crumbling. As you
22 mentioned, some of them are 100-years-old. Some of
23 them are 50-years-old. Older than the children,
24 older than the staffers that come into this building.

1
2 So, how do you plan on uhm, using rebuilding
3 schools also as a way to long-term capacity in
4 underdeveloped sites by replacing buildings with
5 larger schools? What's the plan with that? If you
6 can share that with us please.

7 NINA KUBOTA: Yeah, I'm glad you brought that up.
8 Thank you for that question. I mean, I do want to
9 sort of put this into perspective right. You said
10 it, I said it too. 200 buildings over 100-years-old
11 but I also think that we also have to remember, we
12 have 140 million square feet of space. It's a lot, a
13 lot of space. Uhm, 1500 buildings at average age is
14 65-years-old. I know I'm not saying anything new to
15 you. And so, we have increased funding in the
16 facilities replacement program this time around,
17 recognizing that we do need to look at buildings
18 holistically. But remember, we don't replace our
19 buildings that frequently because there are a lot of
20 challenges, including temporarily relocating students
21 while this occurs. We were very lucky to have had
22 found the space for PS47 students to go to while that
23 building is being replaced but it - there are a lot
24 of challenges, including also dealing with State
25 Historic Preservation Office. They don't like to see

1
2 buildings knocked down. We have to definitely keep a
3 lot of the elements there, so we you know, we are
4 working with our colleagues at the DOE uhm, you know
5 to discuss through this collaborative process how we
6 can replace certain buildings. So, we are studying
7 that again with the increased funding that we
8 allocated.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Because that sends a type of
10 message that as soon as they are entering the
11 building, you want to them to value education. You
12 want them to be happy in the buildings and you want
13 them to come in and thrive. But if the building I'm
14 sitting in is in shambles, I'm not inspired to learn.
15 So, I'm looking to change that narrative for our New
16 York City Children. We owe them that much that they
17 can still sit in a building that is up to par in
18 2022.

19 I have another question for you. LL167, I know
20 we talked about seats, I wanted to better understand
21 how you come about uhm, the seat number that you gave
22 me, 45,883 seats. What the Council and public can't
23 see. How can you tell me exactly, how do you get the
24 number? What's the formula that made you come up
25 with those numbers?

1
2 So, we spoke about it briefly, basically it's a
3 demand supply analysis right. So, uhm, I'm probably
4 at this point, I'd like to turn it over to my
5 colleague Cora Liu to discuss a little bit more and
6 also some of the [INAUDIBLE 39:47]. I do want to say
7 that we are in compliance with Local Law 167 but we
8 understood that you know things might not be as
9 clear, so we have made a couple of changes in the
10 past week or so.

11 So, is my colleague Cora -

12 CORA LIU: Yes, I'm here Nina, thank you.

13 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you.

14 CORA LIU: And thank you Chair for the question.
15 I'm happy to go through a little bit more detail
16 about how we're arriving - arrive at the seating
17 we're currently showing in our plan. As Nina
18 mentioned in the testimony, we do currently uh, have
19 a reducing need based on the most recent trend. That
20 is based on a demand supply analysis.

21 On the demand end, our total enrollment
22 projection is based on two components. Enrollment
23 projection that is produced by our demographic
24 consultant. He has been working with us for over a
25 decade. Is very familiar with the New York City

1
2 trend and neighborhood. We get our information from
3 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. We got our
4 information for birth data. He looks at the past
5 enrollment. He looks at the population shifts.

6 On top of the enrollment projection, we also work
7 with our colleagues at other city agencies,
8 especially just Department of City Planning to obtain
9 building permit information, future housing
10 development, rezoning information. So, when we
11 combine the projection with the Housing Development,
12 that gives us the total projection enrollment.

13 On the supply end bluebook is our baseline. We
14 look at, we have a formula to assess the capacity of
15 our school, of every building we have in our system.
16 We then look at all the other projects we currently
17 have in the pipeline. That gives us the total supply
18 of seats citywide. We compare the demand with the
19 supply. Where there is a gap is where we recommends
20 the seat need.

21 Uhm, in terms of Local Law 167, the formula that
22 I just briefly described has been shared many times
23 with the public, with different stakeholders and
24 groups who are interested. We have posted a one page
25 description to help everyone - to walk everyone

1
2 through in this process. And again, if there is any
3 interest to get more understanding, we're happy to
4 set up a meeting.

5 Right before the pandemic, we actually had
6 brought our consultant to meet with the City Council
7 members or some of the staffers to walk through the
8 methodology, the detailed methodology behind
9 projection. We're happy to doing that again. Thank
10 you.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Just a quick follow-up. How
12 many of those seats came through rezoning? Whether
13 small or large, how many of them?

14 CORA LIU: I don't have that number breakdown
15 right now but we can get back to you.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, thank you. In terms
17 of class size, you know that's something I'm very
18 passionate about. Uhm, is this funding current five
19 year plan enough to reach the city's class size
20 target.

21 Uhm, and let's say enrollment reverse. Will the
22 new capacity increase and will you be able to
23 maintain the current funding levels of class size
24 reduction in capacity projects?
25

1

2

NINA KUBOTA: Thank you for that question Chair.

3

I do want to bring on Dan Weisberg, our First Deputy

4

Chancellor to briefly discuss class size because as

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you know, funding within capacity, we have maintained

6

that and we've increased it for class size reduction

7

but that's only one small part of the puzzle to

8

achieving lower class size.

9

DAN WEISBERG: Thank you very much Chair Joseph

10

and we certainly share your passion for making sure

11

that all of our students have a good, personalized

12

experience and our educators have the ability to

13

develop relationships with each of our students. And

14

that means having class sizes that are reasonable all

15

across the city.

16

The good news is that class size has been

17

reduced, so we see over the last year that we have

18

data, it's down 6.5 percent across the city and

19

that's based on a lot of hard work including by the

20

members of this Committee and I'm very grateful for

21

the \$18 million in funding to reduce class size,

22

which translated into 140 additional teachers being

23

hired across almost 50 schools and that helps a lot.

24

There's the capital side of it Chair Joseph that you

25

referred to and President Kubota refers to and I

1
2 think we have about \$740 million in our program for
3 capital program for class size reduction, which is
4 about creating more seats where we need to. The
5 other piece that doesn't always get mentioned, when
6 we talk about class size reduction, that I also want
7 to thank the members of this Committee for their
8 advocacy on, is fair student funding. Which has put
9 something like \$600 million in additional funding
10 into our school budgets and a lot of that is used for
11 additional teachers and additional school staff both
12 to decrease class size but also to increase services
13 at the school level for our students.

14 So, you know all of that uhm, has come together
15 to reduce class size and it's not just the class size
16 overall, I get it, that's just a number but the
17 number of students in over utilized buildings has
18 dropped by about ten percent. The number of over
19 utilized buildings has dropped by about ten percent.

20 So, we are making progress but you mentioned
21 something Chair Joseph that's really important. Part
22 of the reason class size has been reduced is not a
23 good thing and that Chancellor Banks has talked
24 about. We've lost about 120,000 students over the
25 last five years. It's a very significant drop in

1
2 enrollment and that is something we are very
3 committed working with Chair Joseph and the members
4 of this Committee and our elected officials at every
5 level to win back the trust that we need to win back
6 in order to reverse that decline that we've seen over
7 the last several years even predating COVID.

8 So, you're specific question I want to get to and
9 would ask President Kubota for some help here. You
10 know, if we are successful in reversing the declines
11 and enrollment that we have seen and do see an
12 increase as we hope to in enrollment over the next
13 five years, do we have sufficient funding to meet our
14 class size targets?

15 I think that's a good question and I wouldn't
16 want to - you know my general sense would be no, we
17 would need more funding at that point in order to
18 meet our targets but would ask President Kubota if
19 she has any additional comments.

20 NINA KUBOTA: Yes, thank you for that Dan. I
21 will say that that's part of the reason why we do an
22 annual amendment to the Capital Plan and also why we
23 do our annual seat need analysis every year. Because
24 we do recognize that you know trends change. There
25 could be a shift. We did see enrollment peak about

1
2 ten years ago, almost 15 years ago at this point but
3 we maintain you know, we constantly review it and
4 actually Cora, would you like to speak about our
5 annual process.

6 CORA LIU: Sure, so Chair, the process I
7 explained earlier is not a one time thing. We repeat
8 it every year to make sure we keep on top of the
9 latest trend, right. The birth rate enrollment,
10 anything or the impact from pandemic, we're closely
11 monitoring anything that could change our seat need
12 analysis.

13 As a result of the annual analysis, we do - if
14 there is a huge shift, we do adjust our seat need
15 funding or program. What you saw in December
16 amendment is a very good example where we adjust it
17 down because the seat need is lower. In the past, we
18 have had examples where we changed seating up because
19 the enrollment was increasing. So, we want to make
20 sure our program is actively reflecting the latest
21 trend. If the enrollment is increasing, we will make
22 sure our annual analysis reflect that trend and will
23 work with all partners to make that adjustment.

24 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Uhm, thank you. I just have
25 another follow up. Is the class size reduction in

1
2 the five year plan? Is it enough to reach the blue
3 books target? And again, what – you gave me numbers
4 but what is the class size seats? How much do we
5 really, really need in case enrollments come back.
6 How much do we really need? And we're going to go
7 back to overcrowded and I've been to buildings the
8 last couple of – I walked through school buildings,
9 which is one of my favorite buildings to be in and I
10 still saw a lot of overcrowding, so we got a lot of
11 work to do on that end as well.

12 So, what's the number? What's the class size?
13 What's the seat we really need? Is 45,000 enough if
14 we're looking to attract back the 100 and over
15 100,000 students that we lost prepandemic?

16 NINA KUBOTA: So, uhm, so the 45,838 seats is
17 based on our projections. Uhm, so that is what we
18 feel that the – what will eliminate in terms of
19 overall picture right. Over crowding both current
20 and projected.

21 So, now the Class Size Reduction program is when
22 we do our analysis, we look at it at a what we say is
23 a subdistrict. Look, so there maybe schools that are
24 overcrowded even within that subdistrict even though
25 we have, you know we don't have seat need in that

1
2 particular subdistrict, we can use the funds
3 potentially to address seat overcrowding in a smaller
4 geographic area where there is not seat need.

5 So, we feel that there is enough funding and as
6 Cora mentioned, you know we continuously monitor the
7 enrollment and the trends and if need be, we can
8 shift funding into the category as needed.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, I'll continue back
10 with more questioning but I'll allow my colleagues to
11 ask some questions as well.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair and just to
13 remind Council Members that joined us in the middle
14 for this portion of the hearing on the capital
15 portion, again, we're not on expense, we're on
16 capital. We're limiting CM's to three minutes
17 because we are on a tight schedule, so we're first
18 going to turn to Council Member Salamanca followed by
19 Council Member Stevens, Avilés and Hanks and more to
20 follow but we'll start with Salamanca.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you. Can you
23 hear me?

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.
25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Yeah, first, I want to
3 congratulate the Chair on your first oversight
4 hearing, congratulations.

5 Uhm, so my question is the School Construction
6 Authority. My first question is in regards to growth
7 in communities. Communities such as the Bronx as a
8 whole, in the last four years, I see major
9 development occurring.

10 In my district alone, we're talking about 5,000
11 new units in the last four years. How is your agency
12 monitoring the growth to meet the educational needs?
13 And if you can please just give me direct answers
14 because I have two more questions that I would like
15 to ask.

16 NINA KUBOTA: Sure, uhm Cora, to you want to talk
17 about the planning that we do with City Planning and
18 other agencies?

19 CORA LIU: Sure, so as I mentioned before, I
20 guess there are two parts to my answer. We do work
21 with City Planning who gets near housing development
22 data from DOB, EDC, HPD to make sure any type of
23 housing development projects are included in our
24 numbers when we project seat needs.

1
2 On the outer end, we also work with City Planning
3 or other city need agency when there is a rezoning.
4 We want to make sure we are in that conversation at
5 the very beginning. The projects we just broke
6 ground floor at Edward L. Grant is a very perfect
7 example. We were there in the conversation on the
8 table, so when the drone rezoning was authorized or
9 approved, we already have a site identified from our
10 school.

11 So, we are working with a lot of city partners to
12 make sure we are in those conversations to make sure
13 impacts is addressed as part of the large scale
14 development.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright, I am going to
16 continue to monitor that. Uhm, alright, my second
17 question is, I heard the gentlemen speaking about the
18 decline in enrollment. Uhm, you know I think one of
19 the challenges in declining enrollment is that these
20 new Charter schools that are coming in are providing
21 technology. They are providing resources that we are
22 failing to provide our students.

23 Perfect example, I have a schools Hunts Point
24 where I allocated a half a million dollars for a new
25 computer tech lab and they purchased the equipment

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2

but the infrastructure of the building, the

3

electrical did not support it. So, that building,

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that part of the building just sat empty and I had to

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allocate another half a million dollars so that I can

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get the electrical work.

7

What is your plan to upgrade these buildings.

8

The only way that we're going to keep the – the only

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way we're going to reduce the decline of students in

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public schools is that we provide them with the

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environment and resources that they need. So, how

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are you going to do that?

13

DAN WEINBERGER: Couldn't agree more. Thank you

14

very much Council Member and by the way, we would be

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happy to talk to you offline about that particular

16

school and whether there are ways we can uh, because

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I know we're doing a lot of work. John Shea can talk

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about it. I realize you have limited time.

19

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20

DAN WEINBERGER: To upgrade the electrical plant

21

at these buildings. One quick thing again Council

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Member; I'd be happy to talk to you offline, the

23

decline in enrollment over the last five years is not

24

mainly due to Charter enrollment, so we're happy to

25

share that data with you but we agree 100 percent, we

1
2 cannot win families back unless we provide them with
3 first class facilities and we're committed to working
4 with you all to do that.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright and I'm going
6 to leave with this Madam Chair (LOST AUDIO 55:01) -

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Salamanca,
8 give us one second. Hold on. There we go.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright, I just want
10 to thank Madam Chair for the opportunity and I just
11 want to close with, I have many collocated schools in
12 my Council District in terms of public schools and
13 Charter schools. And I know that as part of the
14 agreement, all the resources that charter schools
15 get, the public school is supposed to get. It's a
16 matching program.

17 I'm visiting my public schools and my charter
18 schools and my public school sections look nothing
19 like the charter schools. Charter schools are much
20 cleaner, they have more resources, you know they have
21 better staffing. The walls are clean, they are
22 painted and so, uhm, I'm just curious, is you agency
23 actually inspecting these schools to ensure that our
24 public schools and collocated schools and charter
25 schools look very similar?

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can we unmute the First
3 Deputy Chancellor?

4 DAN WEISBERG: Thank you and Tom Taratko may want
5 to weigh in on this about whether we directly,
6 whether we inspect that. We do make sure that the
7 resources are there. Exactly how the buildings look,
8 how they were used. That's a separate question and
9 agree with you. They should all be, they don't have
10 to look exactly the same but they should have the
11 same first class facilities and support and that
12 isn't always the case Council Member. I think that's
13 right. Tom, did you want to weigh in on that?

14 THOMAS TARATKO: Well, uh, in two parts. So, we
15 do make sure that for dollar for dollar we match
16 every dollar spent on any charter facilities upgrade
17 with a DOA upgrade of its own. How that's selected,
18 we work with the principals in the DOE schools for
19 what projects they think are beneficial to their
20 schools. As far as the maintenance, I don't want to
21 step on John's toes but the same school custodian
22 maintains those spaces throughout.

23 So, we have instances of a cleaner school, that's
24 something that I think could probably handled with
25 field staff but I would let John Shea chime in on

1
2 that. We just submitted our, I think it's a biannual
3 report to the City Council Friday. Well, at least we
4 did eternally in the DOE, so it will be coming across
5 soon on the spending over the last year and it's
6 greatly reduced because of COVID and the lack of
7 folks that we've had in our building, but we expect
8 that to ramp back up.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I want to chime in real
10 quick uhm, real quick with my colleague. I think
11 what we're trying to say is colocation should be
12 equitable. I shouldn't have to walk into a building
13 and see one side that looks amazing, attractive,
14 beautiful and the other side is crumbling and what
15 kind of message do we send to our children?

16 So, those are the things that we need to answer.
17 We can't co-locate and one look really bad and one
18 looks really nice and we have to make sure it's
19 equitable.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you Madam Chair
21 and I'm done with my questions. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
23 turn to Council Member Stevens.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.
25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Good morning and thank
3 you Madam Chair and I have a couple of questions.
4 I'm going to ask my questions first and then if you
5 could answer, uhm, one of them is just kind of
6 piggybacking off of what my colleague Council Member
7 Salamanca said, which was, you know I want to know
8 more about like how we are deciding with the growth
9 and communities around what schools and what they get
10 because even in my district, I asked the question
11 around, you know they're saying we don't have enough
12 seats at the elementary school level but there is
13 nothing being addressed with the middle school and
14 the high school and then the response is just more
15 around, kids can go outside the district. But we
16 should really be thinking about how finding good,
17 inequitable schools in our communities and most of
18 our schools, we have to refer out because we just
19 don't have the capacity.

20 And so, my other question is, why has the hazard
21 building violations increased so much and what's
22 being done to address those violations? And is there
23 a list of currently planned school enhancement
24 projects and why is the number of planned school
25 capacity projects decreased so much?

1
2 NINA KUBOTA: So, John, thank you for that. I
3 didn't really get the last question but that's fine.
4 John, do you want to talk -

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: The last question was just
6 why has the number of planned school capacity
7 projects decreased so much?

8 NINA KUBOTA: Okay, thank you for that.

9 JOHN SHEA: Sure, and it's a great question
10 Council Member Stevens. So, I'll say a couple of
11 things. Number one, we've been working very hard
12 with the Department of Buildings to analyze our
13 hazardous violations. First thing I want to say is
14 that if we get a hazardous violation, it's
15 immediately addressed. We stabilize the condition
16 and whether it's something that rises to a situation
17 where we have to refer it to the SCA for a capital
18 project or whether we do it in house, we make sure
19 that immediately the building is safe.

20 In a lot of cases for exterior stuff, I know
21 we've talked a lot over the years about scaffolding.
22 That's why you see so much sidewalk breaching is, we
23 throw that stuff up immediately to keep everybody
24 safe right away.

1
2 There's been some legislation changes,
3 particularly on the vertical transportation, our
4 elevator side which have driven some of that increase
5 in the hazardous violations but again, those are code
6 requirements where the units themselves are safe but
7 we're going back and if you see in the capital plan
8 there is money put aside for some of those elevator
9 repairs. We're working through those.

10 The other thing is with the Department of
11 Buildings, they issue, reissue violations for the
12 same issue that they find in many cases. So, if
13 we've stabilized the situation and it's either
14 subject to capital work or we are in the process of
15 remediating the condition and the Building Department
16 comes back, we might get two, three, four, five
17 violations for the same thing.

18 So, we're working with the Building Department to
19 try to recognize that and make the numbers reflect a
20 little bit more realistically what we actually have
21 out there.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, the other question, is
23 there a list of currently planned school enhancement
24 projects?

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 NINA KUBOTA: Yes, there all in the capital plan
3 but we'd be happy to just send you a list of those
4 that are in your district if that would be helpful.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes, that would be very
6 helpful and just the last question, the number of
7 planned school capacity projects, why is it
8 decreasing?

9 NINA KUBOTA: I think we're just seeing
10 enrollment. I think the First Deputy Chancellor said
11 it before, we are seeing enrollment decreasing. We
12 have seen for the past ten years birth rates have
13 been decreasing, so I think this is just sort of the
14 ongoing trend for the past ten years that we've been
15 seeing a decrease.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
18 call on Council Member Avilés.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Good morning. Thank you
21 so much uhm Chair for this hearing and thank you
22 everyone for participating and my colleagues. I
23 guess I have a two part question. Under the - uh, I
24 would like to know, how can we guarantee that the
25 shift and the class size formula will not result in

1
2 pushing out specialized programs such as D75 that
3 already really struggle to find space within
4 community schools.

5 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you for that question. Cora,
6 would you mind talking a little bit about the formula
7 a little more?

8 CORA LIU: Sure. Uhm, so our – the changes in
9 the bluebook calculation this year is to reduce
10 classroom capacities, meaning up grades, grades 4-12.
11 That change does not really mean that we need to move
12 or relocate any of the D75 programs out of the
13 existing collocative space.

14 As a matter fact, in the capacity program, we
15 have increased the funding for D75 seats or increased
16 it from 2,344 to over 3,000 seats. And we have a
17 cross departmental committee that is working and
18 looking at all the data we have whether it is number
19 of kids, you know the average distance when you
20 travel or the number of kids served within your home
21 district to really identify more opportunities where
22 we can create more seats in a faster way to serve the
23 increasing need of D75 space programs.

24

25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILĚS: In terms of like the
3 overall target, where are you in meeting the full
4 need of the D75 seats that we need citywide.

5 CORA LIU: I will probably give this back to the
6 Department of Education. We have made great progress
7 to create D75 new seats as part of the new capacity
8 program. I think out of the three cells and seats we
9 have already either brought online or in the process
10 of bringing online more than half of them. And as I
11 mentioned, we're looking for creative ways or other
12 projects to increase that opportunity but at the same
13 time, there is another effort at the Department of
14 Education where they look at existing buildings to
15 create more spaces to support the D75 program
16 expansion.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILĚS: Well, uhm, thank you so
18 much and I'm in - I represent District 38 in South
19 Brooklyn and covering school districts 15 and 20 and
20 we have situations where new school buildings are
21 going up or school buildings that have already been
22 built are being changed and D75 programs being zeroed
23 out and being pushed much further away from our
24 community and we've had a real dearth of D75 seats

1
2 here available to our children and our district. So,
3 I'd love to talk more about that specifically.

4 Thank you. I have more questions but we'll get
5 you on the second round.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

7 DAN WEISBERG: We would love to sit down with you
8 Council Member and talk to you about the need for D75
9 seats closer to home in Districts 15 and 20. So, we
10 would love to have that conversation. I would ask
11 staff to make sure that we follow up on that as soon
12 as possible. Thank you for that question.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
14 turn to Council Member Hanks.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: Good morning. Uhm, I
17 would like to congratulate Chair, Madam Chair Joseph
18 on her first hearing. My question is very simple.
19 Last year the federal government passed historic
20 infrastructure bill. Has there been any guidance or
21 efforts to secure funding for schools whether it's
22 for resiliency replacing lead pipes in schools or
23 other efforts?

24 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you for that question. Dan,
25 do you, do you want to get this question?

1
2 DAN WEINBERGER: I want to ask John Shea if he
3 has information on specifically on the infrastructure
4 bill. I have not seen specific information about how
5 that federal funding is flowing to schools.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: Okay, so the other
7 question I have is particular to my district. When
8 is the construction completion date for the 45
9 Waverly Place School and when will the school be
10 ready to open? So, this is on Waverly, Waverly Place
11 uhm well off of Charge E Street in District 49.

12 (UNIDENTIFIED) So, I guess I'll go first on the
13 first question. Yes, we have worked very closely
14 with our finance office on stimulus funding to
15 address facilities infrastructure needs at the
16 buildings level. Mostly in ventilation repairs but
17 it's also covered other eligible expenses and we have
18 a plan for that. So, we have gotten a significant
19 amount of stimulus money to address some of those
20 things and it's been extraordinarily helpful.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: Very good and my second
22 question about the construction completion date on
23 the 45 Waverly Place School. When will it be ready
24 to open?

1
2 NINA KUBOTA: So, it is supposed to open this
3 September. So, it will be ready for September, so.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: Okay, thank you very much.

5 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
7 turn to Council Member Louis.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you. Congrats Madam
10 Chair on your first oversight hearing and thank you
11 to the SCA Dream Team for coming out today.

12 President Kubota, I want to thank you and I
13 appreciate the overview of SCA's capital commitment
14 and I know that the pandemic definitely put a strain
15 on previous plans but overall, uhm, I think some of
16 my colleagues and I feel that the SCA has shown a
17 decline in its capital commitment plan over the next
18 three years. So, I just have a few questions and
19 then you and your team could jump in and answer.

20 Council District 45 has a need for retrofits and
21 upgrades and I wanted to know how SCA is going to
22 address the next capital commitment going forward.
23 For example, we have a limited amount of schools in
24 our district and some of the capital plans that we've
25 addressed over time, I would say in my last two and a

1
2 half years that I've been here but even before that,
3 IS 285 Meyer Levin Junior High School for the last
4 five years has begged SCA for assistance with
5 upgrades for the school track, floors, the windows to
6 the gym are falling apart. Some of them don't even
7 open and the very ancient, I would say it was
8 probably created around Brady Bunch aired. The
9 locker room has been falling apart and has hurt staff
10 members and students and we've never gotten an update
11 on that.

12 Tilden High School needed an upgrade to their
13 field, never got an update on that. PS 208 have
14 bathrooms that are from the 50's or 60's and a
15 hydroponic lab that had materials and technical
16 things that were ordered and abandoned, they were
17 never, ever, ever installed in the school.

18 IS 240 never got an upgrade on stem labs and
19 Midwood High School has \$700,000 in its coffer for
20 air conditioning, never got an update. And last but
21 not least, 1833 Nordstrom Avenue, a developer decided
22 to put a school there and wanted to give it over to
23 the DOE as CA did get back to us and told us that it
24 was not viable but we still don't have any
25

1
2 information in regards to, can we have a school at
3 1833 Nordstrom Avenue?

4 So, if I can get update on those, I would
5 appreciate it. Thank you.

6 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you for those questions
7 Council Member and I don't have the specifics of the
8 schools and some of things that you raised but we
9 certainly will get back to your office as soon as
10 possible and I just do want to say if there's any you
11 know DSF is really great partner to us and if there
12 are any hazardous condition, you know the custodial
13 staff there, really good at making sure that anything
14 is taken care of immediately.

15 So, again, I would just urge if there is
16 something, please bring it to the custodial staff
17 immediately, so that if need be, John's team and our
18 team work together to make sure that there are no
19 hazardous conditions. So, sorry about that and as
20 far as we'll also have to get back to you on the 1833
21 Nordstrom Avenue. I do believe it was not viable
22 because there are no windows along either side of the
23 building. Cora, do you have any more information on
24 that?

1
2 CORA LIU: No, I think basically is what you just
3 said. There's no windows can be provided to the
4 classroom and most [INAUDIBLE 1:12:02] is absolutely
5 required. So, those space cannot be used.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Okay, there's windows now,
7 so I'm hoping that we can have that conversation
8 because they do have windows now. So, I think they
9 did some retrofitting and made it available according
10 to criteria but would love to have further
11 conversation about how we can help the falling
12 infrastructure in schools in Council District 45.
13 Thank you so much Chairwoman. Thank you SCA.

14 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
16 turn to Council Member Riley.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you Council and
19 congratulations to my sister Chair Joseph on your
20 first hearing I believe many of my colleagues asked
21 questions and the Administration answered some of
22 those questions. I'm just going to speak about
23 district specific issues. Uhm, does the SCA have any
24 more plans on how to improve our schools
25 infrastructure as in the designs of our schools. I

1
2 walked through a few schools last week and they kind
3 of look prison like. Uhm, it's no color, there is no
4 art in there. Kids don't feel excited to come to
5 school. Actually, I walked to one school and kids
6 were kind of running out of the school to kind of
7 leave.

8 And I think to share the same sentiments as
9 Council Member Salamanca, we really want to make
10 share and Chair Joseph, we really want to make sure
11 kids are excited to learn but the infrastructure in
12 these schools aren't changing. When we went to these
13 schools, which were many moons ago, is different from
14 how our kids are learning now and they still are
15 learning the same atmosphere. So, is there any plan
16 to kind of change that?

17 My second question is, does the administration
18 have any plans? I believe you guys answered this but
19 if you could just be more specific. Does the
20 Administration have any plans on opening any new
21 schools or building any new schools in any districts?
22 Uhm, and if so, how many new schools are we expecting
23 to build within the next five years? And lastly, I
24 don't know if I should ask this to you guys or DOE
25 but Imagine NYC. That was something that we really

1
2 focused on prior to the pandemic. Is there any
3 conversations on actually bringing on bringing that
4 program back?

5 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you Council Member for those
6 questions. So, I think I'd like to start with the
7 new schools and maybe Cora, you can chime in here but
8 citywide, we are building you know the 45,883 seats
9 that's identified in our new capacity section and I
10 believe that's for a total of -

11 CORA LIU: 83. 83 buildings.

12 NINA KUBOTA: 83, thank you. 83 buildings, so
13 and as we've stated, we -

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: I'm sorry President, Madam
15 President, how many of those buildings are going to
16 be in the Bronx?

17 CORA LIU: There are about 15 in the Bronx.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you.

19 NINA KUBOTA: And we are you know always looking
20 for sites but you know we have sited so far more than
21 half of those and we have another 7,000 seats in the
22 earlier stages but of being sited. So, we really
23 have - we are well underway with about two-thirds of
24 those seats. So, we still are looking for about
25 15,000 seats. Sites for seat, so.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: I have a few sites in my
3 district. I know there's a ton of sites in the
4 Bronx, so if we could definitely uh, have someone
5 walk through -

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Some time to do a walk
8 through, we could definitely find some more sites for
9 you.

10 NINA KUBOTA: Great. That would be wonderful.
11 Thank you for that. And then, the uhm, we do you
12 know - I think one of the things that we; I know
13 we're out of time and I do want to say and repeat
14 that our inventory is so large and it is old, right.
15 200 buildings over 100-years-old average age is 65
16 and you know, I think we really are still
17 experiencing deferred, you know problems with
18 deferred maintenance from the 70's. I mean, we are
19 still trying to catch up with that.

20 I mean, our buildings were you know in a state of
21 disrepair and I think we're getting to a better
22 point, however, what we would love to get to is to
23 put those, you know put art in school buildings.
24 Things like that but we're still trying to get out of
25 making sure that our buildings are water tight and

1
2 safe. And that's really where all of our — most of
3 our funding is going to.

4 Chair Joseph raised how much money do we have set
5 aside for playgrounds and unfortunately, it's only
6 \$70 million and you know that should be much higher
7 but we're still trying to make sure that all of our
8 buildings are safe and water tight.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: And thank you Madam
10 President and for sake of time Chair Joseph, I'll
11 speak with you all off line but I do feel like if we
12 don't have enough money to upgrade our schools, I
13 don't understand why we're cutting the budget for
14 education. If we want our students to learn in an
15 effective environment, we have to upgrade our
16 schools.

17 Our students cannot be learning in the same
18 schools that our parents, grand parents and that we
19 learned in. It is imperative that we upgrade these
20 schools if we're going to keep our students engaged
21 in education. So, hopefully we can figure this out
22 moving forward but I strongly believe this is not
23 where we're supposed to be cutting money from.
24 There's so many different agencies we could money
25 from and education is not one of them.

1
2 Thank you Chair Joseph and looking forward to
3 working with you all offline.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
5 call on Council Member Ariola.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you Madam Chair for
8 the time and I want to – this is a question for SCA
9 President Kubota. I first want to thank you for
10 meeting with us at PS 47. We're very happy that we
11 are getting a new school. We know all the time it
12 took for that to happen and the children had to be
13 rerouted, so to your last notice that that really
14 does have to happen before we can build new schools.
15 It was very, very time consuming but thankfully, you
16 work with the community and it got done, so thank you
17 for that.

18 But I want to just talk about something other
19 that's specific to our district, which is the pool on
20 the Beach Channel, height of the Beach Channel campus
21 at Channelview. I recently met back in early
22 February with the leadership at that school and they
23 are waiting for one part. A backflow valve to
24 complete their new pool. A lot of funding was put
25 there, a lot of work was put in and we've been

1
2 waiting. It's going to be close to six to eight
3 months now for that. When I first got involved, it
4 was back on November 12th. When SCA was asked the
5 pool status, it was to uhm, Renaldo Resales and then
6 again on February 3rd. On the 11th, we sent an email
7 again to uhm, Renaldo Resales asking for what the
8 status was and what came back to us was, due to an
9 ongoing issue of supply demand that are beyond our
10 contractors control, the back water valve is still on
11 back order. Expected delivery date remains the end
12 of March as been noted previously.

13 So, my question is, is that still the timeline
14 for this valve to become available. We have, this
15 portion of my district is on the Rockaway Peninsula.
16 I share it with Council Member Brooks-Powers and we
17 have a very high incidences of drowning on the
18 Rockaway Peninsula because a lot of the community
19 members, although it is a beach front community, do
20 not know how to swim. We fund swim safe programs and
21 yet there is not enough pools for children and adults
22 to learn how to swim.

23 We also have a lot of teams, school teams, that
24 are not able to utilize this space. So, I don't know
25 if you have the answer today, but I wanted to put it

1
2 on your radar President Kubota. So, this way, maybe
3 we can have conversations offline to see how we can
4 get this piece. If you do have an answer, I would
5 love to hear it.

6 NINA KUBOTA: Yeah, thank you Council Member.
7 It's been extremely frustrating I think for all of
8 us. I have heard about it and I believe it's still,
9 I would have to check on the timing but I know that
10 our offices have been in touch.

11 So, once we get that valve -

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 NINA KUBOTA: We will of course install and then
14 we have to go for inspections because as you know,
15 swimming pools require Department of Health signoff
16 and you know we apologize and we understand the
17 hardship of not having the pool in operation for both
18 the school and the community and we'll continue to
19 monitor the delivery and we'll alert you to any
20 changes.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: I do appreciate that.
22 Thank you.

23 NINA KUBOTA: Of course, thank you.
24
25

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Wow, sorry I was talking
3 while muted. Thank you Council Member. Next, we
4 will call on Council Member Dinowitz.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you very much.
7 Thank you Chair Joseph. Uhm, Council Member Riley
8 and Salamanca addressed a number of issues here in
9 Bronx that we have. You know it's funny, Council
10 Member Riley when he said he once, he is dealing with
11 schools that our parents and grandparents went to.

12 I actually went to the same school my dad did and
13 I taught in the same building where my mother went to
14 school and you know one of the things, it's an old
15 building. It's the Walton Campus. You know, I
16 visited, one of the times I visited Rikers Island, we
17 were walking up the stairs and the first thing I
18 noticed when I looked to the side, was the same
19 fencing that's on the staircase at Rikers Island is
20 the exact same fencing that in the schools at which I
21 taught, that our students go to school, where my dad
22 and my mom went to public schools. We are using the
23 same design in prisons as we have in schools. I'm
24 hoping that you seek to rectify that. In current
25 buildings, I am obviously going to assume that future

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2 buildings will seek to rectify that but that's not my
3 question. I'm going to ask a few questions,
4 hopefully you can answer them all after I ask them.
5 The first - and I think it was Ms. Liu but if it
6 wasn't forgive me. You had said that if SCA is
7 involved in rezoning's. If that is the case, they
8 are not communicating with community boards. SCA's
9 not communicating with community boards and they are
10 not communicating with local elected officials about
11 your role in rezoning and my question is why?

12 My second question is a lot of development in my
13 district in District 11 is as of right developments.
14 They constitute most of the development in my
15 district. So, do you meet with developers in
16 creating as of right buildings to address what's
17 going to be overcrowding needs? In new spaces, do
18 you collaborate with educators and business experts
19 to see what is the future, what are the future needs
20 of our city?

21 So, for example, are all new buildings going to
22 be equipped with green space. Chair Joseph was
23 talking about green space. I'm talking specifically
24 about gardens and green infrastructure. Are they all
25 going to be equipped with tech labs and science labs

1
2 that are actually upgradable? And the last thing I'm
3 just going to say, I encourage you all to visit
4 really any collocated school in the city. You don't
5 need to know the name of the school. This is
6 following up on Council Member Salamanca. You don't
7 need to know the name of the school to log into the
8 building and see with your own eyes and feel the
9 difference between the resources that Charter schools
10 have and the resources our public schools have and
11 you will see for yourself. I invite you to my
12 district to do the walk through with me. Thank you
13 and I appreciate an answer to the questions.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you for those questions. So
16 first, I'd like to probably, I think the biggest part
17 of your question was about the rezoning's and Cora
18 Liu was the one who spoke before on it and I'd like
19 to let her clarify anything that may have not been
20 addressed. So, and then the as of right, I think
21 also if you could discuss Cora.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you.

23 CORA LIU: Sure. So, thank you Council Member
24 for the questions. Uhm, we do work with City
25 Planning, EDC, HPD when, especially in the city that

1
2 rezoning or private rezoning that requires an
3 approval process. Uhm, we start at a very early
4 stage of near planning, so we want to make sure that
5 the school need, if there is an impact that the
6 school need is taken care of or is accounted for.

7 I think I probably will need a little bit more
8 detail when you say we don't communicate and that was
9 the committee report. We do directly work with City
10 Planning and EDC and HPD. They are in most cases,
11 the lead agency. It is really their responsibility
12 to take care or handle those communications.

13 Again, well, you used your own rezoning as a good
14 example where we have sited two schools as part of
15 that rezoning. Uhm, in terms of as of right
16 development, I think the challenge here is if they
17 are building as of right, they don't have to go
18 through ULURP or a seeker analysis process. Which
19 limit our opportunity to collaborate with them. But
20 definitely cases, situations where we have
21 collaborated with developers to include projects. In
22 our current plan, we have I think web sited eight
23 projects, capacity projects and that was a result of
24 rezoning or our work with developers and we have
25 several that we know have been in conversations and

1
2 once the time comes, the development starts, we will
3 also site in our plan.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Alright, well let me
5 just pause there because there is a rezoning going on
6 in my district and we have heard nothing about - I
7 understand you are saying its different agencies
8 responsibility but I would hope you know the SCA
9 cares enough about school seats to communicate with
10 the local community. So, we have a rezoning in my
11 district where this is not being addressed and we
12 have an as of right building. We have a number of
13 them but one that's 15 stories tall going up where
14 there's currently nothing.

15 Plans are filed with DOB, so the city is aware of
16 this building. You don't just build it out plans.
17 Uhm, and again, the issue of school seats is not
18 being addressed. And if it is being addressed, it's
19 being done secretly. Either of those options are not
20 good. I have according to the data, open data or
21 whatever of the 11th most overcrowded district I
22 think in the city. And I didn't mean to interrupt
23 you but I did have questions about the type of new
24 buildings. Green space, green infrastructure,
25 upgradable tech labs, things of that nature.

1
2 CORA LIU: If you can provide us with the
3 information, the development that you're talking
4 about, we're happy to have offline conversations with
5 you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Okay.

7 CORA LIU: Thank you.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Okay and then the other
9 question I had?

10 NINA KUBOTA: So, uhm, you're talking about the
11 tech labs and I know that sorry, yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Right, our future
13 developments, future construction actually meeting
14 the needs. I know we're talking you know Council
15 Member Louis; you know we're all talking about tech
16 labs needing the upgrading comparing it to what's in
17 the Charter Schools. How is that being addressed in
18 future development?

19 NINA KUBOTA: So, you're talking about new
20 schools? Because -

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Yes, yes.

22 NINA KUBOTA: Okay, so I mean, I think we are
23 always looking for you know, trying to keep up with
24 the most innovative designs out there. We do work
25 with our counterparts at the DOE to make sure that a

1
2 school is equipped with all the spaces it may need,
3 whether they are flexible learning spaces that could
4 be used in several ways. We also do comply with
5 Local Law 94, which does mean that our you know the
6 roofs will have PV's. So, a lot of the you know,
7 where is in the past week could do some play space on
8 the roof potential or some green spaces that's you
9 know, we do install PV's instead.

10 Uhm, so, I mean, other than continually looking
11 at our designs for better, for future school use, you
12 know it's I think that's the way that we best handle
13 that.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Okay, so I'm going to
15 leave it there.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Council Member, you will be
17 able to ask second questions on the second round
18 okay.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: No, yeah, I just wanted
20 to thank the Chair, thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Oh, you're very welcome.
22 Thank you so much.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uh, next we're going to call
24 on Council Member Brewer followed by Council Members
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2 Lee, Restler, Hanif, Schulman, Menin and Feliz. So,
3 Council Member Brewer.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much.

6 Thank you very much. I'm in a you know me; I'm
7 always moving around but I can hear you. Alright,
8 the first question is playgrounds. So, the issue is
9 that I really believe and I've asked IBO to analyze
10 the cost of opening every single playground. This
11 has been discussed since Richard Murphy was the youth
12 coordinator under David Dinkins and he started
13 \$50,000 per custodian, the wonderful Robert Troller
14 staff to be able to open some but not all.

15 So, I want to know are you doing an analysis of
16 how much it would cost because I'm hoping that we
17 could mandate. That every playground is opened no
18 matter what. That's number one. What's a number
19 that you think that would cost?

20 And at PS84 just so you know, apparently a very
21 poor contractor did that playground. It has to be
22 redone because of water pooling and offline, I'd like
23 to get an update. Number two, the issue of
24 bathrooms. I know you mentioned a number but as
25 borough president, as formerly Council Member, as

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2 Council Member now, it is crazy for us to have to
3 throw Reso A money into bathrooms but that is
4 constantly a request.

5 So, how do you analyze the bathrooms? It needs
6 to be done and where are we citywide with the status
7 of bathrooms? Number three, you mentioned 3K and
8 that you have some money for new 3K's. I happen to
9 know the answer to this question but I'd like to hear
10 it from you. What is the status with a new 3K
11 program in District 3? Construction scaffolding,
12 Joan of Arc and 93rd Street has been - ever. How do
13 you analyze getting the scaffolding done and what is
14 your prognosis for that particular one?

15 Uhm, the issue of technology, I know you touched
16 on but I'd love to talk offline because like how much
17 money do you get from the federal government? Can
18 you use that for the community to be hotspots in
19 addition to what you're doing internally and how is
20 that program growing? And then the solar issue, I
21 don't know if you're in charge of that but I'd like
22 to know how many schools are being done? What's it
23 costing and is it saving money at DOE? Thank you
24 very much.

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2 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you Council Member. Okay, I
3 think we have six questions on the table. So, I will
4 turn it to my DOE colleagues to address a lot of
5 these. PS84, we are aware and we are working to
6 rectify that as soon as possible. I think the larger
7 question about keeping playgrounds open is an
8 operational cost, so I'll defer to my DOE
9 counterparts, who could also maybe talk a little bit
10 about scaffolding and technology and John, do you
11 want to talk about solar as well?

12 DAN WEISBERG: John Shea, if we can have John
13 Shea unmuted please, thank you.

14 JOHN SHEA: Thank you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Hi, John Shea.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 JOHN SHEA: Great question. Council Member
18 Brewer, welcome back to the Council. You always have
19 great questions, thank you.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you John. I can go
21 through another hour. Go ahead.

22 JOHN SHEA: I know. So, a couple of things that
23 I'll touch on. First, we'll go with the playgrounds.
24 We always look at the, yes you are correct. That the
25 original number for the school yards and the

1
2 playgrounds program is \$50,000 per site. That
3 obviously has gone up over the years for wage rate
4 increases and those kinds of things.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: What is it now John?
6 What is it now?

7 JOHN SHEA: So, we have to look at it based on
8 the wage rates that start in July 1st.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

10 JOHN SHEA: I want to say last year, it was about
11 \$62,000 per site.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, alright.

13 JOHN SHEA: It's going to be a little bit more
14 starting after that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, alright.

16 JOHN SHEA: And we have over 1,000 playgrounds in
17 the system. So, we can get you a detailed analysis
18 of that to show you some real numbers.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

20 JOHN SHEA: Bathrooms, we definitely are excited
21 about our bathroom programs. There's \$50 million
22 again and thank you to the Council for your support
23 on that for the capital plan. We take solicitations
24 from schools, principals. We work very closely with
25 Mr. Taratko and his office on ABA compliance. We

1
2 also for equity look at the economic needs index when
3 we have more bathroom projects than we can handle
4 right now but we have the \$50 million in the capital
5 plan which is the fourth or fifth year I think that
6 we've done that, so we continue with that program,
7 it's been great. It's making a real impact and we're
8 happy that we're going to have that money for those
9 projects going forward in this plan.

10 I think the last thing for me is the solar -

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yes, yes.

12 JOHN SHEA: And that's a program that's run
13 through DCAS. We as the DOE, the largest city
14 agency, have the largest number of solar panel
15 installations but we partner on that with DCAS. We
16 had 60 projects completed already and we have another
17 180 that are in the pipeline. So, again, we have
18 more projects right now than we can manage in one
19 year but we're excited that we have 180 more that
20 meet the criteria for a solar project and we will be
21 proceeding with those over next couple of years.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Do you save money?

23 JOHN SHEA: So, it's an interesting program
24 because these are done for PPA's, Power Purchase
25 Agreements.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right.

JOHN SHEA: And the city does save money. The installations are done based on the electric rate that you pay that's generated by the solar panels. You'd really have to talk to DCAS for those numbers. We don't have that information but I believe we do save money.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

DAN WEISBERG: And if I can just add Council Member Brewer, good seeing you and on the toilet front, all of our accessibility projects we'll be doing toilet renovations. So, there's 57 elementary schools out there that will be getting those and then as we move into improving accessibility in our buildings, making them from partially to fully accessible, those buildings yet to be planned will be getting additional toilets and we are really targeting specialty programs such as District 75 and those - uh CTE and those type schools. So, I think you're going to see a lot of movement there.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Great.

NINA KUBOTA: Uhm.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: 3K, what's going on my damn 3K. Excuse my French, go ahead.

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2 NINA KUBOTA: I think we have 225 3K seats
3 opening in 2023 but it might not be in your Council
4 District. It's in sort of District 3 but I don't
5 think in your district.

6 Uhm, I'm not sure if we had uhm, early childhood.
7 I thought Carol was going to be on the call. I'm
8 sorry, I can't see is from the DOE?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, there's some
10 building happening on like 63rd Street that is a
11 mystery. So, at some point, I'd like to know what's
12 going on there.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Council Member Brewer, we
14 will be addressing 3K with the DOE once they come on.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much Council
17 Member.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
20 turn to Council Member Lee followed by Council
21 Members Restler, Hanif, Schulman, Menin and Feliz.
22 Council Member Lee.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Thank you so much and thank
25 you and congrats Chair Joseph. Uh, and thank you so

1
2 much for the SCA for being here. Uhm, I having been
3 through the capital project with different city
4 agencies on the nonprofit side, I appreciate the
5 actual speediness of SCA compared to some other
6 agencies. So, I thank you so much for all the hard
7 work you guys do.

8 I actually have 36 schools in my district. Uh,
9 some of them are collocated but many of them are not
10 actually. And so, I've been trying to visit all the
11 schools in my district in the first few months, which
12 has been a bit crazy but rewarding at the same time.
13 And I just want to echo some of the sentiments of my
14 colleagues, because I was looking at the budget
15 breakdown because again, we're getting these labs and
16 stem programs which is wonderful and I think we need
17 to continue to do that in some of the schools but
18 then the electrical infrastructure can't handle that.
19 And so, is that part of - I'm assuming that's part of
20 the capital investment versus the mandated program
21 budget.

22 Okay, is there a way to make it a mandated
23 program? Only because I would actually argue that
24 given the way education is moving these days, uhm,
25 what would it take for us to include that, so that it

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2 could be considered a mandated program because I do
3 think that this is an important piece for our
4 students across the city. And so, just wondering how
5 possible that would be to shift that.

6 NINA KUBOTA: Uhm, so thank you for that
7 question. You know we definitely did see some
8 schools needing an electrical upgrade, which was it
9 might be what you're talking about.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Yes.

11 NINA KUBOTA: Through our AC for all initiative.
12 In some cases it's just distribution. It might just
13 be you know one panel is overloaded versus another.
14 So, uhm, you know through our building condition
15 assessment survey, we do analyze our electrical
16 service. So, that's certainly, while I agree that it
17 is important, I think the distinction we make with
18 mandated is where it's required by code or local law.
19 So we didn't you know, but we do understand the
20 importance and you know, I just will repeat that we
21 have just so many buildings that are so old. And
22 it's like really trying to catch up and just keep our
23 buildings water tight and safe.

24 Now, that's not to say that we wouldn't take that
25 and I'm happy to talk to your office offline about

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2 your schools needs but for the entire City Council,
3 everybody I'm sure feels very passionate about making
4 sure that you know, electrical needs as well as other
5 needs in their buildings are satisfied.

6 So, I hear what you're saying and we certainly
7 will look into that. I appreciate it.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: And just two more quick
9 questions. Uhm, one comment also, I'm glad to hear
10 that for the MWBE contractors, there are increasing
11 efforts to include more of them, I think that's
12 wonderful. So, thank you for that.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Oh sorry, just real quick
15 for the playground. What's the, what's the, what's
16 the dynamic between you guys and on parks? Because I
17 know a lot of our playgrounds are technically owned
18 by parks and so, you know with the changing needs of
19 the students, disability programs that are increasing
20 in my district, uhm, they want to change the
21 playgrounds and rightfully so to meet the needs of
22 the students and so, how does that dynamic work?
23 Because I feel like sometimes there's just like push
24 ball thing kind of going on.

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2 NINA KUBOTA: Yeah, thank you. Uhm, so we do
3 have uh, we have a partnership with parks and some of
4 our playgrounds are jointly operated playgrounds.
5 So, they – there is that partnership and there are
6 parks that are just solely parks. So, I'm assuming
7 you're talking about a JOP, Jointly Operated
8 Playground.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Yeah.

10 NINA KUBOTA: So, and really if there's anything
11 – I mean, I'm not sure if there is you know any
12 specific one's but we really do have a strong
13 partnership with parks. So, if there's a specific
14 issue or something, really would like to hear about
15 that because we do work very well with them.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, and the \$72 million
17 just for clarification purposes, sorry Chair is for
18 the parks that are owned specifically by the schools
19 correct?

20 NINA KUBOTA: Correct.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we'll turn
23 to Council Member Restler.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I firstly want to
3 commend and thank my dear friend, our distinguished
4 Chair Rita Joseph. Thank you Rita for doing such a
5 phenomenal job. It is a tremendous thing to have a
6 teacher of your experience Chairing this Committee
7 and we're lucky to have you and I want to
8 congratulate President Kubota and the SCA team on
9 your new leadership roles. SCA has a long record of
10 being one of the most effective agencies; I think as
11 the Mayor might say, GSD agencies in New York City.

12 So, we appreciate you and everything you do to
13 provide super, gorgeous buildings for our schools for
14 our students and our school communities. I represent
15 the 33rd Council District which has experienced more
16 population growth than any other Council District in
17 the city over the last 15 years and certainly over
18 the last decade and it's not even close and yet, we
19 still don't have one new school that is actually
20 opened since the multiple neighborhood-wide rezonings
21 in our area.

22 We have a new elementary school opening in
23 downtown Brooklyn next year, which we're looking
24 forward to but the area of greatest concern to me is
25 up in Greenpoint where we have three public schools,

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2 three elementary schools that are full, even as we've
3 seen declines in enrollment citywide. Our three
4 elementary schools in Greenpoint are very full and we
5 really badly need a new elementary school in Northern
6 Greenpoint.

7 If you live in the new towers on the waterfront,
8 you have a 25 minute walk to the nearest elementary
9 school in a dense residential community. It doesn't
10 make any sense and the only school that the SCA has –
11 the only school site the SCA has considered is one of
12 the most toxically polluted, toxic and polluted,
13 contaminated sites in all of New York City, a state
14 super fun site where it is known that the
15 contaminants underground have significant
16 developmental impacts on the young people who may
17 spend time around them.

18 So, is SCA prepared to consider alternatives to
19 the long considered Greenpoint landing site and what
20 is the status of our urgent need for a new elementary
21 school in Greenpoint and thank you. I hope I'm not
22 being too obnoxious but we're really – we need a
23 school. It's real.

24 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you for that question Council
25 Member. Uhm, so you know we are willing to look at

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2 any alternate sites that you know if you have any
3 uhm, I just do want to clarify though that we would
4 never jeopardize our students and we would obviously
5 make sure that there's nothing toxic after we
6 remediate before we would build a school.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Of course.

8 NINA KUBOTA: And we've looked at other
9 alternative as well and just remember, I mean, you
10 know this very well. You know, we really look for
11 20,000 square foot plot of land, which is nearly
12 impossible to find these days.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 NINA KUBOTA: Looking -

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I'll just say, we have
16 real options. I'd love to bring you and your team
17 out to northern Greenpoint. Let's look at the
18 options that we can identify together. I recognize
19 that you would make best efforts to remediate the
20 site but I don't think we will ever swage the very
21 real concerns that my neighborhoods have about the
22 safety of our young people at this location.

