

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Jointly with

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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February 8, 2023
Start: 1:16 p.m.
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Eric Dinowitz
Chairperson

Rita C. Joseph
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Shaun Abreu
Alexa Avilés
Carmen N. De La Rosa
Oswald Feliz
James F. Gennaro
Jennifer Gutiérrez
Shahana K. Hanif
Kamillah Hanks
Shekar Krishnan
Linda Lee
Farah N. Louis
Julie Menin

Mercedes Narcisse
Lincoln Restler
Pierina Ana Sanchez
Lynn C. Schulman
Althea V. Stevens
Sandra Ung
Charles Barron
Gale A. Brewer
Inna Vernikov

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

Andrea Soonachan
CUNY Dean for K-16 Initiatives

Joanne Russell
Senior Vice President Kingsborough Community
College

Les Raphael
Director of College Now

Jade Grieve
NYC Public Schools Chief of Student Pathways

Melanie Mac
Senior Executive Director of Office of Student
Pathways

Kristen Harris

Laura Meyers
CUNY

Salimatou Doumbouya
NYC College of Technology Student Government
President

Danielle Guindo
Read Alliance

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

Nazrea Nahar [sp?]
Young Invincibles

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon and
3 welcome to today's New York City Council hearing for
4 the Committee on Higher Education joint with the
5 Committee on Education. If you wish to submit
6 testimony, you may at testimony@council.nyc.gov.
7 Chairs, we are ready to begin.

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Good afternoon.
9 I'm Eric Dinowitz, Chair of the Committee on Higher
10 Education. Welcome to our joint hearing today with
11 the Committee on Education chaired by Council Member
12 and former educator, Rita Joseph. Today's oversight
13 hearing is on CUNY's college preparation initiatives
14 in middle and high schools. We look forward in this
15 hearing to learning more about the programming
16 offered by CUNY college preparation initiatives as
17 well as the evaluative data that the New York City
18 DOE and CUNY have collected and used to judge the
19 success and the impact of these initiatives. We're
20 interested in the selection process used to recruit
21 or identify DOE schools for participation in these
22 initiatives and the selection process used to
23 identify and enroll individual students. The
24 demographic data for enrolled students, including
25 gender, race, ethnicity, and income levels are all

2 relevant here. Furthermore, the committees are
3 specifically and especially interested in learning
4 how students with disabilities are accommodated in
5 these initiatives and how students who are struggling
6 academically are served by them. Finally, the
7 committees also seek an understanding of what support
8 the DOE and CUNY need to continue and to even expand
9 these initiatives and whether there are obstacles to
10 potential expansion. It's not often in education that
11 we find a program that has no down-side, no trade-
12 offs, no draw-backs, none at all. I'm prepared to
13 believe, however, that the kinds of college
14 preparation initiatives we'll be hearing about today
15 are exactly that. These initiatives seem to improve
16 the status quo for everyone involved, more middle
17 school students, for high school students, for their
18 families, for CUNY students, for DOE teachers and
19 administrators and for CUNY faculty and
20 administrators. I'm looking forward to hearing the
21 details. I'm also particularly excited to work
22 alongside Chair Joseph during this hearing. Chair
23 Joseph spent her career in the classroom and deeply
24 understands the value of education and the impact
25 quality programs like the ones we hope to hear about

2 today can have on our children, on their families,
3 and on their futures. I also want to acknowledge
4 colleagues on the Higher Education Committee who are
5 present, Oswald Feliz. I would also like to thank my
6 Legislative Director Adam Sarapoli [sp?], Jenna
7 Klaus, my Chief of Staff, Christina Yalamati [sp?],
8 the Committee's Counsel, Regina Paul, the committee's
9 Policy Analyst, and Nia Hyatt [sp?], the Committee's
10 Senior Finance Analyst. Id would now like to invite
11 Chair Joseph to give her opening statement after
12 which I will swear in our witnesses.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair
14 Dinowitz, and thank you for inviting the Committee on
15 Education to join Higher Education for this very
16 important hearing topic. I'm Rita Joseph, Chair of
17 the Education Committee. Thank you to everyone who's
18 planning to testify today. I'm very much looking
19 forward to hearing your testimony. Chair Dinowitz
20 covered a lot in his opening remarks, so I'll be
21 brief. Having a college education is more important
22 than ever. it prepares students both intellectually
23 and socially for a thriving career and adult life.
24 As some of you may know, I'm a forever educator
25 before joining the City Council. During that time my

2 work in public schools left me with a deep
3 understanding of the barriers that students encounter
4 in pursuit of their education. A strong partnership
5 between CUNY and DOE schools is essential into
6 offsetting some of those challenges. I applaud CUNY
7 for its innovation project programs like CUNY
8 Explorers which was designed to provide all DOE
9 middle school with a visit to a CUNY campus.
10 Promoting the belief that all students can go to
11 college and that preparation should be begin early.
12 But it's not just about getting students to college,
13 it's about getting them through college. Programs
14 like Colleague Now and Early College were designed to
15 improve high school graduation rates as well as
16 prepare students for rigors of college. By allowing
17 students to earn college credits in high school,
18 programs like these make college more accessible to
19 our students and are especially valuable for students
20 in underserved communities. A 2017 evaluation of
21 Early College reveals students who participated
22 graduated high school on time at a higher rate than
23 similar students. Early College students were also
24 more likely to be considered college-ready by high
25 school graduation. And as a result of earning

2 significantly more college credits, they were better
3 positioned for college degree completion and
4 persisted in degree programs at a higher rate than
5 similar students. Around 60 percent of our DOE high
6 school students who attend choose CUNY College and
7 also 80 percent of first time freshman at CUNY
8 colleges are DOE graduates. Not only does a strong
9 partnership between CUNY and DOE contribute to
10 success of New York City students, it contributes to
11 the success of New York City. At today's hearing I'm
12 looking forward to gaining a better understanding of
13 this partnership and how the City can strengthen and
14 expand it moving forward. I am also interested in
15 learning more about the number of early college
16 initiative College Now students who can earn
17 Associates and college degrees and what can be done
18 to better support these students. Lastly, I'm
19 particularly interested in learning how CUNY programs
20 are publicized to DOE students, particularly students
21 living in temporary housing, students with
22 disabilities, and English language learners. I'd
23 like to thank the Committee Staff, my staff, for all
24 the work they put in in today's hearing. Also like
25 to acknowledge Council Member Ung, Council Member

2 Oswald Feliz playing two roles today, Council Member
3 Hanif, and Council Member Menin.

4 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you, Chair
5 Joseph for your opening statement. I would like to
6 remind everyone who wishes to testify in-person today
7 that you must fill out a witness slip which is
8 located on the desk of the Sergeant at Arms near the
9 entrance of this room. Please fill out the slip even
10 if you have already registered in advance that you
11 will be testifying in person today. To allow as many
12 people as possible to testify, testimony will be
13 limited to three minutes per person whether you are
14 testifying in person or on Zoom. I'm also going to
15 ask my colleagues to limit their questions and
16 comments to five minutes. Please note that witnesses
17 who are here in person will testify before those who
18 are signed into the Zoom webinar. Now, in accordance
19 with the rules of the Council, I will administer the
20 affirmation to witnesses from the City University of
21 New York and the New York City Department of
22 Education. Please raise your right hand. Yes,
23 including you two in the back, I believe. Do you--
24 yes. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole
25 truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony

2 before this committee and to respond honestly to
3 Council Members' questions? Thank you. As a
4 reminder to all of our witnesses, please state your
5 name prior to your testimony for the record. Andrea
6 Soonachan.

7 ANDREA SOONACHAN: Andrea Soonachan. Oh,
8 me. Should we just-- alright.

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah, so you can
10 go in order of reading your opening statements and
11 then we'll have committee questions.

12 ANDREA SOONACHAN: Thanks.

13 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

14 ANDREA SOONACHAN: Good afternoon Chairs
15 Dinowitz and Joseph and members of the New York City
16 Council Committees on Education and Higher Education.
17 I want to thank you for this opportunity to speak
18 with you today about CUNY's K-16 Initiatives. It is
19 an honor to be here representing the City University
20 of New York as University Dean for K-16 Initiatives.
21 I joined CUNY three years ago after almost 20 years
22 supporting college access and success for New York
23 City's young people through community-based
24 organizations, research settings, and the New York
25 City Department of Education. Along the way, I was

2 able to earn a Doctorate in Education. Like millions
3 of New Yorkers, I have CUNY to thank for much of
4 this. My father immigrated to New York from the West
5 Indies and worked his way through an engineering
6 degree at City College. His degree opened doors to
7 him, empowered him to fight the bias he often
8 experienced as he rose through his career and gave my
9 family entry to economic security and a life well
10 beyond what he ever imagined for himself. New York
11 City has been a place of community and opportunity
12 for my family, and I've dedicated my career to
13 ensuring that our city remains a place where all
14 students can envision and achieve their brightest
15 possible future. K-16 Initiative is a unit within
16 CUNY Central Office representing CUNY's deep
17 investment in and commitment to our future students
18 and our understanding that we must work in
19 partnership with New York City public schools to
20 reach our shared goals for equity and access.

