

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND SUBCOMMITTEE ON
LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME USES

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October 3, 2008
Start: 10:17 am
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HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:

ROBERT JACKSON
JESSICA S. LAPPIN
Chairpersons

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
John C. Liu
G. Oliver Koppell
Rosie Mendez
Gale A. Brewer
Maria del Carmen Arroyo
Lewis A. Fidler
James F. Gennaro
Daniel R. Garodnick
Peter F. Vallone, Jr.
Domenic M. Recchia, Jr.
Simcha Felder
Vincent Ignizio
David Yassky
Helen Diane Foster
Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
Bill de Blasio

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

Dennis M. Walcott
Deputy Mayor Education and Community Development
Office of the Mayor

Kathleen Grimm
Deputy Chancellor for Finance and Administration
NYC Department of Education

Liz Sciabarra
Chief Executive
Office of Student Enrollment

Garth Harries
Chief Executive
Portfolio Development

Scott Stringer
Borough President
City of New York

Richard Farkas
Vice President
United Federation of Teachers

Emily Horowitz
Professor
St. Francis College

Leonie Haimson
Executive Director
Class Size Matters

Doug Israel
Director of Research and Policy
The Center for Arts Education

Liz Krueger
State Senator
New York Senate

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

Layette Silverman

Dara Adams

On behalf of Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney

Micah Lasher

On behalf of Congressman Jerry Nadler

Daniel Squadron

Nominee for State Senate

Megan Charlop

Helen Rosenthal

Council member

Community Board 7

Jody Seki

Council Member

CEC District 2

Sina Parker

Community Board 6

Susan Curson

Kaitlyn Hannon

On behalf of Assemblyman Brian Kavanagh

Matt Borden

On behalf of Assembly Member Deborah Glick

2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Good morning
3 and welcome to today's joint oversight hearing on-
4 -of the Education Committee and the Subcommittee
5 on Landmarks, Public Siting, Maritime Uses on
6 addressing school overcrowding in New York City
7 public schools. And before I begin my opening
8 statement, let me introduce our colleagues that
9 are present this morning. All the way to my left
10 is Oliver Koppell of the Bronx; Dan Garodnick of
11 Manhattan; John Liu of Queens; James "Jimmy" Vacca
12 of the Bronx; and Jessica Lappin, who is the chair
13 of the Subcommittee of the Landmarks, Public
14 Siting, and Maritime Uses and she is co-chairing
15 this meeting with me here today, it's oversight of
16 education and her subcommittee. The speaker--our
17 Speaker Christine Quinn will be joining us
18 shortly, but let me just say, today is actually
19 the first of two hearings we will be holding on
20 school overcrowding, which is a very complex
21 issue. The focus of today's hearing will be on
22 school capacity and utilization and the planning
23 process for new schools. The second hearing on
24 overcrowding, which will be scheduled in the near
25 future, will focus on the process to find and

1
2 acquire sites for schools, whether for new
3 construction, lease space, or space in existing
4 school buildings for new small schools or charter
5 schools. Over the past six months several reports
6 have been released that talk about overcrowding in
7 city schools, in particular in certain
8 neighborhoods, such as in District 2 and Queens
9 and as a borough, but mainly focus in specific
10 areas. Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
11 issued two reports on overcrowding schools in a
12 number of Manhattan neighborhoods and our city
13 Comptroller Bill Thompson released a report on
14 school overcrowding citywide. I'd like to thank
15 both of them for their efforts to tackle this
16 critical issue. In addition to these reports, a
17 number of working groups, task force, and
18 coalitions have recently been formed to address
19 school overcrowding and the timing of these
20 reports and other efforts is not a coincidence.
21 Rather, they come together in order to impact on
22 the Department of Education's five--proposed Five-
23 Year Capital Plan, which is due out in early
24 November of 2008--in essence, next month. Since
25 the City Council has to approve the Five-Year

1
2 Capital Plan, today's hearing gives us an
3 opportunity to examine what DOE and the School
4 Construction Authority--commonly known as SCA--are
5 currently doing to address overcrowding, as well
6 as to get valuable input from other stakeholders.
7 The magnitude of the overcrowding problem is
8 staggering. According to DOE's most recent
9 Enrollment, Capacity and Utilization Report, 38%
10 of New York City public school students attend
11 schools in buildings that are above 100%
12 utilization--meaning they are overcrowded. Forty-
13 seven percent of elementary school students are in
14 schools that are overcrowded; 19% of middle school
15 students and 51% of high school students attend
16 overcrowded schools. That is not only
17 disgraceful, but is unacceptable. Our children
18 deserve better than that. I have to say that
19 school overcrowding is a very, very important
20 issue to me. I served on the school board for
21 Community School District 6 in northern Manhattan,
22 which encompasses the areas of Hamilton Heights,
23 Washington Heights, and Inwood, when it was the
24 most overcrowded district in the city of New York.
25 Back then. Back then in the 90s and the 80s,

District 6 was overflowing and too many children had to be bussed far from home--from District 6 in northern Manhattan to District 5 to District 3 to District 1 in lower Manhattan, all the way in the Bronx--and that was involuntary busing. The conditions in District 6 schools were not conducive to learning when students were crammed into many spaces that were inappropriate for instructions, like storage rooms, like offices, like bathrooms, like closets. Schools are also lose most of--schools also lost most of their specialized spaces, such as science labs, libraries music rooms, art rooms, dance studios, you name it, if it was available, they took it away and they were converted into what they considered classrooms--regular classrooms. And to add insult to injury, not only did the schools lose these specialized rooms, but their official capacity was inflated as a result. So after converting their library, science, music, art, and other specialized spaces into regular classrooms, a school that was meant to hold 1,000 students could fit, let's say 1,300. Then the school's official capacity would be changed to show it

1 could accommodate 1,300 students. So instead of
2 being enlisted at a utilization rate of 130%,
3 which is considered to be overcrowded, the school
4 would be listed at just 100% capacity. Although
5 District 6 schools are not quite as overcrowded
6 today, most of the schools never regained full use
7 of those specialized spaces. Unfortunately, if
8 the classrooms were never converted back to a
9 specialized purpose as a music room or whatever it
10 is or whatever it was, it still counted today as
11 capacity. So if the number of students attending
12 the school had shrunk, let's say to 1,200, it is
13 now considered underutilized, under capacity,
14 instead of what it really is--a school designed
15 for 1,000 kids that is grossly overcrowded. Not
16 only is this unfair to the school, this practice
17 hides the true level of overcrowding in our
18 system. And let me be fair, DOE has made some
19 changes in their method of calculating capacity
20 and utilization in recent years, but their Blue
21 Book--this is the book which lists capacity and
22 utilization information for every school--still
23 doesn't accurately reflect real conditions in most
24 schools. Now you might say, aw, that's not true.
25

1 Well to find out if this was still true, last
2 spring I commissioned a survey of school
3 principals conducted by Professor Emily Horowitz
4 of St. Francis College and Leonie Haimson of Class
5 Size Matters. More than one-third of all
6 principals in the city responded to the survey.
7 Of those who responded, half of principals at
8 schools that DOE reported as underutilized say
9 their schools are actually overcrowded. I ask
10 you, who do you believe? I look forward to
11 hearing more from these researchers as well as
12 from other parents, advocates, elected officials,
13 and other stakeholders here today. We will also
14 be considering proposed resolution 1573(A) and
15 this is a resolution calling upon the Department
16 of Education and School Construction Authority to
17 implement changes to reform city school planning
18 to better address the problem of overcrowding.
19 And I want to point out, however, that we will not
20 be voting on this resolution today as this is just
21 the first hearing. Everyone who wishes to testify
22 today must fill out a witness slip, which is
23 located at the desk of the Sergeant of Arms in
24 front of the chambers, which is to my left--and
25

2 I'm pointing over there. To allow as many people
3 as possible to testify, testimony will be limited
4 to three minutes per person. And we are very
5 fortunate to have Speaker Christine Quinn to join
6 us at this hearing today and if you don't
7 recognize her, she's sitting right in front of me.
8 And she also would like to make an opening
9 remarks, along with my colleague Jessica Lappin,
10 who is the Chair of the Subcommittee of Land Use
11 and I'd like to now turn it over to--Speaker, can
12 we give it to Jessica first?

13 [Off mic]

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: We're going to
15 give it to Jessica Lappin first, so a Chair of the
16 Subcommittee and then we hear from our Speaker,
17 Christine Quinn.

18 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Thank you.
19 Good morning, everyone. Thank you. It's
20 wonderful to see so many parents here today
21 participating in this hearing and I wanted to
22 thank Deputy Mayor Walcott and Ms. Grimm for both
23 being here this morning as well. I wanted to
24 recognize council member Mendez who's a member of
25 the subcommittee who has joined us since we began

2 today and give just some brief remarks to lay out
3 the issue before us today. New York's
4 construction boom has been a bust for our public
5 school kids. Thirty-eight percent of New York
6 City public school kids this morning walked into
7 overcrowded classrooms, and that's approaching
8 half a million kids. In Manhattan, our schools
9 are in crisis mode. There are way too many
10 students in every class, we have long ago
11 sacrificed art rooms, gyms, science labs and that
12 wasn't enough. Cafeterias have become gyms,
13 breakfast, lunch is served at 9, 10 in the morning
14 and that hasn't been enough. So we are at crisis
15 mode now, not even thinking about what's coming in
16 the future. And the problem seems to be a
17 relatively simple: one school construction has not
18 kept pace with residential construction. The
19 Department of Buildings issues building permits,
20 but the Department of Education doesn't build the
21 schools that we need to keep up. Whatever formula
22 we're using, it isn't working. The last five-year
23 capital plan projected 25% growth in District 2
24 over a decade--I don't see 25% more public school
25 seats being built. I wanted to give just a couple

2 of examples to highlight the problem that we're
3 facing. P.S. 290 on East 82nd Street has 239 more
4 kids than the building can accommodate; P.S. 158
5 on York and 77th Street has a hundred more
6 students enrolled this year than they did last
7 year. And with the economy the way it is and the
8 economy the way it's headed, it's only going to
9 get worse. We're going to hear a lot more
10 examples, some that are much worse from those of
11 you who are here today, but that's what I'm
12 hearing from parents in my district. [Pause] I
13 think because of the outcry, because of the
14 passion, because of the frustration that parents
15 have been feeling, that was really the reason that
16 the borough president and I worked together to
17 introduce the resolution that we're going to be
18 discussing today. I wanted to very briefly give
19 you an overview of what the resolution calls for:
20 it calls for the city to correct the faulty
21 capacity estimates that overstate school capacity
22 as our Chair Robert Jackson explained; it calls
23 for the city to address existing overcrowding, but
24 also to plan for reducing class sizes across the
25 city--not just playing catch up not just using

2 stopgap measures to address the problem we have
3 now, but really planning for the future. And
4 lastly, it calls for smarter and more proactive
5 school planning in the future. The residential
6 buildings don't just pop up overnight. We all see
7 them going up, we see the cranes, we see the
8 workmen, we see the advertisements for the large
9 luxury family units, so we know that the buildings
10 are coming and we know that the families are
11 coming. So we need to be building the schools
12 that can keep up. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

14 Before the speaker, let me just introduce our
15 other colleagues: Simcha Felder to my right, of
16 Brooklyn; Peter Vallone, Jr., to my right, of
17 Queens; Domenic Recchia sitting next to Speaker
18 Quinn, from Brooklyn; and Gale Brewer sitting to
19 her right, of Manhattan. And our speaker,
20 Christine Quinn.

21 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very much.

22 Let me start off by thanking you, Chairperson
23 Jackson and also Chairperson Lappin, for holding
24 this important hearing. I want to thank Deputy
25 Chancellor Grimm, Deputy Mayor Walcott, and

2 everyone else from the Department of Education and
3 the Deputy Mayor's office who are here today. You
4 know, we're all here today because the building of
5 new classrooms and new schools for our children
6 has clearly not kept pace with development
7 throughout all five boroughs and this is
8 particularly acute in some neighborhoods in
9 different boroughs throughout the city. Now as
10 council member Lappin said, although there's been
11 a lot of development in our city and that
12 development has certainly brought benefits, jobs,
13 new housing, it's also--which is a good thing--
14 brought an influx of new families with school-age
15 children into our city. And it's also a good
16 thing that these families want to send their
17 children to public schools. Now it's our
18 responsibility--the responsibility of all of us in
19 government--to ensure that these families don't
20 just send their children to public schools, but
21 that they have the opportunity to send their
22 children to good schools, the best schools, with
23 reasonable class sizes that'll allow their
24 children to grow and learn in an environment that
25 provides them the best and most optimal level of

2 success. I really want to again thank Chairperson
3 Jackson, really commend council member Lappin for
4 her work on this, but also thank some of our
5 colleagues in government. Congresswoman Carolyn
6 Maloney--I know she very much wanted to be here
7 today, but she's in Washington with this equally
8 important issue at hand, so we understand her
9 absence, but she's been working very, very hard on
10 this issue. As has our terrific borough president
11 Scott Stringer--who I know is with us today--who
12 did a very, very significant report on this that's
13 really helped focus everyone and I want to thank
14 him and his staff. Now we all know, as my
15 reference to where Carolyn Maloney is--
16 underscores, we face uncertain and difficult
17 economic times in our city. We're further
18 challenged, therefore, with finding feasible ways
19 to ensure that our children are provided with
20 needed classroom space--the best classroom space
21 and doing it in a fiscally prudent way. We're
22 just going to have to live up to those challenges.
23 I want to thank the Department of Education and
24 the School Construction Office and, again, Carolyn
25 Maloney and Scott Stringer, they've with--through

2 the Manhattan Borough President's School
3 Overcrowding Task Force, have pulled together some
4 very significant meetings. And those meetings
5 have made progress, progress that we're satisfied
6 with, but is it enough, but I think it is a step
7 forward that in those meetings there was a
8 commitment to calculate overcrowding on a
9 neighborhood basis, as opposed to a district-wide
10 basis, and I do want to make very clear that
11 progress today and it is a step forward, which we
12 want to thank people for. However, myself,
13 council member Brewer, the other members who have
14 been at those meetings--and we're happy about
15 that--obviously more needs to be done. And many
16 of us still have concerns about the capital plan
17 that will be introduced very soon and we need to
18 have ongoing conversations to figure out how we
19 really plan our schools for the future. It's
20 critical that all of us in government, the council
21 the Department of Education, and the School
22 Construction Authority, find a way to make long
23 term school planning as flexible and as expansive
24 as possible to accommodate the ebb and flow of
25 development. Despite best efforts to predict

2 where development can and will occur, things
3 change as we all see right now, over a five-year
4 period of time and we need a more fluid structure
5 to be able to deal and respond to that.

6 Additionally, we need to make sure that when
7 schools are planned, their planned as schools
8 really should be. We need to plan schools that
9 have adequate classroom space for full-day pre-
10 kindergarten, that have adequate science labs for
11 middle schools and high schools--that means these
12 schools may cost more, that will have to be
13 factored into all of our understanding, planning
14 and time frame. We want to have gyms in our
15 schools. We don't want to have one room that's
16 the auditorium and the gym and the cafeteria
17 anymore. That's the right thing, we need to plan
18 it, it may cost more, we need to all understand
19 the implications of that. You know, in the months
20 ahead between now and the approval of the plan and
21 in the time after that we're all going to have to
22 keep deeply committed to the issue of dealing with
23 overcrowding, the issue of expanding and building
24 new schools, but to start, or continue, I should
25 say, the process today, we really need to find

2 ways to address how we're doing this to make sure
3 we're doing it in a more appropriate way that's
4 actually keeping on track with development and
5 keeping apace of what we know schools need to be
6 today. I want to thank everyone for participating
7 in this hearing, including the many folks in the
8 public who are here sitting in this room that's
9 very cold, which I can't explain to you why, but I
10 want to thank all of you for being so committed to
11 your school children and your families that you
12 took the time to be here today and I want you to
13 rest assured, we won't get all the answers today,
14 but we will get further down a road of moving to a
15 place where we come to the answers and come to
16 better planning around schools. Thanks again,
17 Jessica and Robert, and thank you, everyone from
18 the Deputy Mayor's Office, Deputy Mayor and the
19 Department of Ed who are with us today.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Let me thank
21 you, Speaker Quinn, for being here with us this
22 morning on this extremely important issue and
23 obviously you have been involved directly with
24 meetings between the Department of Education and
25 the school communities on overcrowding and we

2 appreciate your direct interest in this particular
3 matter knowing that you're so busy on so many
4 issues and concerns and especially the ones that
5 we're dealing with today, with the financial
6 crisis of our great city and our country. Before
7 we hear testimony from Deputy Mayor, we've been
8 joined by David Yassky to my right of Brooklyn.
9 And anyone else? Okay. And now we'll hear from
10 our Deputy Mayor.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Mr.

12 Chairman, Mr. Chairman. I had asked whether I can
13 make a very brief statement.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm so sorry,
15 Oliver Koppell--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --of the
18 Bronx.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Yeah. Mr.
20 Chairman, thank you. I appreciate the Deputy
21 Mayor and the Deputy Chancellor being here and I
22 want to pay tribute to them for the work they have
23 done and the hearing shouldn't be interpreted, at
24 least as far as I'm concerned, to say that we
25 haven't put a lot of money into capital facilities

2 over the last five-year capital plan. But as we
3 look at the new capital plan, there are clearly
4 some needs that have not been met and one of the
5 things is--and I'm delighted my Manhattan
6 colleagues are so active in this area, and I take
7 nothing away from them and the Borough President--
8 but Manhattan's not the only place where there's
9 overcrowding. And my district is, I think as
10 needy as any other place in the city in terms of
11 attention. In Norwood today, the Daily News
12 pointed out that P.S. 56 is way overcrowded and
13 they're busing kids, not only out of the school,
14 but out of the district. PS 8 in Norwood is well
15 overcrowded, the Riverdale schools, which were not
16 overcrowded a couple of years ago, are now well
17 overcrowded and we've got to do something about
18 that. The school in Woodlawn in my district is
19 way over capacity; the school in Wakefield is
20 overcapacity, so we need attention to the schools
21 of the northwest Bronx and I'm sure other places
22 in the city and that has to be included in the
23 five-year capital plan or all the things that have
24 been talked about now will in fact continue to be
25 true. Thank you again for being here and I hope

2 that this new capital plan will meet those needs
3 that are urgently required to be met.

4 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,
5 council member. We've also been joined by Maria
6 del Carmen Arroyo up to--in front of me, a little
7 bit to my right, she's from the Bronx, and Helen
8 Diane Foster of the Bronx. And now--

9 [Off mic]

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --oh, and
11 Vinnie Ignizio snuck up behind me from Staten
12 Island. And now we hear from our Deputy Mayor in
13 charge of education, Dennis Walcott. And let me
14 just ask, Deputy Mayor, if you can ask everyone to
15 introduce themselves at the panel and their
16 position with either the Department of Education
17 or the City of New York.

18 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: By all means,
19 thank you--

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

21 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: --very much,
22 Chair Jackson to Chair Lappin to Speaker Quinn, to
23 members of the Education Committee and
24 Subcommittee on Public Siting. And before I give
25 my formal testimony, I just want to respond to

2 something that Speaker Quinn talked about. Quite
3 frankly, I thought you are absorbing some
4 potential budget cuts with the lack of heat in the
5 room, but I understand that they left the window
6 open, so that's why it's so cold in here. So
7 you're working on it, okay, glad to hear that.

8 But it's really a pleasure and honor, again, to
9 sit before you and I am joined today by Deputy
10 Chancellor Kathleen Grimm and her colleagues from
11 the Department of Education: Liz Sciabarra, who is
12 the Chief Executive of the Office of Student
13 Enrollment and Garth Harries, who is the Chief
14 Executive Portfolio Development. In addition to
15 that, I want to acknowledge those elected
16 officials who are sitting in the audience today.
17 I am pleased to be here to testify on how we are
18 addressing the capacity and enrollment in our
19 city's public schools as these issues are
20 critically important to this administration.

21 These steps build on all of our progress to date,
22 whether it's bold initiatives to make each of our
23 classroom places where all of our children can
24 achieve to their full potential or our commitment
25 to reduce overcrowding and to improve the quality

2 of existing facility. As you know, Mayor
3 Bloomberg's commitment is and has always been for
4 every child to receive a first-class education and
5 that includes providing a high-quality school
6 building in good conditions for learning for every
7 child. We are encouraged by the progress we have
8 made in reducing overcrowding in our schools since
9 the mayor assumed stewardship of the school system
10 in 2002. Upon coming into the office, the mayor
11 inherited a school system which was stifled by
12 bureaucratic dysfunction, marked by widespread
13 overcrowding, erratic management, and diffuse
14 responsibility. Two agencies serving overlapping
15 purposes, the School Construction Authority and a
16 Division for School Facilities, had duplicative
17 functions and different reporting structures,
18 which created a culture of blame that lacked
19 accountability. When the state legislature gave
20 the mayor the authority over the New York City
21 school system in 2002, the school governance law
22 provided the mayor the authority to appoint all
23 three trustees of the SCA, including the School's
24 Chancellor who serves as the SCA chair. As a
25 result of the Mayor's control of the school

2 system, the management of Department of Education
3 Capital Program was consolidated under one agency,
4 the New York City School Construction Authority,
5 combining, some regard, the function of two
6 agencies--the SCA and the Division of School
7 Facilities. Today, the SCA is solely accountable
8 for planning, real estate, and budgeting, as well
9 as the scoping, design and construction of new
10 school buildings, additions and capital
11 improvements to existing school buildings. While
12 the division of school facilities is responsible
13 for maintenance, repair and safe operation of all
14 facilities under the jurisdiction of the city
15 school system, the functions that were once
16 divided between two different organizations are
17 now fully integrated, eliminating duplicative of
18 roles and reducing the overall bureaucracy of
19 these offices, who both report to Deputy
20 Chancellor Grimm and where we are now have a clear
21 line of authority and accountability. As you may
22 remember, the Board of Education's 2000-2004
23 Capital Plan had incurred significant cost
24 overruns within its first few years. And that's
25 the prior Capital Plan than the Capital Plan that

2 we're in right now. As a result of that
3 particular Capital Plan, nearly 20,000 of the
4 60,000 seats it set out to create were never built
5 and many school buildings were overcrowding,
6 reflecting decades of neglect in keeping up with
7 demographic change. The Department of Education
8 inherited this deficit and has spent much of the
9 time since compensating for it. Thanks to the
10 strong management, as well as the unprecedented
11 investment in school construction, we have been
12 able to significantly reduce overcrowding
13 throughout the city, despite the initial handicap.
14 Deputy Chancellor Grimm will get into greater
15 detail about the complex definition of
16 overcrowding, but in simple terms, we are seeing
17 overcrowding as a result of buildings that has
18 more children than its rated capacity. The
19 current overall citywide utilization rate for
20 2006-2007 school year is 84.5%, which is down from
21 93.9% in 2002-2003 school year. For the 2006-2007
22 school year, Brooklyn had a 79.3% utilization, the
23 Bronx had an 85.5% utilization, State Island had
24 88.8%, Manhattan had 78.9%, and Queens had 93.7%
25 utilization. This actually means we have room in

2 our system. The challenge is ensuring that we
3 have room in the right places. We know that some
4 of our buildings have been and are overcrowded.

5 In the 2002-2003 school year, 38.9% of elementary
6 schools and 35% of middle schools and 59.7% of
7 high schools were overcrowded. By 2007-2008, the
8 number of overcrowded buildings had fallen by
9 almost 12 percentage points for elementary
10 schools, 23 percentage points for middle schools,
11 and 21.7 percentage points for high schools.

12 While some overcrowding does persist in certain
13 communities and deserves our strict attention, it
14 is substantially less of a problem than when we
15 first arrived. This is good news for our city's
16 public school children, but at the same time we
17 know we need to do more. This administration has
18 made an unprecedented commitment to school
19 construction by proposing and implementing a
20 school capital plan of \$13.1 billion. This is the
21 largest capital plan in the department's history
22 and with it we have been able to build thousands
23 of sorely needed new seats throughout the city.
24 What we have been able to achieve is as a result
25 of our collected efforts, with the mayor, the

2 state legislature, and you, the City Council,
3 coming together to ensure that the funding for the
4 plan came through from both the city and the
5 state. As of now, 55,285 of the 63,000 proposed
6 seats in the 2005-2009 Capital Plan have either
7 been built or are in process of being built.

8 Specifically, we have opened 10,207 new seats this
9 September and we're projecting an additional
10 11,890 in 2009; 15,921 in 2010; and 10,002 in
11 2011; and 4,211 seats in 2012. Clearly this will
12 further help eliminate overcrowding in our school
13 buildings. The fruits of our investments are
14 being realized. Among the new school buildings
15 open this year are the Family Court Building, when
16 you cross the Brooklyn Bridge, you'll see the old
17 Family Court Building, which is now a new school.

18 In Queens, the Elmhurst Educational Campus,
19 formerly known as the Art & Leather Building;
20 IS/HS 362 in the Bronx, and IS/HS 43 on Staten
21 Island. We've also opened a new facility that
22 people have been clamoring for for years and
23 always promised, but never delivered, but
24 delivered in this Capital Plan of Gregorio Luperon
25 High School in Washington Heights to replace an

2 old, decrepit school building that the children
3 were learning in. These facilities are state-of-
4 the-art and are providing our children with the
5 tools they need to be successful, with and
6 including new science and computer labs. This
7 administration has also been more transparent than
8 any other in our capital planning process. We've
9 learned early on that the previous plan simply did
10 not address the actual need. In neighborhoods
11 where there was a clear demonstrated need, seats
12 were not built, in other places schools were built
13 in communities where there really was little
14 evidence to show need. To avoid this pitfall,
15 we've committed together with the Speaker to
16 amending the plan annually. We meet with the
17 Community Education Councils and elected officials
18 each year and we are guided by their prioritized
19 suggestions. To ensure that we are capturing
20 current needs, we assess a condition of every
21 school building each year and we also do
22 demographic projections every year so that we have
23 the most accurate information on where there is
24 growth or decline in enrollment. All of this
25 information is posted on the DOE website and is

2 readily available to the public. In formulating
3 the upcoming plan and subsequent amendments, we
4 will continue to analyze current population
5 projections from our demographers working with
6 information from City Planning and other city
7 agencies. We will also continue to fold in
8 critical information on birth rates, immigration
9 rates, migration data, and growth in the housing
10 market. We will continue to analyze housing
11 construction--that which is already in
12 construction, as well as that which is planned.
13 That said, I would like to highlight that our
14 demographic projections show a continued decline
15 in overall enrollment throughout the city. This
16 is an important point to make because it
17 demonstrates that overcrowding is not a problem in
18 every school building or even in most districts,
19 nor will it be in the future. Therefore, as the
20 Speaker indicated, and as some of you have
21 indicated as well, the discussion about
22 overcrowding in schools cannot be overly broad and
23 general and it should not be also by districts.
24 It must tailored to the unique needs of specific
25 communities throughout the city and include

2 creative thinking about how we use our space. In
3 order to address some of the most severe
4 overcrowding, we must take a multifaceted
5 approach. We must look at ways to maximize our
6 existing assets. As Speaker Quinn and Chair
7 Lappin know, we are exploring changes in zoning
8 and enrollment practices to manage the capacity of
9 schools in parts of the city, especially in
10 Manhattan. Additionally, we must look at our
11 portfolio and make decisions that may include
12 moving school organizations or programs out of
13 overcrowded facilities into underutilized ones.
14 We update our demographic information annually and
15 we know that as housing markets continue to
16 evolve, enrollment projections will likely change.
17 Both the Chancellor and I have met with elected
18 officials representing School District 2 and
19 developed a "war room." And it has since been
20 convened to tackle particular overcrowding issues
21 on the east side and lower part of Manhattan and
22 also in District 3. The Community Education
23 Council is considering a rezoning and portfolio
24 plan that was designed to provide relief in few
25 severely overcrowded buildings and repopulate

2 other school buildings that are nearly half-empty.
3 And the DOE is meeting with district leadership
4 teams around the city to discuss the portfolio of
5 schools in their district and their needs.
6 Different districts will likely require a
7 different approach, but we are committed to having
8 that conversation. Our efforts thus far should be
9 illustrative of our approach in engaging
10 communities in this issue. Finally, let's be
11 candid, the reason why some of our schools are so
12 overcrowded is because they are great schools and
13 parents want to send their children to these
14 schools. So in addition to new construction,
15 rezoning proposals, and revisions of enrollment
16 policies, addressing overcrowding also means
17 providing high-quality educational options in the
18 building where, for decades, neglect has caused
19 parents to vote with their feet fleeing
20 neighborhood schools. We now have to re-create
21 the demand in these buildings by creating
22 desirable and rigorous schools for students.
23 Again, we look forward to working with all of you
24 in that process. These kind of proposals are not
25 always going to be popular, so, together, we will

2 need to make some hard choices in order to do
3 right by the children of the city. Our children
4 deserve quality school options, they deserve to
5 learn in classrooms that are not cramped, and they
6 are entitled to classrooms for subjects, such as
7 arts and science. Yet we must recognize that
8 tough times demand tough decisions and we must
9 know that all of us need to have the courage to do
10 the right thing and make tough calls when it's
11 necessary. With that said, we look forward to
12 making these decisions in consultation with all of
13 you and our colleagues in elected offices. Before
14 I turn to Deputy Chancellor Grimm, who will
15 elaborate more specifically on the department's
16 policies and plans for further reducing the
17 pockets of overcrowding in our schools, I want to
18 make one last point about the road ahead in our
19 city. As we all know, our economic times demand
20 that every single agency realize that they're
21 going to have to do more with less. We are
22 committed to not letting city services suffer,
23 especially for our children, but we must be
24 realistic in our options and decisions as we plan
25 ahead. And before I say thank you to all of you

2 for your excellent work and suggestions and
3 feedback, as you know, I am fully committed to
4 working with each and every one of you. We sit
5 down on a regular basis, you call, I call, and I
6 think we have an open relationship as far as
7 addressing the pockets of overcrowding that exist
8 throughout the system and I pledge my support to
9 continue to do that. Now it's my pleasure to turn
10 the microphone over to Deputy Chancellor Grimm.