23 So, I'd love for your active involvement
24 President in actually considering alternatives, so
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2 that we can get a school built as quickly as
3 possible.

4 NINA KUBOTA: Absolutely.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Cool, I'm going follow
6 up to see if we can get you to Greenpoint. It's a
7 nice neighborhood.

8 NINA KUBOTA: Sounds great.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you and thank you
10 Chair.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
12 call on Council Member Hanif.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Good morning. Thank you
15 so much and congratulations to Chair Joseph. I echo
16 the words so beautifully articulated by my colleague
17 Council Member Restler.

18 Uhm, I have two questions. I want to go back to
19 the bathrooms for a bit. I am sick and tired of
20 using participatory budgeting dollars for bathroom
21 renovations and you know, I lift up participatory
22 budgeting is because it is one of the quickest ways.
23 It is one of the urgent ways that parents in our
24 school communities have addressed to renovating
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2 engage our communities more thoughtfully. Thank you
3 so much.

4 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you for those questions
5 Council Member. So, all of our bathroom projects
6 actually can be found in the capital plan. I think
7 John Shea went over you know how many they're doing
8 over time. They are selected collaboratively. You
9 know, we check for condition. For the need for ADA
10 compliance. We use economic need index and there is
11 a public engagement process by the CEC and the City
12 Council when we send out the request for capital
13 projects. So, that is one way that you know we can
14 help or a community can help prioritize what
15 bathrooms get done.

16 And so, I would encourage your communities to
17 reach out to us that way.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

19 NINA KUBOTA: Uhm, I will say for the cost of
20 projects, there is Local Law 24 which is a quarterly
21 report of all of our capital projects. There
22 timelines and their costs, so that is something that
23 we send to Council Members on a quarterly basis, so
24 happy to maybe talk to you or walk through that
25 report to help go through some of those details.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I mean, that would be
3 great but I guess I wanted to get at like why
4 projects cost so much year to year. Uhm, does the
5 report identify or delineate the causes or the
6 challenges?

7 NINA KUBOTA: Uhm, so I think costs have been
8 increasing just generally for construction and uhm, I
9 thought you were trying to get at you know project
10 specific one's. But in any case, I mean we know that
11 costs have been increasing. The materials alone have
12 been increasing significantly so, but we do track -
13 that's actually why we have a capital plan amendment
14 process, so that we can make sure that we update our
15 costs continuously, so what you see reflects the
16 latest cost available.

17 I mean, I'm happy to talk to you in your office
18 offline if there is some specific ones and can go
19 through some of the details where we've seen cost
20 increase.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you.

22 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
24 call on Council Member Schulman.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Thank you very much. I
3 want to thank everyone here. I want to thank the
4 Chair, uhm, Rita Joseph for this amazing hearing and
5 uhm, for doing such an amazing job. I want to thank
6 all my colleagues, you know capacity, school capacity
7 seems to be an ongoing trend in this hearing and so,
8 it's really important to me.

9 I represent District 29 in Central Queens and
10 uhm, there are a number of significant developments
11 that are going up and I haven't heard one thing about
12 the school capacity because we're at - our schools
13 are at 170 percent capacity for our high schools at
14 196 percent capacity. We have been involved - I sit
15 on the Zoning and Franchise Committee, I actually am
16 testifying today on a development that's going to be
17 going up very soon and it's going to be uhm, it's
18 going to be done in the next couple years and it's
19 very significant especially after COVID all these
20 developments are coming up. So, I want to know what
21 the plans are for the capacity. I know you're
22 working with City Planning but I haven't heard
23 anything in the Community Board and the Community
24 Board keeps complaining to me that - about the
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2 hospital, I mean, I'm sorry about the school capacity
3 issue.

4 Also, there's uhm, at 64th Street and Queens
5 Boulevard, there's a huge development going up where
6 apparently there was an agreement made, although
7 nobody can go back and find anything written about a
8 school going - the developer making a deal for a
9 school in that place. So, I want to know what you
10 guys are going to do moving forward about the school
11 capacity issue, because it seems to be citywide.

12 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you for those questions.
13 Actually, I think, we do want to get together with
14 your office to talk about what we are doing
15 specifically. I think we have projects -

16 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: You have a meeting set
17 up.

18 NINA KUBOTA: Great. Uh, so we can talk more of
19 the specifics. I think Q174, Q196, 206, all three of
20 those have additions that are coming online. Uhm, so
21 I mean, like you said, we do work with City Planning
22 and that's actually why we have our annual amendment
23 just to make sure that we process, because we want to
24 make sure that everything is up to date, so that we
25 track any new buildings coming online. Our building

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2 permits, if they are not in like a rezoning or
3 something like that, that we're just making sure that
4 we keep up with it.

5 We do have a school in process at 6902 Queens
6 Boulevard. Is that the one that maybe -

7 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Oh, no, we can talk
8 about that offline. I just - what I'd like to know
9 is that if you get involved on the community board
10 level, which I know Council Member Dinowitz kind of
11 alluded to earlier, uhm, when they meet about schools
12 - I mean, in the development coming into the district
13 and how that affects -

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: The school capacity.

16 NINA KUBOTA: Right, right and we do and Cora, do
17 you want to talk about our engagement?

18 CORA LIU: Sure, uhm, so when we uhm, when we
19 have sites that we are considering, we would normally
20 bring it to the Community Board to discuss those
21 plans before we proceed. There are also times where
22 a community board has sent us requests through their
23 process and we will review every single one of them
24 and provide responses but as always, we're always
25 happy to have more conversation if that's helpful.

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COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Okay, thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and Council Member Menin had held her hand up. Do you still have a question Council Member? If you, okay, we'll go ahead and unmute you.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Hi, well, that will be me Council Member Feliz?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Council Member Menin was actually before you. I keep track of all the hands there.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay, I was just asked to unmute.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, so I just want - alright, so Council Member go ahead and then we'll go to Council Member Feliz.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Great, thank you so much and I really want to reiterate my colleagues sentiments about Chair Joseph. Thank you so much for this important hearing. So, I have two questions.

Does the SCA have a dedicated funding stream to meet New York States requirement for Phys Ed. Because as you know in my district with PS 290, that is one of eight schools in Manhattan that have no gym. I think every school throughout the city is

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2 entitled to a gym. Our kids need to have Phys Ed and
3 a dedicated Phys Ed space, so that's my first
4 question. And then my second question goes to
5 something that Council Member Riley, Council Member
6 Dinowitz and Council Member Schulman all touched upon
7 which is land use. I am really concerned that the
8 City of New York continues to approve projects
9 through ULURP and yet there's no nexus to building
10 new school seats. So, it's done in a completely
11 piecemeal process. City's across the country have
12 mandated set asides for new school seats when new
13 development is being approved in a community. I know
14 legislatively, we as the City Council can't fix it
15 because it requires a Charter Revision to ULURP.
16 What can SCA do to make a better, more comprehensive
17 process, so when there is new development that is
18 adding new families to our respective districts, we
19 make sure that new school seats are part of the
20 equation?

21 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you for those questions
22 Council Member. We do have some funding set aside
23 for physical education. It won't make all of our
24 buildings have dedicated physical education space. I
25 know the particular case of 290, we did look at them,

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2 at the school. I think at one point we were even
3 looking on the roof. So, we have a long history with
4 290. I'm happy to connect with you offline to see
5 what we can do with that.

6 And in terms of land use, I will again, turn it
7 over to my colleague Cora Liu who can address this
8 issue a little bit more.

9 CORA LIU: Sure, thank you. We do — and Council
10 Member, we do hear you and we agree with you in that
11 you know having seat need addressed and taking to
12 account for any of the development is extremely
13 important. In a very tight real estate market,
14 especially in New York City, we always have
15 challenges at projects. Which is why we partner with
16 other city agencies to advocate for school seats.
17 But also as you mentioned, it's not an easy process,
18 especially for some of the development, they are not
19 required to work with us. Even though we do promote
20 and really want to you know encourage the partnership
21 with private developers.

22 Again, if we can you know have further
23 conversations where we can help each other to get us
24 more in the door and to grab more opportunities to
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2 view school seats, we are more than happy to have
3 that conversation.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Okay, thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and Council Member
7 Feliz, we'll now unmute you.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Good morning. Thank you
10 Chair Joseph for this very important hearing and also
11 congratulations. Your very first hearing, major
12 congratulations.

13 I want to start and I'll be super brief, I know
14 time is limited. I want to start by echoing what my
15 colleagues mentioned which is that you know schools
16 are supposed to be suitable for learning. Suitable
17 in every way. Small class sizes but also, they
18 should look like schools. Last Friday, I attended an
19 elementary school and the very first thing that was
20 uttered to me was that the school looks like a
21 prison. By the colors, grey and red, the same exact
22 colors that the school had when I was a middle school
23 student and elementary school students and I think I
24 speak for all of my colleagues, I think we would all
25 be grateful if the SCA would just invest and also

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2 make it a priority and investing in something as
3 simple as painting in a vibrant color, our schools
4 and our classrooms.

5 Last Friday, I also attended CS300. The TCU, the
6 Temporary Classroom Unit in CS300 on Prospect Avenue
7 and I cannot describe the horrible condition that
8 that TCU was in. So, I have a few questions about
9 that specific topic, TCU's Temporary Classroom Units.
10 Classroom units that were supposed to be temporary.

11 I know that this is something that we touched on
12 earlier today but briefly, what's the average age of
13 current TCU's in our city?

14 NINA KUBOTA: Uhm, I believe when were these
15 installed? Probably, there about 15-20 years old
16 Cora?

17 CORA LIU: Yeah 15, yup, I think that sounds
18 about right. And also, I think I would just add that
19 we agree with you. The TCU structures are not meant
20 to be near for a long time and we have really made
21 great stride to remove of them. As Nina had pointed
22 out in her testimony, we have removed the majority of
23 266 of them and have planned for 48 of them and we
24 only have 43 left, now we need to develop plans for
25 and as a matter of fact, between the release of

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2 February Amendment until now, we're able to identify
3 four more sites where we I think will be able to
4 remove another 12 units. So, we're really getting
5 down to the last, a bunch of TCU's and we'll work as
6 hard as possible to get them out of the system.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Thank you and time is very
8 limited, so I have time for one more question. If
9 you could briefly describe - we have TCU's but we
10 also have non-TCU temporary buildings. If you could
11 briefly describe approximately how many we have in
12 our city and also the plan for removal if there is
13 any. Non-TCU temporary buildings, which look very
14 similar to TCU's.

15 NINA KUBOTA: Yeah.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: And Chair, it would be
17 great if you could just give this answer about an
18 additional minute if that's possible in the schedule.

19 NINA KUBOTA: So, there are about - about 70 non-
20 TCU temporary structures and -

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 NINA KUBOTA: And while we - we removed some of
23 them while doing an addition or a different type of
24 capacity program. Project rather. We do see the
25 need to remove these as well. So, as we wind down

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2 our work with the TCU's, that is sort of the next
3 program that we intend to - on creating is to remove
4 the other temporary structures.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: But is there a plan for a
6 removal and also, what would be the difference
7 between the TCU's and the non-TCU temporary
8 buildings?

9 NINA KUBOTA: So, the non-TCU temporary are they
10 range in size. You know some of them could be a few
11 classrooms to ten classrooms. So, whereas the TCU's
12 are really just they're two classrooms, two bathrooms
13 sort of in that same - in the way that they were
14 created. I will say we do not currently in this
15 plan, we started the removal of TCU's in the last
16 capital plan and as Cora mentioned, our work and
17 we're really winding it down. Our intent is to look
18 at non-TCU temporary structure removals as our next -
19 as our next plan develops to provide funding for
20 that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Thank you so much for that
22 information.

23 NINA KUBOTA: Thank you.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you Council Member and
25 next, we'll call on Council Member Sanchez.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Great, good morning every one and congratulations Madam Chair on your – on this budget hearing.

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So, my question is – I think my colleagues have done an incredible job. So, I just have one short question for you today which is about the cost of construction and the bid price for school capacity projects.

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So, I noticed in the Mayor's management report that there was a sharp increase in Fiscal Year 2020 to \$817 for per square foot, down from or up from \$792 in 2019 and then there was again a decrease in 2021.

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So, I'm wondering how is that looking when you identify sites and you go into bidding, how are we doing in terms of market prices that we are paying?

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NINA KUBOTA: So, thank you for that question.

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Yeah, I think we did see an increase as you said in 2020 but we have seen a decrease actually in last Fiscal Year, it went down to 710 and then I think we're holding that this Fiscal Year.

24

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Uhm, so I think there is a lot that goes into the cost per square foot and Cora, do you want to talk

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2 about the items? Because I believe— I believe the
3 Fiscal Year 2020, the reason why it was potentially
4 higher is I don't think that there were many capacity
5 projects that were awarded in that Fiscal Year due to
6 the pandemic, but I'll also defer to Cora if you
7 might have some insight into this topic.

8 CORA LIU: Yeah, I think we probably, we can go
9 back to take another look behind the data behind it
10 but I think in general the pandemic definitely had a
11 lot of impact on our project and our bid prices.

12 We are anticipating supply chain issues, so we're
13 waiting to see when that will show our projects. But
14 in general, uhm, the price change is also because of
15 the specific projects. Some of our projects, we're
16 lucky enough to have straight forward, standalone new
17 buildings. Some of the other projects might have a
18 little more other work we might have to do. So, we
19 can go back to look at the data behind those numbers
20 and to give you a more detailed explanation.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Great, thank you and
22 just a second question if I have time. Uhm, so, I
23 think a related question was asked earlier but with
24 the historic infrastructure bill, how is that going
25

1
2 to help us meet the dent in seat demand in the City
3 of New York and of course in particular the Bronx?

4 NINA KUBOTA: So, I'm not sure if DOE wants to
5 chime in on the infrastructure bill. That has not
6 translated into capital dollars, so I'll defer to my

7 -

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 DAN WEISBERG: And Council Member, that's a great
10 question. We're eager to figure that out as well.

11 Uhm, a lot of that infrastructure, federal
12 infrastructure funding is being channeled through the
13 state in the form of grants. So, we haven't seen the
14 format of it all yet, to see how we can apply it to
15 deal with seat demand but we will certainly keep you
16 updated and happy to talk to you offline and
17 certainly we'll keep you updated as we get more
18 information.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you
20 Madam Chair.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member.
22 Chair, all Council Members have asked a first round
23 of questions. I think we are really behind schedule,
24 so I'm going to turn it back to you but I do want to
25 say for all the Committee Members that for any

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2 questions that were not able to be asked, the Finance
3 team is going to collect everything that you have and
4 we will follow up with the SCA and the DOE for
5 capital questions.

6 So, we will send a reminder email to all
7 Committee Members either today, if we ever go to
8 sleep or tomorrow but don't worry, we will take your
9 questions. So Chair, I will turn it back to you
10 before we transition to the round, to the next part
11 of the hearing.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay. Alright, so thank
13 you. So, thank you to all. I think this is our next
14 round right Malcom?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uh, yes, we're gonna - we're
16 now done with the Capital portion of today's agenda.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, so.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uhm, so next and thank you to
19 the SCA and DOE Capital folks. Again, all Committee
20 Members, we will follow-up with you for unanswered
21 capital questions. We will get that from you. So,
22 very quickly, we are behind schedule, so very quickly
23 before we turn to expense, we just had a quick short
24 panel, so before turning the expense portion, we're
25 going to call on the following three witnesses.

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2 Michael Mulgrew, United Federation of Teachers, Mark
3 Cannizzaro, the Council of School Administrators and
4 Supervisors and Donald Nesbit, Vice President Local
5 372. Everyone, you will have two minutes and we will
6 first start with Michael Mulgrew of the UFT.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thank you very much and again,
9 congratulations to the Chair. We appreciate and look
10 forward to doing lots of work with this wonderful and
11 new Education Committee.

12 Right now and I wish we were in a better place.
13 What I see in this budget is basically of any sort of
14 imagination. This is looks like a budget we would
15 have seen in 2017 or 2018. There is – we need to
16 make sure that we have plan in place as we move
17 forward. There is nothing in the current budget as
18 proposed. It really does anything to deal with the
19 greatest challenge we have right now, which is
20 dealing with all of the issues around COVID and all
21 the damage that has been done to the children in our
22 schools.

23 So, we are hoping that through this budget
24 process, we can get to a much better place. Clearly,
25 we always support smaller class sizes. We want our

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2 schools to be attractive for parents. This is their
3 number one issue. It is constantly their number one
4 issue and it's something we really need to start to
5 move on and it's time now, it is the right time to do
6 it. We need to make sure that we have a plan in
7 place for our schools in terms of all of the social,
8 emotional damage that we know is out there. We
9 should be hiring more guidance counselors and social
10 workers, not putting them under a freeze at this
11 moment and as always, we would — the programs that we
12 run at United Community Schools, Teachers Choice,
13 uhm, the positive learning collaborative. All of
14 these things we have proven over and over again are
15 very successful and actually work for children and as
16 a union, we're very proud of the fact that every
17 dollar that is given to our programs, we put more on
18 top of it. So, it really is a small way to go about
19 these things but there is a lot of work that has to
20 be done right now on this budget.

21 Because we need to be out there, talking to our
22 parents about what the plan is as we move forward and
23 what the funding is behind it. We all understand
24 there are still probably \$5 billion in federal money
25 that's here for education but we want to spend it

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2 wisely but it really needs to be a plan and we really
3 need to start getting creative.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 MICHAEL MULGREW: Where our schools should be
6 going. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
8 call on Mark Cannizzaro from the CSA.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 MARK CANNIZZARO: Good morning everyone and thank
11 you and congratulations Chair Joseph and
12 congratulations to all the newly or recently elected
13 officials. Uhm, we look forward to working with you
14 and it's a pleasure to be here with you today.

15 I also want to thank the Council for their
16 efforts to get all schools to 100 percent fair
17 student funding. It was a tremendous relief to
18 finally get there but I do also want to issue a
19 concern. I heard earlier and I've heard several
20 times department officials mention that the increase
21 to fair student funding could address class size.
22 There was no increase to fair student funding. What
23 we were able to do is bring fair student funding to
24 100 percent from a current deficit that has existed
25 for many, many years and the fair student funding

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2 formula is based on current class size as well as
3 average teacher salary. So, I just want to make sure
4 that we all understand that a reduction in class size
5 is going to be – an increase in funds is going to be
6 necessary.

7 Uhm, I have to concur with Michael about this
8 budget. There are some other things that we would
9 like to see. We have a contractual obligation to
10 supply an assistant principal in every school. That
11 is almost there but not currently being done, so
12 we're going to expect and ask that that is addressed.
13 We have our Executive Leaderships Institute, which
14 among other things, prepares school leaders for the
15 job as well as assistant principals to become
16 principals and we know we're going to have a
17 tremendous shortage going forward there.

18 They provide mentoring and service people as
19 well, as well as programs around equity and bullying
20 and social justice programs. Uhm, and then finally,
21 I just wanted to mention that we are in full support
22 of the Carbon Free Schools Initiative. Which you'll
23 be hearing more about from other groups as well.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.
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2 MARK CANNIZZARO: But to reduce the carbon
3 emissions in schools as a long term project and it's
4 a good project and all the labor unions are involved.
5 Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mr. Cannizzaro and
7 finally, we'll hear from Donald Nesbit of Local 372.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 DONALD NESBIT: Thank you Members of the Council.
10 Thank you members of the Council. Thank you Chair,
11 Madam Chair Rita Joseph for this Budget hearing
12 today. Local 372 represents School Crossing Guards,
13 family workers, community titles, school aids, school
14 lunch employees and SAPIS members who service our 1.2
15 million students.

16 Our members live in the communities that they
17 work in vital to the development of our students.
18 During the pandemic, school lunch employees and
19 school crossing guards were the every day vital
20 workers that they have always been.

21 School crossing guards face violent encounters
22 while they perform their duties, which is currently a
23 felony. Local 372 requests and wants the Council to
24 help us in promoting this publicly. That is it is a
25 felony to assault a School Crossing Guard.

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2 School Lunch employees face inadequate staffing
3 levels that put a strain on their every day, on their
4 every day life in the job that they do. They also
5 face extremely hot conditions during the summer
6 months. They reach temperatures of 130 degrees plus
7 in the cafeterias. Local 372 requests money in the
8 capital budget for AC's and cooling units in spaces
9 where school lunch employees are performing their
10 duties.

11 We also requested the Council add money to
12 continue enhancing the cafeterias for our students
13 who eat in those spaces. COVID-19 recovery has been
14 a part of the conversation but we think that we have
15 a solution that's already there. Our SAPIS are in
16 schools. SAPIS is Substance Abuse Prevention and
17 Intervention Specialists and already are trained with
18 the social, emotional training that is needed for
19 students to recover from COVID. We ask that the
20 Council continue to match the money that the New York
21 State Assembly has put into it and we thank the past
22 Council for doing that. We ask that that continues
23 and lastly, our community titles for family workers
24 were vital also during the pandemic and we ask that
25 funding -

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

DONALD NESBIT: We ask that funding for those titles continue. And lastly, I just want to thank the members of the Council and again as my labor brothers said prior to me, thank you all and congratulations on being newly elected. Congratulations Chair for this hearing.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Alright, thank you Chair and there are no Council Members with hands, so we thank that panel. We are now going to move on to the second round for today. So, for those just joining us, we have already concluded the capital portion of our preliminary budget hearing for the Committee on Education. We are now going to turn to the expense portion of our program today but I'll first turn to Chair Joseph for her opening statement for this portion of the hearing.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Malcom. Good morning and welcome to Education Chair's Hearing on the Fiscal 2023 Preliminary Expense Budget. We have been joined by Chancellor David Banks, First Deputy Chancellor David Weisberg, uhm and DOE Financial

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2 Officer Linsey Oates who will testify on the DOE's
3 Preliminary Expense Budget.

4 The Department of Education Fiscal 2023
5 Preliminary Budget totals \$30.7 billion excluding
6 pension and debt service, which represent 31 percent
7 of the city's total budget. Compared to the previous
8 preliminary budget, DOE's new need for Fiscal 2023
9 are modest totaling \$415 million, which is in
10 contrast of the Ambition Program to eliminate the gap
11 initiative. PEG total \$255 million in Fiscal 2022
12 growing to \$558 million in Fiscal 2023. In baseline
13 into outyears as part of the PEG, the preliminary
14 plan reduced DOE's budgeted headcount in Fiscal 2023
15 by 3,642 positions and baselined these reductions
16 into outyears. The reduction is slightly offset in
17 Fiscal 2023 by the addition of 1,770 federally funded
18 positions.

19 While we understand that the use of federal
20 stimulus funding is meant to soften this burden on
21 schools as they adjust to changes in enrollment, I am
22 concerned that this reduction is cutting invaluable
23 staff that directly serve some our most vulnerable
24 students.

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2 As we continue to advance in our post pandemic
3 recovery efforts, our schools deserve all the
4 fundings they need to ensure a robust and well-
5 rounded staff. The Council is glad to see the
6 preliminary plan adding funding to the right size
7 DOE's transportation in Charter School budget in line
8 with actual spending.

9 As you know, these two areas have historically
10 posed a budget risk to DOE as year over year actual
11 spending was well over the budget. However, the
12 preliminary plan fails to make additional investment
13 to departments on Charter case budgets which continue
14 to increase.

15 Another area of concern is how the previous
16 administration allocated one time federal stimulus
17 funding into DOE's budget. Fundings were used to
18 provide a number of programs restoration short term
19 recovery efforts. Long term programs expansion as
20 well as addressing the fiscal deficit caused by the
21 reduced revenue brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

22 Across many of these areas, there's concern about
23 looming fiscal cliff and how if the city's prepared
24 to sustain the programming in the long term.
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I will then use the rest of my time to focus on the challenges faced by some of our most vulnerable student population. Including students in foster care. Students living in shelters. English and multilanguage learners. Students with disabilities and our adult education students. As a recent former teacher, I'm personally familiar with the importance of quality programming and holistic supports in aiding students of these – aiding the success of these students.

I look forward to your testimony and hearing about your vision for the schools. Again, some housekeeping, I would like to remind Council Members and that the Chancellor is here to testify on the Expense budget. If you have capital questions that you did not get a chance to ask earlier, please reach out to the Committee Staff and they will follow up with SCA. Council Members will have limited to five minutes for their rounds of question.

Public testimony is scheduled to begin after. I would like to introduce my staff, my colleagues. Introduce my colleagues who have joined us this morning. Council Member –

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, I have the list, I'm
just going to -

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CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Oh, you have the list.
Thank you.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yup, so I'll take care of
that yes.

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CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Alright, thank you.

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Do you affirm that your testimony will be
truthful to the best of your knowledge, information
and belief David C. Banks, Chancellor?

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Linsey Oates,
Chief Financial Officer?

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LINDSEY OATES: I do.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: What will be very strange to
3 say Mark Treyger, Senior Advisor to the Chancellor.

4 MARK TREYGER: I do.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And finally, Dr. Christina
6 Melendez, Executive Director of Family and Community
7 Empowerment.

8 DR. CHRISTINA MELENDEZ: I do.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And we're not
10 going to reswear them in but for Council Members to
11 be aware, First Deputy Chancellor Weisberg and Kevin
12 Moran are still on the Zoom to answer your questions.
13 Chancellor, you may begin when ready. Thank you.

14 DAVID BANKS: Great, thank you so much and good
15 morning Chair Joseph and all the Members of the
16 Education Committee here today. I'm David Banks, uh
17 the Chancellor of New York City Public Schools.
18 Pleased to join you today uhm, with all the folks
19 that you swore in, the First Deputy Chancellor Dan
20 Weisberg, Chief Financial Officer Lindsey Oates,
21 Chief School Operations Officer Kevin Moran,
22 Executive Director of Family and Community
23 Empowerment Dr. Cristina Melendez, and our Senior
24 Advisor and Executive Director of Intergovernmental
25 Affairs Mark Treyger. Thank you for the opportunity

1
2 to testify on the Mayor's Preliminary Budget for New
3 York City Public Schools.

4 I want to express my gratitude first of all to
5 this Committee for the partnership we have already
6 created during our first three in office. We are so
7 appreciative that we get to work with the Education
8 Committee Members who have demonstrated how dedicated
9 you are to our city's children, and that almost all
10 of you have taken the time to meet with myself and
11 members of my team at least once during these first
12 few months.

13 I also want to especially thank Chair Joseph for
14 her partnership and maintaining regular communication
15 with me and my leadership team. The goal is for us to
16 be true partners in this work. The City Council has
17 enabled us to provide 100 percent Fair Student
18 Funding to all schools for the first time ever this
19 year. This is an incredible investment in our
20 students, and it would not be a reality without the
21 advocacy of so many, especially the City Council.

22 We are pleased to see that the Governor's and the
23 state legislature's budgets propose to continue the
24 phase-in of State Aid needed for us to maintain 100
25 percent FSF. The Council was also instrumental in

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2 securing funding through the American Rescue Plan Act
3 that is helping our school communities rebound from
4 all the disruptions caused by the pandemic. That
5 includes providing the resources to ensure that every
6 school from every Zip Code in the city receives
7 funding to hire a full-time social worker.

8 With direct funding from the Council we are
9 expanding language access, mental health supports,
10 LGBTQ supports and curriculum, and community access
11 to school playgrounds. Now, we will undertake a
12 transformation of our schools to rebuild trust with
13 our families. Regrettably, 120,000 of our students
14 and their families have left our schools over the
15 past five years. For our schools to deliver on their
16 original promise of serving as the engine of the
17 American Dream, we will need to do things very
18 differently in ways that build trust one big step at
19 a time.

20 Our schools need to connect our students to the
21 real world and what matters to them. We want each
22 and every one of our students to graduate with a
23 pathway to a rewarding career, long-term economic
24 security, and equipped to be a positive force for
25 change. This vision for our schools entails four

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2 pillars to make it a reality: Number one,
3 reimagining the student experience. This means both
4 redesigning the school experience so that it's
5 relevant to our students and excites them, and that
6 students leave our schools with the skills and
7 knowledge that makes them attractive to employers and
8 gives them a head start on a pathway to economic
9 prosperity. This begins with our youngest learners,
10 providing literacy and language supports from the
11 start and it will continue through the end of our
12 students' academic careers by creating new and deeper
13 partnerships in the private, governmental, and non-
14 profit sectors in order to ensure that every student
15 leaves our system not only with a diploma but a
16 pathway to a good job and career.

17 Number two, Scaling, sustaining, and restoring
18 what works. This entails identifying the amazing
19 practices throughout our system and sharing them so
20 that they become models that other schools can
21 emulate. We want to build a culture that
22 incentivizes schools to share their best practices.
23 That's why we will continue to build on the excellent
24 Showcase Schools and Learning Partners ideas so that
25 we can shine a light on the innovative and

1
2 transformational work that's happening in every
3 borough.

4 Number three, prioritizing wellness and its link
5 to student success. That includes safe schools,
6 access to green spaces, high-quality nutrition, and
7 comprehensive whole-child support for a broad range
8 of each student's needs. Students who feel healthy,
9 safe, well-nourished and intellectually stimulated
10 are best able to concentrate and engage with their
11 academic work. We will be building on successful
12 initiatives to support the social and emotional needs
13 of our students, collaborating with community based
14 organization partners, and extending learning beyond
15 just the four walls of the classroom. We are
16 expanding PSAL so that every student will have access
17 to programming and fostering recovery through the
18 arts by taking full advantage of the rich, cultural
19 environment of this city.

20 Number four, engaging families to be our true
21 partners, which in and of itself is a powerful
22 pathway to rebuilding trust. In fact, it is the
23 biggest complaint that I have heard since I started
24 as Chancellor. Parents have felt unheard and
25 disrespected and that must change and it will change.

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2 We will be making sure that we are in close
3 communication with our families, surfacing their
4 expertise to enable all of us to more effectively
5 educate and support our children. Research shows that
6 of all the factors that determine positive student
7 outcomes, family engagement is at the top of that
8 list. This work has already begun through
9 significant engagement around our recently announced
10 Summer Rising program, which is going to provide
11 holistic, educational experiences to a record number
12 of students across the city. But engaging families
13 is not stopping there, and this work is going to
14 continue in earnest with the major decisions of this
15 department going forward. Our families are essential
16 to this work and our efforts will reflect that.

17 In addition, I recently announced steps for
18 reorganizing our central offices to make sure we are
19 using taxpayer dollars productively, while ensuring
20 that all of us are working in service of schools and
21 the people working directly with our students and
22 families. That includes eliminating the executive
23 superintendent position, because it adds a level of
24 bureaucracy without adding enough value to schools
25 and students. And we have asked each superintendent

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2 to reapply for their job, so we can assess whether
3 they are in fact, the best individuals to support
4 innovative schools and school leaders, as well as our
5 new commitments related to long-term economic
6 security. The community will be involved in the
7 selection of its superintendents. In partnership
8 with you and our other stakeholders, this is the work
9 we need to do in order to give the students of this
10 city the educational experience that they truly
11 deserve.

12 Now, finally, let me turn to the Mayor's Budget -
13 uh, turn to the details of Mayor's Preliminary
14 Budget. The FY 2023 Preliminary Budget totals
15 approximately \$37.2 billion, including \$30.7 billion
16 in operating resources and another \$6.5 billion of
17 education-related pension and debt service funds.
18 Our funding is a combination of city, state, and
19 federal resources, with city tax levy money making up
20 the largest share at 54 percent, state funds 35
21 percent, and federal dollars 11 percent.

22 Acknowledging the realities of declining
23 enrollment and short-term stimulus funding, the
24 Mayor's budget does two things: first, it cuts
25 central resources by approximately \$60 million, which

1
2 is a little under 10 percent, in order to the meet
3 the citywide PEG target.

4 Secondly, it adjusts school budgets to be in line
5 with current enrollment predictions and trends. That
6 was not done in the past couple of years in order to
7 provide schools with stability during the pandemic.
8 During that time, many schools experienced big
9 changes in their enrollment that were not reflected
10 in their school budgets. We don't expect schools to
11 make these shifts right away. The DOE will again use
12 stimulus funding to help schools facing pandemic-
13 related enrollment fluctuations to restore a
14 percentage of the impact of enrollment losses over
15 the next two years.

16 Specifically, \$160 million and \$80 million in
17 stimulus funding will be allocated to schools to
18 buffer those impacts in school years 2022-23 and
19 2023-24, respectively. Perhaps most importantly, the
20 actions I have described will allow us to meet the
21 Mayor's commitment to fiscal responsibility while
22 continuing to provide schools with 100 percent of
23 their Fair Student Funding. It is imperative that we
24 continue to meet that benchmark for all of our
25 schools.

1
2 So, I want to thank the Council for your
3 continued advocacy on this topic in recent years and
4 assure you that it remains a high priority. This
5 being a preliminary budget hearing, I want to express
6 to you all that we understand and appreciate the
7 vital role that the Council plays in working with the
8 Mayor, OMB, DOE, and the various stakeholders in
9 shaping the final budget in the coming months.
10 Together, we will create a budget that advances the
11 needs and priorities of our students and families.
12 So, thank you and we are here to answer your
13 questions at this time. I have a number of people
14 from my team. We work very closely as a team and I
15 will certainly engage them throughout this process in
16 today's hearing. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Chancellor Banks
18 for your testimony. My first question will be uhm,
19 around federal funding restorations in the budget.
20 In Fiscal 2021 of the budget intact the series of
21 baseline cuts to address fiscal crisis at the start
22 of the pandemic. We were able to secure, \$90.6
23 million in cuts reversed for the fiscal 2022, 2023,
24 and 2024.

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But only \$3 million of these restorations are baselined. So, does the DOE plan on restoring these cuts in the outyears? If so, when will we see this funding in the financial plan? And which funding streams will DOE use to restore the fundings in the outyears?

DAVID BANKS: That's a great question and thank you. Hello? Okay, great question. I'm going to see if Lindsey Oates will lean in on that first.

LINDSEY OATES: Uhm, thank you Chair Joseph for the question. This is something that we're all concerned about. We are grateful for -

DAVID BANKS: I am muted. Is everybody else muted? I think we got a little echo going in here. I'm not sure.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Well, Lindsey, you'll be alright because we just muted the Chancellor and so, you should be okay and then Chancellor, we'll just unmute you as we go forward when we need to. Thank you.

LINDSEY OATES: No worries. Let me start over. Thank you so much for the question Chair Joseph. I think that we are grateful that we've received this infusion of federal stimulus funding. We are

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2 grateful that it lasts for several years. We are all
3 mindful of the fact that this is a temporary fund
4 source and that it expires in a couple of years. And
5 we are going to be working together with our city
6 partners OMB and with you to identify outyear fund
7 sources. This is something that we're currently
8 looking at internally as well to try to identify some
9 sources to support the programs that we want to
10 continue in the outyears and we'll have more to say
11 about it in the next uhm, in the next year or two.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Wonderful. Thank you for
13 that. I'm just going to follow up with uhm - we know
14 that in the restoration we had one time federal
15 funding stimulus for long term programs in the DOE
16 budget, which is about \$515 million in Fiscal 2025
17 for 3K. Mental Health Services and preschool special
18 education just to name a few. How do you plan on
19 federal funding - when do you uhm, how do you plan on
20 expanding one when you run out of city dollars and
21 what does that look again in the financial plan for
22 those type of programs? Anybody? Malcom, they're
23 muted. Okay.

24 DAVID BANKS: Yeah, can you hear me?

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yeah.

DAVID BANKS: Yes, we have a little bit of a challenge here because uh, so I'm going to need whoever is handling the tech - so, if you would start with me and then when I pass, to please just mute me and then bring me back because otherwise you're going to continue to hear an echo of us here. So, thank you but the stimulus has really helped the city's economic recovery and the DOE and OMB believe that revenues are going to bounce back as the city continues to recover. Uhm, we're going to continue to track and review through our normal budget process but Lindsey, you want to add to that?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Just give us a moment as we do the mute and unmute, so uhm, there we go.

LINDSEY OATES: Great, uh, so I will say the response is very similar to the question about restorations. Building off of what the Chancellor said, we are looking at these important investments that we've been privileged enough to make with the federal resources. We're aware that there are temporary resources, that we're grateful that we have that funding now and that it lasts for the next two years. And we're going to be looking at whether the

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2 investments that we've made with stimulus dollars are
3 making the impact that we want and will be evaluated
4 in the outcomes as one of the things that we'll be
5 looking at when making funding decisions about how to
6 support them in the outyears with our city partners
7 and along with you and other stakeholders.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And what does that timeline
9 look like?

10 LINDSEY OATES: Uhm, I think that timeline is
11 over the next couple of years. Uhm, as we're
12 evaluating the investments, obviously we have uhm,
13 you know a new, great Chancellor and leadership team
14 and Mayor that need to spend time becoming familiar
15 with these investments and whether they're supporting
16 their priorities and the outcomes that they want to
17 see from these investments, so I think that that
18 process has started. It started on day one with this
19 administration and we're going to continue to build
20 off of that review.

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, uhm, I had another
22 question. I know that you have hiring freezes. For
23 the records, can you tell us what some of the
24 vacancies are of being cut by title? Are these
25 vacancies due to citywide hiring freeze or does the

1 department not have a need for these positions?

2 What's the decision behind those hiring freezes and

3 what's — is there not a need for those positions?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You'll get a prompt to accept
5 the unmute Chancellor.

6 DAVID BANKS: Okay.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: There we go.

8 DAVID BANKS: Yeah, uhm, we may have to figure a
9 different way to do this. There's going to be a lot
10 of back and forth. We're actually following the
11 city's guidance on hiring right. So, OMB issued a
12 temporary freeze at the beginning of the year, which
13 applied to all central hiring and did not affect
14 roles at the individual school level.

15 But this isn't the first time that we've done
16 this and we're working closely with our partners at
17 OMB on all of this. There will be limited exceptions
18 for roles that have an immediate and direct impact on
19 public health and safety. Uhm, but we're certainly
20 not considering layoffs at this time but as it
21 relates more specifically to the Chair's question, uh
22 Linsey.

23 LINDSEY OATES: Sure, so as the Chancellor
24 mentioned, uhm, there is no hiring freeze and there
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2 never was on school based positions, which is
3 obviously of utmost importance to us. Uhm, our
4 central budget, we always review hiring very
5 strictly. That's really important to us to make sure
6 that we're using our public funding well and this
7 leadership team is looking at - uh, this new
8 leadership team is looking at all of our new
9 positions wisely and whether those headcount need to
10 be there. And so, we are moving with our hiring but
11 we're moving slowly and thoughtfully and efficiently
12 and trying to be judicious as we make decisions
13 moving forward.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: As someone who just left the
15 school building last week, what kind of guidance are
16 you providing for your school leaderships in the
17 buildings. What kind of guidance are you allowing
18 them and what they are saying because around May,
19 June, that's when they start looking to hire and
20 budgeting out for the new school year.

21 So, what are you telling Principals on the
22 ground?

23 DAVID BANKS: Yup, yup so no, we are in
24 communication and we're lining everything up now so
25 you know we just brought on our new Deputy Chancellor

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2 for leadership who is directly responsible for
3 communicating with all of our, not only our
4 Superintendents, our Principals as well. And so,
5 uhm, Principals – you know as we have been going
6 through this process, you know principals are just
7 now really beginning to get more information about
8 what's happening. We're not late in the process yet,
9 so I think we're – we're still in a good place you
10 know. I know you're somebody who just came out of
11 schools. I led schools for 11 years and I understand
12 how important it is for school leaders to be able to
13 plan appropriately but we're still in a good space
14 now and as we had these conversations with all of you
15 as well, it's going to be very important that we'll
16 be communicating in a very timely fashion. And we
17 believe we're still within that timeframe.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Uhm, great, uhm, we talked
19 about earlier how enrollment had dropped
20 significantly. Let's say enrollment picks up again,
21 how do we see – how do we fund those areas that we're
22 having cuts in or we're freezing. How does that look
23 like? What does that look like.

24 DAVID BANKS: Listen, if we, you know that's
25 certainly our hope and our expectation right, if our

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2 schools begin to pick up enrollment and that is
3 certainly the reason that I am here, is to plan
4 programming that will get parents and families
5 throughout this city to come back to our schools.
6 That's like my number one priority and in doing that,
7 we certainly expect that we will be in a much better
8 place but we've got to plan. Sometimes as you know
9 you hope for the best but you have to plan for worst
10 case scenario and that's what some of this initial
11 you know budget negotiation is really all about.

12 What we do know is a reality is that we've lost
13 120,000 families. That we know. Uhm, how many more
14 will come back, we don't know. So, we have to kind
15 of hope for the best but plan for the worst and
16 that's essentially what our position has been.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: What's the game plan to
18 bring those families back? What's the game for that?
19 What does that look like? Uhm, if I'm a parent that
20 left DOE, how do you plan on bringing our family back
21 to your school?

22 DAVID BANKS: It's about the new narrative. You
23 know first of all; I have to serve as a champion for
24 this system and I'm trying to be out and about as
25 much as I possibly can speaking in faith-based; I

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2 spoke at a church yesterday. I'll be speaking
3 community groups and parent groups all over the city
4 but I also you know and being here today, I want to
5 share the message with all of you. This is not a job
6 that rests on one person. We are all - we are
7 partners in this work. If there is one thing I would
8 say to every City Council member that's here today,
9 is we need you to also be a part of the process of
10 rebuilding this narrative in a reimagined school
11 experience for all of our kids. We've come off a
12 tough two years. Everybody has taken a hit. Our
13 children, our families, it has been rough but it is
14 up to us as leaders in this city to say that the best
15 is yet to come and that as New Yorkers, we are going
16 to be resilient and we're going to have an even
17 stronger school system going forward.

18 That doesn't just rest on the Chancellor, even
19 the Chancellor's office. That rests on all of us as
20 leaders throughout this system and I believe very
21 deeply that uh, we are going to have an even stronger
22 system than we had before. So, these initial
23 comments around where we stand with the preliminary
24 budget are one thing but the larger issue for me is
25 about the vision for where we're going and what we're

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2 going to be. And that vision, these pillars that I
3 have shared, they're not my ideas. These are – these
4 are the ideas and that I have heard from parents.
5 That I have heard from Principals. That I've heard
6 from families and from the students themselves. When
7 we talk about a reimagined school experience, where
8 kids are learning financial literacy in school, when
9 kids are getting engaged in civic education, uhm,
10 when we are creating career pathways so that young
11 people have a better idea about you know what future
12 career prospects and economic prospects there are for
13 them. When we're making the investment so that every
14 child can read no later than the third grade. Those
15 are the things that say to parents and families, we
16 heard you and we are going to do better as a system.
17 And so, everything that I shared as part of my vision
18 is the platform that we are championing. And we need
19 everybody throughout the Council and throughout all
20 the city's leaders to continue to say that. Uhm, so
21 that this doesn't rest on one person but this is all
22 of us working together as real partners.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Chancellor Bank.
24 Earlier, my colleagues and I were here. One of the
25 things that they stressed about the school buildings

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2 that some of them attended are run down, they're
3 crumbling. How do we – you want to bring them back
4 but the environment has to also be inviting,
5 learning. So, that's one of the ways that uhm, my
6 colleague spoke – a lot of the spoke about the way
7 the buildings look. Most of them look like jails.
8 They said the colors are terrible. The settings are
9 horrible. So, they want to know, I want to bring
10 back kids. I want to bring back parents. How do we
11 attract them? The buildings also have to be
12 attractive with the learning space, a lot of them,
13 for example, my colleague Council Member Salamanca
14 allotted money to school and they could not set up
15 the technology lab because the electrical system
16 could not support the lab. So, infrastructure will
17 be very important in the conversation on how we bring
18 students back as well.

19 DAVID BANKS: No, absolutely. I'm in complete
20 agreement with you. Where the places are that we
21 need to make these improvements, we have to lean in
22 and as partners in this place and space, anywhere
23 that Council Members are seeing those kinds of
24 conditions, they have to bring that to my attention
25 in order for me to move on it.

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2 Uhm, what I want to change is I've visited 25
3 schools in the two and a half months that I have been
4 here as Chancellor. I have not -- not one of those 25
5 was dilapidated building or a place that like, you
6 know looked like some place nobody would ever send
7 their children. I'm sure there are some buildings
8 that actually have those kinds of issues and
9 conditions and that's why I need to know that but
10 that is not -- that's not the majority of our
11 buildings. The majority of my buildings are not
12 falling apart and the majority of our buildings are
13 not places where you wouldn't sent children. And
14 that's part of what I think we have to as leaders
15 begin to change this narrative. Because the
16 narrative always tends to lean to the negative and
17 there are amazing things going on in our schools.
18 I'm sure the school that you just came out of where
19 you were an educator, you've told me of amazing
20 things that have happened. I visited with Senator
21 Kruger just the other day, a campus on the upper East
22 Side, which she just raved about and said, you have
23 to come and visit. I've had so many City Council
24 persons who have said to me, I want you to come and
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2 visit a school with me in my district because they
3 are so tuned to what's happening.

4 Former Chair Mark Treyger was so connected to
5 every school in his district and saw amazing things.
6 And so, I'm just saying that I think all of us,
7 myself included have to also if we want to get
8 parents to come back, we can't just talk about the
9 negative things in the system. That's not a winning
10 strategy. We got a lot of amazing things and amazing
11 kids and amazing facilities that we have invested
12 hundreds of millions of dollars in over the years.
13 We got to lift those things up. Uh, and that's part
14 of what I want to do as Chancellor is to highlight
15 the things that we know that do work well, so that it
16 builds trust with families.

17 But also, I'm not trying to be naïve, the places
18 that there are problems, we got to fix those problems
19 and I certainly appreciate that point. I want to
20 make sure we're all working together around those
21 issues for sure.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Chancellor. I
23 also want to address the situation, uhm, not
24 situation but something that happens a lot in the DOE
25 Carter cases. I'm sure you're familiar with Carter

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2 cases and I noticed that for some reason when we were
3 doing the data our current cases went up about 244
4 percent. So, what do we need to do on your part to
5 reduce that type of spending? That's about \$234
6 million in 2015 to about \$807 million in 2021.

7 DAVID BANKS: You are so right Madam Chair. You
8 are absolutely right and you know before I took this
9 position, in fact the head of the UFT Michael Mulgrew
10 said to me, it was the number one thing that he said.
11 He said, you got to fix special ed. It's a disaster
12 and we're going to - they're going to put a federal
13 monitor on you if you don't get in front of this
14 thing. And so, there a number of steps that we took
15 to - first of all to address the backlog of cases and
16 I'm going to have our First Deputy Chancellor in a
17 moment tell you a little bit about those efforts.
18 But beyond the backlog, you know we met with Dr.
19 Lester Young, the Chancellor of the State Education
20 Department along with the head of the state Education
21 Department Dr. Betty Rosa. We've been working very
22 closely with them specifically around special
23 education and the Carter cases.

24 The fact that we spend this kind of money every
25 year is a form and function of a level of dysfunction

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2 and I intend to change this, so that we're not in a
3 deficit mode. We spend more money to pay out on
4 cases that we could actually fix and make the kind of
5 investment on the front end. We would save money
6 doing it the right way but this is what I inherited
7 as I came here but this is a major priority for me.
8 If they would mute me for a minute and uh and open up
9 the mic for our First Deputy Chancellor Dan Weisberg
10 because he has really been leading this effort around
11 special education. I thank you for that question.

12 DAN WEISBERG: Thank you Chancellor and thank you
13 Chair Joseph. I appreciate the question. As the
14 Chancellor said, I mean, the top line here is, I
15 appreciate the fact that you pointed out. We've seen
16 a number of cases skyrocket and so, this is putting a
17 strain on the existing system. So, what we're doing
18 in the short-term is essentially changing the way we
19 assign hearing officers. Uh, and so that the cases
20 get heard much more quickly. We're adding about 100
21 permanent and temporary staff here internally in
22 order to deal with the backlog and the backlog is
23 coming down. The ultimate solution as the Chancellor
24 says is we have to do a better job of serving
25 students with special needs in our neighborhood

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2 schools and so, that's going to take a little while
3 longer.

4 In the meantime, we want to make sure the
5 families are getting the cases heard in a timely
6 fashion and we are going to do that and we're happy
7 to report out to you as time goes on the progress
8 there Chair Joseph but longer term, we have to do a
9 better job of accommodating the needs of students and
10 families in their neighborhood schools, in our public
11 schools. That's part of how we are going to win back
12 trust as the Chancellor says and part of how we're
13 going to reverse enrollment declines as the
14 Chancellor says.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: The First Deputy also
16 reinvestment. Reinvestment into the programs that we
17 lack that's as to why these cases are coming up. For
18 example, in D17, there's only one bilingual speech
19 pathologist.

20 So, you can imagine if you have an evaluation in
21 another language, it takes about a year to two for
22 that kid to get evaluated. Do you want to speak on
23 that a little?

24 DAVID BANKS: That's a huge issue where we have
25 shortage areas exactly right in bilingual service

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2 providers is a very severe shortage areas. We would
3 love to work with you. We have some thoughts and
4 ideas and we're going to be engaging with families
5 and communities on this but we do need to increase
6 the supply of service providers generally and
7 specifically bilingual service providers, there's no
8 question about it, agree with you 100 percent.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How many open cases? I have
10 a follow-up question. How many open cases and are
11 the 100 positions already funded?

12 DAVID BANKS: Sorry for the delay. I just needed
13 to unmute myself Chair. The positions are funded
14 absolutely, we are in the process of hiring. We have
15 not hired all the 100. I can get you the specifics
16 on that and I can also get you the specifics, I don't
17 have it in front of me on the number of cases that
18 are still pending. It is reduced. I can tell you
19 that but we'll get you the specifics.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Chancellor
21 Banks, we're going to talk about a population that's
22 near and dear to my heart and that was my first
23 hearing. ENL students, English as a New Language,
24 uhm, however the ENL's deserve more than just one
25 time investment and the federal stimulus will drop

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2 out in the outer years. How can we commit to
3 sustaining these programs in the outyears for our ENL
4 students?

5 DAVID BANKS: Well, listen, my goal is absolutely
6 to commit to doing that. You know, first of all, a
7 commitment to providing a high quality education to
8 our ENL students and supporting their unique needs is
9 critically important and we recognize that as a
10 system, we have to do a better job of improving those
11 outcomes. We have so much work to do to help our
12 children recover from all that they have experienced
13 and to further support them academically and
14 emotionally.

15 But we can't get back to where we were. We have
16 to even better and I think you know working with you
17 and others, not only in the Council but community
18 based organizations who have developed a great level
19 of expertise in this space is going to be really,
20 really important.

21 The things that we value and prioritize as
22 copartners will get funded. You know, even this
23 process here, this is a preliminary budget hearing.
24 Uhm, you know the voices of the members will be heard
25 and if there are priorities that arise to a higher

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2 level for this City Council and there are adjustments
3 that we have to make in the budget to make sure that
4 those things get done, we will do them.

5 So, it's not – it's not just you know my
6 decision, I'm working with all of you on this and I
7 will continue to do that. So, listening and learning
8 and partnering with the leaders as well as our
9 schools and families and communities is going to be
10 the hallmark of everything that I do here as
11 Chancellor. You know, we face challenges right. We
12 have to deal with the economic realities of the
13 challenges that we face. Uhm, I want every school to
14 have everything that it's supposed to have but as
15 partners and as leaders in this system, we're going
16 to have to make some tough decisions right. And uhm
17 and those things that are priorities for us, we will
18 ensure that they get funded but that's why I think
19 it's important that we continue to send a different
20 message to parents and families that there are better
21 days ahead. Because if we don't send that message
22 collectively, we will continue to hemorrhage families
23 and if more families leave, dollars leave with them.
24 And when those dollars leave, it makes it very hard
25 for us to turn around and make sure that every school

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in the system for all the students who are left get everything that they so richly deserve. We have to build a greater level of trust across our system with our families. That's why it sits at the top because if we do that, I think we're in a much better position to ensure families that we're going to be able to support all of these issues including the resources that are needed in the outyears for our ENL students.

CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Chancellor. Our ENL's and a lot of my colleagues have also echoed along with families and advocates about transfer schools for older ENL's. There's only five and they all exist in Manhattan and there's none in the outer boroughs. So, we need to build and create the one's in the outer boroughs. So, we're looking to see, where are we on that and how long will it take and what's the timeline?