21 Today's K-12 students are tomorrow's CUNY students.

22 An average of 65 to 67 percent of incoming first-time
23 freshman at CUNY are recent graduates from New York
24 City public high schools. Our office supports the
25 reciprocal relationship between these two systems to

2 help ensure that entering undergraduates are prepared
3 for success. the unit is home to more than a dozen
4 innovative programs that seek to prepare students for
5 post-secondary success with strong onramps, including
6 pre-college curriculum, dual enrollment
7 opportunities, near [sic] peer advisement, tutoring,
8 and career-connected activities. Our programs are
9 organized around four pillars that are essential to
10 increasing access and success in higher education,
11 building college and career aspirations, building
12 seamless access and transition points, increasing the
13 academic readiness of incoming students, and
14 supporting systemic coordination. CUNY Explorers
15 begins in middle school to build those college
16 aspirations. We bring sixth through 10th grade
17 students to our campuses to experience age-
18 appropriate and customized visits. We hire and train
19 CUNY students to work as visit guides. These guides
20 design interactive and career-connected experiences
21 for students that immerse them in the life of a
22 college students. Visit activities include hands-on
23 labs like extraction of DNA from a strawberry at
24 Queensborough Community College, demonstration of
25 dental hygiene clinic activity at City Tech, or

2 flight simulation and a tour of the Robotics Room
3 with the Aviation Institute at York College. Visit
4 guides reinforce the message that all students can go
5 to college. College is affordable and students can
6 take steps now to achieve their college goals. In the
7 2021-22 school year, CUNY Explorers hired 95 students
8 as visit guides, conducted 685 visits and reached
9 36,378 unique six through 10th grade students. CUNY
10 Tutor Corps embeds tutoring into New York City public
11 middle and high school math classrooms across the
12 five boroughs while providing employment and
13 practical career development for CUNY undergraduate
14 and graduate students who serve as tutors. Tutors
15 work part time under the supervision of a host
16 teacher. Tutor Corps provides extensive professional
17 development and coaching for tutors that enable them
18 to deepen their own understanding of STEM content and
19 professionalism while providing high-quality
20 classroom-embedded tutoring delivered by a diverse
21 tutoring pool aligned with New York City public
22 school priorities. Tutor Corps conducts outreach to
23 all public schools focused especially on high-need
24 areas and works with teachers and administrators to
25 identify students who can benefit from tutoring.

2 This year, we are partnering with New York City
3 public schools to address one of the most critical
4 issues facing our students, closing skills gaps and
5 accelerating learning following the disruptions of
6 COVID. We will be placing 100 tutors in 21 high
7 schools, providing small group intensive Algebra
8 tutoring to 1,500 students. In the 21-22 school
9 year, we hired 366 tutors placed in 65 high school
10 and 45 middle schools reaching 3,399 students
11 altogether. These schools include many in high
12 poverty census tracts and serve a diverse student
13 population. Students tutored last year, 46 percent
14 were Hispanic, 27 percent were Black, 21 percent had
15 an individualized education plan, and 23 percent were
16 English language learners; 88 percent qualified for
17 free and reduced lunch or HRA benefits. We know that
18 the barriers to college access and success include
19 readiness for the academic expectations of a college
20 classroom. Our dual enrollment and early college
21 high school programs are rooted in decades of
22 research demonstrating the effectiveness and early
23 exposure to college-level work to increase college
24 success, especially for students traditionally under-
25 represented in higher education. A recent literature

2 review commissioned by New York State found that
3 early college experience and advanced coursework were
4 associated with higher student achievement, college
5 enrollment, and college graduation, and even had
6 long-term positive effects on employment and wages
7 after college graduation. K-16's largest program
8 College Now provides an opportunity for students to
9 earn college credits by participating in college prep
10 courses and activities. Nineteen CUNY campuses
11 partner with over 470 New York City public and
12 charter high schools to offer courses each year. Each
13 campus has a coordinator and support staff dedicated
14 to the program who work closely with staff and
15 individual partner schools to recruit and place
16 students. In 21-22 we served nearly 22,000 students
17 in College Now; 80 percent were eligible for free or
18 reduced lunch or HRA benefits, 62 percent identified
19 as female, 30 percent were Hispanic, 19 were Black,
20 and 26 percent were Asian, 8.6 percent had an
21 individualized education plan to receive special
22 education services, and 10 percent were English
23 language learners. In the fall of 2022, 24,679 New
24 York City public school graduates entered CUNY degree
25 programs as first-time freshman within six months of

2 high school graduation. Of those CUNY freshman,
3 approximately 29 percent had participated in a
4 College Now opportunity while in high school.
5 College Now participants have a stronger post-
6 secondary transition and success rates compared to
7 students who do not participate. Of the 21-22
8 graduates who previously participated in College Now,
9 about 85 percent matriculated into college within six
10 months of high school graduation. On average, these
11 College Now alumni transfer 6.41 credits to CUNY,
12 earn more credits in their first semester, 10.66
13 compared to 8.31, and have a higher GPA after their
14 first semester than New York City public school
15 graduates who did not participate. This academic
16 momentum persists through graduation as College Now
17 alumni show a 13 percent point higher three-year
18 associate degree completion rate and a seven
19 percentage point higher six-year bachelor's degree
20 completion rate in CUNY than those who did not
21 participate in the program. While many College Now
22 courses offer opportunities to earn credit for
23 students who have identified readiness for college
24 coursework, we've also begun to intentionally expand
25 offerings for students who need additional support.

2 As CUNY colleges have ended remediation, colleges
3 have began offering co-requisite courses in both math
4 and English language arts. In CUNY's co-requisite
5 model, a credit-bearing pathways course, a General Ed
6 course unified across all of our campuses is offered
7 at the same time as mandatory non-credit support.
8 Students who are assigned to developmental education
9 in math, reading, or writing on the basis of CUNY
10 skill proficiency markers are eligible to enroll in
11 credit-bearing pathways courses with co-requisite
12 support. For high school students, College Now co-
13 requisite courses provide a clear path to readiness
14 with the benefit of earning students transferable
15 college credits. We currently offer 11 different co-
16 requisite math courses through seven colleges. For
17 many non-STEM majors, this course also satisfies the
18 required college credit math course. We also offer
19 preparatory course called Linked Math for high school
20 students to ensure that they are prepared and ready
21 for this co-requisite math course. In the 21-22
22 school year, 306 students enrolled at eight different
23 high schools and completed this two-course sequence
24 with a success rate of 90 percent. This academic
25 year we have 11 high schools and 475 students doing

2 the Linked Math course sequence. Given the success
3 rate of these courses to-date and their critical
4 importance to supporting a strong post-secondary
5 start for students, we look forward to working with
6 our partners at New York City public schools on
7 continuing to develop and expand innovative
8 approaches to ensuring all students have access to
9 post-secondary opportunities while in high school.

10 This year we've collaborated on the design and launch
11 of Future Ready NYC, a partnership between New York
12 City public schools, CUNY campuses, and employer
13 partners. Future Ready NYC will give students access
14 to reimagined educational experiences with the chance
15 to receive early college credits, industry-valued
16 credentials in high-growth fields including
17 healthcare, technology, business, and education.

18 CUNY's a major partner in this work providing student
19 visits to college campuses through CUNY Explorers and
20 early college credits through College Now courses.

21 This year, 34 high schools are partnered with eight
22 CUNY campuses seeking to engage approximately 5,000
23 high school students. What makes Future Ready unique
24 is that the College Now courses offered at each high
25 school are designed are in a two or three-course

2 sequence which align to the knowledge and skills
3 within industry and tied to specific high-need job
4 titles. Designed around best practices and career-
5 connected learning, these sequences paired with
6 school-led work-based learning experiences,
7 internships, and student advisement allow young
8 people to proactively explore careers earlier and
9 more intentionally. Our Early College high schools
10 are public schools that partner with institutions of
11 higher Ed and blend a rigorous college prep
12 curriculum with the opportunity to earn up to two
13 years of college credit while in high school at no
14 cost to students and families. The program is
15 designed to scaffold the transition from high school
16 to college with additional support and make sure
17 students are ready to jump into courses without
18 remedial need. CUNY's Early College Initiative
19 established in 2003 to develop and support Early
20 College high schools. Today, we support 19 Early
21 College high schools that serve over 10,000 students.
22 K-16 provides guidance, product management, and
23 financial resources to create and maintain Early
24 College high schools which are categorized into four
25 models: 6-12, 9-12, 9-13, and P-Tech. The ECI models

2 were designed to serve low-income first generation
3 college-goers, English language learners, and other
4 groups that have been historically under-represented
5 in higher education. In 21-22, our diverse student
6 population included 43 percent that identified as
7 Latinx or Hispanic, nearly 33 percent who identified
8 as Black, and nearly 13 percent as Asian. The
9 population was 47 percent female. Eleven percent of
10 students were English language learners; 18 percent
11 had individualized education plan; 86 percent
12 qualified for free and reduced lunch. Student's
13 academic preparation upon entering our high schools
14 is also wide-ranging as evidence by their eighth
15 grade exams. In 2019, nearly 50 percent scored a
16 level one or two on their ELA exams, while nearly
17 two-thirds scored a one or two on math exams. While
18 fully representing ethnic, racial, demographic, and
19 academic diversity of our city's students, ECI
20 students graduate from high school on-time at a
21 higher rate than similar students. In 2022, our
22 network-wide on-time graduation rate is 93.3 percent,
23 compared to the citywide rate of 78.8 percent. The
24 graduation rate for English language learners who
25 entered high school in 2018 was 82.2 percent.

2 Overall, 71.7 percent of our graduates earn college
3 credit prior to graduation an average of 25.2
4 credits, 77.8 percent of graduates enroll in post-
5 secondary education within six months of graduation.
6 Two schools offer the opportunity for students to
7 earn their associates degree by the end of 12th
8 grade. Of these, 57 percent of the June 22 graduates
9 at Kingsborough Early College Secondary School
10 graduate with an associate's degree and 40 percent of
11 the graduates from Hostos Lincoln Academy for Science
12 earned an associate's degree from Hostos Community
13 College. The admissions process for our Early
14 College high schools is led by New York City Public
15 Schools Office of Enrollment. Our schools have two
16 types of admissions methods. The 10 P-Tech schools
17 are educational option schools, which admits students
18 across all academic levels with the goal of promoting
19 academic diversity. Students are grouped into three
20 equal-sized categories, low, middle and high, based
21 on their final seventh grade course grades.
22 Applicants in each category are prioritized for one-
23 third of seats at each school. If there are more
24 applicants from a category than prioritized seats for
25 that category, applicants are randomly selected using

2 the random selection process based on their numbers.