11 [Pause]

12 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Thank you,
13 Deputy Mayor. Good morning, Chair Jackson, Chair
14 Lapin and the members of the Committee on
15 Education and the Subcommittee on Public Siting.
16 I'm pleased to be here this morning to discuss the
17 considerable steps that we have taken to reduce
18 overcrowding in recent years and to continue to
19 engage in a conversation about that work that
20 still certainly needs to be done. First I'd like
21 to step back and take a closer look at the formal
22 definition of overcrowding. Every year, the
23 department releases an Enrollment Capacity
24 Utilization Report, otherwise known as the "Blue
25 Book," that defines the number of students in each

2 classroom and each facility that can serve our
3 children. The method of calculating a classroom's
4 capacity varies by grade level and by room size
5 and is outlined in detail in the Blue Book. After
6 each classroom's capacity is calculated,
7 classrooms are combined to determine the capacity
8 of the entire school building, making assumptions
9 about how schools will use the classrooms. This
10 calculation determines the level at which,
11 according to the Blue Book, a school becomes
12 overcrowded. [Pause] When the public imagines
13 overcrowding, it often imagines too many students
14 sitting on radiators, overflowing from the
15 classrooms into the halls and other spaces. In
16 some cases, this happens and one case of this
17 happening is too many. But overcrowding is
18 typically experienced by schools in other ways.
19 Because of the assumptions we make about class
20 size and how schools will use their classrooms,
21 overcrowding can sometimes mean only that a school
22 needs to schedule the classroom space more
23 aggressively, with less downtime, than we assume
24 it does. In many cases, particularly at the
25 elementary level, overcrowding means that schools

2 don't have enough art or music rooms and those
3 disciplines must be offered in the homeroom. At
4 the high school level, overcrowding often means
5 the classes will be staggered over a longer day.
6 Since 2002, the department has made changes to the
7 Blue Book to better represent the actual
8 utilization of our facilities so that both we and
9 the public can have a clearer sense of the
10 capacity of our buildings. In fiscal year '04, a
11 new method for calculating capacity was introduced
12 to reflect our target class sizes for grades K-3.
13 Now the Blue Book includes the historical capacity
14 rate, which uses our standard methodology and
15 allows everyone to compare to past reports, as
16 well as this new target capacity rate, which
17 reflects our goal to reduce maximum K-3 class size
18 from 25 to 20 students. [Pause] In order to
19 identify need for music and art room space, the
20 Blue Book was also updated to include both the
21 number of cluster rooms--cluster rooms being rooms
22 for art and dance and drama, etc.--[pause] to
23 include both the number of cluster rooms reported
24 by each school and the number of cluster rooms
25 each school should have based on the allocation

2 formula used to formulate capacity. This way,
3 when schools convert an art room or a science room
4 into a classroom--as we know many schools have
5 done to deal with rising enrollments--the schools
6 don't lose the claim on those rooms as cluster
7 rooms. As the Deputy Mayor affirmed earlier,
8 transparency is fundamental to our mission and we
9 have worked to make sure the most accurate and
10 most useful information is widely available.

11 [Pause] Even when a school is at 100% utilization
12 or above, the principal can--and usually does--use
13 her space in such a way that keeps class size
14 below the maximum allowable in a particular space.

15 [Pause] For example, the Blue Book's target
16 capacity assumes that standard high school
17 classrooms are used 87.5% of the time and that
18 specialized high school classrooms--science labs,
19 for example--are used 67 and a half percent of the
20 time. That would translate in a regular classroom
21 87 and a half to 7 out of 8 periods and in the
22 specialized classrooms, five out of the eight
23 periods. While these measures are reasonable for
24 the purpose of calculation, most schools schedule
25 their rooms in a way that uses this assumed vacant

2 time to reduce classes. In other words, a
3 principal would use those rooms at a larger
4 percentage. [Pause] Class size can be low even
5 in schools at 100% utilization, just as class
6 sizes can be too high in schools that have
7 capacity to spare. [Pause] On this point, it is
8 important to note that average class sizes in the
9 department are smaller at every school level than
10 the maximum's assumed by the Blue Book. We have
11 reduced class size at all grades in every year of
12 this administration. These class size reductions
13 are the result of significant efforts undertaken
14 by the department, not only to construct
15 buildings, but to invest resources into schools
16 and help educators program and plan for reduced
17 class size. The department's Five-Year Class Size
18 Plan pays particular attention to low performing
19 schools that have high class sizes and are under
20 capacity. Last year, these schools saw class size
21 drop by almost 5%. [Pause] ...talk a little bit
22 about how we're making progress. The department
23 has worked hard to reduce overcrowding across the
24 city. We have helped reduce overcrowding by
25 investing in capital construction, reconfiguring

2 facilities to better use available space, and
3 adjusting our enrollment practices. And we'd like
4 to talk a little about each of these efforts in
5 detail. First, on capital investment. As you
6 heard from the Deputy Mayor, the current
7 administration has presided over an unprecedented
8 investment in school construction. Thanks to the
9 historic agreement between the mayor and the state
10 legislature and with the generous additional
11 contributions from the City Council, the
12 department now has actually invested \$13.7 billion
13 in this capital plan. We are on track to create
14 63,000 new classroom seats across every borough by
15 2012. [Pause] Fifty-five thousand have been
16 completed or are in the process of being
17 completed, this includes 3,000 seats in District
18 2; 1,700 seats in District 10; and more than 5,000
19 seats in District 25--clearly areas of great need.
20 Twenty-four, I'm sorry. This--thank you.

21 [Off mic]

22 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: I

23 appreciate, I appreciate that, Mr. Chair. [Pause]
24 This doesn't include seats that will be built
25 under the next capital plan. [Pause] Just as--we

2 are not just building prolifically, we are also
3 building strategically. New building construction
4 is approved only after careful consideration of
5 demographic, immigration, and housing factors that
6 influence enrollment trends. Our demographers
7 assess where the needs for seats will be the
8 greatest and we make every effort to concentrate
9 construction to sites that will relieve existing
10 overcrowding and will accommodate projected
11 enrollment growth. However, as we all know,
12 construction takes time. Sites must be found,
13 which--as parents across the city know--can be a
14 real challenge in overcrowded neighborhoods and
15 designs must be submitted and approved before the
16 first brick can be laid. As a result, we are just
17 beginning to see the fruits of our capital
18 investment in this plan. Some of you were with us
19 on the first day of school this year when we
20 visited the brand-new Luperon High School in
21 Washington Heights, which houses nearly 500
22 students. The desire to build schools as quickly
23 as possible is understandable, but quality should
24 never be sacrificed due to rush. And, as I think
25 few people question, our first responsibility is

2 to create safe, well-designed, state-of-the-art
3 schools like Luperon. And thanks to the great
4 work of the School Construction Authority, we have
5 done just that and will continue to do so as we
6 move forward. So capital investment is one
7 important step that we take to reduce overcrowding
8 in those parts of the city where we don't have
9 enough classrooms. But, in addition to creating
10 new space, it has been essential to think
11 strategically and creatively about how to put
12 existing space to best use. One effective measure
13 is to reconfigure space within school buildings to
14 make sure we are maximizing the amount of
15 classroom space. From September '03 to September
16 '05, we refurbished underutilized administrative
17 space and used it to create over 12,000 new seats.
18 In some areas of the city, we have shifted the use
19 of existing buildings from one grade level where
20 we have more space than we need to another grade
21 level where the schools are overcrowded. In
22 District 9, for example, we resituated PS 2 into
23 the building occupied by PS 63. PS 2's old
24 building was then used to house both a secondary
25 school and a high school to relieve the high

2 school overcrowding in the Bronx. Similarly in
3 the Bronx, the former 257 elementary school
4 building was redesigned to house a multiple
5 pathways school serving overage and under-credited
6 students. Since 2002 we have opened 138 school--
7 new school organizations in buildings with mixed
8 high school and middle school enrollment or mixed
9 middle school and elementary school enrollment.
10 In addition to being quality new options for the
11 city students and families, these new schools have
12 enabled us to relieve overcrowding in nearby
13 schools. And finally, we have reduced
14 overcrowding by adjusting enrollment policies.
15 For example, policies have been implemented to
16 restrict the number of students who are admitted
17 from out of zone or to special programs in K-8
18 schools. Zoned schools are capped in selected
19 grades when they can no longer accommodate
20 eligible students. At the same time, we monitor
21 the impact of these policies on neighboring
22 schools to ensure that they are not adversely
23 affected. Finally, where appropriate and
24 feasible, we are pursuing changes in school zone
25 lines to reduce pockets of overcrowding by making

1 use of classrooms in underutilized facilities. As
2 the Deputy Mayor noted, overcrowding is often the
3 result of high demand for one specific school
4 rather than a lack of available capacity. [Pause]
5 In District 3, for instance, demand for the Delta
6 program at MS 54 significantly exceeds capacity
7 even at nearby MS 44, we don't have full
8 classrooms. In District 2, East Side Middle
9 School and Salk School of Science are both at peak
10 enrollment while the larger zoned middle schools
11 are in significantly less demand. In this sense,
12 schools are victims of their own success. Parents
13 want the best for their children and have
14 consistently chosen to send their children to
15 great overcrowded schools rather than to different
16 schools with capacity to spare. By continuing to
17 create better options for the city schoolchildren,
18 we'll help to ease the burden on overcrowded
19 schools by creating demand elsewhere. [Pause] So
20 on our next steps, we look forward to continuing
21 our work with individual communities and elected
22 officials to combat overcrowding. Although the
23 overall school population is declining, there are
24 clearly pockets where enrollment is growing
25

2 rapidly. We will continue to be proactive in
3 targeting construction to the places where new
4 seats are most needed. The next capital plan will
5 monitor trends, not just by district, but by
6 neighborhood, so that we have more specific
7 information about exactly where the population is
8 growing. We will also work to ensure that our
9 zoning and admissions policies keep pace with
10 changing demographic patterns. We've begun to
11 work on rezoning plans with the Community
12 Education Councils from District 2 and 3 so that
13 zoning lines align more closely to these
14 districts' current populations. [Pause] Clearly
15 collaboration is fundamental to the work we do,
16 from choosing sites for new construction to
17 determining the best way for a school district to
18 be rezoned. We have worked with many of you in
19 the past on these very difficult issues and we are
20 eager to build upon these efforts as we move
21 forward. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,
23 Deputy Chancellor, we appreciate your testimony
24 and we look forward to the question and answer
25 period. Before I turn over to our Speaker

2 Christine Quinn, let me introduce additional
3 colleagues that have joined us. To my right is
4 council member Lou Fidler of Brooklyn. And now we
5 turn to our Speaker Christine Quinn for questions.

6 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you and I just
7 want to apologize, I'm not going to be able to
8 stay for the whole hearing. So thank you for
9 letting me ask my questions first. Let me just
10 start off with kind of two kind of opening
11 statements. I mean, I want to underscore what I
12 said in my opening statement, which was that
13 there's been a lot of collaborative work going on
14 with the DOE, the SCA, and the Deputy Mayor's
15 office and for that we're very, very grateful. I
16 think, Chancellor Grimm, you're correct to say
17 that there are facets and factors beyond building
18 that need to be maximized, and I think that's true
19 and you guys need to continue to go and kind of
20 like literally ferret out every square foot of
21 space you can and maximize it with a focus on
22 children. But, you know, and I appreciate you
23 taking us through where you've made progress in
24 that. I think that what we need--needed probably
25 a little bit more to focus on this morning was

2 what are the plans, which I just didn't hear as
3 much about, to move forward to make even more
4 progress beyond what we're at. You know, I don't
5 mean this critically, but the testimony was a
6 little defensive and like we're dealing with it,
7 we're dealing with it, and we know you're dealing
8 with it, but we want it to be dealt with even more
9 than it is in an additional way. So I think
10 that's really what we need to put our heads
11 together on is what more we can do beyond even the
12 ferreting of space that's going on and that is
13 correct. And I think, you know, you raise a valid
14 point, which is that the number of schoolchildren-
15 -a point which is, you know, is kind of
16 contradictory in a way we--there are certainly
17 pockets of overcrowding, though I have to say kind
18 of as I go around the city, I hear it in so many
19 places. Then when the fact that the number of
20 schoolchildren is going down is put out there,
21 it's hard for me to kind of put the two together.
22 And that is a fact, I mean we recently did a
23 report on seniors and, you know, in 2030 there's
24 going to be more seniors in the city of New York
25 than there are school-age children, so there's a

2 fact to that. Now I wonder whether that fact
3 becomes less relevant when you go to the point of
4 the nature of the school building changing, right?

5 That now we want and demand more space in the
6 building and the degree to which has that been
7 factored in enough, right? You know, so a

8 building that might have been satisfactory 30

9 years ago that had one room that was a gym, the

10 auditorium, and the cafeteria isn't anymore and I

11 wonder whether we factor that in enough to see

12 whether the problem really is beyond the pockets.

13 All of that said, you know, in our conversations

14 about the problems in Manhattan, or in my

15 district, one of the things that was, you know, in

16 a very helpful way committed to was to changing

17 the way overcrowding or capacity is determined

18 away from district needs to neighborhood needs.

19 Is that something you're going to be doing--and to

20 me, that kind of goes into the forward, how are we

21 going to do more, how are going to change, how are

22 we going to do better. Is that something that's

23 now going to be citywide or is that going to be on

24 a district by district as need determination

25 basis?

2 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: If I may let
3 me just start with a broad overview--

4 SPEAKER QUINN: Sure.

5 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: --and then
6 I'll defer to the experts who can really get into
7 the substance of your question. I mean, I think
8 part of our goal is to really be more
9 neighborhood-based because I think, as you
10 indicated, as the chairs indicated, while we can
11 cite facts and figures and statistics to say that
12 utilization levels are down, the projection of
13 students is also going down, the reality is in a
14 number of neighborhoods the population growth is
15 going up. And as a result of that, what the SCA
16 and DOE have done is hire two demographic experts
17 and working with the Department of City Planning
18 so we can be more accurate moving forward as far
19 as the trend analysis of the different
20 neighborhoods as well. So that gives the
21 Department of Education, I think more accurate on-
22 the-ground information as far as local
23 neighborhoods are concerned and I think the
24 conversations that we'll be having in the future,
25 future hearings won't necessarily be about

2 districts, but really will be about specific
3 neighborhoods. For example, in District 2--and
4 we've been working closely with a number of you,
5 both on the panel, as well as people who are in
6 the audience--around District 2--and District 2 is
7 a perfect example of a Y district that has a
8 number of different needs in different parts.

9 What's the issue up in the upper East Side may not
10 be the issue in the lower part of the district and
11 I think we have to be more responsive and
12 reflective of that. I think as a result of the
13 engagement with all the parents and the local
14 elected officials and the CEC, we are a lot better
15 as far as that type of finite information as far
16 as the needs--so is there a certain parts of
17 District 2 that don't have overcrowding as an
18 issue at all. And so I think that's one of the
19 things moving forward, but I think the other
20 thing--and then the Deputy chancellor talked about
21 and I think we all know it from prior engagements
22 around the siting of different school--there are
23 going to be some tough decisions as well.

24 SPEAKER QUINN: Without a doubt,
25 without a doubt.

2 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: And well I
3 say that because the Deputy Chancellor cited an
4 example that I know very well, in that up in the
5 Bronx we consolidated two schools to free up a
6 school building that allowed us to put a high
7 school in that freed building. There may be cases
8 we'll be coming back to you as the local elected
9 officials, as well as the CECs, of school
10 buildings in your respective jurisdiction where we
11 may have similar type of situations, where to free
12 up space we will have to go through a very
13 deliberative process engaging the community as far
14 as potential consolidation or the siting of
15 schools within buildings. So that's the other
16 thing, the final thing from a broad stroke--

17 SPEAKER QUINN: [Interposing] And I
18 just want to say, I think you know, I mean I think
19 that is correct to underscore that. I just want
20 to kind of give a credit to your office and to the
21 council in that we've already had some of those
22 choices, and I think every single one of them did
23 the tough--it might have been a tough decision,
24 but the right one on siting.

25 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: And just one

2 other broad stroke and then I'll really turn it
3 over to them for the details, is that, especially
4 in District 2, somewhat District 3, I mean finding
5 suitable space, and that's one of the things we
6 committed to in our war room is to work in
7 collaboration with all of you, as well as the
8 borough president and the local elected officials
9 who are here and not here as far as making sure
10 that any space that people feel may be appropriate
11 for us to take a look at, that we can then build
12 or build out or lease and those are important
13 points. I mean, that was part of the challenge in
14 Queens and as some of you know, I know council
15 member Loan [phonetic] is here with District 24,
16 as the Deputy Chancellor cited in her testimony.
17 I mean Queens was totally over-utilized and we
18 were able to identify space and build in that
19 space to draw down. So from broad points, moving
20 forward, I mean that's our goal in being more
21 neighborhood specific, but it also requires not
22 just one approach, it requires a multifaceted
23 approach as addressing some of the line issues, as
24 well. Because I think, again, it's not going to
25 be easy in looking at some of the zoning issues

2 within a district and historic zones that parents
3 may have been comfortable with, no longer apply in
4 2008-2009 and moving forward in 2010 and we look
5 forward to our engagement with all of you as far
6 as encouraging that type of discussion, because we
7 think by having that type of district line
8 adjustments through zoning will allow us that
9 space. And I'll turn it over to Kathleen or Garth
10 or Liz, whoever.

11 SPEAKER QUINN: Just, Deputy Mayor,
12 sorry. So does that mean that the neighborhood
13 projections are now how we're doing citywide
14 versus the district projections?

15 [Pause]

16 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: We will be
17 making projections on a district basis, but we'll
18 also be able to share with you breakdowns in terms
19 of neighborhoods within the districts.

20 SPEAKER QUINN: Just if you could
21 share with us just the thinking if that--and it
22 may not work in other parts of the city, I'm not
23 trying to force something that worked in District
24 2 and other folks if it doesn't work--but if that--
25 -if we've come to believe that works--will work

2 better in District 2, which is a diverse district
3 as you said--

4 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM:

5 [Crosstalk] yes.

6 SPEAKER QUINN: --so there's a lot
7 of different kind of case studies in there, so to
8 speak. If you came to believe that would work
9 better in District 2, what has led you to not come
10 to believe that that would work better in the rest
11 of the city--I should probably have better grammar
12 when I'm at an education hearing, but I think you
13 know what I mean.

14 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Yeah, we
15 plan to look at every district this way.

16 SPEAKER QUINN: Oh, so you--okay, so
17 the four, okay, I'm [crosstalk]--

18 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Yes

19 [crosstalk]--

20 SPEAKER QUINN: --I'm sorry I
21 misunderstood that, okay.

22 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: And we--

23 SPEAKER QUINN: [Interposing] sS
24 that's a citywide change, okay.

25 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Yes.

2 SPEAKER QUINN: Okay. Sorry. I
3 apologize I didn't understand that way.

4 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: [Off mic] I
5 was just using District 2 as an example because
6 that is the one that's most fresh in all of our
7 engagement as far as the challenges of District 2
8 and sometimes we're on a committee meeting on--in
9 lower Manhattan, for example, it may not apply to
10 the upper part of the district as well. So, we'll
11 be looking at it both from a broad district point
12 of view, but specifically we're very sensitive,
13 especially, again, when you--as you talk about the
14 inherent contradiction of low enrollment, but at
15 the same time within your respective councilmatic
16 [phonetic] districts, you'll hear from parents
17 saying, well our schools are overcrowded. So we
18 have to be more finite in the information and
19 making sure that we're granularly taking a look at
20 the neighborhoods. And the other thing I just
21 want to respond to something that Chair Jackson
22 said about the principal survey. Quite frankly,
23 any good principal will say that they want more
24 space and so some, we really--we'll take a serious
25 look at and some we'll be able to say that they

2 have enough space, but as Deputy Chancellor Grimm
3 indicated, it's how you utilize the space and how
4 you program that space to make sure that the space
5 within that particular building is being used at
6 its maximum level.

7 GARTH HARRIES: It's probably worth
8 noting an example--this is Garth Harries. We had
9 the--the Bronx delegation was in a few weeks ago
10 meeting with the Deputy Chancellor and I and
11 noting some neighborhood pockets of overcrowding
12 and those are things that we're absolute looking
13 at. So it is something we're looking at across
14 the city.

15 [Pause]

16 SPEAKER QUINN: As former question,
17 which is that the Deputy Mayor--or the Chancellor,
18 I'm sorry, I don't remember who--mentioned some
19 new staff you've brought on looking at projections
20 of where the children will be, etc. You guys also
21 work with the Grier Partnership, correct? To make
22 enrollment projections and also use city plannings
23 numbers and I just wanted to get a sense of how
24 accurate you have found both the work of the Grier
25 Partnership to be and also the projections of the

2 city planning and A how accurate you found them to
3 be and B how frequently do you monitor their
4 accuracy?

5 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: We have
6 found that our --and we'd be happy to share this
7 data--we have found that the projections are quite
8 accurate. And if they vary from the actual
9 enrollment, it's often that they--the projections
10 were larger than the actual enrollments.

11 SPEAKER QUINN: Really, okay.

12 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: I would
13 just though say that it's not just the Grier
14 Partnership, we have now two demographers so that
15 we make sure we're comfortable with what we're
16 seeing. It's--we work with the Department of City
17 Planning, we work with the Department of
18 Buildings, we work with HPD, so that we make sure
19 we're covering all approved housing, housing
20 starts, rezoning, changes [pause] and make sure
21 that we're factoring all the things that can
22 happen to have an impact on the enrollment.

23 SPEAKER QUINN: That would be great
24 if you would share that data, that'd be terrific.,
25 thank you. Thank you, Chair Lappin, Chair

2 Jackson.

3 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you,
4 Speaker Quinn, and we look forward to your
5 engagement on this very important issue now and in
6 the future. And now let me just turn to our
7 colleagues to ask questions and, of course, the
8 first, it's Chair Jessica Lappin and then we're
9 going to entertain John Liu, Dan Garodnick, and
10 Oliver Koppell in that order and I'm going to ask
11 my colleagues that on the first round to limit the
12 questions and response to no more than five
13 minutes. So I have to be the taskmaster here as
14 far as keeping you under five minutes, if you
15 don't mind. But, Jessica Lappin, first questions.

16 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Thank you. I
17 wanted to pick up where Deputy Mayor Walcott left
18 off because I think we all know that times are
19 tough. I mean, unless you live in a cave or you
20 are John McCain up until two weeks ago, you know,
21 that times are tough and I was very (laughter),
22 very heartened to see Mayor Bloomberg on Meet the
23 Press this past weekend saying that we're not
24 going back to the 70s. That's a significant and a
25 very important statement from him and I was very,

2 very heartened to hear that. And when I sit here
3 and I listen to your testimony, I just hear sort
4 of convoluted formulas and fuzzy math, and I feel
5 like for a long time the frustration we've been
6 hearing is that there is a hiding behind citywide
7 utilization rates, borough-wide utilization rates,
8 district-wide utilization rates, that kind of mask
9 what's really happening on the ground. And so I
10 was very happy--you know, I know Chancellor Klein
11 sent a letter to borough president Stringer
12 yesterday or the day before saying that you're
13 going to start to look at a more neighborhood
14 level and that's fabulous. I really am so happy
15 to hear that and I think it's a big move from what
16 we've been doing in the past and there are very
17 different needs in different parts of districts.
18 They are large, particularly District 2--I'm not
19 going to sort repeat what you said, but, you know,
20 what I wanted to have today was a discussion about
21 planning and so since that's a significant change
22 that you're going to make, a very positive one, I
23 want to talk about that. How is that going to
24 work and how are you going to plan neighborhood by
25 neighborhood? Are you going to look at every

2 individual school's catchment area? Are you going
3 to look at geographic areas? How are you going to
4 define them, is it going to be by Community Board?
5 I mean, how are we going to really fix the problem
6 and to say, okay on the East Side, we desperately
7 need new facilities in a way we might not in other
8 parts of the district. How are we going to
9 identify that and how are we going to solve that?

10 [Pause]

11 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Right now
12 going--this is going be a multi-step process,
13 obviously. What we are doing in preparation of
14 the draft plan is we are having internal meetings
15 with my colleagues here and their staff and we are
16 looking [pause] on a neighborhood basis at where
17 we have schools that are overcrowded and where we
18 have schools that are underutilized and we are
19 trying to explore what kinds of steps we could
20 take, whether it's grade reconfiguration, all the
21 things that we've been talking about this morning.
22 And where can we do things like that and then
23 where are there--where there don't appear to be
24 any of these what we're calling administrative
25 solutions, then we're going to have to look and

2 see if we can't increase capacity through brick-
3 and-mortar. And we plan to--when we release this
4 draft, we will happily sit down with the CECs,
5 with elected officials, certainly everybody here,
6 and share that data. As the Deputy Mayor clearly
7 said earlier, there are going to be a lot of tough
8 decisions to make because our needs, our resources
9 never meet all of our needs.

10 CHAIR JACKSON: If I could just add
11 one of the things that we pay attention to it as
12 well is what are the age level of the students. I
13 mean your question gets at what's the right scale
14 to do planning and fundamentally our look is at
15 what's the kind of geography that students will
16 travel in and that's clearly a different answer in
17 elementary, middle, and high school and that's
18 part of what we're trying to take into account.

19 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: And if I may,
20 I mean, what I think the difference is, and I
21 agree with you wholeheartedly, we have to discuss
22 this moving forward, is that by the representation
23 that you see sitting at the table today, I think
24 represents that moving forward different approach
25 in that you have the Deputy Chancellor who's in

2 charge of School Construction Authority, but you
3 also have the chief executives of the respective
4 divisions--Portfolio Development and Student
5 Enrollment--and that to me represents a major
6 change as well. While there may have been
7 collaboration within the department, I think by
8 having them here talks about our commitment of
9 having it all blended together as far as the
10 projection of student enrollment, but also the
11 development of new schools and how we utilize
12 those both new buildings, as well as developing
13 the new buildings and new schools that will be put
14 in buildings, as well as phasing out or closing
15 down schools that are failures as well. For
16 example in District 2, we will be coming back to
17 you with some specific plans through the war room
18 as far as how we're going to tackle both the upper
19 East Side but also lower Manhattan issues within a
20 district, but that incorporates the three players
21 who are sitting here now and not just the School
22 Construction Authority. So I think what's more
23 limited in the past whereas now is going to be a
24 more collaborative approach from Department of
25 Education, I think that represents a significant

2 change. In addition to that, I think one of the
3 key things is that as a result of both of our
4 experiences in Queens, but our most recent
5 experiences here in Manhattan, we have committed
6 to all of you being always accessible and
7 available in responding to the neighborhood needs
8 as well, because you know better than sometimes we
9 do as far as the local issues within that
10 particular neighborhood. And I think our
11 discussion--I think this is a major move for all
12 of us--is to move it away from a district
13 discussion, that it's not district overcrowding,
14 it's not citywide overcrowding, it's local
15 neighborhood overcrowding and how we approach that
16 as well. And I think if we're working in
17 collaboration with the neighborhood part of the
18 overcrowding that allows the discussion and the
19 moving forward, I think that'd be a lot easier.

20 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: I think that's
21 right, and it's great that everybody is working
22 together to find real solutions and the fact that
23 we had to create a war room just showed the
24 breadth of the problem and that I'm happy to hear
25 there are going to be some real solutions and

2 suggestions that come out of it. And I just want
3 to go back to--and this is the last point I want
4 to make 'cause I know lots of other people have
5 questions, but this concept that schools are
6 victims of their own success, I don't think we
7 should just sort of say well, so many parents want
8 to send their kids there that, even though they're
9 overcrowded, they'd rather have that choice. Of
10 course, they'd rather have that choice, but we
11 still have to do something about it. And every
12 single elementary school in my district is
13 overcrowded--every single elementary school people
14 want to send their kids to because they are good
15 schools. And so just saying, well they're
16 successful and so there's really not much that we
17 can do about it isn't going to solve the problem,
18 right. We have to find ways for successful
19 schools as well to either enlarge them or create
20 new alternatives that will be just as attractive
21 for parents to keep them in the system and to keep
22 the well performing schools from being totally
23 overwhelmed, which they are now.