DAVID BANKS: Uh, don't have a timeline, an officiant timeline on that right now. I know it's something that has in fact been raised and I think that's something that you know we can - we can and should sit and talk about and map out together but

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2 there's no definitive timeline on that issue as we
3 sit here today.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you because you know
5 that our ENL population are mostly likely to drop out
6 of school. So, we have to do everything in our power
7 to make sure we keep them in schools, older ENL
8 students.

9 DAVID BANKS: Yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Providing a location for
11 them to go that's near home, where they don't have to
12 travel so far.

13 But we're going to talk another population that's
14 also near and dear to my heart is, students in
15 temporary housing. Uhm, I know that we had - I know
16 the DOE had submitted a plan as part of federal
17 funding to hire 50 community coordinators which is
18 very essential in shelters because they play
19 important roles to making sure students are getting
20 all their educational support needs.

21 We have over 200 shelter sites and around 28,000
22 students spend time in shelters every year and over
23 the last ten years, that number doubled up to about
24 114,000 students sleeping in shelters. There's 117
25 DOE shelter-based family positions but they only pay

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2 \$28,000. So, it makes it difficult for you to
3 recruit and retain those staff members. So, how does
4 the administration prioritize students in alternative
5 housing? Can we expect better investment in that
6 coordination in home corrardin- uhm shelter
7 coordinators.

8 DAVID BANKS: Well, first of all, that is a very
9 important issue. I think there was an article in the
10 paper written about it today. I literally just got
11 off the phone a little while ago with Dr. Betty Rosa
12 from the State Education Department and the support
13 that they are going to be providing as well in this
14 area. We are committed to making these hires but the
15 are the hires as we currently know them.

16 Increasing the salaries for those positions is
17 something that I think we would love to do but I
18 don't know that we're currently in a position to so
19 that given the level of other economic constraints
20 that we're finding ourselves in.

21 So, first things first. I'm trying to ensure
22 that we are going to make the hires that are already
23 in the budget and already established as first of
24 all, as a baseline and then secondly, I think we can
25 continue the conversation around how do we increase

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2 salaries to make those positions you know even more
3 desirable. But right now, I just want to make sure
4 at the very least, we get those positions filled and
5 that is something that we plan on doing in the coming
6 weeks. Can you hear me? Hello?

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CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes, I can hear you. Hello.
I can hear you.

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DAVID BANKS: I was done.

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CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, we're going to touch
upon fair student funding and then I'm going to allow
my colleagues to ask some questions as well.

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DAVID BANKS: Sure.

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CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Uhm, we know that additional
headcount as a result, 100 percent fair student
funding. How will the fair, the foundation set aside
from Albany this year and next as part of the CFE
lawsuit be allocated to schools?

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DAVID BANKS: Great question. I'm going to pivot
to Linsey Oates our CFO if they could mute me and
unmute Lindsey to lean in on that question.

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LINDSEY OATES: Thank you Chair Joseph. This is
an important question and we are grateful that the
state has continued to propose phasing in, the
foundation in funding both in the Governor and the

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2 Assembly in the Senates proposed budget that we
3 recently released and we're looking forward to that
4 continued phase in to be in the state and active
5 budget hopefully to be released in the next couple of
6 weeks.

7 We will continue to use the increased foundation
8 aid to support having all schools at 100 percent fair
9 student funding in the upcoming school year. What we
10 did this school year to achieve that goal was to use
11 the first phase in of the foundation aid funding as
12 well as some of our federal stimulus funding to
13 achieve that goal. So, next year, we will use
14 exclusively the additional foundation aid coming from
15 the state to achieve the 100 percent fair student
16 funding for all schools.

17 So, again, we're grateful for the state for the
18 additional funding and we thank you and your
19 colleagues for your continued support for that
20 funding.

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. I'm going to
22 turn it over to my colleagues who have questions and
23 I'll come back with another round of questioning.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. Uhm, we're
25 first going to call on Council Member Salamanca

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2 followed by Council Members Louis, Riley, and Stevens
3 and we have more after that. And I just want to
4 remind the public that the Zoom raise hand function
5 is strictly for the Committee Members to ask
6 questions of the administration. So, we'll turn to
7 Council Member Salamanca.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you. Can you
10 hear me?

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Yes, alright. How are
13 you Mr. Chancellor? Uhm, I will be brief with my
14 questions. I know that the Chair asked some of the
15 questions that I had in mind but I was wondering, do
16 you have anyone on your team who's in charge of the
17 school facilities here?

18 DAVID BANKS: Uh, yeah, we've got uh, we've got
19 Kevin Moran on, so if they would unmute Kevin Moran,
20 he can certainly respond to any question and I'm
21 having a problem with my screen, so I'm going to have
22 someone take a quick look at this while Kevin is
23 responding to your question. Kevin Moran.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Yeah, I was just
25 curious in terms of how often, how often does the

1
2 school facilities go out and inspect the work that
3 superintendents are doing?

4 KEVIN MORAN: The work of the school custodian is
5 inspected weekly by our Deputy Directors of
6 Facilities. They visit their schools in their
7 catchment areas weekly and so, if there is a special
8 request. I heard earlier on the hearing that the
9 color scheme of grey and red at the school, that was
10 preferred. We have that in our contract as an
11 obligation. Every year a percentage of school
12 building be repainted, we could do that and any of
13 the structures that folks had alluded to that there
14 were structural outside exterior mason rework that
15 was crumbling in a word that was used. There is
16 scaffolding as was mentioned that goes outside, the
17 shed that goes outside.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I'm sorry, let me
19 interject because I have a little bit of time.

20 KEVIN MORAN: Alright, sure.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I did a check
22 presentation at one of my schools last week and I was
23 really, I don't even want to say disappointed. I was
24 just disgusted in the condition of that school.
25 Ceiling tiles missing, ceiling tiles falling apart,

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2 uhm, you know the walls. Just the total lack of
3 maintenance and I'm taking this personal because this
4 is a school down the block from my office and in my
5 neighborhood. I grew up in this community and just
6 to see the lack of disrespect that they showed these
7 students with how disgusting the school was.

8 I, myself and the borough president at the time
9 Ruben Diaz Jr., we funded a playground next to the
10 school with two basketball courts. One of the
11 basketball courts, the backboard and the rim was
12 completely gone. I went to the gym and speaking to
13 some of the students, one of the students asked me,
14 when are you going to fix the rim. The rim was
15 completely bent and you know, I'm here trying to do
16 my best to allocate fundings for these schools, but I
17 was just taken back by the way that this, the
18 conditions of the school and if you're superin- if
19 there's someone supervising that custodian, then he
20 or she is not doing their job.

21 So, I am going to on the record request that we
22 do an inspection where whoever is in charge of school
23 facilities, I want to visit some of these schools. I
24 want to show you these conditions and if these
25 custodians, who many of them have been there for many

1
2 years may feel complaisant, are not doing their job,
3 it's time for us to replace them as well.

4 You know, that is one of the reasons why your -
5 uhm, in terms of your capacity for students, is low.
6 They are going to Charter Schools. They want private
7 schools. They don't have these issues in Charter
8 Schools and in private schools. They maintain their
9 buildings. They want to ensure that their enrollment
10 is high you know.

11 KEVIN MORAN: Well, I appreciate the feedback and
12 I would be more than happy to walk a building with
13 you Council Member. We recently did a project at
14 Lehman High School in the Bronx where we replaced
15 every bit of the ceiling with new LED lights. I'd
16 love you to see that type of work we're doing and if
17 there's a specific example that you have, I'd like to
18 walk with you as soon as your calendar permits. It's
19 definitely not acceptable if there are ceiling issues
20 or rims broken or backboards. We can get out there
21 and fix those.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Salamanca one
23 second. I think you muted yourself, give us one
24 moment.

25 DAVID BANKS: Yeah, well, can you hear me?

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can Chancellor and Council
3 Member Salamanca we re unmuted you.

4 DAVID BANKS: Yeah, so let me say this as well
5 right because I don't sit here as Chancellor to
6 defend status quo and to defend nonsense and
7 craziness in our schools. Uhm, and I just want to
8 say this to any person that's here, any Council
9 Member. If you have any school in your district that
10 you recognize is unacceptable, you ought to let me
11 know that personally. We don't have to wait until
12 you get on a hearing to tell me that. If you call me
13 personally and I have given my number I think to
14 everybody that's a member here and if you don't have
15 it, you can certainly have it. I don't even want you
16 to go to somebody else that works for me. You ought
17 to let me know that directly and it will be
18 absolutely responded to. I will go and do that walk
19 through with you as well. Because I don't like to
20 work in the abstract.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Yeah.

22 DAVID BANKS: If you tell me there's a definite
23 problem somewhere and so, please get me that
24 information and I'm making a note of that now because
25 I want to do that walk with you as well. This is

1
2 personal for me. I was a school leader and I know
3 the experiences our kids are suppose to have and the
4 kind of facilities that they deserve and if the
5 Council has allocated funding to make these happen -

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 DAVID BANKS: And it's not happening. I'm sorry,
8 I didn't mean to take up all your time Council
9 Member.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: No, no, listen, I
11 wanted to focus on this and Mr. Chancellor,
12 immediately when I did that walk through, I reached
13 out the executive superintendent and she immediately
14 reached back out and said there's going to be a
15 corrective action plan but I wanted to take this
16 opportunity in this hearing to find out who is in
17 charge of school facilities because there are other
18 issues but I was just taken back by the conditions
19 that my students, my neighbors, my family members, in
20 this junior high school and the conditions that their
21 in and it's here that the individual who supervises
22 the custodian does an inspection once a week or once
23 a month just comes to show that they are not actually
24 inspecting that school building.

1
2 So, my team is going to reach out to your office
3 and I welcome that walkthrough and yes, I have direct
4 contact for you and I want to thank you for that.

5 DAVID BANKS: I appreciate that. No, absolutely
6 and let's make sure we do that. You can go to the
7 executive superintendent on a host of things but when
8 it becomes something that becomes that kind of
9 situation that's unacceptable, come to me directly
10 and we'll take care of it.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright, thank you Mr.
12 Chancellor. Thank you Madam Chair for the
13 opportunity.

14 DAVID BANKS: Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Salamanca.
16 Next, we'll turn to Council Member Louis.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Louis, you
19 just have to accept the unmute. There we go, now we
20 can hear you.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Got it, thank you Malcom.
22 Congrats again Chair on the Oversight Hearing. Glad
23 to see you Chancellor Banks and your whole team.
24 Thank you for sharing the DOE's four point plan,
25 especially on reimagining the school experience.

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2 I wanted to ask you what your vision was to help
3 our students and scholars that are going into
4 college? What is the plans for career pathways and
5 do you have a designated or a dedicated staff to work
6 on that and how can our school communities work with
7 them? And my second question is on, what is DOE
8 doing to address young students that are affected by
9 the current mental health crisis? I wanted to know
10 if DOE is expanding the number of school-based mental
11 health clinics, restorative justice practice programs
12 as well as expansion of inclusive school programs.
13 Thank you.

14 DAVID BANKS: Great question. No, I appreciate
15 you Council Member, thank you so much. So, first of
16 all, we have named Jade Grieve. J-a-d-e is her first
17 name, G-r-i-e-v-e. She is the Chief of our career
18 pathways work and she has done this work all around
19 the world. I think in many ways, we got the best
20 person in the world that we could have brought here
21 to the DOE to help drive this agenda and uhm, and we
22 plan on raising a lot of money from the philanthropic
23 community to help to ensure that our kids get
24 developed in these career pathway opportunities. The
25 kids have said that they need it, schools need it and

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2 listen, I was in — the Mayor and I were at Bayside
3 High School a couple of weeks ago where he graduated.
4 Bayside High School is a tremendous high school,
5 comprehensive big community high school. It's not a
6 career and technical education school, but every
7 student in the school takes career and technical
8 education classes, which I think is a phenomenal
9 model.

10 Everybody gets exposed to like the real world and
11 that's what we want to do for the entire system. And
12 so, Jade Grieve is the person and folks on my team
13 who are watching this, will ensure that you get — in
14 fact we should send it to every Council person. Jade
15 Grieve send her contact information because that is
16 going to be the north star for this body of work that
17 we're doing. Trust me. If there is going to be a
18 legacy that I would leave as Chancellor, it is going
19 to be around helping to open up the power of
20 possibilities for all of our kids. So, that they're
21 not just going to school to go to school and we're
22 trying to improve math and reading by a couple of
23 points.

24 I want them to understand why they go to school
25 and I want them to understand that they can go into

1
2 the fintech industry. They can go into biotech.
3 They can be investment bankers. They can be
4 architects but it's hard to imagine how to position
5 yourself for those things if you've never had any
6 exposure to it. That's where we're going and if the
7 business community is saying they need us to produce
8 students from the DOE, who can do some stuff. Who
9 have credentials, they can go to college if they want
10 to go to college, if they don't want to go to
11 college, they can go right into the world of work and
12 get good paying jobs that put them on the path to
13 economic prosperity. That's what I care deeply
14 about.

15 And there a lot of other things that we have to
16 do to help get our kids to that place and space
17 Council Member. Uhm, but one of the things that
18 we're doing, we've made a number of investments. I'm
19 going to ask that Lindsey also lean in and our CFO
20 around some of the investments that we've made and
21 things that we're doing in the mental health areas to
22 provide levels of supports for our schools.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you.

24 DAVID BANKS: And in fact, not - Lindsey, I'm
25 going to go to Mark Treyger rather, I meant Mark

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2 because Mark has been, Mark has spent a lot of time,
3 effort, energy in this space and it's personal for
4 him. And so, Mark Treyger, if you would, I'd love
5 for you to just kind of lean in a little bit and talk
6 about some of the things we're doing there.

7 MARK TREYGER: Thank you. Thank you Mr.
8 Chancellor and it's great to be with you Council
9 Member and the Chair and this wonderful Committee and
10 staff in the people's house and as the Chancellor
11 noted, this work is deeply personal. I also want to
12 just flag Council Member Louis. Thank you for your
13 excellent question also on career pathways. This
14 Chancellor has really built a strong, very big strong
15 robust team on making sure that every child from
16 every zip code has a plan, has an access point for
17 resources, for information for every school
18 community. That's always been a challenge
19 historically and there is a strong team in place and
20 also, I will make sure Council Member Louis that you
21 actually have a follow-up with me personally after
22 this hearing. And also, to all members of this
23 Education Committee. To this wonderful outreach team
24 but again, I'm happy to follow-up with you further
25 right after this hearing as well.

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COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, was that it Council Member Louis? Was that all Council Member Louis? Sorry.

COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Yeah, and regarding the expansion of the school-based mental health related. I think they answered the question. They would follow-up after as regarding restorative justice practices and all that. Thank you Malcom.

MARK TREYGER: Oh, Council Member, forgive me. That piece got cut off from my sound. Uhm, I want to thank the Council. I want to thank you as well for being big supporters of the school-based mental health continuum.

Also, in addition to making sure that every school has resources to hire a full-time social worker. There is work underway and partnerships underway between the DOE and the Department of Health in terms of setting up structure in the system and I want to thank Advocates for Children and many great community partners as well for championing this work for many years and there's work underway and partnerships underway to ensure that schools have an

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2 outlet to use health officials for kids experiencing
3 crisis rather than calling NYPD.

4 And as I mentioned before in my previous role, a
5 five year old kid having a bad day is not an NYPD
6 matter. We need to make resources in place and
7 partnerships in place between DOE and DOHMH and our
8 experts to provide services at the school level. I'm
9 happy to follow up with you further after this
10 hearing as well, to give you an update.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Look forward to working
12 with you on that. Thank you so much.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Uhm, next, we'll
14 hear from Council Member Riley followed by Council
15 Members Stevens, Abreu, Dinowitz, Avilés, Brewer,
16 Restler, Hanif and Lee. But we'll turn to Council
17 Member Riley.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you Council. Thank
20 you Chair again for your leadership. Chancellor
21 Banks, I have so much respect for you. You know why,
22 the things that you've done for my brother and my
23 family, Eagle Academy, I have truly a lot of respect
24 for you.

1
2 My former colleague Council Member Treyger, I
3 have a ton of respect for you and what you have done
4 for DOE. I do have some questions and concerns and
5 Chancellor Banks, I heard you loud and clear to
6 contact you directly when we have some issues
7 regarding schools and I will do off line but I did
8 take a visit to a school about two weeks ago and I've
9 been talking about for the last two weeks to the
10 Chair, to members of your team, to members of the
11 administration, that my heart is really concerned
12 about what's going on at Evander Childs High School.
13 Uhm, when I went to the school. Students were
14 spoking in the school. Students weren't going to
15 class. They were running out of the school. The
16 school hasn't been invested in for years. They have
17 I believe Council Member Abreu brought it up in the
18 first hearing with SCA but they have two pools. They
19 only can access one pool and there's a lot going on
20 in that school and the culture of the school is
21 really, really bad. I felt like I was in uhm Lean on
22 Me; if anyone remembers Lean on Me, Eastside High.
23 That's exactly where I felt I was at when I went to
24 visit a school.

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2 We desperately need to go visit that school. I
3 saw the issues that was going on in there but I could
4 speak to off record and off topic of the hearing to
5 see when we could schedule a time for you Chair
6 Joseph, members of the UFT and a lot of people to
7 come because we need all stakeholders to help that
8 school. Because the high school in my district I'm
9 really concerned about it.

10 My next concern and question is I heard you
11 brought up green spaces at school and talked about
12 agriculture. I just wanted to hear about the DOE's
13 plan to kind of expand that to other schools across
14 New York City. When we talk about healthy food
15 initiatives and we're talking about giving our
16 children a chance to actually grow healthy food
17 within their school systems. That's something that
18 interests me. And also, imagine NYC. It was a
19 program that the DOE did where they were focused on
20 additions of new schools. I wanted to know if there
21 is any update on Imagine NYC because there is a
22 teacher that is in my district who wants to open up a
23 new school. Folks on [INAUDIBLE 3:17:49], for young
24 girls of color, so I really, really want to focus on
25 that as well. I have to jump on my hearing at one.

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2 I have a hearing on Land Use that I have to Chair but
3 I do have a ton of other questions but just to give
4 you a chance to answer that, if we could please touch
5 base offline because I do have some concerns that's
6 going on district 11.

7

8 DAVID BANKS: Got it. No, no, so certainly I
9 appreciate your remarks and thank you so much and you
10 know how much I appreciate you and your leadership as
11 well and certainly Evander Childs, we can follow up
12 on that right away. Very disturbing to hear that.

12

13 In terms of some of the other things that we're
14 talking about in respect to the health issues, I'm
15 going to ask Kevin Moran to lean in and then
16 particular around Imagine NYC, I'm going ask First
17 Deputy Dan Weisberg to lean in and weigh in as well.

17

18 So, Kevin, why don't you respond to the second
19 part of that.

19

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And sorry Chancellor, we're
21 also going to unmute Mr. Taratko because he was
22 indicated he would like to say something as well.
23 So, we'll unmute Kevin Moran and we'll unmute Tom as
24 well.

24

25 DAVID BANKS: Great. Kevin? I don't think we
hear Kevin.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: There, you are both unmuted
3 now.

4 KEVIN MORAN: Uh, okay, Tom, I don't know which
5 portion you want to -

6 THOMAS TARATKO: I was going to speak to Evander
7 Childs quickly because we have reinstated our
8 facilities team which is exactly what the Council
9 Member was talking about. Whatever the issues are,
10 we can talk to the Council Member and school
11 leadership and bring the exact people that can solve
12 those problems. Whether it be school safety, the
13 instructional side. Facilities, capital side
14 whatever and space management will be there and also
15 have programs that I spoke to the Chancellor a couple
16 weeks about a campus enhancement program.

17 So, if we can work with the leadership in the
18 school to say, this is the vision. This is what we
19 want to do here, we can work to get there and then
20 definitely bringing the local elected's in on it, it
21 just add the priority and it adds the high visibility
22 to the project and things will really get done and
23 you can turn that, what you've just described around
24 fairly quickly.

1
2 I know you don't think so because you've seen it
3 this way but we're real confident we could jump on
4 that and make some positive impacts quickly there.
5 So, we're happy to work with you Council Member.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you Tom.

7 KEVIN MORAN: Yeah, and so Council Member, thank
8 you for the question. I visited Evander recently,
9 very recently and I'm having a visit scheduled
10 already with the principals and the custodian. We
11 walked the space and saw some of their showcase
12 projects that they have in the building and their
13 student library. Students are very proud of the
14 space as is the staff and custodial team. Even when
15 down to the second pool that you referenced, I know
16 there's some talk about getting that second pool back
17 online. And the custodians in house redid the locker
18 room down there. It's really, I'd love to show you
19 the work going on there. That's exciting work for
20 us.

21 As it relates to the Green and Sustainability
22 Initiatives, we have an Office of Sustainability,
23 we'd love to partner up on more opportunities to grow
24 healthy options and foods and hydroponics and
25 different raise planting beds around the campus and

1
2 space. So, as soon as we can get this on the
3 calendar Council Member Riley, I'd love to get out
4 there with you. I think you'll find an excited team
5 and where there's opportunities to do more, we
6 certainly will.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you Kevin. Thank
8 you Chancellor and Chancellor, one more thing before
9 I leave. Last year, Public Advocate Jumaane Williams
10 and myself put together a healing center school
11 initiative from the DOE. We still haven't got any
12 update on a lot of those initiatives, so if there is
13 a conversation that your team could have with the
14 healing center school initiative to how we could kind
15 of implement a lot of those initiatives within the
16 DOE, I will truly appreciate that as well. Thank you
17 Chair, I'm sorry to take up a little bit more time.
18 Have a good one.

19 DAVID BANKS: Thank you. I got the report as
20 well, I'm still looking through it and I want to make
21 sure that my team puts this down and we have a number
22 of things that we can follow-up with you on. We
23 should get up - we'll get up to the Bronx and sit
24 with you.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you.

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DAVID BANKS: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll turn to Council Member Stevens.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Uhm, good afternoon everyone. Good afternoon Chancellor Banks, very excited to see you today. Uhm, you know we're always in partnership, because I'm all about these young people. So, uhm, I'll get right to it though. So, a couple of things. One of the things I've been thinking about and talking with some of my superintendents about is just around like community schools. Community Schools is one of those things that we love and we think that they're super important but one of the huge things I've been like talking with one of my superintendents about is just like Community School hubs because we have these places where they have all these resources being put into it and how are we thinking about getting these resources to the masses because you know there's so many good opportunities but it's only available to those kids in the school. So, that's one of the things that I would love to talk about.

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And then the next thing as you know, we are embarking on a very huge summer endeavor with Summer Rising and increasing these numbers. I'm really concerned because last year, a big part of the issue was the communication between DOE and providers. What are we going to be doing to make sure that this communication is happening adequately and that CBO's and providers are seen as equal partners and they do not work for the principals and really working in partnership. Because I think that when it works, it works really well but when it doesn't work, it doesn't work at all.

So, I definitely want to make sure that we're addressing this and thinking about this as we're planning.

DAVID BANKS: Well, I'll start on the second thing and then I'm going to ask Mark Treyger to also talk a little bit about what we're doing with the community schools work. On the Summer Rising, we're really excited about it. It will be the largest summer program that we've ever had and I think not just in its size but we learned a lot of lessons from the last time around. That's part of the reason why we didn't even change the name. We said, we want to

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2 continue to build on what was a good program that had
3 some issues. And we're going to do that and we've
4 been learning the lessons from before. And so, uhm,
5 the Mayor has directed, the Deputy Mayor Wright was
6 really lead the effort on Summer Rising and she has
7 coordinated meetings with DYCD, DOE, all of these
8 providers. Its been really good and we've been
9 planning this now for weeks, not months. Really,
10 since we got here these meetings have been happening.

11 So, we've been well ahead of the curve in terms
12 of our preparation to be ready for the summer. So, I
13 think you're going to see -

14 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Well, my concern is that
15 there has been conversations going on but they've
16 been higher conversations and not trickling down to
17 the actual people who are doing the work.

18 DAVID BANKS: They will, they will. Trust me.

19 There's a -

20 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: I trust you but I just
21 had to put that out.

22 DAVID BANKS: No, no, there's a timeline that is
23 laid out so that every body will be on the same page
24 right, we're still in March right, and so we had to
25 kind of order our steps first, making sure different

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2 things are coordinated. We also heard from people
3 from last year as well, who in fact were on the
4 ground. A lot of their voices are informing this
5 process right now that we're engaged in and you'll
6 see in very short order, it will be kicking right
7 back out to the people who are on the ground who are
8 going to be responsible for driving this. There was
9 a lot of confusion around a number of areas last year
10 and we're going to close the gap on all of those
11 things.

12 So, that's where - we spend a lot of time there
13 as well.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: And just another note
15 that I wanted to put in because this isn't a new
16 partnership but still often providers come in and
17 they are not seen with the same level of respect as
18 educators and sometimes principals do not come in
19 with the same respect. So, I think that we have to
20 make sure that we're putting in a level of forced
21 partnership because sometimes the expectations is not
22 that they are going to listen to the provider and
23 they're like no, this is my building, you need to
24 listen to me when in reality, this is a partnership
25 and we should be working together.

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So, I just wanted to put that as a note because a lot of times and I know this for a fact because I actually worked in these programs where principals wouldn't listen to me. And so, we have to make sure that they understand that this is a dual partnership. So, I think and I said this in my hearing, that there needs to be dual partnership and dual expectations and they should be working on them together enforce collaboration.

DAVID BANKS: I agree and I'm glad that you raised it as well and I'll make sure; we got another meeting I think coming up I think tomorrow. I'm going to bring up these issues that you're sending, make sure that we are ensuring that this happens. You know, it is not an easy deal because principals are oriented to you know, in fact they use the language, my building, right.

COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Yup.

DAVID BANKS: And that's kind of like a universal thing where principals take real ownership and anything that comes in their building, you know has to go through them. That can be a good thing and it also can be a bad thing, right.

1
2 So, we got to ensure that we find the sweet spot
3 that works.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 DAVID BANKS: And we do that but also, I'm going
6 to ask Mark Treyger to talk a little bit more about
7 what we're doing, and we're expanding on our
8 community schools work as well. Mark.

9 MARK TREYGER: Thank you Mr. Chancellor and I
10 want to thank Council Member Stevens for your
11 proactive leadership because you're asking all the
12 right questions, particularly Summer Rising. I know
13 that last year, there were major issue with
14 enrollment. To the credit of this Chancellor and the
15 team that he's build here in partnership with City
16 Hall and our DYCD and our Deputy Mayor, DOE actually
17 is now handling enrollment. That was a major issue
18 and problem last year. I know that there are other
19 issues and also, Council Member, if there are
20 organizations that have contacted you that have
21 issues with DOE, please forward them my way.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Oh, absolutely, you know
23 I will.

24 MARK TREYGER: I'd love to kind of help you know
25 bridge to help - yes, you're awesome. You're awesome

1
2 at that and please, keep sending that information my
3 way and we'll ensure that there's communication and
4 collaboration between DOE, DYCD.

5 Uh, with regards to community schools, thank you
6 so much for raising this question. Huge fan of this
7 wonderful initiative and thank you because your
8 committee plays a critical role in partnership with
9 the education committee and really seeing the
10 education – that the community school initiative
11 really take shape.

12 At the end of this school, the number will go
13 well over 300 close to 400. Community schools,
14 there's an RFP out. I'd love to be able to brief you
15 and your team on where the community school
16 initiative stands because there is some really great
17 work happening there. I'd love to work with you and
18 the Council and the Chair Joseph as well to kind of
19 seeing this grow and flourish for years to come.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Absolutely. Thank you
21 so much. I know we ran out of time but I'll
22 definitely be in contact with you to definitely have
23 a briefing and thank you Chancellor Banks for all
24 your partnership and I will be in touch if I have any
25 more concerns with both of you.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
3 Stevens and next, we will turn to Council Member
4 Abreu.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: Yeah, well thank you to
7 Chair Joseph and to our Chancellor Banks and Mark
8 Treyger, it is nice to see you here as well my
9 friend.

10 Look, like a lot of students, I struggled reading
11 growing up and was held back in school as a result.
12 Can you speak to your plans to invest in high quality
13 literacy instruction rooted in the science of
14 reading?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chancellor, one moment.
16 Okay, there we go.

17 DAVID BANKS: Okay, you can hear me now, okay,
18 great, yeah. Yeah, so again, this is another major
19 priority and it's a huge body of work that we are
20 leaning in on right now. So, we haven't fully
21 determined the reading program perse that we're going
22 to use. We're talking to lots of different people.
23 I sent out a signal that a return to a phenetic
24 approach to the teaching of reading is critically
25 important.

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2 We're partnering with organizations like the
3 Windward School around issues of dyslexia. Those
4 that don't know in the upper east side private
5 school, it's a gold standard really for how to
6 address and support students with dyslexia.

7 But more importantly, there approach to the
8 science of reading is what I think is critically
9 important and we have too many of our students and
10 too many of our schools which have not been engaged
11 in a very productive approach to the teaching of
12 reading. And I think our schools of education have
13 failed miserably in preparing teachers who come into
14 our profession, who don't know really how to teach
15 the fundamentals of reading.

16 And over the last 25 years, you know we had a
17 whole language approach that the results are in and
18 it hasn't worked and that's why we're going back to
19 probably an approach that many of you may be familiar
20 with maybe when you were coming up. Although many of
21 you here are a lot younger than me, so I don't know.
22 I don't know if any of you may have gone through a
23 whole language approach as well but it has for far
24 too many kids, it has not been an affected approach.

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2 That's why 65 percent of Black and Brown children
3 across the city never achieve proficiency in this
4 DOE, never. So, we are in that space now. We have
5 teams of folks who are leaning deeply into it and
6 you're going to hear announcements about that in the
7 coming weeks around the full on approach of where
8 we're going to make a difference for next year,
9 beginning next year for our kids.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: I'm so relieved to hear
11 that. Thank you so much for focusing your attention
12 on reading. I look forward to hearing more and just
13 quickly I've been in conversations with some of my
14 colleagues on this. The middle school quality
15 initiative, is that something that we continue to
16 invest in and support?

17 DAVID BANKS: Yup and Dan has been spending a lot
18 of time in that space as well. Dan.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: Thank you Mr. Chancellor.

20 DAVID BANKS: No, thank you Council Member, I
21 appreciate you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: I owe you a car as well,
23 like all my other colleagues.

24 DAVID BANKS: We still got to get our sit down
25 right.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: We will, we will.

DAVID BANKS: Okay. Dan Weisberg.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yeah, we gone ahead and unmuted him.

DAN WEISBERG: Thank you Council Member, appreciate it and the middle school quality initiative, we would love to connect with you on that. We are going to continue that work but we're looking at it in exactly what form. We know we have to address middle schools for sure. You know we talk a lot about early literacy. We talk about student pathways. We know that we don't get to student pathways and we don't build on early literacy if we don't have quality middle schools.

So, we definitely want to continue that work. We want to figure out how to scale it, so that all of our middle schools are quality middle schools. So, would love to talk to you about that and get you cost.

COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: Thank you so much to all of you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member. Next, we'll hear from Council Member Dinowitz.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

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COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you Malcom.

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Thank you Chair. Good afternoon Chancellor. Hope

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you're doing very well today. First, I also want to

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thank you for the work you've already started doing

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and for your vision of education. I know it comes

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from a place of deep love and experience, so I thank

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you for that.

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DAVID BANKS: Thank you.

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COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: My first question is

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about money and how much money is spent in per

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session on regents exams? In other words, test prep,

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test and coordination, administration of exams, both

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during the school year and in the summer?

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DAVID BANKS: Uh, I have no idea.

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COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: It's kind of a specific

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question but uhm.

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DAVID BANKS: Yeah, yeah, I'm going to ask

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Lindsey. I'll see if she will take a shot at that

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one.

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LINDSEY OATES: Sure. Let me know when the

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Chancellor is unmuted.

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COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: You're unmuted so.

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LINDSEY OATES: Okay. So, I don't have the exact

25

figure for you. In fact, this is something that

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2 obviously has been on pause for the last couple of
3 years as a result of the pandemic and the regents
4 postponed and cancelled. So, we are sort of looking
5 at it for the first time new this year after a couple
6 of years with those activities largely going undone.
7 So, we will get back to you with some of the
8 historical data but just know the historical data
9 will largely be pre-pandemic. And then this year,
10 the Regents exams being announced and going through,
11 we're looking at what this funding will look like now
12 this year and we can certainly get back to you after
13 those activities take place later this spring.

14 So, ask again at the exact hearing and going
15 forward and we can certainly get back to you with
16 that but I'd be happy to look at the sort of 2019 and
17 older numbers.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Yeah, because we're
19 going to be starting these tests soon.

20 LINDSEY OATES: Yup.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: I think it's vital so
22 we know how much is actually being spent on these
23 tests and in addition to not just the human hours,
24 per session hours, but also the contracts. The
25 printing, the process and the test prep books. All

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2 of this money that we spend both on the regents and
3 on the other exams.

4 I do want to comment about you know one of the
5 number one things being special education and uhm, I
6 will tell you in my experience as a teacher, very
7 often the reforms and the work being done for special
8 education students often really just meant more
9 paperwork and compliance mechanisms and not actually
10 help for the students.

11 So, while you mentioned working with Chancellor
12 Rosa, I do hope many of the people that you work with
13 include the UFT, include our teachers, include our
14 service providers of people actually giving our
15 students the services, providing the services.
16 Because you know they're the one's doing the work and
17 of course, the families who students are impacted.

18 DAVID BANKS: That's right.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: One other question I
20 have is in relation to the last question regarding
21 reading. Uhm, as you know you've spoken about this
22 time and again, it is a huge issue in our schools. I
23 actually, after your speech, I actually went out and
24 introduced myself to that man, if only the kids could
25 read.

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DAVID BANKS: No, Bill.

COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: That's right Bill. And so, when I asked this question last time, the answer I got wasn't great. I'm hoping you made progress on it. Are you working with the state to address the reality? The middle school students and high school students, many high schools students need phonics, need direct reading instruction but such courses, they are not provided credit for those courses and schools are not given the credit that they need to provide these courses to our students.

DAVID BANKS: Well, I'm not sure about the credits aspect of it. What my major focus is going to be at the elementary school level, where we don't spend a lot of time focused on credits, like we do on the upper grades but in the early grades, building that solid foundation is where I've really been spending a lot of my time. But you're asking a question about older students?

COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Sorry to interrupt. The clock is ticking down and I have full - trust me, I have full faith in your commitment and the work you're doing for younger grades. The older students often get forgotten. So, it's very complicated in

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2 this particular case, it was told to me at the last
3 hearing, oh, well we got to work with the state
4 because the credits this, the credits that. And so,
5 what I'm asking is, can you or are you working with
6 the state to say if a child comes into middle school
7 or a child comes into high school, far below reading
8 level, which is the reality in so many of schools.
9 That schools are disincentivized from providing those
10 children the actual reading instruction that they
11 need. Which was the case when I was a teacher and I
12 will just share, the only time – one of the only
13 times I ever got to teach direct reading instruction,
14 was when I had a principal who wasn't so concerned
15 about you know the score, what the superintendent was
16 going to say to her about, about oh, these students
17 are getting the credits. Students need to read she
18 said, let's get them to read but that was despite the
19 fact that the state and the city did not incentivize
20 her to do so. So, with all of that, I would just
21 encourage you in your work to recognize there are
22 high schoolers, most with IEP's and middle schoolers
23 who can not read and they attention as well and I
24 hope that you're working to provide the right
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2 incentives for principals so that they can invest in
3 those children as well.

4 DAVID BANKS: That's a great question. Great
5 questions. Dan, you were going to say something on
6 that.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: There we go unmuted.

8 DAN WEISBERG: Thank you very much and thank you
9 for the question. It's a critical question. Agree
10 with you 100 percent. We will get back to you on
11 that Council Member on the issue of credit. There
12 are other ways that we can provide incentives for
13 that sort of foundational reading work in secondary
14 schools. And the other piece that we're going to
15 have to address is the secondary level teachers are
16 not trained in phonics for example and phonemic
17 awareness and how to do that but they're going to
18 need to be in many cases and this is a national
19 problem. There aren't a lot of great materials on
20 foundation, literacy foundations for older kids who
21 don't want to look at the elementary level phonics
22 materials very often because it's you know, it's baby
23 stuff for them.

24 So, would love to work with you on thinking about
25 how to do that. That has to be a piece of the puzzle

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2 for us is to make sure our older kids learn how to
3 read and once they do, they can zoom ahead and really
4 accelerate their learning in all subjects. So, we
5 couldn't agree with you more Council Member.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: You're absolutely
7 right. I would respectfully say my experience is
8 teaching kids to read. It's just different than what
9 you just said but I would love to work with you in
10 that because as I said, we have older kids, probably
11 with IEPs who need that direct instruction.

12 Thank you. Thank you Deputy Chancellor, thank
13 you Chair Joseph.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member.
15 Next, we'll call on Council Member Avilés.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Hi there, can you see me?

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can't see you but we can
19 hear you.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Ah okay, you can hear me.
21 Hi, how are you? Thank you so much again for uhm,
22 this hearing. I wanted to ask a little bit about, we
23 know at the state level we've seen a significant
24 portion of our fair student funding going to Charter
25 Schools because of the tuition reimbursement and the

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2 rental DOE having to pay for rent and yet, in this
3 budget, we are also seeing a significant new
4 allocation of budgets for Charter schools to the tune
5 of \$281 million. Can you tell us more about why we
6 are adding additional money even though Charter
7 Schools serve only 14 percent of the New York City
8 student population and getting the lion share of the
9 fair funding, why we're adding more money and what
10 that money is going towards?

11 DAVID BANKS: Yeah our CFO will talk a little bit
12 about that. Lindsey.

13 LINDSEY OATES: Uh, thank you so much for the
14 question. So, the foundation aid formula I believe
15 is what you were referencing at the state level and
16 that's a funding source that we received. It's the
17 largest state education funding source the department
18 receives. Charter school tuition is funded by about
19 uh, is funded - 50 percent of it is funded with the
20 foundation aid formula.

21 The increase that you see that was included in
22 the preliminary budget is to really bring the Charter
23 School budget up to historic and projected spending
24 levels and it is not about increasing as a result of
25 real growth in that sector. It was more about just

1
2 right sizing the budget to match projected
3 expenditures this year.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah, I guess what's hard
5 to wrap around our brain around is that in the same
6 budget document or same cuts to programs that are
7 really important for our communities like low income
8 childcare voucher, the citywide literacy curriculum,
9 mental health initiatives, immigrant family
10 engagement programs within the DOE and yet, we're
11 allocating even more additional resources to a very
12 small subset of the schooling community.

13 LINDSEY OATES: I understand where you're coming
14 from and I appreciate the connection that you're
15 making between foundation aid and Charter School
16 tuition. Again, the addition, the resources that
17 were added to support Charter School Tuition in the
18 preliminary budget were really to match projected
19 expenditures in that space and as it relates to you
20 know the reductions that you just mentioned, again we
21 want to work with you in the Council on your
22 priorities as we move forward both with our city tax
23 levy funding but also with our stimulus dollars in
24 the outyears. So, looking forward to continuing to
25 have those conversations.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Great, we'll definitely
3 talk more. I just wanted to also flag the pupil
4 transportation has truly just been a disaster and
5 yet, spending has doubled this year. With summer
6 school around the corner, what measures are being
7 taken to make sure that transportation is in place
8 and what's the update on transportation for students
9 that need a special education recovery services?

10 DAVID BANKS: Yup, Kevin, Kevin Moran is our lead
11 on our transportation.

12 KEVIN MORAN: Yeah, thank you very much for the
13 question Council Member Avilés. I want to talk a
14 little bit about school busing in its larger context
15 for you. And in 2018, we came in and started our
16 modernization efforts to make sure that we could move
17 towards a more responsive system. And it started
18 with redoing our call center to the point now, we
19 serve 150,000 students across 3,000 schools and
20 programs and on a daily basis, we get around 400
21 calls or complaints into our center and so, the
22 improvement there is you know, 99 percent of our
23 routes are running. You do note that there is
24 increased costs and that is matching with the demand
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2 as more students need to be bused or specialized
3 transportation to locations across.

4 We did see that correlation in the rise but I
5 would say one of the first things we eliminated in
6 2019 was the evening program. It was a program
7 called Project Read and it ran at six o'clock. It
8 wasn't structured in a way that was successful.
9 Students were being released into rush hour traffic
10 into the city and so, we are reevaluating that
11 program and how to bring it back right that is
12 responsive to schools, students and families. And
13 so, that's something we're eager to continue the
14 conversations on but I could tell you on a nightly
15 basis, uh, we saw over 60 percent reduction in
16 compare in complaints as it relates to busing. And
17 our focus more now than ever is how do we reduce the
18 distance and time traveled from one's home, their
19 residence to their school program.

20 And so, we'd love to partner with you on places
21 you see that there's a problem.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 KEVIN MORAN: Uhm, definitely want to be partners
24 here with you.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILĚS: Well, I definitely look
3 forward to talking some more. There was a rally this
4 weekend around the transportation problems that so
5 many of our families face, so an ongoing conversation
6 and look forward to talking to you tomorrow
7 Chancellor, so thank you for the time.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member and
9 next, we'll call on Council Member Restler.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Oh, great. Great, I
12 didn't know that was me. Uhm, so firstly, let me
13 thank our great Chair Rita Joseph and thank
14 Chancellor Banks and his team for joining us. I am
15 concerned about the budget cuts that we're
16 experiencing in this proposed budget for DOE. The
17 potential loss of 1,000 headcount and significant
18 resources when our schools need them more than ever
19 and when our young people had suffered from learning
20 loss during this time period.

21 So, firstly, just wanted to kind of lean in on
22 asking about what we can do to actually improve the
23 literacy needs, to help our young people catch up and
24 you know would love to see an intensive reading
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2 intervention program that can make sure that our
3 young people are catching up across the board.

4 DAVID BANKS: Right, yeah and that's also - that's
5 all part of the whole literacy initiative and you're
6 going to hear, you'll be hearing in the coming weeks
7 around what our approach is going to be as we come
8 out of this. So much of what we're focused on is
9 really, I mean I got here in January and so, trying
10 to organize things and get ready as we go into the
11 next school year. It's a little difficult making
12 major moves and adjustments in the middle of a school
13 year but we are spending a lot of time in these
14 areas. So, it's not just the literacy approach for
15 kids at the early grades but also literacy
16 interventions as well. It's all part of the many
17 things that we're exploring.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: We've got catch up work
19 to do and I appreciate that. It worries me to see
20 budget cuts when we need to be doubling down on
21 investments and the - just on the enrollment, when we
22 look at the outyears, we're not - the folks in your
23 planning unit are not expecting the enrollment to
24 come back. And I just want to affirm that that
25 continues to be your thinking and how are we kind of

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2 managing the loss of enrollment and the lack of
3 funds? And how are we preparing for the ensuing
4 reduction of funds that you're anticipating in as
5 equitable way as possible?

6 DAVID BANKS: Well, I think part of that is what
7 we've been doing here in terms of making some of
8 these adjustments and downsizing a little bit. I
9 would love nothing more than to double down on these
10 - on deeper investments. But we're also trying to be
11 fiscally prudent as well as we look at what these
12 trends are demonstrating. So, it is disturbing and
13 so, we've got tough choices that we have to make
14 here. But again, as I said earlier, I think if all
15 of us are working together, we got to figure out how
16 do we get - how do we get families to reengage and to
17 trust and want to come back into our schools. That
18 will solve a lot of these other kind of financial
19 issues that we have, so we're in a little bit of a
20 catch 22 right now and we're just you know, trying to
21 see our way through.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I want to be a partner
23 and I want - I know that you're - I think you're an
24 effective cheerleader and we need more. Uhm, you
25 know our Charter schools are aggressively,

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2 aggressively, aggressively, recruiting kids into
3 their schools. We need to be need to be doing the
4 same kind of ambitious aggressive dynamic outreach
5 into our public schools and I want to be a champion
6 with you. I am going around and visiting every
7 single school in my district. We got 40 some
8 schools. We got a lot of schools in District 33 and
9 I've had great experiences so far one by one meeting
10 with elementary and middle schools and we're going to
11 make our way to each and every high school as well.
12 I want to help you get more students in the doors,
13 recruit all of our neighbors and make sure that our
14 young people and our families know that our public
15 schools are the places to be. I just want to
16 highlight big priorities for me that I'd like us to
17 work together on, integration of our schools, better
18 support for students in temporary housing and fixing
19 our broken special education system.

20 To me, those are the three big picture items that
21 I want to be focused on with you and you know I
22 really do believe that you know we can do so much
23 more for the students who are struggling in our
24 system and you know, want to see the greater
25 investments going into social workers and mental

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2 health counselors so that we can make sure that the
3 students with high needs are getting the support that
4 they need. And you know, in particular, if there's -
5 I'm concerned that we're not doing enough for the
6 students in temporary housing. There are over
7 100,000 kids. They are subject to [INAUDIBLE
8 3:50:42]. It's an extraordinary number and we need
9 to be making additional investments to actually
10 support what their great needs are and would love if
11 you could highlight any additional efforts in this
12 budget that you're making.

13 And then the last question is just one for
14 Lindsey, uhm, if we could, is there a place that we
15 can look for a clear and crisp breakdown of the
16 federal allocations that we've been getting over this
17 last - over the stimulus funding that's going to DOE
18 that we can look up in real time and track.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: So, if you don't mind
21 just answering on those two.

22 DAVID BANKS: No, I think you've identified.
23 These are critical issues and I appreciate that and
24 from the moment that I met you, you've been clear
25 thinking and very focused on these big issues and

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2 what we need to lean in on and I'm doing my best here
3 to try and lean in on them. You know, I certainly
4 didn't anticipate as walked in, having to make some
5 of these proposed budget cuts. No Chancellor wants
6 to be able to do that. So, that's a directive from
7 the Mayor, right. It's a three percent PEG across
8 every city agency. We're the largest city agency and
9 so, you know it's going to be a — that's never
10 pretty. It's never easy, certainly not something
11 that I was looking forward to having to deal with but
12 it's my reality and I've got to figure it out and the
13 goal is to now to negotiate with you and figure out
14 how we can emerge from this you know under the best
15 circumstances that we possibly can.

16 So, we're still early on in these negotiation
17 process, what we have proposed is not the law. This
18 is a negotiation that we all got to figure out how
19 we're going to work together on this but Lindsey, you
20 want to respond to the other part?

21 LINDSEY OATES: Sure, thank you Council Member.
22 Uhm, we will make sure that we send to you the links
23 for our website of where you can find more details
24 about our federal stimulus funds including the
25 application that will be submitted to the state,

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2 which will require a post on the website, our
3 application for stimulus funding.

4 In addition, I'd be happy to sit down with you at
5 any point to have conversations with you about the
6 details or anyone on this Council to talk about where
7 our stimulus funding is and how we are spending it
8 now.

9 In addition, I think that in the Executive
10 Budget, which will be released at the end of April,
11 you'll see some changes most likely to the stimulus
12 budget to reflect this Mayor's priorities and this
13 Chancellors priorities. And so, when we talk again
14 in - probably in May, after the Executive Budget is
15 released, we'll have more to share with you at that
16 time but in the meantime, anytime, happy to meet with
17 you to answer any specific questions.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I appreciate that
19 Chancellor and Lindsey, look forward to following up
20 and I'm hopeful that we'll get some additional
21 support. The states really stepped over the last
22 couple years. They will continue to in this budget
23 to help us and then we've got to work together to
24 fill the gap because we cannot afford cuts in our
25 schools right now. We need to be deepening

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2 investments, not the other way around. Thank you
3 very much.

4 DAVID BANKS: Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member and
6 next, we'll turn to and I don't know if I butchered
7 it last time, Council Member Hanif or Hanif. Correct
8 me please.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Hanif is fine, thank you.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Good afternoon Chancellor
12 and the entire team. I'll share them together,
13 please take note.

14 So, one, we know that Asian students are getting
15 bullied disproportionately with the rise of anti-
16 Asian violence. Can you describe how the DOE is
17 proactively supporting students and can the DOE
18 commit to culturally responsive pedagogy that
19 includes Asian history. That's my first question.

20 DAVID BANKS: Right.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Can you walk me through
22 how the DOE engages with immigrant families during
23 COVID. Paraprofessionals in my district were
24 lifelines to immigrant families who lost loved ones
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2 to COVID and they were the ones I interacted with
3 because of – because they represent the community.

4 So, I'd love to know right now what your language
5 access process is looking like and again, in a
6 previous conversation, I mentioned that I'd love to
7 be more proactively involved and now, as the
8 Immigration Committee Co-Chair, as the Chair uhm,
9 would love to be uh, incorporated.

10 And then the third, what is being done to support
11 children and youth mental health coming out of the
12 COVID crisis, particularly with respect to increasing
13 the budget for social workers, guidance counselors
14 and shifting resources away from police in our
15 schools? This has been a continuous ask from youth
16 advocates. Thank you.

17 DAVID BANKS: I appreciate it. Uhm, first of
18 all, we're all deeply concerned about the anti-Asian
19 hate that we're seeing all across the city and one of
20 the things I am absolutely committed to is the AAPI
21 you know, Asian American Pacific Islander curriculum
22 that we will develop.

23 So, we've gotten a couple of models that have
24 been sent to us from people like Senator John Liu and
25 others. I had met with some of the Asian leadership

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2 across the city together with the Mayor. Really just
3 very outraged around just this anti-Asian hate that
4 is happening, the violence that we're seeing.

5 I have not heard if there have been many
6 incidents in our schools themselves but we're seeing
7 it in the broader community and I think what feeds
8 that is when young people, the young people need to
9 have an appreciation and a respect for every body and
10 when you see folks as the other, uhm, that fuels uhm,
11 I think just a lot of negativity and stereotypes and
12 ignorance quite frankly.

13 And so, our job is to be further upstream and I'm
14 making sure that we are doing that. So, there's been
15 a mosaic curriculum. We're doing some work around
16 that but the AAPI curriculum will certainly be a part
17 of what we do roll out. I think it is critically
18 important that every student who goes to New York
19 City public schools understands the contributions of
20 the Asian American community. And so, that is
21 something that is very meaningful to me and it is
22 part of the work that we'll be rolling out. So
23 that's one.

24 The issue around language access and maybe Dr.
25 Cristina Melendez can speak to that a little bit if

1
2 you mute me. I want to come back because there are a
3 couple other issues that you raise as well but Dr.
4 Melendez, would you like to speak to that at all?

5 DR. CRISTINA MELENDEZ: Yeah, good afternoon
6 every one. Uhm and thank you for that question. I
7 mean language access is extremely important to the
8 Chancellor considering that most of our families are
9 not native, Spanish, English speakers. During the
10 pandemic, the face team has been hosting a weekly
11 call just to update families that are Spanish
12 speaking on many issues. That does not address every
13 family in New York City Public Schools and that is
14 something that we're looking into to think about ways
15 to expand things like that, so that we can continue
16 to provide the supports that families need and the
17 updates from the New York City public schools that
18 come through immediately.

19 Aside from that, we are constantly committed to
20 translating all our documents in real time. We're
21 working towards that. Some of the translations take
22 a little while but we're working towards expanding
23 that translation and interpretation team, so that
24 they can continue to provide the translations in a
25 more timely way. And then, really translation and

1
2 interpretation team is also working to train our
3 family –

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 DR. CRISTINA MELENDEZ: To really think about
6 ways to leverage our families on the ground by
7 training them to support – to really do this work as
8 well so that they can support families in the
9 immediate.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Does the DOE do reporting
11 of language access and families reached through
12 materials that are provided in their languages or
13 interpretation at meetings?

14 DR. CRISTINA MELENDEZ: I'm not sure how that's
15 documented but the TNI team is in a better position
16 to sort of answer that directly. I can certainly
17 follow-up with them and you. Uhm, but they do track
18 just what are the languages that need access and how
19 much and how often and in what areas.

20 So, they have somewhat of an understanding. I
21 can't speak to the details on that.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: I'll follow-up.