3 The six through 12 Early Colleges enroll-- primarily

4 enroll students at sixth grade and give priority to

5 students and residents in specific districts where

6 they are zoned. Most students continue into their

7 school's high school program. High school entry does

8 have academic screening for ninth grade seats. The

9 grade nine through 12 and nine to 13 Early College

10 schools are screened for ninth grade entrance. One

11 school is an international school for English

12 language learners who have resided in the US for four

13 years or fewer. Perspective students learn about our

14 school through a variety of ways. New York City

15 Public Schools publishes a high school directory each

16 year with a wide range of admissions information. To

17 increase diversity, school admissions are based on a

18 rank choice and lottery system. In 2020, one of our

19 schools, Manhattan Hunter Science High School

20 launched a diversity initiative through the Office of

21 Enrollment at DOE to give priority to applicants

22 eligible for free or reduced lunch for 69 percent of

23 seats. Each year, schools are encouraged to

24 participate in district, borough, and citywide fairs

25 where they share informational materials with

2 families and dates and times for open house tours.

3 Schools also do direct outreach to elementary and

4 middle schools in their district and promote their

5 schools on social media and their websites. Our

6 continuum of programs is capped by College and Career

7 Bridge for All, the largest near peer matriculation

8 support program in the nation, supporting over 50,000

9 graduates annually. The program runs from June

10 through September, supporting students from

11 graduation from high school through their first month

12 of college should they enroll. Bridge hires and

13 trains current college students who largely graduated

14 from New York City public schools and attend CUNY,

15 and groups them in borough-based teams where they are

16 supervised by professional counselors and experienced

17 coaches to support graduating seniors from high

18 schools in their community with a wide range of post-

19 secondary planning and matriculation tasks. Bridge

20 coaches receive extensive training in how to support

21 students as they transition, including understanding

22 types of degree and non-degree options, navigating

23 college enrollment steps, and researching non-degree

24 career programs both at CUNY and with community-based

25 organizational partners. Coaches meet with these

2 partners during training and are able to support
3 students to enroll in a strong college match or
4 career program. College and Career Bridge for All is
5 implemented with an intentional focus on
6 student/coach connections. In order to foster a
7 strong connection, coaches are matched with high
8 school students with similar characteristics, borough
9 of residence, language, and high school. Through
10 weekly outreach bridge coaches provide prospective
11 students with support on completing applications,
12 financial aid, navigating enrollment holds, uploading
13 proof of vaccination, registering, and general social
14 emotional guidance. The diversity of our Bridge peer
15 mentors is key to the program's success. Of the 199
16 peer mentors that participated in Bridge in 2022, 147
17 were CUNY students. Among those, 34 percent were
18 Asian, 25 percent were Black, 14 percent were
19 Hispanic, and 13 percent were multi-racial. In 2022,
20 Bridge served 54,000 seniors from the New York City
21 public schools class of '22, ensuring that all
22 graduates had the support of a near peer mentor. Of
23 this group, 35 percent had substantive interaction
24 with a mentor that moved their post-secondary
25 planning forward. The largest impact of the Bridge

2 program is on enrollment outcomes. In 2022, 71
3 percent of graduates served by Bridge enrolled in
4 college in the fall, and 58 percent of college-bound
5 students chose a CUNY campus. A 2020 Impact
6 Evaluation found that students who connected with
7 their coach enrolled in college at a rate seven
8 percentage points higher than comparable peers. The
9 program is particularly effective for students who
10 are Black, Hispanic, or living in low-income
11 neighborhoods, three groups typically under-
12 represented in higher education, with those students
13 seeing the greatest impact on enrollment from
14 engaging with their coach. The effects of connecting
15 with a near peer on applying to college after May is
16 almost double for Black and Hispanic students
17 compared to that of white students. I thank you for
18 your interest in this important topic, for your
19 support of CUNY's efforts to increase access and
20 readiness for all students. CUNY K-16 programs are a
21 national model in their scale, scope, impact and
22 depth of partnership with a public school system.
23 Every day we are working alongside our partners at
24 the New York public schools to eliminate barriers and
25 strive towards our shared goals for all students to

2 access promise-filled futures and economic security.

3 The success of these efforts is the result of the

4 collective work of many hundreds of staff and leaders

5 all of whom deserve great credit for what we have

6 accomplished. We are proud of all of these successes

7 and we know that there is so much more to do. We

8 look forward to our continued partnership and what we

9 can continue to accomplish together.

10 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you, Ms.

11 Soonachan. Very comprehensive. When you speak,

12 please make sure you state your name for the record,

13 and we look forward to hearing your testimony. Thank

14 you.

15 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Joanne

16 Russell.

17 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Oh, and I'm sorry,

18 before you begin, I just want to acknowledge we've

19 been joined by Council Members Lee, Brewer, Avilés,

20 Barron, Ung-- I saw Menin-- Narcisse. Please, thank

21 you.

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Thank

23 you. Chairpersons Dinowitz and Joseph and member of

24 the New York City Council Committees on Higher

25 Education and Education. I am Doctor Joanne Russell,

2 Senior vice President and Provost at Kingsborough
3 Community College. I'm pleased to provide
4 information about Kingsborough's programs with New
5 York City high schools. Although my testimony will
6 focus on Kingsborough's College Now and Early College
7 initiative programs, we also have a state-funded
8 Liberty Partnership Program at the Thomas Jefferson
9 campus in Cypress Hills that serves over 360 students
10 who are at-risk at dropping out. I'll briefly
11 describe the College Now and ECI programs, the
12 students served, and the outcomes. Kingsborough's
13 College Now program is the oldest and largest College
14 Now program within CUNY. We are celebrating 39 years
15 of excellence in preparing students for the rigors of
16 college academics and a transition from high school
17 to college. In the College Now model, most classes
18 meet in the high school either before or after the
19 regular school day. Kingsborough also offers Saturday
20 and summer programming in which classes are taught on
21 the college campus. Students may earn up to 12
22 college credits which will appear on the Kingsborough
23 Community College transcript. Courses are taught by
24 high school faculty who have met all requirements to
25 be hired as adjunct faculty in the appropriate

2 departments at Kingsborough Community College.

3 Kingsborough appoints a college faculty member as a

4 course coordinator, and this course coordinator meets

5 with all of the College Now faculty who are teaching

6 a particular course to provide professional

7 development. Participating high schools appoint

8 College Now liaisons who serve as the primary point

9 of contact with the college and are responsible for

10 providing information to eligible students and

11 developing a program of coursework tailored to the

12 students' needs and interest. During the academic

13 year 2021-2022, Kingsborough's College Now program

14 offered credit classes in 39 New York public high

15 schools. With funding from the Department of Youth

16 and Community Development's Work, Learn, Grow

17 program, Kingsborough collaborated with an additional

18 69 high schools citywide to offer college transitions

19 courses that include career exploration opportunities

20 as well as tools for smoothing the transition from

21 high school to college. During the 2021-2022

22 academic year, Kingsborough's College Now program

23 enrolled 8,111 unduplicated students, accounting for

24 almost 12,000 enrollments in college credit courses,

25 and college and career awareness courses. Eighty-

2 eight percent of the enrolled students were
3 successful in earning college credit. Within this
4 same cohort, 23 percent of the students were Asian,
5 22 percent Black, 27 percent Hispanic, and 26 percent
6 white. We continue to note an increase in the
7 percentage of female participants. Sixty-two percent
8 of female students compared to 38 percent of male
9 students participated in 2020-2021, a pattern that
10 has been consistent with pre-pandemic trends. This
11 is also sadly consistent with the national increase
12 of female enrollment in higher education. To assist
13 the program in recruiting and retaining male
14 students, we have included opportunities for male
15 students to meet with our director of the Men's
16 Resource Center. We continue to innovate to improve
17 our offerings. For example, we have worked to ensure
18 that all of the classes we offer are either accepted
19 as General Education, CUNY's Pathways credit, or are
20 part of a sequence of courses that are a pathway to a
21 degree program. As part of a future New York City
22 program that Andrea spoke about, we are currently
23 offering College Now courses in two partner high
24 schools that will allow students to earn 12 credits
25 towards the AS degree in Health Sciences. Because

2 the cost of textbooks are so high, we are replacing
3 textbooks with free, high-quality open educational
4 resources. The development of open educational
5 resources is typically a two-semester project that
6 involves regular meetings between high school faculty
7 and college faculty to build the materials and learn
8 how to use them. This project also has the
9 additional benefit of ensuring consistency between
10 the college and high school faculty and supports
11 their collaborative work. In addition to the College
12 Now program, Kingsborough partners with CUNY and the
13 DOE to run an Early College initiative high school
14 that's housed at the Lafayette Educational Complex,
15 Kingsborough Early Childhood Secondary School, or
16 KECS. At KECS, students have the opportunity to earn
17 an AA degree in Liberal Arts by the time they
18 graduate from high school. KECS students enroll in
19 college credit classes as part of their regular
20 school day. These courses are dual credit courses,
21 meaning that students earn both high school and
22 college credit upon successful completion. For some
23 classes, students are fully integrated with college
24 students on the college campus. Other classes may be
25 run with an entire section devoted to KECS students.

2 All courses are taught by college faculty. At KECS,
3 about 425 students are enrolled in grades nine
4 through 12, 69 percent of whom are classified as
5 economically disadvantaged, and 66 percent
6 minorities, 32 percent Hispanic, 25 percent Black,
7 eight percent Asian, and 34 percent white. Prior to
8 the pandemic, about 70 percent of graduating seniors
9 had earned the AA degree in Liberal Arts at the same
10 time as their high school diploma, and 80 percent of
11 students had earned at least 45 credits.