24 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: I totally
25 agree with you and I think one of the things, and

2 it's unfortunately--we have to look back every now
3 and then, I think part of the challenge and part
4 of the problem that we face specifically in
5 District 2, as I indicated in my testimony, is
6 that in the prior capital plan, I mean it was
7 unconscionable that it was not considered a
8 priority in the prior 2000-2004 Capital Plan for
9 any seat development to take place in District 2
10 and so we're playing catch-up from the historic
11 part of not including that in the capital plan.
12 And so that's where we get into the having to look
13 reflect back on why District 2 was in that
14 position. If the prior 2000-2004 Capital Plan had
15 seat development, part of the challenge wouldn't
16 be there. The other part is well--and you know
17 this way better than I do--that then with the
18 district as well, especially in the upper East
19 Side, there wasn't a zoned school and the zoning,
20 zone school was eliminated in that particular
21 district as well, which also created some of the
22 problems. So that's why, again, I think the team
23 effort helps because as a result of that, it
24 allows us better to plan moving forward so we
25 won't have the next capital plan put in that

2 particular position.

3 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Right, but we,
4 I mean, I guess it just seems to me that it's a
5 simple solution: you took a school away, but
6 there's still kids that are zoned for that school.
7 All the other schools nearby are overcrowded, we
8 need to build a new school to deal with that. Now
9 and that--but that's something that's particular
10 to me and I don't want to get into that
11 [crosstalk]--

12 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: [Interposing]
13 But it also applies though to other areas and I
14 think it goes to the heart of the testimony, at
15 least that I was trying to give, in that in not
16 that this capital plan, but the prior capital
17 plans, a lot of decisions were based on--forgive
18 me for using this word--the politics versus the
19 needs.

20 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: They were.

21 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: And as a
22 result of that, a lot of those decisions were
23 based on--I mean, as we know there were schools
24 that were projected in the prior capital plan that
25 really didn't need to be built at all and those

2 areas that where schools needed to be built, were
3 not built there, and that's what we try to
4 correct.

5 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: [Interposing]
6 But we have seats in this plan that still haven't
7 been identified.

8 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Say again,
9 I'm sorry.

10 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Don't we have
11 seats left in this capital plan that still have
12 not have been identified?

13 GARTH HARRIES: Yes, we do.

14 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: In District 2?

15 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: And we're
16 still looking for sites.

17 GARTH HARRIES: We're still looking.

18 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Right.

19 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: We're always
20 looking for sites.

21 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: So I guess that
22 just brings me back to, and I'll let my colleagues
23 take it from here, but the planning process, we
24 know there's a need, we know there's a need for
25 more seats. It's now four plus years into this

2 capital plan where we identified the need and put
3 the money aside and identified the seats and we
4 still haven't started to build those schools. So
5 that to me is a problem in the process, not even
6 identifying that there is a problem, which was a
7 big step forward, and that's what I want to
8 understand. How is that going to change so that
9 when we all say, finally yes, we need more seats,
10 yes, we have the money, but it's been four plus
11 years and we still haven't built a new school, how
12 that's going to change.

13 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: But again, I
14 think--and Kathleen can go into the details--I
15 think, again, as we indicated, there are 55,000
16 seats plus that are either have been built or in
17 process of being built. In addition we're looking
18 for locations to build other seats as well in this
19 remaining five-year capital plan, or the time
20 that's remaining in this five-year capital plan.
21 And the challenges, especially in a district like
22 District 2 and some other districts as well, in
23 finding locations is extremely difficult. And so
24 we're always interested in looking for space,
25 especially meeting our cost projections of

2 building as well. And as the Deputy Chancellor
3 indicated, part of the, I know, frustration of all
4 of us is that when you talk about a 13.1 or \$13.7
5 billion capital plan you want to see it done
6 immediately, but the reality is with all--even
7 though we've increased our on-time percentage
8 tremendously over the last four years, as far as
9 completing schools on time and also meeting basic
10 cost projections as well--it is a process that
11 takes place over a lengthy period of time. So
12 that's why this September, we opened up 10,000
13 seats; this coming September, we're opening up
14 11,000 and change; and the prior year we're
15 opening 15,000 . So you'll be seeing the results
16 of this five-year capital plan over the next three
17 years and so we're delivering on the seats that we
18 promised.

19 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Go ahead, do
20 you have anything specific in response to that?

21 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: I just
22 wanted to point out that for District 2 in this
23 capital plan, we have sited and have built or are
24 building 3,150 seats and we've already made
25 commitments in the next plan for 2,496 seats in

2 District 2. So I think there's really movement
3 here in this plan and [crosstalk]--

4 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: The next plan
5 is not even out yet.

6 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: I know.

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. But in
8 essence, you're projecting forward.

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And you're
11 saying that you have already sited--

12 jet DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM:
13 [Interposing] Sited [crosstalk]--

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --3,100 seats?

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Yes. In
16 this plan.

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah, in this
18 plan.

19 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Yes,
20 3,150.

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And those
22 sited for 3,100 seats will be built in the next
23 capital plan or--

24 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: No,
25 they'll be built--some of them are finished

2 already--

3 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

4 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: --okay?

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Some of them
6 have been built already.

7 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Others
8 will open in 2009, 2010, 2012.

9 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: The numbers
10 that I cited earlier, just moving forward.

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: But the 2012
12 is not really part of this capital plan.

13 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: It's
14 funded.

15 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: In essence,
16 it's fundable from this capital plan?

17 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Yes.

18 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So in essence,
20 when you deal--when you come out with your next
21 five-year capital plan, lets assume its \$15
22 billion, it would not include anything that is
23 cited in this plan. The cost would not be added
24 to the next capital plan?

25 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: That money

2 rolls over.

3 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. The
4 money rolls over that is not spent.

5 [Pause]

6 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: That is--

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Help me out
8 here.

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Yes, if
10 for--

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [Interposing]
12 Because, if for example, you have--

13 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: --if we
14 give--if we put out to bid to build a school--

15 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah.

16 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: --and we
17 put that bid out tomorrow with a commitment from
18 this capital plan, it's going to take two years,
19 two and a half years to build that, so we will be
20 paying out money to the contractor while the next
21 plan is an existence, but we're going to be--we're
22 going to keep taking it out of the pot from this
23 plan.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. And
25 when you come out with the new capital plan in

2 November, you will be telling us how much money is
3 being rolled over to the next capital plan?

4 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. Let me
6 turn to our colleagues, John Liu, Dan Garodnick,
7 and Oliver Koppell in that order, and I ask my
8 colleagues to stay within the five-minute limit.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: [Crosstalk]
10 First-round.

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: Thank you, Mr.
13 Chairman, and thank you, Madame Chair. I want to
14 thank the officials from the Department of
15 Education for joining us. I just want to make
16 sure I heard correctly in response to council
17 member Lappin's questions, Deputy Chancellor
18 Grimm, you said that not all of the seats in fact
19 are laid out yet under this current capital plan.

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Not all
21 the seats are...

22 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Sited.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: Are sited.

24 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Correct.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: Okay. So you

2 see, that's--I mean, your testimony here says that
3 well that you're on--that everything is hunky-
4 dory, you're on track, 63,000 new seats, that was
5 the plan, right? And so everything's done, but in
6 fact, the seats aren't sited. I'm just trying to
7 reconcile what those statements all mean. In
8 fact, I'm trying to reconcile all of this stuff.
9 I mean, you have--

10 (Applause)

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Oh, please--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: You have--

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --ladies and
14 gents, no applause and boos, please--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: Yeah, you know,
16 we're--

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --if you don't
18 mind. Thank you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: --talking
20 about, I mean, I've just--I've had trouble
21 focusing ever since the first five minutes of the
22 hearing when I hear a statement that says this
23 actually means we have room in our system. For
24 seven years, we've had an extreme overcrowding
25 situation in high schools in northeast Queens--

2 you're well aware of that. In fact, as much as
3 we've engaged in these conversations, those
4 conversations have gone nowhere in seven years,
5 Deputy Chancellor and Deputy Mayor. And, you
6 know, I want to congratulate my colleagues in
7 government in District 2, because they're getting
8 somewhere, but for some reason in northeast
9 Queens, we have an area bounded by Newtown High
10 School, Flushing--Francis Lewis High School and
11 John Bowne High School, those are severely
12 overcrowded high schools. And your department
13 even asked me to find you a location, and it's
14 still the department refuses to go ahead and site
15 a new high school in the area, and I don't
16 understand these statements. I don't understand
17 the statements about how there's a complex
18 definition of overcrowding. I mean, it's actually
19 pretty simple: when there's pretty much like
20 double the number of students in a particular
21 school building than that building was designed
22 for, that's severe overcrowding. There's no
23 complexity about that, it's actually pretty
24 straightforward. And so I don't know what the
25 department is doing. We are on the final stretch

2 of the Five-Year Capital Plan and seats are still
3 not sited. Could you tell me when they're going
4 to get cited?

5 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Sure, let me,
6 if I may, tackle a couple of points that you
7 raise. One and I'm sorry that we were not clear
8 and let me try to make us be a little clearer in
9 our remarks. In that we have built a number of
10 school seats in the borough Queens specifically.
11 In the borough Queens PS 307, 40-20 100th Street
12 open. PS 305--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: [Interposing]
14 Could you just--just, when you cite those schools
15 in Queens, could you just tell us in what
16 particular district, if you don't mind.

17 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Sure, be my
18 pleasure.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: Okay.

20 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: In district
21 24, 1,025 seats were opened at PS 307, which is
22 40-20 100th Street; PS 305, 384 Seneca Avenue,
23 District 24 also, 441 seats; PS 306, District 27,
24 441 seats; PS 303 District 28, 250 seats; the
25 Elmhurst Complex that I referred to in my

2 testimony, 1,659 seats; PS 244, 137-20 Franklin
3 Avenue, District 25, 441 seats; PS 4, which is--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: [Interposing]

5 Mr. Chairman --

6 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: --Skillman
7 Phase II, 72 additional seats.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: --the responses
9 to--

10 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: We have
11 opened a number of seats and that's this year
12 alone in the borough of Queens, in the borough of
13 Queens's, we--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: [Interposing]

15 Deputy Mayor--

16 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: --have opened
17 up 9,000 new high school seats in the borough of
18 Queens. We have made a concentrated effort in
19 addressing the overcrowding, both in District 24,
20 as well as throughout the entire borough of Queens
21 and responding to the demands and the rightful
22 demands by the residents of the borough itself and
23 so we have made a concerted effort to address the
24 overcrowding. Like any issue, when you're looking
25 for appropriate sites, whether it's in Queens or

2 throughout the city, there are a variety of
3 factors that go into that decision-making and
4 where a school will be built. And, as you know,
5 we've had in prior discussions around different
6 sites of high schools in the borough of Queens,
7 transportation and also sensitivity to the
8 community as well. And so all of those factors
9 are taken into consideration in the siting of
10 particular schools. So in the borough of Queens,
11 I think we've been very clear in responding to the
12 overcrowding and, again, as we had talked about
13 both in the testimony, as well as the dialogue
14 that we've had since the testimony, I mean the
15 pockets of overcrowding are neighborhood-based and
16 if we're going to move away from a district, we
17 agree that there are neighborhoods in various
18 boroughs throughout the city that we need to be
19 more responsive to and we've made our commitment
20 to do that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: [Interposing]

22 Mr. Chairman, the response is just--I mean, I
23 appreciate all that information. You gave us a
24 litany of new public schools, elementary schools,
25 that have been opened in Queens and I'm thankful

2 for the new public schools in Queens, but we know
3 even from 2000 and 2001 in the development of this
4 five-year capital plan that we're at the tail end
5 of now, that the shortage in Queens was specific
6 in North Queens and specific to high school ages,
7 high school years. It was not about one
8 neighborhood or another neighborhood, it was an
9 entire region--the northern part of Queens. The
10 high schools are extremely overcrowded in all of
11 northern Queens and you give us a litany of
12 elementary schools. You know, you cited that
13 9,000 new high school seats were actually created
14 in Queens? Could you tell me how many of those
15 new high school seats are sited in what are now
16 overcrowded elementary schools?

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. One
18 second please.

19 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Sited in
20 overcrowded elementary school?

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: One second
22 please. We're going to--

23 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: I'm not sure
24 of the question.

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --we're going

2 to allow you--I'm going to allow you to answer
3 that question, but then--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: [Interposing]
5 But briefly, please.

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: John, John,
7 hold on a second. Then I'm going to move to my
8 colleagues. In fact, I'm trying to have a strict
9 enforcement of the five minutes, I'm trying to be
10 flexible, and I know you have additional
11 questions, but every colleague will have the
12 opportunity for five minutes and then we'll roll
13 back to you again. So we're going to answer this
14 question, then we're going to move to Dan
15 Garodnick.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: Okay.

17 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: [Crosstalk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: Well, let me
19 let me just give--

20 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: [Interposing]
21 But you asked a specific question, I just want to
22 give you specific answer, I don't [crosstalk]--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: Sure, you said
24 9,000, you said 9,000 high school seats--

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [Interposing]

2 Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, wait, wait, wait, wait,
3 wait.

4 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Yeah, I'm
5 going to read it to you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: All right, go.

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: The question
8 was asked, you're going to answer the question,
9 we're going to move on.

10 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Sure. These
11 are schools that either have been completed or are
12 in the process of being completed. IS/HS 167,
13 which is on Metropolitan Avenue--

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [Interposing]
15 What district is that?

16 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Nine, it's no
17 district when it comes to high schools--

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. Go
19 ahead.

20 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: --so that's
21 northern Queens. Or I don't know if
22 Metropolitan's considered northern, but it's not
23 the southern part of Queens. Nine hundred and
24 thirteen seats completed--will be completed June
25 2010. Another high school in Metropolitan Avenue,

2 998 seats June 2010; high school on Lyndon Place,
3 1,047, June 2012; the new Gateway High School, 805
4 students, July 2010; IS/HS on 57th Avenue, again
5 the northern tier of Queens, 1,318 seats, June
6 2012; the York Early College Academy, 290 seats,
7 September 2006; Frank Sinatra School-The Arts, 998
8 seats will be ready January 2009; the Queens High
9 School Complex, 744 seats, May 2005. The Young
10 Women's Leadership Academy, which is in Mount
11 Carmel, is 400 seats, that was December 2006;
12 Young Women's Leadership Academy, Mount Carmel,
13 Phase II, 140 seats February 2010; Art & Leather,
14 which I talked about earlier, 1,659, which is the
15 northern part, the Elmhurst Complex, that's August
16 2008 that's open; and then the John Adams High
17 School Annex, which was 500 seats, which was
18 opened September 2005 [crosstalk]--

19 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [Interposing]
20 So, all of those are in Queens.

21 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: All those are
22 Queens, that's the [crosstalk]--

23 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And those are
24 ones that either some of them have been built and
25 are open and others are sited, in the process of

2 being built--

3 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: That's
4 correct.

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --and/or not
6 in the process of being built, but sited and
7 we'll--'cause you mentioned one school in 2012, so
8 I assume that you didn't start construction on
9 that yet, but it's sited, is that correct?

10 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Correct.

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So these are
12 ones that have been built, in the process of being
13 built, or sited and plan to be built within the
14 next couple years, all in Queens.

15 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: That is
16 correct.

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. Now,
18 I'm going to turn--sorry, John, I got to go to our
19 other colleagues--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: Oh, I'll come
21 back in the next round.

22 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. Dan
23 Garodnick of Manhattan. Before we begin the Leroy
24 Comrie of Queens is in front of me and Bill de
25 Blasio, our colleague from Brooklyn is to my left.

2 Dan Garodnick?

3 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you
4 Mr. Chairman and Deputy Mayor and Deputy
5 Chancellor and representatives of the DOE, thank
6 you for your testimony today. I wanted to just
7 start off by making a comment, which is that in
8 listening to the testimony of the Deputy Mayor
9 about the citywide utilization rate being at 84.5%
10 and Manhattan's being at 78.9% with the conclusion
11 that we have room in the system may be true in the
12 aggregate, but it further punctuates the need for
13 us to drill down further, not just at the district
14 level, but of course at the neighborhood level.
15 And I was pleased to hear, Deputy Chancellor
16 Grimm, in your response to the Speaker that that
17 is the plan on a citywide basis, and we, of
18 course, in the Education Committee would like to
19 work with you as to how exactly you will define
20 neighborhoods even within a district because I
21 think that that is an important question, presents
22 a whole new set of challenges for us. But I just
23 think that that is, that is critical we're glad
24 you responded in District 2 from the advocacy of
25 many of the elected officials and have had

2 meetings with us and put out a blueprint for
3 District 2, but that blueprint only came about as
4 an answer to what we perceive as a crisis in
5 overcrowding in our neighborhood. So I think that
6 it's very important for us to have those
7 neighborhood forecast. So I know my time is
8 limited so I just wanted to, I wanted to
9 understand very quickly here, so we can, so let's
10 go back and forth very quickly on these. One is
11 the--on May 21st, Deputy Chancellor, you said that
12 upgraded demographic information since the
13 November 2006 amendment to the capital plan makes
14 use of new residential construction plan for
15 occupancy in the next five years. I just wanted
16 to understand is the information about the new
17 residential construction, is that coming from
18 Department of City Planning and your to
19 demographic experts that Deputy Mayor Walcott
20 mentioned? Where is that coming from?

21 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: The
22 demographic experts take a look at things like
23 birth rates and immigration, movement of people
24 and their projections are then taken by the SCA
25 and then we overlay information from the

2 Department of City Planning, from the Department
3 of Buildings and the HPD. So that we're taking
4 into account demographic trends and housing
5 starts.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: And when
7 you have that information--

8 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Mm-hmm..

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: --how do
10 you apply that information in the next step? Does
11 it go on a list and say okay, well we now know
12 that there's going to be, you know, we know the PS
13 116 example are going to be 32 new buildings or
14 wherever it is in that area physical, does it go
15 on a list and then you say, okay while now we need
16 to find the space? How exactly do you take that
17 and actually apply it?

18 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: There are
19 formulas that the SCA uses, certainly there are
20 things we can walk through with you. One of the
21 things we're trying to do is to be a little more
22 transparent about how we deal with the housing
23 information. I think we've been very successful
24 in getting the demographic data out and up on the
25 web and sharing that with people and I think we

2 have to do a better job of sharing the housing
3 formulations.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: I also
5 would add that I know that the Department of City
6 Planning is providing birth rate progression--
7 projections with you--

8 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Right.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: --
10 ostensibly to prevent fluctuations in birth rates
11 from exerting, you know, particular challenges for
12 DOE on school needs, but I just wanted to suggest
13 also that there is data on actual births that is
14 out there.

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Yes.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: And I
17 just want to make sure that your demographic
18 experts are using that which will give you even a
19 finer accurate number as to who you're expecting
20 in three years or five years.

21 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Yes, and
22 we redo those analyses every year. So we try to
23 stay very much on top of [crosstalk] --

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Let me go
25 to Deputy Mayor Walcott for a question. Obviously

2 when there's new development in the city of New
3 York, there's frequently a requirement that
4 environmental impacts are studied, people have to
5 study everything from traffic to shadows to even
6 school capacity and school needs as a result. Do
7 you think, Deputy Mayor, that there should perhaps
8 be obligations on developers to take steps on
9 their own to either--other cities have considered
10 impact fees and things like that to make sure that
11 when a new development is going up, that they're
12 actually participating in the infrastructure
13 improvements necessary to support the existence of
14 the building that is going up?

15 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Well we,
16 obviously with schools in particular do not feel
17 it's part of our role in government to mandate
18 that they include school in their development. I
19 think what we've been able to do in a number of
20 projects through our education construction fun
21 and working through the Department of Education's
22 SCA, is tried to see where we can have some joint
23 planning with those developers and including
24 schools, either within their buildings or in the
25 surrounding area as well.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK:

3 [Interposing] But let me just stop you there for
4 one second because my time is now--

5 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Sure.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: --I just
7 wanted to make sure that I--

8 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: [Crosstalk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: --no, no,
10 you're right to point out the potential for
11 public-private partnerships--

12 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Right.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: --
14 through ECF and other means, but what I really
15 wanted to understand from you was when you don't
16 have the ability to include a school in a new
17 development, do you think that it's appropriate to
18 ask developers to--through the environmental
19 impact statement, environmental review process--to
20 pay for additional fees for the impacts that
21 they're having on the number of school students in
22 a way to enhance the Department of Education's
23 ability to build new schools, find the funds to be
24 able to do what you all need to do. Is that
25 something that you have considered or something

2 that you support?

3 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: I won't say
4 that we support it or don't support it at this
5 point, I think it's something you talk in
6 collaboration with the Mayor and our Deputy Mayor
7 for Economic Development as far as how we can
8 collaborate together on that particular issue. So
9 not setting policy here per se, but at the same
10 time I think there are opportunities to explore a
11 variety of options that gives us the ability to
12 get developers more committed to the investment of
13 schools within their particular areas where they
14 build.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay. I
16 thank you and I know Chair Lappin wants to move
17 on, but I think that that's a conversation that we
18 should, that we should continue.

19 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Council member
20 Koppell.

21 CHAIRPERSON KOPPELL: Thank you.
22 First of all, in terms of dealing with these
23 issues I very much appreciate, Deputy Chancellor,
24 that we have found a new home for Jonas Bronck
25 Academy, which is important, it was a totally

2 inadequate facility, Manhattan College wanted them
3 out and you solved that and we visited it
4 together, so I feel very good about that. Marvin
5 Shelton, who's the head of the Community Education
6 Council for District 10, has complained to me that
7 he's been unable to get updated numbers on
8 registers at the various schools in District 10
9 right now. And since the new capital plan draft
10 is coming out, it's critically important that we
11 know exactly where we stand with all the schools
12 in District 10. So I would--I assume that that
13 information will be made available, can I ask that
14 that be done?

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Actually,
16 he asked me for the information late last night
17 and I couldn't get it to him for today, but we
18 will get the register information to him.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Very good
20 then in terms of--I fully agree, and the Deputy
21 Chancellor knows it, we've had these back-and-
22 forth about neighborhoods rather than looking at
23 districts as a whole, and I fully agree with the
24 new emphasis at neighborhoods, although in my
25 district, District 10 particularly, pretty much

2 the whole district has problems, but particular
3 neighborhoods have particular problems. We had
4 hoped that by the end of September, we would know
5 whether the Riverdale neighborhood, which is of
6 course important neighborhood in my district,
7 would get back the seven classrooms in the
8 Whitehall Annex--

9 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Oh, I'm sorry.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: --and you
11 may not have an answer for me today, but I'm
12 really hoping that we get an answer soon. I think
13 that also may require to put up a little red flag
14 or a yellow flag, a renegotiation with the co-op
15 because the lease on that space, I think it has a
16 couple years to go, but if we're going to have it
17 for a long-term commitment, I think it has to be
18 renegotiated. Do you have an answer on the Annex
19 and--

20 GARTH HARRIES: We don't have an
21 answer today, but we're well aware of the issue
22 and of the lease issue as well, so we're focusing
23 on both.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: And when
25 you're looking at that--since you mention the

2 registers--please look at the registers at PS 24,
3 which have really shot through the roof, somewhat
4 to our surprise because the buildings that have
5 been built in Riverdale in the last couple of
6 years have not really been occupied yet. So those
7 registers have increased notwithstanding the fact
8 that there are lots and lots of empty apartments
9 that will be filled over the next two years. So
10 we already are overcrowded, we're going to be even
11 much more overcrowded very soon and those seven
12 classrooms, I think, are absolutely essential to
13 have in that particular neighborhood. So I'm glad
14 to hear about the register numbers and we'll
15 continue to talk to you, you know my concerns,
16 because I keep talking about them again and again
17 about Norwood. And, oh yeah, I did have one other
18 question and I'm delighted the Deputy Mayor is
19 here because it involves not only education
20 department, school construction, but also other
21 agencies. I was pleased to hear from one of your
22 colleagues, Deputy Mayor, that the mayor is
23 looking into getting the National Guard out by
24 working with the governor's office and I was
25 delighted to hear that because we hadn't had any

2 movement. Do you confirm that you are trying to
3 get the National Guard out?

4 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: I know there
5 are conversations that are being held and, just
6 for the audience in general, you're talking about
7 Kingsbridge?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL:

9 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Right, just
10 so people with the Kingsbridge Armory. I think
11 they have a variety of conversations that are
12 being held right now and so I think that
13 discussion is taking place.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Well I
15 think all of us would be absolutely delighted
16 because once the National Guard moves out, then.
17 we can really focus on building one or more
18 schools there and that's what the community is
19 totally committed to. Thank you.

20 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Thank you.

21 [Pause]

22 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Peter Vallone
23 to be followed by council member Yassky.

24 [Crosstalk]

25 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you.

2 I want to follow up on what Dan Garodnick was
3 asking, a quick sir about what happened in my
4 office this week. Developers came in, PowerPoint
5 presentation, pictures, they showed me how they
6 wanted to turn this beautiful waterfront area,
7 which is full of dilapidated warehouses into
8 beautiful homes for our neighborhood. Three to
9 5,000 people would move in and when they were
10 done, I told them how great it looked and I said
11 to them, now where all the kids in that
12 development going to go to school because Long
13 Island City High School, where they're zone for is
14 at 200% capacity, and they looked at me like I had
15 another head growing out of my arm, because
16 apparently they'd never been asked anything like
17 that before. I said to them, you know what, come
18 back to me when you tell me where those kids are
19 going to go to school, you talk to Dennis Walcott,
20 you tell me how you're going to build it, and then
21 we'll talk about the zoning change you need, and I
22 think that illustrates the problem here. The
23 problem that--the way we got into this situation
24 is by allowing development without proper
25 infrastructure. We saw that northwestern Queens

2 with the blackout, all the infrastructure, no new
3 lines underneath the ground, blackout. We see it
4 every time it rains in Queens, flooding because
5 there aren't sewers put in to handle a new
6 development. And we see it with overcrowding of
7 the schools, we allow the development, there isn't
8 a school in place to handle those kids. So the
9 question is--and it's not enough to say there are
10 discussions being held--is there a policy in place
11 when it comes to the Department of Education or
12 New York City to not allow development if that
13 area is already saturated when it comes to our
14 school kids? Is there any policy in place at all
15 when developers come to the city or where you
16 force them either to build or to not build until
17 you can get in there and actually find and
18 actually put the schools there, so that we're not
19 now chasing after the problems, so we're not
20 trying to build schools to alleve [phonetic]
21 overcrowding, but we have the school there so that
22 the overcrowding doesn't happen in the first
23 place.

24 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: We have
25 become more aggressive in that type of discussion

2 and what I mean by that is that the Deputy Mayor
3 of Economic Development and I, along with the
4 Department of Education have been working along
5 with EDC in any type of new development that takes
6 place and making sure that consideration is given
7 around school site development as well. Just
8 recently within the last two to three weeks, I sat
9 down with a developer who is talking about some
10 new development in an area and we talked about the
11 issue of siting schools and the inclusion of
12 siting schools in that particular development, and
13 so we have been more aggressive in that regard.
14 And again, I think through Kathleen's office and
15 through the Educational Construction Fund and I
16 don't want to minimize the importance of the
17 public-private partnership as Chair Lappin knows
18 on the upper East Side, I mean we have the project
19 where the crane collapse where there is a school
20 that's going to be located in that particular
21 building as well. And that's part of our goal to
22 make sure we're doing that, we're doing that in a
23 number of areas and we plan to do it even more so
24 as we move forward.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: This is

2 great to know and I'm done, but I think that if
3 you actually started to stop some development
4 until the infrastructure was in place, you'd be
5 much more successful in getting public-private
6 partnerships. I haven't seen that happen, I'm
7 very glad that we're on the same page when it
8 comes to this, but I really would like to see some
9 sort of policy in writing when it comes to
10 development, that infrastructure needs to be in
11 place for us, including schools before we allow
12 the development. I'm not opposed to development,
13 it has to be done in a rational way. Thank you.
14 Thank you all for coming down here today and as
15 usual my two kids in public school are doing great
16 and thanks for that.

17 [Off mic]

18 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Council member
19 Brewer.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you
21 very much. First of all congratulations on MS 44
22 schoolyard, Kathleen, because it is done and it is
23 beautiful and it's on time. And you know how we
24 did it? We met every single week. And thank you.
25 So it's nice to hear some good news once in a

2 while. In terms of war rooms, is that war room
3 just for District 2 or is for the whole school?
4 We don't know what's in this war room, we keep
5 hearing about it. What is it?

6 [Pause]

7 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: It's
8 District 2, although the borough president--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

10 [Interposing] We would like a war room.

11 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Pardon?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: We would
13 like a war room for District 3. What is it?

14 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Let me take a
15 stab at that question so people understand. I
16 think it was--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

18 [Interposing] It sounds very exciting, Deputy
19 Mayor.