23 DR. CRISTINA MELENDEZ: Yup.

24 DAVID BANKS: And then I think you also raised
25 the issue around; I know some of the advocates around

1
2 you know police in schools. So, uhm, you know and
3 sometimes those things get linked between full scale
4 NYPD coming in the schools versus School Safety
5 Officers who are – so, technically you know part of
6 NYPD. It's interesting I mean and I know we have the
7 advocates on that end but I also hear from lots of
8 other folks, in fact more around needing more school
9 safety officers in our schools. They're not calling
10 for more NYPD officers but there's a dramatic
11 shortage of school safety officers. And in most
12 schools, you know school safety officers are
13 essential to the school. I wore the uniform. I was
14 a school safety officer myself. And so, you know –

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: I'd respond to the aspect
16 of mental health services. I'm assuming that the
17 school safety officers are not providing.

18 DAVID BANKS: Oh, no, no, I thought you had asked
19 a question around school safety officers as well.
20 Maybe I misunderstood, I'm sorry.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Yeah, I was getting at
22 shifting resources away so that the schools have an
23 appropriate ratio to students to counselors.

24 DAVID BANKS: Yeah, well, I think one of the
25 things that this Council did was really fight for

1
2 additional funding and so, you know I know even
3 under, when Mark Treyger was Chair of the Education
4 Committee, it was one of the biggest things that he
5 fought for to help ensure. Now, every school in the
6 city has a social worker and the funding is there for
7 them to continue to do that. That is a major thing.
8 That was not the case in years past. It certainly
9 wasn't the case all the years that I was a principal
10 to have dedicated funding that would allow for that.
11 And certainly, we would like more but I will tell you
12 that what's critically important in schools and
13 somebody who led a school, led two different schools
14 over the course of 11 years, the culture of a school
15 and kids knowing that they are loved and cared for
16 and supported by the adults in the school, mean more
17 than any particular title. I can give you five
18 social workers in the school. If it's a
19 dysfunctional school, it will not have the impact
20 that it's supposed to have. What's most important is
21 the culture that is established in a school. That's
22 a culture that respects parents and families and the
23 children. And when kids know that they go; that's
24 why so many of our kids have suffered throughout the
25 pandemic. It was not just the academic loss.

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COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Right.

DAVID BANKS: When they go to a school and they know that there's somebody, there's an adult in that building who loves them, who gives them that pat on the back, that word of encouragement. And I will tell you, that person could be the school safety officer. It might be their third grade teacher. It might be Ms. Jones whose serving the food in the morning. All of those adults make up the ecosystem of a good school. And when it works well, it's the school crossing guard you know who gives you a smile and tells you to keep working hard.

Kids missed out on all of those things and that's why the return to school was so critically important and we're still in that process of getting back to a normal where kids are feeling again, a level of engagement and support.

And additional counselors, that all helps but the most critical thing is the relationships that kids have with each other in school as it's supported by their teachers and their principals and administrators and support staff in the school. That's what makes for a successful school.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Yeah, Chancellor, I really
3 appreciate you uplifting that because just going back
4 to my first question, like I do want our Asian
5 students in particular in this moment, to feel
6 comfortable to be able to report and not feel fear or
7 anxiety around reporting. I know many students uhm,
8 I've been in communication with just not feeling
9 comfortable and so, to your point around creating
10 cultures within schools, so that students feel safe
11 is a big priority for us.

12 DAVID BANKS: Absolutely, it's no bigger priority
13 for me. Trust me and I'm hypersensitive around round
14 it. I've not heard of cases within our schools where
15 Asian students are feeling bullied, where they are
16 being treated, you know people are committing acts of
17 violence against them. Uhm, I'm not seeing that.
18 We've seen it on the news but these are things that
19 are happening in the subways and in the
20 neighborhoods. I think probably the safest place
21 that our kids feel are in schools and if you are
22 aware of situations where you had filing about an
23 Asian students feeling bullied in schools and not
24 safe, please bring that to my attention. We will
25 respond to that immediately.

1
2 But I have not heard that and so, uh, if you're
3 not safe and if you don't feel safe, nothing else
4 matters. Before you get to academic support or
5 anything else, if you don't feel safe, then you can't
6 teach a child who feels unsafe physically and as well
7 emotionally unsafe.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you. Thank you for
9 your commitment.

10 DAVID BANKS: Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
12 call on Council Member Menin.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Thank you so much
15 Chancellor. Great to see you. So, I have a couple
16 questions. About seven years ago, I started a
17 program called NYC Kids Rise where we seated in
18 Queens District 30 about 13,000 kindergarteners with
19 a college savings account as a pilot and at the end
20 of the de Blasio Administration, it was announced
21 that that program was going to go universal, which is
22 fantastic.

23 So, first of all, I wanted to get an update on
24 that. Will that program be embedded in every single
25 school. I think it's imperative because the research

1
2 shows that a low-income child that has a college
3 savings account is three times more likely to go to
4 college than a student that does not have a college
5 savings account.

6 So, that's my first question and then my second
7 question relates to dual language programs because
8 I'm hearing from a lot of parents in my Council
9 District that the programs have been cut and I just
10 really want to advocate for restoration of those
11 programs in a city obviously like New York where over
12 200 languages are spoken. It's so important. I say
13 this as a daughter of an immigrant, my mom came
14 through the public school system here and it was
15 really a lifeline to her. So, those are my two
16 questions.

17 DAVID BANKS: I appreciate it. In fact,
18 yesterday I spoke at St. Barts Church and I had a
19 chance to meet your treasurer and so, it was good to
20 make that connection. Uhm, New York City Kids Rise,
21 I think is a critically important initiative. I just
22 had a big meeting about it the other day. For those
23 who don't know, right, I mean just the ability for us
24 to — when kids are having a level of savings you know
25 hopefully for college right, it is a game changer.

1
2 It changes the psychology of how kids see their
3 future. How they are saving on a daily basis. It
4 meant a lot to me as a kid. When I had my old pass
5 book at Chase Bank and every time you put another
6 dollar in it made a huge difference. And so, are
7 similarly here, we are big supporters of it. The
8 question is around our ability to expand it and make
9 it universal.

10 Let me have our First Deputy speak to that.
11 These are one of the issues that we're finding some
12 challenges around but – and to speak to that as well,
13 is your other question around dual language programs.
14 Both very important issues. Dan, you want to
15 respond?

16 DAN WEISBERG: Yeah, thank you so much Council
17 Member and this is a program as the Chancellor says
18 that connects directly to the North Star, the
19 Chancellor has laid out around long term economic
20 prosperity. So, we're huge supporters of it. We
21 just actually engaged in a campaign to make sure that
22 the students who were enrolled know about this and
23 act on it.

24 We haven't yet figured out the plan on scaling.
25 We definitely are committed to scaling it. We have

1
2 to put together the implementation plan. Obviously
3 funding is a piece of that and we're going to make it
4 universal but would love to work with you to figure
5 out how best to do that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Great, thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
8 hear from Council Member De La Rosa followed by
9 Council Member Feliz followed by Council Member
10 Sanchez. We'll first turn to Council Member De La
11 Rosa.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Oh, I think you've remuted.
14 Okay, go ahead.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Hi, how are you
16 Chancellor? Thank you for being here and to our
17 Chair for this important hearing. I'm going to go
18 back again to the uhm, the PEG which reduces the
19 headcount for the DOE and I just wanted to receive
20 some more clarity on your part as to the impacts that
21 the headcount reduction is going to have specifically
22 on English Language Learners and on the pool of
23 substitute teachers that the department has right now
24 for any schools that may be experiencing for example,
25 if the COVID numbers go back up and we have a second

1
2 wave right. Any preparation for that type of
3 reality?

4 I also wanted to ask about funds for the
5 engagement of parents. If we think that any of this
6 reduction is going to impact how communities interact
7 with our parent community, which we know are a major
8 – you know, in communities like mine, it's a major
9 task because of the language access issues that we
10 heard Council Member Hanif talk about. But in
11 addition to that, we have some wonderful CBO's that
12 are working in our communities and that are doing
13 this work on the ground and I'm wondering if there
14 are correlations with some of the cuts that are going
15 to happen and that work that is happening in our
16 communities.

17 DAVID BANKS: Yeah, I don't anticipate that any
18 of these proposed cuts are going to impact either one
19 of those that you just spoke about. Lindsey, you
20 want to respond but no, according to everything that
21 we've got laid out, there should be no concern there.
22 Lindsey?

23 LINDSEY OATES: Thank you Chancellor. Uhm, thank
24 you Council Member for this really important
25 question. So, to confirm what the Chancellor just

1
2 said, that's correct that we don't anticipate these
3 cuts will have a significant impact on CBO's or
4 family engagement activities, particularly those
5 conducted by CBO's. We also do not anticipate that
6 these will negatively impact any surge staffing need
7 that we would need as a result of any God forbid
8 future sort of surge from the pandemic. We've
9 prioritized using stimulus funding to provide
10 additional staffing supports, increasing the sub pool
11 is an example of that. We've used our stimulus
12 funding to provide additional funding to schools that
13 needed that and if we need to do that this upcoming
14 school year, we certainly will prioritize using our
15 stimulus funds to provide additional staffing as
16 needed.

17 The reduction that you're referring to that are
18 related to our registered changes and the headcount
19 reductions there are really about rightsizing school
20 budgets to support the number of students that are
21 projected to be in our school communities this year
22 and next year. And in fact, I think it's a
23 significant step forward for us to be able to
24 announce that we are using federal stimulus dollars
25

1
2 to hold schools partially harmless at this point in
3 the school year.

4 We've done [INAUDIBLE 4:12:15] the last two years
5 but there was - we were not able to announce that in
6 a timely fashion and that provided a lot of
7 uncertainty for schools going into the school year.
8 So, the fact that we were able to announce this in
9 February before the start of the school year is about
10 six months to eight months earlier than we've ever
11 been able to announce our [INAUDIBLE 4:12:34].

12 So, this gives school communities and principals
13 a lot of time to really think about how they will to
14 that rightsizing plan for this and we're also going
15 to be releasing school budgets earlier this - later
16 this spring, earlier than we have in the last two
17 years. So, we're really trying to be able to
18 communicate with principals about what their
19 resources are going to be earlier than we have been
20 able to during the pandemic and certainly earlier
21 than we ever have as it relates to a hold harmless.

22 So, although these cuts are not what we would
23 confer and our results of the reality and the
24 registered changes on the ground, we are trying to be
25 as proactive as possible in terms of communication

1
2 with principals so that they know what to plan for
3 going into the school year.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Okay, great, thank
5 you for answering that question. My second question
6 is about state tests and understanding that we're
7 coming out of two years of a pandemic. I know there
8 is an opt out option but if - what are some of the
9 resources or funds being allocated to assist
10 particularly in districts where we know that have
11 underperformed on these tests to one, get the word
12 out to parents about the opt out option but also two,
13 to reinforce any needs that may be lacking at this
14 point.

15 DAVID BANKS: Uh, so, uhm, uh, in terms of our
16 messaging to parents, uh, maybe Dr. Melendez can
17 speak to that and Dan also to speak to the issue
18 around preparation and support to schools.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 DAVID BANKS: Dr. Melendez.

21 DR. CRISTINA MELENDEZ: Yeah, I was unmuting
22 myself. Uhm, thank you for the question. I think
23 it's really important for families to understand what
24 is taking -

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: I'm sorry to interrupt. The
3 livestream for this hearing just went down, so we're
4 going to work on some issues and then we'll get back
5 to you guys as soon as we get it fixed. Thank you,
6 sorry.

7 DAVID BANKS: Should we take a break? Is that
8 what we're saying?

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uh, yes. Chair Joseph, not
10 to rat on anybody but Econ Development set their
11 hearing up wrong and they booted us out of the
12 virtual room and they are streaming over us. So,
13 Econ Development. So, just give us a few minutes
14 everyone please, sorry.

15 DR. CRISTINA MELENDEZ: It's alright.

16 [BREAK 4:14:56-4:16:47]

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, Chair uhm, it's
18 definitely Monday morning or afternoon. Uhm, we're
19 back.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And I honestly forgot the
22 last few minutes, so Council Member De La Rosa did
23 you get your questions answered? We'll unmute you,
24 give us one second.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Thank you
3 Carmen.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Yes, I think that
5 uhm, Dr. Melendez was in the middle of answering the
6 question about parental engagement around opting out
7 of state tests and other resources.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, Dr. Melendez, you
9 should be unmuted now.

10 DR. CRISTINA MELENDEZ: Yes, I am. Thank you for
11 the question again and I just want to say that as the
12 Department of Education, we are not messaging
13 directly to parents that testing is optional,
14 although they can always opt out. That is still
15 their right. However, we are more interested in
16 communicating with families that it is extremely
17 important particularly after the pandemic, that we
18 get as much information as we can about where their
19 children are in this particular moment and time in
20 regards to state standards. Uhm, and so, it would be
21 essential for us to really get these – as many
22 children as we can to participate and engage in
23 taking the tests, so that we can have yet another
24 layer of assessments including student work that
25 happens in schools and the screeners that are being

1
2 integrated currently so that we can shift our
3 practices to meet their needs. So, that's sort of
4 where we are around that.

5 DAVID BANKS: You can jump in Dan.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Okay, uhm are there
7 resources?

8 DAVID BANKS: Yeah, and our First Deputy
9 Chancellor is going to respond to the second part
10 that you had.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Thank you so much.

12 DAN WEISBERG: Yes, thank you Council Member. I
13 appreciate it and it is a really urgent matter. It's
14 always on our mind about the schools that have been
15 most heavily impacted by the pandemic in terms of
16 disruption to students lives and mental health and
17 their academic progress. So, that is why you know a
18 major part of the stimulus funding this fiscal year,
19 it's about \$350 million are going out for academic
20 recovery and that money is going out to schools
21 because we don't want to mandate from here how it
22 should be used across the city. It's being used in
23 different ways but for example, using the information
24 from the academic and the social, emotional learning
25 screeners, for teachers then to provide personalized

1
2 plans for each student to get them back to grade
3 level. It's some of the things that schools are
4 doing. They are using it for after school times. In
5 some cases, weekend time to give students extra help
6 so you know that's one of the ways we're investing in
7 making sure that the schools that really need extra
8 help have the resources to do it, so that their
9 students catch up and hopefully we will see that on
10 all sorts of indicators including state tests.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Thank you so much.
12 Thank you for your answers.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and Chair, I missed
14 a message, you wanted me to turn it back to you
15 before I kept going, so sorry, turning back to you
16 for a moment.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: No, that's okay, you can
18 allow - I'll go right after uhm -

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Lee.

20 CHAIRPERON JOSEPH: Council Member Lee because I
21 have a couple more questions.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, Council Member Sanchez
23 and then Council Member Lee and then back to the
24 Chair. So, if we can unmute Council Member Sanchez.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Hello, good afternoon
3 Chancellor and good afternoon everyone. Chair
4 Joseph, congratulations on your stamina for all of
5 these hours as the rest of the Committee staff. So,
6 I do have three questions. I'm just going to ask
7 them Chancellor if that's okay. I'll ask them in
8 succession and try to get to as many of them.

9 So, the first one is about supporting our
10 homeless families. You know, I don't have to tell
11 you but 101,000 families experienced homelessness
12 last year. 94 percent of them look like you and I.
13 They are Black and Latinx and here in District 14 in
14 the northwest Bronx, uhm, we of course have such a
15 high concentration of these families because housing
16 instability is so pervasive. And so, my question is
17 given how disruptive this is to the children, how
18 much this impacts them in schools, you know what is
19 the DOE doing? Can there be a stronger commitment?
20 More funds allocated to having coordinators? Perhaps
21 at shelters in addition to the schools?

22 So, that's number one. Number two is about the
23 shortage of preschool special education seats. Uhm,
24 I - two part question, one, there is a shortage.
25 Two, there were federal stimulus funds but I

1
2 understand that most of the federal stimulus funds
3 have gone toward programming, toward learning loss
4 and things like that. Making up for lost time in the
5 pandemic.

6 But what is the DOE's plan to fund the lack of
7 and the shortage of preschool education seats and is
8 there anything in the stimulus? And lastly, uhm,
9 this is sort of a point of clarification but the PEG
10 on the Department of Education reduces headcount at
11 the DOE by some 3,600 seats but I also see that
12 there's a new – just about 1,700 seats in terms of
13 federally funded positions.

14 So, are those federal positions temporary or how
15 does the PEG reduction and the federal funding
16 increase? How do those things work together. Thank
17 you.

18 DAVID BANKS: I appreciate it. I'm going to turn
19 to Lindsey our CFO, where she can better respond to
20 actually each one of these issues.

21 LINDSEY OATES: Thank you Chancellor and thank
22 you Council Member. These are really important
23 issues that you're raising, so thank you for the
24 opportunity to talk about them. Uhm, as you point
25 out, students in temporary housing are a high

1
2 priority for all of us on this hearing today and we
3 have received targeted federal funds to support an
4 expansion of the community coordinator positions that
5 are in temporary housing shelters. That was
6 discussed this earlier. We're going to expand that.
7 We're in the process of hiring those staff. In
8 addition uhm, we have been tasked both by the federal
9 government but also because it's our priority for the
10 New York City public schools to really target
11 resources towards students in temporary housing. So,
12 the academic recovery school allocation, the \$350
13 million that First Deputy Chancellor Weisberg spoke
14 about earlier. One of the factors that is considered
15 in the allocation of those funds is how many students
16 in temporary housing are in your school.

17 And so, we're really looking at concentrations of
18 need when we push out those funding source because we
19 know that higher concentrations of need in a school
20 really need more funding still. That there's a big
21 difference between having you know 50 percent of your
22 school coming from students in temporary housing to
23 just having one or two students in your community.
24 And so, the way we've approached that allocation is
25 really in acknowledgement of those concentrations.

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As it relates to uh, the pre-K seats that you were talking about or early childhood seats, uhm, the federal stimulus funding did significantly expand the specifically the 3K seats available throughout the city. So, this school year, now we have 3K seats available in every single district and our new Deputy Chancellor Ahmed has been looking at how best to approach early childhood along with Deputy Mayor Wright in the City of New York and I think there's going to be more to come as we look holistically about where those seats are. Are they serving the right students? Should we look at serving different types of students, different age bands?

And so, I think there's more to come there but we have been using federal dollars to look at that area. Those students as well as special education pre-K. You asked about the reduction in headcount and the backfill of the federal dollars. And so, I want to really just speak to that. The federal dollars are temporary. They are going to help offset some of the reductions in school budgets that we are taking in to right size those budgets. And so, what we spoke about earlier and I spoke about earlier is really using those federal funds strategically to be able to

1
2 uh, sort of smooth out the approach as schools are
3 right sizing. So, we're going to try to - the last
4 two years, we have held schools 100 percent. We have
5 now announced over the next two years, this coming
6 school year and the year after, that we will phase
7 that, what was 100 percent support, we're going to
8 start to phase that out. So, next year, we'll be
9 closer to 50 percent and the school year after that
10 will be 25 percent. It's really helpful that we have
11 these federal stimulus dollars to help schools be
12 able to plan over the long term as they are right
13 sizing.

14 So, this funding is really stabilizing schools as
15 they are working towards right sizing their budget
16 and principals are really empowered to make those
17 hiring decisions, so what's in the budget now are
18 really estimates of what will ultimately be decisions
19 that are made by principals in their school and
20 communities to right size the resources and the
21 staffing levels to support the students in their
22 building.

23 I think I got all three of your question. If I
24 missed anything, let me know.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: You did. Thank you so
3 much for that and Mr. Banks, I do not have your phone
4 number but I will absolutely follow-up and make sure
5 that I get that. So, thank you so much for offering.

6 DAVID BANKS: Yes, no, in fact I'm going to make
7 sure that somebody sends it over to you right away.
8 So, we have a lot of people who are listening to this
9 from our team and I'm hoping that they heard what I
10 just said. Make sure every Council person should
11 have my number uhm, and if there are things that are
12 - if they are just run of the mill things, you could
13 talk to people on our team, our staff can handle but
14 if there are things that are very pressing, uhm, you
15 know that really require like an urgent response,
16 please let me know. I'm inviting you all, please,
17 encourage you all to do that. And so, I want to make
18 sure that everybody certainly has my number.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Well, thank you. Thank
20 you Chancellor and thank you Chair.

21 DAVID BANKS: Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and finally, we'll
23 call on Council Member Lee and then I will turn it
24 back to you Chair.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Hi everyone. Uhm, sorry, I
3 just wanted to say I'm sorry if I missed a bunch. I
4 actually just came back from middle school to
5 recognize a lot of the food and school aid workers
6 and I just say Donald Nesbit there. So, I apologize
7 because I probably missed a lot in between but I just
8 wanted to say thank you of course to Chair Joseph and
9 also, to you Chancellor Banks because I have to say
10 it is uhm, a welcoming, refreshing space to be in
11 where uh, you know the school Chancellor, DOE
12 Chancellor is wanting to bring different voices to
13 the table. So, I just wanted to say thank you for
14 that.

15 And I just wanted to I guess piggyback off of
16 what I had last heard from my colleague Althea
17 Stevens because I used to run a nonprofit
18 organization and I'm a social worker myself and very
19 big on the you know mental health programming. We -
20 you know at my previous nonprofit, we started the
21 first Korean outpatient mental health clinic in New
22 York State and so, to me this is a very important
23 issue around mental health and the emotional, social
24 wellbeing of our students. And so, I just wanted to
25 know a little bit more about how you're engaging a

1
2 lot of the community-based organizations and
3 partnering them along with the schools and especially
4 when it comes to supportive services.

5 Because I do think the community school model is
6 great but if you could also, I know former Council
7 Member Treyger was on you know speaking about the
8 community school model a bit before but if you could
9 speak to the connectivity and outreach to the CBO's.
10 And also, after that, I just had a quick question
11 about the 3K's as well.

12 DAVID BANKS: First of all, thank you for your
13 question and I respect it very much and I respect the
14 spirit in which you asked that question as well. You
15 know I come out of the not-for-profit space. It kind
16 of gives me an interesting perspective on being
17 Chancellor as well, right. And not only did I lead a
18 school but since 2008, I've led a CBO uhm that was
19 connected to the DOE but it was not directly within
20 the DOE and I've gotten to know many of the
21 community-based organizations around this city.

22 And so, very serious intentions around how to
23 engage the CBO world. That's who I was as well. And
24 it's interesting, I would talk to community-based
25 organizations on a regular basis and said, who do you

1
2 deal with at the DOE? And the response was uhm,
3 there's no real point of contact. We work in
4 schools. We kind of work around the DOE, so we're
5 putting in efforts now to change that so that the
6 community-based organization world has very clear
7 points of contact so that not only do we want to
8 enhance that work, but we want to really connect the
9 dots amongst the CBO's themselves. Because one CBO
10 is doing great work in one district and they are not
11 even aware that there's another CBO doing something
12 that's also amazing that they join forces, we could
13 have even greater impact.

14 So, so, it's one of the things I talked about
15 even before I came into this office. There are so
16 many priorities here. This is one of the challenges.
17 Like, everything is a priority and it's a huge agency
18 and so, I'm working to do that. I'd love to meet
19 with you. I'd love it if you would invite me up to
20 your district. I absolutely will come and love to
21 continue this conversation around the best ways to
22 actually engage in that work.

23 Let me just say this before I go as well on your
24 next question or the Chair. What you will come to
25 learn about me is this, if you didn't hear anything

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else that I said today, please hear this. I am a person who is about getting stuff done. I'm not a person that tries to show up for performance. And in fact, I have very little regard for performers. I have deep and high respect for people who are about taking care of business.

So, what does that mean? That means if you see something in your district that needs to be brought to my attention, bring it to my attention. I am telling you; I genuinely want to help. I've known other folks who I've dealt with who didn't say a word to me but there's a whole big press conference. There's a whole big thing. I said, well, why didn't you call me? If you call me and I didn't do anything about it, then I get it but if we're going to do performance then that says to me, maybe you're not serious about really getting things done, you just want to do performance.

I don't do performance well. I am very earnest in when I say, I came here to do a job and I have to work with all of you to get the job done. So, you never have to wait until a Council hearing to bring any of these issues to my attention. I am open, I am here, I am willing to work with you. The Chair, I

1
2 will tell you I meet with her and my team on a weekly
3 basis, that apparently has never happened before but
4 that's how I move.

5 So, please take me up on it, engage me in real
6 and meaningful ways so that we can get the job done.
7 That's what I'm about.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: No, I really appreciate
10 that. Sorry, just real quick, one quick question
11 about - if that's okay Chair Joseph about the 3K and
12 universal Pre-K, which may have been asked already
13 but I think one of the challenges even with the Begin
14 programs, all the after school and school-based
15 related programs that are in the city. We, you know
16 I know on the CBO side, a lot of organizations do
17 provide those services together with the schools.
18 Uhm, and just wondering because I know that some of
19 the folks that have been providing these services,
20 especially when universal Pre-K first started for
21 example, the reimbursement rates were not enough to
22 cover a lot of their expenses and so, uhm, like I
23 know that there was a nonprofit in Brooklyn that had
24 nine UPK sites and they had to close all of them
25 except one because they were bleeding money from the

1
2 program. And so, is there assurance because you know
3 especially now that we're talking about expanding 3K,
4 that we can you know make sure to pay the you know
5 the workers, the teachers, the salaries they need as
6 well as the organizations, the funding to be able to
7 run the services and how the rollout will happen.
8 Uhm, if you could speak a little bit about that.

9 DAVID BANKS: Yeah, yup, absolutely and I'm going
10 to pivot to Lindsey to talk a little bit more about
11 that. Lindsey.

12 LINDSEY OATES: Thank you Chancellor and thank
13 you Council Member for this really important
14 question. What we want to do is really build on some
15 of the initiatives that the previous administration
16 started to look at as we are already looking at the
17 rates, looking at things like pay parity. There were
18 some changes made in the recent awarded contracts for
19 all of our early childhood providers that changed the
20 way that we pay. It used to be enrollment based and
21 now there are some changes that account for uhm, not
22 just enrollment, sort of a base plus is what we call
23 it. Happy to talk offline further with you about
24 those changes. But we do have regular conversations
25 and hear feedback about those from our early

1
2 childhood providers and again, Dr. Ahmed, our Deputy
3 Chancellor for Early Childhood is actively looking at
4 all of those issues and talking with providers. I
5 think there's going to be more to come about all of
6 those really important issues, so thank you for
7 raising them here today.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Awesome, thank you and just
9 like my former colleague said Council Member Sanchez,
10 I don't think I have your number Chancellor but
11 hopefully we'll be able to reach out and I would love
12 to have you come visit our district because we have
13 36 schools. And one final thought is that you know,
14 I appreciate your efforts because not all districts
15 are the same. Everyone has different needs but
16 they're all just as important and so, I look forward
17 to having future conversations with you, so thank
18 you.

19 DAVID BANKS: Thank you. Thank you. I hope you
20 all appreciate the challenge of a job like this
21 right? I literally, I've gotten on CDC meetings and
22 people say we are totally against screen schools. We
23 think it is discriminatory and then I go to the next
24 night with a whole other and I get a completely
25 different view. So, you recognize like the whole

1
2 world lives here in New York and there's no one
3 unified voice. Every district has its own
4 personality and has its own needs.

5 And I have to figure out how to be respectful to
6 all of it and any time you make a decision, you
7 recognize that some people are going to love it and
8 some people are not. But I do try to listen to what
9 everybody says and try to make the best decision, and
10 that's the best that I can do.

11 COMMITTEE COUSEL: Thank you and Chair, I will
12 turn it back to you.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Oh, of course, thank you.
14 Thank you so much Chancellor for hanging in there
15 Chancellor Banks. Uhm, we talked about this before
16 but I just wanted to have it on record. We have
17 about 7,000 or more students living in foster care in
18 our city and I mentioned that to you that I was also
19 a foster mom and I'm an adopted mom now. So, this
20 becomes a little personal in terms of, we were able
21 to provide the resources for our two boys. But not
22 every parent around New York City can do what we've
23 done here in our homes and we noticed that at one
24 point, there was no contact person, not one person
25 dedicated from the DOE to that special population.

1
2 It takes a special heart. It takes special
3 families to welcome foster children into their home
4 and when they do, there are certain barriers that
5 should not be placed there, because then parents are
6 like, well, you know what? I can't handle this
7 because this is too much. I want to return the
8 child. And they look like you and I most of the
9 children in foster care look just like you and I.

10 So, we want to be able to one, provide
11 transportation and bring up their graduation rate.
12 Only 43 percent of our students in foster care
13 actually graduate high school. And that's not a
14 problem for me, that's a crisis. So, that's less
15 than half. So, how can the DOE work in partnership
16 with agencies and other stakeholders to make sure
17 that we are meeting the needs of this special, very
18 special population?

19 DAVID BANKS: You know and I feel, I feel it, I
20 feel you. I do. I feel it, I see how personal it is
21 to you as well and uhm, and I feel it deeply myself
22 and that's part of the reason I am excited that you
23 know, we're moving forward with hiring staff for the
24 first ever DOE office that's focused on addressing
25 the needs of kids in foster care.

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And I'd love to – there are a number of positions that are in this space and I'd love to talk to you after this about any recommendations that you have around people who might be a good fit to be here. Lindsey, you can talk a little bit more about what some of those – what that office is going to look like and what some of those positions are but we are you know, doing the transition. Our leadership had to get his hands around what the previous administration had planned to launch but hadn't. But now we're posting those roles and getting ready to move forward.

So, you're asking it at the right time, we're getting ready to launch this brand new office that's going to support our kids and their families in foster care. Lindsey.

LINDSEY OATES: Thank you Chancellor and thank you Chair for this really important question. We have uhm, begun to start the hiring process for the foster care office which will for the first time put a really point of contact, as you know. So, that is great news and we'll certainly report back as we start to build up that office.

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One thing I just sort of generally would like to speak to is uhm, as it relates to foster care and as it relates to students in temporary housing. As it relates to English Language Learners, one of the things that I really want to highlight for you that I think that we can work together on in the future, is you talked about at the top of the hearing, the fiscal cliffs as a result of the ending of the stimulus funding.

So, we have really been intentional and we will under this Chancellor as well be intentional and are intentional about using stimulus dollars to really support those concentrations of high need populations in New York City. And I think we all know that those concentrations in New York City and make New York City really an area that the state and the federal government need to continue to invest in when the stimulus dollars dry up. And so, we want to, although the state has for the first time every committed to fully funding foundation aid, we really you know appreciate the fact that that took so long to get here. We're grateful that we're here and we're grateful that the state looks like it will continue to phase that in in the state budget but

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2 there are things that we would want to really
3 highlight as we look at future opportunities for
4 investment in our school system and the things that
5 make us unique, that make us worth investing in are
6 the foster care students, are our students in
7 temporary housing. We, I think have proven that
8 that's how we're using our stimulus funding and we
9 want to make sure that we, as we think about the end
10 of those funding streams, continue to work with you
11 and all of our advocates and stakeholders that we
12 need to continue to invest in those populations and
13 that means more federal funding, more state funding
14 that really account for those specialized needs.
15 Uhm, and I think that that's something that we can
16 build on together as we work towards that in this
17 budget but also in outyears to.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Uhm, a follow-up question to
19 that. I know one of the barriers that my students,
20 of students in foster care usually face is
21 transportation and a lot of them also have IEP's and
22 usually transportation is offered only to students
23 with special needs but not to foster care. Do you
24 have an idea what that model would look like
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1
2 transportation and how much would it cost to do a
3 transportation model for students in foster care?

4 DAVID BANKS: Lindsey, go ahead.

5 LINDSEY OATES: Yeah, thank you. So, this is
6 something that we have been looking at over the
7 years. I don't have a cost estimate for you today.
8 We can talk about that in the future and I think that
9 as we think about foster care and those unique needs,
10 I think again, I go back to really thinking about how
11 we can partner together and advocate for additional
12 funding to support these really specialized
13 interventions as we talk about busing but also, all
14 types of other specialized supports that the New York
15 City public school students really need.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You were going to add
17 something Chancellor or?

18 DAVID BANKS: No, no, I think that's about all
19 that I've got for now. Just to know that we are
20 committed to this place and this space and with you
21 as Chair, uhm, I know this sits right at the top of
22 your agenda. This will give us a chance to really
23 lean in in a big way and make a real difference for
24 all of our kids in foster care. So, let's make it
25 happen together.

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CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Absolutely. Adult education, a lot of – we have about 1.3 million adult education students in the city. One of the things I wanted to uhm, to see is adult literacy, what sort of collaboration exists between adult ed and the DOE? Because I felt that I – and I've taught adult ed over the years and I've always found that there was a disconnect. When I think that there should always be a connection through pipelines, just like elementary schools should talk to middle schools and middle schools should talk to high schools and how we put a pipeline in place. And adult ed, which is also the continuing ed department of the DOE would provide all these free courses. How is that pipeline working? Because you do offer CTE, you offer a lot of variety of programs but I always feel a disconnect from the DOE and adult ed.

DAVID BANKS: Hmm, that's a good point and that's one I haven't spent a lot of time really thinking about, so let's come back to that right. Building a deeper level of alignment with adult ed is – I'm just making a note of that now. So, let's talk about that. There's so many issues Madam Chair, so I don't have an answer for every single one right but these

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2 are, as you raise them, these are things for me to
3 take time and to figure out you know how to dig much
4 more deeply into them.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yeah, absolutely because the
6 Build Out program provides that workforce and it
7 supports immigrant families because they have the
8 CPE, they have the plumbing, they have the carpentry
9 programs and if we support that, as we talked about
10 workforce, this would be a great collaboration
11 between the DOE and the Adult Ed programs.

12 DAVID BANKS: Absolutely because we're already
13 doing that stuff and we want to expand on it even
14 more but developing that deeper alignment, that's
15 what to – that's what I want to spend some more time
16 talking about how we make that happen for sure.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Absolutely, because we want
18 to retain them. Just like the students in the lower
19 grades that we expand to the digital divide. So,
20 with the adults, a lot of them we weren't able to
21 retain. Retention was very low, access to devices
22 and access to Wi-Fi was also a challenge for them as
23 well.

24 Because I can stay in touch with the
25 Superintendent in the DOE and the principals at all

1
2 of these sites and that was one of their biggest
3 challenges. So, to maintain the students, retain
4 them and make sure. I know Council Mark Treyger had
5 an amazing program in his district where he created a
6 program like that. He provided the technology and
7 made sure they had a stipend and they were encouraged
8 to come and stay in these programs. So, maybe that's
9 something we might want to revisit or have a pilot
10 on.

11 DAVID BANKS: That's right. That's part of the
12 scale, sustain and restore what works. We want to
13 lift up these things that are working and we don't
14 necessarily have to reinvent the wheel, we just need
15 to scale them across districts around the city.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Absolutely, well thank you
17 for your time.

18 DAVID BANKS: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I look forward to our
20 partnership and I look forward to the budget cycle
21 and thank you.

22 DAVID BANKS: And this is the beginning of it
23 right, we're -

24 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yes, yes.

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2 DAVID BANKS: Your voices are being heard in this
3 moment and you will continue to do that. And you're
4 going to help to shape what this budget is ultimately
5 going to look like. This was just our first four way
6 into it but in the next several weeks, we're going to
7 really figure it out. So, I thank you for the
8 opportunity and thank you first of all Madam Chair
9 for allowing me to switch my time. I know you
10 originally had me scheduled to go first and I had an
11 opportunity to be in a meeting this morning with some
12 of the biggest foundation funders in the country.
13 Who were at a big meeting at the Ford Foundation and
14 we're trying to raise a ton of money to help us with
15 many of these programs that we're talking about here.

16 One of the questions that was raised around how
17 we engaged at community-based organizations. Well,
18 these foundations like Robin Hood and Ford Foundation
19 and about 100 of them, they were all there together
20 and they wanted to hear what are the priorities and
21 what are we doing in education. And so, I definitely
22 did not want to miss that and you made it possible by
23 switching the time so I was able to do that and then
24 come here and I appreciate it and I thank you all for
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1
2 taking the time and thank you to my team for hanging
3 in there as well.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You're quite welcome. Thank
5 you so much. Thank you.

6 DAVID BANKS: Alright, bye, bye.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Bye, bye.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Alright, thank you Chair.
9 Uhm, so we are now going to go to round three of
10 today's hearing. The public testimony. so, for
11 those joining us, good afternoon. I'm Malcom
12 Butehorn and Counsel to the Committee on Education.
13 We are now going to receive public testimony for the
14 Preliminary Budget Hearing for the Committee on
15 Education.

16 You will be muted until you are called on to
17 testify. At which point, you will be unmuted by a
18 member of our team. Please wait for the Sergeant at
19 Arms to tell you when your time begins. The Sergeant
20 will then let you know when your time is up. As a
21 reminder, you have two minutes for your testimony.
22 We have more than 100 registrants and more than 40
23 panels for today's hearing. So, we ask in fairness
24 for everyone when the Sergeant does call time, to
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1
2 please wrap up your thoughts so we can move on to the
3 next person.

4 If there is anyone who would like to submit
5 written testimony for the record, which may be as
6 long as you wish, please email it to
7 testimony@council.nyc.gov. We'll accept it for up to
8 72 hours at the close of the hearing.

9 We're going to ask members of the public, please
10 do not use the raise the hand function. The raise
11 hand function should be used by Council Members. For
12 those that have questions of a particular panelist, I
13 will call on you in the order that you raise your
14 hands at the conclusion of a panel.

15 Now, and if any one is not called, we only call
16 on people when we see you logged on, so if you are
17 not logged on when it was going to be your time to
18 testify, please remember at the end of the hearing,
19 we do a catch all statement. So, for anyone who was
20 off the Zoom at the time they were going to be
21 called, we still retain time at the end, so everybody
22 will have the opportunity to testify today.

23 So, the first panel that we are going to hear
24 from will be Tom Sheppard, the New York City Panel
25 for Educational Policy and Shirley Aubin the

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2 Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council. We'll first
3 turn to Tom Sheppard.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 TOM SHEPPARD: Good afternoon Chair Joseph and
6 members of the Education Committee. My name is Tom
7 Sheppard and I am the CEC President Appointee and
8 current Vice Chair on the New York City Panel for
9 Educational Policy.

10 I wanted to start by thanking you for giving me a
11 few moments to testify before you today. While I'm
12 not speaking for the panel, I would like to offer the
13 City Council Education, I would like to offer an
14 invitation for you to engage with members of the
15 panel in the same way you do as the Mayor, OMB, DOE
16 and the Chancellor. Especially since the panel has a
17 responsibility for approving the DOE estimated and
18 aggregated budget and contracts prior to those
19 budgets and because five borough presidents and 32 CC
20 presidents are also represented on the city board.

21 With that said, this has been an extraordinarily
22 difficult time in New York City public schools. This
23 pandemic has caused a lot of pain, trauma, and
24 unimaginable loss for many students and their
25 families as well as our school communities. As the

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2 doors to our schools reopen, I am concerned that not
3 enough is being done by our public school system to
4 address this trauma and provide the tools necessary
5 for our students to cope and understand this trauma
6 and to provide the necessary social and emotional
7 support for everyone as they begin the process of
8 healing and recovery.

9 On the ground, organizations such as the Bronx
10 Healing Centered Schools Working Group, the New
11 Settlement Parent Action Committee, Dignity in
12 Schools Campaign and hundreds of parent ambassadors
13 have answered the calls and support themselves and
14 each other as part of the family and community
15 wellness collective.

16 These volunteers have taken the time to get
17 trained on what trauma is and the impacts of that
18 trauma on behavior. And then take what they've
19 learned to create support systems at schools for
20 their children and their communities. There's been a
21 lot of initial funding to support -

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 TOM SHEPPARD: This much needed program but only
24 half of the schools in the city, and if I'm not
25 mistaking only \$3 million.

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2 I'm here to respectfully request the City Council
3 to allocate the resources necessary to provide
4 ongoing support for the schools already participating
5 in this program and expand the program to cover every
6 school in New York City. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
8 turn to Shirley Aubin, the Chancellor's Parent
9 Advisory Council.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 SHIRLEY AUBIN: Good afternoon everyone, Chair
12 Joseph, Council Members for Education Committee. I'm
13 going to touch on Tom Sheppard's topic but from a
14 different angle. I'm advocating for, we are
15 advocating for enhanced cafeteria redesign for the
16 middle schools and high schools.

17 Not only will that uhm, reduce food race, it will
18 give fresh food. It will have more variety of
19 selections. It would also uhm, help with the social
20 and emotional growth of our youth. They need the
21 social, emotional learning. They're there for
22 academics but they're also learning how to socialize.
23 We need to protect their physical, mental, social
24 health.

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2 The enhanced cafeteria will help do this, address
3 social, emotional needs outside of the academic
4 classrooms because they also need that outside of the
5 academic classrooms to grow socially and at the
6 enhanced cafeteria will do this. This will give them
7 a well, warm, welcoming environment for our youth.
8 It's like if you're cooped up in an office all day
9 and you see the sun outside and you want to feel the
10 sun on your skin or even the fresh air, the enhanced
11 cafeteria design can do that inside the school
12 building where they feel comfortable to socialize
13 with their students, you know compadres and they also
14 can uhm, eat healthier food right. This is one of
15 the mayor's initiatives. So, when you enhance the
16 cafeteria design and reduce serving time, so they
17 have more time to eat and more time to converse with
18 their fellow classmates. I'm done, thank you.

19 So, we are asking you to add this into your
20 budget. Those who doesn't have the cafeteria design
21 to have all high schools and middle schools does that
22 and this addresses a lot of issues for our youth.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 SHIRLEY AUBIN: Social, emotional and physical
25 health and mental. Thank you.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
3 The next panel that we're going to call on is Chauncy
4 Young the New Settlement Parents Action Committee,
5 Natasha Capers Public School Parent and Director of
6 the New York City Coalition for Educational Justice
7 and Inshirah DuWors Parent Leader with the Alliance
8 for Quality Education. We'll first turn to Chauncy
9 Young.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 CHAUNCY YOUNG: Good afternoon and thank you
12 Chair Joseph and members of the New York City Council
13 Committee on Education. The Parent Action Committee
14 is a multicultural group of parents and community
15 members dedicated to improving the quality of
16 education for all city children in New York City with
17 an emphasis on the Bronx and we are based in
18 community district 9. Uhm - the Bronx, I'm sorry I
19 had a little technical issue there for a second. The
20 Bronx and our neighborhood has always been a
21 community of immigrants and over two thirds of the
22 residents of the Bronx Community Board Four and
23 School District Nine speak a language other than
24 English.
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2 Additionally, we have the highest number of
3 shelters and families living in temporary housing in
4 New York State. The Bronx and our neighborhood was
5 tremendously affected by the COVID-19 crisis with
6 some of the highest levels of infections and death by
7 population. Additionally, Bronx families have
8 experienced incredible levels of trauma including
9 loss of family members, school staff, jobs and
10 housing. Four years ago, PAC partnered with Legal
11 Services New York to support the Healing Centered
12 Schools Working Group, a coalition of parents,
13 students, social workers, community members,
14 advocating for school transformation with a focus on
15 healing centered practices in schools across New York
16 City.

17 Even prior to the pandemic, students have
18 struggled in throughout the Bronx and many schools
19 have struggled to support families. We are here to
20 ask that additional social, emotional supports are
21 provided to New York City students. We would like to
22 hire more restorative justice coordinators in 500
23 high schools and to put \$45 million to institute
24 restorative practices. Additionally, we would like
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2 to have baselined \$5 million for the mental health
3 continuum.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 CHAUNCY YOUNG: The youth in New York City need
6 additional support. The last thing I just mentioned
7 is, we don't know what happened to Mosaic curriculum.
8 There is \$500 million for cultural responsive
9 curriculum that is suddenly off the table. We don't
10 know what's going on; City Council should ask about
11 that and we need healing centered schools. Thank you
12 so much.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
14 to Natasha Capers.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 NATASHIA CAPERS: Hello, I am Natasha Capers,
17 Director of the New York City Coalition for
18 Educational Justice and public school parent. CEJ's
19 work is what has created the Middle School Quality
20 Initiative, help to bring community schools to scale
21 in New York City and funding for the implicit bias
22 trainings of all DOE staff, as well as the universal
23 Mosaic curriculum to say a few.

24 CEJ is an organization that unapologetically
25 organizes in Black, Latinx and immigrant communities

1
2 all across New York City. The Chancellor spoke again
3 and again about building trust with families and
4 bringing them back from Charters and private schools
5 but two key things that private schools have that we
6 do not is both – excuse me, culturally response
7 approach and curriculum and they have ethnic studies
8 programming.

9 Chancellor Banks spoke one sentence, one about
10 the developments of the universal mosaic curriculum
11 that is supposed to be comprehensive, CRSC in line
12 for K-12. That's every student in the system, Black,
13 Latinx and immigrant and indigenous parents and
14 students fought for and won mosaic. Just for this
15 new administration to come in and begin to back pedal
16 on its commitment.

17 In the words of the DOE last year and their plan
18 to the state, they would create a comprehensive ELA
19 math and the curriculum and that it gauges all
20 students and prepares them for success in school and
21 life. That is what the Chancellor spoke of today and
22 that is what the Chancellor should live up to. What
23 makes CRSC so fundamentally different is that it is
24 committed to eliminating all forms of a question
25 within our learning communities, that includes

1
2 xenophobia, misogyny, ablism, religious oppression
3 and adultism.

4 CRSC centers the voices of young people and their
5 families.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 NATASHIA CAPERS: Last budget season, the DOE
8 received over \$200 million. The reported to CEJ that
9 they were investing \$500 million to build this
10 curriculum. Yet, no one has asked them, where is the
11 money? How has it been spent and why are they
12 slashing their commitment. CEJ is asking this
13 Council to ensure the Department of Education lives
14 up to its commitments to creating the universal
15 mosaic curriculum for all students across all grades.
16 Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Natasha and next,
18 we'll hear from Inshirah DuWors.

19 INSHIRAH DUWORS: Hi, good afternoon everyone.
20 My name is Inshirah DuWors, I am a parent of three
21 school age children. I am an educator and I am a
22 Parent Leader for the Alliance of Quality Education.
23 I am here today to talk about the mosaic curriculum
24 and to ask Council people here to please help the DOE
25 to live up to its commitment. To put the mosaic

1
2 curriculum in our K-12 schools, not just the middle
3 school.

4 I've been listening into the session for quite
5 some time and I got the pleasure to hear many Council
6 peoples issues around programming, most importantly
7 and really disappointedly in the budget cuts that
8 public school has been receiving. Anti-Asian hate,
9 students in temporary housing and foster care,
10 indigenous and immigrant communities, students with
11 disabilities, learning and physical, students who
12 have mental health concerns. Culturally response
13 sustaining education invest in children in all of
14 these communities. Every single one of them. What
15 better way to show students support than allowing
16 them to see themselves represented in the curriculum.
17 The Chancellor spoke about the problem regarding
18 anti-Asian hate and the correlation of those students
19 being seen as the other.

20 We know that when students see themselves
21 represented in learning, they have a sense of
22 belonging inside of their classroom. We also know
23 that other students who might not be learning about
24 themselves and learning about somebody else develops
25 empathy and understanding. Culturally responsive

1
2 sustaining education really helps serve all of the
3 concerns addressed here today and all of the
4 communities of students who belong in our schools.

5 We need investment in programming but we also
6 need your investment and commitment to the curriculum
7 that these students go every single day, nine months
8 a year. So, please, again, encourage the DOE to live
9 up to its commitment to put mosaic curriculum into
10 our K-12 schools. Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony
12 and that concludes this panel. Next, we are going to
13 call on Ellen McHugh CCSE, Amy Tsai New York City
14 Coalition for Educating Families Together, Tameesha
15 Simon Good Shepherd Services, Rebecca Charles
16 Citizens Committee for Children and Gregory Brender
17 Day Care Council of New York. We'll first turn to
18 Ellen McHugh.

19 ELLEN MCHUGH: Hi, good afternoon.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 ELLEN MCHUGH: Good afternoon. Although it's
22 been a long morning, it's still nice to see everybody
23 and I'm glad to see how many people have remained on.

24 I am Co-Chair of the CCSE, a required body under
25 New York State Education Law to consult with and work

1
2 with the Department of Education. Our issues and our
3 concerns are many, almost as many as the 250,000 plus
4 students receiving special education services. Three
5 of our top concerns at this point now are summer
6 rising. 1,110 seats are available on a first come
7 first serve basis. Recognizing learning loss that
8 has occurred over the past two years. How is it that
9 students with disabilities are competing for limited
10 seats? In District 75, summer school as we refer to
11 it is a mandated 12-month program offered to all
12 2,600 plus students. Extended school year for a
13 district base student is rarely included on an IEP
14 because the parents are told that IEP teams cannot
15 add that service.

16 We are also concerned about access to the SIRS
17 busing, which is not universally available even now.
18 Despite repeated requests and statements regarding
19 the availability of busing, there's still no contract
20 in the offing or on the PEP contract scheduling for
21 summer school.

22 Lastly, access to school buildings and programs
23 has always been a problem. We are limited by busing
24 concerns. Students with IEP's on buses cannot stay
25 after school activities, as busing requirements

1
2 prevent that. Just on the note Mr. Moran made a
3 statement about, the larger context for busing.
4 Families aren't concerned about the larger context.
5 That maybe his role.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 ELLEN MCHUGH: The parent is concerned about
8 whether or not her child gets to school.

9 Lastly, Mr. Weisberg I believe, talked about
10 impartial hearing cases. I just want to let you know
11 that as of December 1st, there were 8,985 cases and
12 as of today or I should say as of last Friday, the
13 number of cases have been reduced to 3,200 because
14 the DOE has taken a positive or proactive approach.
15 Thank you for the time and thank you for the extra
16 moments.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ellen and my screen
18 froze one moment. Okay next, we're going to call on
19 Amy Tsai.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 AMY TSAI: Good afternoon. Dear Chair Joseph and
22 the member of the Committee on Education also New
23 York City Council. My name is Amy Tsai, I am a
24 parent of five New York City students that are
25 currently all attending elementary to high school.

1
2 I'm also the citywide community educational council
3 member for District 75, as well as the Vice President
4 of New York City Coalition for Educating Families
5 Together New York Staff.

6 Today, I am testifying with other parents and
7 advocates across the city to ask special education
8 services and student transportation be a priority in
9 the educational budget of New York City for Fiscal
10 Year '23. This school year is certainly the recovery
11 of full in person classroom instruction and the
12 social, emotional of supports needed for students
13 after the two years of unstable learning and social
14 engagement in the remote and hybrid. There are still
15 thousands of students registered at another school
16 registry are still not physically in the building.
17 These families who are receiving a [INAUDIBLE
18 5:06:19] and families that choose to keep their
19 children home for various health reasons to stay safe
20 from COVID-19. Although Mayor Adams has lifted the
21 mandate for masking in schools and the report of
22 positive cases are at the lowest in the city, but
23 Department of Education still has failed to fulfill
24 the vacant services providers needed for students
25

1
2 with an IEP. And the bus para's as some students
3 need in order to go to school and home.

4 Hundreds of IEP complaints for services that were
5 noncompliant before the pandemic, with the current
6 noncompliance has become a backlog of DOE's norm. It
7 is unacceptable. Students with a disability who
8 receive an IEP, are programed to receive the
9 appropriate services and instruction with the support
10 of an IEP team that gives opportunities for students
11 to strive and succeed.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 AMY TSAI: The necessary service or staff is not
14 available to the students throughout the school year
15 and the students are more likely to fall behind from
16 their peers or have learning loss. School leaders
17 and parents have seen this happen over and over too
18 many times, especially during the last two years.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to allow me to
20 speak this afternoon. I appreciate your time.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll hear
22 from Tameesha Simon.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 TAMEESHA SIMON: Good afternoon. My name is
25 Tameesha Simon and I am the Director of Special

1
2 Services and Model Fidelity overseeing the Education
3 team in our Family Foster Care program at Good
4 Shepherd Services.

5 It's important for the city to lift the DOE
6 hiring freeze so the DOE could move forward with
7 hiring positions designated to supporting students in
8 foster care. My agency, along with many others,
9 advocated for the DOE to hire staff specifically
10 focused on the needs of students in foster care.

11 Finally, in December 2021, the DOE announced that
12 it would launch the first-ever team focused on
13 students in foster care, but because of the hiring
14 freeze, the positions are all on hold and there is
15 not a single staff member at the DOE focused on the
16 needs of students in foster care.

17 Working for a foster care agency, I see the need
18 every day for the DOE to have personnel with foster
19 care knowledge and expertise who could support
20 Teachers, Social Workers, Guidance Counselors,
21 Assistant Principals and Principals when it comes to
22 decision-making and troubleshooting the many
23 challenges children in foster care experience. Far
24 too many times, school personnel do not know where to
25

1
2 turn when complex questions or issues come up
3 involving students in foster care.