12 Understandably, these success rates have slipped
13 during the pandemic years so that 2022 56 percent
14 earned their associate degree and 66 percent earned
15 at least 45 credits. We expect that these success
16 rates will return to pre-pandemic levels.

17 Kingsborough has been working with CUNY and the John
18 Dewey High School to start another ECI that is
19 focused on education studies. We are especially
20 interested in attracting young men of color into a
21 teaching career by working with them early in high
22 school. I thank you for the opportunity to share
23 this information with you today, and I'm very proud
24 to work with my partners at CUNY and the DOE.

2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah, you got a
3 lot of partners up here today.

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: I do.

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So it's looking
6 good. Thank you. Remember please state your name
7 for the record, and before we begin, we've been
8 joined by Council Member Schulman.

9 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: Les Raphael. Excuse
10 me. Good afternoon members of the Higher
11 Education/Education Committees. My name is Les
12 Raphael, and I am the Director of College Now and
13 several other academic skills programs at York
14 College. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to talk
15 about the College Now program at York College, which
16 is a senior CUNY college. As with all College Now
17 programs around CUNY, York's program follows CUNY
18 Central Office guidelines and submits an annual
19 proposal for approval and funding. The program also
20 works at York with the Vice President for academic
21 Affairs, with York College offices, with Department
22 Chairpersons and faculty members, and we receive
23 guidance and approval for the program's offerings,
24 especially the credit classes which make up over 97
25 percent of the classes that are offered at York.

2 College Now at York was implemented in fall 2000 when
3 College Now expanded to all CUNY campuses and
4 currently works with five larger partner schools in
5 southern Queens, and they are significant feeder
6 schools to York and enroll-- and enroll in our
7 College Now program, or they enroll in our College
8 Now program, those high schools, 100 to 500 students
9 each academic year. Those high school are
10 construction trades, engineering and architectures,
11 John Adams, Hillcrest, Richmond Hill, and the
12 Springfield Gardens Educational Complex. In addition
13 to these schools, York's program works with the
14 Queens High School for the Sciences at York which is
15 a specialized school on the York campus that enrolls
16 approximately 300 students are year while taking dual
17 credit courses, which I'll explain to you in a minute
18 or so. And we also work with approximately 14
19 smaller participating high schools all around the
20 Queens area, and they enroll around 10 to 50 students
21 during the year, and I've listed the 14 smaller
22 schools that work with us. It's in the report. Some
23 of the basic guidelines and structuring of York's
24 College Now program include-- we work with liaisons
25 and representatives at our larger partner and smaller

2 partner participating schools, and they plan and
3 recruit and they enter the students into a York-based
4 online application. So they're doing all the
5 recruitment. They're doing-- finding the students
6 who are eligible and who they're recommending, and
7 then from the application that they put in-- the
8 students, they put into our application, we vet them
9 and enroll in the college credit classes. We send
10 their names, the rosters to the Registrar's Office.
11 We also use free online educational resources which
12 are the free materials in about 80 percent of our
13 classes, and we're pushing for more, and the rest, we
14 do have to buy some textbooks for, but we brought
15 down those courses dramatically. And of course, all
16 instructors, they're vetted, approved and provided
17 orientation and training by the appropriate academic
18 departments. Most of our teachers are high school
19 teachers who are eligible or meet adjunct
20 requirements and are interviewed by the academic
21 departments and trained. The College Now program at
22 York, we're sensitive to the needs of students with
23 disabilities. Although the high schools are
24 responsible to provide those students with support
25 services, one thing that our liaisons do is-- after

2 obtaining permission from parents and the students--
3 indicate to us which students have those kinds of
4 needs, and we provide with permission our instructors
5 to identify that so they don't get, you know,
6 something happens in a classroom that they don't
7 understand. And most of our classes are at the high
8 schools. So those who are-- who do come to the
9 campus, they either come just for a Saturday for a
10 couple of hours or like a Monday, Wednesday, Tuesday,
11 Thursday. Our appropriate office at York will help
12 in times of need, but they spend so much time at the
13 high schools that most of those services are provided
14 at the high schools by the high schools. About the
15 demographics, as has been mentioned before, our
16 program has a strong-- higher percentage of females,
17 you know, in the 60 to 64 percent and that means 40
18 to 35 percent males. And the percent of students
19 taking College Now classes at York, when we compare
20 them to the DOE numbers, we have a higher Asian
21 Pacific Islanders percentage and number. We have
22 lower for Hispanic and white students and
23 approximately the same for black tenderness. One
24 reason for this higher increase in the Asian Pacific
25 Islander is that in our area of southern Queens,

2 there is a higher percentage of-- a very high
3 percentage of that race-- those races and ethnicity.
4 Mainly backgrounds from Southeast Asia, India,
5 Pakistan, Bangladesh. And if you look at the chart
6 below, you can see the percentages, roughly 34 to 40
7 percent Asian, 29-28 percent black, 22 percent
8 Hispanic, and so on. And when it-- the chart below
9 shows the DOE numbers, and as you can see again, our
10 Asian Pacific Islanders is higher and our black is
11 basically the same, but our Hispanic populations are
12 lower. And again, I think a lot of that has to do
13 with the area we serve, which is southern Queens and
14 the percentages there. About York's offerings,
15 generally the York program offers about 50 to 60
16 classes per semester and four classes in the summer,
17 and we serve around 2,400 students per year, and
18 approximately 80 percent of the classes are offered
19 at the high schools, and about 20 percent on the York
20 campus. Actually, before the pandemic was a little
21 bit higher, 25 to 30 percent at the York campuses,
22 either after the school day or on Saturday. Most of
23 our College Now classes are Pathway courses which
24 fulfil the CUNY General Education requirements, or
25 introductory major required courses, and students

2 typically choose from common taken first-year courses
3 like psychology, sociology, biology, history, and so
4 on. We also have sequences of classes that lead to
5 career paths and college majors. We also offer
6 those. Those are offerings include for us include
7 sequences in education and health, and in business.
8 In addition to providing the appropriate sequences of
9 classes, and advise us about those, the academic
10 departments provide presentations to those classes
11 about the opportunities in those fields and college
12 road map classes needed to graduate those areas. At
13 York, and I think at all the CUNY College Now
14 programs, students are permitted to earn up to 16
15 credits through College Now, and we offer our
16 programs, our college classes, in three different
17 modalities. Either at the high schools after the
18 school day, at the high schools during the school
19 day, or at the college campus after the high school
20 day on Saturdays. These classes that are offered
21 during the school day, we refer to them as dual
22 credit classes. And college credit curricula are
23 taught to specifically-identified high school
24 classes, and upon successfully completing the credit
25 class requirements, the college credit class

2 requirements, students earn both high school and
3 college credit. One example would be the high school
4 Civics class is offered with a Political Science
5 credit class, and they get-- but the teacher teaches
6 the college credit curriculum, but the Principal
7 awards a high school credit as well as getting the
8 college credit. Our outcomes over the last three
9 years have been very successful. When we look at ABC
10 grades as successful outcomes, it's actually around
11 98 percent. Students withdraw, of course, but those
12 who complete, 97, 98, 99 percent get a A, B, or C,
13 and very small numbers get D's or F's. There are
14 withdrawals, and there are-- students who struggle
15 are encouraged to withdraw, but we have a very
16 successful rate there. College Now students who
17 matriculate at York after graduating high school earn
18 more credits and have higher GPA's in their first
19 semesters than those who did not take college credit
20 classes. If you look at the charts below, you can
21 see generally speaking if they took college credit
22 they earn around two or so credits more in that first
23 semester from the college than if they did not take
24 College Now program, and those students also have
25 about half a point higher GPA which is a significant

2 number than those who did not take College Now before
3 they entered York College, a regular college credit
4 matriculate. Each year between 400 to 550 students
5 from York College Now program enroll in one of the
6 CUNY colleges after graduating high school. The
7 following chart, it's a little busy, but it shows
8 which colleges York's College Now program is sending
9 students to. Just if you look quickly, for example,
10 if you look at the first column BMCC, that 59 means
11 York College sent 59 of its students to BMCC and so
12 on across the line. The largest numbers of College
13 Now students which we'll get they'll actually come
14 from College Now programs at the three community
15 colleges. And so you know, across the board we're a
16 large program that work together and not really
17 essentially or specifically only pulling from our own
18 program. And then-- but from 2017 to 2019 there was
19 a slight decrease in the numbers, but it really went
20 down in 2021 as you can see, and that's because of
21 the pandemic. And the following chart shows which
22 College Now program are sending students to York, and
23 again, if you read across you can see that first one,
24 BMCC sent six students to York College to matriculate
25 there. So, we move back and forth. All of our

2 programs work together, and I wish to thank you for
3 the opportunity to describe the York College Program
4 to you.

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. You
6 seem very proud as the-- I'm sure we'll talk more
7 about-- you probably should be, but thank you for
8 your testimony.

9 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: Okay.

10 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And I'd like to
11 also recognize before we continue Council Member
12 Stevens. Please.