20 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: It was
21 modeled after what Borough President Claire
22 Shulman and later Borough President Helen Marshall
23 started in the borough Queens to address the
24 overcrowding and, as a result of a number of the
25 elected officials in Manhattan who represent

2 District 2 in particular, felt the need based on a
3 severe problem in the number of the neighborhoods
4 within District 2 to convene a body that was
5 called a war room to talk about some of the things
6 we talked about today: identifying where there's
7 space availability, talking about the different
8 schools that are over-utilized and how we have a
9 collective response to that. You know, I can give
10 you an answer to say I think where we are right
11 now as a system on the Department of Education and
12 City Hall part is that all of our conversations
13 that are on overcrowding could be considered war
14 rooms in that we're try to work collaboratively
15 with the local CECs and the local elected
16 officials as far as addressing those pockets in
17 particular. So it's a phrase that's been used
18 specifically around District 2 and we've had a
19 number of meetings with the elected officials,
20 parent bodies, as well as the CEC of District 2 to
21 try to be more concrete in our plans moving
22 forward and responding to the overcrowding in
23 District 2. So that's how both the concept came
24 up, as well as what's actually taking place. And
25 to date we've had at least one, I think, official

2 war room meeting, but we've had a number of
3 meetings with the local electeds addressing the
4 overcrowding in District 2.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Well
6 I'll just make it simple, Marty Barr and certainly
7 John White gave great presentations, but we do
8 have a war in District 3, and so I think a war
9 room concept might make sense 'cause if you don't
10 think there's not a war in District 3... So I
11 would like to do the same in District 2 with the
12 borough president and everybody involved. Other
13 question then, I know time is of--

14 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: [Interposing]
15 Council member Brewer, yeah, is it quick?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah, it's
17 very quick. How do you define the classrooms
18 going to the correct number because is it hat
19 based on the CFE or is it based on your numbers in
20 terms of 20 or less with the K-3, etc.? How do
21 those numbers get determined?

22 [Pause]

23 GARTH HARRIES: Okay. Yeah, so the
24 question is about, you know, essentially what's
25 the class size that we're looking at and as the

2 Deputy Chancellor referred to, the capacity of the
3 buildings, the amount of space that's in the
4 buildings is determined according to the Blue Book
5 capacity numbers and one of the changes that we
6 made was at the K-3 level to make that 20 students
7 and under. It varies as, you know, grades four
8 and five, middle school, and high school, we make
9 a different set of assumptions. It's important to
10 understand that even, as the Deputy Chancellor
11 laid out, even with those assumptions, most
12 schools in the system have class sizes that are
13 below those averages.

14 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Or above.

15 GARTH HARRIES: There are very few
16 that have classes above--certainly there are some,
17 certainly there are some and that's part of what
18 shows up in the utilization statistics, that's
19 part of what shows up when we pay attention to
20 class size. Class sizes, one of the reasons I'm
21 responding to this is I'm the official responsible
22 for the DOE's Five-Year Class Size Plan. It's a
23 function of facility space and classroom space
24 absolutely, and it's one reason why I work so
25 closely with Deputy Chancellor Grimm. It's also a

2 function of school funding. It's also a function
3 of how space is used in the building and how
4 schools program and schedule their space. And so
5 our five-year plan has sought to address all of
6 those different aspects of class size.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, We
8 need a new Beacon school, you're working on it and
9 we need a new school in the development at
10 Riverside South. Thank you very much. Before I
11 get in trouble for talking too much.

12 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: And I'm going
13 to take a moment of privilege and just say to
14 council member Brewer that, I mean, my sense is
15 that our war room grew organically and actually, I
16 mean, I would say started from a meeting that I
17 had with one school with one principal and some
18 parents, it then became more neighborhood
19 principal and more parents and more elected
20 officials and more members from the Department of
21 Education and the table kept getting bigger and
22 bigger and bigger, until we had to move it to
23 Tweed and that's sort of how it came about.

24 GARTH HARRIES: It's also worth
25 saying that the portfolio office has been visiting

2 many of the district leadership teams that exist
3 in each of the districts and having conversations
4 [crosstalk]--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

6 [Interposing] We see them every night.

7 GARTH HARRIES: Yes, you do.

8 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Council member
9 Felder to be followed by council member Fidler.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Thank you,
11 good afternoon, I'm still--I'm intrigued by the
12 war room and I'd like to be--

13 [Off mic]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: --invited to
15 a war room session, if that's okay. Two items,
16 first of all, there was a press conference this
17 morning by some thoughtful elected officials
18 demanding more capital money in the upcoming
19 sessions. Given the economy and everything else
20 that's going on, despite the fact that everyone,
21 including yourselves, would like there to be a lot
22 more capital money, can you tell me whether
23 there's going to be an increase in capital money
24 this current year?

25 [Pause]

2 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: We're
3 having conversations with OMB in terms of exactly
4 what the money will look like in the capital plan.
5 The mayor has said that he is going to ask that
6 all capital projects be pushed out so that what we
7 might've done in four would be done in five. As I
8 say, we've got to work through with OMB, we will
9 put out the November draft and that will reflect
10 those conversations. I would just want to say
11 though, the buildings that we're talking about in
12 this plan that will open in '09, in '10, '11,
13 those projects will all go forward. It will--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Yeah--

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: --have--
16 nothing will have an impact on that.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: --well the
18 answer you gave me wasn't the answer that I was
19 looking for. But I'm not here to give you a hard
20 time, I was going to give you an easier time.
21 That despite the fact that everybody wants more
22 capital money, I don't see us living in Disney
23 World with everything else that's going on.
24 Everybody says police, security is first, kids are
25 first, everything is first and there's no money.

1 So the--I think it's a little bit ridiculous for
2 someone like myself, that's not the first time
3 that I've said something ridiculous, but this
4 happens to make sense to demand, demand, demand,
5 demand without coming up with a source for that
6 money--I'm not talking about fulfilling old
7 commitments, but new commitments, I don't
8 understand how the city's can make any new
9 commitments given the situation that exists, even
10 if it's bid. The second issue is one you have
11 nothing prepared for, which is what I'd like
12 asking about, it has to do with security and space
13 on Election Day. Many of the schools are used for
14 voting places and this is something that I think,
15 God forbid, should never become an issue. The
16 fact is that crazy people like myself walk into
17 the schools, what are you here for, to vote and
18 there's no security whatsoever and many of the
19 schools especially because of spacing issues, you
20 have kids mingling with voters that are coming in
21 and out. I don't have a good solution for it and
22 it's not exactly tied to the hearing, but it has
23 to do with space because what's happening is the
24 same parts of the schools that are being used for
25

2 teach the kids are being used in the hallways and
3 other places for voting, you know, on primary day,
4 and I think that's a very, very big problem. I'd
5 ask you to look into it.

6 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Council
7 member [crosstalk] respond to it. I think there
8 is an answer to the question that you think there
9 is no answer to and that, if I'm not mistaken, for
10 the presidential election, the children will not
11 be in school. The [crosstalk] space --

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER:
13 [Interposing] Yeah, but I'm not as stupid as I
14 look, I said, the primary.

15 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: No, no, I
16 heard the primary afterwards, I just wanted to--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Oh.

18 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: --just in
19 case people--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: No, but I
21 wanted impress you--

22 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: --didn't
23 know--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: --I wanted
25 to impress--

2 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Okay thanks,
3 but in response to your first question, I think
4 the challenges, and that's why I think both the
5 Deputy Chancellor and I said in our testimony
6 we're going to have tough times and there's going
7 to be a lot of discussion when we come before the
8 joint committees as far as justifying the capital
9 plan and having that discussion, because there
10 isn't an unlimited pool and we don't know what
11 position the state will be in, the city will be
12 in. And as a result of that some of the tough
13 decisions are going to have to be made, but again
14 it's going to be made on based on need and not on
15 politics moving forward.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: [Crosstalk]
17 primary. Again, you can just look into the
18 security issues on primary day, I would appreciate
19 that very much.

20 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Yes, sir.

21 [Pause]

22 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Council member
23 Lew Fidler.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: And as so
25 often happens around here, Fidler has to follow

2 Felder. Deputy Mayor, good afternoon and thank
3 you all for coming. I want to briefly touch on
4 two topics that we have dialogued here before
5 about, perhaps even crossed swords, and I promise
6 you neither of them is cell phones. The first is
7 gifted and talented programs and you were, I don't
8 remember your exact words, but earlier today in
9 response to a question you, or during your
10 testimony, you pointed out that sometimes it is
11 not a problem of capacity in a neighborhood but in
12 a school of choice. You know, I have taken the
13 position with the department that there ought to
14 be enough gifted and talented seats for those kids
15 that qualify by some standard. Now we've come to
16 a point where you believe you established a
17 standard, I could quibble with that. But clearly
18 when you make that comment, you are not providing
19 those seats in the school of choice in the
20 neighborhood. So my question to you is, I'm glad
21 to hear that you are now going to be looking at
22 capacity by neighborhood, will you also then look
23 at the capacity issue with the need for gifted and
24 talented seats factored in as well?

25 [Pause]

2 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: ...I may, I'll
3 defer to Garth, because this specifically respond
4 around gifted and talented, but I think when we
5 were talking about choice and, you know,
6 Councilman Liu is not here right now, but, for
7 example, he was talking about the overcrowding in
8 the northern tier of Queens with high school
9 specifically and our goal is to improve the
10 utilization level and the response of students
11 applying to, say, high schools in the southern
12 tier of Queens as well. If we have that type of
13 quality in the southern tier of Queens, than the
14 demand in the northern tier of Queens will be
15 reduced and therefore that will also reduce the
16 utilization level in the northern part of Queens.
17 So in my remarks, when I was talking about options
18 and choice and providing a broader base of
19 selection for parents and students to have higher-
20 quality schools in all parts of the area or
21 borough, it's more along that line, and I think
22 there's a direct correlation [crosstalk] --

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER:

24 [Interposing] Well actually, Deputy Mayor, I think
25 you were referring to schools in Manhattan and a

2 particular gifted and talented program at the
3 time, but--

4 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: In today or
5 [crosstalk]--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: --it's
7 immaterial.

8 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: --G&T?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Yeah, today.

10 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Today of G&T?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Well I think
12 you were talking about a school where, you know,
13 there was demand, but no space and, you know,
14 'cause we all--I forget the name of the school--

15 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: [Interposing]
16 Okay, but--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Whatever.
18 Immaterial.

19 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: --whatever,
20 but gifted and talented, go ahead.

21 GARTH HARRIES: So, councilman, on
22 your question about gifted and talented. Yes, we
23 are looking at where the gifted and talented
24 programs are, where the students are that have
25 qualified for them, and we think, you know, we've

2 made good strides this year in establishing a set
3 of standards around it and that was a difficult
4 process. We are looking closely at how folks made
5 choices last year and what that reflected about
6 where kids who qualified were able to get to, to
7 go to school. So that is part of the portfolio
8 that we look at. You know, obviously it is one of
9 the issues when, you know, if you have a zone that
10 has students who have a right to go to that
11 building and there are more zone students in the--
12 that fit in the building and then you're trying to
13 layer in a gifted and talented program. I think
14 it's a good example of the kind of complexity of
15 the issue that we need to wrestle with and are
16 trying to wrestle with on a local level.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: So then,
18 make sure I understand what your commitment is,
19 and that would be if I am hearing you, to find
20 capacity for every child that qualifies for gifted
21 and talented program in the school that they
22 choose to go to.

23 GARTH HARRIES: No.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Why not?

25 GARTH HARRIES: Because gifted and

2 talented is a choice that students are making, we
3 want to provide them options that they can get to
4 and it gets to the Councilman Lappin's question,
5 what's the geography in which students will go to
6 school when students are making a choice to go to
7 a gifted and talented program as opposed to their
8 local school, sometimes they may need to travel.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Now I

10 understand that that's--that could never be an
11 absolute but I respectfully differ and I think
12 that there is a reason why some parents prefer a
13 particular gifted and talented program. We ought
14 to be seeking to meet that capacity. As we began
15 the debate I gifted and talented programs, I
16 reminded you that for many parents the choice is
17 to get into the program that they want their child
18 to go to or to move out of the city of New York or
19 send their child to private school--neither
20 alternative is good for the city of New York for
21 the economy of the city of New York, for the
22 future the city of New York, or for the
23 neighborhoods. So I would urge you to take
24 another look at that. The other is really more of
25 an informational question, we have differed in the

2 past over the dismantling of the larger high
3 schools. And as, you know, Deputy Mayor, three of
4 them in and around my district have been
5 dismantled--I suspect you're heading for a fourth.
6 Could you just tell us what impact on utilization
7 dismantling of those high schools has had, what is
8 the utilization of the new schools, and what is
9 the utilizations of the schools while they're in
10 transition?

11 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Sure, and two
12 things, I don't know if we've really crossed
13 swords on the large--I'm a big believer in large
14 high schools, I'm just not a big believer in large
15 failing high schools and I draw distinction of the
16 two and I think it's an important distinction.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I'm out of
18 time, so I won't quibble.

19 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: No, but I
20 mean, 'cause I am a graduate of a large high
21 school that continues to be a large high school,
22 Francis Lewis High School. I'm a big believer in
23 high schools, we have Fort Hamilton High School,
24 we have a number of successful large high schools
25 that we protect and we cherish and, including

2 Francis Lewis, including Cardozo, including
3 Bayside. So there are large high schools
4 throughout the city, but at the same time we
5 should not continue old failing large high schools
6 that are not producing graduates of graduate level
7 that we feel they--where they should be. So
8 that's maybe where the quibble is, but at the same
9 time--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER:

11 [Interposing] The quibble would be I would say,
12 one can make them succeed but that, no.

13 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: And we agree,
14 we do want to make them succeed and we work very
15 hard with them, and that's what the--and that's
16 another hearing though. The progress reports are
17 valid and having peer comparisons and all, but
18 beyond that, I think and I'll again, defer to
19 Garth and maybe to Liz that with the enrollment of
20 the schools once we do break them up into the
21 smaller schools, we definitely want to make sure
22 we maintain if not reduce the enrollment level of
23 the schools that are put in there, the smaller
24 schools, but again, let me defer to Liz, who can
25 give you more concrete information.

2 LIZ SCIABARRA: Well, I'll use one
3 of the examples that we had talked about a while
4 ago--James Madison. we were nervous that James
5 Madison, because of South Shore and Tilden and
6 Canarsie closing down, that James Madison might in
7 fact become overcrowded. And one of the things
8 that my office does is work very closely with the
9 principals to determine what the entering class
10 would look like, we make some very strong
11 decisions about how over-the-counter students get
12 into a building. We look at all those things and
13 work collectively with the principals so that A,
14 there is no building that is negatively impacted
15 by the reduction, you know, by the siting of new
16 small schools. So in the case of James Madison,
17 for instance, over the last two years we've worked
18 very hard with the school and brought the
19 enrollment down there. It was a school that was
20 over 4,000 we're now down to 3,700. In schools
21 where we have new small schools--South Shore,
22 Tilden, Canarsie--we all know that it takes a
23 while for new schools to get their legs but, at
24 the same time we embark upon a very vigorous
25 recruitment campaign and we do our best to fill

2 those schools. Ultimately, with a critical mass
3 of new schools and the decrease in enrollment of
4 the school that is closing, we're able to get
5 those campuses up to a level that then creates
6 balance across the communities.

7 GARTH HARRIES: And it's worth
8 adding that, you know, in at least two cases that
9 I know of in Brooklyns or South Shore and
10 Lafayette, which we work closely with Councilman
11 Felder on, those were buildings that were
12 dramatically underutilized prior to their closure.
13 And part of what--part of why this is such a
14 collaborative effort is trying to make sure that
15 we have schools that are in those buildings that
16 can draw students and increase the enrollment
17 that's in the building so that we don't put
18 pressure on some of their surrounding high
19 schools. Councilman Felder worked hard with us
20 around the relocation of one of the most popular
21 schools in his district to the Lafayette campus in
22 order to increase the enrollment in that building,
23 and that's an example of the kind of--what our
24 tough choices, we had tough conversations with
25 parents about that move, but that ultimately

2 resulted in a more balanced in enrollment across
3 our school facilities.

4 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: And I just
5 want to modify something and modify it because I'm
6 thinking one in my area, Springfield Gardens High
7 School for example, that we phased out and
8 eventually closed down with Springfield and made
9 it into a campus and with Springfield, if I
10 remember the figures correctly, it's going back a
11 couple of years, the old Springfield Gardens High
12 School was probably at maybe 75% utilization, 70%
13 utilization. And now with the new schools that
14 have been placed there, demand is increasing where
15 people are now saying I want to send my child to
16 those new schools within the building. So the
17 modification of my statement I want to make is
18 that, we may exceed where the school was before,
19 but not be oversubscribed because of the increased
20 demand from the parents of the community wanting
21 to send their children to those schools that are
22 located in the Springfield complex as compared to
23 the old school of Springfield Gardens High School
24 itself.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Just 'cause

2 I know I'm out of time, I'd just like to ask you
3 to give me the raw facts--I don't imagine you have
4 them now--for Tilden, South Shore, Canarsie, and
5 Sheepshead Bay. I'd like to know the registration
6 capacity and utilization the year before you
7 closed those three schools, okay, and for each
8 year since, so that we can see what the facts are
9 in terms of whether or not we are in fact--what
10 the space in those buildings is, what the impact
11 has had and I'd like to see Sheepshead Bay 'cause
12 I suspect you're heading there next. So I'd
13 appreciate it--

14 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: [Interposing]

15 I think it's a great example.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: --if you'd
17 provide that to me and to the committee.

18 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Sure, would
19 love to, it'd be a great case study to see exactly
20 what we're talking about.

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So if you can
22 get that to us and council member Fidler, we
23 appreciate it. Vincent Ignizio of Staten Island.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Thank you
25 very much, Mr. Deputy Mayor, ma'am, Deputy

2 Chancellor, as always good to see you. And my
3 question, as you would imagine, relates to Staten
4 Island, so I'm going to actually turn the tables
5 somewhat and ask you to give me a primer on where
6 we are vis-à-vis utilization in Staten Island and
7 then my questions will ensue from there.

8 [Pause]

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: In terms
10 of the projects in this capital plan?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Yes, ma'am,
12 Deputy Chancellor, and where we are in terms of
13 utilization as a whole. And I do have one of the
14 largest high schools in the city in Tottenville
15 High School and it's working great and we don't
16 want changes to it. I visited there last week and
17 the principal is great and the school is doing
18 well. With that being said yes, Madame--Deputy
19 Chancellor, if you wouldn't mind.

20 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: You want
21 the actual utilization figures for the schools in
22 your district?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: No, no, no,
24 I'm talking about the overall utilization that
25 Staten Island as a district has vis-à-vis the rest

2 of the city. What utilization percentage--

3 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: [Interposing]

4 Sure, let me do that and then Kathleen can give
5 you the specific information. So the Borough
6 Staten Island, overall schools now we're dealing
7 with. Starting in 2000-2003, Staten Island was at
8 94.5% utilization, and now 2006-2007, Staten
9 Island is at 88.8% utilization. So the
10 utilization level has gone down in Staten Island,
11 just like citywide, and compared to citywide back
12 in 2000-2003, the utilization rate citywide was
13 93.9%, and now it's 2006-2007, 84.5% but again as
14 we--

15 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [Interposing]

16 But those stats--let me seek clarification.

17 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Sure.

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: When you gave
19 the stats for Staten Island and made a comparison,
20 were any new schools built with, you know, in
21 order to reduce that utilization?

22 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Kathleen can
23 give you that--

24 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Yes.

25 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: --I was just

2 responding to his general question.

3 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, okay.

4 But I'm just curious, if you built 20 new schools,
5 obviously I would assume the utilization, not
6 unless, you know, 500,000 more people moved into
7 Staten Island, you know?

8 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Right.

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: We opened
10 as you know, a new high school.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Yes.

12 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: This
13 September in Staten Island.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Proudly in
15 my district.

16 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: And it's a
17 beautiful school, I'm sure you've been there
18 recently, in the capital--in the next draft we
19 will, of course, be seeing what the latest numbers
20 indicate in terms of need.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: But is it,
22 I mean, the Curtis High School has always been one
23 that my colleague, council member McMahon--and I
24 am doing duty as the only Staten Island
25 representative today on the education panel--

2 Curtis High School is always one that comes up--

3 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Yes.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: --as a
5 problem.

6 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM:

7 [Crosstalk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Is there,
9 on the horizon, is there a success in additional
10 capacity coming before it?

11 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Well, I
12 think we have to wait for the capital plan to come
13 out. Again, we've had many conversations with the
14 councilman about Curtis, and we will be looking
15 not just for capital resolutions there, but for
16 administrative resolutions also.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Okay. So
18 we're eagerly anticipating is that capital plan,
19 so to me representing the fastest-growing district
20 in New York state, is eager and as always, have
21 mentioned to you several times, we have 16 acres
22 of land set aside in Charleston area of my
23 district with the utilization and increasing I
24 would once again like to put on the table a
25 discussion about a Petrides, south type complex, a

2 K-12 on those 16 acres, which would allow for us
3 to reduce the capacity of all the surrounding
4 schools and actually I think it gives the best
5 bang for the buck in terms of decreasing
6 overcrowding in the schools that I represent and
7 it will do what Petrides has been doing for that
8 mid-island/north shore section of Staten Island.
9 So that's something that I once again wanted to
10 reiterate to you and stress the importance of.
11 Overcrowding in my schools has been fluctuating,
12 there was a bubble--

13 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Right.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: --in my
15 district and I want to know if you can somewhat
16 articulate that better than I can. I think it was
17 right around 2000-2003 that we were at the peak
18 capacity in the southern region that I represent.
19 Have we seen that level off just in terms of new,
20 you know, kids entering kindergarten, kids are
21 either entering first grades or--

22 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM:

23 [Interposing] I don't have those specific data,
24 but will be happy to pull them up and share them
25 with you.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Okay.

3 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: And in
4 response to Chair Jackson's question, just to give
5 you specifics, the school I think you guys were
6 just referring to is IS/HS 43. Is that the one
7 that you're just talking about?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Right.
9 Yeah.

10 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Which is
11 1,664 seats that just opened up this year, and
12 then we also opened up an addition to a school PS
13 15/829, which is in district 31, which is Staten
14 Island, which is 441 seats and those are the two
15 schools that were just--

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [Interposing]
17 About 2,000 seats then.

18 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: This year
19 alone. Right.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: This year
21 alone.

22 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Right.

23 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And what is
24 the student population of Staten Island? In
25 essence--

2 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: You should
3 know this.

4 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, what
5 would the utilization be--we were talking about
6 capacity and utilization, so for example, I don't
7 know if you have that stats now, you may. How
8 many children were at that, that fit into the
9 formula that you read off percentage-wise at 90
10 something, says versus 80 something with 2,000
11 seats being added?

12 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: We can get
13 you that particular information. I don't want to
14 give you wrong information.

15 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

16 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: At least I
17 don't have it in my figures.

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm just
19 curious, you know.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: I have one
21 final question, if I may --

22 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: I don't know
23 right now.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. Very
25 good.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: There is a
3 additional I think, what is 604 seats or 406
4 seats--my dyslexia is coming into play here--in
5 this last five-year--in the capital plan we're
6 currently in, there is some discussion about how
7 or how those seats will be allocated. I believe
8 the community district school board did recommend
9 PS 53 for an extension from a K-5 to a K-8.
10 Ultimately who makes that decision on where to
11 allocate those last--the additional seats?

12 [Pause]

13 GARTH HARRIES: I think the--so the
14 question is about additional capacity seats since
15 that now, is that right?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: There is--

17 GARTH HARRIES: Right.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: --
19 additional capacity seats in this current five-
20 year capital plan without a project--didn't have
21 them allocated and there's been some conversation
22 about it being PS 53 being made into a K-8 school
23 instead of the K-5 that it currently is and I
24 believe the community school board supported that
25 and made that--made you all aware that.

2 Ultimately when and where is that decision made?

3 GARTH HARRIES: The decision about
4 building a new facility is made by the Deputy
5 Chancellor, the Chancellor, in consultation with
6 the School Construction Authority about what's
7 feasible to build and then I get involved in the
8 question of how will that building be used. For--
9 so, for example, on the question if what we're
10 going to do is convert a school from a K-5 to K-8,
11 understanding that, you know, that will have an
12 impact on the surrounding middle schools--

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Right.

14 GARTH HARRIES: --right? Because
15 the kids will no longer go and that's something
16 that we would then have to plan around, which is a
17 good example of how these sorts of issues begin to
18 intertwine. Answer your question, ultimately the
19 construction decision is made by the Deputy
20 Chancellor and then I work with their team on how
21 are we actually going to use that space
22 instructionally.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: And as that
24 progresses, you will let us, the local council
25 member, know we've made a decision, we are going

2 to do that or we're not going to do that?

3 GARTH HARRIES: Absolutely.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Okay.

5 Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Mayor and Madame
6 Chancellor, thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you. I
8 have a couple of questions and then I am the last
9 questioner and then we're going to move to another
10 panel. So I want to thank you for your
11 cooperation. Under the current capital plan--

12 [Off mic]

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm sorry,
14 what did you say, brother?

15 [Off mic]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Mr.
17 Chairman, I think Mr. Simpyfel [phonetic] is out
18 of order and it should be ruled accordingly.

19 [Pause]

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Under the
21 current capital plan, my understanding there were
22 three primary goals for new capacity and one was
23 to eliminate overcrowding so that no school would
24 remain at 100% utilization and no school would be
25 forced to hold double or triple shifts. Number

2 two, remove all trailers and temporary classroom
3 units, which are called TCUs and number three,
4 create enough space so that class sizes in grades
5 K-3 could be reduced to 20 or less in every
6 elementary school. My question is, have you, by
7 the end of the five-year capital plan which it
8 ends in, I think--

9 [Off mic]

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --soon. Have
11 you reached your goals in each one of these areas
12 and if not, give me a percentage of, for example,
13 we've reached--our goal was this and we reached
14 75% of it, 50% or something like that. If you
15 don't mind.

16 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Well, I'll
17 do my--I'll do my best. If I can just go back to
18 the first item, that was overcrowding. And this
19 is the lesson we learn, I think we all learned as
20 we went--have gone through the amendments to this
21 capital plan. The original plan contemplated
22 eliminating overcrowding on a district basis and
23 what we've all learned is that's not good enough.
24 And so now we're sort of shifting gears and in the
25 next plan we're going to look on a more

neighborhood basis in terms of what we have to do. Under the old rubric of eliminating overcrowding on a district basis, we have over 55,000 of the seats sited and in progress or completed, so that would be, I guess, roughly 88% of the 63,000 that--but we haven't given up, we have another year and we're going continue to try and site those I think roughly 7 or 8,000 seats. On the TCUs, again under the old rubric of the way this plan was constructed, if we eliminated overcrowding, theoretically if we were just doing numbers, we could eliminate all of the TCUs. We've learned a couple of things in this capital plan. Number one, we've learned that some school communities don't want to give up their TCUs, they like them, so we're not going to rip them out if people really want them. We're also taking another very hard look because since we've shifted gears and we're looking at a neighborhood level, it's become a much more complicated situation, and so we are struggling with that now in terms of the new plan, so I don't have an answer for you on that today. On the space for K-3, I don't have a specific number for you, but it would, I assume, track the

2 fact that we have sited or are in the process of
3 constructing 55,000 seats or roughly 88% of the
4 seats, so I would assume we'd be hitting a similar
5 target on our goal for K-3. Garth.

6 GARTH HARRIES: I think it's worth
7 adding, councilman, because you referred to the
8 specifically the end of the plan and it's worth
9 remembering when [crosstalk]--

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [Interposing]
11 And the end of the plan is when, Garth?

12 GARTH HARRIES: This plan ends at
13 the end of two--fiscal year 2009.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, so
15 that's June of 2009.

16 GARTH HARRIES: That's correct, and
17 I think the point that I wanted to make is to
18 remember that many of these construction projects
19 take years to build and so the plan is funded now,
20 the projects are being built, the 88% that the
21 Deputy Chancellor referred to, you know, those are
22 good things, we won't see the schools open until
23 subsequent years. So it's important to keep in
24 mind, and part of what our office is trying to do
25 is work together with local communities to make

2 sure they're aware of the buildings that will be
3 built and beginning to plan around their
4 instructional use what kinds of schools, what
5 kinds of emphasis, so that we're ready to hit the
6 ground running when the school buildings actually
7 open their doors.

8 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: But when we
9 dealt with the current capital plan when it was
10 being put forward, we knew how long it takes to
11 build schools, I mean that was a given. So, I
12 mean, that was factored in, in the beginning. But
13 I need to know, with respect to whether or not
14 you're setting realistic goals because if people
15 look at this five-year capital plan, you look at
16 the previous five-year capital plan and the one
17 before that the goals were not really achieved as
18 far as 100% and parents and people want to make
19 sure that you set realistic goals. So if you say
20 that you're going to reduce class sizes in K-3,
21 you have a protocol in place to achieve that and
22 not put it forward as a goal, but realistically
23 we're not going to achieve it. You know, parents
24 want to see class size reduction.

25 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Again, I

2 think for the five-year capital plan and what
3 Garth was saying is that, while it will end June
4 2009, all the results will not be shown until
5 roughly 2012. And so we don't want us to be in a
6 position, the collective us, to be in a position
7 to say, okay, it's end of June 2009, yet we don't
8 see X,Y, and Z being achieved. In reality that
9 will be achieved once all the schools have been
10 built, all the seats have been opened, which will
11 stretch to 2012. So I just want to clarify that
12 because I know when people hear a five-year
13 capital plan, they say okay, it's over now at the
14 end of the five-year period of time, where are the
15 seats, you know, how come we're not reaching this
16 particular goal.

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Absolutely.