4 Schools do not understand the trauma students in
5 foster care are facing and do not know how to get
6 support navigating behavioral or trauma related
7 issues with our children who have been removed from
8 their homes and placed in foster home after foster
9 home and foster home. Most often the stable
10 environment children need is their school but only if
11 they can get the right support in school.

12 We need a DOE team focused on students in foster
13 care to bridge this gap. We need the village to come
14 together to really ensure our young people have
15 access to the same educational opportunities as other
16 young people. We need to come together, for the sake
17 of our children in care, and we need the DOE to
18 support our young people during the most tender
19 moments of their lives.

20 We need to instill trust in one of our most
21 vulnerable populations and go above and beyond –

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 TAMEESHA SIMON: So their education and foster
24 care experience doesn't allow them to become a victim
25 of their reality. We must give them to become a

1
2 victim of their reality. We must give them the
3 opportunity and support needed to overcome all
4 obstacles thrown in their direction. It's hard to do
5 that when there is no one at the DOE focused on the
6 needs of students in foster care. Please make sure
7 the city lifts the DOE hiring freeze and hires a team
8 focused on students in foster care. Thank you for
9 your time.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
11 call on Rebecca Charles.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

13 REBECCA CHARLES: Good afternoon. Thank you and
14 congratulations to Chair Joseph and thank you to all
15 members of the City Council Education Committee for
16 holding today's budget hearing.

17 My name is Rebecca Charles and I am a Policy and
18 Advocacy Associate at Citizens' Committee for
19 Children of New York. An independent multi-issue
20 child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring
21 that every New York child is healthy, housed,
22 educated and safe. We at CCC believe firmly that
23 there has never been a more crucial time for
24 investments into education. We were disappointed
25 with and concerned by the Preliminary Budgets

1
2 proposed cuts to the Department of Education, which
3 included a \$57 million decrease in several offices
4 funding and a \$375 million decrease in funding due to
5 enrollment changes, resulting in a hiring freeze and
6 cutting over 3,600 vacant positions. These cuts risk
7 creating new barriers for schools to support
8 students. CCC in partnership with various coalitions
9 and city advocates urges the city and Council to
10 prioritize the following education recommendations in
11 this years budget: To prioritize long overlooked
12 needs of students in temporary housing and in foster
13 care, we ask you to create 150 DOE employee community
14 coordinator positions. Invest \$5 million to ensure
15 school busing for students in foster care and
16 students in temporary housing and end the hiring
17 freeze to create a small taskforce dedicated to
18 supporting this population.

19 To achieve an equitable educational continuum
20 from early education through K-12. Address the
21 dearth of affordable infant and toddler care. Expand
22 3K and UPK to be year round and extended day
23 programs. Baseline funding for all youth services,
24 including summer and year round youth employment
25 programs and invest \$30 million to ensure

1
2 comprehensive parity between preschool special
3 education, teachers and CBO staff in their 12-month
4 DOE counterparts.

5 And finally, to ensure supports for older
6 immigrant and bilingual students, we ask you to
7 invest \$2.1 million and commit to a three year \$8.3
8 million transfer school pilot program recommended by
9 the New York Immigration Coalition to address the
10 barriers immigrants face and invest in the
11 infrastructure needed to ensure high schools are
12 fully accessible to immigrant families.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 REBECCA CHARLES: As we emerge from the pandemic,
15 we must prioritize the needs of New York City school
16 children, especially those who are homeless, in
17 foster care, bilingual or have special needs.

18 With only two minute for oral testimony, these
19 are the points that I wanted to touch on today but an
20 expanded list of recommendations will be submitted to
21 the record in written testimony. Thank you for this
22 opportunity to testify.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and just so
24 everybody knows, the email account for that is
25 testimony@council.nyc.gov and the testimony is

1
2 accepted for up to 72-hours following the conclusion
3 of this hearing.

4 And next, we will call on Gregory Brender.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 GREGORY BRENDER: Good afternoon and thank you so
7 much for the opportunity to testify Chair Joseph and
8 all the members of the City Council Education
9 Committee. I'm here on behalf of the Day Care
10 Council of New York. We are the membership
11 organization of New York City's Early Childhood
12 provider organizations. Many of our members are
13 providing early childhood education through contracts
14 with the Department of Education and we certainly
15 appreciate that there have been questions today about
16 early childhood education and the Council's
17 leadership on this issue.

18 I just wanted to go through a few of the key
19 areas where we're hoping to see some movement in this
20 year's city budget and by the city to improve the
21 early childhood education system for all New York's
22 families. First, is the unfinished work of salary
23 parity. The City Council worked very hard to get the
24 city on a path to parity which got us to a point
25 where certified teachers in community based

1
2 organizations have salaries on par with the starting
3 salaries of teachers in public schools. We want to
4 see both the longevity increases that public school
5 teachers are matched with those of their colleagues
6 and CBOs, but also to address the unmet needs of
7 other parts of the early childhood workforce
8 including directors and support staff.

9 We also wanted to just briefly touch on
10 enrollment-based payments. Uhm, we know that this
11 has been an issue I know that the Council has worked
12 on. Currently the city is taking steps to hold
13 providers harmless just in Fiscal Year 2022. We want
14 that to go on to Fiscal Year 2023 as we know
15 enrollment will continue to fluctuate.

16 We also want to see improvements in enrollment
17 procedure so that community-based organizations who
18 have deep connections with their community can enroll
19 families who already have relationships with those
20 organizations.

21 Finally, just wanted to touch on as you probably
22 heard, the state has been talking about significant
23 expansion of early childhood education and both of
24 the Assembly and Senate proposed multi-billion dollar
25 expansions. The city's going to have a major role in

1
2 it and we ask that the City Council and the
3 Administration include the strong network of
4 community-based organizations who are already -

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 GREGORY BRENDER: In these plans. Okay, got it
7 in two minutes but there is more lengthy testimony
8 that goes into details on this and thank you for the
9 opportunity.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony
11 and now, we're going to hear from a student that has
12 logged on. We're going to go ahead and if we can
13 unmute Alakai (SP?) Sullivan from the Urban Youth
14 Collaborative.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Actually there is no - so,
17 Alakai (SP?) Sullivan, you need to log out and log
18 back in and you have no audio. So, while you do
19 that, we will call on the next panel and then I will
20 circle back to you. So, the next panel will be Randi
21 Levine Advocates for Children, Jeanne Alter Kennedy
22 Children Center, Isabella Girls for Gender Equity,
23 Quadira Coles Girls for Gender Equity and Christopher
24 Treiber Interagency Council of Developmental
25

1
2 Disabilities Agencies. We'll first turn to Randi
3 Levine.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 RANDI LEVINE: Thank you for the opportunity and
6 for your thoughtful questions today. My name is
7 Randi Levine, I'm the Policy Director of Advocates
8 for Children of New York. Every year we help
9 thousands of families navigate the education system.
10 Given the needs we see on the ground following the
11 unprecedented educational disruption of the pandemic
12 and the historic levels of federal and state
13 education funding, this is not the time to make cuts
14 to education. The DOE hiring freeze is already
15 taking away from support from students. Refusing to
16 fill vacancies when staff happen to leave no matter
17 their role, no matter whether they focus on students
18 with disabilities or students who are homeless is not
19 a strategy for identifying efficiencies and not a way
20 to achieve positive outcomes for children.

21 Instead of cutting support for students, the city
22 should invest in the following areas described in our
23 written testimony and supported by coalitions.

24 First, given that 65 percent of Black and Latinx
25 students are not reading proficiently, the city

1
2 should invest \$125 million in federal funding to
3 provide evidence-based reading intervention to
4 students who need it.

5 Second, in 2020, nearly one in four English
6 Language Learners dropped out of high school. The
7 city should invest \$2.1 million to launch programs to
8 support ELL's at existing transfer schools and invest
9 \$12 million to hire ELL Instructional Specialists.

10 Third, 40 percent of public school families speak
11 a language other than English at home. So, this
12 years investment of \$4 million in immigrant family
13 communication to be increased to \$6 million and
14 baselined.

15 Fourth, the city is short 900 seats in preschool
16 special education classes. The city increased
17 salaries of Pre-K teachers but excluded preschool
18 special education teachers. The city should invest
19 \$30 million to increase salaries for preschool
20 special education teachers.

21 Fifth, the city should invest \$5 million to
22 guarantee bus service to students in foster care, so
23 they're not forced to transfer schools due to lack of
24 transportation.

25 Six, more than half -

1

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

2

3

RANDI LEVINE: Of students living in shelter are chronically absent from school. The city should invest \$12 million to hire 100 DOE community coordinators to work in shelters and help ensure students can get to school. And finally, the pandemic has heard a national youth mental health crisis. The Council was instrumental last year in securing \$5 million for the mental health continuum, a model to integrate direct services to students with significant mental health needs in high need schools. The city should also expand the number of school-based mental health clinics and invest \$118 million for schoolwide restorative justice practices. Thank you.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

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JEANNE ALTER: Hi, good afternoon. Thank you very much for this opportunity to address the City Council on really the only childhood special education crisis.

My name is Jeanne Alter, I'm the Executive Director of Kennedy Children Center, located in East

1
2 Harlem in the South Bronx. I've been working in 4410
3 Preschool programs for 30 years and in the state 30
4 years. Salary parity has always been an issue for
5 us. 4410 programs like Kennedy provide mandated
6 preschool special education programs for New York
7 City Department of Ed students.

8 Like the New York City Department of Ed, we are
9 publicly funded and rely on certified special ed
10 teachers, certified teacher assistance and licensed
11 related service personnel to provide children with
12 their IEP services. Why should our staff make any
13 less money than their colleagues in the DOE if we're
14 doing the exact same part. If you truly care about
15 equality in education, you cannot continue to
16 discriminate against one sector of providers.

17 Everyone deserves to make a decent living and our
18 teaching staff is no different. We know the pandemic
19 has upended education but staff turnover this year
20 has been exhausting. Since July 1st, we have lost 51
21 percent of our teachers and 42 percent of teacher
22 assistants. Over half of these former staff have
23 accepted positions with the DOE. Currently, I have
24 almost 28 children sitting at home with IEP's and I
25 can't start them in school because we cannot find any

1
2 staff to take on positions. Because DOE teachers
3 make more money for a ten month program and our staff
4 have to work 12 months.

5 So, you are denying DOE children and families the
6 certified and qualified staff they deserve simply
7 because they attended 4410 program. I have spent my
8 career fighting for the needs of children and
9 families in New York City and I'll continue to be a
10 voice for this community. There is not a shortage-

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

12 JEANNE ALTER: About young children especially,
13 there's a lack of funding and support for teachers
14 like ours who want to work with these very young and
15 vulnerable learners in programs like Kennedy Children
16 Center. Therefore, I urge you to please look at
17 salary parity seriously. Thank you for your time.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Than you and next, we will
19 call on Isabella.

20 ISABELLA: Uhm, is my audio all good?

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

22 ISABELLA: Okay, cool. Uhm, good afternoon Chair
23 Joseph and the members and staff of the Committee on
24 Education. My name is Isabella and I am a huge
25 participant in a liberation legacy at Girls for

1
2 Gender Equity. Girls for Gender Equity works to
3 center youth through a lens to achieve gender and
4 racial justice by centering the leadership of Black
5 girls and gender expansive young people, to reshape
6 culture and policy through advocacy, youth led
7 programming and shifting dominant narratives. GGE or
8 Girls for Gender Equity has been a leader in
9 conversation around gender-based violence and
10 consistent advocates against youth policing. We are
11 offering testimony today for a safer and fairer
12 school experience for all. Schools are not prison,
13 they are a place for creative minds and education to
14 flourish, so why are we making young people feel like
15 they are being left up with watchful eyes, metal
16 detectors and a lack of privacy? Why are adults
17 allowed to go through students bags and lockers
18 without permission? Why are these security guards
19 allowed to target my Black and Brown peers without
20 even glancing at the their White counterparts?

21 I would like to repeat once more that schools are
22 not prisons and we should not be treating young
23 people as prisoners. I would like a call to action
24 to shift the current funding away from policing in
25 schools and put that money into other resources. Our

1
2 schools are inundated with youth from all boroughs
3 and most times they do not have the support they
4 need.

5 Our systems are punishment based and many do not
6 take the time with students to understand why they
7 are acting a certain way. I remember one of my
8 teachers took the time to communicate and sit down
9 with a student who was labeled as "troubled." He
10 offered the student to play chess with him after
11 school, share his story and work with him to
12 understand his problem.

13 That same student turned from a "troubled"
14 student into an honor student within a couple of
15 weeks. A little support and understanding can go a
16 long way, especially for Black and Brown young
17 people, queer young people and disabled youth.

18 The young generation is our future. We have to
19 support them. Furthermore, we stand in solidarity
20 with many organizers and education justice advocates
21 across New York City –

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 ISABELLA: Hiring 2,000 New York's [INAUDIBLE
24 5:23:24] from school based restorative justice,
25 support students social and emotional wellbeing and

1
2 move money away from policing. Thank you for your
3 time.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
5 call on Quadira Coles.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 QUADIRA COLES: Uhm, good afternoon Chair Joseph
8 and members and staff of the Committee on Education,
9 My name is Quadira and I am the Deputy Director of
10 Policy at Girls for Gender Equity. Thank you
11 Isabella for your testimony. Uhm, it kind of makes
12 sense to repurpose some of my old testimonies because
13 here we are again, demanding now a new Council to
14 prioritize police free schools and invest in students
15 education with healing services programs and support.

16 Also, rectify the inequities and harm that were
17 laid bear by the pandemic and remote learning. While
18 some parts of the city can pretend that the pandemic
19 is a thing of the past, students are still feeling
20 its two year impact. There is a citywide consensus
21 amongst the students themselves and adult allies that
22 their emotional and mental wellbeing is top priority
23 right now and we cannot ignore that.

24 Funding to the school safety division which
25 fosters harmful policing tactics and surveillance

1
2 takes away from areas within our education system
3 that need adequate and sustainable fiscal support
4 such as staff retention and restorative and
5 extracurricular programming.

6 During the pandemic, students have lost access to
7 their school buildings, peers and teachers and had to
8 rapidly adjust to new routines in a new method of
9 learning that has exposed a multitude of educational
10 inequities within New York City school system. This
11 has brought on a tremendous amount of stress and
12 mental health issues that students are consistently
13 uplifting. Neither school communities nor students
14 were prepared for this and we are still trying to
15 play catchup. So, the plan to upscale officers in
16 the school safety division seem absurd considering
17 the many other things that need the investment and
18 that will truly ensure holistic safety for students.

19 And as we begin to see rollbacks on the progress
20 the city has made to undo pathways to harm and abuse
21 by the NYPD in our own communities, we must ensure
22 that more than \$400 million in the school policing
23 budget is removed. This includes money for police as
24 well as police officers – I'm sorry, police officers,
25

1
2 the city calls youth coordination officers who are
3 supposed to –

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 QUADIRA COLES: Form relationships in and outside
6 of schools. Students do not need mentorship from
7 officers who are also being told to bring back heavy
8 handed policing tactics on a quest to allegedly get
9 tough on crime. Which disproportionately targets
10 Black and Brown youth.

11 Furthermore, we and that includes our fellow DOC
12 advocates and students here demand the city invest in
13 hiring 2,000 New Yorkers to strengthen schools, cut
14 \$75 million to hire restorative justice coordinators
15 in 500 high schools and \$45 million to implement the
16 restorative justice practices, support our students
17 social and emotional wellbeing and move money away
18 from policing. Thank you for the opportunity to
19 testify.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and finally, we
21 will call on Christopher Treiber.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 CHRISTOPHER TREIBER: Good afternoon Council
24 Chair Joseph and members of the Education Committee.
25 Thank you for holding the hearing today. My name is

1
2 Chris Treiber and I am the Associate Executive
3 Director for Children Services with the Interagency
4 Council. We're a nonprofit membership association of
5 more than 130 agencies that serve children and adults
6 with developmental disabilities and our agencies
7 provide early intervention preschool special
8 education services to thousands of children in New
9 York City.

10 My testimony today will focus on preschool
11 special education, the children and families who
12 depend on those services. It's very important to
13 remember that preschool special education students
14 are public school students and that they are entitled
15 to equitable funding. You should also know that 88
16 percent of all of the preschool children in New York
17 City who need special education get served by
18 community-based organizations, not New York City
19 public schools and that our schools are in a dire
20 staffing crisis that really threatens the viability
21 and service system available to children with
22 disabilities.

23 4410 teachers were excluded from the salary
24 parity agreement and that has had dramatic
25 consequences on the children in our schools. Nelson

1
2 Mandela said, "there can be no keen or revelation of
3 a society sold in the way it treats its children."

4 Think about Nelson Mandela's statement as I give you
5 some numbers based on a survey that we did with our
6 schools in October of 2021.

7 25 percent is the current turnover rate for
8 certified teachers in our schools. 33 percent is the
9 vacancy rate. The number of teacher positions that
10 are unfilled in our schools. 212 teachers left,
11 about 36 preschool programs last year and 63
12 preschool programs have closed across the state in
13 the past few years, 34 of them in New York City.

14 I know numbers can be overwhelming but it's about
15 the kids and so, we must guarantee that every
16 preschool student with a disability has access to a
17 certified teacher and the services they need. The
18 only way to achieve that goal is to address the
19 salary parity issue for 4410 teachers and ensure
20 equitable funding for our children. We are calling
21 on the City Council to address -

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 CHRISTOPHER TREIBER: Of our preschool special
24 education teachers from the salary parity agreement
25 and provide the funds to ensure that certified

1
2 special education teachers in the 4410 preschool
3 programs receive the same pay as 12-month teachers in
4 the DOE, so that preschool students with disabilities
5 get the critical special education services they need
6 and legally entitled to. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next panel
8 that we're going to call on is Labafio Lebay from the
9 Urban Youth Collective, Star Eva Mendez, the Urban
10 Youth Collective and Alakai Sullivan Urban Youth
11 Collective. We'll first turn to Labafio.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 LABBAFIO LEBAY: Good afternoon. Sorry, okay,
14 good afternoon Chair Joseph. My name is Batcho
15 Bamba(SP?), 10th Grade Student Leader at Harvest
16 Collegiate High School in District 2; a small, Public
17 high school that focuses on restorative justice. As
18 a high school student, I highly oppose Mayor Adams
19 Preliminary Budget Proposal adding millions of
20 dollars for school cops instead of funding the
21 restorative justice and mental health support that we
22 truly need. I would like to share a personal story
23 that I found that restorative justice in school has
24 been extremely functional in solving conflicts
25 between students and staff, staff to staff and most

1
2 of all, students to students. Being a youth led
3 program, we get the opportunity to mediate conflict
4 before any punitive action is necessary. And that's
5 why it's so important that we fund restorative
6 justice in schools, not cops.

7 I've had the experience of mediating harm between
8 myself and another student about the use of racial
9 slurs. Without restorative justice this opportunity
10 wouldn't even be possible.

11 So, I demand that New York City must spend \$75
12 million to hire restorative justice coordinators in
13 500 high schools and \$45 million to implement
14 restorative justice practices. Unlike policing,
15 restorative practices seek to address the root cause
16 of the harm. It will look at youth like me as a
17 person rather than a potential problem. Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we're
19 going to call on Star Eva Mendez.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 STAR EVA MENDEZ: Hello, good afternoon. My name
22 is Star Eva Mendez and I'm in District 2, the main
23 school of Harvest Collegiate.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Star, can you just speak up
25 just a little bit more? Having trouble hearing you.

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STAR EVA MENDEZ: Hi.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

STAR EVA MENDEZ: Okay, hi, my name is Star Eva Mendez. I am in 10th grade and I go to school at Harvest Collegiate in District 2. Uhm, I have a demand that we need police free schools. Because of this, I feel like its not right that students have to come to school feeling some sort of way and not feeling comfortable enough to come in and be themselves with the worry of having police coming over them.

I have a personal story about this. A few years back, I was in middle school and we had a tight, very tight security with police officers and there was a time where a student had acted out because of a mental illness and police officers had attained her and took her out the building with not actually knowing what was wrong. I feel like that was because there weren't as many counselors, school counselors that the student could go to. If the student had more counselors to go to, then this wouldn't have happened and this student wouldn't have been obtained by the police officer at school. I have never experienced it to myself but I have had friends who

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2 have had issues with students and the police officers
3 in school and I don't think it's right that schools
4 have police in them.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, thank you for your
6 testimony and next, we're going to call on Alakai
7 Sullivan.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 ALAKAI SULLIVAN: Hi Chair Joseph. Oh, sorry,
10 good afternoon Chair Joseph and members of staff. My
11 name is Alakai Sullivan, I'm a 9th grade student
12 leader at Friends Collegiate High School in District
13 2. A small public school that focuses on restorative
14 justice. Unfortunately, I go to a school with no
15 metal detectors and I feel safe when I walk in the
16 school but I know a lot of people that did have metal
17 detectors and a lot of really tight security, which
18 is why we need to make it much safer for everyone in
19 public school. And I demand that New York City must
20 not - sorry, any new students [INAUDIBLE 5:33:20]
21 scanning equipment that the Mayor is already testing
22 out in schools. We don't need anymore money invested
23 in our criminalization. Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony
25 and the next panel that we are going to call will be

1
2 Dr. Deloris McCullough Bellevue Daycare Center,
3 Sophia Francis Cortelyou Early Childhood Centers, Dr.
4 Angela White 4410 Preschools at Rising Ground, Maggie
5 Moroff Advocates for Children and Lori Podvesker
6 Include NYC. We'll first turn to Dr. Deloris
7 McCullough.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 DR. DELORIS MCCULLOUGH: Thank you Chair Joseph
10 and the Education Committee and all esteemed guests
11 for allowing me this opportunity. My name is Dr.
12 Deloris McCollough and I am the Director of Bellevue
13 Daycare Center. A center based infant, toddler and
14 preschool program in New York City.

15 Many ECE programs have welcomed the transition of
16 oversight of childcare funding from ACS to DOE
17 believing that the ECE finally acknowledged and
18 respected for our work as educators. We were wrong
19 on many levels. I welcome the new leadership and
20 appeal on the following matters. Suspend the pay for
21 enrollment policy enacted by the DOE. In most
22 instances, programs were not awarded based on their
23 responses to the birth to five RFP resulting in
24 programs having to adjust despite the needs of their
25 community and all while managing the COVID pandemic.

1
2 Provide families with more full time and year
3 round ECE services. Parents who work full-time need
4 full-time care and most parents don't get two months
5 off. Include salary parity for the ECE workforce.
6 The low compensation draws our most educated and
7 experienced workers to seek employment in the early
8 elementary school system, resulting in high turn over
9 rates. Increase rates for infants and toddlers with
10 consideration for the special care equipment and the
11 staffing they need. Also know that it will be
12 necessary to distinguish the funds between funds
13 allocated to preschool and infant toddler programs
14 because the former administration has drawn a
15 distinction within the ECE community.

16 And finally, respect that ECE community by
17 including representatives of CBO's as part of the
18 Planning Committee when addressing policies and
19 procedures that impact the ECE programs. The recent
20 COVID pandemic highlighted our significance in
21 society. We make it possible for parents to fulfill
22 their roles as professionals, emergency and essential
23 workers and keep our city operational. We work so
24 that everyone else can work. We value our work.

1
2 This is your opportunity to demonstrate that you feel
3 the same. Thank you for your time.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
5 turn to Sophia Francis.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 SOPHIA FRANCIS: Good afternoon Council Committee
8 on Education. My name is Sophia Francis and I am the
9 Director of a private childcare center, Cortelyou
10 Early Childhood Centers in Brooklyn New York. We've
11 been in operation for 40-years. Currently as a
12 private childcare center we are experiencing a
13 shortage of qualified childcare staff, staff are
14 leaving because they are going to other educational
15 agencies. We're all fishing in the same pool. We
16 have lost teachers to the Charter School mid-year
17 because they are paying off graduate degrees. We've
18 lost teachers to the DOE and assistance because they
19 were doing this whole initiative in October 2021 when
20 they were paying \$50 on top of the days pay.

21 There used to be a pipeline of new teachers that
22 they got experience and worked in private care
23 centers and then moved onto the DOE. The Council has
24 to understand as long as our teaching requirements
25 are the same, the exact same for the public school

1
2 teacher versus private childcare for the infant and
3 toddler teachers, the issues of childcare deserts
4 will persist and there will be a revolving door for
5 private childcare centers.

6 Also, this morning I read an article in regards
7 to Governor Hochul putting more money, \$1.4 billion
8 into the education – into the budget. This is great
9 and we are glad that the lack of affordable childcare
10 is not going unnoticed. However, a city and state
11 initiative, we must ensure that systems are in place
12 to facilitate all of these new initiatives.

13 Our school alone has lost funding for extended
14 day year seats due to a premature program that was
15 rolled out without the proper infrastructure in
16 place. We had to tell 3K and PreK extended year
17 families that we can no longer provide care for them
18 because their initial application was actually
19 temporarily accepted but no longer accepted, which
20 they didn't understand in the middle of a school
21 year.

22 Their excuses from the extended day childcare
23 assistance subsidy team. They sent a subsidy team
24 email one, subsidy team email five. It's very
25 confusing and as a Director, we just want to teach

1
2 and educate our students and work with our staff.

3 So, it's very confusing what's going on with the
4 extended day -

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 SOPHIA FRANCIS: Lastly, we had some issues with
7 special education We have kids who are in our 3K and
8 Pre-K program, who came in with no language and all
9 year, they have not been able with the DOE social
10 workers and all that we have in place to get any
11 evaluations and these children are leaving this June
12 with no services because there is no services
13 available to them. Thanks so much for your time.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
15 turn to Dr. Angela White.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 DR. ANGELA WHITE: Thank you Chair Joseph and
18 members of the Committee on Education for the
19 opportunity to testify about the proposed education
20 budget. My name is Dr. Angela White and I'm from
21 Rising Ground where I'm the Superintendent of Schools
22 for the Early Childhood Center, Ground Now Preschool
23 and a children's learning center. All 4410 special
24 ed preschools. These preschools have been lauded for
25 providing supportive, instructional and therapeutic

1
2 programs for young children with disabilities in the
3 Bronx and Harlem.

4 Rising Ground and my 4410 colleagues recommend
5 that the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget includes funds to
6 provide preschool special education teachers and
7 staff at preschool 4410's. Salaries on par with
8 their 12-month Department of Education counterparts.
9 Two years ago, the city reached an agreement to raise
10 salaries of the most certified early childhood
11 teachers at Department of Education contracted CBO's
12 but excluded teachers of Department of Education
13 contracted 4410 preschool special ed programs, who
14 work 12-month jobs serving young children with the
15 most intensive needs in the state.

16 The city has not yet committed to salary parity
17 for these educators, even as a shortage of seats in
18 the preschool has left preschoolers with disabilities
19 without the support they need and have a legal right
20 to receive.

21 In order for 4410 preschools to open new
22 classrooms, the city needs to address the salary
23 disparities that are causing my teachers, teaching
24 assistants and staff members to leave with jobs in
25 the New York City Department of Education, where they

1
2 can earn higher salary compensation. I have had to
3 close several classrooms as a result of not having
4 highly qualified preschool teachers.

5 The city has a plan to open 800 much needed
6 preschool special ed classrooms in July by offering a
7 contract enhancement to the 4410-

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 SOPHIA FRANCIS: Without salary parity and
10 increased salaries, it's hard to see how the city
11 will be able to open the classes it needs. So, on
12 behalf of the 4410, please ensure that the Fiscal
13 Year '23 budget includes at least \$30 million to
14 provide preschool special ed teachers and staff and
15 other 4410's with salaries on par with their 12-month
16 counterparts. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
18 turn to Maggie Moroff.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 MAGGIE MOROFF: Thank you. Thank you Chair
21 Joseph and members of the Committee for the chance to
22 speak today. Like others, I am sure cutting my
23 written testimony now.

24 I coordinate the ARISE Coalition, our members are
25 individual parents, advocates and organizations

1
2 working together to push for improved access to
3 quality programming, day to day experiences and long-
4 term outcomes for youth with disabilities in city
5 schools.

6 ARISE members have welcomed Chancellor Bank's
7 recent remarks and I was glad to hear his testimony
8 earlier about the importance of improving literacy in
9 our schools. I also really appreciated the questions
10 and comments of Council Members around the issue and
11 bravo to those who testified on a previous panel
12 around students with disabilities.

13 Past failure to teach all students to read at
14 grade level and to offer interventions as needed,
15 must be addressed immediately. We have been speaking
16 with the current administration about this and I'm
17 here today to emphasize how critical funding will be
18 towards that end. Schools must be able to use
19 evidence based culturally responsive core curricula
20 and provide evidence based interventions across all
21 grades and communities to all students who need them.

22 The DOE has allocated \$250 million in federal
23 COVID relief funding for academic recovery in student
24 supports next year but it hasn't shared specifics on
25 the plans of how they are going to use those funds.

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2 To make a difference for struggling readers, the
3 city should invest \$125 million of those relief funds
4 for one on one and small group interventions to
5 students who need them from staff trained and
6 approaches that work, uh, proven to work. I also
7 want to express concern that the DOE's hiring freeze
8 is going to disproportionately impact students with
9 disabilities. A separate issue from the literacy,
10 sorry. Students who by nature of their disability
11 require additional supports. Those vacancies all
12 really need to be lived.

13 Similarly, hiring freezes shouldn't extend to
14 Universal Literacy Initiative which provides critical
15 supports to K-2 school staff.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 MAGGIE MOROFF: Teaching of core literacy skills.
18 And then lastly, I echo all the other voices here
19 today calling for salary parity for preschool special
20 education teachers working at CBO's. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
22 turn to Lori Podvesker.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 LORI PODVESKER: Good afternoon Chair Joseph-

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uh, you cut out Lori. Uhm,
3 yeah, we can't hear you. You may want to try turning
4 off your video if it's on. That sometimes can help
5 if there bandwidth issue.

6 LORI PODVESKER: Because of preschool program
7 4410's and we commend the Department of Education and
8 all staff under 1,800 schools for their ongoing
9 commitment to our children and their families during
10 the last two very challenging years, we testify today
11 to urge the city to better prioritize meeting the
12 needs of the near 300,000 students with disabilities
13 in the FY23 budget.

14 Despite the unprecedented amount of funding the
15 city has received from the federal government and the
16 New York State Education Department in the last year
17 to address learning loss for students with
18 disabilities and to provide educational opportunities
19 equal to their peers, the city did not adequately do
20 this the last school year.

21 Tens of thousands of students with disabilities
22 were excluded at Summer Rising programs last year as
23 a result of the city failing to provide timely
24 information to families, special education supports
25 and mandated busing services to students. In

1
2 addition, the city first started delivering special
3 ed recovery services in December of 2021, three
4 months into the school year and almost all services
5 are not in person, creating the same access barriers
6 for disabled students and their families as full time
7 remote instruction did.

8 We have worked with thousands of parents and
9 educators in the last school year and we know first
10 hand that the city is not adequately delivering
11 timely and legally required special education
12 evaluations, support services and programs for tens
13 of thousands of students with suspected or known
14 disabilities ages 3-21.

15 We also know that too many families are kept in
16 the dark about their child's special education
17 services and programs as a result of inferior
18 communication from individual schools in the city.
19 In the Fiscal Year 2022 Managers Report, further
20 substantiates this by stating parent engagement was
21 down 30 percent during the last school year.

22 As a result, we recommend City Council ensures
23 there is adequate funding in the budget for the
24 Department of Education to do the following:
25 Increase salaries for preschool special education

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2 teachers and staff at community-based organizations
3 with salaries on par with their 12-month Department
4 of Education counterparts. Immediately lift hiring
5 freeze and address staffing shortages of qualified
6 special ed teachers, para professionals, school
7 psychologists -

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 LORI PODVESKER: And transition counselors.

10 Strengthen systemwide capacity to conduct quality
11 special ed evaluations for students from preschool to
12 12th grade. Create borough-based centers this summer
13 to deliver in person and serve to students who did
14 not receive any during the ten month school year.
15 And I'll stop because I know we're on limited time
16 and the most important recommendation we have is for
17 the city to create a public phasing accountability
18 system that attracts how and where the special
19 education funding has been spent. That has been
20 specifically targeted for students with disabilities
21 through IDA. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next panel
23 that we will call is David McGillan Salvadori Center,
24 Kenneth Jones Salvadori Center, Leonie Haimson Class
25 Size Matters and Michael Kohlhagen Center for

1
2 Educational Innovation. We'll first start with David
3 McGillan.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 DAVID MCGILLAN: Sorry about that, I was just
6 running from another meeting. Uhm, so, hello, good
7 afternoon and thank you Chair Joseph for the
8 opportunity to testify and congratulations on your
9 first oversight committee. I'm actually a District
10 40 resident for the past 18 years, so it's great to
11 have someone from the neighborhood Chairing the
12 Committee.

13 My name is David McGillan, I am Deputy Director
14 of the Salvadori Center and we started the hearing
15 this morning with questions about class sizes and
16 Salvadori students work in groups of three or four in
17 public schools in under resourced communities and
18 they build projects and conduct science, map and
19 design experience. All lessons are hands on and
20 project based so students learn by doing.

21 And this small group work enables all students to
22 contribute and succeed. Students receive more
23 attention and they feel safe in the knowledge that
24 they don't have to have all the answers. Because
25 together, we can come up with better solutions.

1
2 So, as our students respond to real world
3 challenges, they build skills that make them
4 attractive to future employers and as they work
5 collaboratively and communicate ideas persuasively,
6 the develop vital, social, emotional learning skills
7 that have been lost during the isolation of the past
8 two years of this pandemic.

9 So, Salvadori has been doing this for almost 50
10 years and we're here to help. Our project-based
11 hands on classes require a lot of materials which we
12 provide to schools and we can be ready to teach
13 anywhere across the five boroughs within two weeks.

14 So, I know it's been a long day and I will yield
15 out the rest of my time but thank you for the
16 opportunity to testify.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
18 hear from Kenneth Jones.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 KENNETH JONES: Hi everybody. Councilman Joseph,
21 Chair Joseph thank you very much and congratulations
22 on your first hearing as everybody has said. I don't
23 want to repeat too much of what David said. I'm the
24 Executive Director at the Salvadori Center but one of
25 the things we've heard from a lot of the DOE staff,

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from the other panelists is about teacher burnout. The last two years have been horrible. So, many people are frustrated, there's teacher burnout and I just want to remind everybody that the DOE has a vendor contract system that enables organizations like the Salvadori Center to come in and work with the students directly, especially on areas where some generalists who are teachers might not be subject matter experts.

So, Salvadori for example, is a subject matter expert in STEAM which is Science, Technology, Engineering, Architecture/Arts and Math. As David said, a hands on collaborative approach and not every school teacher is a specialist in math, science and the arts. And so bringing in nonprofit organizations as vendors within the DOE, is a very useful tool and for us, one of the things that we pride ourselves on is the culture of assessment. And so, we constantly measure student performance, art, there is a subject matter knowledge that they're supposed to learn in the grade they're in. Is there comprehension of that knowledge? Has it increased? And we thankfully over the last ten years have shown constant increases in comprehension across the board.

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2 But most recently we did a survey with a – a
3 study with NYU researchers that measured relevance
4 and the Chancellor talked about this. Do kids care
5 about school? Is what they are learning relevant to
6 their lives? Answering that question of why do I
7 need to know this and our surveys are showing that
8 when you have a collaborative project-based approach
9 to learning, where kids at different learning styles
10 and modalities can share and learn together that
11 their interest in school, in the sense of relevant
12 spikes. But what's really cool is, after a program
13 like Salvadori's, that decline that happens from day
14 one to the end of the academic year, when school
15 becomes more analytical –

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 KENNETH JONES: That decline in relevance stops.
18 So, thank you for your support. Please continue to
19 make it possible for nonprofits to help you succeed
20 and we're here for you if you need us.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
22 turn to Leonie Haimson.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If we can –

25 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: She's muted.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Leonie, you have to click the
3 accept – you have to accept the unmute request that
4 we sent.

5 LEONIE HAIMSON: Sorry, sorry, I will begin
6 again. I hope I didn't lose too much time.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Nope, they don't start till
8 you go, so go ahead.

9 LEONIE HAIMSON: Okay, good afternoon Chair
10 Joseph and members of the Council. My name is Leonie
11 Haimson, I am the Executive Director of Class Size
12 Matters. Yesterday, we released a new report
13 entitled, 'What has Happened to Class Size this Year
14 and What will Happen to it if the Mayor's cuts are
15 Enacted.' The full report is attached to our written
16 testimony.

17 We show how average class sizes this year have
18 decreased citywide due to enrollment decline yet
19 significant disparities remain between districts and
20 among grade levels. Instead of building on this
21 progress and making class sizes more equitable across
22 the city, the proposed budget cuts to schools of \$375
23 million would cause these class sizes to swell to
24 prepandemic levels or even higher despite the strong
25 consensus among parents and teachers that smaller

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2 classes are even more important now than ever before
3 to support students and enable them to recover from
4 the multiple academic and emotional challenges caused
5 by the pandemic.

6 We cannot attract parents back to the system or
7 provide stronger literacy supports if class sizes
8 increase sharply. Thank you for your questions about
9 the new class size standards in the Bluebook but the
10 SCA did not respond as to what they mean and whether
11 they will actually lead to all schools having enough
12 space to lower class sizes so these levels. We
13 really doubt that, especially as the proposed capital
14 plan cuts \$1.5 billion from new capacity and over
15 10,000 new school seats compared to the adopted plan.

16 We also need to refute the SCA's claim that they
17 have complied with Local 167, which required the
18 [INAUDIBLE 5:53:16] to transparent methodology about
19 their seat needs projections. Simply saying as they
20 do that we look at X,Y and Z is not a methodology.
21 Neither the DOE nor the SCA has complied with Local
22 Law 168 either. Passed in 2018, they were supposed
23 to create a taskforce that would work together to
24 analyze the suitability of city and privately owned
25 empty lots for schools. This taskforce was supposed

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2 to release a report in July 2019 but they have still
3 not released any analysis of thousands of privately
4 owned sites due more than two years later.

5 We urge the City Council to oppose these huge,
6 proposed cuts to the seats to schools and to the
7 school budgets and to resubmit and pass Intro. 2274
8 in amended form by requiring the phase in of greater
9 classroom space requirements per student now to be in
10 alignment with the new class size capacity standards
11 in the Bluebook in over five years instead of three
12 years.

13 The original bill that contain uniform and
14 stricter space requirements to be achieved in all
15 grades over three years garnered the support of 41
16 out of 50 City Council members last session but never
17 came to a vote. Thank you very much for the
18 opportunity to speak to you today.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
20 turn to Michael Kohlhagen.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 MICHAEL KOHLHAGEN: Good afternoon. Thank you
23 Madam Chair Joseph, all the Education Committee
24 Members and all the members of the Committee and
25 congratulations to the newly elected Committee

1
2 Members. Thank you for staying online and listening
3 to everyone's testimony.

4 My name is Michael Kohlhagen, CEO for the Center
5 for Educational Innovation. A nonprofit 501C3 with
6 30-years of history serving school leaders, school
7 communities and students across all five boroughs of
8 New York City with a focus on equity and innovation.
9 Our mission is to provide every student with a high
10 quality education and as many of you know for the
11 last 20 years, we have been providing direct service
12 to students funded by the city and this body to
13 support after school enrichment programming,
14 educational programs for students and college and
15 career readiness and for that we are very grateful.
16 You all know how important it is preparing students
17 from under resourced communities for high school and
18 beyond. We continue this work and most recently have
19 enhanced our work with coding and robotics and e-
20 sports infused with college and career readiness,
21 academic coaching, life skills, social action, art
22 and music all offered virtually during COVID pandemic
23 and now hybrid. Meeting the changing needs of our
24 school communities during this important reentry to
25 school process.

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2 Over the past year beginning in the Summer
3 Rising, during the Summer Rising program, we were a
4 provider for over 20 schools working with schools,
5 communities, superintendents and principals who have
6 all confirmed that these enrichment programs are more
7 important than ever and must be aligned to the
8 changing needs of students, families and communities.

9 On behalf of our diverse team of educators, we
10 reiterate the need for investment in the Speakers
11 Initiative, after school enrichment, educational
12 programming and college to career readiness to
13 provide supplemental and complimentary school support
14 and enrichment that fosters -

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 MICHAEL KOHLHAGEN: Engagement for our students
17 and expose them to new opportunities, nurtures,
18 talented interests of students and poise them towards
19 career pathways.

20 I just want to end by saying thank you if I may.
21 Thank you for your time and opportunity to speak. To
22 reiterate what you already know, the need to
23 prioritize our students and the importance of
24 engaging them in these goal oriented experiences. On
25 behalf of all the nonprofits and CEI committed to a

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2 continued partnership with each of you. The
3 Chancellor and the Mayor to invest in the future of
4 this city, I thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next panel
6 that we're going to call will be Paulette Ha, Lana
7 Bilic from Children's Aid, Dr. Brenda Triplett
8 Children's Aid, Lennia Clark Committee for Hispanic
9 Children and Families and Kaveri Sengupta the
10 Coalition for Asian American Children and Families.
11 We'll first turn to Paulette Ha.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 PAULETTE HA: That's okay.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uhm, can you just unmute
15 Paulette one more time?

16 PAULETTE HA: Hi, can you hear me?

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

18 PAULETTE HA: Okay, sorry, we're just having a
19 bit of technical difficulty, give me one second.

20 My name is Lucas Healy and I am D75 Student.
21 Thank you for this opportunity. Looking for where I
22 started testifying at City Council, I was looking for
23 a middle school and my mom had to reject a [INAUDIBLE
24 5:58:38] before we found the right program. I am now
25

1
2 starting high school in September and I have even
3 less choices as then I have for middle school.

4 I heard someone from the DOE say earlier they
5 have 3,000 empty seats the budget. Please make sure
6 they are seats for high schools too. Mostly,
7 recently I spoke at the rally at the middle school in
8 D20 who changed their admissions policy to audition
9 instead end of a choice model.

10 By doing so, they took away the only D75 middle
11 school program in Sunset Park. Decisions like these
12 with no community engagement is why students like me
13 had to travel two hours a day to get to programs.
14 D75 students are not broken. Students, we are smart.
15 We are talented and we should not be treated like
16 garbage.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

18 LUCAS HEALY: That needs to be shuttled out of
19 the communities we live. Special Education should
20 not be afraid- be an afterthought. We need proper
21 supports like reliable busing, safety, after school
22 programs and access to programs in our neighborhoods.
23 Invest in our future because it's the right thing to
24 do. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and sorry, next,
3 okay sorry, screen froze. Next, we will hear from
4 Lana Bilic from Children's Aid.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 LANA BILIC: Thank you to Chair Joseph and the
7 Education Committee for the chance to testify on
8 behalf of Children's Aid today. Children's Aid is a
9 multiservice human service agency positioned
10 throughout childhood to empower young people to
11 succeed. They work with 50,000 youth and families in
12 Harlem, Washington Heights, South Bronx, Staten
13 Island and Brooklyn.

14 In my written testimony I've included more
15 recommendations including on early childhood
16 education but today I want to talk about community
17 schools. An evidence based initiative in New York
18 City which works like this. CBO's like Children's
19 Aid develop significant partnerships with DOE schools
20 and coordinate resources so schools can act as
21 community hubs that offer holistic integrated
22 services that organize the school around the needs of
23 the whole child. In a ran report in 2020, New York
24 City community schools are found to have positive
25 impacts on students.

1
2 For over 25 years, Children's Aid has partnered
3 in community schools and today, we partner with 20
4 schools where we integrate expanded learning
5 programs, health and mental health services, family
6 engagement and more into the school building. It's
7 very exciting the city is poised to expand the
8 initiative which is the largest in the country right
9 now from 267 to 416 schools using American Rescue
10 Plan federal stimulus but the city has yet to develop
11 the sustainable funding solution for community
12 schools. Federal stimulus will sustain them for now
13 but this funding will be cut in half in FY25 and then
14 go away completely in FY26 leaving a gap of around
15 \$60 million.

16 We recommend planning for these fiscal cliffs now
17 just as Chair Joseph discussed earlier to support the
18 long-term existence of this strategy. A strategy of
19 equitably and sustainably investing in communities.
20 We really believe that community schools are a way of
21 leveling the playing field for all students and a
22 strategy to help students recover from the last few
23 years because it's not only a mental health strategy
24 or an academic strategy or an education equity
25 strategy, it is all of those things and more.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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LANA BILIC: Children look forward to continuing to partner with city and community schools for years to come. Thank you so much.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will turn to Dr. Brenda Triplett.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

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DR. BRENDA TRIPLET: Okay, yes, good afternoon everyone. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak. My name is Dr. Brenda Triplett and I'd like to speak on the importance of the DOE team focused exclusively on youth in foster care.

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So, uniquely, uhm, just as our Chair, our Madam Chair Joseph, I come to you this afternoon bringing many different perspectives. First, I am a retired public school educator administrator, approximately 35 years of service. Second, I proudly served as a foster parent for several years and finally, I now serve as the educational director at one of the largest and oldest child welfare agencies in New York City Children's Aid. So, my view is through many different lens. A few years back, when I first started working at Children's Aid after retiring, I began to realize just how much I didn't know about

1
2 youth in the foster care system, despite having spent
3 over three decades in public education.

4 As a matter of fact, the more I interacted with
5 the DOE faculty and staff in my new role as
6 educational advocate, the more apparent it became
7 that there is an overall lack of knowledge on the
8 part of the DOE concerning the legal rights of this
9 population of students. The rights of their
10 biological parents and importantly, the impact of
11 trauma on their ability to succeed in school.

12 So, although there are mandates including Every
13 Student Succeeds Act and the Chancellors regs which
14 clearly outlines specific protections for youth in
15 foster care, many school leaders and I speak from
16 experience, conversations I had this weekend with
17 sitting school principals, they are unaware of these
18 regs and the -

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 DR. BRENDA TRIPLETT: And they do not enforce
21 them. So, it's critical then that the schools have
22 access to reliable accurate timely culturally
23 sensitive guidance since the majority of the
24 referrals come from schools. So, I am just asking
25 that the hiring freeze be lifted so that that team

1
2 can be put in place as soon as possible. Thank you
3 for the time.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
5 turn to Lennia Clark.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 LENNIA CLARK: Thank you Chair Joseph and the
8 members of the Committee for the opportunity to offer
9 testimony. I'm the Director of the Early Care and
10 Education Institute at the Committee for Hispanic
11 Children and Families, a nonprofit organization with
12 40-years of history of combining education, capacity
13 building and advocacy to strengthen the support
14 system and continuum of learning for children from
15 birth to school age. We're submitting more testimony
16 written today but I'll be touching on some of the
17 most important points.

18 CACF continues to focus our advocacy on creating
19 safe and supportive education spaces for all students
20 to thrive. We know the significant value of
21 connecting CBO partners with schools to offer
22 culturally and linguistically responsive wrap around
23 services to meet family student needs. Each year we
24 advocate for increased investments in programs that
25 build and strengthen CBO partnerships with schools.

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This includes expansion of city funded out of school time programs to ensure universal access, smart and sustainable investments in the Community School Initiative to ensure long-term sustainability and growth for these services and in program of city partnership practices with the CBO partners so that they and their staff are sustainable and able to thrive as they deliver critical services. An additional ask, we would like to uplift is the NYIC education collaboratives called to fund the \$21 million transfer school pilot program to particularly build access for recently arrived older immigrant students to support transfer schools outside of Manhattan.

CACF continues to support the early care and education sector through our state contracted work as part of New York City's job care research and referral consortium and the Family and Childcare Network in the Bronx. We're excited that the call for universal childcare is growing across state and city. It is critical that the city immediately addresses the systemic flaws that will impede our ability to exercise a universal system and that are

1
2 having catastrophic impacts on the childcare sector
3 and on families in need of quality care.

4 A particular concern are the –

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 LENNIA CLARK: Under compassing and lack of
7 benefits for childcare providers and staff. Delays
8 in eligibility that are further stagnating family
9 connections to care providers and their ability to
10 fully return to the workplace and the inequities
11 established in the DOE run birth to five system for
12 network. Childcare providers and non-DOE providers
13 which bring to resources.

14 We continue to support the City's First Reader
15 Initiative, which provides research driven, early
16 leadership program to more than one million children,
17 parents, caregivers, and providers and educators in
18 New York City to ensure school readiness and
19 educational success. Thank you for the opportunity
20 to present testimony.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for testifying and
22 next, we will turn to Kaveri Sengupta.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 KAVERI SENGUPTA: Good afternoon, my name is
25 Kaveri Sengupta, I am the Senior Policy Coordinator

1
2 for Education at the Coalition for Asian American
3 Children and Families or CACF. Thank you so much to
4 Chair Joseph and member of the Committee on Education
5 for giving us this opportunity to testify.

6 CACF is the nations only pan-Asian children and
7 families advocacy organization and leads the fight
8 for improved and equitable policy systems funding and
9 services. Our coalition is constantly fighting the
10 harmful impacts of the model minority myth, which
11 prevents our needs from being recognized and
12 understood.

13 AAPI students comprise 16.2 percent of the New
14 York City's student population, attend over 95
15 percent of our public schools, make up almost one in
16 four English Language Learners and over 15,000 have
17 an IEP. A critical way that elected officials in DOE
18 can help dismantle the model minority myth and
19 address the enormous disruption to AAPI students
20 education, heighten mental health challenges. And I
21 want to thank Council Member Hanif for bringing this
22 up, ongoing fears regarding racism is by enacting
23 policies in the budget that are truly supportive of
24 our students.
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2 We denounce the cuts in funding to the New York
3 City education system outlined in the Mayor's
4 Preliminary Budget and strongly believe that due to
5 the need to address long term inequities exacerbated
6 by the pandemic, our students and families need more
7 investment than ever.

8 City Council must ensure sufficient funding and
9 accountability in the FY23 budget for the DOE to
10 invest in and sustain the following multi-pronged
11 policies, which will support API students and
12 families, especially those who struggle the most.

13 Firstly, collecting and making transparent
14 disaggregated data by ethnic group to target services
15 to long underserved communities beginning by updating
16 enrollment forms to ask respondents about ethnicity
17 in the upcoming school year.

18 Secondly, thoughtfully engaging stakeholders and
19 community members and comprehensively rolling out the
20 universal mosaic curriculum as part of the holistic
21 investment in culturally responsive standing
22 education as well as infusing curriculum materials
23 covering API's.

24 Hiring more bilingual and culturally responsive
25 and culturally humble guidance counselors, social

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2 workers and mental health staff, ELLS in particular,
3 should be able to access these services in their home
4 languages. Expanding community schools into harder
5 to reach AAPI communities and developing partnerships
6 with AAPI led and serving CBO's beyond the current
7 organizational partners both within and outside of
8 the community schools model which are unable to cover
9 all the need. Providing additional support for ELLs
10 such as ESL and bilingual teachers to work with
11 students after school. Addressing their under
12 referral of API students at Special Education
13 Services and baselining \$6 million investment in
14 language access infrastructure. Thank you so much.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and excuse me, the
16 next panel that we will hear from is Madeline Borelli
17 Teachers Unite, Caitlin Delphin Teachers Unite,
18 Lauren Clavin Teachers Unite, Edward Curtis and
19 Jessica Escobar. We'll first turn to Madeline
20 Borelli.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 MADELINE BORELLI: Good afternoon. My name is
23 Madeline Borelli, I'm a public school parent and a
24 Special Education Teacher in District 21. I'm also a
25 member of Teachers Unite.

1
2 I am testifying today to urge you to pass an
3 Education Budget that no longer invests in policing
4 but one that instead invests money back into our
5 programs for our school communities and into
6 positions that create restorative networks of safety.

7 We have seen historically that police and adults
8 acting as police have targeted, harassed and hurt
9 Black and Brown students, queer students and
10 neurodivergent students. This statement is supported
11 by the fact that these groups of students make up the
12 largest percentages of school suspensions and
13 arrests.

14 The city needs to stop funding policing and
15 surveillance of our young people and instead, invest
16 the money into evidence based positions and programs
17 that address students physical, emotional and mental
18 needs. We need a budget that gives our schools the
19 resources necessary to build safety and respond to
20 conflict through community building, de-escalation
21 and transformative justice.