13 CHIEF GRIEVE: Jade Grieve. Good
14 afternoon Chair Joseph, Chair Dinowitz and members of
15 the New York City Education Committee and Committee
16 on Higher Education. My name Jade Grieve, New York
17 City Public Schools Chief of Student Pathways.
18 Today, I am joined by Melanie Mac, Raina Utonomia
19 [sp?], and Kristen Harris from my team. We are
20 pleased to be here today to discuss our deep sense of
21 urgency and commitment to strengthening students'
22 college and career pathways and our partnership with
23 CUNY to do so. Since this is the first time I'm
24 appearing before the committees, I wanted to briefly
25 share some background. I've spent close to 20 years

2 in education and workforce policy and programs
3 starting in Australia, working for both federal and
4 state administrations, and prior to this role,
5 spending seven years in the nonprofit and
6 philanthropic sectors working on the expansion of
7 Early College and career pathways across many US
8 cities and states. I'm one of the many who came here,
9 fell in love with the City, and never left. I'm also
10 one of the many who was first in my family to earn a
11 bachelor's degree and from an early age understood
12 education is the critical path to changing my own
13 economic success and financial security. I've been
14 very motivated from an early-- from very early in my
15 career to expand the same educational opportunities
16 and have dedicated my career to doing so. At the
17 outset, we wanted to thank the Speaker and both
18 Chairs for your commitment to the expansion of Early
19 College and early career exposure and experiences for
20 New York City youth. We welcome the chance to talk
21 with you today about our programs, strategies, and
22 partnership plans for the future. Chancellor Banks
23 has set a bold north star [sic] for New York City
24 public schools to ensure each student graduates on a
25 pathway to a rewarding career, long-term economic

2 security, and equipped to be a positive force for
3 change. in setting this goal, Chancellor Banks has
4 not shied away from the hard truth about our
5 graduate's college and career readiness and New York
6 City public schools is deeply committed to improving
7 on our rate of 58 percent of the high school cohort
8 graduating college-ready as they transition to a
9 post-secondary path. We would like to share the
10 actions that we've taken over the last year to
11 achieve better outcomes and to strengthen college and
12 career pathways. The newly established Office of
13 Student Pathways has identified four key strategies:
14 One, strengthening college and career advising; two,
15 expanding high-quality career-connected pathways and
16 aligned internships and apprenticeships; three,
17 enhancing 21st century skills like financial literacy
18 and digital literacy; and four, extending early
19 college credit and credential opportunities to
20 provide more young people with a head start on their
21 future after school. in the year since Chancellor
22 Banks took office, we have taken significant strides
23 towards these four priorities by launching and
24 expanding the future-ready NYC pilot with more than
25 30 high schools and CUNY's close partnership, the

2 career readiness and modern youth apprenticeship
3 pilot in over 50 schools, CUNY's college and career
4 advising fellows in 10 high schools, CUNY's Tutor
5 Corps supporting 1,500 students in over 20 high
6 schools with targeting tutoring on 9th grade Algebra,
7 and starting the planning phase of our new high
8 impact tutoring initiative which will fund
9 tutoring in kindergarten through grade two literacy,
10 and/or grade six through eight math depending on the
11 school. This month, providers involved in this
12 initiative began their work with 3,500 students
13 across 65 schools. Both CUNY Tutor Corps as well as
14 CUNY Reading Corps are serving as providers for these
15 tutoring services. Under Chancellor Banks and Matos
16 Rodriguez, there is now deeper alignment across
17 institutional values and missions and an even
18 stronger commitment to our shared student body with
19 41 percent of our students transitioning to CUNY
20 after graduation. This year, both Chancellors have
21 relaunched the New York City Public Schools CUNY
22 Steering Committee to drive towards shared goals
23 while collaborating on Future Ready NYC, a signature
24 initiative for improving college and career
25 readiness, and for providing students a strong hand-

2 off to their post-secondary pathway. As New York
3 City public schools prioritizes college and career
4 advising and awareness, CUNY's emphasizing their
5 middle and high school programming build college and
6 career aspirations. Our focus on Early College
7 credits and credentials and career-connected pathways
8 also dovetails with CUNY's efforts to build seamless
9 access and transition points while increasing the
10 readiness of incoming students. Again, thank you for
11 the opportunity to be here today. I will no hand
12 over to my colleague Melanie Mac who will share more
13 details on the core areas of New York City public
14 schools and CUNY collaboration in support of stronger
15 student readiness and post-secondary success.

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: Melanie Mac.

17 Good afternoon Chair Joseph, Chair Dinowitz, and
18 Members of the New York City Council Education
19 Committee and Committee on Higher Education. My name
20 is Melanie Mac and I'm the Senior Executive Director
21 of the Office of Student Pathways. I bring my heart
22 and my experience to the New York City high school
23 teacher and assistant principal and proud founder of
24 three high schools in the Bronx and Manhattan to this
25 role. The topics we're discussing today are deeply

2 important for me in the various roles I've played
3 serving New York City students. I'm going to speak
4 first on what Jade has mentioned about advising and
5 awareness as a priority for New York City public
6 schools. The following programs my colleague, Dr.
7 Soonachan, described highlight college and career
8 advising and awareness programs for middle and high
9 school students that reflect New York City public
10 schools and CUNY's shared missions, values, and
11 goals. CUNY Explorers, which we've heard through
12 campus visits and workshops hosted by current CUNY
13 students who serve as visit guides, reinforce the
14 message to our students that they can go to college,
15 that college is affordable, and that students can
16 take steps now to achieve their college goals. This
17 program supports students in grades six to 10 to
18 develop a college identity, promote a college-going
19 mindset and encourage meaningful career exploration
20 through Near Peer Mentoring and interactive
21 workshops. Next, college and career advising fellows
22 which launched this year. This initiative trains
23 recent college graduates to work as full-time
24 advisors, this year in 10 of our public schools, to
25 provide personalized college and career advising.

2 College and career Bridge for All is a program we're
3 offering all graduates of New York City public
4 schools to have a Near Peer Mentor to support
5 seamless transitions to post-secondary and avoid
6 summer melt, including specialized referrals for
7 students with disabilities, students in temporary
8 housing and foster care, multi-lingual learners and
9 immigrant students. These Near Peer Mentors or Bridge
10 coaches are current college students, most of whom
11 attend CUNY and are New York City public schools
12 graduates. Next, more on what Jade touched on in
13 terms of expanding college and career readiness and
14 acceleration opportunities. Central to today's topic
15 of the hearing is expanding access for high school
16 students to college courses which increases college
17 and career readiness while accelerating the path to a
18 post-secondary degree and credential attainment.
19 Dual enrollment opportunities give students awareness
20 and early exposure to college-level instruction,
21 providing enrichment for students wishing to take
22 more advanced coursework and giving students the
23 chance to begin earning college credit. That makes
24 college access and exposure more real for students.
25 Without having to use their own money or any

2 financial aid while they're in high school. Through
3 our partnership with CUNY we're also examining the
4 most viable ways to expand dual enrollment
5 opportunities for students across the City, and we
6 currently have two long-standing approaches you've
7 heard named, Early College Schools and programs and
8 College Now. Early College Schools, as you've heard,
9 enables students to earn both a high school diploma
10 and an associate's degree or up to two years of
11 transferrable college credit upon high school
12 graduation at no cost to the student. The goal is to
13 boost college enrollment rates with as little college
14 debt as possible. Early College Schools allow for
15 students who may otherwise not pursue higher
16 education or who are under-represented in high-growth
17 career fields, particularly science, technology,
18 engineering, mathematics, STEM to seamlessly
19 transition from high school to college by enrolling
20 in college classes as high school students. New York
21 City public schools and CUNY have a cost-sharing memo
22 of understanding in place to support 19 such Early
23 College Schools across the five boroughs. This
24 agreement is contingent on New York City public
25 schools and CUNY respectively being able to secure

2 funding each year from its own sources. Now, Early
3 College Schools are just one of our strategies to
4 make dual enrollment more accessible to or students.

5 Starting and maintaining Early College Schools and
6 programs is resource-intensive and limited to
7 students who are able to enroll in those schools.

8 Pardon me. In partnership with CUNY, we're also
9 deepening our collaboration on College Now which
10 offers a clear a more accessible runway for schools
11 to participate in dual enrollment opportunities. As

12 you've heard, College Now offers free college credit
13 courses, pre-college courses, college and career
14 awareness courses and activities, summer programs,
15 STEM Research Academy, and access to CUNY campus

16 facilities and events. College Now courses are
17 offered before or after a high school student's day
18 or on Saturday, on college campuses, and in our high
19 schools. The program serves over 20,000 students

20 from more than 470 high schools, amounting to over
21 30,000 individual enrollments, and over 90 percent of
22 students receive passing grades in their courses and
23 earn college credits. Next, to high-quality career-

24 connected pathways. The Future Ready NYC pilot that
25 both Doctor Soonachan and Jade have mentioned

2 launched this school year, and it brings together
3 system-wide best practices we've learned about career
4 aligned instruction, dual enrollment, and post-
5 secondary planning. Participating schools and
6 educators are receiving support and funding to
7 develop labor market aligned pathways to ensure that
8 students are future-ready. These pathways include
9 career-connected instruction-- so this is in their
10 high school courses-- that aligns to high-growth
11 livable wage jobs, 21st century skills including
12 financial and digital literacy, dual enrollment
13 opportunities from 10th to 12th grade through Early
14 College coursework, and industry-validated
15 credentials, work-based learning including paid
16 employment experience and individualized college and
17 career advising. Based on our experience with the
18 Early College and Career and Technical Education, or
19 CTE schools, we are matching schools, high schools,
20 with CUNY partner campuses where students will have
21 the opportunity to take College Now course aligned to
22 their school's career pathway focus. By creating
23 stronger alignment between career themes and college
24 courses, we're reimagining how to make dual
25 enrollment more accessible and meaningful for our

2 students. The idea of Early College may evolve from
3 serving a small number of students to a more
4 equitable option for high school students. Now, on
5 ensuring equity-- New York City public schools and
6 CUNY have established a range of important equity-
7 centered initiatives to strengthen advising and Early
8 College awareness opportunities, as well as credit-
9 bearing opportunities for students historically
10 marginalized and under-represented in college. Those
11 include our admissions and CUNY Fee Waivers program.
12 All financially eligible graduating students from New
13 York City public schools applying to CUNY receive an
14 application fee waiver. Over 50,000 waivers are
15 distributed annually across all high schools. Waiver
16 allocations are determined by enrollment of free and
17 reduced lunch eligible students with CUNY and New
18 York City public schools sharing the cost of the \$65
19 application fee. Next, the Immigrant Student
20 Ambassadors Program. This program supports the
21 social/emotional and Early College awareness of
22 immigrant students in select New York City public high
23 schools by providing trained CUNY college students to
24 serve as Near Peer Mentors and small group
25 facilitators. Ambassadors help immigrant students