18 Right, yeah.

19 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: And so even
20 when we originally testified way back when before
21 the committee we knew that it would stretch until
22 2011, 2012 period of time just for the siting and
23 the construction and design phases that one has to
24 go through in the building of schools itself. So
25 I just want to make sure we're all on the same

2 page as far as that particular issue is concerned
3 and then I think as we have indicated in our
4 testimony to all of you, that I think all of us
5 have gotten better in identifying where those
6 pockets exist, where we have those schools and
7 neighborhoods that are overcrowded. And as a
8 result of that we've had to make adjustments
9 within the five-year capital plan to respond to
10 that--

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Right.

12 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: --and that's
13 some of what we're going through throughout the
14 city as well, not just in one district, but
15 throughout the city.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I understand.
17 Yeah, and I think from a practical point of view,
18 when the Department of Education or the City
19 Council say this is a five-year plan, the people
20 are not saying--they want to see a five-year plan
21 that's going to realistically be built within that
22 five years, not to say oh, it's a five-year plan,
23 but the end of the plan is going to happen three
24 years out. I mean, because that's not really a
25 five-year plan--it may be a five-year plan, but

2 the realization is more than five years--

3 [Crosstalk]

4 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --and people
5 want it now and not five years from now when their
6 kids are already out of elementary school.

7 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Yeah, for
8 example in your district--

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Right.

10 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: --there is a-

11 -

12 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: My districts
13 are five and six, you know.

14 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Six, six, I
15 think I'm talking about, we're building or will be
16 building a school, the cloth site, I think it is?

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Right, right.

18 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: And so I'm
19 not--

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: The Health
21 Career School.

22 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Right. And
23 so while that's concluded in this five-year
24 capital plan, I think the actual completion date
25 is when Kathleen?

2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: 2010,
3 something like that? Yeah.

4 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: 2010.

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [Crosstalk]

6 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: So I mean,
7 I'm just using that as an example that something
8 that's definitely committed in this capital plan.

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And I think
10 that that's where and in listening to Kathleen and
11 Garth talk about some of the lessons that we
12 learned in this five-year capital plan, because my
13 next question was going to be, how would you
14 improve the next capital plan to ensure that you
15 do better in the next round. And you've mentioned
16 some of those as far as not looking at a district,
17 but neighborhoods and some other stuff as far as
18 transportable's, but are there any other things
19 you're looking at in order to refine and/or to
20 make clearer the next five-year capital plan?

21 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: I think
22 one of the most important things we're doing is
23 what the Deputy Mayor described a little earlier
24 in that all the people at this table are working
25 very closely together to look at, not just where

1
2 the need is, but where the space is and what can
3 we do, not just with brick-and-mortar but what can
4 we do with administrative solutions to address the
5 problems in every neighborhood.

6 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Also if I
7 may, one of the goals and this may come out wrong,
8 but it is to bore all of you--and let me tell you
9 what I mean by bore all of you. In that I think
10 for our next presentation I would love to have a
11 more detailed description with showing whether
12 it's through a computer or some other means,
13 exactly the overlay of where our pockets are and
14 to have more mapping information for you so that
15 way all of you can see exactly the neighborhood
16 need and what the plans are, whether it's to new
17 construction or through leasing, through the
18 reconfiguration of schools and build into overlay.
19 So while, you know, it may be very boring to a lot
20 of people, it really gets into the weaves of
21 exactly the planning process that's involved as
22 far as taking a look at the next five-year plan.
23 And that way, it stretches out and makes it more
24 informational and it really gives all of us I
25 think an idea of those projections and then you'll

2 see, for example, City Planning says X, new
3 housing starts Y, and then put that on and then
4 the projected impact that will have in a
5 particular district and particular neighborhood as
6 far as school seats are concerned. So it's a
7 rather very tedious, detailed process, but I think
8 it lays out the information that all of us should
9 be sharing with each other especially as council
10 members, you need to be responsive to your
11 constituents as far as the neighborhood needs of
12 schools. So that, to me, would be part of the
13 next step in sharing information, once you get
14 your draft plan, and then how we really got to the
15 point of what's included in that draft plan.

16 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: I would love
17 that and you may have seen them already, but I
18 have--the PTAs of a number of the schools have
19 done around because they've been so frustrated,
20 and they have these Google maps and they have
21 every new building and exactly the number of units
22 and the zone school and the capacity and the
23 utilization rate at the school. And they've done
24 it and I would love to compare what they've done
25 to what you've done and really see, you know,

2 where we are.

3 [Pause]

4 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well that even
5 [pause] that would be a very detailed process,
6 but, you know, if you only do, for example, in the
7 presentation District 2 or 3 in Manhattan and
8 Brooklyn and Queens are going to go, hey wait, so
9 obviously if you would get us all of that
10 information beforehand and maybe then, you know,
11 but we would love to see that in detail and we
12 understand that that is--takes a lot of time, but
13 quite frankly, it's time well spent because in the
14 long run our children will benefit from it.

15 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: I mean, this
16 is just part of a vision that needs to be refined
17 by the pros and experts, I mean, I can see a hot
18 map being developed basically where we have an
19 overlay of the city as far as schools, and then
20 from there we break it down by districts, and then
21 from there we break it down by neighborhoods and,
22 again, it's going to be a very detailed process,
23 but I think it really gives a read. And then, as
24 Garth was indicating on the side just now, I mean,
25 what we also do is meet with the delegations of

2 the different boroughs as well and we start that
3 process in that regard. So a lot of that
4 discussion can take place so it's refined even
5 before we come before the city council. And so, I
6 mean, we are open to presenting something that
7 meets, I think, all of our respective needs
8 because quite frankly we're not interested in
9 really not giving you any information that you
10 want--we want to give you all the information so
11 that way you have a clear projection on school
12 construction, especially incorporating councilman
13 Felder's reality check that we're going to be
14 facing tough times and, as result of that, people
15 need to have the information because there are
16 going to be some really tough decisions that we're
17 going to have to make over the next couple of
18 years. So...

19 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, let me
20 just ask a couple of specific questions. When do
21 you realistically expect to eliminate overcrowding
22 so that no school is over 100% utilization?
23 [Pause] I want somebody to answer--no, and I'm
24 being real--

25 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Sure.

2 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: No.

3 [Crosstalk]

4 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I'm not asking
5 a question to like, I gotcha moment, but this is
6 real because I think people want to know that and
7 especially since you said you're looking at
8 neighborhood, you know, versus district now, which
9 is more appropriate. But realistically people
10 want to know and citywide, citywide, when are we
11 going to have schools where there are no school is
12 over 100% utilization?

13 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: We do not
14 have an answer to that question and we are going
15 to need help from you to arrive at the answer.
16 And what the Deputy Mayor has laid out in terms of
17 the information sharing, we're all going to have
18 to work really hard to go through it and match
19 that to our resources and that will give us the
20 timeline and we will need your help doing that.

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. Going
22 back to questions that I've asked before with
23 respect to a realistic plan. I think I've asked
24 the general question and let me ask it again.
25 Tell me how much money it would take to build

2 schools in our city so that no school is over
3 utilized and that all of the major repairs, all of
4 the repairs at level five and fours and threes
5 twos and ones, so that our schools are
6 satisfactory to everyone here. How much would it
7 cost? Would it cost \$100 billion? 150 billion?
8 And then let's map out, you know, okay we're going
9 to do this over five years or seven years or eight
10 years or ten years. Rather than get a five-year
11 capital plan and it doesn't realistically take in
12 citywide what we need to do in order to have a
13 seat for every child in a school that is not
14 overcrowded, that has a gym, that has art room, it
15 has computer rooms, dance studios, and everything
16 else that many of the children in the suburban
17 schools have and we don't have. And I think that
18 that's what I want to know and which I know that
19 you may say, well, you know, that takes a lot of
20 work, but I think it's real, because quite
21 frankly, you know, the city in this situation as
22 you know we're capital, we can bond and get money
23 in order to build schools based on our financial
24 rating.

25 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Let me tackle

1 your first question and I want to tackle that
2 before--I don't know if we have an answer for your
3 second question, but tackle your first question,
4 because I think what you asked is something that's
5 going to require all of us to really be very clear
6 that if we truly to achieve a goal where there
7 isn't a school that's over utilized at all, it's
8 going to require a change of mindset and it's
9 going to require a change of mindset as far as
10 it's not just about building new schools, it's
11 about the reconfiguring of existing schools. For
12 example, the story that I always like to tell
13 which Garth referred to around the two schools
14 that were literally--didn't add this part in his
15 discussion--that were two blocks away from each
16 other, two elementary schools and one was roughly
17 40% utilization, the other was maybe 55%
18 utilization and both sets of parents wanted to
19 hold onto their building. And it was a struggle
20 to make sure that they understood that both were
21 underutilized schools and to collapse both of them
22 into one building would make sense, which
23 therefore freed up the existing building to be a
24 high school. And that was a major challenge as
25

2 far as getting to the point of doing it. It's
3 going to require that type of mindset for people
4 to really break from the traditions of the past as
5 far as having a very protective mindset around a
6 school building in their neighborhoods and if
7 we're truly to achieve the goal that you've raised
8 with the first question, it's going to require all
9 of us collectively and you guys are going to get
10 the pressure as well from your respective
11 constituents as far as the old buildings and not
12 necessarily the way buildings should be in 2009
13 and 2010. And so it's not just about new money,
14 it's about reconfiguring the existing way
15 buildings are being structured right now. And so,
16 I mean, I am committed and we are committed to
17 always responding to those challenges, but at the
18 same time, I think it's going to require
19 collective support from all of us to achieve that
20 goal. And I think if we have that type of
21 consensus as far as moving away from the old
22 mindset of a building per se and what a new
23 mindset should be to make sure that buildings are
24 utilized fully and therefore it draws down the
25 utilization levels in other buildings, then I

2 think we can get a long--get to that point that
3 you raised in your first question as far as the
4 goal of not having any building at 100%
5 utilization. It's not going to be easy,
6 obviously, but it's going to be a better
7 opportunity for us to reach that particular goal.
8 As far as the second question, I mean, I honestly
9 don't have a figure to that and I would be
10 reluctant for any of us to commit to a dollar
11 figure along that line because I think something
12 like that is both not realistic in this budget
13 climate, but at the same time, I think it goes
14 away from the first question of really meeting the
15 challenges of how we redefine and have a new
16 paradigm as far as what a school should be as far
17 as configuration. I mean, at some point in one of
18 the boroughs--I won't mention where--we'll be
19 coming back to the local council members where
20 they potentially, a very interesting challenge as
21 far as an existing building in that particular
22 area. And when we talk to that council member and
23 talk to that CEC around this particular building,
24 we're going to get a sense of how willing people
25 are as far as taking a look at a building that

2 will relieve a problem on one side of that
3 particular area, but at the same time, possibly
4 creating a problem on the other side. Again, it's
5 going to have a lot of dynamics, a lot of issues
6 that people are going to have to manage, but at
7 the same time it achieves the overall goal of
8 addressing a pocket of overcrowding in a
9 particular area that needs to be addressed. And
10 we're hopefully, we'll have the support of that
11 local community to achieve that particular goal.

12 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: What borough is
13 that in?

14 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: I did not
15 cite a borough, council member.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Now [pause]
17 how far away, timeframe, from having enough space
18 to reach the goal of this five-year capital plan
19 where reduce class size in K-3 to 20 in every
20 elementary school? Knowing that part of decision
21 based on some of the principles--meaning people
22 involved, not necessarily the principal of the
23 school--

24 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Sure.

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --is that they

1 want to keep some of the TCUs and a lot of the
2 TCUs are for the younger kids. How far away are
3 we from achieving that no more than 20 in K-3?
4 Are we a year away? Two years away? Three years
5 away? How far away are we? Based on all of your
6 sitings and everything else.
7

8 GARTH HARRIES: I mean, the issue,
9 councilman, is as you know, I think class size
10 reduction in K-3 we seen reductions every year of
11 this administration. The part of my answer to
12 that question would be that, you know, this
13 capital plan was designed around the target of K-3
14 construction, 20 students per class--that would be
15 an average utilization. But those statistics are
16 built in to the construction assumptions that both
17 the Deputy Chancellor and the Deputy Mayor have
18 been referring to. I don't know when the last
19 elementary school is scheduled to be completed,
20 call that 2012, but what we know is that the
21 situation changes and the situation changes every
22 year--it's one reason why we update demographic
23 projections, it's one reason why we update housing
24 projections. So this capital plan is well on its
25 way to meeting its goals when all the buildings

2 are finished, but we have to understand that the
3 situation changes. Part of what we're trying to
4 lay out today is the way that that, together with
5 you, we need to be looking at every year. Where
6 are their spikes that weren't anticipated; where
7 is there new housing that wasn't anticipated;
8 where are there people fleeing schools that wasn't
9 anticipated and how do we take advantage of that?

10 [Pause]

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You hired two
12 demographers, is that correct? When did you hire
13 these individuals? How long ago?

14 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: The Grier
15 Partnership has been working for a long time. I
16 don't--certainly before I got here and I think
17 around 2004 or five we hired a second one just so
18 that we make sure that we have two sets of eyes
19 and two minds doing the calculations.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [Interposing]
21 And is that individual employed by DOE or the
22 Grier Partnership or whatever consultant?

23 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM:
24 [Interposing] No, no, both contracts are with the
25 School Construction Authority.

2 [Pause]

3 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. [Pause]

4 A timeframe here because our borough president is
5 here and he's testifying and he's on a time
6 schedule. Let me just ask maybe one more
7 question, how many new capacity seats were
8 completed in the last five-year capital plan and
9 what was the average time of completion from start
10 to finish for new capacity seats?

11 [Pause]

12 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: I don't
13 think I have that information with me, but we can
14 certainly get it.

15 [Pause]

16 GARTH HARRIES: I would add also
17 that that statistic is in capital plan annual
18 amendment every year, so there is a chart in the
19 capital plan that includes how many seats have
20 been completed to date, how many seats are sited,
21 how many remain to be sited. So if we don't have
22 it today, we can absolutely get it to you, but I
23 would also urge folks to look at the publicly
24 available capital plan.

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: But do, you

2 know--

3 GARTH HARRIES: [Interposing] it
4 doesn't include I think the timeframe which was an
5 independent question.

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah, if you
7 can get us that information, we'd appreciate it.
8 One of the things is, you know, these documents
9 are not the easiest to read and especially from
10 people that are not involved in the business like
11 you are and I'm not involved in the business, I'm
12 a legislature but as far as the staff is
13 considered. So if you can get us that, I'd
14 appreciate it. I guess my last question is how
15 many new capacity seats would the Department of
16 Education calculate that it needs to meet the
17 Contract for Excellence class-size target goals in
18 total? As you know, under the Contract for
19 Excellence, you're supposed to have class size
20 reduction, not only in K-3, but K-12. So [pause]
21 I'm just--I need to know how many seats would you
22 calculate you need in order to meet the Contract
23 for Excellence goals?

24 GARTH HARRIES: I don't have an
25 answer for you today, it's something we are

2 looking at in the construction of this capital
3 plan. I think it is very important to understand
4 several things. One is, as the Deputy Chancellor
5 referred earlier, class sizes across the system
6 are lower than the numbers assumed in our
7 facility's estimates and that is a function again
8 of the complexity of the class-size issues--

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Right.

10 GARTH HARRIES: --that many schools
11 work on programming and alternate use of their
12 spaces, so that they can reduce class size and we
13 want them to make sure they have the cluster rooms
14 and those things as part of that. The second
15 thing to be clear about is, you know, our class-
16 size plan was focused on around injection of
17 resources and projection of what sort of resources
18 were coming and I think part of what we're all
19 going to have to look carefully about is how the
20 economic situation changes, not only our capital
21 investments, but also our operating investments
22 and take that into account as we work forward.

23 [Pause]

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And I hear
25 you, but also I know based on the stats that I

2 also cited in my opening statement, whereas your
3 recent Enrollment, Capacity and Utilization
4 Report, 38% of New York city public school
5 students attend schools in buildings that are
6 above 100% utilization and the details are 47% of
7 the elementary school students are in schools that
8 are overcrowded; 19% of middle school students and
9 51% of high school students. Quite frankly, you
10 know, I know that--I know the situation that we're
11 in financially, but these children especially at
12 the high school level are in the most overcrowded
13 situation--51% of high school schools are
14 overcrowded.

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: I'm not
16 sure where their--your numbers are coming from,
17 our current numbers show that citywide--

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [Interposing]
19 We're talking about students, not buildings, I'm
20 sorry.

21 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Students?

22 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah, 51% of
23 high school students attend overcrowded schools.
24 This is taken from your most recent Enrollment,
25 Capacity Utilization Reports.

2 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: We'll have
3 to work with your staff on that because our
4 numbers show a citywide number of 57 or 27%.

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Students? Are
6 you talking about students or are you talking
7 about--what are you talking about? What is your
8 reference to the 27%?

9 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Buildings
10 that are overcrowded.

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah, see
12 we're talking about 51% of high school students
13 attend overcrowded schools. This is taken from
14 your report.

15 DEPUTY CHANCELLOR GRIMM: Okay. I
16 think I have to suggest that staff sit down and
17 work through those numbers.

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: But I think
19 that you would agree that high schools are
20 overcrowded overall, isn't that correct?

21 GARTH HARRIES: There are certainly-
22 -it's the same answer, councilman. There are
23 certainly high schools that are overcrowded, there
24 are many that are not. Part of our efforts over
25 the last several years has been very deliberately

2 to bring down enrollments in those facilities that
3 were the most overcrowded and part of that has
4 been attracting students into buildings that were
5 underutilized. It's something, you know, we know
6 the--Liz Sciabarra and I have worked closely on
7 the Bronx, which is a situation that was
8 particularly dire, as you know, when we started in
9 2002 in terms of high school overcrowding. And we
10 have been doing some of what the Deputy Mayor
11 talked about in the Bronx about replacing failing
12 schools that in that instance were overcrowded and
13 as we've done that we've managed to bring
14 utilization down at the high school level fairly
15 pervasively--we still have issues, there are still
16 schools that are overcrowded, but we're making
17 good progress.

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: But see, and
19 that's where I think that the stats that that you
20 give concerning school capacity and the stats that
21 we're given as far as students in overcrowded
22 schools and classrooms we have to sync so that
23 everyone--everyone--will be on the same page and
24 that's extremely important, especially for us to
25 be on the same page so that the public, the

2 parents and advocates will be able to understand
3 it in plain, simple language.

4 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Totally
5 agree.

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah.

7 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: No
8 disagreement.

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well let me
10 thank you all for coming--

11 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: [Interposing]
12 Thank you, councilman.

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --and we
14 appreciate--

15 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: [Crosstalk]

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --and we look
17 forward to working with you.

18 DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT: Thank you
19 very much, members of the Council.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And next we're
21 going to hear from our borough president of
22 Manhattan, Scott Stringer, who's been waiting
23 patiently for the past four hours, three hours.

24 [Pause] Oh, if they stay, you have--they will
25 listen to you. I hope they have their

2 representatives here. Bottom line is this is been
3 recorded and it's not the Department of
4 Education's hearing, it's the Education
5 Committee's hearing. Borough President Scott
6 Stringer, please come forward. Sorry for the
7 delay.

8 [Pause]

9 [Off mic]

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Now you've
11 been here since early this morning at the press
12 conference that you called and so you must've been
13 here at least by 8:30 and it's now almost 1
14 o'clock. I hope you had something to eat in the
15 meantime.

16 PRESIDENT STRINGER: I have not, Mr.
17 Jackson.

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Oh, my gosh.
19 Well welcome.

20 PRESIDENT STRINGER: So I'd like to
21 order, no. We heard you're buying for everybody
22 who's here. Actually it's--I really want to start
23 out by thanking Council Speaker Christine Quinn
24 and yourself, Mr. Chair, Mr. Jackson. And, of
25 course, the Public Siting Committee Chair Jessica

2 Lappin for holding this important hearing. For
3 the past year--oh, let me also introduce Dan
4 Golub, our senior policy advisor in our office,
5 who's worked very hard of this issue and I want to
6 publicly thank him for all of his efforts. I do
7 think that today's hearing is an important step in
8 beginning the coordinated planning process that
9 you talked about with the DOE today. I also want
10 to commend the Council for holding the oversight
11 hearing before the city releases its five-year
12 capital plan instead of doing this after the plan.
13 And I also want to thank and recognize, Mayor
14 Bloomberg, Chancellor Klein, and the staffs at the
15 Department of Education and the School
16 Construction Authority for being here today to be
17 a part of this conversation. They've shown a
18 willingness to begin an open dialogue with parents
19 and elected officials on school overcrowding and
20 they have been working very hard to tackle these
21 critical issues. As we all know, eliminating
22 overcrowding is critical to providing a quality
23 education for every child. Unfortunately, 38% of
24 New York City public school students now attend
25 schools in buildings that are overcrowded.

2 Meanwhile, the city has seen an explosion of new
3 residential development in many of our
4 neighborhoods and this has not been matched by
5 creating new schools. In April, my office issued,
6 "Crowded Out," the first report to compare
7 residential growth to neighborhood school
8 capacity. It showed that in Manhattan
9 neighborhoods--that in Manhattan neighborhoods, it
10 had the highest risk for overcrowding. The city
11 approved enough new residential buildings over the
12 past eight years to add up to 2,300 new students
13 to neighborhood schools. Meanwhile, the city only
14 added 143 seats of school capacity. This August,
15 I released, "Still Crowded Out," which showed that
16 the pace of development has kept up so far in
17 2008. In fact, the pace has actually increased
18 substantially. The report we authored offered a
19 number of reform proposals that would help fix
20 this process. Many Manhattan council members have
21 worked with me on these proposals as part of our
22 Manhattan School Overcrowding Task Force, which is
23 chaired by Leonie Haimson of Class Size Matters
24 and Patrick Sullivan, my appointee to the panel
25 for education policy and because I know this is a

1 citywide issue, we've partnered with a broad
2 coalition of parents, educators, advocates, union
3 leaders, and elected officials as part of the ABC
4 Campaign--The Campaign for A Better Capital Plan.
5 When the city proposes its new five-year capital
6 plan for school construction this November, we
7 propose three important reforms that I would like
8 the council to consider. The first is, we must
9 address existing overcrowding and reduce class
10 size. The very least we can do is build enough
11 seats to relieve current overcrowding. And the
12 city should also describe what it would take to
13 reduce class sizes to the levels set out by the
14 city in its last class size reduction plan. These
15 were the promises that were made pursuant to the
16 CFE decision and we should keep them and you know
17 the role you've played in this. Second, we must
18 be ready for growth and plan at the neighborhood
19 level--and I'm very glad that the DOE addressed
20 that very concern. But it is time to look at
21 school planning from the perspective of urban
22 planners and development analysts. DOE and SCA
23 should work with planning experts and communities
24 to establish a clear transparent procedure for
25

2 projecting future growth. In addition, the new
3 capital plan should plan at the neighborhood
4 level, rather than solely through the lens of
5 community school districts. The large size of
6 many school districts can obscure the overcrowding
7 that occurs at the local level. And New Yorkers--
8 parents--have a reasonable expectation that there
9 will be a school in their neighborhood for their
10 young children to attend. On this point, I do
11 want to commend Chancellor Klein who recently
12 wrote to me to tell me that DOE is planning to
13 implement this reform in the new capital plan. I
14 look forward to working with him and the council
15 to learn more about how that process will work.
16 And three, I want to talk about how we correct the
17 faulty capacity estimates because I think we need
18 to be clear about our data. As you know, Mr.
19 Chairman, and, you know, Subcommittee Chair
20 Lappin, there's a widespread concern about the
21 accuracy of the city's official capacity numbers.
22 Students just don't classrooms, they also need art
23 and music rooms, science laboratories, special
24 education services, and libraries. These spaces
25 are central to the well-rounded education our

2 children deserve. DOE and SCA should work closely
3 with educators, parents, arts experts, and others
4 to revise these official capacity numbers so we
5 preserve these space and these learning
6 activities. Now, I certainly recognize that in
7 difficult fiscal times it would be a challenge to
8 provide enough funding to meet all of these
9 priorities, but as the mayor has said, we can't
10 respond to an economic downturn by letting schools
11 and other amenities go by the wayside--that only
12 makes the economy worse. We can't repeat the
13 mistakes of the 70s when we stopped supporting our
14 infrastructure and investment simply fled the
15 city. No matter what the economic situation is,
16 the proposed capital plan should aim to meet our
17 children's needs. Setting our priorities and
18 making the tough choices about how much we fund
19 should happen in the open as part of our budget
20 process. And let's face it if our parents are not
21 assured of a public school seat in their local
22 district, they will pack up and leave this city
23 and take their precious tax dollars with them. We
24 must be--we must recognize that fact. I do urge
25 the City Council to keep working and demand a

2 capital plan for schools that meets our children's
3 needs. I've partnered with council member Lappin
4 to introduce a council resolution supporting these
5 reforms, which I hope you will consider. With
6 more families choosing to raise children in New
7 York City and City Planning projecting that the
8 city's population will increase by nearly a
9 million people, this is a problem that can't wait
10 for a solution. But if we plan wisely and if we
11 plan ahead, we can validate the state's
12 Constitution's guarantee of a quality education
13 for every child. I want to thank you, council
14 member Lappin, Speaker Quinn, for having this kind
15 of hearing, which is so important, not just for
16 the parents who are here today, but to create a
17 strategic outline that will get us to where we
18 have to be in terms of school seats, and I want to
19 thank both of you for spearheading this effort.

20 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: I wanted to--

21 [Applause]

22 PRESIDENT STRINGER: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: He deserves a
24 round of applause.

25 PRESIDENT STRINGER: Thank you.

2 Thank you.

3 [Applause]

4 PRESIDENT STRINGER: Thank you.

5 Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: And I wanted to
7 thank you and I wanted to thank Dan Golub, because
8 not only did you put together such an excellent
9 report that really brought critical attention to
10 this issue, you didn't just issue a report and
11 stand at a press conference and put it on the
12 shelf. You have really worked since April to
13 build a coalition around the report and to push
14 for changes and we've had a victory and the fact
15 that the Chancellor said to you this week--and I
16 don't think it's a coincidence with the hearing
17 today that you got a letter yesterday. So but
18 that said, it's those--him adopting one of your
19 recommendations and so that's significant and we
20 have a lot of work ahead of us, but we've already
21 had a positive impact, I think, in terms of the
22 planning process. So thank you.

23 PRESIDENT STRINGER: I mean just to
24 your point, council member, I think that part of
25 what's exciting about the report is that this is

2 not just about, as you mentioned, you know, a
3 couple of pages in a document. I mean, the
4 research is out there and the coalition that's
5 forming is so broad-based and, as you know,
6 because I think you referenced it today and some
7 of the council members, when you go to PTAs,
8 parents understand what's at stake here and what I
9 think is really incredible is this coalition
10 really believes in the public school system. I
11 mean, people want to send their kids to the local
12 school and I think it's been driven home as we
13 deal with this whole issue of the capital plan,
14 parents really love public schools and it's such a
15 great refreshing way people are describing how
16 they very much want their kids to get that kind of
17 education. We deliver this for them, they're
18 going to stay and raise their kids here and the
19 sky is the limit for these schoolchildren. So I
20 think it's an amazing coalition that's been
21 formed, your role in this is clear, and I just
22 think we just have to keep the pressure on.

23 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well,
24 President let me just thank you for your
25 leadership on this particular matter. Obviously,

2 as Jessica said, not only did you talk the talk,
3 but you're walking the walk--

4 PRESIDENT STRINGER: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --and that's a
6 total type of leadership that we need in all of
7 our elected officials--and I'm not going to call
8 you a politician, I'm going to call you an elected
9 official, because that is the ultimate elected
10 official that represents the people of the borough
11 of Manhattan, 1.5 million people.

12 PRESIDENT STRINGER: Well, when you
13 tell me that I've walked the walk, considering you
14 walked to Albany for the kids, I take that as the
15 highest compliment.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you very
17 much.

18 PRESIDENT STRINGER: Thank you very
19 much.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

21 And next we're going to hear from the vice
22 president for middle schools from the United
23 Federation of Teachers, Richard Farkas. Richard?
24 [Pause] Welcome, I hope you've heard all of the
25 testimony and questions and answers that were

2 given and I'm sure that you have a lot to say as
3 far as being the vice president for middle schools
4 for the United Federation of teachers.