22 In my years in the DOE, I've seen multiple
23 instances where the culture of policing has pushed
24 students in crisis out of our schools. The policing
25 push out pipeline does nothing to address the many

1
2 issues facing our youth in our schools. I've had
3 students removed from my classroom and had their
4 learning interrupted because a conflict that could
5 have been easily solved through community facilitated
6 restorative circles.

7 So, my ask today is that the budget should
8 include the hiring of 500 community members into
9 supported positions based on need. It's this hiring
10 of community members in our schools that build
11 networks of support and helps to connect our students
12 and their families to the school community.

13 In my experience, these communities held
14 positions create safety in our schools and not
15 policing. I think schools should be a place where
16 students feel seen and represented and not
17 surveilled. So, I urge the City Council to pass a
18 budget, an Education budget that divests from
19 policing and invests in the structures and supports
20 that our schools actually need. Thank you all for
21 your time.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
23 turn to Caitlin Delphin.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.
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1
2 CAITLIN DELPHIN: Hi, I'm Caitlin Delphin, I am a
3 Special Ed Teacher in Brooklyn in a Brooklyn High
4 School and I today want to just talk a little bit
5 about my experience with the school this year.

6 Although we're back in school this year, which is
7 really wonderful in my opinion, uhm, we are currently
8 experiencing the least stable school year that I've
9 experienced in my eight years of teaching. Our
10 students need more support. Our staff needs more
11 support and one way that we can do this is by hiring
12 more school staff and more counselors to support our
13 students through these times.

14 My students are extremely eager to learn and they
15 are doing really well in classroom environments where
16 we have some structure and some ability to have some
17 norms and roles in place. However, when our students
18 are in unstructured environments this year because it
19 has been so long since they've been there, there are
20 added challenges. And these challenges are often
21 resulting in added conflict.

22 Before the pandemic, it had been years since
23 there had been a fight at my school and now it is
24 unfortunately this year a regular occurrence. And
25 something that really concerns me is that this is

1
2 going to be used as an excuse or a reason to continue
3 to add police to our schools, rather than the support
4 that students need in order to address the root
5 causes of these issues.

6 Uhm, and I really don't want to see this being
7 used as a cycle to perpetuate policing in our
8 schools. Instead, what we need is support. We need
9 more counselors. We need more special ed teachers
10 and more ENL teachers and more culturally responsive
11 teaching in order to keep our students in class
12 engaged in learning. They don't need to be policed
13 or forced out and further traumatized in that way.
14 Instead we need to add community resources and we
15 need to support these ideas with the budget and not
16 just with our words, so that we're really putting our
17 money behind our mouth. And you know, I look forward
18 to a time in New York City public schools when we do
19 have that support that we need.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 CAITLIN DELPHIN: And that our students are
22 getting what they deserve. Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
24 turn to Lauren Clavin.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

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2 LAUREN CLAVIN: Good afternoon. My name is
3 Lauren Clavin. I am a Public School Parent in
4 District 28 in Queens and I want to thank Chair
5 Joseph for holding this hearing. We actually met
6 last week. We were with some students who were
7 sharing their demand for police free schools and you
8 let us know that you were aligned with their goals
9 because of your many years of experiences as a public
10 school educator.

11 So, I really look forward to seeing you fight for
12 the dignity and emotional and physical safety of our
13 young people.

14 To the Council Members that are still on this
15 call, I hope you are taking note of what our students
16 have shared today because this Committee exists to
17 support their needs and they all took the time to be
18 here when you know they could be studying or hanging
19 out with their friends but they came here to let you
20 know that they need police free schools.

21 They need the nearly half a billion dollars that
22 is currently being spent on school policing to be
23 diverted to restorative justice programs. To
24 bilingual and culturally responsive social workers,
25 guidance counselors, nurses, things that actually

1
2 keep them healthy and safe so that they can learn and
3 thrive. This is what they need. This is what they
4 deserve. This is what they are demanding. As a
5 parent, this what I am demanding as well.

6 You know I heard several Council Members express
7 that schools in their districts that they visited
8 look more like prisons than institutions of learning.
9 And that's not going to change if this budget is
10 implemented in the way that it's written.

11 So, uhm, I need you to listen to our youth and
12 please don't let them down. I also want to say that
13 I am also a foster parent for many years and I'm glad
14 that the needs of that special population came up in
15 conversation today. But I want to echo what some
16 others have said.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

18 LAUREN CLAVIN: Other foster care advocates said
19 here today. The needs of those kids are not
20 reflected in this budget either. Thank you very much
21 for the time.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
23 to Edward Curtis.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.
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1
2 EDWARD CURTIS: Good afternoon. My name is
3 Edward Curtis. I am a mathematics for a secondary
4 education student at the Borough of Manhattan
5 Community College. I'm here today to urge you to
6 pass a budget that includes \$75 million to hire 500
7 new social workers. I have been the parent of two
8 children in New York City Schools. I am a Lawyer who
9 worked for 25 years in the New York State Attorney
10 General's Office. I conducted hearings at State
11 psychiatric centers. I also worked for MFY Legal
12 Services, which is now MFJ Legal Services in its
13 mental health law project representing New Yorkers
14 with mental illness living in the community.

15 I am concerned about the mental health and
16 emotional wellbeing of New York City students. New
17 York City offers a lot of opportunities. However,
18 New York City also offers a lot of experiences that
19 if left unexamined can affect an adolescents emotions
20 and intellectual development for years to come.

21 We have all been adolescents and we have known
22 adolescents. We all remember our emotional
23 experiences and the impulses we have sometimes had as
24 a result. I have lived in New York City since 1988
25

1
2 and I understand why and how police officers are such
3 a presence in the schools.

4 In my experience, social workers as compared to
5 police officers are an excellent resource with a
6 different set of tools to offer adolescents. We are
7 trying to understand what is happening to them and
8 determine what would be appropriate responses. A
9 budget that includes additional funding for social
10 workers would help the mental wellbeing of New York
11 City students and New York City in general for years
12 to come. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and I do not see
14 Jessica on the Zoom any longer, so we will turn to
15 our next panel. We have two students. We have Zemias
16 Gene from the Ya-Ya Network and Isabelle Aria from
17 Teachers Unite. So, we will first turn to Zemias
18 Gene.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 ZEMIA GENE: Hi, hello, my name is Zemias. Uhm,
21 I'm a Youth Organizer under the Ya-Ya Committee and
22 I'm one of many concerned and worried students. We
23 are still in the middle of a pandemic.

24 As we're still in the middle of a pandemic, we're
25 returning to in class learning has not only been

1
2 difficult but it has put a huge mental strain on the
3 mental health of many young children in academia.
4 This is one of the most stressful times for young
5 children of today and the last thing that any student
6 needs is to fill more confined and policed.

7 As others on the panel has shared today, the need
8 for more quality counseling support and mental health
9 resources is not only important, it is crucial.
10 Having more divesting in programs that support
11 policing is also very important and putting more
12 money and support into programs that are there for
13 students that affect their mental health is also very
14 important.

15 As many have shared on this panel, the
16 implementing more policing does not help this matter,
17 it only makes it worse. Where students feel that
18 they cannot even share their issues or you know
19 what's happening in their lives, as this has been
20 like, you know one of the craziest rows of years yet
21 to come. I believe that it is very important that we
22 all focus on what is really going to help young
23 students of today, and I do not believe it is
24 policing. Thank you very much.
25

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, will turn
3 to Isabella Aria.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 ISABELLA ARIA: Hi, I'm Isabella, an organizer
6 from Ya-Ya Network and I'm here today in support of a
7 budget that reflects restorative justice practices
8 and specifically the \$5 million baseline funding for
9 a mental health continuum.

10 Restorative justice scenes have a lot of parts
11 but what it really comes down to is human decency.
12 It's teaching our community the quality of going
13 through life with kindness. It is ethical and fair
14 and understanding. It's something – it is talking to
15 others and practicing conflict out of solution, de-
16 escalation and compromise. It's kind of like
17 kindergarten all over again, except we continue to
18 teach these practices and values throughout the
19 school experience.

20 The time around middle school and high school is
21 when we start to question our world and the realest
22 thing I could tell you about this time is people go
23 through shit. Students go through crisis and the
24 majority of the time children just need someone to
25 hear them. I was lucky enough to have parents that

1
2 are incredibly intelligent and I would go to them
3 with my problems I had but I can only really take
4 their advise but that didn't stop me from falling to
5 bad friend groups, getting into trouble and making
6 enemies and eventually having ACS course opened on my
7 family because my middle school decided to call the
8 cops on my family instead of asking me what's wrong.

9 To this day, I still don't know what teacher
10 called the cops on to come to knocking on my door to
11 accuse my father of physical abuse. All I know is
12 that it was standard procedure.

13 An ACS case in New York is mandated to stay open
14 for at least two months, mine stayed open for six. I
15 love my father. I've never accused him of physical
16 abuse but this teacher decided they knew better about
17 my own home life and ran straight to the cops.

18 During that period of time, I wasn't allowed to
19 leave my house except to go to school on court days.
20 I was really stressed all the time. I felt an
21 incredible amount of guilt for being the reason that
22 my father got arrested and I was going through really
23 a depression. It was a crisis for everyone in my
24 family and I still wonder how it would have played
25

1
2 out differently if standard procedure was checking up
3 on students instead of call the cops on them.

4 This is just one of the many stories I know where
5 mental and emotional support would have completely
6 changed the course of the students story.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 ISABELLE ARIA: Lynn Schulman, you are City
9 Council Representative and seeing that you are on the
10 Education Committee, I don't think it's right that
11 you say that you care about the students. I urge you
12 to represent the person in the story that comforts
13 the child going through a hard time. Be the student
14 support and give the budget \$5 million baseline for
15 the continuum and be a decent human that continues
16 the needs of students so that this funding can expand
17 to \$15 million by 2024. Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next panel
19 that we will hear from will be Dante Bravo United
20 Neighborhood Houses, Jamie Hastings Arthur Miller
21 Foundation, Fabiola Toribio Catholic Guardian
22 Services, Liza Schwartzwald New York Immigration
23 Coalition and Michael De Vito Jr. NYCID. We'll first
24 start with Dante Bravo.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Dante, you are unmuted and
3 you are able to start your testimony. Oh, Dante, we
4 can't hear you. Let me go to the next person and I
5 will turn back to you. You may need to do something
6 with your settings but we can't hear anything coming
7 out. So, we'll turn to Jamie Hastings and then we'll
8 go back to Dante.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 JAMIE HASTINGS: Thank you. My name is Jamie
11 Hastings and I am the Executive Director of the
12 Arthur Miller Foundation, a nonprofit organization
13 that honors the legacy of the American playwright
14 Arthur Miller and his New York City public school
15 education by supporting theater teachers. Theater
16 education is social emotional learning. Theater
17 education fosters collaboration, empathy, and gives
18 students a safe space to find their voice while
19 increasing student attendance and engagement.

20 78 NYC DOE theater teachers are part of the AMF
21 Fellows program in partnership with the Office of
22 Arts and Special Projects. Over the course of three
23 years, theater teachers receive over \$30,000 in
24 dedicated support to build sustainable in school
25 theater programs through mentorship, cultural partner

1
2 residencies, classroom materials, Broadway tickets
3 for students and ongoing professional development.

4 The program reaches nearly 40,000 students in all
5 five boroughs of New York City. Not only are we
6 supporting in school theater education programs and
7 certified theater teachers but we're investing in the
8 New York City cultural economy through partnerships
9 with eight organizations and their teaching artists.

10 The most recent arts in schools report showed
11 that only 21 percent of DOE schools has a certified
12 theater teacher. I am here to request that any
13 budget cuts we face do not affect DOE theater
14 teachers, approximately 200 of them, who are already
15 severely underrepresented throughout New York City
16 when compared to other subject areas and arts
17 disciplines. We're grateful for the \$70 million
18 historic investment in arts education but that
19 funding was a temporary one year increase. We need
20 your help for arts education to have an equitable
21 seat at the table. Please consider reinstating that
22 funding for next school year.

23 As we look to the future together, we'll continue
24 providing support for our DOE theater teachers and
25 students. After all, that's what a community is for

1
2 but to do our part, we must ensure that the arts
3 office and arts education infrastructure are not lost
4 and that the DOE is able to continue hiring certified
5 arts teachers being that they are -

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 JAMIE HASTINGS: So disproportionately
8 represented. Together we can foster the students of
9 today to become the forward thinking creative
10 citizens and problem solvers of tomorrow, but we
11 cannot lose the progress that's been made to this
12 point when we still have such a long way to go.
13 Please help us ensure that theater education is
14 prioritized and considered a right not a privilege.
15 Thank you Chair Joseph and the Committee on Education
16 for the opportunity to testify today. We're very
17 grateful.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We'll go back to
19 Dante and see if we can get -

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 DANTE BRAVO: Can you hear me?

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Now we can.

23 DANTE BRAVO: Perfect, thank you so much.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sure.
25

1
2 DANTE BRAVO: Thank you Chair Joseph and members
3 of the New York City Council for the opportunity to
4 testify. My name is Dante Bravo and I'm a Youth
5 Policy Analyst over at United Neighborhood Houses,
6 UNH in particular is a policy organization
7 representing 45 neighborhood settlement houses that
8 reach 765,000 New Yorkers from all walks of life.

9 In particular, UNH's recommendations include
10 investing in early childhood education to stabilize
11 the larger system for intentional targeted expansion
12 to reach the demand across the city. This includes
13 reorganizing the enrollment system to allow for CBO's
14 to enroll families directly into their programs.
15 Investing in the Department of Mental Health and
16 Health and Mental Health Hygiene to clear the backlog
17 on comprehensive background checks that are slowing
18 down the hiring process and expediting the family
19 income verification process at the Human Resources
20 Administration, so that families receiving subsidized
21 care can have timely access to their ideal care.

22 We also call for baselining the mental health
23 programs to support positive school climates and
24 bolstering academic achievement, specifically with
25 investing in the expansion and implementation of

1
2 restorative justice programs of about \$118 million to
3 bring this model to 500 schools in FY2023 with the
4 ultimate goal of investing \$225 million for full
5 implementation in all New York City schools by
6 FY2028. We also call on the city to recognize the
7 value of CBO school partnerships by finding
8 sustainable funding sources for programs such as the
9 Community Schools Initiative and the Learning to Work
10 program.

11 Community Schools in particular will need an
12 additional baseline \$60.3 million in funding after
13 the American Rescue Plan funding drops off in FY25
14 and UNH also urges the city to ensure that
15 investments in the learning to work program are fully
16 baselined at \$42.1 million and remain available for
17 students and their families well past Fiscal Year
18 2025.

19 We urge the Council to emphasize the needs of
20 human service workers in the budget negotiations and
21 thank you for your time.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
23 turn to Fabiola Toribio.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.
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2 FABIOLA TORIBIO: Hi, good afternoon. My name is
3 Fabiola Toribio and I'm the Assistant Executive
4 Director of Family Permanency Services at Catholic
5 Guardian Services. We are one of 26 ACS contracted
6 foster care agency in New York City providing foster
7 care services to over 7,500 children in the city.
8 And today, I'm here to encourage the implementation
9 of DOE team focus on student in foster care.

10 The city has long overlooked the educational
11 needs of students in foster care and it's time to
12 move forward with the plans to hire a small team
13 focus a student in foster care and that includes
14 funding in the budget to guarantee transportation for
15 those students.

16 Students in foster care who are
17 disproportionately Black and Hispanic come from the
18 city's poorest communities, are amongst the most
19 likely to repeat a grade, be chronically absent or
20 leave high school without a diploma. Last year, only
21 43 percent of students in foster care graduated high
22 school in four years. Despite the obvious need
23 currently, there is no single person at DOE focused
24 full time on meeting the needs of student in foster
25 care. The result is that various education for this

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2 population remains unaddressed and opportunity for
3 successful troubleshooting, interagency coordination
4 and policy change are wasted.

5 Today, we heard Chancellor Banks talk about the
6 specialized team in DOE to provide services to
7 students in foster care. DOE is receiving an
8 increase in state and federal funding. There is no
9 reason to impose a hiring freeze on addition assigned
10 to support one of the most marginalized groups of
11 students.

12 DOE must also ensure that every student in foster
13 care gets to school. Federal and state law requires
14 the city to provide transportation to students in
15 foster care so that they can stay in their original
16 schools.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

18 FABIOLA TORIBIO: We ask the City Council to
19 ensure that the budget include \$5 million for DOE to
20 provide bus service or other door to door
21 transportation to the relatively small number of
22 students in foster care who need to maintain school
23 stability.

24 I thank you for allowing me time to do my
25 testimony today. Thank you.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
3 turn to Liza Schwartzwald.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 LIZA SCHWARTZWALD: Great, thank you. I'm Liza
6 Schwartzwald from the New York Immigration Coalition.
7 This year, New York City must address a longstanding
8 injustice that was deeply exacerbated during the
9 pandemic. Quality public school programs are
10 inaccessible for thousands of immigrant youth and
11 families. For decades, far too many immigrants have
12 not been able to enroll in, let alone find quality
13 programs. The city must address this through two
14 proven initiatives.

15 First, we request a \$2.1 million initial
16 investment for a transfer school pilot program to
17 increase access for newly arrived high school aged
18 immigrants. A 2022 migration policy analysis found
19 nearly 4,000 new comer immigrant youth who are 14-21
20 years old who were not enrolled in school and did not
21 have a high school diploma. Nearly 90 percent of
22 these youth are 16-21, which is the toughest age
23 range to find an adequate placement, as they have
24 little time to learn English and fulfill graduation
25 requirements before they age out.

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2 Our proposal will create quality programs for
3 them and address the fact that immigrant youth are
4 dropping out now at a rate almost five times that of
5 their Native English speaking peers. By identifying
6 best practices that can be replicated, the pilot will
7 test a model that schools can follow to better serve
8 new comer immigrant needs.

9 Second, the city should invest \$4 million to
10 expand our Life project to support 20 community based
11 organizations across the five boroughs to provide
12 culturally responsive and linguistically diverse
13 outreach, application and enrollment support,
14 referral services and early intervention support to
15 immigrant families of three and four years old's.
16 The majority of the 156,000 parents of zero to four
17 year old's who are limited English proficient in New
18 York City also lack access to a computer or internet
19 and need robust community-based engagement and
20 supports to learn about and enroll in 3K and Pre-K
21 programs. Our life project has successfully helped
22 over 400 immigrant families enroll in Pre-K and 3K by
23 providing outreach, counseling and referral services
24 to eligible families.

1
2 Our success is demonstrated by the fact that
3 despite a drop in city enrollment during the
4 pandemic, life project partners saw no drop in
5 enrollment within the families we assisted. And four
6 out of the five families said they could –

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 LIZA SCHWARTZWALD: They could not have applied
9 without assistance.

10 Finally, New York City must reject across the
11 board of cuts and hiring freezes and instead employ
12 unprecedented funding streams from the state and
13 federal stimulus to invest in programs that replicate
14 success and increase access for immigrants. Thank
15 you for the opportunity to testify.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and finally, we'll
17 turn to Michael De Vito Jr. from NYCID.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 MICHAEL DE VITO JR. Good day Council Members.
20 Congratulations to Chair Joseph and to the new
21 Council Members. Brother Malcom, you're amazing.
22 I'm Michael De Vito from New York Center of Personal
23 Development. We are a member of the Learning to Work
24 Coalition and we represent at Promise Youth who are
25 enrolled in transfer schools and young adult borough

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2 centers across the city. First, I want to thank
3 everyone and anyone who had taken part in ensuring
4 that there were no large cuts to our programs in
5 FY23. We absolutely needed some room to breath.

6 A while back I reported to this Committee and to
7 many others that partnerships with LTW and CBO's like
8 NYSID, have saved the city billions of dollars.
9 Here's a figure for you. \$325,000, that is the net
10 gain to our city that was presented in 2009 by the
11 Northeastern University and the Community for
12 Services Society.

13 Simply helping one low scaled New Yorker earn a
14 high school degree or equivalency is worth \$325,000
15 to our city. In the last 20-years, LTW has helped
16 graduate more than 15,000 New Yorkers. That is \$4.9
17 billion of net benefit to our city. As you move
18 forward you must remember this number because there
19 is a tsunami of young people that are in need right
20 now and in order for us to support them, we need a
21 real commitment from you all.

22 LTW is currently funded with tax levy dollars.
23 The only reason why we are not on the chopping block
24 is because there was an injection of \$30 million of
25 stimulus money that will be set to expire in 2025.

1
2 We are constantly on that chopping block and now is
3 not the time to leave us with what if's.

4 What we are asking for is sustainable streams of
5 funding for the learning to work programs citywide.
6 It is \$42.1 million. Remember, investing means
7 saving billions. It is not news to anyone of you
8 that the CBO's do the heavy lifting of New York City.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 MICHAEL DE VITO JR. Given - I'll skip to the
11 end. Last final thought. We all understand how
12 important it is to invest in the infrastructure of
13 our roads and bridges and waterways. I ask you now
14 to ensure that we invest in the infrastructure that
15 serves our most vulnerable. Remember in the end, it
16 will save us billions. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next panel
18 what we will hear from Savannah Dockery, Alyssa
19 Figueroa Urban Youth Collaborative, Tanisha Grant
20 Parent Supporting Parents New York, Caroline O'Neill
21 Generation Citizen and Katherine Hoy AHRC New York
22 City. We'll first turn to Savannah Dockery.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 SAVANNAH DOCKERY: Hi, my name is Savannah and
25 I'm with the IS Action Committee and as a student

1
2 still currently attending high school, I have a few
3 things to say but I'll keep it short. Give us more
4 mental health support. Why is it that we only have
5 one to three guidance counselors and maybe three to
6 five people within the school designated to help us
7 with anything we maybe going through for hundreds of
8 kids. Realistically that's not a bill for your
9 normal school day because what if ten kids have
10 something they need to talk about and everyone
11 designated for that is already occupied. Safety
12 isn't all about having police surrounding us. It
13 could be making one feel comfortable in the
14 environment they constantly have to be in. If no one
15 was listening, I hope the representative in my
16 district how DO Stevens was. Your voice could help
17 our students make a change and give us the money we
18 need to make a difference. Thank you. That will be
19 all.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
21 hear from Alyssa Figueroa.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 ALYSSA FIGUEROA: Hi, my name is Alyssa Figueroa
24 and I am the Coalition Coordinator of the Urban Youth
25 Collaborative, a student led coalition of New York

1
2 City youth organizing groups fighting to end the
3 school to prison and deportation pipeline. Today, I
4 want to stress that the safest schools are not the
5 most policed. They are the most resourced. In fact,
6 policing makes schools less safe especially for
7 students of color.

8 In New York City, Black and Latinx students
9 represent 91 percent of all arrests despite being 66
10 percent of the student population. One out of five
11 students handcuffed is for a mental health crisis.
12 Last quarter, the youngest person restrained was a
13 six year old Black girl experiencing a mental health
14 crisis. This is what New York City is spending more
15 than \$400 million on.

16 New York City spends more on school policing than
17 any city in the country by far. Los Angeles has more
18 than half of New York City student population but
19 spends nine times less than we do on school policing.
20 Our counselor and social worker to student ratios are
21 about one to 400. Our cop to student ratio is one to
22 180. Now, is the time for the Education Committee
23 members to fight for a budget that New York City
24 students deserve. We demand you include the
25 following in your budget response to the Mayor:

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2 Eliminate the more than \$400 million school policing
3 budget and please note that Mayor Adams preliminary
4 budget allows for the hiring of nearly 1,000 new
5 school cops.

6 New York City must not hire a single new school
7 cop. Eliminate funding for youth coordination
8 officers. Students need mentorship from those
9 trained to support them, not from police. Eliminate
10 funding for any new student scanning equipment Mayor
11 Adams wants to put in schools. Students don't need
12 anymore money invested in their criminalization.
13 Instead, invest \$75 million in restorative justice
14 coordinators, \$45 million in restorative practices.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 ALYSSA FIGUEROA: \$75 million in school
17 counselors, \$75 million in social workers. \$75
18 million in para professionals, youth advocates and
19 parent coordinators and baseline \$5 million for the
20 mental health continuum. Now is the time for the
21 city to divest from its racist, harmful and costly
22 school policing system and invest in school support
23 staff and practices that students have been calling
24 for for decades. I am calling on the Council Members
25 on this Education Committee to stay on and to listen

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2 to students who will be testifying around 4:30 p.m.
3 today. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
5 to Tanesha Grant.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 TANESHA GRANT: Hello Chair Joseph. It is nice
8 to see you at the Chair of this Committee. I am
9 Tanesha Grant. I represent the community-based
10 organizations that don't get funded but do major work
11 in the community.

12 I speak to that demographic. I also represent
13 impacted children, since I have been impacted by the
14 Child Welfare System and the Public Education System
15 since the day I was born. It is very triggering for
16 me to sit on here Chair Joseph and listen to a lot of
17 the things that people have to say. Like Children
18 Aid Society who handled my closed adoption and who I
19 am still fighting to see my original birth
20 certificate.

21 So, believe me when it rings hallow to me when I
22 hear Chancellors talk about how they have inherited
23 you know the last Administrations problems over and
24 over again. My oldest daughter is 28 years old. As
25 an impacted child by not only the Child Welfare

1
2 System but the Public Education System, when I hear
3 people say that our schools look like prisons. Where
4 I hear SCA get up here and say you know that they are
5 doing this and they are doing that and as an x-CEC
6 member, I remember being flabbergasted at all the
7 requests that my counselor put in and work that had
8 never been done. We are based in Harlem. When our
9 children don't have a playground. They have no area
10 to play in and this is something that has happened
11 for generational, generations. It becomes the
12 normal.

13 So, I am demanding on the behalf of my community
14 and on behalf of children like myself that are still
15 children and that children like myself that are
16 adults. That the money be put into everything that
17 we need for education and it be used wisely.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

19 TANESHA GRANT: And responsibly. Where things
20 start to happen to impact our children and our public
21 education system for the better. I'm tired of seeing
22 everyone pass the buck because when we pass the buck,
23 our children are growing into adults and it's more
24 children in generations being harmed. Thank you.

25

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
3 turn to Carolyn O'Neill.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 CAROLYN O'NEILL: Thank you and good afternoon.
6 My name is Carolyn O'Neill, I'm the Program Director
7 at Generation Citizen New York. Last year,
8 Generation Citizen's served over 1,700 students in 70
9 classrooms through our Action Civics curriculum. In
10 which secondary school students apply social studies
11 learning to the real world by studying and more
12 importantly advocating for an issue of importance in
13 their communities.

14 I'll give an example that's relevant to much of
15 what has been discussed on today's hearing. 10th
16 grade students at the new Visions High School for the
17 Humanities in Rockaway Park in Queens, agreed through
18 our program that they wanted to take collective
19 action on the metal detectors in their school
20 building.

21 The daily security checks made them in their own
22 words, feel uncomfortable, angry and embarrassed and
23 negatively impacted their school culture. Through
24 research they learned that schools with a majority of
25 Black and Brown population are significantly more

1
2 likely to have metal detectors and to take action,
3 they surveyed fellow students, spoke with school
4 leadership and security guards and contacted their
5 superintendent to ask for the changes they wanted.

6 This experience gave them a glimpse into how
7 government works and how it can work for them. In
8 the current Fiscal Year, Generation Citizen has
9 embarked on an ambitious programmatic expansion from
10 70 classes to at least 170 classrooms serving more
11 than 4,000 students.

12 We are thankful for the Council's \$500,000
13 investment this year in our programming through the
14 Civics Education and City Schools Initiative. In
15 Fiscal Year 2023, we are seeking an increase of
16 \$100,000 to support our major expansion of
17 programming in New York City.

18 We've been able to grow in this challenging
19 school year because our work supports students
20 social, emotional learning and buttress's their
21 connection to one another in their communities, as
22 well as contributes to culturally responsive and
23 sustaining education practices.

24 We are incredibly thankful for the City Council's
25 renewed funding –

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

CAROLYN O'NEILL: And we hope to continue partnering with the Council and the Department of Youth and Community Development to bring civics education to more schools. Thank you and please see our submitted written testimony for more information.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll turn to Katherine Hoy from AHRC New York City.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

KATHERINE HOY: Good afternoon Chair Joseph and members of the Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Katherine Hoy and I am the Director of Advocacy Services at AHRC New York City and a member of the Arise Coalition. For 74 years AHRC has supported people of intellectual and developmental disabilities and their family members here in New York. AHRC created some of the first education programs for students with disabilities.

Programs which became early models for DOE Special Education Services. Today, our agency serves more than 15,000 New Yorkers with disabilities throughout the life course. The Education Advocacy Program, which I oversee provides direct services and

1
2 guidance to hundreds of students with lifelong
3 disabilities and their families each year.

4 Our recommendation for the Fiscal Year 2023
5 Budget is to include \$30 million for preschool
6 special education teachers and staff of 4410's and
7 CBO's on par with their 12-month DOE counterparts and
8 to commit to salary parity now.

9 My colleagues spoke in detail about the technical
10 aspects of the proposed contract enhancement. I'd
11 like to speak to you from the heart about the
12 experiences of families and children I'm working with
13 who are bearing the brunt of an inequitable system.
14 The DOE is responsible for the evaluation and
15 placement of preschool children with disabilities.

16 When a child is placed, families have a right to
17 expect high quality instruction from highly trained
18 teachers and staff to just speech and occupational
19 therapists. Instead, due to extreme pay disparities
20 and resulting high turnover, many children have no
21 placement in an appropriate preschool program or are
22 in class but waiting for their permanent teacher,
23 classroom staff and related services to begin.

24 Some children will wait indefinitely and many
25 services to which students are entitled based on

1
2 their IEP will never occur or be made up. The issue
3 here is not how to serve students with disabilities
4 but how the system fails to provide an equitable
5 start for children right from the beginning of their
6 lives.

7 Disability is a normal part of life, yet parents
8 of children with autism, cerebral palsy, down
9 syndrome, cannot count on the DOE to ensure that
10 their child's teacher will be paid on par with
11 educators and staff at programs serving typically
12 developing children. The Chancellor spoke earlier
13 today about placing students, every student on a
14 pathway to employment and -

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 KATHERINE HOY: Future success. That pathway
17 starts in preschool. Thank you so much to the
18 Committee for the opportunity to testify today. I
19 just wanted to support also the testimony provided by
20 my colleagues Chris Treiber at IEC and Maggie Moroff,
21 Coordinator of Arise. Thank you so much.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next panel
23 that we'll be calling is Jennifer Veloz with New York
24 Lawyers for the Public Interest, Melinda Andra Legal
25 Aid Society, Rasheeda Brown-Harris Bronx Legal

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2 Services, Caroline Scown Chinese American Planning
3 Council and Bella Week Teachers Unite. We'll first
4 turn to Jennifer Veloz.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 JENNIFER VELOZ: Thank you and good afternoon
7 Chair Joseph and members of the Education Committee
8 for the opportunity to speak at today's budget
9 hearing on the critical issue of funding for school
10 buses. New York City has one of the largest school
11 bus suits in the state with approximately 10,000
12 school buses in operation across the city.

13 These school buses are old and environmentally
14 inefficient. The average age of a New York school
15 bus is 16-years. The amount of flu in the school
16 buses poses a huge health risk to students who depend
17 on them daily to get to and from school. On average,
18 students can spend almost two hours a day. Two hours
19 on the school bus, sometimes longer for special
20 education students because of the inefficiency of
21 school bus routes. It is unimaginable to think that
22 a student with asthma continues to ride a school bus
23 that will worsen their medical condition.

24 This issue was exacerbated because many school
25 bus depots are housed and disadvantaged in

1
2 environmentally justice community. COVID-19 related
3 illnesses continue to be aggravated by diesel school
4 buses, emphasizing the need to ensure an expeditious
5 and equitable transition to electric school buses.
6 The passage of Intro. 455, now Local Law 120 passed
7 in 2021, requires electrification of all school buses
8 by 2035. This is a crucial first step and will go a
9 long way in improving the operation of school buses.

10 Both this year and going forward through 2035, we
11 need to ensure that there is sufficient funding in
12 DOE's budget to purchase and/or lease electric buses
13 as well as the financial resources needed to maintain
14 them. If we are serious about wanting a cleaner New
15 York and Local Law 120 is proof of that. Ensuring
16 proper and sufficient funding in DOE's budget for the
17 transition to electric school buses has to be a top
18 priority.

19 Purchasing and/or leasing buses, charging
20 stations and job training are core to a successful
21 transition from diesel to electric school buses.
22 Electric school buses get us one step closer to a
23 cleaner, breathable New York City. Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
25 hear from Melinda Andra.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

MELINDA ANDRA: Good afternoon. First, I want to congratulate all of the newly elected Committee Members and thank the Education Committee and Chair Joseph for holding this hearing. I work in the Education Advocacy Project within the Juvenile Rights Practice of the Legal Aid Society and the Juvenile Rights practice represents about 90 percent of New York City children who appear in New York City family courts. Typically, we represent more than 33,000 children each year in abuse, neglect, juvenile delinquency and other court proceedings. I first want to echo the need that so many here have expressed for a fundamental shift toward a model of restorative justice for youth and away from the over policing of school children, particularly the over policing of children of color and students with disabilities.

But today, I'm going to focus my time to elevate the needs of students in foster care. In the 20-2021 school year, 7,400 students in New York City were in foster care and this is a vulnerable group. The documented outcomes for them were not good. Nationally, we know that between 35 and 47 percent of

1
2 children in foster care have been identified as
3 students with disabilities. And as Chair Joseph
4 stated earlier, in 2021, only 43 percent of New York
5 City students in foster care graduated on time. This
6 was the lowest graduation rate of any group from when
7 figures were reported.

8 I want to thank the Committee for its attention
9 to this vulnerable population of students and I
10 applaud the administration for prioritizing hiring
11 for the planned team for students for children in
12 foster care. It's unfortunate that the hiring freeze
13 created the delay in staffing this essential team but
14 I am very happy to hear that the DOE will go for in
15 hiring for at least some of the planned positions.

16 This is an important first step but the entire
17 team is needed and we hope that the full team will be
18 hired quickly, so that their important work can
19 begin.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 MELINDA ANDRA: Uhm, I also want to raise the
22 need for students in foster care to have busing.
23 Chancellor Banks spoke earlier about the importance
24 of school relationships. This is especially
25 important for children in foster care. So, I want to

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2 urge the City Council to include sufficient funding
3 in the budget. Approximately \$5 million is needed to
4 ensure that the DOE provides the legally mandated bus
5 service for students in foster care through the 6th
6 grade, for both during the school year and during the
7 Summer Rising Program. Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
9 to Rasheeda Brown Harris.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 RASHEEDA BROWN HARRIS: Okay, peace everyone.

12 Thank you for the opportunity to testify and congrats
13 Chair Joseph on your position and this hearing. My
14 name is Rasheeda Brown Harris, pronouns are she, her,
15 hers. I'm here testifying today on behalf of Legal
16 Services NYC LESNY.

17 LESNY's mission to fight poverty and seek racial,
18 social and economic justice for low income New York
19 City residents. Through litigation, advocacy,
20 education and outreach, LESNY has advanced the
21 interest of our clients and created systemic changes
22 that strengthen and protect low-income communities.

23 We want to protect the rights of veterans,
24 immigrants, the LGBTQ add plus community, people with
25 disabilities and other vulnerable constituents. We

1
2 are deeply appreciative to the City Council for its
3 many years of support for legal services and for its
4 championship of our mission and our work.

5 The Education Rights Practice at LESNY assists
6 hundreds of New York City school children and their
7 families each year to ensure access to education.

8 Over 80 percent of our student clients are children
9 of color ranging from 3-21 years of age. I'm

10 speaking as a legal service advocate but also as a
11 former student of our New York City public school
12 system. I've experienced the lack of resources and
13 support as a child growing up in New York City. I
14 wish I had a school counselor or school social worker
15 to guide me academically and support me emotionally.

16 I wish my father, a single Black man raising
17 three children had legal representation to support
18 him in navigating the education system and lack of
19 services and harm they provided to children.

20 But in 2022, we need to prioritize healing
21 centered practices within our schools. We know how
22 trauma or adverse childhood experiences can impact
23 the cognitive and behavioral development of children.

24 Yet, school staff continue to respond to students -

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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RASHEEDA BROWN HARRIS: In a punitive manner without consideration of a schools disability, personal history or circumstances. Thank you. Let me just say this one part. LESNY is working hard to address the issues to support the most vulnerable community members as we ask you to provide \$500,000 to support our access to education project, which will deliver legal services and support, designed to help our children and families with their education, education access and school experience.

We will work with the schools to implement healing centered practices to our children and not further harm – so our children are not further harmed by our schools. We look forward to hearing and working with all of the City Council Members and excited for the necessary support you will provide LESNY to keep this work going and growing. Thank you very much.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Rasheeda. Next, we will hear from Caroline Scown, Chinese American Planning Council.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

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2 CAROLINE SCOWN: Good afternoon everyone. Thank
3 you Chair Joseph and Committee Members for the
4 opportunity to speak today.

5 My name is Caroline Scown, I'm an Adult Literacy
6 Instructor at the Chinese American Planning Council
7 and today I'd like to urge the City Council to fully
8 fund adult literacy program. Adult literacy equips
9 immigrant New Yorkers with practical language skills
10 to support their children's education, search for
11 jobs, higher education, you know apply for
12 citizenship, speak up for their rights among many
13 other things.

14 One student of mine, Ryan recently finished our
15 class and enrolled in a CUNY program. He is now
16 studying computer science and plans to pursue a
17 career in computer engineering after graduation.
18 Because he was empowered to apply to this program
19 because of the skills and confidence that he found in
20 our class.

21 Beyond language skill, that literacy class also
22 connects participants to information and wrap around
23 services. We reach a lot of New Yorkers who may
24 otherwise be isolated by COVID-19 and fears of anti-
25 Asian violence. We can offer students access to

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2 workforce development programs, housing assistance,
3 food assistance, childcare, and elderly services.

4 Students receive reliable information about COVID-19
5 testing, vaccines and mental health programs. Many
6 of my students are parents and they trade information
7 about how to apply for high schools, how to find
8 doctors and keeping their kids safe.

9 Last year, CPC was the recipient of the Adult
10 Literacy Pilot Project Initiative which fought to
11 show how students would benefit from solely funded
12 programs. Even through only a fraction of the
13 promised amount was received, this addition meant
14 that we have been able to triple our outreach in wrap
15 around services to our students as well as modernize
16 our digital infrastructure.

17 Many of the students that teach have finally been
18 able to attend our classes for the first time because
19 remote classes left unlearned while they care for
20 children and other family members. I call on the
21 Mayor and the City Council to maintain the \$8 million
22 in previously baselined funds and double the
23 investment per student with an additional \$13.5
24 million.

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2 The City Council should extend the Adult Literacy
3 Pilot project for a second year and expand it to \$5
4 million to address the wider need for additional
5 student support services and resources.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 CAROLINE SCOWN: Finally, the City Council should
8 renew the \$4 million of Council Adult Literacy
9 discretionary funding to continue to provide for
10 program sustainability. Thank you so much.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and uhm, the next
12 panel that we are going to call up will be Liz
13 Accles, Kevin Dahill Fuchel Counseling in Schools,
14 Riza Jay, Bishop Richard Wheelhouse Charity Baptist
15 Church, Lady Noro Wheeluce(SP?); I messed that up,
16 sorry Charity Baptist Church and Herman Younger
17 Parents Action Committee. We'll first turn to Liz.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 LIZ ACCLES: Hi, thank you Chair Joseph for the
20 opportunity to be here today. So glad to see you.
21 Thanks for the other members of the Committee. I'm
22 Liz Accles, Executive Director of Community Food
23 Advocates. We spearhead the One for Learning
24 Campaign that brought universal free school lunch to
25

1
2 New York City and I'm here to speak very briefly
3 about school meals.

4 In the spirit of Chancellor Banks, uhm, comments
5 about reimagining the school experience and scaling
6 success, I'm here to talk about Department of
7 Education Office of Food and Nutrition Services.
8 Very successful cafeteria, a model that modernizes
9 cafeterias by updating the food service line into
10 food court service style and also, diner booth style
11 seating round tables, really making a student
12 friendly cafeteria.

13 You see my background, that's one example of what
14 that is. We know that this is very successful
15 getting high school students who have this in the
16 first schools that this was in, 35 percent increase
17 in participation. That's among high schools students
18 unheard of. We think this is the next big thing to
19 really transform the school meals program after
20 universal free school lunch. We know that the Adams
21 Administration and the City Council are going to be
22 focusing on food access and nutrition and school food
23 is the biggest reaching program to households with
24 school age children. Nothing matches in scale.

1
2 As we were fighting for universal free school
3 lunch, we talked with thousands of students, parents,
4 school administrators, teachers, and food appealing
5 cafeteria environment where two of the biggest
6 barriers on top of the stigma related to -

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 LIZ ACCLES: Uhm, to uhm poverty associate with
9 the program that was need to get more kids eating. We
10 want to see in the Chancellors Capital Plan, \$250
11 million committed to over five years scaling up
12 cafeteria enhancement to all high schools and middle
13 schools. We know it's cost effective, it's highly
14 effective and the work in the school is done in one
15 weekend. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
17 turn to Kevin Dahill-Fuchel, Counseling of Schools.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 KEVIN DAHILL-FUCHEL: Thank you Malcom and thank
20 you Madam Chair for this opportunity. I am Kevin
21 Dahill-Fuchel, I'm the Executive Director of
22 Counseling in Schools, a not-for-profit organization
23 providing social and emotional supports to New York
24 City public schools since 1986. And since 2011,
25 Chair Joseph, we have been at the high school for

1
2 Youth and Community Development in your district
3 among many others.

4 I wanted to speak today about two issues
5 affecting community-based organization amidst
6 programs that are highly successful that would not
7 require any additional funding but perhaps an
8 additional oversight and support. First, within the
9 Community School Initiative, which has been highly
10 successful and well-reported out on by many at this
11 hearing and in other places. There is a very
12 significant challenge for community-based
13 organizations through the procurement process to be
14 able to receive the funding to do that work. Not
15 only to pay the wages that have been raised but also
16 to even have the funds to deliver the programs.

17 As a 36-year-old organization, we are fortunate
18 to be able to withstand the incredible now nine-month
19 gap in funding but I know that there are several
20 other organizations that would provide great services
21 that could not do this.

22 The other is in the Social, Emotional Support for
23 Students Initiative funded through the City Council,
24 which allows Counseling in Schools to reach about 500
25 students in nine schools throughout New York City

1
2 with social workers and creative arts therapists.
3 This is a small portion of the over 100 counselors
4 and creative arts therapists that we provide
5 throughout the city.

6 I raise this to say that these individuals, when
7 people are talking about the need for providing these
8 services, these individuals as far as I can tell and
9 I've been asked over and over, are not counted by the
10 Department of Education as individuals in schools
11 providing these supports.

12 So, that when new hires are made and social
13 workers are brought in, the ratios are not looked at
14 as to where our services are -

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 KEVIN DAHILL-FUCHEL: And where the community,
17 through community-based organizations are in fact,
18 providing social, emotional support service and
19 resources could either be used elsewhere or otherwise
20 in places where they are looked at as the sort of
21 mental health deserts.

22 I believe looking into these two issues,
23 procurement and counting community-based organization
24 social workers would greatly improve the Community
25

1
2 Schools Initiative and the Social Emotional Supports
3 for Students Initiative. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Kevin. Sorry for
5 messing up your name and for all the other panelists
6 to come, I've been speaking for seven hours, if I
7 butcher your name, please correct me. I do
8 apologize. So next, we're going to call on Riza Jay.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 RIZA JAY: Hi, good afternoon.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Riza, we can't hear you.

12 RIZA JAY: To students and to all. I am a parent
13 of a child with special needs and my concern is with
14 the ACS agency regarding parents who fight and
15 advocate for their children's rights education-wise.

16 Like myself, I advocated for my child and won the
17 hearing and the hearing judge found it in favor that
18 the DOE CSE4 did not provide FAP. After the decision
19 came out, two days later, ACS was called on my family
20 in regards to my child's education and I had to
21 fight.

22 My concern is, I would like to just raise the
23 concern that parents and advocates should be able to
24 fight for their children without being retaliated
25 afterwards if it's found in favor of the parent and

1
2 advocate. It became really daunting and a huge
3 problem throughout my child's education years and I
4 am still fighting for her as of this moment, as we
5 speak.

6 So, that's my big concern for the Chancellor and
7 just the city to just take knowledge of illegal
8 accusations or false reports being made towards
9 parents. Not only in regards to education-wise but
10 with parents advocating it and you know advocates
11 fighting for their children. You know we should not
12 have to feel afraid or concerned that afterwards
13 there's retaliation or some type of form of
14 repercussion. It's just not right.

15 So, I'd just like to raise that concern and to
16 make just everyone aware, just to pay attention you
17 know in regards to that matter. Thank you so much
18 for listening all.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Riza and next, we
20 will hear from Lady Noro Wheeluce from Charity
21 Baptist Church.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 LADY NORO WHEELUCE: Good afternoon everyone and
24 thank you to the Education Council Committee. I am
25 Lady Noro Wheeluce representing the Charity Baptist

1
2 Church of Christ located at 142 Walking Street in the
3 Brownsville area. The Charity Baptist Church has
4 offered to host the community action for [INAUDIBLE
5 7:09:55] and the Middle Advisory Counsel.

6 This area in Brownsville is where our help is
7 needed badly due to high poverty, drug activity,
8 lousy access to fresh food and programs for the
9 youth. The Advisory Council will conduct an
10 afternoon weekend enrichment academic wellness
11 program for approximately 60 children, kindergarten
12 through 5th grade. 32-weeks during the academic
13 year. Hours Monday through Friday, 3-6 p.m. plus
14 Saturday field trips to culture events.

15 Seeds in the Middle is asking for \$240,000 to
16 carry out this program. This program will encourage
17 children and adults and let them know that life can
18 be different from what they see every day. This
19 curriculum will provide tutoring and academic help
20 they need, music and arts instruction, and music
21 history. Yoga, meditation and mindfulness, both for
22 parents and children. Healthy cooking, one day a
23 week that they can take home to their families to
24 provide healthy dinners for them.

1
2 Black and Brown children in central Brooklyn
3 should not have to live in neighborhoods without
4 access to healthy and affordable fresh fruit and
5 vegetables. Additionally, there will be some
6 physical activities like soccer and other programs
7 that they will learn how to play. We will also
8 provide transportation to and from each culture event
9 and outdoor activities provided by the program.

10 We want the community to know that we are there
11 to be a blessing and support to families and children
12 in the neighborhood.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 LADY NORO WHEELUCE: Lastly, we are here to say
15 we are asking you to change funding. Give to Seeds
16 in the Middle, so we have a chance to change the
17 narrative and give our children real opportunity to
18 be change makers, to be healthy, supported by us and
19 the community. Thank you so much for your time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony
21 Ma'am. Next, we're going to go Herman Younger.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 HERMAN YOUNGER: Good afternoon members of the
24 Council. MY name is Herman Younger and I am an
25

1
2 organizer representative with the Parent Action
3 Committee.

4 What I have heard during today's Council hearing
5 from this administration has been deeply troubling.
6 The Adams Administration proposes to cut nearly \$1
7 billion in public school funding while proposing an
8 increase of about \$281 million for Charter schools.
9 This is especially troubling when given the context
10 that during the Chancellor's address to the public on
11 March 2nd, he painted a narrative of Charter and
12 private schools doing a better job than public
13 schools and closing his speech by plugging in the
14 Eagle Academy in which he founded as a place of Black
15 and Brown excellence.

16 Mr. Banks, you are the Chancellor to the largest
17 school system in the United States and the world and
18 your rhetoric toward public schools is both harmful
19 and shameful. A place of excellence for our Black
20 and Brown low income students begins at the public
21 school system, not at the privileged few who are
22 admitted or can afford to attend a charter or a
23 private education.

24 As the largest public school system, we opt to
25 lead by example both inside our schools and how we

1
2 govern them. What message do you send to the rest of
3 the world when your administration proposes a cut of
4 this magnitude, when our public school system is
5 already underfunded.

6 A report from Education Next found that by and
7 large money matters. On average a \$1,000 reduction
8 in people's spending reduces average test scores in
9 math and reading by 3.9 percent of a standard
10 deviation and increases the score gap between Black
11 and White students by roughly six percent.

12 A 1,000 reduction also lowers the college going
13 rate by about 2.6 percent. I thank Council Member
14 Dinowitz and Salamanca as well as Madam Chair Joseph
15 for raising the stark contrast and the inequities
16 that exist between public and charter education. In
17 this hearing, the priorities of this administration
18 have become clear. When asked upon timeline for
19 vacancies and positions for special education and
20 English language learners, Chancellor Banks and the
21 First Deputy had no answer. Yet, in a private press
22 conference to reporter, Chancellor Banks made it very
23 clear that "an increase in SSA was his top priority"
24 and stated he would like to hire 1,000 new SSA. Mr.
25 Banks, was it not you that stated in today's meeting

1
2 that we must be "fiscally prudent and make tough
3 choices?"

4 Equity and justice are not a priority for Mayor
5 Adams or Chancellor Banks. A militant and privilege
6 state is. So, today I ask members of this Council to
7 reject any proposal from this administration to any
8 cut in funding on our public school system as well as
9 rejecting a \$281 million increase for Charter
10 schools.

11 I stand in solidarity with speakers for the
12 coalition of for Education Justice and Dignity in
13 Schools under demands for a culturally response
14 sustaining education through the proposed mosaic
15 curriculum and a complete divestment of SSA in our
16 schools in turn for a restorative justice approach
17 with an increase in hiring for social workers in our
18 schools. Thank you for your time.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next panel
20 that we will call on is Alex Mojica, Sisters and
21 Brothers United, [INAUDIBLE 7:15:16 7:15:21] Make the
22 Road New York Urban Youth Collaborative and Delia
23 Davis Sisters and Brothers United.

24 LOST AUDIO [7:15:28-7:15:40].
25

1
2 ALEX MOJICA: Good afternoon everyone. My name
3 is Alex Mojica, my pronouns are they, them. I am a
4 Senior at Bronx Academy for Software Engineering. I
5 live in Council District 15. I'm a Youth Leader with
6 Sisters and Brothers United and the Urban Youth
7 Collaborative.

8 I like many students in the Bronx attended school
9 with more police than guidance counselors, more
10 police than social workers and more police than
11 gender neutral bathrooms. Every morning as I get to
12 school, I have to empty my pockets and hear the cops
13 yell, belts, keys, change, watch, wallets. I have to
14 walk through a metal detector and be stopped and be
15 questioned about any bit of metal on my body. As I
16 go through these metal detectors and get intimidating
17 looks from the police, I feel less than human.

18 I feel angry, annoyed and hurt that I am not seen
19 as a student but as a criminal as I walk through the
20 front doors of my school. The 18-months of virtual
21 classes have had a major impact on my mental health
22 and I'm sure many of my peers can relate.

23 We as students also had to endure this pandemic.
24 We suffered the loss of friends, family members, lots
25 of income instability and even loss of homes. But

1
2 when schools opened up, I was greeted by police at
3 the front door. Why didn't my school not hire any
4 social worker or transformative justice coordinator
5 right away. As young people, we need support. We
6 cannot attend school without our overpoliced and
7 under resourced. The Bronx cannot continue to be our
8 elected officials playground. We will not accept
9 another pilot program that is not in the best
10 interest of our people, so we will not accept Mayor
11 Adams's new proposal to upgrade invasive surveillance
12 equipment in our schools and communities. Our call
13 for police free schools is a call for an investment
14 in all of us, so we call on elected officials to
15 listen to our vision and to act on our behalf. Our
16 priorities center BIPOC and LGBTQI folks. What do
17 you think you are centering when you vote for a
18 budget that criminalizes us in the streets and in our
19 schools.

20 Mayor Adams's budget continues to fund the school
21 to prison pipeline that funds Black and Latinx
22 arrests and continue negative interactions with
23 police in our schools and communities. This budget
24 is not the budget we call for because we would never
25 invest more than \$400 million on school police. We

1
2 would never invest millions on surveillance equipment
3 and we will never fund racism.