2 and multi-lingual learners engage in their
3 educational journey and support them in their
4 preparation of their post-secondary goal. Next, the
5 summer Intensive English Language Program is a
6 College Now course offered in partnership with Hostos
7 offering an opportunity for multi-lingual learners to
8 improve their English, writing, and critical thinking
9 skills build community and earn three college
10 credits. As the Council is aware, and we
11 congratulate you all, last week Mayor Adams signed
12 Local Law 18 sponsored by Chair Dinowitz to provide
13 additional support for students with disabilities as
14 they prepare to enter institutions of higher
15 education, including CUNY. We look forward to
16 working with CUNY and the Mayor's Office for People
17 with Disabilities in implementing this law and
18 building on our existing partnerships. One such
19 partnership is between CUNY's Office of Student
20 Inclusion initiatives and the New York City Public
21 Schools Transition and College Access Centers which
22 are located in each of the five boroughs. We look
23 forward to a continuation of this work and deepening
24 our connections to CUNY to better serve New York City
25 students with disabilities through the implementation

2 of the new Local Law. Now, looking across New York
3 City public schools, CUNY middle school and high
4 school collaborations, we've laid a strong foundation
5 of programs. They enable many students to get an
6 invaluable start on their post-secondary path through
7 Early College exposure, mentorship, and credit-
8 bearing opportunities. We've learned together with
9 our CUNY colleagues about readiness, transition and
10 persistence in college. The road ahead with CUNY and
11 other higher education partners is to explore
12 affordable ways to scale Early College awareness and
13 credit opportunities and make them available to more
14 students while ensuring that their Early College work
15 connects to what they're doing in high school and
16 what they plan to do in post-secondary. We can do
17 some of this by drawing from tried and true practices
18 like expanding dual enrollment and Early College
19 credit while learning lessons from other communities
20 like embedding Early College in students' school day
21 so that they can equitably access these
22 opportunities. We look forward to continuing to
23 evaluate the quality of the college and career
24 pathways and programs we're developing
25 collaboratively with CUNY in pursuit of our central

2 mission of ensuring our students' long-term career
3 success and economic security. As we continue to
4 evaluate our current partnership in ways to grow and
5 adapt post-pandemic to meet students' needs, we want
6 to build on the strong alignment partnership and
7 collaborative leadership of our Chancellors. We
8 thank you for your strong support and partnership and
9 look forward to your questions.

10 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. So,
11 thank you. I'm going to ask the questions and, you
12 know, whoever's best able to answer them I think
13 should answer them. I'm not necessarily going to ask
14 any one of you, though. I want to thank you all for
15 your testimony. You've certainly provided a robust
16 amount of information about the programs. My first
17 question is, how are the individual schools recruited
18 and selected for participation, and what is the role
19 of each individual CUNY campus in that recruitment
20 versus CUNY Central?

21 DEAN SOONACHAN: Just to clarify, the
22 recruitment question is for which program?

23 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: well, let's say--
24 let's say-- let's start with College Now, because I'm
25 going to start with my College Now questions.

2 DEAN SOONACHAN: Sure, okay. So College
3 Now is in nearly every public high school across the
4 City. We're in 470 schools. So, and actually like
5 Bridge, we really aim to be a universal program, and
6 then on the ground, my campus partner can speak to
7 how they locally make those relationships with
8 partner high schools.

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yeah, we
10 have-- we're partnering with 39 high schools, but we
11 frequently get requests for either additional courses
12 or perhaps for a high school we may not be working
13 in. When that occurs, we work with CUNY who actually
14 vets the request and looks at a number of factors
15 such as whether our college is best-suited to provide
16 that course or courses, the borough that it's located
17 in, and also the cost involved.

18 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And so it's-- so it
19 sounds like it's sort of incumbent upon a local high
20 school to reach out to the college to say we'd love
21 have College Now programs at our school, is that--

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL:
23 [interposing] That's not the only way. Some of them
24 reach out directly to CUNY. Like when we--

2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [interposing] what
3 I mean is--

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: receive
5 the request, we work with CUNY to determine how to
6 best meet that request. We don't respond on our own
7 at the high school.

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: But the question is
9 really, so-- but it is the DOE high school that is
10 reaching out to CUNY or to York or to Kingsborough
11 to-- they are the ones that are reaching out saying
12 hey we'd love this program.

13 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: Yes, initially it was
14 set up kind of geographically and which that was many
15 years ago and we all receive a number of partners
16 that made sense from Central, and then as we went
17 along year after year as more schools wanted to join,
18 they might ask us, "We'd like to partner with York."
19 And we always sent it-- had it vetted through Central
20 because--

21 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [interposing]
22 Right.

23 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: you know, we don't
24 want to-- we're not in competition with one another,
25 and see the big picture, Central has a better big

2 picture of which schools are most appropriate,
3 though, geographically and for the kind of courses we
4 offer. Is that--

5 DEAN SOONACHAN: At this point, there are
6 very few high schools that don't have that
7 relationship. It's a longstanding nature. Our DOE
8 colleagues can probably elaborate about how schools
9 are supported, principals are supported in developing
10 new partnerships.

11 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: How many high
12 schools exist in New York City?

13 CHIEF GRIEVE: I think the number is 519,
14 but I can double check.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And you said 400
16 somewhat of them have college--

17 DEAN SOONACHAN: [interposing] We have
18 470 active partnerships in a given year, yeah.

19 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: And I think last year,
20 York got maybe one or two requests from a high
21 school. Most of the high schools in our area are
22 already connected.

23 CHIEF GRIEVE: Could I also just build on
24 that as it relates to the Future Ready NYC program
25 which is building on College Now and incorporating

2 its-- Doctor Soonachan mentioned in her testimony,
3 building out those two and three core sequence-- so
4 through high school. and with that approach with the
5 selection of schools we actually ran an open and
6 competitive process for high schools to request to
7 nominate to be part of that process, and very
8 intentionally part of high schools were selected to
9 come into that which by virtue of coming into that in
10 this program we are expanding opportunities for
11 schools and for students to get access to dual
12 enrollment opportunities. We were very focused on
13 equity of enrollment and kind of where we see
14 opportunities to grow as we look across the City.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Great. So, I
16 just-- I have a few sections and I'm going to turn it
17 over to Chair Joseph then some members, and I--
18 because there's a lot of robust programs, so I want
19 to make sure that we're, you know, that I'm at least
20 in my questions are, you know, trying to be
21 deliberate. So I just want to talk about College Now
22 for a little bit. So, I mean, first it sounds like
23 an incredible program. Obviously, and all the
24 numbers you've shared indicate it's positive outcomes
25 for the students. I just sort of want to get clarity

2 on some of the data, though. The data you shared
3 were that, students who enroll in College Now courses
4 have higher GPA's. That's one of the metrics used.
5 Higher GPA's acquire more credits when they get to
6 college. How does that compare to students with
7 similar incoming GPA's, right? So let's say in
8 eighth grade they have the same middle school scores.
9 They have the same Regent's scores before they get to
10 College Now, but are in a high school that doesn't
11 offer the opportunity for them to take College Now
12 courses.

13 DEAN SOONACHAN: I don't have that exact
14 analysis prepared. We can definitely follow up with
15 you on that.

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah, please do.
17 Thank you. I'm not sure if the leaning into the
18 microphone means you have a-- oh, there's-- okay.
19 No, that's okay. But I guess, so assuming that all
20 of these outcomes are great and they sound really
21 good, why aren't these programs expanded more, both
22 to more high schools and to more course offerings?
23 What are some of the roadblocks that exist to more
24 course offerings and to these schools, those hundred
25

2 or so schools, I guess, who don't have these programs
3 having the programs at their schools?

4 DEAN SOONACHAN: There is a resource
5 question, obviously. We do pay the faculty for the
6 courses, right? So as Melanie discussed, we share
7 the cost with DOE annually for all of the credits
8 earned and all of the courses offered. So offering
9 more courses does come with a higher price tag. And
10 we're really exploring strategies like dual credit
11 that has a lower resource and some other savings, and
12 also expand access when we offer courses during the
13 school day or integrated into the school day that
14 really expand the-- into students who for whom an
15 afterschool or weekend program may not be accessible.
16 Our recent work, too, expanding into co-requisite and
17 career connected courses is very much tied to our
18 desire to diversify in that student population and
19 expand access to college ready-- college ready
20 courses through College Now. My campus partners can
21 speak a little bit to the course development process,
22 your question of adding a new course. There's a few
23 steps involved in that on a campus.

24 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: We've
25 made an intentional effort to, as Les mentioned, to

2 ensure that the courses that we offer do count as
3 General Education credit seamlessly at any CUNY
4 institution, or build upon a sequence of courses. So
5 when are-- if a conversation with the high school
6 about what course would best fulfill that either a
7 sequence of offerings for that high school or another
8 Pathways or Gen Ed course that would round out their
9 offerings. We also need to work-- there's a few
10 things that really are important for making the
11 program as excellent as it is. One is being able to
12 hire adjunct faculty who are frequently high school
13 faculty that we hire to teach before or after school
14 that have all the credentials necessary to actually
15 be department members at the college. So, they are
16 treated just like adjunct faculty at the college.
17 And so making sure that we have the right adjunct
18 faculty to teach it, and then making sure that the
19 course is appropriate, meaning some courses have
20 multiple pre-requisites which really limit the number
21 of students who might be ready for it. So we try to
22 focus on more entry-level courses. Les, you may be
23 able to add a few more things.