5 RICHARD FARKAS: Thank you,
6 councilman Jackson. First, President Randi
7 Weingarten expresses her regrets for not being
8 here today, but she was in St. Louis at the vice
9 presidential debate and she's coming into New York
10 later today, so she wishes she could be here. And
11 we do have some written testimony that will be
12 forwarded later today. [Off mic] On behalf of the
13 200,000 members of the United Federation of
14 Teachers we want to thank you for convening this
15 hearing on this very important issue. Like so
16 many others who are here today, we at the UFT want
17 to express our extreme dismay over school
18 overcrowding, congested classes, and the
19 Department of Education's inefficient and--
20 insufficient and defective capital planning
21 process. Reducing school overcrowding and
22 repairing the capital planning process are
23 critical matters and we appreciate the city
24 council focusing its attention on our efforts to
25 address this situation. Let me state from the

2 outset that the UFT believes that our children
3 benefit most when teachers can dedicate sufficient
4 time and resources to each individual student.
5 Our students thrive when their schools offer a
6 full range of academic instruction, arts
7 enrichment, and fiscal education in facilities
8 that accommodate the true size for the school
9 population in their neighborhoods. We can boast
10 about New York City's highly qualified and expert
11 teaching force. These extraordinary professionals
12 cultivate minds and instill a desire for academic
13 achievement among their students. However
14 overcrowded schools and congested classrooms
15 diminish teacher productivity, lessen student
16 accountability, and negatively affect student
17 achievement. Parents and teachers know all too
18 well that school overcrowding just makes it more
19 difficult for kids to get the education they
20 deserve. We place New York City's children at a
21 severe disadvantage when their classes are too
22 large and their skills--and their schools are
23 filled past capacity. We're here as partners with
24 Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer who has
25 provided leadership on this issue with his

2 published April 2008 report entitled, "Crowded
3 Out." His in-depth analysis cites the number of
4 students added to school districts without the
5 Department of Education providing sufficient
6 additional seats. For example, in Washington
7 Heights, PS 210 operates at 215% utilization,
8 which translates into twice as many students as
9 there are seats. The city has approved
10 residential construction for neighborhoods on the
11 upper east side, Greenwich Village, Soho, and the
12 midtown Flatiron district that could generate up
13 to 1,400 new seats without planning to add a
14 single new seat in schools that will serve these
15 communities. But this problem is not confined to
16 Manhattan and we have witnessed the negative
17 effects of overcrowding and cramped classrooms
18 citywide. One teacher, Kathleen Cruet at PS 89
19 in Cypress Hills in Brooklyn, teaches in one of
20 the small schools inside the main building, where
21 she must share a library, a computer lab, and
22 cafeteria. Here students arrive at 8:40 but
23 because of shared space they do not eat lunch
24 until 1 p.m., making it even harder for them to
25 pay attention. Comptroller Thompson further

2 quantified and illustrated the poor planning and
3 overcrowding issues in his May 2008 comprehensive
4 report entitled, "Growing Pains." His account
5 also--

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [Interposing]
7 Excuse me, ladies? You got to take the
8 conversation outside, please. Thank you.

9 RICHARD FARKAS: His account also
10 exposed that new residential construction was far
11 outpacing school construction. New housing is
12 good news for New York City, the current
13 construction boom shows that the city is doing a
14 great job of attracting middle-class families, but
15 it is not doing a good job of planning to add more
16 classroom seats and school space to accommodate
17 the educational needs of our kids. The flawed
18 planning process does not provide incentives for
19 developers or education mandates connected to the
20 number of residential units they are building in
21 community school districts. Parking space
22 allotment is prioritized, but sufficient classroom
23 seats are neglected. In a city where the
24 leadership has placed a premium on improving
25 public education and at the same time has

2 purportedly striving for traffic and emission
3 reduction, we are baffled by this planning
4 oversight. We recognize there are economic
5 challenges. The rapid decline in the city's
6 financial sector is sobering. Advocating for and
7 protecting our children's rights to learn,
8 however, is imperative and we have to just, you
9 know, as many of our speakers have said today that
10 we can't avoid--we have to avoid and not follow
11 the same mistakes that we made in the 70s. When
12 New York City faced the fiscal crisis in the mid-
13 70s, the facilities deteriorated, school
14 overcrowding was neglected, and middle-class
15 families abandoned public education in sizable
16 numbers. Frankly speaking, we lost a generation
17 of public school children. Let us not repeat this
18 sad chapter in our history. The need for smaller
19 classes has united educators and parents for
20 years, as very large classes emerge as a glaring
21 disadvantage for the city's public school
22 students. Both the city and the state agreed on a
23 framework for the reduction of average class size
24 to no more than 20 students in grades K-3--and I'm
25 glad you mentioned this today, Councilman Jackson,

2 23 students in grades 4-12 because the department
3 kept on ignoring the grades 4-12, they
4 concentrated on grades K-3, but it's very
5 important to know that the class-size agreement in
6 grades 4-12 should be 23. [Pause] DOE is
7 required by state by statute to reduce average
8 class size, but citywide averages hide what's
9 really going on in the schools. Our analysis
10 shows that half the kindergarten classes in this
11 city this year exceeded the goal of 20.7 students.
12 And this was set by the DOE in the state. In the
13 middle school grades, where the Contract for
14 Excellence money was supposed to be targeted, more
15 than half the classes in each grade exceed the
16 target of 24.8 students. And in Brooklyn and
17 Queens high schools, the average high school class
18 size exceeds 28 students and it's closer to 30.
19 We are [crosstalk]--

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [Interposing]

21 Did you say Brooklyn and Queens?

22 RICHARD FARKAS: Brooklyn and
23 Queens.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, okay.

25 RICHARD FARKAS: That's our

2 analysis--

3 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

4 RICHARD FARKAS: --we haven't gotten
5 to the other boroughs is what... We're calling on
6 the State Education Department to tighten class-
7 size regulations and require the city to develop a
8 plan that makes class size reduction a priority,
9 especially in a school in need of improvement and
10 those with large concentrations of students with
11 limited English proficiency, English language
12 learners, students in poverty, and those with
13 disabilities, and low academic achievements. Now
14 we call upon the City Council--and we believe the
15 City Council should be leading this fight. We
16 know the economy is slumping and that Wall Street
17 is gyrating, but promises to students have to be
18 kept even in hard times and we expect our city and
19 state governments to keep the promises they made
20 to the students, parents, and educators. All of
21 the education advocates and experts agree,
22 overcrowding must be reduced and capital planning
23 must be revamped. The UFT believes that the City
24 Council can and should lead on this important
25 issue. The Council can help drive accountability

2 on aligning the capital plan to reduce school
3 overcrowding, class size, and overhauling the
4 faulty capacity estimates of the DOE and the SCA.
5 We are optimistic. The borough president's report
6 shows the human toll of school overcrowding, but
7 the upcoming five-year capital plan presents a
8 huge opportunity for a public-private partnership
9 to solve it--assuming that mayoral control of the
10 school system is used to the extent that it could
11 be. City Hall oversees the various city's
12 agencies involved in school construction and has
13 access to public and private entities across a
14 wide spectrum. The administration could assure
15 that the city's capital plan is aligned with
16 class-size averages mandated by state Contract for
17 Excellence limits. This is a quality-of-life
18 issue because families considering whether to move
19 or to remain in New York City often think about
20 things like class-size, whether schools offer art
21 and music classes, and how they compare to schools
22 in other neighborhoods. We strongly urge the
23 administration to seize this opportunity to make
24 certain that we have enough school seats to
25 accommodate future growth. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well let me
3 thank you on behalf of your union, United
4 Federation of Teachers, for coming in and giving
5 testimony. We look forward to looking at the
6 details of that in writing. But I have a question
7 for you--

8 RICHARD FARKAS: Sure.

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --you may have
10 been here when I read my opening statement and I
11 talked about 51% of students--of high school
12 students attend overcrowded schools; 47% of
13 elementary school students are in schools that are
14 overcrowded; and 19% of middle school students,
15 and you've heard the stats that they talked about
16 as far as school buildings. And I said that we
17 need to align it so that we're all on the same
18 page, so everyone can understand in plain simple
19 statistics or English. My question to you is, I
20 know that every year I read that UFT normally file
21 grievances on class-size capacity--

22 RICHARD FARKAS: Yeah.

23 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --when you
24 exceed the class-size mandates. I think it's 25
25 in K-3, so forth, and so on.

2 RICHARD FARKAS: Right.

3 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How many
4 grievances have been filed--

5 RICHARD FARKAS: I don't have that I
6 don't have--

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --and how have
8 those matters been resolved from a contractual
9 point of view with UFT?

10 RICHARD FARKAS: Those--I don't have
11 the exact number of grievances that have been
12 filed, but we--our chapter leaders filed those
13 grievances, they are now in arbitration and they
14 are currently in the arbitration process. So some
15 of them are being adjudicated through the
16 arbitration process right now. I don't have the
17 exact number.

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I guess I'd be
19 curious to know what is the end result of the
20 actions, administrative actions that UFT have
21 taken in order to try to force the Department of
22 Education to comply with the contractual
23 obligations as far as class-size capacity--

24 RICHARD FARKAS: [Interposing] Well
25 this is--class size is a priority for us--

2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah.

3 RICHARD FARKAS: --as you know.

4 Many times when you go to the arbitration process
5 and the class size is beyond the limit, the
6 arbitrator finds for the union, but there's no
7 place to put the kids and in some places what
8 they've done in early childhood, which doesn't
9 really help too much in the middle schools, is
10 what they do is put another body in the classroom,
11 they put another teacher or they put a para in
12 that classroom. So the kids are still sitting,
13 for example, in a kindergarten class, could be
14 sitting with 30 kids when they should be at 20
15 kids.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Right.

17 RICHARD FARKAS: But to relieve the
18 situation, they're just taking--they're putting a
19 para into that room, which is not really reducing
20 the class-size, it's just adding another body to
21 the room.

22 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Right, I mean
23 clearly adding another body helps to--

24 RICHARD FARKAS: Yes, it does.

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --manage the

2 situation as far as trying to--and we don't want
3 to manage, we want to educate our children. I
4 mean, obviously having another paraprofessional or
5 a teacher in the classroom is good, but the ideal
6 situation is to not have an overcrowded classroom.

7 RICHARD FARKAS: The only way of
8 really resolving this is to build schools that
9 have the capacity to handle it and not take away--
10 I know as a middle school vice president in many
11 of our schools, we don't have art rooms, we don't
12 have music rooms, we don't have science labs,
13 they've been converted into classrooms. And I'm
14 not an expert on the Blue Book and how the DOE
15 figures out its capacity, but if they say well,
16 our schools at 100% or 98%, but they've taken away
17 the art rooms and the music rooms and the kids
18 don't have it, there's a problem there. And that
19 is more often the case than not.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: We look
21 forward to continuing working with UFT in order to
22 ensure that our teachers will have classrooms that
23 are not overcrowded and have the capacity to teach
24 to students and not, you know, just trying to
25 manage a classroom.

2 RICHARD FARKAS: And I want to thank
3 you. And on a personal note, I think your
4 advocacy has been exemplary and it's a model for
5 everyone and you've led the charge, so I really
6 just want to extend our appreciation to you.

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

8 Next we hear from Leonie Haimson, Class Size
9 Matters; Emily Horowitz, professor at St. Francis
10 College; and Doug Israel, the Center for Arts
11 Education. Please come forward. And while they
12 come forward, we've received testimony for the
13 record from a statement from State Senator Eric
14 Schneiderman regarding school overcrowding and the
15 Department of Education's upcoming five-year
16 capital plan. We received testimony for the
17 record from State Assembly Member Jonathan Bing of
18 Manhattan, and we've received testimony for the
19 record from the co-presidents of PS 89 PTA,
20 Carolyn Happy and Sheila Schmidt, along with the
21 co-chairs of the Overcrowding Committee, Anne
22 Albright and Chrissie Schierlitz. And with that,
23 who's going to go first?

24 EMILY HOROWITZ: Okay. I--

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Emily

2 Horowitz, please identify yourself and whoever
3 else is at the table and you may begin.

4 [Off mic]

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Can you press
6 a button, please?

7 EMILY HOROWITZ: My name is Emily
8 Horowitz, I'm a Professor of Sociology at St.
9 Francis College. I just want to start by saying
10 that data that you cited that Kathleen Grimm said
11 was incorrect, about 51% of high school students
12 being in overcrowded schools; 47% over elementary
13 school students; and 19% of middle school students
14 is taken directly from their Blue Book. They e-
15 mailed me and others in an Excel file and I simply
16 calculated it from there. So it's their data--

17 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And that's
18 what--

19 EMILY HOROWITZ: --it's not our
20 data.

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --and that's
22 what I said to her it's from--

23 EMILY HOROWITZ: Yes, it's from--

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --it's your
25 information--

2 EMILY HOROWITZ: Yeah.

3 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --but I think
4 we were citing students in overcrowded schools,
5 and they were citing--

6 EMILY HOROWITZ: [Interposing] It's
7 students, you said 47% of elementary school
8 students--

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Right.

10 EMILY HOROWITZ: --and you didn't
11 say the number of schools.

12 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Right.

13 EMILY HOROWITZ: Yeah, so it's their
14 data, but we can sit down with them, I'd love to
15 do that. So if you want to set up a meeting.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, without
17 a doubt, because what we need is we need clear
18 transparency, so everyone will understand--

19 EMILY HOROWITZ: That's right.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --that's what
21 we need. Okay.

22 EMILY HOROWITZ: That's right,
23 that's right.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And that what
25 you're--all of us are trying to achieve.

2 EMILY HOROWITZ: That's right, but I
3 want to talk about a survey I conducted with
4 funding from your office of public school
5 principals that shows this data that shows overall
6 that 30% of our public school students are in
7 overcrowded buildings, actually us under estimates
8 dramatically the problem, so even though we can
9 fight about their numbers, I know Sara Morgrage
10 [phonetic] on your staff has been saying for many
11 years, these numbers don't even matter because
12 they underestimate the problem. Our data, which
13 was collected from 40% of public school principals
14 representing over 40% of public school students,
15 which is a huge percentage and I can tell you,,
16 you know, that it's statistically significant
17 almost half of our students are represented by the
18 data in this survey. I'm just going to point out
19 a few highlights of our survey, the testimonies on
20 the record, and the full report is available over
21 there, but we think that these figures
22 significantly understate the actual level of
23 overcrowding. And in fact for principals who have
24 schools that are reported under 100%, over half of
25 them say that the DOE's utilization rate is under-

-is incorrect. Over half of all principals in our survey said that enrollment at their own schools is not capped at a level to prevent overcrowding. Over half of the principals in our survey said that overcrowding sometimes leads to unsafe conditions for students or staff, nearly half said that overcrowding makes it difficult for students and staff to get to class on time and that their schools are too crowded to be able to provide important after school programs or services like tutoring, sports clubs, and things like that. The DOE capacity formula needs to be recalculated. You can't, from the numbers that they have and from the formula they use, you can't tell that many schools have lost cluster rooms for art, music, and science that are now being used for regular academic classrooms and, in fact, this process is ongoing. A quarter of our principals reported losing their art, music, or dance rooms to academic classroom space, 20% said they lost their computer rooms, 18% had lost their science rooms, 14% had lost their reading enrichment rooms, and 10% had lost their library space. I also want to just respond to something else that

2 the DOE said. They said well, of course, if you
3 interview principals, they will say they need more
4 space, but I would disagree with that. I think if
5 you interviewed principals in schools with enough
6 space, they might not say that their lives are
7 perfect and they have no problems, but I don't
8 think they would say we need more classrooms, we
9 need more art rooms, if they indeed had art rooms
10 or science rooms--that makes no sense and it's
11 very demeaning to principals to say, oh, they just
12 are responding to the survey because somebody's
13 listening to them, it makes no sense.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I mean, I made
15 a note here myself when I think Deputy Mayor
16 Dennis Walcott made the statement, any good
17 principal wants more space, but in my comment was,
18 overcrowded is overcrowded.

19 EMILY HOROWITZ: That's right.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And that's
21 what I wrote here and I meant to say that some
22 time, but I guess I never got around to it, so you
23 said it for me.

24 EMILY HOROWITZ: Yeah, okay.

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

2 EMILY HOROWITZ: So I think it's
3 kind of insulting to principals to just say
4 they're whiners who always want more space, I'm
5 sure they want other things besides space, if they
6 have space. The official capacity estimates don't
7 consider whether the level of overcrowding
8 prevents students from having regular access to
9 the cafeteria, the auditorium, the library, or the
10 gym. And in fact at almost 20% of all schools,
11 students have no regular access to the library.
12 At almost 30% of schools, lunch starts before
13 10:30 in the morning--again in these things are
14 not calculated in the capacity figures.

15 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: 30% of this
16 [crosstalk]--

17 EMILY HOROWITZ: [Interposing] 30%
18 of our students attend schools where lunch starts
19 before 10:30.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And this is as
21 reported by the principals [crosstalk]--

22 EMILY HOROWITZ: [Interposing] Oh,
23 as reported by the principals themselves.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

25 EMILY HOROWITZ: So, again, maybe

1 they're exaggerating, but I would doubt it. So I
2 don't know why they would say this. Almost half
3 of all schools have less than one hour of gym per
4 week. In 11% of schools, students have no access
5 to an auditorium at all, many schools have no
6 science labs, and many principals reported using
7 inadequate space for remediation or special
8 education services. Many schools have trailers
9 and non-standard space for classrooms and, again,
10 the DOE said well, principals really like trailers
11 and transportable, but of course they do because
12 when you take them away, they have less space. So
13 that's not fair, I'm sure they would rather have
14 permanent space that is up to standards. For
15 example, some principals said their schools had
16 especially small rooms that cannot hold more than
17 25 students, others describe classrooms of columns
18 that obstruct the students' view of the teacher or
19 blackboard. In addition, 20% of principals
20 reported that their schools have classrooms with
21 no windows at all. Several principals said that
22 the DOE inaccurately describes their schools as
23 underutilized, despite the fact that they rely on
24 annexes and/or transportables to accommodate their
25

1 students. Over a quarter of all principals
2 responded that overcrowding in their schools has
3 resulted from new schools or programs being placed
4 in their schools. The problem is if the school is
5 under capacity, if it's 80% or 75%, even though we
6 know those figures don't capture everything, the
7 DOE says oh, they can fit another school in there
8 or another classroom or another program. So all
9 of these new schools and programs are causing more
10 overcrowding. In addition, several principals
11 reported that the situation has worsened because
12 of DOE's decision to add new grade levels to their
13 schools with the goal of creating more K-5, K-8,
14 and 6-12 schools. And other pervasive problems
15 that were commonly reported were things like air
16 conditioning and electricity problems, in
17 particular, almost 60% of principals reported
18 having a lack of sufficient electrical power,
19 which is very problematic for technology and
20 computer needs. And in conclusion, I think it's
21 really important that we throw out the Blue Book
22 formula and create a new formula based on the
23 qualitative realities of our students, and their
24 needs.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I was going to
3 ask questions, but I'll wait to hear from the
4 other panelists. Leonie Haimson, Class Size
5 Matters.

6 LEONIE HAIMSON: I want to thank you
7 so much for holding this hearing, and for your
8 leadership over many years on this issue. The
9 problem of school overcrowding has been chronic
10 throughout our history and it remains the most
11 severe obstacle we have in improving our schools
12 today. The principal survey that Emily talked
13 about, 86% of principals said that their class
14 sizes were too large to provide a quality
15 education--that's 86% of our principals. And the
16 most--the largest obstacle towards them achieving
17 it, they said was the lack of control over space
18 and enrollment so that overcrowding is what's
19 stopping it from happening. According to the most
20 recent class size data, more than 160,000 children
21 or more than 60% of our K through third-graders
22 exceed the class size goals of the current capital
23 plan. The current one ending in June--160,000
24 students. The failure of this administration to
25 take any affirmative actions to reduce class sizes

2 in the early grades despite six years of broken
3 promises and hundreds of millions of dollars in
4 state and federal funds for these program is a
5 special disappointment to me and a tragedy for the
6 millions of children who have passed through these
7 goods without a better chance to learn. The city
8 is now committed additionally to reducing class
9 sizes in all grades according to its state-
10 mandated class size reduction plan and the state
11 law that passed in April of 2007 said that this--
12 the capital plan had to be aligned with the class
13 size reduction plan and this has yet to happen. I
14 was especially disappointed to hear today from DOE
15 representatives that they still haven't yet
16 figured out how many seats they need to achieve
17 these goals and that should be something that they
18 should've done a year and a half ago when the law
19 was passed. And we need them to stop spinning
20 statistics, to stop obfuscating the issue, and to
21 come up with some clear and simple numbers about
22 what we need in terms of new seats, and then let's
23 worry about how we're going to get there. A
24 recent monitoring report from the state showed
25 that we haven't made our first-year targets and

1 then in more than half the schools in New York
2 City that have increased millions of dollars in
3 new state funds had increased in class size and/or
4 student-teacher ratio last year. Now as--today
5 they were talking endlessly about pocket
6 overcrowding, this is--of course, we have pocket
7 overcrowding, but we have overcrowding system-
8 wide. Though in the past, the DOE has relied upon
9 enrollment projection decline to get us to
10 eliminating overcrowding and reducing class size,
11 I think it's time for them to stop doing that now.
12 I received data out of their own budget analyses
13 from the Office of Management Budget shows no
14 enrollment decline projected to the year 2012 at
15 all. In other words, they see no declining
16 kindergarten enrollment. So if they tell you that
17 they're going to get to smaller classes, they're
18 going to get to elimination of overcrowding
19 through enrollment decline, do not believe it,
20 these are their own numbers. Second, we know that
21 the city is supposed to grow by a million by 2030
22 and the plan New York City focused on all areas of
23 infrastructure in detailed, housing, parks,
24 sewage, police, etc. Every single infrastructure
25

1 that you could name, except for schools. In fact,
2 the only mention of schools in their planNYC report
3 was how you could transform existing school
4 buildings into more apartments, that was their
5 only mention and I had it from someone who is a
6 member of the commission that they were
7 specifically told by the Mayor's office not to
8 mention schools and focus on schools in their
9 projections. Finally, Emily talks about the
10 problem with the Blue Book, we need to also align
11 the Blue Book with their class size reduction
12 plan. Right now the target class sizes in their
13 Blue Book are 28 in 4-8th grade and 34 high school-
14 -students in high school, not the 23 in those
15 grades that their class size reduction plan has.
16 Also, the number of thousands of kids are put in
17 TCUs and trailers and they're not counted in the
18 capacity estimates at all as being in overcrowded
19 schools. As one principal observed, "My school
20 occupies two buildings due to overcrowding in the
21 main building. We have an annex, which is one
22 mile away from the main building and students are
23 bussed there by yellow shuttle buses. There are
24 four portable classrooms in the schoolyard,
25

2 however, due to the way that the DOE calculates
3 space, it does not deem my building as
4 overcrowded." Now that is just outrageous and
5 they've got to stop doing this. Emily talks about
6 the policies of DOE that's made it worse, all the
7 new small schools and charter schools put in
8 existing infrastructure have taken up classroom
9 space, they've taken up office space and cluster
10 rooms leading to special ed kids being given their
11 services in hallways and closets. Now the state
12 gave us a lot more billions of dollars in funding
13 for school facilities and up the reimbursement
14 rate to 50%, meaning for every dollar we spend, the
15 state pays back 50 cents for school construction,
16 yet all that happened was that the city cut their
17 capital plan by 3,000. I want to show you a
18 couple more charts, the mayor brags about having
19 the most ambitious capital plan in history--it's
20 simply not true. More than 100,000 seats were
21 created in 1902 to 1905 and half a million during
22 the 1920s, but even more recently, you can see
23 that during the Giuliani years--and this is
24 straight from the Mayor's Management Reports--
25 created many more seats per year than the

2 Bloomberg years, 15,000 per year compared to--

3 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [Interposing]

4 Can you point to--

5 LEONIE HAIMSON: --less than 10,000.

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --can you
7 point to it. I mean...

8 LEONIE HAIMSON: These are the
9 Giuliani years here--

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

11 LEONIE HAIMSON: --up until that
12 level, you can see how many seats were created
13 every year compared to the Bloomberg years. We've
14 had declining numbers and we've had less than
15 10,000 a year during the Bloomberg years, compared
16 to more than 15,000 to Giuliani, who is hardly
17 seen as the great savior of our school system.
18 And more and more of the seats are not in new
19 schools, they are through classroom conversions.
20 The Mayor's Management Report last year put this
21 in here, but they don't--not going to put it in
22 anymore probably, but they did which shows you
23 that the blue is classroom conversions as opposed
24 to leased schools or new schools, and that's
25 created a lot of the problems that Emily and Doug

1
2 are going to talk about in terms of loss of
3 critical school spaces, office space, art rooms,
4 and the rest are these classroom conversions. So
5 if you're talking about leased and actually new
6 schools, that amount of seats created is really,
7 really tiny and have declined over the last few
8 years and they've been playing games with those
9 figures as well. A Daily News article last year
10 talked about they claimed to have new seats in a
11 school that all that happened was that they
12 changed the name of the school, they didn't change
13 anything else about the school, and they claim to
14 have created new seats and so they play games all
15 the time with this. And finally, in terms of city
16 spending on education as part of our capital
17 budget, this is the percentage of our total
18 capital budget in city spending that goes through
19 infrastructure things like roads, highways,
20 bridges and all the rest and you can see that in
21 the six years of the Bloomberg administration,
22 we've had a declining percentage of that going to
23 schools. And this year and the year projected for
24 2009, the amount is going to be less than 10% on
25 school construction of city spending.

2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: What now where
3 are you getting those stats from?

4 LEONIE HAIMSON: This is from the
5 Independent Budget Office analysis of Mayor's
6 preliminary budget for 2009. Their report put out
7 in March 2008.

8 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So that's
9 from--

10 LEONIE HAIMSON: They get it
11 straight out of the capital plan spending reports
12 that the mayor's office puts out.

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And this is a
14 comparison of the overall capital plan for
15 everything and making comparison to how much is
16 being spent on buildings and schools?

17 LEONIE HAIMSON: This is all the
18 city's capital spending on infrastructure, water,
19 roads, bridges, everything that they do and what
20 percentage is going to school construction and
21 repair. Their capital spending on schools and
22 education compared to everything else and you can
23 see that we've reached a very low level here. And
24 they're projecting--

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: [Interposing]

2 I'm sorry I can't see the numbers, can you just
3 tell me what they are?

4 LEONIE HAIMSON: It's for 2008,
5 7.6%; 2009, 9.9% compared to the last years in the
6 Giuliani administration, 36%

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: No, it's okay,
8 that's okay.

9 LEONIE HAIMSON: I can e-mail you
10 copies of these charts and I can also put them
11 online so that you can see them.

12 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Please, if you
13 don't mind.

14 LEONIE HAIMSON: I think that our
15 children deserve better than this eliminating
16 overcrowding and reducing class size will have
17 substantial economic benefits in terms of the
18 revenue generated and shoring up our middle-class
19 tax base. And I'd just like to end with a quote
20 of somebody who was on Meet the Press a couple
21 weeks ago, his name is Michael Bloomberg. "We're
22 not going to make the mistake that was made in the
23 70s. This is when the last budget crunch came,
24 when we stop building parks and schools and those
25 kinds of things. We are going to go ahead and

2 continue those things. We are not going to walk
3 away from our city--that's the prescription for
4 disaster." So I hope that you hold them to their-
5 -his words and you do everything you can to make
6 sure that our kids get the schools that they need
7 and that we start providing a really better
8 education to our kids and give them a chance to
9 learn. Thank you very much.

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

11 Doug Israel, the Center for Arts Education.

12 DOUG ISRAEL: Good afternoon, is
13 this on? Thank you, Chair Jackson and also
14 Chairperson Lappin and the Subcommittee on
15 Landmarks, Public Siting, Maritime Uses for
16 holding this hearing and allowing us the
17 opportunity to testify. I am Doug Israel,
18 Director of Research and Policy for the Center for
19 Arts Education. As you are aware, the New York
20 City Department of Ed and the School Construction
21 Authority are developing their next five-year
22 plan. CAE is here today because we believe that
23 as the city tackles overcrowding issues in public
24 schools, it is critical that due attention be paid
25 to the maintenance, expansion, and reclamation of

spaces dedicated to arts learning in public schools. According to the DOE's own 2006-2007 Annual Arts in Schools Report, the lack of available in school art space was one of the top three challenges to implementing arts education that was reported by all schools. Regrettably, there is evidence that dedicated space for arts learning in public schools is decreasing.

According to the survey information that was shared to you and conducted by Professor Horowitz with Class Size Matters and funded by the City Council, 25% of principals reported losing their art, music, dance, drama, or theater space to general classroom spaces due to overcrowding. If we extrapolate that to the entire system, that's 400 schools that have lost their art spaces-- that's a minimum of 400 art spaces that are gone from our schools. And we are hearing additional reports along these lines from parents and teachers as well. Music rooms, dance spaces, blackbox theaters, and art studios have been divided, walled, and turned into academic classrooms are commandeered for other purposes. It's disheartening that in New York, the cultural

capital of the world, our schools are failing to provide the infrastructure and even the instructional time to provide students with a world-class education in the arts. Without question, easing overcrowding and providing adequate classroom space for our students should be a top priority in the city. However, this should not be done at the expense of providing students with the facilities necessary to support learning in the arts and other subject areas that require specialized facilities, such as science and phys ed. These needs need to be addressed in a coordinated fashion. In order to ensure that the schools are appropriately equipped with dedicated spaces for arts learning, we're calling upon the School Construction Authority and the DOE to do three things which we ask for the council's support in as well. One, we're calling on them to ensure that art spaces are incorporated into the design and construction of all new school facilities. Two, to create a citywide plan to inventory and then reclaim those art spaces that have been lost in our public schools. And three, to ensure that the formula used to determine

2 capacity at the school level reflects the loss of
3 arts and other cluster spaces and the need to
4 reclaim and improve access to these spaces. We
5 ask for your support in urging the DOE and the SCA
6 to make these--to take these recommendations into
7 consideration as a key component as they develop
8 their next five-year plan and we ask you to help
9 raise awareness around the need to protect
10 critical art spaces in our public schools. Thank
11 you for the opportunity today.