4 Instead, our budget this year –

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 ALEX MOJICA: Calls for \$75 million to hire 500
7 restorative justice coordinators, \$75 million to hire
8 500 new social workers, \$75 million to hire 500 new
9 counselors and \$5 million baseline funding for mental
10 health continuum and many other things that we
11 actually need. Today, we call for a real investment
12 in us. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next
14 panelist we'll hear from Jolie Santiago.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 JOLIE SANTIAGO: Good afternoon, my name is Jolie
17 Santiago, I am a Sophomore in high school in Brooklyn
18 and a Youth Leader with Make the Road New York and
19 Urban Youth Collaborative.

20 What makes my experience with police in schools
21 unique is the fact that I was able to see a
22 difference between a school with very few cops and a
23 school with way too many cops. When I went to a
24 school in a predominantly White neighborhood, the
25 first thing I noticed was there weren't a lot of

1
2 school police and we had an abundance of resources at
3 our disposal. However, when I transferred to a high
4 school in Brooklyn, that was in a predominantly
5 Latinx neighborhood, that equation was flipped and
6 the first thing I noticed was a significant increase
7 in school police I saw and the lack of resources that
8 came with them.

9 They are the first people I see when I enter
10 schools and it's concerning because of all the police
11 brutality we have seen both in and out of schools.
12 What often fears me the most is the possibility that
13 any power I have can be stripped away by any of these
14 officers if they don't like something I did or they
15 woke up on the wrong side of the bed that day.

16 For one of my friends, that fear became a
17 reality. My friend was caught in an argument with
18 another student and got dragged away from the
19 situation by a school police officer with no social
20 worker or guidance counselor around to support him.

21 I don't want to see myself or my friends be made
22 powerless and that's the first thing that comes to
23 mind when school police interact with youth. There
24 is no evidence that school police make school safe
25 and if you ask me or any of my friends, we'll tell

1
2 you they do the quite opposite, which is why we're
3 here today with our Police Free School Campaign.

4 We demand you treat students with respect that
5 they deserve by hiring more support staff and
6 programs eliminating more than \$400 million -

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 JOLIE SANTIAGO: On our policing budget,
9 eliminating all current metal detectors from our
10 schools and reinvesting \$200 million already
11 dedicated to them over the next four years. And
12 there should be no new funding for any new student
13 scanning equipment that Mayor Adams wants to put in
14 schools.

15 Instead, we should invest \$75 million to hire
16 restorative justice coordinators and \$45 million to
17 implement restorative justice practices. Invest \$75
18 million to hire school counselors and \$75 million to
19 hire new school social workers and that's just a
20 start.

21 We need you, the City Council to fight for the
22 budget that NYC students deserve. We need you to
23 hear our call and stand by a budget that eliminates
24 school policing and reinvest those resources to the
25 things we need to succeed. Until then, we're going

1
2 to keep on fighting until our school are better
3 funded and we have police free schools. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next we'll turn
5 to Cruz Soriano.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 CRUZ SORIANO: [INAUDIBLE 7:21:41-7:21:51] Youth
8 Leader at Make the Road. I am testifying for the
9 school policing have real long-term consequences for
10 students of color. They cause us to experience
11 trauma and make us more likely to drop out of school.

12 I join the police free school fight, not that I
13 want to go but I joined because I knew I needed to
14 fight for my rights as a student. As a student and
15 young man, I wanted to feel welcome and supported,
16 not criminalized by school police. We get treated as
17 the problem but we aren't the problem. Racist police
18 are the problem.

19 In a survey we conducted of students of color
20 with high police presence in their school, the
21 majority of them said they wanted the police moved
22 from their schools. 60 percent of them had
23 experienced or know someone who has experienced at
24 least one negative interaction with school police.
25 For Bronx students, that number was 75 percent.

1
2 In my school, there was no school cops. I never
3 had to go through metal detectors. I know that the
4 young people like myself would go through that but I
5 was wrong. This year, on my transition to high
6 school, I was welcomed by school police and sometimes
7 popup metal detectors. My first time going through a
8 metal detector was uncomfortable. I was confused why
9 I was treated as if I had done something wrong.

10 It is frustrating to be treated as a criminal in
11 the place where you are supposed to be learning.
12 Being at home for almost 18-months with barely
13 support from school was hard and traumatic for many
14 of us. My school is a community school. This is
15 important to me because community schools are more
16 important than ever in providing the support students
17 and families need as we return.

18 This is where the city should fully invest in
19 resources, not on policing. What does it say to me
20 and other students about whether the city is choosing
21 to invest in money. Policing me or supporting me to
22 succeed. Mayor Adams has the opportunity to
23 eliminate all the empty school police positions in
24 his preliminary budget. Instead, by eliminating 500
25 of them, he gave the NYPD the go ahead to hire nearly

1
2 1,000 more school cops. Plus the money saved from
3 cutting -

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 CRUZ SORIANO: I'm just going back to the city
6 not being invested into the support we need.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
8 turn to Delia Davis.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 DELIA DAVIS: Good afternoon everyone. My name
11 is Delia Davis and I'm a senior in high school. I
12 live in Council District 11 and I'm a Youth Leader
13 with Sisters and Brothers United and Dignity in
14 Schools New York.

15 Today, I'm here to call on City Council Members
16 to pass a budget that makes real investment in mental
17 health and support for students. It is not okay that
18 over the last few years, the city has only given us
19 small crumbs towards programs that are vital for our
20 lives and education. It is also not okay that over
21 decades, New York City has invested more money in
22 policing Black and Latinx students in schools, which
23 has only traumatized us.

24 In New York City, Black and Latinx students make
25 up 30 percent of arrests despite being only 66 of the

1
2 student population. This is not okay. As a Black
3 student, I've witnessed many students that look like
4 me being targeted either while going through metal
5 detectors in the hallway or while leaving school.
6 This has made me very self-conscious about how I act
7 because I'm constantly worried that the next time,
8 I'll be the one who will be interrogated at the door
9 or I'll be searched for looking suspicious.

10 These are not thoughts I should be having while
11 I'm at school. Recently, Mayor Adams released his
12 budget and his thoughts on why he should not
13 eliminate school policing. He also said that public
14 protection can't be based on those who is the
15 loudest.

16 Well, I'm here to say that I think it's time that
17 this kind of narrative, the same kind that is often
18 projected onto Black girls like me and which makes us
19 targets at the schools for unjust harassment by
20 schools police.

21 This is the same kind of narrative that makes us
22 Black girls be seen as more aggressive and therefore
23 needing harsher punishment at schools. So, today,
24 I'm going to be the loudest and call for a full
25 divestment of screens in our schools and call for

1
2 investment in our care. Black girls like me need
3 people who look like me and who understand Black
4 women like me and those jobs and that care for our
5 mental health.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 DELIA DAVIS: The Council needs to baseline \$5
8 million on a mental health continuum to ensure our
9 schools are able to count on sustainable source or
10 funding to be able to really invest in their
11 students. The time to transform how we view Black
12 girls is now. As the Council Members, you can do
13 this by fighting alongside us for police free
14 schools. Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next panel
16 that we're going to call is Tosh Sutton, Kimberly
17 Olsen New York City Arts and Education Roundtable,
18 Sami Abu Shumays Flushing Town Hall, Jolene Gunther-
19 Doherty The Guild For Exceptional Children and Felix
20 Arias Dominican Women's Development Center. We'll
21 first start with Tosh Sutton.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 TOSH SUTTON: Thank you so much. Thank you for
24 having all of us. Congrats to Chair Joseph and
25 welcome to all the new City Council members. I'm

1
2 going to dive right in and say that many of you are
3 new but the issues are not. And so, what I don't
4 want to see is the suggestion or the idea being
5 passed around that more data needs to be collected or
6 more conversations need to be had. Because not only
7 does the anecdotal evidence at every Council hearing
8 meeting tell us that police free schools is an
9 essential mental health decision. The data also
10 backs this up. The science will back this up and so,
11 to continually hear these young people like Isabella,
12 to have a mother come on here and say that she
13 advocated for her child and the response from the
14 state was to call ACS on her, is reprehensible and it
15 should be something that every single City Council
16 Member is talking about.

17 I've met with way too many so-called leaders as a
18 member of parents of responsive equitable safe
19 schools. As a member of Black Lives Matter at New
20 York City public schools. As a program director at
21 Teens Take Charge. As the Coms Director at Students
22 Break the Silence. As a Taskforce member for the
23 Healing Centered Schools Working Group and nothing
24 changes. This budget is a moral document and it is a
25 reprehensible one. There is no reason that policing

1
2 and socioemotional learning are being discussed
3 within the same budget or even conversation. If our
4 goal to get children back into school buildings in
5 person during a pandemic, which will support them
6 socioemotionally, then why are we still funding
7 police more than we fund social workers, guidance
8 counselors, school nurses, arts programming, sports,
9 etc., etc., etc....

10 And when we talk about culturally responsive
11 education, it's another thing, a word, a phrase right
12 that people throw around. Where is the
13 accountability? Where is the community conversation
14 about, is this actually working? Yes, everyone has a
15 diversity and equity and inclusion committee but who
16 is on that committee? But who is on that committee
17 and are they aligned with the most impacted school
18 community members or are you all tokenizing people in
19 school communities? Are you listening to the voices
20 that actually make up the majority or are you
21 listening to the loud individuals with the time and
22 the resources and the private insurance.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 TOSH SUTTON: And the private you know and the
25 healthcare and the childcare to come and just harass

1
2 elected leaders so that they can get what they want.
3 We need to start looking at all of these school
4 related issues through a lens of what is best for the
5 majority. We constantly hear this rhetoric about the
6 loudest voice. It's really not about – the loudest
7 voice is us. The loudest voices for police free
8 schools. The loudest voices for masking to our
9 friend. The loudest voices for public safety and
10 truly public holistic schools. And that is what I
11 charge this new City Council with actually advocating
12 for. We need you to lead from the front. We've
13 already given you all the information. We've met
14 with you. We've written you reports. We're on the
15 steps on Tweed every two days. Let's get it
16 together. Let's get it done. Police free schools
17 are essential for this moment and have been for
18 years. We need you to make it happen and show it for
19 these kids. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
21 turn to Kimberly Olsen.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 KIMBERLY OLSEN: First, thank you to Chair Joseph
24 and your fellow committee members, we are so grateful
25 for your passion, your leadership, your stewardship

1
2 of the City Council's Committee on Education, as well
3 as your stamina.

4 So, my name is Kimberly Olsen and I am the
5 Executive Director of the New York City Arts and
6 Education Roundtable. I'm also a Teaching Artist at
7 P396-K, a District 75 school in Brownsville New York.
8 New York City public school students have been
9 through a lot over the past two years. Lost
10 instruction time, suffering from mental and emotional
11 strain of remote learning, processing the trauma
12 associated with the pandemic and also, the racial
13 injustices of our city and our country. I'm here to
14 say that transforming our city's schools starts with
15 the arts. The arts provide evidence-based solutions
16 for engaging students in learning, increasing our
17 parents involvement, improving academic outcomes,
18 supporting student mental health and promoting well-
19 being. We know that excellence arts education is the
20 foundation and the launching pad to success in school
21 and in life. However, under investment in arts
22 education in New York City has been recurrent. Prior
23 to COVID, 67 percent of principals noted that the
24 funding for the arts was generally insufficient.
25 Only 34 percent of middle schoolers are meeting state

1
2 learning requirements in the arts and 17 percent of
3 schools still lack a certified arts teacher.

4 As echoed in this hearing, we want inviting,
5 colorful, vibrant, thriving school communities. That
6 starts with the arts. The New York City Arts and Ed
7 Roundtable is recommending that the DOE make sure
8 that all schools can provide required arts
9 instruction to all students by baselining at least
10 \$100 per student in dedicated funding to support
11 sustainable arts education for all.

12 Two, continuing to devote 20 percent of FY23
13 American Rescue Plan Act Academic Recovery Funding to
14 support standard based arts instruction for summer
15 and school year programs.

16 And three, restore and baseline the \$24 million
17 for arts services that was originally cut when the
18 pandemic hit New York City's economy.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 KIMBERLY OLSEN: The arts are an essential part
21 of every students academic program. Thank you for
22 your time, consideration, and commitment to our
23 students.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
25 turn to Sami Abu Shumays.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

SAMI ABU SHUMAYS: Hello, can you hear me?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can.

SAMI ABU SHUMAYS: Thanks to Chair Joseph and everyone who is still here after nine hours. If you understand a word I'm saying, congratulations.

I'm Sami Abu Shumays, Deputy Director of Flushing Town Hall, a cultural organization and member of the CIG and an arts services provider in New York City schools. We're a DOE contractor and vendor.

Prepandemic, our arts education department serve more than 30,000 students, teachers, senior citizens and family audiences with programs, including more than 21,000 New York City school students alone.

In the current school year, we're offering 122 distinct programs, including 84 workshops and assembly's, in-school residencies, CASA's and SUCASA programs. What sets us apart is our cultural responsiveness. We offer programs representing artistic and cultural traditions from all over the world, taught by master tradition barriers from these cultures to schools with a numerously diverse student populations. We give BIPOC students the opportunity to see themselves in their own cultures represented

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2 on stage and in the classroom in programs like
3 traditional dance of Mexico, Peru and Ecuador.
4 Korean music and dance, West African dance and
5 drumming, music dance and performing arts of China,
6 poetry and storytelling, Native people of Queens,
7 Long Island and the Caribbean and more.

8 This type of arts education is tremendously
9 important for community building. We all know that
10 arts education has significant benefits and Kim was
11 just talking about a lot of them. But for people of
12 color, they need to see their own cultures, realized
13 in order to reap these benefits.

14 Uhm, so I fully support everything Kim was saying
15 about the needs for DOE school students and teachers
16 in schools, but what we do as a community-based
17 organization is offer something that can't be gotten
18 through those ways. There is 200 languages spoken in
19 New York and as many cultures and it would be
20 impractical for schools to hire teaching artists
21 representing every culture in New York.

22 So, providers like us offer something very
23 important but it's dependent on -

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.
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2 SAMI ABU SHUMAYS: For cultural organizations in
3 New York. So, I'm here to advocate for equitable and
4 adequate funding for culture through the Department
5 of Cultural Affairs and a restoration of the Mayor's
6 cuts from the cultural sector in support of these
7 programs. Thank you very much for the opportunity to
8 testify.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
10 turn to Jolene Gunther-Doherty.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 JOLENE GUNTHER-DOHERTY: Thank you. My name is
13 Jolene Gunther-Doherty and I am the Director of the
14 Guild for Exceptional Children's 4410 Preschool
15 Special Education Program, that has served public
16 school students for over 60 years. It's recommended
17 that the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget include \$30 million
18 to provide preschool special education teachers and
19 staff at community-based organizations with salaries
20 on par with their 12-month Department of Education
21 counterparts.

22 Two years ago, the city reached an agreement to
23 raise the salaries of most certified early childhood
24 teachers at DOE contracted community-based
25 organizations but excluded teachers of DOE contracted

1
2 preschool special education programs, who work 12-
3 month jobs serving young children with the most
4 intensive needs.

5 The city has not yet committed to salary parity
6 for these educators. Even as a shortage of seats in
7 preschool special education classes has left
8 preschools with disabilities without the support they
9 need and have the legal right to receive. The city
10 needs to address the salary disparities that are
11 causing our 44 teachers and staff members to leave
12 for other jobs where they can earn much higher
13 compensation. My school is losing yet another
14 teacher this week to go to the DOE. Leaving one
15 group of public school students without a teacher to
16 go to teach at another public school.

17 The city has a plan to offer a contract
18 enhancement to CBO's but the city is not yet
19 committed to increased staff salaries as part of the
20 contract enhancement. Without increased salaries,
21 its hard to imagine how the city will be able to open
22 the classes it needs and is legally required to
23 provide.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.
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2 JOLENE GUNTHER-DOHERTY: Please ensure that
3 Fiscal Year 2023 Budget includes \$30 million to
4 provide 4410 preschool special education teachers and
5 staff at CBO's with salaries on par with their 12-
6 month DOE counterparts. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we were
8 going to call Felix, but I do not see him on the
9 Zoom, so we're going to go to our next panel. The
10 next panel will be Alexandra Carmona Sisters and
11 Brothers United, Sequazia George Sisters and Brothers
12 United and Anthony Morales Make the Road New York
13 Urban Youth Collaborative. We'll first start with
14 Alexandra Carmona.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 ALEXANDRA CARMONA: Hi, good afternoon everyone.
17 My name is Alexandra Carmona and I am a senior in
18 high school. I live in Council District 16 and I'm a
19 Youth Leader with Sisters and Brothers United.

20 One of my biggest passions is art and as an
21 artist, I've learned to put a little of myself in
22 every piece that I make. We do this so that others
23 get to experience us as people. Similar to how I put
24 a little of myself into my art, I believe that our
25 elected officials put a little bit of themselves when

1
2 they create and pass budgets for the rest of us to
3 experience in the city.

4 Over the last decade, what I've seen and what
5 many of my peers have experienced is a disregard for
6 our social and emotional wellbeing as students. I
7 have seen budgets passed that over time have
8 increased funding for a historically racist system of
9 police in the name of our safety. What I know is
10 that there is no proof that school police prevent
11 conflict but many of my peers and I are witness to
12 police often escalating situations in our school.

13 Sometimes something as simple as when I recently
14 went through the metal detectors and accidentally left
15 a lighter in my bag the cop had a metal detector and
16 immediately began to interrogate me and roughly
17 searched through my bag as if I had something more
18 dangerous in there. I tried to explain that I forgot
19 it was there in the first place but they wouldn't let
20 me. Then they just held up the line to keep
21 searching me. They asked me intimidating questions
22 and raised their voices as if I had tried to be
23 combative. I didn't even want the lighter. I just
24 wanted to go on about my day at that moment and I
25 felt like I was not walking into the school that I

1
2 love and enjoying being at it. Instead, I felt like
3 I was a criminal walking into jail. It is
4 interactions like that that confirm countless studies
5 which show that the negative interactions with police
6 negatively impact students mental health but even
7 with this, students still interact with more police
8 than their school counselors or social workers. What
9 I find shocking is that we don't have to tell you or
10 the Mayor that we see more cops in our schools than
11 counselors because you all make the budget that hire
12 for these positions and yet the Mayor is choosing to
13 miss the opportunity -

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 ALEXANDRA CARMONA: To permanently cut more than
16 1,000 vacant school police positions but only
17 proposing to cut 500 positions and allowing for the
18 NYPD to hire nearly 1,000 new school cops while not
19 even reinvesting the money into positions that can
20 actually make a difference in our school. Today, I'm
21 advocating for my younger siblings and peers who
22 deserve to go to schools that fully support them and
23 that do not criminalize them.

24 I call on the Council to do what is right and
25 pass a budget that funds the necessary resources. We

1
2 call for at least \$75 million for 500 new counselors,
3 \$75 million for 500 new social workers and \$75
4 million for 500 new restorative justice coordinators.
5 Instead of police at the front door of our schools,
6 we want \$75 million for 500 new community members.
7 Parents and other support staff trained in de-
8 escalation practices. We call for a baseline of \$5
9 million for a mental health continuum and \$45 million
10 for restorative justice training and programs.

11 Lastly, we call for a complete divestment of
12 school police and to reinvest those funds into the
13 positions that were not harmful to students. If you
14 value our safety, our social and emotional wellbeing,
15 then I suggest you keep a little bit of your values
16 onto this year's budget and pass a budget that takes
17 a step towards more healing centered schools. Thank
18 you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we're
20 going to turn to Sequazia George.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 SEQUAZIA GEORGE: Good afternoon everybody. My
23 name is Sequazia George, I'm a Senior in high school.
24 I live in City District, City Council District 16.
25 I'm a Youth Leader with Sisters and Brothers United.

1
2 Today, I join many of my peers to call on the City
3 Council to pass a budget that centers the needs of
4 Black and Latinx youth, young people. I call for a
5 budget that funds our futures and not further
6 criminalizes us.

7 When I started high school, I imagined my senior
8 year being spirit week, prom, senior trips, applying
9 to college and graduating. Instead, my senior year
10 was the first time back to school for many of us 18-
11 months of virtual classes. It was the first time
12 many of us got to see each other and many students
13 came back with a lot of trauma.

14 One thing we all hoped for was things to go back
15 to normal, some kind of normal. We also hoped that
16 after the many protests for Black Lives Matter, our
17 communities and our schools would realize that we
18 need to do better. I thought that they would no
19 longer treat us Black girls like criminals. I am
20 about to graduate and I still see more police in
21 schools than counselors.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 SEQUAZIA GEORGE: But Black students continue to
24 be wait — where am I? Black students continue to be
25 disproportional-ized. Be impacted by school police.

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2 We make up 25 percent of youth population but have
3 been targeted in 55 percent of all police incidents.
4 Why can't the city understand that policing us will
5 only continue to harm us?

6

7 Even though I'm graduating this year, I hope that
8 the city – the Council will vote on a budget that
9 invests at least \$75 million to hire 500 new
10 counselors. \$75 million to hire 500 new social
11 workers and \$500 million to hire 500 new community
12 leaders and alimony like myself to support the social
13 and emotional growth of future students.

14

15 Students like my younger sister, it's time to
16 devise from criminalizing Black girls and on Woman
17 History Month. I hope you City Council Joseph and
18 other Black women on the City Council vote on a
19 budget that centers us. Thank you.

20

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
22 to Anthony Morales.

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24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

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26 ANTHONY MORALES: My name is Anthony Morales. I
27 live in Staten Island and I'm in 10th grade and I'm a
28 Youth Leader at Make the Road New York and the Urban
29 Youth Collaborative. I'm here today testifying
30 because after years of us campaigning for police free

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2 schools is a slap in the face to return back to
3 schools and still see police and learn that the Mayor
4 and the Chancellor are already talking about hiring
5 for these empty school positions. This is all while
6 the Mayor is allowing for years education budget to
7 drop by \$1 billion, instead of divesting money from
8 policing to make up for it.

9 I was excited to be in high school but my
10 freshman year was not how I imagined it to be. When
11 the pandemic hit it made me realize that my school
12 and all the schools across New York were not equipped
13 to deal with a situation like this one. Coming from
14 middle school to my first day of high school was
15 disorganized and stressful because I was not informed
16 by any staff about my school schedule nor emotional
17 support that was available to deal with my anxiety
18 from the pandemic.

19 I became aware that there is a lack of funding
20 for social, emotional and mental health support for
21 students. To me, and probably to many students, the
22 lack of resources is a nightmare. We have to stop
23 spending money on policing schools. Hiring new
24 police schools is not what young people like myself
25 want. For years, we have been extremely vocal about

1
2 removing police out of schools. We have been
3 demanding to reallocate that funding from policing
4 schools to social, emotional and mental health
5 supports. There are more schools across New York
6 City than social workers, guidance counselors and
7 school nurses available for one million students.
8 Every time students of color like myself walk inside
9 a school building, we have to go through metal
10 detectors. We get treated as the problem but we
11 aren't the problem. Racist policies are the problem.
12 It's more infuriating that school police constantly
13 watch us Black and Latinx students and are ready to
14 punish us for any minor mistake we make.

15 In mostly White schools where there are fewer
16 police, school police, students are constantly
17 surveilled and any mistakes that are seen are treated
18 as opportunities to learn from not reasons to be
19 punished for. Now, more than ever we need everyone
20 to listen and stand by us. We need guidance
21 counselors that can help us be on track.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 ANTHONY MORALES: We need success centers that
24 can make the process easy. Less stressful and less
25 scary. We need staff on our side that will help us

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feel safe and supported. I want to be welcomed at a school building that prioritizes students needs and well-being. Not that criminalizes us just because of our skin color. New York City must spend \$75 million to hire restorative justice coordinators in 500 high schools and \$45 million to implement restorative justice practices. Unlike policing, restorative practices seek to address the root cause of the harm. It would look at youth like me as a person rather than a potential problem. Thank you for your time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next panel that we're going to call, Naftuli Moster Yaffed, Linda Rosenthal Volunteers of America Greater New York, Robert Scott Tenant Association Vandyke Houses, Quamid Francis City Year New York and Amal Abdulla Yemeni American Merchants Association.

We'll first turn to Naftuli Moster.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

NAFTULI MOSTER: Honorable Chairwoman Joseph, City Council Members, staff and my fellow New Yorkers. My name is Naftuli Moster and I'm the Founder and Executive Director of Yaffed. Young Advocates for Fair Education.

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2 I founded Yaffed because I was one of tens of
3 thousands of students who attended Yeshivas that are
4 failing to provide instruction in subjects like
5 English, math, science and social studies as required
6 by New York State Law. The majority of these
7 unlawful Yeshivas are operating here in New York
8 City.

9 We estimate that there are 45,000 school children
10 in New York City currently attending Yeshivas that
11 fail to provide a basic education. Seven years ago,
12 in 2015, over 50 Yeshiva graduates and Yeshiva
13 parents filed a complaint with the New York City
14 Department of Education demanding that the department
15 compel these schools to follow the law. We are now
16 in the seventh year of the city's investigation yet
17 nothing has happened.

18 The de Blasio Administration did nothing. It's
19 own department of investigation found in 2019 that
20 the Mayor's team actually deferred with the
21 investigation at the behest of Yeshiva leaders. All
22 we've gotten in the six plus years since the
23 complaint was filed are two letters from Chancellor
24 Carranza to the State Commissioner of Education,
25 which admitted that 90 percent of the Yeshiva's they

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2 investigated were deficient. No remediation has been
3 taking place. Every year that passes, the students
4 of these schools get older, more students enter and
5 more graduate or leave and every year that these
6 schools are not being enforced to comply with the
7 law, the cycle of educational neglect continues.

8 I want to ask every member of this Committee to
9 take a moment and think about what it would mean
10 today to have grown up never learning basic English,
11 math or science after two years of a global pandemic.
12 Is there a single reason why children should not be
13 learning basic science? I urge you to use your
14 oversight powers to compel the Department of
15 Education to complete its investigation that began
16 with our complaint almost seven years ago. It has
17 been way to long. Many Yeshivas have graduated out
18 of the system -

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 NAFTULI MOSTER: And even more have entered
21 during this time. I urge you to demand that current
22 administration open the books of the investigation
23 and begin the hard work of remediating it so that
24 every child really gets access to a fair and
25 equitable education. Thank you and have a good day.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
3 turn to Linda Rosenthal.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 LINDA ROSENTHAL: Hello, my name is Linda
6 Rosenthal and I'm the Director of Early Childhood
7 Educational Services at the Volunteers of America
8 Greater New York Early Center. I would like to thank
9 Chair Joseph and the members of this Committee for
10 the opportunity to submit the following testimony.

11 The Bronx Early Learning Center is a Preschool
12 Special Education or 4410 program which is approved
13 by the New York State Education Department and under
14 contract with the New York City Department of
15 Education to provide multidisciplinary evaluations,
16 special education services, and related services such
17 as occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech
18 therapy and counseling. We have been open since 1984
19 serving the Bronx.

20 The 4410 preschool special education programs are
21 publicly funded programs with tuition rates
22 established by the New York State Education
23 Department. We are not private schools where parents
24 pay tuition for their children services. We serve
25 New York City students for whom the New York City

1
2 Department of Education is unable to provide
3 services, whether it's because of the significant
4 challenges our students present with, lack of space,
5 or the lack of expertise that the staff have in
6 working with our students.

7 All students, whether in special education
8 classes or general education classes are entitled to
9 a certified teacher. At the present time, the
10 teachers in 4410 programs receive salaries that are
11 between \$30,000 and \$36,000 less per year than
12 teachers in public schools.

13 When the city agreed to increase the salaries of
14 3K and Pre-K, general education teachers in
15 community-based organizations two years ago, the 4410
16 program, special education teachers were not
17 included. Today, 4410 programs such as ours, are
18 experiencing teacher shortages because sadly our
19 teachers are leaving us for higher paying positions
20 in the early childhood community.

21 As our teachers continue to be recruited by the
22 public schools, charter schools and community-based
23 organizations with 3K and Pre-K contracts with the
24 New York City Department of Education, we are unable
25 to serve preschools -

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

LINDA ROSENTHAL: Waiting placement. At our 4410 programs, there are three closed classrooms this year because we have been unable to hire certified teachers. Please ensure that the budget for Fiscal Year 2023 includes \$30 million to increase the salaries of our teachers serving New York City's children. Thank you very much.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next two panelists appear to have dropped off, so we're going to go to Amal Abdulla, the Yemeni American Merchant Association.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

AMAL ABDULLA: Hello, my name is Amal Abdulla and I am the Director of Social Services at the Yemeni American Merchants Association and I oversee the Education Department and Youth program. We represent an already underrepresented community in Yemeni Americans and we truly believe that the community school strategy is a path forward to ensure students are not left behind by the crisis.

Many of the children in our community have a father that works many hours, seven days a week and is a new immigrant who's struggling to adapt to life

1
2 in a new country. Along with mothers that don't
3 speak English and are unfamiliar with our systems.
4 They depend on community schools to support their
5 children's educational and mental growth. We have
6 long believed that every school should be a community
7 school even before the pandemic.

8 Students learn better when their physical and
9 socioemotional needs are met and when they have
10 significant relationships with caring adults. If
11 students are coming to their classes hungry, dealing
12 with the stress of living in temporary housing,
13 receiving inadequate and mental or physical
14 healthcare or dealing with other socioemotional or
15 economic hardships that have been increased by this
16 pandemic, it will only be that much harder to focus
17 on school.

18 Community schools address those barriers by
19 partnering with community-based organizations like
20 ourselves in holistic and innovative ways and
21 represent a long term equity strategy to sustainably
22 invest in youth, families and communities.

23 Moving forward it is now more important than ever
24 to support our community schools and local
25 organizations between this Committee and advocacy

1
2 organizations to understand the dire need of
3 immigrants in New York. Thank you again and thanks
4 also to the many partners who are in this fight for
5 our community schools in underrepresented
6 communities.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for testifying.

8 The next panel that we're going to go to Jocelyn

9 Palafox Diaz Make the Road New York Urban Youth

10 Collaborative, Daniella Rodriguez Make the Road New

11 York Urban Youth Collaborative, Luna Quavez (SP?) Make

12 the Road New York Urban Youth Collaborative and

13 Fernando Palafox Make the Road New York Urban Youth

14 Collaborative. We'll first start with Jocelyn

15 Palafox Diaz.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 JOCELYN PALAFOX DIAZ: Hello, my name is Jocelyn

18 Palafox and I am a Youth Leader with Make the Road

19 New York in Staten Island and the Urban Youth

20 Collaborative. I am calling on the Education

21 Committee members to fight for a budget that New York

22 City students deserve by divesting from our

23 criminalization and investing in our care. We demand

24 you to include the following in your budget response

25 to the Mayor: Eliminate funding for any students

1
2 scanning equipment Mayor Adams wants to put in
3 schools. New York City already spends hundreds of
4 millions of dollars on scanners. We don't need any
5 more money invested in our criminalization.

6 Please fight to fund my future instead of racist
7 school policing. Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
9 hear from Daniella Rodriguez.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, it looks like she has
12 dropped off. We're going to go to Luna Quavez.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 LUNA QUAVEZ: Hello, my name is Luna Quavez and I
15 am a Youth Leader of Make the Road New York in Staten
16 Island and the Urban Youth Collaborative. I am
17 calling on the Education Committee members to fight
18 for a budget that New York City students deserve by
19 divesting from our criminalization, investing in our
20 care.

21 We demand you include the following in our budget
22 response to the Mayor: Baseline \$5 million for
23 mental health to continuing success and ensuring
24 students gain the mental health support we need.
25

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2 Please fight to fund our future instead of racist
3 schooling police. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and our final
5 panelist will be Fernando Palafox.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 FERNANDO PALAFOX: Hello, my name is Fernando
8 Palafox and I'm a Youth Leader with Make the Road New
9 York in Staten Island and the Urban Youth
10 Collaborative. I am calling on the Education
11 Committee members to fight for a budget that New York
12 City students deserve by divesting from our
13 criminalization, investing in our care.

14 We demand you include the following in your
15 budget response to the Mayor: Baseline \$5 million
16 for the mental health continuum to continue its need
17 in ensuring students gain the mental health support
18 we need. Please fight to fund my future instead of
19 racist school policing. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next panel that
21 we will hear from will be Steven Morales All our Kin,
22 Nell Stokes, Elizabeth Bird Educational Alliance and
23 Rebecca Florenzi(SP?). We'll first turn to Steven
24 Morales.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

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STEVEN MORALES: Hi honorable Council Members.

3

My name is Steven Morales, I'm the New York Policy

4

Director at All our Kin. All our Kin is a nonprofit

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organization that supports over 400 homebased family

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childcare educators in the Bronx and across New York

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City as business owners and as educators.

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I'm here to talk about the importance of

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investing in Early Childhood Education, specifically

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homebased family childcare. Family childcare

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educators make up 37 percent of licensed childcare

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capacity in our city. They care for the majority of

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our low-income infants and toddlers and while some

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family childcare educators are affiliated with DOE

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contracted family childcare networks, the vast

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majority are independent educators and small business

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owners.

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For too long, we have under invested in childcare

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and families and childcare educators have suffered as

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a result. We urge the Council to ensure that family

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childcare educators have access to the resources they

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need, whether or not they are affiliated with the

23

DOE. As a city, these investments would increase

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access to childcare, increase compensation for

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educators and support quality.

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2 We urge the Council to make the following
3 immediate investments in family childcare. One,
4 prioritize provider pay and benefits by including
5 family childcare alongside center based teachers in
6 pay parity agreements. And by offering family
7 childcare providers health insurance and retirement
8 benefits that most can not currently afford.

9 Second, ensure the family childcare providers
10 have equal access to DOE funding. DOE systems are
11 not set up to accommodate family childcare, fewer
12 than 50 of the 5,000 family childcare providers in
13 New York City are able to participate in Pre-K for
14 All. The DOE must ensure that FCC programs have
15 equitable access to early learn, 3K, PreK and all of
16 the other DOE funding opportunities.

17 Finally, the city must ensure that all family
18 childcare educators, including those in networks and
19 independent have access to robust professional
20 learning opportunities. These investments are not
21 only crucial for children –

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 STEVEN MORALES: Families and educators but they
24 will help put New York City on track toward an
25

1 economic and educational recovery from this pandemic.

2 Thank you for your time.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
4 turn to Nelle Stokes.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 NELLE STOKES: Thank you. Thank you Chairwoman
7 Joseph and members of the Education Committee for
8 your amazing stamina and also for the chance to speak
9 today.
10

11 My name is Nelle Stokes and I am the Executive
12 Director of Magic Box. A media arts education
13 nonprofit that its in its 16th year and is also one
14 of the cosponsors of the New York City Public School
15 Film Festival and I'm here to advocate for continued
16 support of arts education, in alignment with the four
17 pillars that the Chancellor outlined this morning.

18 Budgets are all about numbers and formulas. So,
19 what if I said I had a formula that was proven to do
20 the following for kids: Maintain engagement across
21 academic disciplines, manage behavior, develop better
22 mental health, improve attendance and on-time
23 graduation rates and get kids ready for jobs in a
24 sector that's growing and generates one out of every
25 eight dollar in New York City.

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Well, here's the good news. It's not an algorithm. It's arts education. Data shows that arts ed does all of that and more. During our city's darkest times after 911 and recently during the continuing pandemic, we mandated earmarked funding for arts education. We know that when the rubber meets the road, our kids need the arts. Now is not the time to take that away from them. Our students need art education not just to survive but to thrive. We are seeking the following: Dedicated and sustained funding for arts education. Increased equity for all students through alignment with state arts mandates and certified arts teachers and arts cultural partners in every school.

I was so struck by one of the young activists who spoke earlier, Alexandra Carmona, who identified herself first as an Artist. In the words of one of our Magic Box student photography -

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

NELLE STOKES: What I see can change the world.

Let's help them make the best picture for our future and makes arts education a priority. Thank you for your time.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
3 turn to Elizabeth Bird.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 ELIZABETH BIRD: Thank you Chair Joseph and
6 members of the Education Committee for the
7 opportunity to testify today. My name is Elizabeth
8 Bird, I am the Director of Public Policy and
9 Educational Alliance, which offers high quality,
10 multigenerational programs and services to the
11 community of lower Manhattan.

12 Today, I would like to highlight two aspects of
13 the preliminary education budget. Allocations for
14 community schools and early childhood education.
15 Educational alliance serves as a CBO partner at five
16 community schools. As you know, the city is poised
17 to significantly expand the community schools
18 initiative in New York City using federal funds
19 available through the American Rescue Plan. This
20 represents an important acknowledgement of the value
21 of community schools to improve student outcomes.
22 However, because stimulus dollars must be spent by
23 the end of FY25, funding for the expansion will drop
24 off completely in FY26.

1
2 The community schools strategy is not a one time
3 intervention. It is a long term investment in
4 communities. Without a permanent long-term funding
5 solution the future of these schools is uncertain,
6 despite the proven value of this strategy for
7 supporting children and families. We urge you to
8 ensure that any plan to expand community schools,
9 prioritizes the sustainability of the initiative.

10 I would now like to speak about early childhood
11 education and childcare. At the Manny Canter Center,
12 one of educational alliance flagship location, we
13 provide a truly unique model for an economically
14 integrated early childhood program that serves
15 families on the lower east side and beyond.

16 To support New York City's recovery from the
17 economic impacts of the pandemic, all families need
18 reliable high quality childcare options. The city
19 must ensure all neighborhoods have access to extended
20 day care to better accommodate the schedules of
21 families with irregular work schedules in the current
22 economy, the city needs to increase center-based
23 capacity for infant and toddler care. The city must
24 improve the enrollment procedures for early childhood
25 programs -

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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ELIZABETH BIRD: By continuing to suspend the pay for enrollment policy. And finally, the city must work with New York State policy makers to increase income eligibility for childcare subsidies and to reduce the burdensome paperwork requirements that too often prevent families from applying for benefits.

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll

11

turn to Rebecca Florenza.

12

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

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REBECCA FLORENZA: Thank you so much for this

14

opportunity to testify. My name is Rebecca Florenza,

15

I'm a Public School Parent and I'm also a Teacher,

16

educator in Early Childhood, so I spend a lot of time

17

in Elementary Schools.

18

It's been very heartbreaking to watch a system I

19

so strongly believe in, struggle so much as the COVID

20

pandemic has exacerbated already existing inequities

21

and wholes in the way we support students and their

22

families emotional wellbeing.

23

School safety is important but the way the DOE

24

defines safety as indicated by budget allocations is

25

via control and the presence of police. I have been

1
2 in so many school buildings over the last 18 months
3 and I have talked to many teachers who are concerned
4 about their young students emotional wellbeing as
5 they have faced indescribable trauma and loss
6 throughout the past two years. Not to mention the
7 emotional support teachers need and are not getting
8 in order to best support our young people.

9 In my personal and work life, I have heard story
10 after story of elementary school students who
11 desperately need mental health support waiting and
12 waiting for this help due to lack of capacity with
13 our current counselors and social workers and when
14 these same children act out, they are punished,
15 suspended or have school police called on to
16 intervene.

17 Regardless of the individual officer or what kind
18 of relationship they have with the students in the
19 school, they are not special educators, counselors,
20 or social workers and these are not situations that
21 should involve police. These children also shouldn't
22 be sitting in a principal's office all day isolated
23 because they aren't getting the support that they
24 need. This is a violation of their rights to an
25 appropriate education and consistently affects Black

1
2 and Brown students disproportionately, as well as
3 students with disabilities.

4 The money is there, we can see it in the DOE,
5 NYPD relationship and the physical safety of students
6 is an undeniable human right, however, safety is
7 multilayered and as a public school parent who is
8 concerned with the safe and supportive education of
9 all NYC's children, I ask that the Mayor, Council,
10 and Chancellor reexamine -

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

12 REBECCA FLORENZA: The definition of safety and
13 how to keep our students physically safe. They need
14 deepened professional support for their emotional
15 wellbeing and we need to see this priority
16 represented in the dollar amount to this budget.
17 Thank you so much.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next panel
19 that we will have will be from Make the Road Urban
20 Youth Collaborative Carolyn Ramirez, Nia Morris,
21 Brielka Rodriguez (SP?), Iesha Ejos (SP?) and from
22 Sisters and Brothers United Neil Gum and we'll first
23 turn to Carolyn Ramirez.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.
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CAROLYN RAMIREZ: Hello, my name is Carolyn Ramirez. I am the Youth Leader with Make the Road Staten Island and in Urban Youth Collaborative. I am calling on the Education Committee members to fight for a budget that New York City students deserve by devising our criminalization and investing in our care. We demand you include the following in your budget response to the Mayor: A baseline of \$5 million for the mental health continuum to continue its success and ensuring students gain mental health support we need.

Please fight to fund our future instead of racist school policing. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will turn to Nia Morris.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

NIA MORRIS: Hello everyone. My name is Nia and I am a Youth Leader with Make the Road New York in Staten Island and the Urban Youth Collaborative. I am calling on the Education Committee members to fight for a budget that New York City students deserve by divesting from our criminalization and investing in our care.

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2 We demand you include the following in your
3 budget response to the Mayor: Eliminating funding
4 for any new student scanning equipment Mayor Adams
5 wants to put in schools. NYC already spends hundreds
6 of millions of dollars on scanners. We do not need
7 any more money invested in our criminalization.

8 Please fight to fund my future instead of racist
9 school policing. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
11 turn to Brielka Rodriguez.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 BRIELKA RODRIGUEZ: Hello, my name is Brielka
14 Rodriguez and I am Youth Leader with Make the Road
15 New York in Staten Island and the Urban Youth
16 Collaborative. I am calling on the Committee,
17 Education Committee members to fight for a budget
18 that New York City students deserve by divesting from
19 our criminalization and investing in our care. We
20 demand you include the following in our budget
21 response to Mayor: Eliminate funding for any new
22 student scanning equipment Mayor Adams wants to put
23 in schools. New York City already spends hundreds of
24 millions of dollars on scanners. We don't need
25 anymore money invested in our criminalization. Thank

1
2 you. Please fight to fund my future instead of
3 racist school policing. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
5 turn to Iesha Ejos.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 IESHA EJOS: Hello and good afternoon. My name
8 is Iesha Ejos and I'm a High School Senior and a
9 Youth Leader with future of tomorrow at Urban Youth
10 Collaborative.

11 I am calling on the Education Committee members
12 to fight for a budget that NYC students deserve by
13 divesting from our criminalization and investing into
14 our care. We demand you to include the following in
15 your budget response to the Mayor. Eliminate the
16 more than \$400 million school policing budget. NYC
17 must stop funding racist school policing. This
18 includes eliminating funding for all vacant school
19 policing positions.

20 Mayor Adams Preliminary Budget allows for the
21 hiring of nearly 1,000 new school cops. NYC must not
22 hire a single new school cop. Eliminate funding for
23 youth coordination officers. We need mentorship from
24 those trained to support us, not from police.

1
2 Eliminate funding for any new student scanning
3 equipment Mayor Adams wants to put in schools. NYC
4 already spends hundreds of millions of dollars on
5 scanners. We don't need any more money invested into
6 our criminalization.

7 Invest \$75 million to hire restorative justice
8 coordinators in 500 high schools and \$45 million to
9 implement restorative justice practices. Unlike
10 policing, restorative practices treat youth like me,
11 as a person rather than as a potential problem.

12 Invest \$75 million to hire 500 new school
13 counselors and \$75 million to hire 500 new school
14 social workers. School counselors and social workers
15 provide key mental, emotional and academic support
16 for us that is badly needed.

17 Invest \$75 million to hire 500 community members
18 to help contribute to the safety of our school
19 communities. When we are at school, we should be
20 greeted by school community members not police.

21 Additionally, we need Youth Advocates and Parent
22 Coordinators to help make sure our schools thrive.
23 Baseline \$5 million for the mental health continuum
24 to continue its success in ensuring students -

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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IESHA EJOS: Get the mental healthcare we need. Please fight to fund my future instead of racist school policing. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank and next we'll hear from Neil Gum.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

ASHLEY PEREZ: Yes, hello everyone. My name is Ashley Perez. I'm a Senior in High School and I live in Council District 17 and I'm a Youth Leader with Sisters and Brothers United.

Like many, I used to think that all students from New York City - [LOST AUDIO 8:14:46].

Can you hear me?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, now we can hear you. Can you also just start again and say your name please for the record?

ASHLEY PEREZ: Good afternoon everyone. My name is Ashley Perez. I am a Senior in high school and I live in Council District 17 and I'm a Youth Leader with Sisters and Brothers United.

Like many, I used to think that all students in New York City had the same experience as me when they entered their school building. I thought it was normal to see cops on every corner outside of school.

1
2 I thought everyone had to go through metal detectors
3 and see a cop strolling their halls. I thought this
4 was the New York City experience.

5 At the very least, I thought this was the
6 experience of all schools in the Bronx. When I
7 joined SBU, I realized that this wasn't true. That
8 the only students who had this experience were
9 students that looked me and in schools where
10 predominantly students of color attended.

11 It really made me question if this was about
12 safety. If this was about safety, then wouldn't all
13 schools have the same kind of police and surveillance
14 present? While looking across the country and
15 learning that we had the largest police force in our
16 schools, even when compared to Los Angeles, which has
17 more than half of NYC student population and yet has
18 nine times less police than we do.

19 It makes me question what are our city's
20 priorities. If people think police are the way to
21 prioritize our safety, then answer me this, why do
22 one in five handcuffing incidents in school happen
23 during a mental health crisis? Why do Black and
24 Latinx students represent over 90 percent of those
25 incidents? Why in the last three months of 2021

1
2 right after we went back to school was a child, a ten
3 year old child, handcuffed during a mental health
4 crisis?

5 The answer is simple, a cops job is to
6 criminalize Black and Brown people. That is why
7 police have no place in our schools because they are
8 not the ones we need in moments of crisis. I think
9 of my younger siblings and I know that if they are in
10 need, I would want a social worker or a mental health
11 practitioner to support them because their job is to
12 care for students.

13 It is time to invest in the resources that will
14 help transform our schools into healing centered
15 schools. We want \$75 million for 500 new school
16 counselors. \$75 million for 400 new social workers.
17 \$75 million for 400 new restorative justice
18 coordinators -

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 ASHLEY PEREZ: We call on the Council to
21 eliminate all vacant school police positions for our
22 future budgets. We cannot spend one more dollar on
23 harmful positions. We need police free schools now.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next panel
25 that we are going to hear from, Lisa Gilday Birch

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2 Family Services, Tracy Weber-Thomas Joe Torre Safe at
3 Home Foundation, Estela Cohetero Academy of Medical
4 and Public Health Services and Ogi Funta Morena (SP?),
5 the Muslim Community Network. We'll first start with
6 Lisa Gilday.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 LISA GILDAY: Good afternoon members of the
9 Education Committee at the City Council. Thank you
10 for this opportunity to testify. I am Lisa Gilday,
11 Chief Operating Officer at Birch Family Services, a
12 not-for-profit agency.

13 Birch is a leading provider of special education
14 preschool services under contract with the New York
15 City Department of Education. We operate eight 4410
16 preschool programs and provide services to 1,000
17 preschool students in the least restrictive setting.

18 Our students are New York City public school
19 students. Children are referred to us by the
20 Committee on Preschool Special Education because the
21 DOE has no suitable placement options. Tuition rates
22 for us are determined by the New York State Education
23 Department.

24 88 percent of Special Education preschool
25 students in New York City receive their services

1
2 through 4410 nonpublic programs operating special
3 classes. For years, providers like ours have
4 struggled to recruit and maintain certified teachers,
5 teacher assistants and related therapists because of
6 the lack of tuition increases.

7 Since 2012, our schools have received only a ten
8 percent increase compared to 46 percent for local
9 districts. The result is our inability to provide
10 competitive salaries to our teachers. In addition in
11 2019, an agreement was reached by the city to raise
12 the salaries of certified early childhood teachers at
13 DOE contracted CBO's. However, this agreement failed
14 to include the teachers of DOE contracted 4410
15 preschool special education programs. This has
16 created a huge disparity between teachers that were
17 included in the Parity Initiative with starting
18 salaries for certified teachers at \$68,500 for ten
19 months, in contrast to 4410 teacher salary starting
20 in the mid to low 50's for twelve months.

21 Our vacancy rate is now close to 30 percent. As
22 a result, the DOE is projecting a shortage of about
23 900 preschool special education seats this spring.
24 The city released an RFP for contract enhancement to
25 CBO's to expand by 800 preschool special education

1
2 seats starting in July but there's no commitment to
3 increase salaries for 4410 teachers. Not included in
4 the prior Pay Parity Initiative.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 LISA GILDAY: We are asking that you ensure that
7 the FY23 budget invests at least \$30 million to
8 provide preschool special education teachers and
9 staff at 4410 CBO's with salaries on par with their
10 12- month DOE counterparts, so that preschools with
11 disabilities get a fair and appropriate education to
12 which they are entitled by law. Thank you very much.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
14 turn to Tracy Weber-Thomas.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 TRACY WEBER-THOMAS: Thank you Chair Joseph and
17 members of the Education Committee for the
18 opportunity to provide testimony. I am Tracy Weber-
19 Thomas, the Chief Operating Officer of the Joe Torre
20 Safe at Home Foundation.

21 When our Co-Founder Joe Torre was a child, he
22 witnessed the unrelenting verbal abuse and saw the
23 results of the physical harm inflicted by his mother
24 by his father. As Joe grew older, he wanted to
25 ensure that no child grew up as he did, feeling alone

1
2 and afraid, so that's why he started Safe at Home 20-
3 years ago in New York City for children exposed of
4 violence, abuse and trauma. Our work is critical.
5 60 percent of children in the U.S. have experienced
6 violence in their homes, schools and communities and
7 during the COVID-19 pandemic, children could no
8 longer rely on going to school as a reprieve from the
9 dangers they faced at home.

10 Safe at Home currently operates 17 school-based
11 programs called Margaret's Place, named after Joe's
12 mother. Four of which operate in New York City.
13 Margaret's Place is trauma informed and healing
14 centered. We created a safe space within the school,
15 staffed by a full-time Master's level therapist who
16 provides mental health counseling to youth,
17 prevention education, peer leadership and support for
18 school staff and parents.

19 We are there when students need us. Over 50
20 percent of referrals from teachers are for students
21 in immediate crisis. And when COVID-19 hit, because
22 we were already embedded within the school, we were
23 able to continue our supportive work with students
24 during that difficult time.
25

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2 Principals at our locations are our greatest
3 champions. One stated, Margaret's place is more than
4 a room. It's a force shaping who we are. It says,
5 we are determined to provide a respectful supportive
6 environment for all members of our community. No one
7 is alone.

8 Exposure to violence without timely intervention
9 could impact a child's ability to learn and attend
10 school, impact their physical safety and mental
11 health and increase the likelihood of continuing the
12 cycle of violence.

13 However, there is hope. There are factors that
14 can decrease harm, resilience, positive coping
15 skills, a supportive social network and a caring
16 adult. Our programming is designed with these
17 protective factors in mind. We kindly ask for your
18 support today to be able to continue to provide
19 critical services to children in schools.

20 Specifically requesting citywide initiative
21 funding -

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 TRACY WEBER-THOMAS: Of \$100,000 to support our
24 four Margaret's Place locations. We are also seeking
25 member support for four specific school-based

1
2 programs. Thank you again for the opportunity to
3 provide testimony.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
5 hear from Estela Cohetero.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 ESTELA COHETERO: Hi, good afternoon everyone.
8 Thank you Chair Joseph for the opportunity to
9 testify. My name is Estela Cohetero and I am reading
10 this testimony on behalf of Ivana Ferguson, Manager
11 of Community Education at the Academy of Medical and
12 Public Health Services or AMPHS who unfortunately
13 couldn't be here today.

14 AMPHS is a not-for-profit health organization in
15 Sunset Park of primarily Chinese and Latino community
16 that works to bridge the health equity gap among
17 communities of color through individualized health
18 education, adult literacy, social services and
19 preventative health, all free of cost and regardless
20 of immigration status.

21 We work primarily with undocumented immigrants
22 whose language barriers pose significant obstacles to
23 accessing healthcare, education, and the workforce.
24 Our work has included improving basic adult literacy
25

1
2 skills among the most vulnerable New Yorkers to help
3 address those issues.

4 During the pandemic, our adult literacy classes
5 have also served as a platform for COVID-19
6 information and resource dissemination and as a
7 source for mental health support. As such, we're
8 asking the City Council to renew \$4 million for adult
9 literacy discretionary funding to address the immense
10 inequitable gap in English literacy, digital
11 literacy, systems navigation skills and access to
12 information our communities face.