24 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: To answer your
25 resource question, it's not only paying for the

2 classes adjunct salaries and so on. For example, at
3 York we have a full-time director, main coordinator,
4 and an office assistant, secretary. So three of us
5 have to deal with 2,400 enrollments a year, and it's--
6 - I don't think we can expand much anymore, because
7 we just don't have the person power to do that. So I
8 think it's a combination of both paying for the
9 classes and so on. And again, we are also very
10 rigorous about-- and our departments are very, very
11 rigorous about who we can hire to teach the class,
12 and like you're saying, most-- many of-- most of our
13 teachers are high school teachers, but they have to
14 have exactly the right qualifications that any
15 adjunct would have, a Master's Degree at least in
16 that area, and then come to be interviewed and
17 vetted, and then also trained and provided syllabi
18 and so on.

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Master's? I have
20 one of those from Hunter, Master's degree.

21 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: There's a job waiting
22 for you.

23 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Great. Think I'm
24 busy with this one. So, let's-- so, I do have a
25 question about the qualifications of the teachers and

2 the assessments, but just about funding and
3 resources. I understand money is always a question,
4 but to what degree is it-- I mean, isn't it true that
5 if you're spending money on the front end, you're not
6 spending it on the back end. So if you're investing
7 resources in high school students who are acquiring
8 credits, you are then not spending those dollars to
9 get those students credits when they actually
10 matriculated into college. It--

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: I would
12 say from a City perspective, it's an excellent
13 investment, right? Early on to strengthen the
14 students' college readiness, to ensure that they're
15 not taking non-credit or developmental courses, it
16 absolutely is. I don't think that funding model is
17 completely in place at this point. And like Les
18 said, you know, we have 8,000 students enrolled.
19 It's like renting a mini college within a college,
20 and it does take administrative support as well as
21 the payment for the faculty.

22 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Right. So, I mean,
23 just focusing-- I understand the human time
24 investment, but I just kind of want to focus on the
25 money for a second, so we could do one thing at a

2 time. and you keep-- it's brought up remedial
3 courses, for example, and my understanding is if
4 students are enrolled in College Now or CUNY Tutor
5 Corps, a number of the other programs, they're less
6 likely to need those co-requisite, those remedial
7 courses. We fund CUNY Start and Math Start. The
8 City Council invested money in that, but is it your
9 opinion that if we also invest in this college--
10 these college now programs, CUNY Tutor Corps, we
11 would-- you would need-- CUNY would need less money
12 or less investment in the remedial courses?

13 DEAN SOONACHAN: I don't know if we-- we
14 would have to do that sort of analysis and get back
15 to you. I would concur with Joanne. There's a
16 broader city and state level return on investment to
17 higher degree attainment, right, which is the long-
18 term outcome for all of these programs. So it would
19 certainly strengthen the city and state economy to
20 have overall higher degree attainment and that all of
21 these programs support that. So, it's a worthwhile
22 investment with certainly a long-term impact. The
23 short-term budget implications on what you're saying
24 in terms of how the programs inter-relate, I think we
25 have not conducted an analysis that looks at it from

2 that perspective. We'd have to get back to you on
3 that.

4 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you.

5 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: I'm not sure about the
6 impact from College Now into using students who
7 matriculate or their tuition and so on, but I think
8 the College Now investing in a class is very-- is
9 very prudent, because one class, 25 or 30 students.
10 The basic cost only is paying one teacher. So, for
11 4,000 dollars or some 5,000 dollars, you can offer a
12 three-credit class to a 30, 25 students, and that's a
13 very cost-effective way. I mean, you know, losing
14 tuition later on, I'm not sure, but the actual
15 delivery cost is very cost-effective, I think.

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: You know, I think
17 there's value in CUNY and DOE kind of crunching the
18 numbers. I mean, we're talking real financial
19 constraints here in New York City and real questions
20 about the efficiency of the dollars we spend on our
21 city agencies. And you know, as members of the City
22 Council who are involved in the budget, I think it
23 would be extremely valuable to know what we are
24 getting from our investment and, of course, with our
25 state partners and federal partners who are funding

2 these programs as well. What is, as you mentioned,
3 the return on investment both short-term and then
4 medium-term and long-term with degree attainment, but
5 even over the course of a few years, over the course
6 of a students' college career, how much money is
7 being-- and just from a fiscal perspective, because I
8 think we all agree that we should be investing
9 everything we can in our students to give them as
10 best of future as possible. But I know y'all deal
11 with the spreadsheets and dollars and cents, so we
12 have to live in that reality unfortunately. Going
13 back to the teachers. So, they are trained. I
14 understand they get professional development. what
15 sorts of assessments or oversight is there over the
16 courses to ensure that these College Now courses are
17 actually a college level and the students are
18 actually performing at a college-- at a college
19 level?

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: So that
21 question is--

22 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [interposing] I saw
23 you smile, by the way, which means you have an answer
24 for this.

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yeah,
3 it's near and dear to my heart. You know, as the
4 Chief Academic Officer, it's really important for me,
5 for our college, for our accreditation to ensure that
6 wherever we offer a credit-bearing course it is
7 assessed in a similar manner as all of the courses
8 that we offer. So we have to demonstrate to our
9 accrediting middle states regional accreditor that
10 we-- wherever we offer the course, it's of the same
11 high-quality. So, we-- as Les has said, we vet the
12 teachers very well, and I think you raised before the
13 qualifications of the teacher. That's a step in
14 ensuring that we are treating these courses the same
15 as we treat other college courses. We then have the
16 syllabi which is consistent for all sections of the
17 same courses, whoever teaches it, and the
18 professional development that is offered to the
19 faculty by the course coordinator, typically the
20 course coordinator will bring all the faculty
21 together who are teaching the course and go over the
22 elements of the course. We use the same textbook or
23 OER. We actually do peer observation. So our course
24 coordinator will sit in on a College Now class to
25 ensure that it is being taught according to the

2 syllabus. We collect assignments. If there's a
3 common final exam, the same one is administered at
4 the high school as well. And when we assess courses--
5 - so it-- we assess. We might decide some year we're
6 assessing all of our American History classes. So we
7 sample all across the college, plus all of the high
8 schools or other places we might be offering that
9 course, and they're treated in the same way and
10 evaluated the same way as college-based courses.

11 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So you assess on
12 more than just the high-stakes end-of-year test?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Oh, yes,
14 yes, yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Write that one
16 down, DOE. It's a good one.

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL:
18 Absolutely.

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah, and this is
20 college level.

21 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: It's
22 college level.

23 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Wow.
24
25

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: And again,
3 I mean that's so important. I'm sure it's important
4 to Les. He's been, you know, that--

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [interposing] Yeah.

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: That what
7 we're doing has great integrity with regard to that
8 college credit. We take it very seriously.

9 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: Yeah, just to
10 reiterate, every teacher gets vetted, orientation,
11 and it's viewed by the Department Chair and the
12 Department Discipline Coordinator. They receive--
13 everyone receives-- every teacher receives a
14 standard-- the standard syllabus used for that course
15 in the regular college classes, standardized exams,
16 or if exams are created at the high school, by the
17 high school instructor. It's vetted through the
18 Chairperson and the Discipline Coordinator. The
19 materials are exactly the-- everything is exactly the
20 same. Grades at the end are looked at. Again,
21 there's observations and the coordinator, the
22 Discipline Coordinator of Political Science or
23 Psychology, reaches out periodically to the
24 instructors and is available to the instructors to
25 answer questions and review what's being done.

2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And for the College
3 Now program, I think you said that there are--
4 there's a model where it is during the school day,
5 it's during the regular school day. And are those
6 teachers-- those teachers are also paid a stipend
7 from CUNY?

8 DEAN SOONACHAN: Yeah. We have that
9 info, Kingsborough and York. So, I-- yeah.

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: We don't
11 have as many that are actually taught during-- in the
12 middle of the day. That's a dual credit class. We
13 do that for our Early Childhood initiative. A dual
14 credit class means they get both high school credit
15 and the college credit. It takes more planning to
16 ensure that we're meeting the high school outcomes
17 and the college outcomes. That faculty member does
18 not get paid college stipend. They are paid as part
19 of their regular assignment.

20 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: They should be.

21 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yeah,
22 yeah.

23 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Should be more
24 money.

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Well,
3 it's during their regular day. This has been a sore
4 sub-- you know, they would like to get more money,
5 but it's during the course of their regular school
6 day.

7 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: If I might, I think
8 your college has the largest dual credit program
9 which we started a few years ago. We found that
10 basically there was no difference between the
11 instructor teaching it after the school day or during
12 the school day. The same qualifications, the same
13 support, the same orientation, the same is exactly
14 given to those high school teachers who are doing it
15 during the school day as doing during-- doing it
16 after the school day. The only-- and as you know, as
17 your probably know, the DOE school day, the school
18 year is longer-- a semester is longer than a college
19 credit. A college credit is basically 45 hours, and
20 I think DOE is 54 hours. So, but the-- and they go
21 into-- like for the fall goes into January at the DOE
22 but for the CUNY it ends mid-December. So those
23 instructors have to complete the college curriculum
24 by mid-December, have their grades-- do their finals,
25 have the grades in, and then there's an option with

2 the Principal of a teacher to continue teaching non-
3 credit. But I think from our experience-- we've done
4 it for a few years with less. We've had like 10, 20,
5 30, 40 classes over the last few years. It's been the
6 same. The same if they started after school, the
7 same issues. Nothing different from our perspective.