12 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well and let
13 me thank all three of you for coming in and
14 representing your respective organizations and
15 clearly the statistics that all of you brought
16 forward in this hearing need to be considered.
17 And without a doubt, as far as the advocacy
18 community fighting for smaller class sizes,
19 fighting for the space that we need for our
20 children for a totally holistic well-rounded
21 education, I don't know what we would do without
22 you and your advocacy because we depend on Class
23 Size Matters and all of the stats that you've
24 given and Emily as a professor and doing the
25 survey, clearly I do not believe the principals

2 are not telling the truth. I think that they are
3 telling the truth, and I do think that we need to
4 come up with a formula that everyone can agree is
5 the formula in order to assess a particular
6 school's capacity and utilization. We're not
7 there yet, we have a long way to go, but clearly,
8 when they come out with the next five-year capital
9 plan, we need to put it under a microscope and
10 analyze all aspects and not agree to it unless it
11 is clear, transparent, and it is in fact factually
12 correct, and that's going to be the challenge, I
13 guess with the City Council. Are we going to have
14 enough heart, are we going to have enough, you
15 know, guts in order to say, no we're not accepting
16 this because it is not transparent, it is not
17 clear, it is not correct. And those are the
18 challenges that we're going to have to face. You
19 know, one thing, time will tell. So thank you all
20 for coming in. And next we're going to hear from
21 our State Senator, State Senator Liz Krueger
22 representing Manhattan and any parts of Queens,
23 no?

24 SENATOR KRUEGER: No.

25 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Just

2 Manhattan.

3 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: My State
4 Senator.

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Oh, Jess,
6 okay, great. [Pause] Welcome State Senator.

7 [Off mic]

8 SENATOR KRUEGER: I think--is that
9 on?

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah.

11 SENATOR KRUEGER: Yes. So thank you
12 for letting me sneak in also. I couldn't be here
13 earlier today so I appreciate you taking a few
14 minutes to listen to my testimony. And again as
15 council member Lappin mentioned, I overlap her
16 district, council member Garodnick's district,
17 council member Mendez's district, and council
18 member Quinn's district, so that's the matching
19 geography. And I am here today because I think it
20 is so important that the City Council is looking
21 into how we solve the problems of overcrowding in
22 our schools through a better capital plan. And
23 when the New York State Senate, with me included,
24 voted for the New York City Education and Reform
25 and Accountability Act of 2002, we knowingly gave

2 the mayor greater control over management of the
3 Department of Education and the School
4 Construction Authority and we believe that this
5 change afforded the mayor an opportunity to
6 demonstrate strong leadership in improving our
7 schools and reaching the goal we all share of
8 building the best school system in the United
9 States of America. And it was intended that this
10 change would help eliminate bureaucracy, improve
11 failing schools, reduce the high dropout rates,
12 correct the lack of structure to provide
13 meaningful participation for the school community,
14 and most importantly bring about a new era of
15 construction to help combat overcrowding in aging
16 and inadequate school buildings. And while the
17 mayor and his chancellor have continually assured
18 the legislature, the city Council, parents,
19 principals, teachers, and the Community Education
20 Councils and districts that all of these items are
21 part of their agenda, in many areas the promise of
22 mayoral control, I believe, has come up short and
23 nowhere more so than in the school overcrowding
24 problem. And again just to go off testimony, the
25 state of New York also dramatically increased

2 capital monies to the New York City school system
3 and a real fight in Albany to do so in order to
4 help the mayor and the city of New York to address
5 the problem of overcrowding through new
6 construction and rehabilitation and modernization
7 of existing buildings. And yet in the school
8 district, District 2 that my students participate
9 in, overcrowding has not lessened and in fact it
10 has grown worse during the last seven years. Both
11 because of inadequate coordination with the
12 Departments of Buildings and City Planning and a
13 demonstrated unwillingness to engage in serious
14 conversations with the community about acquiring
15 and retrofitting existing structures or
16 identifying sites for buildings and new schools,
17 building new schools. And in fact, council member
18 Lappin has been a real leader in our district for
19 fighting for new schools and for recognizing the
20 enormous problems we're having and I have gone to,
21 probably more meetings than I can remember with
22 parents and principals and teachers and other
23 elected officials trying to address this problem.
24 I know many people have testified today and I'm
25 sure that any a number of them have referenced

2 both borough president Scott Stringer's report on
3 overcrowding in Manhattan and the City

4 Comptroller's Office study on overcrowding

5 throughout the city called, "Growing Pains" from

6 May which documented the serious overcrowding

7 problems throughout the city, so I'm not going to

8 take the time to read my testimony on that,

9 because again I think it would be repetitive of

10 what you've probably already heard here today.

11 But I am just going to highlight as one example

12 one of the schools in my district, PS 116 on East

13 33rd Street in Murray Hill and I think it's a

14 perfect example of the findings from both the

15 borough presidents in the comptroller's reports.

16 The school, well known to the Department of

17 Education, has suffered with a serious

18 overcrowding issue for years. PS 116 is in a

19 neighborhood experiencing a surge in development

20 with some 33 new residential buildings under

21 construction in that school zone as we speak--

22 again, 33 new residential buildings in the school

23 zone going up. School officials, the PTA, elected

24 officials have held numerous meetings with

25 representatives of the Department of Education and

2 the School Construction Authority where many
3 creative ideas have been proposed for how we
4 develop new schools. The schools community
5 suggestions frankly have been met with a flurry of
6 reasons why none of them are possible and each
7 time we have a meeting to discuss where we're
8 going next, basically our parents are told well,
9 you're going to have to just squeeze in or we're
10 going to bus your small children far from home.
11 There's got to be better answers in the city of
12 New York than to simply announce if the schools
13 are too crowded, you're going to bus
14 kindergartners and first-graders to other schools.
15 In fact, at PS 116 we already have a situation
16 where children start eating lunch at 10 a.m.,
17 because the school facilities are so crowded, if
18 you don't start lunch at 10 you can get every
19 child into the school lunch program during the
20 school day. We already have a new pre-
21 kindergarten program that was ended in order to
22 make room for increased enrollment, and the gifted
23 and talented program has stopped accepting
24 students and current enrollees are being moved to
25 other schools. Whatever the school capacity

1 numbers are used and whatever data the formulas
2 dependent on, we know when schools are overcrowded.
3 We believe that the city has to do a far better
4 job at planning for new schools at using
5 reasonable assumptions and transparent data about
6 what is an overcrowded school, what the numbers
7 are, and what we're planning to do about it. The
8 severe current economic downturn is only going to
9 increase enrollment in 2009--and I know there are
10 different districts throughout the city with
11 different issues, I'll talk about my district. We
12 have a large number I think and the Senate
13 District I represent, the largest number of
14 children going to private schools of any district
15 in the city of New York. Because of the downturn
16 in the economy, we have to anticipate a dramatic
17 number of children who might otherwise have been
18 going to private school next year coming back to
19 our public school system. And in fact, even in
20 discussions of overcrowding in the last several
21 years, I've had the Department of Education tell
22 me I shouldn't be that worried, the kids will go
23 to private school. Well we're actually the
24 government, we're actually supposed to be

1
2 concerned about the public school system. And in
3 fact, though, just as a fact, the private schools
4 have pretty much maxed out for space and that's
5 what we've been hearing for the last several
6 years. So in fact even arguing these new numbers
7 of children moving into the large numbers of new
8 buildings on the East side and Midtown could go to
9 private schools, one, that wasn't realistic,
10 because we didn't have private school space; two,
11 that makes an assumption that the government
12 doesn't have a responsibility for ensuring good-
13 quality adequate space for public school students
14 and now through, frankly no fault or control of
15 the city of New York, an economic downturn, which
16 is growing out of global and national policies is
17 absolutely going to drive more children into the
18 public school system, starting the next September.
19 And so any numbers we've dealt with, I think we
20 have to adjust upward because of that. And so I
21 would argue that we are so many years behind on
22 where we need to be in providing adequate school
23 space that I'm recommending specifically the
24 following three areas be dealt with immediately.
25 One, that the Department of Education needs to

2 insert itself into the planning process and
3 coordinate with other city agencies, such as the
4 Department of Buildings and City Planning in order
5 to have a better grasp and predict how a surge in
6 development, birth rates, and economic indicators
7 in any given neighborhood all affect the demands
8 on community facilities and schools. Two, that
9 the Department of Education needs to partner with
10 city developers in a manner that stays true to the
11 vision of the city, which is strengthening our
12 infrastructure as we grow, rather than weakening
13 it. I believe that the administration and
14 developers should come to an arrangement where tax
15 incentives induce developers to include schools in
16 their residential developments. This practice has
17 already been very successfully applied in several
18 locations in my district, but in far too few
19 instances. So we should be negotiating for
20 schools in buildings as they're built. And three,
21 the Department of Education should action take an
22 aggressive lead role in amending the city zoning
23 resolution to expand citywide provisions that have
24 been piloted in the South Richmond Special
25 District Plan, which actually require that in

2 order for Department of Education to certify--
3 excuse me. This pilot requires Department of
4 Education to certify that sufficient school space
5 exists for new development or the developer has to
6 provide school space in order to be permitted to
7 build their project. Again in the east side and
8 midtown Manhattan where I represent, even in bad
9 economic times you can look on any corner and see
10 a building going up or go into City Planning and
11 see that--and Department of Buildings to see the
12 permits are there for buildings to go up. If we
13 don't have the space for the children, we have to
14 adjust that through planning for schools before we
15 let additional residential buildings go up. I
16 appreciate your time today. I'm happy to take any
17 questions.

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well let me
19 thank you, Senator, for coming in. We had Scott
20 Stringer earlier giving testimony and obviously
21 some of the things that you mentioned, DOE said
22 that they are coordinating between all their
23 various departments and so forth and so on, with
24 City Planning, this, that, and the other. You
25 know, and that's fine, but the proof is in the

2 pudding and I need to taste it in order to
3 determine whether or not it's appropriate and I
4 say that because I've listened to Leonie Haimson
5 from Class Size Matters and I know you heard her
6 testimony--

7 SENATOR KRUEGER: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --you were
9 standing outside and Emily Horowitz and Doug
10 Israel and it doesn't necessarily sync with what
11 DOE is saying. So we all have to get on the same
12 page here in order to really work hard
13 collectively in order to ensure that every child
14 has a seat in their schools, that it's not
15 overcrowded and that they're receiving, not a
16 sound basic education, not an adequate education,
17 but a well-rounded good education. So thank you,
18 Senator, for coming in.

19 SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you, Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: I wanted to
21 just reiterate that we had a discussion about some
22 of the things you mentioned and I totally agree in
23 terms of the economy and what we're going to see.
24 We've already seen at some of the schools that we
25 share, much larger numbers this fall than last

2 fall, I think beyond even just the construction
3 and transfers in at higher grades in much higher
4 numbers, and that is almost, you know, much more
5 likely to be kids who are being taken out of
6 private school than families that are new to the
7 area.

8 SENATOR KRUEGER: Right.

9 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Right, so we
10 appreciate you coming down and all the work that
11 you have done and all the meetings we've attended.
12 I think we're getting--I think it's working. I
13 think we have a long way to go, but I think there
14 has been some recognition of the problem and the
15 Chancellor said this week they're going to start
16 look on a neighborhood level, not just a district
17 level, which is a good step. So thanks for all of
18 your work.

19 SENATOR KRUEGER: Thank you. Thank
20 you for giving me a few minutes.

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And next we're
22 going to hear from our next panel is Miss Layette
23 [phonetic] Silverman representing herself and
24 she's a parent at PS 234, and Dora Adams
25 representing Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney and

2 Micah--

3 MICAH: Micah.

4 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: -- Micah
5 Lasher representing Congressman Jerry Nadler.
6 Please come forward. [Pause] Okay, well we got to
7 go.

8 [Off mic]

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah.
10 [Pause]...as soon as you're ready.

11 LAYETTE SILVERMAN: Hi, thank you
12 very much for your time and for everyone else's
13 time.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Pull up your
15 mic a little closer, please. Just pull it up a
16 little closer to you.

17 LAYETTE SILVERMAN: Sure, sorry.

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah.

19 LAYETTE SILVERMAN: I was the PTA
20 president of the PS 234 last year and I was very
21 involved with a lot of overcrowding committees. I
22 would like to say that the Education Department
23 that Deputy Mayor Walcott was describing sounds
24 ideal and I'd really like to go to it, but I don't
25 feel at all that what a lot of what he was saying.

2 I really wish that more members of the Department
3 of Education had remained. I actually have to say
4 I feel offended that they had walked out en masse
5 because it appears to me that they give their side
6 of the story and leave and they don't stay to hear
7 our side of the story. And they talk about
8 transparency, but I find them almost Stalinist in
9 their stonewalling, that their numbers in the
10 figures that they give, when we give alternate
11 numbers and figures, they constantly deny it.

12 When we prove our figures to be correct, they kind
13 of--their intransigent in a very odd way. As a--I
14 feel they're a government body and you all have
15 official oversight on them and yet you can't ask
16 them to stay to hear the rest of the speakers who
17 are speaking about their issue.

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You know, to
19 say that they do have a representative here
20 listening to the testimony.

21 LAYETTE SILVERMAN: Right.

22 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You have
23 Government Affairs, the Department of Education,
24 you have the Mayor's Office of Legislative and
25 they're normally here, and obviously, they will

2 have the opportunity to review the tape--

3 LAYETTE SILVERMAN: To get feedback.

4 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --but also I
5 agree with you, but also, there are many members
6 of the education committee that are not here.

7 LAYETTE SILVERMAN: I know.

8 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And that
9 speaks for itself also. But anyway, I'm not going
10 to go there. But go ahead, I'm sorry.

11 LAYETTE SILVERMAN: No, I just want
12 to say that there's something when you talk about
13 people wanting to go to public schools, there is
14 something remarkable in New York City that doesn't
15 happen very often anywhere in America, which is
16 that we walk to our public schools. If you have a
17 local public school, the parent body walks there
18 and the parent body that walks there, they can
19 congregate in the yard, if there is a yard and
20 talks to each other and forms a community that
21 becomes the lifeblood of the area. It's not just
22 that I could walk my kid to a bus stop that the
23 kid gets on a bus, that I never see them again,
24 that I have no idea about the other parents, that
25 I have no idea about the other children. What you

1 form here is the village inside the enormous city
2 and what that is, is enormously process and when
3 you say I'm going to bus the kindergarten children
4 somewhere else, you rid the city of something
5 that's really precious to it without giving it any
6 value. And I feel--and I know that some people
7 disparage community activists--but I feel that a
8 core of your community activists come from these
9 parents intermingling together and getting to know
10 each other on other issues, but the core of the
11 safety in a big city for children comes from all
12 the parents knowing each other's faces and the
13 children's faces and that the children know each
14 other. And I think that's incredibly valuable and
15 I feel that it's very distressing to me that it's
16 dismissed kind of like, you know, I've got five
17 seats here and six seats here and seven seats here
18 and I'll just fling the children any which way to
19 fill in the seats and that will be done. And I
20 feel that's really undermining actually, what a
21 good public school can do and I feel the DOE
22 doesn't value its own precious--something that we
23 love about it and they give it no value at all,
24 which I feel is really sad. I also like to say
25

2 that in their definitions of overcrowding at PS
3 234 as you've heard from other schools, we
4 currently have three lunch shifts. Not every
5 child can make it to the gym, K-classes no longer
6 have exercise in the gym because there's not--
7 there's 33 classes, which is 33 hours, which means
8 that there is no access to certain rooms at
9 certain times, even if we had those rooms. We
10 lost our originally planned science and art rooms,
11 we're so grateful that in our annex we had through
12 a lot of people working very hard, we actually
13 have science and art rooms still, but I fear that
14 they're kind of on the cusp of going and I really
15 want--the other things I wanted to say was that
16 when Chancellor Grimm said that quality should
17 never be rushed in terms of buying the building, a
18 building a building, I'm thinking, but a bad K-2
19 experience can never be recaptured. So if they're
20 spending three years building these buildings,
21 that means that those three years they K-2
22 children didn't have those good buildings and then
23 that's a tragedy too. So we've lost that
24 experience for those children forever. And when
25 they say that their enrollment policies--sorry,

2 I've lost myself. When they say that they're
3 completing all the schools in 2010 to 2012, it
4 means that their five-year plans are effectively
5 seven-year or eight-year plans, and that this also
6 means that we're always two years behind and that
7 the children are missing the experiences. I would
8 also ask that all the people who are fifth grade
9 parents advocate strongly for high schools if this
10 is a five-year to seven-year plan, that all the K
11 parents should be advocating very strongly for
12 middle schools. There's a big bubble that we can
13 see happening around K and we're really worried
14 about middle schools right now because in five
15 years times, those middle schools will be very
16 full. And finally, sorry, one of the formulas
17 that they use in their Blue Book is that they say
18 that there will be one child in every 10
19 apartments and according to their own formulations
20 they're going to fall behind on that. When in
21 actual fact, certainly in downtown Manhattan,
22 there is many more than one child for every 10
23 apartments, that I think it's a ridiculous
24 formula. There's often two children per
25 apartment, so instead of saying one child, there's

2 going to be 20 and they're overlooking those 19
3 children altogether. And I really wish that they
4 would have stayed here and they have heard this.
5 Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.
7 And next we're going to hear from Dora Adams
8 representing Congress member Carolyn Maloney.

9 DARA ADAMS: Hi, it's actually Dara.

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Oh, Dara.
11 Okay, I'm sorry.

12 DARA ADAMS: That's okay.

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: I misread it.

14 DARA ADAMS: That's fine, I
15 apologize, Congresswomen couldn't make it.
16 Clearly she has to be in DC, there's some
17 important legislation.

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. Pull
19 your mike up a little closer, Dara, please. Thank
20 you.

21 DARA ADAMS: I'd like to thank you
22 for giving me the opportunity to offer testimony
23 expressing my serious concern about the problem of
24 school overcrowding. This is a growing problem.
25 In my district there has been a sharp increase in

the number of families moving in and a significant increase in the number of children who are attending public school. Additionally, there has been an explosion in the number of new residential buildings in our neighborhoods, many which are sized to attract families. District 2 is one of the few areas of the city which is expecting an increase in the number of public school children. Despite the fact that Manhattan has 13% of the city student population and a significant number of its overcrowded schools, we received only 5% of capital funds in the current budget. Our schools are experiencing a real crisis that will inevitably harm achievement. We are told that class size matters. Schools throughout my district are finding it impossible to meet the goals of an average of 20 students per class in grades K-3 and 23 students per class in grades 4-12. Most of our classrooms are extended far beyond that and many schools are being forced to drop cluster rooms, pre-K, G&T, and other programs to accommodate the soaring population. A recent survey of New York City principals conducted by Professor Emily Horowitz of St. Francis College

2 and Leonie Haimson of Class Size Matters revealed,
3 as we've already addressed, 86% of principals
4 believe that class sizes at their schools are too
5 large. The survey also revealed that 25% of our
6 schools have lost art, music, or dance rooms to
7 compensate for the lack of classroom space.

8 Moreover, 20% of computer rooms, 14% of reading
9 enrichment rooms, and 10% of libraries have been
10 converted to classrooms. Shamefully, at 16% of
11 our schools students have no regular access to the
12 school's library. I am seriously concerned by the
13 way the DOE calculates capacity. More than two-
14 thirds of the schools in community District 2 are
15 already over capacity. What's more, new
16 development does not seem to figure in DOE's
17 estimates for the future. Children are eating
18 lunch at breakfast time, 29% of our schools start
19 serving lunch at or before 10:30 a.m.. We know
20 that dollars spent on early education have a
21 greater impact than dollars spent in high school
22 or college or even graduate school, yet many of
23 our schools have already lost their pre-K
24 programs. PS 59 for example, which currently
25 operates out of the MEETH building recently lost

2 its pre-K program, and even without pre-K,
3 enrollment has increased. As a result of the
4 overcrowding, PS 59 has had to convert its
5 technology room into a classroom . PS 59 will have
6 a new school, but in the meantime students are
7 being shortchanged. PS 116 has lost its pre-K
8 program and its G&T program. Fifty families in
9 the PS 116 zone chose not to send their children
10 to public school this year as a result of the
11 overcrowding. Families in the PS 151 zone have no
12 zone school. They are faced with the stress and
13 uncertainty of lottery. Ten families still had no
14 school for their children after the school year
15 began. In every school is run in the PS 151 zone,
16 the schools are overcrowded in large part due to
17 the influx of PS 151 children. Previously the
18 families had a choice of six schools, this year
19 overcrowding from zone children reduced the
20 options to four. At PS 290 on the upper east side
21 science and music classes are held in the
22 auditorium and three closet-sized bathrooms have
23 been turned into offices for support staff. DOE
24 has promised a planned in the near future, but we
25 still have heard no specifics as to whether DOE

2 proposes to build a new school in the PS 151 zone
3 or to make available one of the existing school
4 buildings currently used for other purposes, such
5 as Richard Green High School. We need a plan now.
6 One that accounts for long-term planning, that
7 accounts for growth in construction. This
8 situation, like the new high-rises in our
9 neighborhoods, did not arise overnight, but rather
10 accumulated over time. This problem will not
11 simply pass and it is likely to get worse. We
12 need concrete plans and adequate funding to put
13 them into effect so that our neighborhood schools
14 can accommodate our students today and in the
15 future. All the elected officials in the east
16 side of Manhattan have been trying to get DOE's
17 attention and it may be working. After several
18 reports, press conferences, joint letters,
19 meetings, etc., DOE has begun to meet with us to
20 try to work out a solution. I personally have
21 organized several press conferences, a joint
22 letter signed by 16 elected officials, and to
23 meetings and District 2 representatives at the
24 Tweed building and I look forward to working with
25 the DOE in the future.

2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

3 And tell Congressman Maloney that she's doing a
4 great job advocating for her constituents. Micah
5 Lasher representing Jerry Nadler's office.

6 MICAH LASHER: Thank you. I'm Micah
7 Lasher--

8 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Micah, I'm
9 sorry.

10 MICAH LASHER: --here on behalf of--
11 no problem--here on behalf of Congressman Nadler,
12 who wanted to be here, but is in DC dealing with a
13 few minor matters. I wanted to thank Councilman
14 Jackson and the education committee for shining a
15 bright light on a problem that is citywide but has
16 a particularly acute impact on the schools in
17 Congressman Nadler's district. According to
18 borough president Stringer's recent report, in the
19 four community board districts that comprise the
20 Manhattan part of Congressmen Nadler's district
21 alone, the city has permitted new construction
22 that would, according to the existing
23 environmental standards, send between 3,300 and
24 4,700 kids to neighborhood schools. Unfortunately
25 that building boom was accompanied by an addition

1 of just 143 seats. In neighborhoods throughout
2 the district we have seen the results. Schools
3 like PS 75 on the upper west side, 203 seats
4 short; PS 234 in Tribeca at 138% of capacity; in
5 community school District 3 parents who are worn
6 out and frustrated with the overcrowded schools,
7 they send their kids into daily now struggle with
8 two inadequate solutions the DOE is asking them to
9 choose between instead of providing the new space
10 we need. Of course, we know the solution, we know
11 must be bigger. We need a capital plan that is
12 truly ambitious that the DOE and the SCA doesn't
13 give up the fight for new school seats before it
14 begins because of resource concerns. DOE and SCA
15 need to set a high bar that would achieve a class
16 side targets mandated by the CFE class size
17 reduction agreement so the pressure can be on the
18 city to act. We need a truly transparent plan and
19 process that looks to the future instead of just
20 catching up with the past and yesterday's planning
21 failures. We need a plan that thinks about
22 neighborhoods, not overbroad districts and it was
23 good to hear today that the DOE is moving in that
24 direction. It's a good start, but obviously far
25

1 more needs to be done. We need a correction of
2 capacity estimates that are over-counting
3 classrooms at the expense of art and music space,
4 which is the center for arts education--as rightly
5 noted are essential to a well-rounded education,
6 and we must start properly funding them once
7 again. And we need to look at new ideas and new
8 incentives to mandate new schools space in new
9 development. A final note that illustrates the
10 breakdown that has occurred between DOE and our
11 communities on the matter of school space. A
12 couple of years ago, DOE quietly turned down an
13 offer of space for a new school that was mandated
14 as part of the Riverside south development on
15 Manhattan's west side, which is that
16 neighborhood's probably fastest growing community.
17 Today, the school space problem is even worse.
18 Today that same developer seems willing to make
19 the same offer, even though it is no longer
20 required to do so and once again today we may lose
21 the opportunity because DOE can't see the need or
22 cover the costs--just how crowded must our schools
23 get for parents to get action. Congressman Nadler
24 is a graduate of the New York City public school
25

2 system, I am a proud graduate of the New York City
3 public school system, and we are hopeful that
4 today's hearings will put us on a path to ensuring
5 that New York City families can get a quality
6 education at their neighborhood schools for
7 decades to come. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Let me thank
9 all three of you for coming in and giving
10 testimony. You as a parent and former PTA
11 president at 234 and the both of you in
12 representing the members of Congress. So thank
13 you very much.

14 MICAH LASHER: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Our next panel
16 is Megan Charlop, Mashula Montefiore, Healths --

17 [Off mic]

18 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. Of the
19 Bronx, can't read your handwriting, but Squadron,
20 Democratic nominee for state Senate, is that
21 Daniel?

22 DANIEL SQUADRON: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. Come
24 on, Daniel. Helen Rosenthal CB seven Manhattan.
25 You here, Helen? Oh, Jody Seki of CEC District 2,

2 is she here? Please come forward. Okay. And
3 Megan?

4 MEGAN CHARLOP: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Just identify
6 yourself and your organization and you may begin
7 your testimony.

8 MEGAN CHARLOP: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Press the mike
10 maybe.

11 MEGAN CHARLOP: Thank you. My name
12 is Megan Charlop, and I work with the Montefiore
13 school health program in the Bronx. I'm a long-
14 time resident of the Bronx. All my kids were
15 educated in the Bronx and my foster kids as well
16 and I also held some offices along the way in the
17 PAs where the kids went. The reason I wanted to
18 testify today was to talk about the health aspect
19 of overcrowding. I don't--I just want to say that
20 I don't know all the health consequences of
21 overcrowding, there's many that have to do with
22 mental health issues for stress and those things
23 for both the staff and for the students. I don't
24 have good statistics on that. However, I can
25 speak to obesity and we know that obesity is a

1 present problem with our youth, I'd like to tie
2 obesity into overcrowding because if we don't look
3 at the health consequences of overcrowding in
4 addition to the academic consequences, we're going
5 to miss something important. So, according to the
6 Department of Health and according to the
7 statistics that we have as well, about half of the
8 students in New York City are above the normal
9 weight range with about half of those, 25% of all
10 students in the obese category. And we have a
11 state law that requires a 120 minutes of fitness
12 every day and we are totally out of compliance
13 with that and the main reason --and I agree a
14 colleague--the main reason that we are out of
15 compliance is because we don't have the space for
16 physical education and fitness activities. And
17 that is in the school where gyms have been used
18 for classrooms and that is outside the school
19 where the schoolyards have been used with these
20 classrooms, these temporary classrooms that have
21 been there for 15 years. In the Bronx, we're 100%
22 of schools over capacity. This situation that
23 we're seeing in Manhattan, but we've been living
24 with this for a long time and we can't get the
25

1 Department of Health and the Department of
2 Education to recognize the situation. There is
3 the Armory at Kingsbridge which council member
4 Koppell mentioned earlier. It's sitting there, we
5 could get 2,000 seats in that space, Department of
6 Education is telling us that we're not
7 overcrowded, we don't need schools in that space.
8 Honestly, you scratch your head to try to figure
9 out what these folks are seeing because what
10 they're seeing and what we're seen has nothing to
11 do with each other. I want to say that the new
12 schools that are being built are also being built
13 without gymnasiums and a lot of the new schools
14 are built without, what we call cooking
15 cafeterias. So we have a lot of schools, 50% in
16 the Bronx, where the food comes from the outside
17 and it gets heated in heating cafeterias, it
18 doesn't actually get cooked. And what does that
19 mean? It means that mostly have a lot of breaded
20 type of food that's easily heated and it's higher
21 in fat and it's higher in calories and it is not a
22 good antidote, whereas if you have cooking
23 cafeterias, you can make your vegetables right
24 there. The new schools are not being made with

1 cooking cafeterias, they are not been made with
2 gymnasiums and our kids are going to continue to
3 get more and more obese. As I go around to the
4 schools in which we work, I see kids who just sit
5 during recess, they sit with their jackets on
6 lined up in chairs like this, because there's no
7 place outdoors for them to go and to play. I
8 wanted to just mention that in the Bronx--you
9 might've heard of this--that the Yankees are
10 building a new stadium. I heard that Shea Stadium
11 is being rebuilt and I heard that Brooklyn also is
12 getting a new stadium. As far as fitness is
13 concerned, I heard that the taxpayers are paying
14 that, but we're not paying for gyms. I wanted to
15 just make a little offer that maybe the franchises
16 would like to kick back something to make sure
17 that all of our students become the athletes that
18 they are today. I couldn't agree more that an
19 accurate assessment that the overcrowding is
20 critical and building the seats in the Armory. We
21 have to eliminate the temporary classrooms, we
22 have to build enough seats, we have to look for
23 that leveraging with the dollars, and I just want
24 to say that as a public health person, one of the
25

2 most critical factors that you can look at, if not
3 the most critical factor for health outcomes, is
4 whether the person is a graduate of high school or
5 not. And in the Bronx only half of our students
6 graduate high school, and we know that for
7 multiple reasons in terms of health literacy, in
8 terms of access to health, in terms of being
9 employed and being covered by insurance, if you
10 don't have a high school diploma, you will die
11 earlier and you will be sicker throughout the
12 course of your life time. So overcrowding turns
13 out to be a factor in the health of our children
14 and ultimately in the health of our nation and our
15 city.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.