13 Last year was also the first year that we
14 received funding from the Adult Literacy Pilot
15 project, which we hope expands to \$5 million to
16 continue funding groups like ours. Pilot project
17 funding allows us to hire educational case managers
18 to provide device loans to students that could not
19 afford internet access and provide professional
20 development for our instructors. It also enabled us
21 to begin a civics education digital literacy
22 curriculum. With classes returning to in person next
23 year, there will be additional cost for space and
24 infrastructure improvements while the literacy
25 assistance center estimates \$7,400 cost per student

1
2 for an effective program. We have only received
3 funding to cover \$926 per student through adult
4 literacy initiative discretionary funds leading to
5 hire teacher attrition and lack of ability to invest
6 in curriculum building.

7 So, the pilot project has been an incredible
8 first step in expanding the capacity of our adult
9 literacy programming to what it should look like.
10 Continued funding under the adult literacy pilot
11 project will enable us to integrate technology –

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 ESTELA COHETERO: To strengthen students capacity
14 to navigate and information based society, hire case
15 managers, counselors and social workers to assist in
16 systems navigation. More effectively support
17 students work readiness and college transition and
18 provide organized curriculum and instruction,
19 conceptualize students long-term goals and career
20 interests, leading to skillful English speakers,
21 problem solvers and leaders. Ongoing coordinated
22 services are much more cost effective and a better
23 intervention than risk of unemployment, exploitation
24 and poor health.

1
2 So, these two initiative can truly help us
3 enhance economic growth and promote healthy
4 communities and I humbly thank the City Council for
5 funding these initiatives this past Fiscal Year and
6 strongly urge the Council to continue fully funding
7 these initiatives. Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
9 hear from Ogi Funta Morena.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 OGI FUNTA MORENA: Good evening everyone and
12 thank you Chair Joseph and the rest of everyone on
13 here for your time and patience.

14 I'm here, my name is Ogi Funta Morena, I'm the
15 Advocacy and Civic Education Program Coordinator at
16 Muslim Community Network. I'm here to testify
17 underneath of really just diversity education in New
18 York City public schools. Muslim MCN has conducted a
19 survey in 2019 that showed that youth 10-18 year
20 old's experience more hate crimes, amounting up to 43
21 percent of our survey – people who filled out our
22 survey.

23 Verbal abuse topped the list at 42 percent.
24 Students have received harassment at 41 percent and
25 been called terrorist Isis supporters, asked why they

1
2 are wearing hijab or any religious attire. So, it's
3 so significant that New York City Department of
4 Education includes really just diversity education in
5 their curriculum for students to not only be more
6 inclusive and accepting of other students faith but
7 also to be more aware of global diversity. To be
8 more knowledgeable about U.S. History and World
9 History and to also reduce the number of hate crimes
10 that are in our schools. And I would also like to
11 emphasize the students testimony on here that New
12 York City budget shouldn't uhm, the Education Budget
13 shouldn't be going to criminalizing students. I'm a
14 product of public school and I've experienced a
15 trauma that the metal detectors and having police
16 officers in the schools cause and so, it's important
17 that funding goes towards cultural awareness,
18 language access, improving resources in schools.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 OGI FUNTA MORENA: And supporting English as
21 second language speakers and English as new language
22 speakers. Thank you all for your time.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and we'll now call
24 on the next panel. Stephanie Nilva Day One New York,
25 Steve Held Just Kids Early Childhood Learning Center

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2 Far Rockaway. Nancy Katz Seat in the Middle, Molly
3 Schiff , Sara Landis and Cheryl Sanders. We'll first
4 turn to Stephanie Nilva.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 STEPHANIE NILVA: Good morning. Thank you so
7 much to the Chair and to the City Council members for
8 allowing me to speak here today.

9 Hi, my name is Stephanie Nilva, I'm the Founder
10 and Executive Director of Day One. And Day One is an
11 organization fully focused on building healthy
12 relationships among young people through domestic
13 violence prevention in hundreds of schools each year
14 and legal assistance and counseling for young
15 survivors of relationship abuse.

16 Demand for domestic violence services has been as
17 much as 70 percent higher since before the pandemic.
18 Day One only works with youth 24 and under, reaching
19 over 10,000 youth annually and the adults in their
20 lives. Day One has submitted requests to every
21 single Council Member for the following allocations:
22 District specific and citywide funding from the DOVE
23 Initiative. \$60,000 from the initiative to combat
24 sexual assault and new funding of \$100,000 from the
25 immigration and sexual assault programs within the

1
2 young women's initiative. We hope to meet with your
3 offices and expand services in each of your
4 districts. We'd also like to briefly address bigger
5 picture issues. We shouldn't be asking schools if
6 they need information about healthy relationships
7 when one-third of young people are consistently found
8 to be experiencing harm in their dating
9 relationships.

10 Technology abuse affects as much as half of all
11 youth. Domestic violence is already draining
12 hundreds of millions of dollars from New York City
13 each year. The city can meet this crisis with a new
14 initiative that would fund preventive education for
15 youth and training for youth workers and teachers on
16 the subject of healthy relationships. The need is
17 dramatic. The biannual youth risk behavior survey
18 finds one in five girls and one in ten New York City
19 students report experiencing abuse while dating.

20 In New York, teen survivors are three times more
21 likely to miss school and three times more likely to
22 carry a weapon to school when they don't feel safe.

23 The DOE does not require youth workers, teachers,
24 or guidance counselors to be trained about warning
25 signs or abuse or handling disclosures of harm. Many

1
2 initiatives like DOVE address direct domestic
3 violence services. Let's put an equal amount, \$10
4 million towards prevention and improving the lives of
5 New York City -

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 STEPHANIE NILVA: Students, so that they never
8 need those direct services. Day One also supports
9 the Just Pay Campaign. Day One and other nonprofits
10 are desperately in need of the wage adjustments
11 included in the campaign. Thank you for your time.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
13 hear from Steve Held.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 STEVE HELD: Hi, thank you for the opportunity to
16 speak with you about the proposed budget. My name is
17 Steve Held and I have been the Executive Director of
18 Just Kids Early Childhood Learning Center for the
19 past 42-years. Our program has educated over 1,200
20 children each year between the ages of birth to five
21 with and without disabilities and today, I would like
22 to speak to you about or Far Rockaway site.

23 Since New York City opened 3K and UPK for all and
24 negotiated staff salaries to align with their public
25 school counterpart, Just Kids has struggled to retain

1 special education staff at our Far Rockaway site.

2 Our reimbursement is promulgated by the State

3 Education Department and it cannot support New York

4 City's 3K and UPK staff salaries. In fact, our staff

5 have been solicited by the BOE to come work in 3K and

6 UPK at their higher salaries.

7

8 Importantly, I'm at least five staff short at

9 this moment and based on the SED regulations, I will

10 be required to submit my intent to close our Far

11 Rockaway site no later than April 1, nine days from

12 now if positions remain unfilled. This will mean as

13 of July 1, nearly 100 children will need a placement

14 in an existing program. This is heartbreaking to me.

15 Our site is the only program in the area and our

16 special education children present with profound

17 developmental delays. Just Kids has applied to the

18 Board of Ed for an early childhood enhancement grant

19 and we had direct discussions with the wonderful

20 staff at the BOE. Our understanding is that they

21 would like us to agree to limit a 12-seat classroom

22 to six or eight in order to meet our areas least

23 restrictive environment for children awaiting

24 placement by the Board of Ed.

25

1
2 They cannot at this time promise any enhanced
3 funding without this Council's support and the
4 support of the Mayor's Office. I would respectfully
5 request that the Council support this -

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 STEVE HELD: With the dollars needed for your
8 children and their families. Please consider your
9 support of Ed proposal and please visit our program.
10 We promise you will enjoy the children. Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we're
12 going to turn to Nancy Katz.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 NANCY KATZ: Hi, I'm Nancy Katz, I'm the Director
15 of Seeds in the Middle. We're a very small charity
16 that's been around for about 11-years and we're very
17 focused on low income food insecure neighborhoods in
18 Central Brooklyn. We ask for a lot of money this
19 year because we know that healthy children do better
20 in school and our focus is equity and the fact that
21 we do not accept that schools in Black and Brown
22 neighborhoods do not have fresh fruits and
23 vegetables.

24 So, we set up school farm stands and edible
25 gardens and healthy cafés and we have a chef night on

1
2 April 13th at 178 in Brownsville. But the bottom
3 line is this, is that we ask for money for a series
4 of school run farm stands where the students can
5 learn how to run a farm stand and make it sustainable
6 at the same time that they are learning. We also
7 asked on Walking Street at Charity Baptist Church for
8 funding for an after school program for 60 children
9 to show that children of color don't automatically
10 score low and we want to do a 32-week program. The
11 church is dedicating its space and it will have
12 certified teachers, arts education, music education,
13 healthy food, healthy cooking, soccer and cultural
14 trips on Saturdays. And we want to show that if we
15 give the children the same resources that others take
16 for granted in other areas of the city, they will of
17 course do as well on tests as everyone else.

18 So, basically, our bottom line again is equity
19 and fresh food for all and we would super appreciate
20 if you would look at our request for funding and
21 think about changing up how you fund organizations
22 because it's clear due to the deaths of COVID and due
23 to the high rates of diabetes and obesity that
24 programs have been failing for a decade. So, why not
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1
2 try some others that are based on community leaders
3 running them? Thank you very much.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
5 turn to Molly Schiff.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 MOLLY SCHIFF: Good afternoon. My name is Molly
8 Schiff and I am a Theater Teacher at a 6-12 school in
9 the Bronx in District 16. I'm currently on a leave
10 of absence as I pursue a masters degree at the
11 Harvard Graduate School of Education and Education
12 Policy but I plan on returning to my wonderful
13 students and school in the Bronx in September. Thank
14 you to Madam Chair Joseph and the Committee on
15 Education for the opportunity to share testimony
16 regarding arts education funding for next school
17 year.

18 For the last four years, I got to witness how
19 impactful and meaningful theater education is to
20 students. School is often their first and only
21 opportunity to experience and participate in theater.
22 I've witnessed countless students overcome crippling
23 anxiety in public speaking and interacting with their
24 peers through ensemble building activities,
25 productions and playwriting, among others.

1
2 And through virtual learning, theater was the one
3 subject that provided my students with an escape from
4 their reality. Social emotional learning is of
5 upmost important to students readjust to attending
6 class in person five days a week and through
7 partnerships with professional theater companies such
8 as Manhattan Theater Club in New York City Center, my
9 students have had the opportunity to develop the four
10 social emotional skills. Namely self-awareness,
11 self-management, social awareness and relationship
12 skills and these are skills that support students as
13 they navigate the world in and beyond the classroom.
14 Additionally, theater education has been immensely
15 valuable to my 12th graders as they navigate the
16 college application process.

17 Story telling is at the core of the essay writing
18 process and students find that theater helps
19 themselves – helps them express themselves in
20 compelling and effective ways.

21 It is imperative that arts education funding
22 remain available so that every student in New York
23 City public schools has access to a high quality arts
24 education and programming.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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MOLLY SCHIFF: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, next we will turn to Sara Landis.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sara, you should receive an invitation to accept the unmute from our staff. Okay, we'll switch to Cheryl Saunders and then we'll try Sara one more time. So, if we can go ahead and unmute Cheryl Saunders.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You're unmuted now Cheryl.

CHERYL SAUNDERS: Good evening Chair Joseph and City Council Education Committee. I am a recent Special Ed Teacher retiree and currently substituting in a public school in East Brooklyn, East Flatbush Brooklyn and I live around the corner from the school, so I'm not only advocating for the school, but also the community. I have been volunteering with Seeds in the Middle, a healthy food, education program for about five years. This program includes farmers markets, field trips, chef nights, chef nights demonstrate how to prepare healthy and affordable meals that our students are cooking and serving the meals.

1
2 And the farmer markets provide a business model
3 exposing students how to set up and maintain their
4 own businesses and focusing on healthy alternatives.
5 So, please continue to support these relevant and
6 important programs. I'm referring to Seeds in the
7 Middle and thank you for the opportunity to share.
8 Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, uh, we're
10 going to try Sara Landis again.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, uhm, we are going to
13 move onto the next panel. Bear with me a moment.
14 The next panel is Ashley Conrad Comfort Menza,
15 Crystal Reyes from Sisters and Brothers United and
16 Cynthia Sanchez Sisters and Brothers United. We'll
17 first start with Ashley Conrad.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 ASHLEY CONRAD: Uh, good evening Chair Joseph and
20 Committee members. Thank you so much for allowing me
21 to testify this afternoon. I am testifying on behalf
22 of Freedom Agenda as the Community Organizer and a
23 native New Yorker.

24 For years we have been pushing and pulling for a
25 system transformation, yet we continue to overly

1
2 invest in systems of punishment like the Department
3 of Correction instead of towards systems of healing
4 and empowerment.

5 I was educated in the New York City Department of
6 Education from the years of 1998 to 2011. I was
7 educated at PS89 elementary school in Elmhurst, a
8 school that failed me and many years later, also
9 failed my nephew who was currently on Rikers Island
10 and for a lack of better term, I would say funneled
11 into Rikers Island by the New York City school to
12 prison pipeline.

13 I sat in classrooms of over 30 plus kids to one
14 teacher. I watched extra-curricular activities and
15 after school programs constantly be stripped.
16 Educational resources that provided access to arts,
17 music, one on one tutoring and not to mention the
18 support that after school programming provided to our
19 communities, in which parents maybe working multiple
20 jobs.

21 At the start of each school year, I remember
22 being sent home with a long list of supply items to
23 buy for my classrooms. Items like crayons, paper
24 towels, glue, scissors, markers, etc.... Communal
25 items that the community had to supply because our

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2 schools often went without basic needs. Needs to
3 access like stationary, computers, and decent up-to-
4 date textbooks. Instead, we have more access to NYPD
5 or school safety and metal detectors than we did to
6 guidance counselors and true support.

7 Education continues to be an equity issue tied to
8 racial social and economic just this year in the
9 city. Gaps in student achievement along with racial
10 and socioeconomic lines are longstanding and we saw
11 that first hand during this pandemic. Equity and
12 education cannot be –

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 ASHLEY CONRAD: Education cannot become a reality
15 if we prioritizes preserving an inflated DOC budget
16 but find savings by cutting education funding and
17 that's exactly what our Mayor has proposed. Cutting
18 school budgets is not an unfortunate financial
19 necessity, it's a choice.

20 In 2021, New York City spent almost three times,
21 which is 290 percent more on an incarcerated person
22 than the second most expensive jail system in the
23 country. Yet people in DOC custody are subjected to
24 the worst jail conditions and we've already had our
25 third death this year alone. The FY 2022 DOC budget

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2 is currently forecasted at around \$2.697 billion.
3 That is simply unparallel. We can start by shifting
4 at least some of these resources wasted on a corrupt
5 and deadly jail system towards education and true
6 community sources. Funding for mental health
7 resources in and out of schools, restorative justice,
8 and in school and after school extra-curricular
9 programming that will provide supports to students
10 who need educational spaces that offer safety and
11 transformative possibilities for students in
12 historically marginalized underserved communities.

13 In addition to funding their education and
14 futures, achieving equity by providing support for
15 schools with nonprofit and cultural organizations
16 that will serve Black, Brown, immigrant, disabled,
17 indigenous and low-income communities throughout the
18 city. No teacher should have to worry about not
19 being able to provide the most basic resources for
20 their students. Especially when our youth here in
21 the city show up to classroom doors lacking far more
22 than school supplies that we can supply through
23 divestment.

24 We are really counting on the City Council to
25 make that a reality for us. Thank you so much.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
3 turn to Comfort Menza.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 COMFORT MENZA: Good evening everyone. Thank you
6 for the opportunity to testify about the proposed
7 budget. My name is Comfort Menza and I live in the
8 Bronx with my four-year-old son Gabrielle.

9 I am here today to support calls for higher
10 salaries for preschool special education teachers and
11 staff at community-based organizations. This is not
12 just important to teachers; it is also very important
13 for children with disabilities and their families who
14 need good teachers in your classrooms. I have seen
15 the real impact that special education services can
16 have on their child and the importance of providing
17 children with the services they need. My son
18 Gabrielle was diagnosed with autism as a toddler. As
19 his third birthday approached, I had him evaluated
20 for preschool special education services and was told
21 that he will be placed in a small preschool special
22 education classroom. Unfortunately, when it came
23 time for Gabrielle to start preschool, the DOE did
24 not have a seat for him in the classroom. He needed
25 in violation of his legal rights.

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2 The DOE had to told me I had to wait and I waited
3 for a whole year. I enrolled him in a DOE general
4 education 3K program but quickly saw that they did
5 not have the resources to support my child. I didn't
6 know what to do, so after reaching out to an
7 advocate, I was finally able to get a seat for
8 Gabrielle in a preschool special education CBO at the
9 end of the last school year.

10 Ten months after he was supposed to start in
11 special education program, I immediately saw him make
12 progress. He started speaking more, he made friends
13 and he was very excited to go to school. He has
14 continued to learn this school year and is better
15 prepared for kindergarten in September. While I'm
16 excited about the progress he has made, I am also
17 worried about the month he went without services and
18 those missed opportunities -

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 COMFORT MENZA: To learn. Sorry, I also worried
21 about the hundreds of other children who like him are
22 waiting for a seat in the preschool special education
23 classroom. Two years ago, the city agreed to
24 increase the salary of 3K and Pre-K general education
25 teachers as CBO's but left our preschool special

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2 education teachers. Today, there's a shortage of
3 preschool special education classes and the city will
4 not be able to open the classes we need in preschool
5 special education teachers as CBO's are paid less
6 than other teachers. Please, please ensure that the
7 budget for the Fiscal Year 2023 includes \$30 million
8 to increase salaries for preschool special education
9 teachers and staff as CBO's, so that every child can
10 have the classroom and teacher that it needs. Thank
11 you so much.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
13 turn to Crystal Reyes.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Crystal, are you there?
16 Okay, we're going to move on to our next panel. Uhm,
17 we're going to try one more time to see if Sara
18 Landis is there and then we'll hear from PJ, Rachael
19 Gazdick, Debra Gray, Jackie Schiffer, Mark Gonsalves
20 and Juan Carlos. We will first unmute Sara Landis.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we are now going to
23 turn to PJ.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

25

1
2 PJ: Thank you. Good evening Chair Joseph and
3 the Council Members that may still be on. Thank you
4 for the opportunity to testify today. My name is PJ.
5 I'm the new Education Policy Analyst at Community
6 Service Society of New York or CSS.

7 Since 2005, we've researched and defined the
8 problem of out of school, out of work youth in New
9 York City. We also call that OSOW. Our work on this
10 issue has moved the city towards making some critical
11 investments in education for New York City's youth.
12 Most recently, we saw the mayoral administration
13 expand SYEP to a historic high of 100,000 slots and
14 we of course commend the Mayor for this dramatic
15 increase to SYEP. And hopefully we continue to see
16 increases over the upcoming years as we build toward
17 a universal summer youth employment program.

18 We want to inform the Council of a few issues
19 that persist and how they might be resolved.
20 Firstly, we need to ensure that there are no barriers
21 for undocumented students who are included in SYEP.
22 We believe that part of that work is investment in
23 translation services and language appropriate
24 communications. If anything, one of the lessons
25 learned from at home instruction during the pandemic

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2 was that we need to have timely information to
3 families in a language appropriate manner and an
4 outdated bluebook or an English bias and materials
5 shouldn't be what bars a student from programs like
6 SYEP.

7 We also think it's time for the city to invest in
8 evaluation of the SYEP. In terms of schools.
9 Evaluations are integral to ensuring that SYEP is not
10 just something to do during the summer but a pathway
11 to future careers. We have a report on universal
12 SYEP that includes how we might tightly couple
13 schools in academics but we also need those resources
14 to go toward public evaluation and data that is
15 publicly available.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 PJ: And lastly, lastly, we need deeper
18 investment in contracting rates and staff
19 recruitment. We're part of a coalition of providers
20 who are creative and committed to making the
21 resources stretch but that's not a sustainable model.
22 Those who are hired to manage SYEP sites are doing
23 difficult work and they need competitive salaries.
24 We also think that DYCD can support this by
25 establishing a staff recruiter position to help

1
2 bolster those efforts. We think the SYEP program is
3 a great asset to our students and their families.
4 Once again, we're excited about the growth of the
5 program and we want to see it continue to grow. You
6 can refer to our written testimony which we will
7 submit for more details on all of the issues I've
8 mentioned and I'm happy to answer any follow-up
9 questions. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
11 turn to Rachael Gazdick.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 TERI WEST: Madam Chair and members of the
14 Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity
15 to testify. My name is Teri West, Director of
16 Government Contracts and School Partnerships at New
17 York Edge. I am here today on behalf of Rachael
18 Gazdick to ask the prioritized New York Edge's FY23
19 citywide funding request of \$1.2 million under the
20 Council's Afterschool Enrichment Initiative.

21 New York Edge is the largest provide of
22 afterschool and summer programming in New York City
23 serving youth in all five boroughs. Our mission is
24 to help bridge the opportunity gap among students in
25 underinvested communities by providing programs

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2 designed to improve academic performance, health and
3 wellness, self-confidence and leadership success.
4 Leadership skills for success in life and as our name
5 implies, we strive to provide every student in our
6 program with the edge they need to succeed in the
7 classroom and in life.

8 Targeting underserved communities throughout the
9 city, academics now account for over 50 percent of
10 our programming with core components including visual
11 and performing arts, stem education, social and
12 emotional learning and leadership, sports, health and
13 wellness, academics, and college readiness.

14 We are also one of the city's largest providers
15 of college access programs. Our student population
16 is 90 percent or more African American or Hispanic
17 with an approximately equal number of males and
18 females. More than 85 percent come from low-income
19 households eligible for Title One free or reduced
20 price lunches. For 30-years, New York Edge with the
21 Council as our partner has been able to substantially
22 impact the lives of hundreds of thousands of New
23 York's most vulnerable youth. City Council funding
24 supports our flagship New York City Council summer
25 camps and allows us to bring our school year leagues

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2 at special events, weekend programs and holiday break
3 programming to youth across the city. New York Edge,
4 it's students and families are extraordinarily
5 grateful for the past three decades of support from
6 the New York City Council.

7 We are now looking to you to meet the needs of
8 the next generation of young people by supporting our

9 -

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 TERI WEST: FY23 citywide funding requests of
12 \$1.2 million. These funds will enable us to keep
13 providing youth throughout the city with the edge
14 they need to succeed. Thank you very much for your
15 time.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
17 turn to Debra Gray-Parker.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 DEBRA GRAY-PARKER: Good afternoon Chair Joseph
20 and members of the Education Committee. My name is
21 Debra Gray and I am President at PS IS323 in
22 Brooklyn. As a parent with two children with an IEP,
23 I know that far too often our education system fails
24 students with disability. As a parent leader, I know
25 how to advocate for my children to help ensure that

1
2 they receive their mandated services. However, I
3 also know now every parent knows how to navigate the
4 system for their children. So today, I would like to
5 share the concern and solutions I often hear from
6 parents in my school district.

7 Parents are concerned about their children riding
8 the school bus, especially with the stories told to
9 them from neighbors and news reports of school bus
10 safety issues. I have heard stories of school buses
11 failing to show up to pick up children to take them
12 to school, causing them to lose out on learning.

13 I have also heard stories from worried parents of
14 children on the school bus for hours due to drivers
15 not knowing their route or traffic. As a parent, I
16 choose to take my own children to school, although
17 they are eligible for the school bus service.

18 Because I am concerned about their safety on the
19 bus, with that said, the Department of Education
20 should invest in funding to improving the school bus
21 system. I understand that there is a national
22 shortage of jobs but I encourage the DOE to invest in
23 an incentive and initially to hire more.

24 Additionally, it is 21st Century and DOE should be
25 using modern technology, such as GPS system, so that

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2 parents could easily track school bus route. That
3 way if a bus is running late, a parent will feel a
4 little less anxious as they wait for the bus to pick
5 up or drop off their children.

6 Next, during the past three years, students of
7 all groups experienced loss instructional time,
8 especially students with disabilities. Not only do
9 students -

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 DEBRA GRAY-PARKER: With disabilities lose out on
12 instruction from their primary teacher, many also did
13 not receive their mandated services three years into
14 the pandemic. Many parents are concerned that their
15 child IEP's are not being met and that our school
16 system is not doing enough to help set their children
17 on a path to meet their goal.

18 With that said, DOE should provide training for
19 parents for students with disabilities so that they
20 can help better their goal. DOE should also
21 prioritize students with disabilities for Summer
22 Rising Programs and fulfill its promise of ensuring
23 that students receive additional support that they
24 need to be successful.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
3 hear from Jackie Schiffer.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 JACKIE SCHIFFER: Thank you Chair Joseph and
6 members of the Committee of Education. My name is
7 Jackie Schiffer and my career has been the management
8 of 50 plus arts education programs across New York
9 City's five boroughs. Managing federal arts
10 education research program and currently serving as
11 an associate director with and advancement at Lincoln
12 Center for the Performing Arts.

13 A 2014 report by former New York City Comptroller
14 Scott Stringer, found that 28 percent of New York
15 City public school lacked a full time arts teacher.
16 Another 20 percent lacked a full or part time arts
17 teacher and nearly half of these schools were located
18 in the South Bronx and Central Brooklyn. Speaking to
19 deepen equities.

20 Cultural organizations including Lincoln Center
21 responded swiftly. Middle School Audition Camp was
22 launched alongside New York City Department of
23 Education. To narrow the gap in access for some 300
24 rising 8th graders as they prepare for New York City
25 public high school arts auditions each year. Council

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2 Members, students from each of your districts have
3 participated in the program and an astounding 95
4 percent of students gained acceptance into a high
5 school of their choice in 2019. As a researcher on
6 the Center for Arts Educations, Arts Engage
7 Initiative, I personally experienced how the arts
8 transform school communities and serve as an
9 equalizer in the classroom.

10 While significant progress was made between 2015
11 and 2020, our city and our students were gravely
12 impacted by the pandemic. The 2020-2021 arts in
13 schools report highlighted downward trends in arts
14 instruction. Simply put, much of our progress has
15 stalled. As New York City emerges from the pandemic,
16 our students are counting on us to center arts
17 education once again. It's through the arts that
18 we're able to come together. To process emotion,
19 learn from and about those who are different from us
20 and imagine a world of infinite possibilities.

21 Together, we can ensure that our efforts towards
22 an equitable arts education ecosystem resume and that
23 our progress is not lost. The city should consider
24 baselining a \$100 minimum investment in Arts
25

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2 Education per student. Thank you for your
3 consideration.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
5 turn to Mark Gonsalves.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 MARK GONSALVES: Hi, thank you Chair Joseph for
8 giving the time to speak. My name is Mark Gonsalves,
9 I'm a parent of two kids in New York City. I have a
10 nine-year-old who is in an ICT classroom and attends
11 a public school here in Manhattan. My 12-year-old
12 though has been rejected by DOE. In fact, just last
13 month in this IEP meeting, he was rejected again by a
14 DOE for the seventh time. They don't want him.

15 Why? Because he is on the autism spectrum. He
16 is a kid who loves school but the DOE doesn't want
17 him. And so, my son thankfully, was able to find a
18 school, it's called an 853 school. It's similar to
19 the preschool 4410's you heard about but it's for
20 kids of school age and so, in his case being 12, he's
21 now attending an 853 school.

22 Now, this school is approved by the State of New
23 York. It's paid for by the State of New York but
24 it's not equal. It's separate but not equal. My son
25 has had three assistant teachers this year because

1
2 the DOE keeps on poaching his teachers. He has lost
3 teachers in the middle of a school year. Where? To
4 go to the DOE.

5 And what's happening? He has learning loss. He
6 continues to struggle because all of a sudden a new
7 teacher has to learn about my son and figure out what
8 he needs as a child on the spectrum. This cannot
9 stand, we need the New York City Council to stand up
10 with their funding and say, this is not acceptable.
11 We need programs for kids on the spectrum.

12 The DOE will say yes but we have NEST and we have
13 Verizon. That's great. They take care of one end of
14 the spectrum and the other end of the spectrum but
15 they forget all the other kids in the middle of the
16 spectrum. And so, now we've got tens of thousands of
17 kids who the DOE rejects every year who end up going
18 to private schools and 853 schools or go to no
19 schools and it's just not acceptable.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 MARK GONSALVES: We need the City Council to step
22 up in their budget, mandate special education funding
23 for autism and other sources. We're spending
24 hundreds of millions of dollars in lawsuits every
25 year so those families could afford to sue the DOE.

1
2 And yet we have so many families who can't even
3 afford and get lost in the system because the DOE
4 doesn't care. We need - Chair Joseph, we need you to
5 stand up to DOE and show that you care and the City
6 Council cares. I thank you Chair Joseph, the New
7 York City Council, and the Education Committee for
8 hosting this hearing. Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
10 turn to Keith Fuller Make the Road New York Urban
11 Youth Collaborative, Zuleima Dominguez Make the Road
12 New York Urban Youth Collaborative and Christian
13 Flores Urban Youth Collaborative. We'll first turn
14 to Keith Fuller.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Oh, look at me. See, I'm
17 sorry everyone. Won, I'm sorry. We'll turn to Juan
18 and then we'll go to Keith. Sorry, everyone. It's
19 been a day.

20 JUAN CARLOS SALINAS: Hello everyone, I'm Carlos
21 Salinas Director of Education at Jamaica Center for
22 Arts and Learning, part of New York City's Cultural
23 Institutions group. I'm here today to advocate for
24 arts education and I'm sorry but today is test day,
25 so everyone that is still awake and listening, here

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2 is my first test five seconds. In five seconds,
3 remember what were you doing last Thursday work-wise
4 or school-wise? What were you wearing?

5 Okay, in five seconds, try and identify this
6 song. [PLAYING A SONG]. I'm going to guess that you
7 had an easier time identifying the song. Most of you
8 might know it as Overture or the Bad News Bears theme
9 song, then you do remember what you were doing last
10 Thursday or you know what you were wearing. And that
11 ladies and gentlemen is the power of arts education.
12 It gets our brain firing on all cylinders. All of
13 you wrote a speech yesterday. You rehearsed it and
14 you presented it today. We call that theater. I
15 threw my speech out the window when I realized we
16 were all saying similar things and wasn't really
17 going to add anything new to the conversation. Some
18 of you are using visual arts to make powerful
19 statements in your background. All of this is arts
20 education and that is why it is so important. Again,
21 let's make learning fun again.

22 A child's body is not designed to be sitting at a
23 desk for five, six hours doing nothing and the arts
24 bring that stuff to life, right.

1
2 So again, you know think about how much you
3 suffered when you were sitting in that desk as a
4 child, right. And it's arts education that can turn
5 the experience around for so many people and be that
6 turning point, okay. Thank you for your time. Don't
7 forget the arts education, it's what brought you here
8 today and made your presentation effective.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Juan. Sorry, for
10 skipping you. Now, we'll turn to Keith Fuller from
11 the Urban Youth Collaborative.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Keith, are you there? Okay,
14 we'll circle back to him. Let's go ahead and unmute
15 Zuleima Dominquez.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Zuleima, you should see a
18 accept an unmute prompt on your screen.

19 ZELEIMA DOMINQUEZ: Hello everybody and good
20 afternoon. My name is Jasmine Cortes and I am a
21 Youth Leader with Make the Road New York in Staten
22 Island and the Urban Youth Collaborative. I am
23 calling on the Education Committee members to fight
24 for a budget that New York City students deserve by
25 devising from our criminalization and investing in

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our care. We demand you include the following in your budget response to the Mayor: Invest \$75 million to hire 500 community members to help contribute to the safety of our school communities. When we arrive at school, we should be greeted by Community Members not police. Additionally, we need youth advocates, parents, parent coordinators and community outreach coordinators to help ensure our schools thrive. Please fight to fund my future instead of racist school policing. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll turn to Christian Flores.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

CHRISTIAN FLORES: Hello, my name is Christian Flores and I am a Youth Leader with Future of Tomorrow and the Urban Youth Collaborative. I am the eldest brother of two younger siblings of which attend the public schools within the DOE. I personally have had the unfortunate experience of interacting with the police in a negative aspect, including being handcuffed and being treated unfairly.

Something that really changed me to the core is the idea of my siblings potentially having to go

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2 through the same experience and as an older brother,
3 it is my instinctual reaction to look out for them
4 and to make sure they receive the best possible help
5 and they are treated on equitable terms with other
6 people, other students.

7 I am here today to call on the Education
8 Committee members to fight for a budget that New York
9 City students deserve by divesting from
10 criminalization and investing in our care, our mental
11 health, our needs. We demand that you include the
12 following in your budget responses to the Mayor:
13 Such as, eliminating more than \$400 million in school
14 policing budgets. The New York City must stop
15 funding these discriminatory acts and policing. This
16 includes eliminating funding for all vacant school
17 policing positions. Additionally, we also ask for
18 the defunding of the youth coordination officers. We
19 need mentorship. We need counselors. We need mental
20 health support. We do not need police.

21 I also ask for you to delay any funding for any
22 new student standing equipment Mayor Adams wants to
23 put in schools. New York City already spends
24 hundreds of millions of dollars on scanners. We do
25 not need any more money invested in our

1
2 criminalization. We ask that you invest \$75 million
3 to hire restorative justice coordinators in 500 high
4 schools and \$45 million to implement restorative
5 justice practices. Unlike policing, restorative
6 practices seek to address the root causes. It will
7 look at the youth like me as a person rather than a
8 potential problem.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 CHRISTIAN FLORES: And we also ask that you
11 invest \$75 million to hire 500 community members to
12 help contribute to the safety of our school
13 communities. When we arrive out of school, we should
14 be greeted by community members, not the police.

15 Additionally, we need youth advocates, para
16 coordinators, and community outreach coordinators to
17 make sure our schools thrive. We also ask our
18 baselined \$5 million for the mental health continuum
19 to continue with success in ensuring students gain
20 the mental health support we need.

21 We ask that you please fight to fund my future
22 and instead of these racist school policies and make
23 sure that my siblings do not have to go through the
24 same experiences I had to go through.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Chair, before we
3 do our catch all statement, because that's the final
4 panel, I just want to quickly read the list of CM's
5 incase anyone was missed for the record. So, today's
6 hearing we were joined by Council Members Louis,
7 Riley, Schulman, Hanif, Ung, Brewer, Salamanca,
8 Sanchez, Stevens, Narcisse, Hanks, Avilés, Ariola,
9 Gutierrez, Menin, Lee, De La Rosa, Dinowitz, Restler,
10 Gennaro, Feliz, Abreu, Marte and Krishnan, so I think
11 half the Council.

12 Now, there have been lots of people that were
13 registered today with special times. We accommodated
14 almost everyone but many people were not on when they
15 were going to be called. So, if you were on this
16 Zoom and your name was not called, please use the
17 raise hand function. I will call you in the order
18 that you raise your hands and you will again, the
19 time to speak is for three minutes - two minutes.
20 Two minutes, I don't want people to get mad at me.
21 It's two minutes. Please wait for the Sergeant to
22 let you go. So, we will first turn and if I mess up
23 any names, forgive me. We're going to first start
24 with Anna [INAUDIBLE 9:10:17], sorry.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1

ANNA: Hi, that's okay, it's [INAUDIBLE 9:10:24].

2

3

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

4

ANNA: Uhm, I'm sorry there's a couple of young people here who also registered. I'm hoping that they will prioritized as well.

6

7

ALISHA BEDEVIS: Hi everyone. So, I'm actually speaking on behalf of one of our young people who logged off a little while ago. So, good afternoon.

8

9

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My name is Alisha Bedevis(SP?) and I am a Senior at West and Secondary School. I am here today to ask

11

12

for your support in funding the \$250 million

13

initiative to implement enhance cafeterias across all

14

New York City public high schools and middle schools.

15

The cafeteria should be a space for socializing and

16

meeting new people and a relaxing break in the school

17

day amid the stress of academic classes. However, I

18

have seen how the stigmatization of eating school

19

lunch or sitting in the cafeteria has prevented the

20

type of lively socializing, a school cafeteria should

21

foster.

22

At my school, the cafeteria is quite because most

23

students prefer to leave the building during lunch

24

and the cafeteria is the last resort, place to eat.

25

Therefore the students who need to stay in because

1
2 they can't afford to buy food off campus are
3 isolated, stigmatized and without the beneficial
4 social aspects of lunch time.

5 The pandemic has taken an unfortunate toll on the
6 students education and I'm asking Mayor Adams,
7 Chancellor Banks and the City Council to take action
8 to address the loss of learning in the past two years
9 of interrupted schooling.

10 One way to support the students education is to
11 ensure that they are eating tasty, nutritious food in
12 a welcoming cafeteria environment. The enhanced
13 cafeterias will not only add more many options for
14 students but the redesigned cafeteria spaces will
15 make the experience of eating school food more
16 enjoyable and less stigmatized. Students will be
17 able to enjoy the social aspect of lunch because all
18 students regardless of if they eat school lunch bring
19 their own or by outside food and bring it back to
20 school will want to eat together in the cafeteria. I
21 hope you will join youth food advocates in the fight
22 for a better school food system -

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 ALISHA BEDEVIS: In New York with universally
25 enhanced cafeterias. Thank you for your time.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
3 turn to Beatrice Weber.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 BEATRICE WEBER: Honorable Chairman Joseph, City
6 Council Members, staff and my fellow New Yorkers, my
7 name is Beatrice Weber and I am here as both a parent
8 ambassador for the advocacy organization YAFFED,
9 Young Advocates for Fair Education and as a parent of
10 a child attending a private religious school in New
11 York City.

12 I am here as the face of thousands of parents who
13 cannot be here because to speak out against the
14 ultraorthodox Yeshiva system would do irreparable
15 harm to them. In New York City, there is a system of
16 control that exists to keep children from learning
17 basic educational subjects like math, science, and
18 the English language. This is not an issue of
19 religious freedom; it is an issue of community
20 control and forced ignorance perpetuated by a few
21 powerful men.

22 I am talking about so-called schools, sending
23 home rules that parents must obey if they wish to
24 keep their children in the yeshiva. Rules that
25 forbid members of the family from entering the public

1
2 library. Rules that forbid families from having
3 secular books in the house. I'm talking about
4 schools that make rules that forbid mothers from
5 driving cars.

6 I am a parent of ten children, six of them boys.
7 All of whom have attended or currently attend
8 Yeshiva's in Brooklyn and upstate New York. My sons
9 receive less than six hours a week of academic
10 education. They are taught in Yiddish by teachers
11 who have not received any high school education
12 themselves.

13 At age 13, the academic education ends. How are
14 my sons going to be able to find real jobs, feel out
15 job applications and be productive city's of a
16 democracy with that kind of education.

17 The Mayor's Preliminary Budget contains no new
18 funding for the underfunded Department of Educations
19 Office of nonpublic schools. I urge you to demand
20 that adequate funding be included for this office.
21 Please help us make sure that the law enforce and
22 that all children in New York City receive an
23 education. Let's work together to make sure that
24 these Yeshiva's act like real schools and follow the
25 law.

1

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

2

3

BEATRICE WEBER: And the Department of Education is equipped with the resources to enforce the law. I thank you for your time and your continued service.

4

5

6

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will call on Jennifer Stuart.

7

8

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9

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JENNIFER STUART: Hi, I'm Jennifer Stuart and I am a parent just here to echo some of the earlier panelists who were discussing pay parity for 4410 schools.

13

14

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17

My son is currently enrolled in his first year in District 75. He's severely autistic and nonverbal and he may be done with 4410's but I'll never stop advocating for them because of everything that they have done for us.

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25

What I'm asking is for the DOE to stand with these schools instead of steamrolling them by poaching their best teachers and therapists shamelessly. With their unequal funding, it's undeniably predatory and history will not look kindly on them. You already heard the devastating effects of these practices from the other panels. You can't deny that you are solely choking the life out of

1
2 these schools which have helped so many of us parents
3 early in our journey.

4 As a parent, I don't trust District 75 with the
5 critical developmental years of preschool for the
6 severely disabled population and here is one example
7 why. In August 2021, my son was approved for a
8 speech device and I actually got an email while I was
9 in this meeting that he finally got a speech
10 therapist but he hasn't had a speech therapist since
11 September. That's six months that my son went with a
12 speech device sitting in his school, that I couldn't
13 have because a speech therapist had to program it.

14 So, my question is, they want to cut \$1 billion
15 from this budget and what's going to happen to all of
16 these kids who need a 4410 environment? Where are
17 they going to go? What's the backup plan for them
18 because those schools will close.

19 Just from July, somebody earlier said, like they
20 lost 50 percent of their teachers. It's not going to
21 stop these -

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 JENNIFER STUART: I'm almost done. If they don't
24 have a backup plan for something as simple as a child
25 not having a speech therapist and not having somebody

1
2 floating around to set up speech devices for six
3 months, what's the backup plan for these preschool
4 aged children in the future? There is none. All the
5 DOE is doing right now is just acting out of greed.
6 They are acting like a corporation milking the
7 resources of 4410 schools until there's nothing left.
8 And please realize that from a parents perspective
9 that even with half the funding, a lot of these 4410
10 schools are still twice as good because they put
11 their full heart into their work. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
13 call on Salma H.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 SALMA H: Good afternoon. My name is Salma and I
16 am an Organizer with the Ya-Ya Network coming as a
17 former DOE student asking you to redirect the
18 allocation for school safety funding from policing
19 students to restorative justice.

20 As a college organizer looking back on my high
21 school experience, I can remember the extensive
22 disciplinary culture. I knew the name of every Dean
23 and saw an officer at every corner but I only saw our
24 one college counselor in my school of 3,000 twice in
25 my four years. I always knew more about how I can be

1
2 suspended or given detention but didn't know where to
3 go if I was feeling alone or needed mental health
4 support. Listening to today's students, it doesn't
5 sound like anything has changed and things have only
6 gotten worse. So, that leads me to ask, why is City
7 Council still trying to allocate \$450 million to
8 school safety when we know what that students in
9 schools with metal detectors and increase policing
10 are and have been criminalized. Why is it that
11 students are drilled with how they can be punished
12 but don't know their college counselor or where a
13 school psychologist or social worker is.

14 Because as the DOE has proven for the 20 years,
15 the definition of school safety hasn't included
16 emotional and social wellbeing of our students and it
17 hasn't met access to our counselors or social
18 workers. It means money for metal detectors and
19 police, so students don't have to act out. It's
20 creating prison like environments with the idea that
21 students will fear punishment. But in what
22 environment can you learn and grow if you are in
23 fear?

24 Yet, we see the same tactics remodeled or just
25 blatantly reused. This year needs to be different.

1
2 We want adequate investment in our schools that
3 create real safety and support education, so we can
4 build our communities and so they can thrive. We
5 don't need new security technology. We don't need
6 more metal detectors. This doesn't mean just
7 rebranding officers. We need to replace them with
8 counselors and social workers.

9 With that said, we are demanding that this \$425
10 million for school safety be reinvested into creating

11 -

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 SALMA H: Environments that foster growth. So,
14 please put - please help us put an end to the
15 policing culture in New York City schools. Thank you
16 for your time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
18 call on Christine Ramirez.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 CHRISTINE RAMIREZ: Hello, my name is Christine
21 Ramirez, Parent Association President from PS35
22 District 9. I'm a part of an SLT and the Parent
23 Action Committee. I as a parent leader and once a
24 student myself, I'm angered by the city wanting
25 police in our schools.

1
2 I went to John F. Kennedy High School where metal
3 detectors made me feel like an animal, a prisoner of
4 the education system. This environment was so
5 horrible, kids fought every day. Pepper spray was
6 always used because of out of control fights and kids
7 rebelling against school police. John F. Kennedy
8 later on, after I graduated was later closed due to
9 its violence. This is proof that police in schools
10 don't work. I urge the Council to not let police in
11 our schools happen.

12 What we need is counseling, emotional programs
13 for our students who struggle with our society.
14 Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll call
16 on Shindi Whiteman.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 SHINDI WHITEMAN: Honorable Chairwoman Joseph and
19 City Council members, my name is Shindi Whiteman and
20 I'm a Parent Ambassador for the Advocacy Organization
21 Yaffed Young Advocates for Fair Education.

22 I'm here today to plead for your help. I'm here
23 to represent the thousands of parents of acidic
24 school children who cannot be here today because they
25 are prevented from having an independent voice and

1
2 from advocating for change in the orthodox Yeshiva
3 system.

4 Uh, we are not trying to stop instruction, we are
5 trying to state the right of every child to also
6 learn the basic skills they will need to be
7 productive citizens of this great city and this great
8 country. When a child has not learned science or
9 math or history and does not adequately learn the
10 English language, that child is going to have serious
11 trouble interacting with the larger world.

12 It is likely that the child will have trouble
13 finding a job. I know graduates of acidic Yeshiva's
14 20-year-old men who cannot fill out a basic job
15 application because they have never learned enough
16 English to do so. These are men who are born in
17 Brooklyn and were educated at schools in Brooklyn.
18 These are private schools. They receive millions of
19 dollars of taxpayer money.

20 We cannot let this continue. This is not an
21 issue of religious freedom. This is a system of
22 control intended to keep the community ignorant in
23 order to perpetuate the power of a small group of
24 men. This is going on here in New York City. I grew
25 up a member of the community. My son has attended

1
2 and stills attends acidic Yeshiva for his entire
3 career. He is over 13 now though he receives zero
4 secular instruction. All of his education is
5 religious. I have not been able to move him to
6 another school because of a divorce custody decision
7 in a New York State City Court.

8 My story is not unique. There are many parents
9 who want a better education for their children who
10 cannot be here today. There is no choice in the
11 Yeshiva system. If you are member of the community,
12 you must put your child in a Yeshiva. You must put
13 your child in a Yeshiva operated by -

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 SHINDI WHITEMAN: In New York State, private
16 schools operate in a market and demand they be of
17 certain quality because the parents choose to send
18 their children there and choose to pay the tuition.
19 In the Yeshiva community, how the schools operate and
20 what they teach and what rules they require, the
21 students are all controlled by leaders of the
22 community. Thank you for your time.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next up, we
24 will call on if we can unmute Leslie Gomez Rivera.

1
2 LESLIE GOMEZ RIVERA: Hello, my name is Leslie
3 Gomez Rivera, I'm a Senior in Midwood High School and
4 I live in the 37th District. I'm here to ask for
5 your support to fund the cafeteria enhancement in all
6 of New York City, middle schools and high schools.
7 I've been a part of the New York City Education
8 system for all my life and I've come to realize the
9 importance of school food for growing children and
10 their education.

11 When my father was sick and my mother would be at
12 the hospital with him, I had to rely on school food.
13 I would make sure to go to school early and get
14 breakfast and then make sure during my last period
15 class to ask for permission to leave early to get
16 school lunch before they closed the kitchen. I
17 didn't want to be another burden on my mother.

18 This opened my eyes to the importance of school
19 food because it was accessible to me at the time that
20 I needed it the most. My freshman year, our
21 cafeteria was the standard normal one. There was
22 long white tables that were placed next to each other
23 and the experience with this cafeteria arrangement
24 wasn't the most pleasant because it was usually
25 crowded and that's how it's always been.

1
2 After the cafeteria redesign, the same year we
3 had booths where you could sit across from your
4 friends. Seats were just two people or big tables
5 with individual seats and it was much more easy to
6 eat school lunch. The entire cafeteria was more
7 colorful and enjoyable to just sit there. The number
8 of people eating school lunch increase dramatically
9 in Midwood. We are a school with over 4,000
10 students, so just imagine the change that all of you
11 could create for all middle schools and high schools
12 by supporting the Redesign Cafeterias. More and more
13 children would feel better about school lunch and it
14 would overall improve the quality of our education
15 all across the board. Thank you for your time.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
17 go to Faith Jones.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 FAITH JONES: Hi, I'm Faith Jones. I am
20 currently a 9th grader at Brooklyn High School and a
21 member of Youth Advocates. I am here today to ask
22 for your support to bring cafeteria enhancements to
23 all NYC middle and high schools. The reason why I am
24 bringing awareness to this issue is because I've seen
25 many kids at my school go without lunch because they

1
2 couldn't afford to bring lunch from home, and didn't
3 want to be embarrassed to be seen with school food
4 given its reputation. That's the reputation, is the
5 students perception of the cafeteria being old and
6 outdated, causing students to question if their
7 cafeteria is suitable to be eating lunch in.

8 This leads students to not eat school lunch in
9 order to save themselves from being ridiculed by
10 peers. Resulting in countless students going hungry
11 themselves throughout the day, which is known to have
12 negative affects such as tiredness, low mental health
13 and lower grades. As of right now, there are many
14 NYC students who aren't able to reap the benefits of
15 universal school food. But that can change if you
16 were to give the additional funding for cafeteria
17 enhancements.

18 I urge you to continue the fight for school foods
19 that the previous members of the City Council have
20 done by passing universal free school lunch in 2017.
21 The next battle for school food justice is to bring
22 more modern and up to date cafeterias to NYC
23 students.

24 This action is necessary to bring about positive
25 change in the students life. Such as improved mental

1
2 and physical health, better academic performance, and
3 overall wellness. Thank you for my time.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and our final
5 person is Alexander Rehov Martinez.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 ALEXANDER REHOV MARTINEZ: Good evening, my name
8 is Alexander Rehov Martinez. I am a sophomore at
9 Central Park East High School and here as a member of
10 the Youth Food Advocates on behalf of all public
11 schools students in New York City.

12 Today, I'm here asking for your support in aiding
13 the enhancement of all cafeteria environments in New
14 York City, middle and high school. As a student who
15 has been in the in's and out's of predominantly
16 minority institutions, I've been a witness of the
17 detrimental affects of not eating the whole day at
18 school. We must understand that this meal might be
19 the only meal some students depend on and so, the
20 best service must be provided for all students. In
21 fact, when there is no money to support the school
22 food program, additional problems become presented.

23 One of them being the reputation of embarrassment
24 it leaves on students. Because of the risks that
25 students face on being stereotyped for eating school

1
2 lunch, most students choose to avoid eating
3 throughout a whole school day. I am one of those
4 students.

5 With a pandemic on our shoulders, many families
6 have been in the midst of a financial crisis.
7 Students who eat school lunch are labeled as a school
8 eater. School eater is a slur that has been
9 normalized in our schools and by providing funds to
10 update cafeterias, you can help make this change and
11 overthrow these negative associations. By offering
12 renewed and improved school cafeterias where students
13 feel comfortable eating the school food, you can
14 support the intellectual growth of each and every
15 student. By not investing in school cafeterias, we
16 decrease the chances that students will eat and
17 decrease their school performance but most
18 importantly offend them.

19 In fact, we deserve quality space to enjoy our
20 meals rather than eating in those space. We want
21 togetherness. And so, I hope you will join the Youth
22 Food Advocates in the campaign for a better school
23 food system in New York City. Complete the
24 universally improved cafeterias.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 ALEXANDER REHOV MARTINEZ: Thank you for taking
3 the time to listen to this.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uh, thank you. Chair, those
5 are all the hands. So, uhm, we've concluded the
6 Preliminary Budget Hearing but while everyone is on,
7 I just want to remind folks that next month we go
8 back to oversight and our oversight topic will be
9 foster care youth in the DOE system. So, Chair, turn
10 it back to you.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, thank you. Wow,
12 what a day but thank you for hanging in there
13 everyone. So, I wanted to thank everyone who's been
14 on this Zoom for me - with me for the last nine
15 hours. Special thanks to SCA, DOE, my colleagues and
16 the nearly 200 people who came to testify today. We
17 heard you testify on 4410's, foster care, busing,
18 restorative justice, mental health services, art
19 education and the dozen other topics you brought to
20 our attention about today.

21 This hearing is just a start of the budget
22 process. The Council will soon release our
23 priorities for investment. We hope to see the
24 Council's priorities and your priorities reflected in
25 the Executive Budget the mayor will release next

1
2 month. After the release of the Executive Budget, we
3 will have an additional round of hearing with
4 agencies and a day of public testimony.

5 I look forward to continuing the conversation
6 I've have already had and will have with many of the
7 folks who spoke today. And with that, we end the
8 first Education Budget Hearing of this Council.

9 What do I do? I adjourn. And I adjourn.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We adjourn. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you all.
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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date May 30, 2022