17 And I am running the Team for Kids which the Team
18 for Kids, if you don't know is part of the New
19 York Road Runners Club and the Team for Kids
20 program is raising money to fight teen obesity
21 so...

22 MEGAN CHARLOP: And we love working
23 with them.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah.

25 MEGAN CHARLOP: And they do their

2 best to figure out how to work kids where there is
3 no space.

4 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Right, right.

5 MEGAN CHARLOP: But we got to make
6 the space.

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: But we need
8 space, I agree. Daniel Squadron, Democratic
9 nominee for the state Senator. Congratulations on
10 your primary, Daniel.

11 DANIEL SQUADRON: Thank you very
12 much, I--

13 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: You're
14 welcome.

15 DANIEL SQUADRON: --I appreciate it
16 and it's an honor to be here before you, Chair and
17 all the Council members. I am the Democratic
18 nominee for State Senate in the 25th Senate
19 District. It covers District 1, much of district
20 2, Districts 13 and 15 and, you know, the way that
21 it is today and it's an interesting district
22 because it has lower Manhattan and it has
23 Brooklyn, but the similarities are striking. In
24 lower Manhattan we've heard a lot about it today,
25 we've heard about PS 89 and PS 234 and the fact

1 that they are in neighborhoods that are growing--
2 have grown incredibly quickly and a school
3 planning process that predicted no growth or
4 little growth and the terrible situation that puts
5 us in, the incredible work that's being done by
6 the community to try and solve it. We know that
7 in Brooklyn, PS 8 in Brooklyn Heights is a school
8 that is now over capacity suddenly and out of
9 nowhere, seemingly as far as the DOE is concerned,
10 although clearly a trend that we saw starting--a
11 trend that in fact, we would hope to have--it's
12 become despite the grading system of school that
13 just people from a variety of neighborhoods,
14 diverse student body. We have a situation in
15 which we have middle schools on both sides of the
16 river where too often we lose parents, we either
17 lose parents to the city or we lose parents to
18 private schools at the point at which their
19 students, their children, students move on to
20 middle school because we don't have a process that
21 recognizes the flow of neighborhoods or that
22 recognizes the flow of students from elementary
23 into middle school, the needs of parents and
24 families have to keep their children in public
25

1 school. You know, I can't tell you the number of
2 parents that I meet outside of the schools, either
3 who have a second child starting kindergarten who
4 are going to be heading out of the city for that
5 reason or for first child heading to middle school
6 who are heading out of the city for that reason.

7 It damages the city, it does a disservice to our
8 children. It is unacceptable for us to plan from
9 a cave, and that's what it looks like we're doing
10 right now. You know, the definition of insanity
11 is doing the same thing again and again--and I
12 talked about this before in other context--but
13 doing the same thing again and again, expecting a
14 different result. Today, what we heard, as I
15 understand it and from what I was able to hear
16 personally, were some changes, some modifications
17 in the process, not the fundamental shift in the
18 way the school planning process works that we need
19 to have in order to solve these problems, in order
20 to prevent these problems from happening again two
21 years, five years, ten years down the line. The
22 number one issue that this comes down to as far as
23 I'm concerned is transparency. If we have
24 transparency in the process as the five-year plans
25

are being developed as some modifications happen, that I'll talk about, we will be able to identify the places the School Construction Authority the places DOE is getting it wrong: places like lower Manhattan, places like downtown Brooklyn. We need to have expansive transparency, we need to have the process on the web, we need to have the community meetings happen, not just at the end of the planning process, but throughout the planning process. Part of that is having an aligned planning process. You can, this has been spoken out before today, you can't fully align with other agencies, with city planning, with DEP, with all of the other folks who are doing projections if you have a closed process definitionally you have left the others out, you have under accounted the value of the other planners in favor of your own internal nontransparent planners. Aligned planning is critical. We also need to have rolling plans we shouldn't be sitting down doing five-year plans and starting another five-year plans. This is a process that should be modified at the fundamental level annually. We should get five years ahead and every year we should build a

2 fifth year in, we should always have a five-year
3 perspective plan in place that is fully thought
4 out, that is slowly fleshed out and is developed
5 in a fully transparent way. It's been talked
6 about before, Senator Kruger referenced it, others
7 have referenced it--putting new space in new
8 buildings is incredibly important, figuring out a
9 way so that DOE isn't making excuses for new
10 buildings not having space but is doing the
11 opposite, is working aggressively to force new
12 buildings to have the new space and that's a
13 process where I think we need to start talking
14 about things like impact fees off of an EIS and
15 start considering what the effect of those would
16 be and what the best way to handle those are. And
17 of course finally, and this is too often the third
18 rail and it's great to hear DOE say that they're
19 thinking on a neighborhood level, but I got to
20 tell you, we have districts, we have zones, we
21 have boroughs, we now have neighborhoods. I think
22 it's very, very hard when you talk about a
23 transparent process where you can really make use
24 of all of the different city planning that's
25 happening, all of the different projections that

2 are happening if you don't have an aligned
3 structural basis here. And so we need to start
4 talking about what districts look like, what zones
5 look like, how to align them with neighborhoods,
6 how to align them with community boards, for
7 example, so that we don't have 17 different
8 organizing principles, none of which make any
9 sense and all of which allow for the kind of
10 disasters and problems that we've seen. Of course
11 this all depends on funding and for that, if I'm
12 fortunate in November I plan to partner with you
13 on the Council and across the city, making sure we
14 get the kind of funding that we need for this even
15 in tough times. Together, we can do this. We
16 need to force a truly transparent process, we need
17 to not just ask them to chip away at the size, but
18 to fundamentally change the way it works. Thank
19 you very much.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, Daniel,
21 let me thank you for coming in even though you're
22 not the representative of the senatorial district
23 as of yet, you're clearly directly involved and
24 knowledgeable about the area in which you are
25 seeking to represent. And if in fact, you are

2 successful in the state Senate, starting in
3 January, you will be a very positive aspect to
4 that and I look forward to working with you.

5 DANIEL SQUADRON: Thank you very
6 much, council member.

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.
8 Helen Rosenthal, Community Board 7 of Manhattan.

9 HELEN ROSENTHAL: Thank you.
10 Council member Jackson, I'm just so pleased to be
11 testifying in front of you, you've just been an
12 incredible leader at all of our community
13 meetings, at our CEC meetings, at our Parent
14 Teacher Association meetings, you're always there,
15 you're always there leading the way very
16 eloquently and we really appreciate your work on
17 that. Community Board 7 runs from 59th Street to
18 110th Street, we cover about two-thirds of school
19 District 3. In our purview, six of eight of the
20 elementary schools are overcrowded and this is
21 just no surprise whatsoever. We've been looking
22 at both as of right and regular city reviewed
23 buildings over the last 10 years. I am shocked at
24 Liz Krueger's numbers, ours aren't quite as huge,
25 but we do have 42 apartment buildings that have

2 gone up since the year 2000; 6,000 new apartments,
3 2,500 of those new apartments are two bedrooms or
4 more. What I don't understand is why our district
5 hasn't gotten any more seats to accommodate those
6 students. And our problem is that 40 of those 42
7 buildings have been built as of right. Developers
8 are very clever they know our land-use zoning
9 regulations. Those buildings are built right up
10 to--if the zoning is for 20 stories, they're build
11 up to 19 1/2 stories. They don't have to come
12 before the city for a review. Meanwhile, three of
13 them are sitting on a street, right across the
14 street from each other and the impact on the
15 school right across the street from them is 120
16 new students this year. Kindergarten classes
17 where there were three kindergarten classes five
18 years ago, there are seven kindergarten classes
19 now 120 new students and nowhere for those
20 students to go when they go into first grade. So
21 we're already seeing the impact of the new
22 development, we're not getting any relief from the
23 School Construction Authority, and I really
24 appreciate the testimony of everyone that's come
25 before us today--not the Department of Education

2 School Construction Authority--but everyone else
3 in trying to think of innovative ideas and
4 encouraging you and thanking you for your support
5 on this. We really have to, I think, be working--
6 asking the school--there is one piece of Liz
7 Krueger's testimony--we need to ask the School
8 Construction Authority to work with the Department
9 of City Planning to make sure that we expand the
10 city review of new buildings. We have to include
11 those buildings that are as of right, we have to
12 be looking at those, we have to make them go
13 through the EIS process, we need to know the
14 impact on the community. So we can see in our
15 rolling way--I like your idea rolling five-year
16 plan--we can see before it happens what's
17 happening in our community. Specifically in our
18 district we do have one development that's coming
19 up that's not as of right and we're trying to work
20 with the developer and we appreciate your help on
21 this in having them build a new school on site.
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And Community
24 Board 7, that's in District 3 is that--so I don't
25 know if you were here earlier, Gale had said

2 earlier that we need a war room just like District
3 2. I don't particularly like the word war because
4 it connotates violence in my opinion, so I would
5 rather find another, you know, terminology rather
6 than a war room. That's just me talking, you
7 know. Thank you.

8 [Off mic]

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. And
10 next in this panel is Jody Seki from CEC District
11 2, I hope I pronounce your last name correctly, if
12 not, please correct me.

13 JODY SEKI: Jody Seki.

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you.
15 Okay.

16 JODY SEKI: Good afternoon. Thank
17 you for giving me an opportunity to speak. I'm a
18 parent from PS 59 and I'm also a CEC council
19 member. I'm here today to stress just how
20 imperative it is to ensure that the next capital
21 plan is funded adequately to provide our city with
22 enough seats in our school system. In our
23 district, District 2, we have neighborhoods with
24 schools that are all over capacity or near
25 capacity. Nearly 50% of our elementary and middle

schools in District 2 are over the target capacity. In some schools children are not guaranteed a seat in their zone school because of the lack of physical space available. Many of the schools have been forced to give up cluster rooms, such as art rooms, science rooms, and music rooms to provide for more classroom space. In some schools in our district have eliminated our pre-K programs due to increased school enrollment and a need for regular classrooms. As Jessica Lappin had mentioned, we have children zoned for the former PS 151 but there is no longer school there for them to attend and all the neighboring schools are overcrowded. I have been in communication with a parent of a new third-grader to our district who as of last week still does not have a school for her daughter. Our schools do not fill up overnight, the poor planning and inadequate funding contributed to the lack of seats in neighborhoods that desperately need them. The overcrowding situation will not improve without immediate intervention. We must ensure that our children get the education they deserve in a safe environment. School principals should be

2 concentrating on teaching and curriculum, not
3 where to find a space for classrooms and students.
4 We must provide adequate funds in the upcoming
5 five-year capital plan to add more seats and build
6 more schools. The Department of Education is too
7 optimistic with their predictions on school
8 enrollments and capacity and their ability to
9 accommodate them. New residential construction
10 and building permits must be factored in when
11 planning for growth in neighborhoods and in order
12 to be proactive in this issue, the DOE's efforts
13 must be collaborative with the CEC's, elected
14 officials, community boards, and school
15 communities. Our children deserve to go to school
16 in their neighborhood if they choose to. Our
17 children deserve to go to a school that has
18 adequate space for them to learn and grow. Thank
19 you.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, let me
21 thank you hear a member of CEC, Community
22 Education Council District 2.

23 JODY SEKI: district 2.

24 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And that's
25 represented I think by Jessica Lappin and--

2 JODY SEKI: Dan Garodnick.

3 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --Dan

4 Garodnick and is that Alan Gerson also? Or--
5 because District 2 comes around the west side
6 also, yeah. How long have you been on the CEC?

7 JODY SEKI: A year.

8 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So welcome.

9 JODY SEKI: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Now, you had
11 mentioned that one parent was in contact with you
12 that has a third-grader that's still not in
13 school.

14 JODY SEKI: Right, they are new to
15 the district--

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay.

17 JODY SEKI: --and because of the
18 overcrowding in our--in the upper east side, and
19 that's where 151 was previously, they haven't been
20 assigned a school.

21 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. Well,
22 Jan, we're going to take some information from
23 you, we're going to get that to DOE, because
24 there's no way--it doesn't matter whether or not
25 there's, 151 is gone that student should be in

2 school without a doubt. And so we'll get that
3 information from you so we can give it to the DOE.

4 JODY SEKI: I'd appreciate it
5 because she's--

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: And I'm sure
7 that the DOE representative will work on that with
8 us also. Okay.

9 JODY SEKI: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Let me thank
11 you all for coming in and, Daniel, good luck.
12 Okay. And next we're going to from Sina Parker
13 [phonetic] from CB 6, if she's still here. Susan
14 Crowson [phonetic] from public school Parent
15 Advocacy Center at PS3 and Irene Kaufman
16 [phonetic] from the public school political action
17 committee.

18 [Off mic]

19 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: How is that
20 again?

21 [Off mic]

22 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay. All
23 right. OK. And Tiara Joyce [phonetic] from PS
24 234, if they're still here? Please come forward,
25 anybody else? Give me two more and we're going to

2 call up two more individuals that may be here,
3 Kaitlyn Hannon [phonetic] from Assemblyman Brian
4 Kavanagh's office, are you hear Kaitlyn?

5 KAITLYN HANNON: Mm-hmm.

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, come up
7 when you get a moment and the Matt Borden from
8 Assembly Member Glick's office, are you here,
9 Matt?

10 MATT BORDEN: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Come on, Matt,
12 I'm sorry. All right. All right, ladies please,
13 you may begin. Just state your name and your
14 title, your position, who you're presenting and
15 you may begin your testimony.

16 SINA PARKER: I'm Sina Parker. I'm
17 on Community Board 6, I'm a member of the Youth
18 and Education Committee on that community board.
19 We represent midtown east Manhattan from 14th
20 Street to 59th. All of our elected officials have
21 mentioned one particular school, from Congress
22 member Carolyn Maloney to State Senator Liz
23 Krueger to Assembly member Bing to council member
24 Garodnick. Each of them has spoken about PS 116
25 and this is a tremendous concern of our community

1 board. As you've heard PS 116 has had to give up
2 their talented and gifted program, had to give up
3 their pre-K. program, and even so, as of last
4 spring which does not include new people coming in
5 the fall, they we're at 115% of capacity. They
6 have had to have another kindergarten class, and
7 even then kindergarten size is about 28. Who
8 knows what next year will hold. There are 33
9 buildings in that particular catchment area that
10 have been or are being built as we speak. All of
11 these buildings have children coming in, and if
12 just taking the boards 10%, that means about 34
13 children all going to this one school and that is
14 not including the solo project, which even with
15 the school on site that they promise will be
16 built, there is still--it's figured that there
17 will be more students than that school will be
18 able to accommodate and that school will not be
19 there until, at the very least 2012, because
20 building has not started there and the school is
21 not going to be the first building to be
22 completed. So this one particular school has had
23 everything pouring in down on it. We have tried
24 to talk about having an extra floor put on the
25

2 building which has three stories right now. Even
3 putting an extra floor on the building will not
4 help because their cafeteria and kitchen cannot
5 accommodate more students than they already have.
6 This is a school where they start eating at 10:15,
7 10:10 in the morning and that lunch periods are 20
8 minutes long in order that each student have a
9 chance to get into the cafeteria. And this is a
10 principal who has said we are not going to have
11 art on the cart going from room to room, we are
12 going to keep our art room and because of that the
13 classes are extremely overcrowded because she
14 could have taken a few people from each class and
15 made a new classroom, but given up her art room,
16 she doesn't want to do that. So this is a very
17 big problem in our neighborhood and I hope that.
18 the Department of Education will be addressing
19 this matter as quickly as possible.

20 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, let me
21 thank you as a community board member for coming
22 in and giving testimony on this particular matter
23 obviously your elected officials are a very
24 focused on that.

25 SINA PARKER: Oh, yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: But you know,
3 I've heard that school can you give me the exact
4 address of PS--

5 SINA PARKER: [Interposing] Yes --

6 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --116, where
7 is it located at?

8 SINA PARKER: -- PS 116 is that 210
9 East 33rd Street between Third and Lexington
10 Avenues, I believe.

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Okay, I think
12 I've been there before. Several years ago when--

13 SINA PARKER: [Interposing] Is it
14 Third and, no I think Second and Third, Second and
15 Third.

16 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Yeah, I've
17 been there before okay. Well. Thank you. I'm
18 sorry, who is next? I'm sorry, what's your name
19 again?

20 SUSAN CURSON: Hi my name is Susan
21 Curson [phonetic] and thank you for allowing me to
22 speak today on behalf of my kids and especially
23 the challenged learners of New York City. In
24 spring 2007 there was a budget increase to New
25 York City schools through the Contract of

2 Excellence. The funds were to be spent in five
3 areas including class size reduction. Class sizes
4 are supposed to be at 20, my third grader
5 currently has 27 children in his classroom.
6 That's not 20. I can do that math, it's
7 overcrowded. My learning disabled child who is in
8 fourth grade, his class is slated to have 32
9 children in his CTT class, which is currently
10 happening. This is unacceptable. These kids are
11 asked to have speech therapy in a room that's been
12 blocked up to have three speech therapists and
13 kids working simultaneously--these kids cannot
14 produce what DOE is asking for them on the test.
15 My son had OT last year in a locker room,
16 kindergarten kids are having speech therapy out in
17 hallways. This is just absolutely inexcusable,
18 you know, my son is asking, I can't learn, how can
19 they ask me to learn and to take these tests when
20 there are 32 children in the classroom. There is
21 none of special education classrooms, these kids
22 are suffocating. It's just deplorable. I
23 challenge, you know, Ms. Grimm said we want a
24 first-class school system. I don't think having
25 speech in a hallway is a first-class school

2 system. I challenge the Deputy Mayor and the
3 Chancellor and the Deputy Chancellor to walk
4 through the schools, I'd be glad to give them a
5 tour and let them see that the schools are
6 overcrowded. It's absolutely unacceptable. The
7 Blue Book should define the school capacity as to
8 what the initial numbers were slated for these
9 schools, not let's create a new room and let's
10 look at our cafeteria and let's look at the--oh,
11 let's see we'll kill the gym, and let's see our
12 children get even bigger and heavier. They asked
13 us to use our space more wisely, there's no more
14 space to use. These kids are coming in
15 classrooms--when my fourth grader started
16 kindergarten, there were 21 kids in his class.
17 There were five kindergartens, that's a hundred
18 kids. Now there is seven kindergarten rooms at 25
19 to 27 kids, which means the kindergarten rooms
20 have expanded to 175 kids and then they just keep
21 moving up so then third grade gets bigger and
22 fourth grade gets bigger, fifth grade gets bigger.
23 We just--this can't continue. We're asking these
24 kids to do too much and we're asking them to do it
25 under deplorable conditions. It's unacceptable.

2 Thank you very much.

3 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, Susan,
4 but let me thank you for coming in on behalf of
5 your children and expressing your personal views
6 about the situation and obviously you've made an
7 offer to show the Deputy Chancellor and the Deputy
8 Mayor Dennis Walcott walk them through your school
9 and I say to you take them up on it, write them a
10 formal letter, call them up and offer to. You
11 never know, they may take you up on that offer and
12 if not, you can say that you made the offer and
13 they have not accepted--I'm sure that they will
14 respond to you one way or the other. Thank you.
15 And next we're going to hear from Kaitlyn Hannon
16 from assembly member Brian Kavanagh's office,
17 representing the 74th to 70 District in Manhattan.
18 I believe, right? Right.

19 KAITLYN HANNON: Thank you. You
20 have the full testimony in front of you, but I'll
21 just abbreviate as much as possible as many of the
22 issues have already been said, specifically 116.
23 I want to thank you, Chairman Robert Jackson and
24 Jessica Lappin and the members of the committees
25 for the opportunity to testify today on the issue

1 school overcrowding. The method for calculating
2 overcrowded schools is undoubtedly complicated as
3 we talked about. A system that serves over 1.1
4 million children in a wide variety of building
5 configurations, interests, and needs determines
6 that we must have a different method for
7 calculating space other than just a mathematical
8 formula. With that caveat, there are several
9 schools that serve large numbers of schools from
10 the 74th assembly district that are classified as
11 overcrowded according to the target capacity
12 outlined in the Blue Book. PS 110 is located on
13 Delancey Street and the lower east side just
14 outside the 74th District but serves many families
15 from the district. This school is operating at
16 104% capacity and this overcrowding produces
17 significant adverse effects, while the gifted and
18 talented kindergarten class has only 16 children
19 and to remain a kindergarten classes hold 28 and
20 26 students. The school has no visual art spaces,
21 class sizes throughout the building are high and
22 close to 30 students on average, and there's
23 little to no room for growth in the coming years.
24 On the whole, the school appears to be managing
25

1 reasonably well with the current space, but that
2 is just this year. They have two dedicated
3 science rooms, a music room, and the computer lab.
4 Fifteen blocks from PS 110 is PS 61 on East 12th
5 Street, this is a school that hasn't been
6 mentioned today that I want to make sure we
7 mentioned. PS 61 is the name of the building that
8 houses three schools PS 361, 315 and PS 94, which
9 is a district 75 special-education school.
10 According to the Blue Book, PS 361 and 315 are
11 both operating over capacity at 106% and 108%
12 respectively. The schools housed within PS 61
13 have done their best to deal with the lack of
14 space. They have converted to bathrooms and three
15 closets and office space for related service
16 providers such as speech therapist, social
17 workers, and guidance counselors, as you were
18 mentioning. PS 361 in PS 315 have no access to a
19 gymnasium, the teachers have no staff room they
20 eat lunch either in their classrooms or outside of
21 the building. The school has only one art room,
22 which is used for several purposes throughout the
23 day. Within one building, there are three schools
24 with three different sets of needs trying to make
25

1 use of the same space. Finally at PS 116 on East
2 33rd Street and Murray Hill, it's just outside of
3 our district, but serves many families from within
4 the district. The parents and students have been
5 particularly vocal as we've seen today about the
6 overcrowding within the school. They operate
7 according to the 0607 numbers at 105% capacity.
8 Students begin the first of six lunch rotations at
9 10:30 because of limited cafeteria space and
10 finish after 1 p.m. The DOE has chosen to phase
11 out both the gifted and talented program and the
12 pre-K program due to space constraints. The
13 school houses seven kindergarten classes of 25
14 plus students each, five or more than recommended
15 by the state. Approximately 50 families according
16 to the principal have left this year after last
17 year because--citing overcrowding as a reason.
18 There are over 3,000 approved new residential
19 units under construction, which is zoned for PS
20 116 and so far there are no adequate explanations
21 as to where those new residents will send their
22 children to school. I am pleased the DOE has
23 agreed to joint federal, state, and city elected
24 officials and the task force to attempt to find
25

solutions to overcrowding and 116 and other schools in District 2. For the '06-'07 school year, the state legislature provided \$613 million of state aid for New York City school construction. As the DOE and SCA develop the next five-year capital plan there are several issues which must be considered--which basically all three we've covered today--they're covered in detail in the testimony, but the funding must realistically address not only present concerns, but future ones, it must give parents, community members, educators, and students a voice in the capital plan because they're the ones who actually know where our overcrowding is taking place. And finally, the students must continue to receive or start to receive a wide variety of opportunities within those facilities including arts, physical education, science foreign-language, these spaces don't require just empty rooms, but equipped rooms that will provide a well-rounded education. This is affecting schools throughout the city and in many schools conditions are far worse than the ones I've just mentioned today. We intend to continue to take an active role in working with

2 DOE and SCA, elected officials, local school
3 officials, parents, and students to address these
4 issues all the children of New York city deserve
5 the best opportunities we can offer them. We are
6 confident that with proactive and also planning we
7 can provide our children with an excellent public
8 education in the future. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Thank you and
10 obviously, your assembly member knows very well--
11 he was a former Chief of Staff of Gale Brewer, so
12 he knows the details of it and obviously as a
13 representative he's hearing from people especially
14 like 116 and other schools and the pressure has to
15 be kept on. Matt Borden, Assembly member Deborah
16 Glick's office.

17 MATT BORDEN: Thank you, Council
18 member Jackson. It would be an egregious omission
19 if nobody gave a shout out to Jan Atwell
20 [phonetic] today for her hard work that she put
21 into this. I know that she's been doing about
22 nine jobs basically on her own so I really do
23 appreciate that, I know everyone in New York City
24 appreciates that, I know that council member
25 Jackson appreciates that.

2 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Well, listen,
3 Jan is the backbone right now of the education
4 committee, without Jan there would be no education
5 committee.

6 MATT BORDEN: I know she's--

7 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: But we do have
8 a new council that's coming on board, and she's
9 sitting right here.

10 MATT BORDEN: Oh, great.

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Aysha
12 Schaumberg [phonetic].

13 MATT BORDEN: All right. [Crosstalk]

14 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: So, I believe
15 she's starting either today or tomorrow hopefully,
16 but she's been sitting in this hearing and the one
17 we held last week to get acclimated to--

18 MATT BORDEN: That's great.

19 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --the issues
20 and concerns and the long hours that we hold our
21 hearings.

22 MATT BORDEN: Yeah.

23 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: But Jan has
24 been the backbone obviously and you're absolutely
25 correct. She deserves more than a shout out--

2 MATT BORDEN: Yeah.

3 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: --she deserves
4 a raise.

5 MATT BORDEN: So do I, but, you
6 know, that's neither here and are there. I want
7 to be brief, mainly because I'm starving and also
8 because many of the points have been made already.
9 But you know, the assembly member is really in
10 line with everyone else on her thoughts about
11 this, especially in terms of how the DOE is really
12 perceiving the situation. You know, I was just
13 thinking about it sort of like being inside with
14 someone else and looking outside and seeing it's
15 pouring rain and going, oh man, it's really
16 raining hard and the people that you're with are
17 being like, really I don't, 'cause I don't even
18 think it's raining, maybe it's a little drizzle
19 and it's like how do you make those people
20 understand that it's pouring. Well you say go
21 outside and they go outside and they get wet and
22 they go, well it's just a little drizzle it's--
23 maybe it's raining harder some places than others
24 but I would call this a drizzle. And I clearly--
25 this is it's pouring, and there's absolutely right

1
2 now, you know, not a fundamental shift in
3 philosophy of what the DOE is thinking, it's only
4 going to get worse. You know, I was a teacher in
5 a past life, you know, and I really think that as
6 long as the DOE can see test scores rising, you
7 know, then that's fine and that sends a message
8 and they just basically have sent a message saying
9 that as long as test scores rise, classroom
10 environments don't need to change, and that's an
11 unacceptable philosophy and it's one that I don't
12 know how, you know, how it gets shifted. I just,
13 you know, basically also just wanted to say in
14 closing that teachers and administrators and
15 students have been forced to make compromises that
16 undermine educational goals, and I really hope
17 that the City Council does really have that
18 backbone and really pushes the administration to
19 re-examine their projected models, their
20 population growth, you know, the Blue Book,
21 whatever color book you want to call it, it's just
22 out of whack, you know, and it's crazy, and, you
23 know, we can't continue to hope that school
24 overcrowding will disappear by relying on the DOE
25 shell games, 'cause, you know, that's when I was

2 growing up in New York, and you'd see those guys
3 on the corner and they'd play these little three
4 card monte situations and that's what it kind of
5 feels like, it's if we can move a little over here
6 and move it a little over there, the situations
7 going to be fine, it's not fine and our students
8 really deserve more. So that's the testimony of
9 Assembly member Glick. Thank you, Council member
10 Jackson.

11 CHAIRPERSON JACKSON: Let me just
12 let me thank you for coming in and staying the
13 distance and I agree we are all like hungry and
14 ready to eat, but obviously this is so important
15 and this is the first of two hearings concerning
16 school overcrowding and so the other one we'll be
17 dealing with--I forgot, but forgive me. I'm like
18 my mind is almost in a haze, but it's extremely
19 important. Let me just thank the assembly member
20 obviously, you know, state assembly members and
21 state senators are going to be dealing with this
22 issue as far as funding for our schools, as far as
23 dealing with the whole issue of, yeah, of male
24 control [phonetic] when that expires next year and
25 it's--you know, the chair of the assembly

2 education committee was here earlier, giving
3 testimony at the press conference and the second
4 hearing is going to be on school siting, the
5 actual siting of schools and that's going to be
6 extremely important and as, you know, Jessica
7 Lappin, now she chairs the school siting
8 Subcommittee for Land Use and so she's going to be
9 intricately involved. So thank you all for coming
10 in. And we have two more individuals Rayna
11 Lipson, if she's here--she's gone. And Carene
12 Ball, B-A-L-L, no? Is there anyone else in the
13 auditorium that wishes to testify? Hearing none,
14 it is now 2:48 and this education committee
15 hearing on overcrowding is hereby closed.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature Tammy Wittman

Date October 10, 2008