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: thank you. I have
9 on more question for CUNY, then I'll turn it over
10 Chair Joseph. But first I want to acknowledge that
11 we've been joined by Council Member Krishnan. So,
12 one of the things that's important to this committee
13 is really seeing CUNY's role, not just in the two,
14 four, six years, but really as part of the students'
15 journey from youth to college to career. So, again,
16 going back to data. So you have data on the students
17 who enroll in College Now courses, for example, how
18 they-- you know, their demographic data, disability
19 status, and how they fare in college compared to
20 their peers. Do you have data on how the students
21 who enrolled in College Now all the way when they
22 were teenagers, fared in the job market or what their
23 employment prospects were? Do you have that sort of
24 through-line data?

2 DEAN SOONACHAN: I don't the central
3 level. Sounds like you might have locally.

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: I do
5 think there's been a study done at CUNY, but I don't
6 have it.

7 DEAN SOONACHAN: Right, and I did
8 reference the recent New York State study that looks
9 like at long-term employment and wage outcome for
10 students who took advanced coursework throughout the
11 state, which presumably includes College Now, but we
12 can follow up with you on anything that we might have
13 that's College Now specific.

14 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah, I mean, as
15 we're talking about impact both on the human and on,
16 you know, a budget's long-term impact, if College Now
17 programs result in students getting higher wages or
18 being more likely to be employed or even staying in
19 New York City, staying and improving their
20 communities, I think that's a really valuable piece
21 of information to have when prioritizing our budgets.
22 Thank you. We'll come back, but I want to turn it
23 over to Chair Joseph now for her questions. Thank
24 you.

2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much.

3 I had a few questions. Earlier you spoke about
4 there's a special need for these teachers that you
5 recruit as adjuncts. What are those criteria?

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: In CUNY,
7 to be hired as a faculty member at the lecture level,
8 you need a master's in the discipline. At the
9 Assistant Professor level it is a doctoral degree or
10 a terminal [sic] degree in the discipline. We apply
11 the same criteria. As you probably-- as you know,
12 many high school teachers might have a master's in
13 education and not the masters in the discipline, and
14 so if that's the case we have to vet that very
15 carefully at the department level. They may not have
16 the disciplinary background that's needed to teach
17 that particular college-level course.

18 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: Yes, I agree at York,
19 and you know, we're very dependent upon the
20 department, and they're very rigorous about keeping
21 the same standards to hire adjuncts to teach during a
22 regular college day, you know, regular college
23 classes and the College Now classes, and we follow
24 and we've had a number of teachers turn away because
25 they didn't have the right degree.

2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Do you plan on--
3 this is for the DOE. Do you plan on expanding this to
4 high school teachers in order to recruit and maintain
5 them to teach these courses? I know, right.

6 CHIEF GRIEVE: So, thank you for the
7 question.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Of course.

9 CHIEF GRIEVE: This, I think, hopefully
10 as you're hearing from the testimony and the
11 questions and answers so far, certainly this is a
12 really big priority for us that we can expand these
13 kinds of opportunities. That's certainly a big
14 driver of the way in which the Future Ready NYC
15 program has been created, and I think what's critical
16 about how we're thinking about the formulation of
17 that is also looking at it as Doctor Soonachan has
18 shared the way in which we can help to expand those
19 inside the school day, and I do think that does lead
20 to questions and planning around how we ensure that
21 we have the right capacity to do that.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: I think one part
23 of the testimony in terms of our New York City public
24 schools and CUNY partnership we didn't get into as
25 much today was just around the teacher in-service

2 opportunities that we collaboratively develop, and so
3 one of those was the Computing Integrated Teacher
4 Education initiative that launched this year. So
5 more of our teachers, K-12 being able to access a
6 multi-course sequence that's specializing in computer
7 science, computational thinking, and digital
8 literacy. We've also expanded offerings to train our
9 teachers in work-based learning which is a component
10 of Future Ready, which isn't always part of the
11 basics of a Teacher Ed program, and so we're looking
12 to the ways that we're better tooling and supporting
13 our teachers, both for their classroom
14 responsibilities, and in high schools and middle and
15 elementary schools, but also ways that that supports
16 a teacher's career pathway and specialization as
17 well.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yeah, that's why I'm
19 asking. We said we have about 519 high schools,
20 right? How many of them are part of the CUNY family
21 partnership, about how many?

22 DEAN SOONACHAN: Every single graduating
23 senior works with Bridge to receive advisement and
24 support through graduation. So we consider that a
25

2 universal program. Then we have, as you said, about
3 470 high schools that are partnered with College Now.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Is there a goal to
5 expand it to cover all high schools, if we look at
6 the data, the output, how many students, the
7 progress, and even as my colleague said, how many
8 students lead this program having an associate
9 degree, having college credits? That opens
10 opportunity. This is the pathway. So is there a
11 plan to expand this? And again, I know it's going to
12 go back to resource, it's going to go back to money.
13 How is that-- how are those numbers looking, and how
14 can we expand that to almost every high school?
15 That's a game-changer. That's pathway. And I've
16 told the Chancellor that so many times, that this is
17 a pathway. A lot of our students end up in CUNY. How
18 about we create the pathway to retain them, one. Two,
19 they attend CUNY, and three, they're-- the degrees
20 that they can get and the economics just also
21 translates into workforce that we've been lacking
22 here in New York City.

23 CHIEF GRIEVE: Thank you, Chair. So, I
24 would [inaudible] the question to say that yes, I
25 think what we also recognize, just the huge value of

2 these kinds of opportunities for young people. As
3 you've heard in my testimony, I shared the kind of
4 four strategic priorities that we're really driving
5 towards, and one of those being around expanding
6 Early Childhood credit and credentials. We are doing
7 this actually as part of Future Ready NYC already.
8 So that program launched this school year. We have
9 34 high schools that are participating in that. They
10 are partnered with eight CUNY campuses and the goal
11 within the program, as Melanie described the four,
12 are related to really-- to creating and expanding
13 opportunities including for Early Childhood credit,
14 including for aligned [sic] industry credentials that
15 are connected to areas of high demand, high wage
16 fields and that students are getting the support to
17 kind of move through those sequences, and that we're
18 really re-imagining their experience 9-12 around that
19 which creates that real upswing as they move into
20 their post-secondary pathway because they had a sense
21 to try out those programs to get Early Childhood
22 credit, and so we're starting to do that already. I
23 think there's many ways we can think about that there
24 are currently different ways in which we can think
25 about how we continue, like how we support these

2 programs. At College Now as you've heard the numbers
3 of students that are supported with that. We are
4 expanding through Future Ready program. And as the
5 Chancellor announced last year plans by fall 2024 for
6 three additional academic accelerated high schools.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: thank you for that.

8 How many high school students come through our
9 system? How many graduate and how many plan to go to
10 college on their own without this program?

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: One moment.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: No worries.

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: So, I have it,
14 Chair Joseph, in percentages. If that's a good
15 starting point, we can for sure follow-up on making
16 sure that we're speaking accurately. But our most
17 recent graduation rate is 87.3 percent. The post-
18 secondary enrollment always lags because of using a
19 multitude of data to understand all the places across
20 the nation and across the world that our students may
21 matriculate or transition after they graduate, and so
22 we're relying on a previous cohort's post-secondary
23 enrollment. And we did see that with I believe it's
24 the class of 2021, 59 percent enrolled in a post-
25 secondary program within six months of graduating.

2 And so those are-- those are our most recent. I will
3 say that your question is about student's aspirations
4 versus the realities there, and that's a place that
5 our office and New York City public schools are
6 focusing on, particularly this advising and early
7 awareness. There's a number of advising resources
8 and strategies that we're putting in place that my
9 colleague Kristen Harris can speak to in terms of how
10 we ensure we're advising and informing students and
11 supporting them in their planning that much earlier.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

13 KRISTEN HARRIS: To elaborate a little
14 bit more, so specific to advising and awareness, we
15 have a lot of ways in which we want to ensure that
16 every student in the school day has a highly-trained
17 person, at least one, right, to be able to inform
18 their passion and their purpose after they graduate.
19 Currently, we have a number of ways that we support
20 that both with the physical counselors, but also we
21 know we have a robust community of CBO partners that
22 support schools and our principals are engaged in
23 that work and engaged in those partnerships. We're
24 able to support schools, support those 519 schools
25 with a SAM, a School Allocation Memo, that totals

2 about 16 million dollars so that they can identify
3 the needs of their school, their school community,
4 their students so that they can support a robust
5 advisement infrastructure that doesn't rely on one
6 person, but creates the infrastructure, creates the
7 ecosystem so that there are multiple things happening
8 in that school to support that student's experiences,
9 advisement, and that connective, you know, through-
10 line to what they're doing in the classroom, what
11 they're doing in these experiential learning
12 programs, and to make those informed choices.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, when they
14 graduate, how many of those students matriculate into
15 college versus those that had no experience at all
16 with the CUNY system? So we got work to do, guys.

17 DEAN SOONACHAN: it's probably a little
18 bit hard to say that at this point, because 100
19 percent of the graduate seniors have had support
20 through Bridge program, so it's a little bit hard
21 just statistically to say that there are any students
22 that haven't had some support from the CUNY/DOE
23 partnership.

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: Can I build
25 there, Chair Joseph? So, just to add on two of the

2 places where I believe that the pandemic pushed us to
3 innovate in new ways for our students is the College
4 and Career Bridge program prior to the pandemic was a
5 relatively small, small by New York City standards,
6 program supporting, I believe, 100 or so schools, and
7 then during pandemic we shifted it to citywide as
8 Doctor Soonachan named, because we recognized that
9 every single student needs somebody who is a text or
10 an email or a call away as they're making those
11 critical choices. And so that was a-- was a paradigm
12 shift for us in terms of level of support. To build
13 on what Kristen was sharing as well, we know have
14 through the pandemic launched Next Steps Text and
15 Advising so if there's any time that school is
16 closed, a student, any high school student has access
17 to one of our counselors. So this is after school
18 hours 4:00 to 8:00. This is Saturdays and Sundays on
19 the weekend. We've invested more resources and I
20 think we've innovated in new ways throughout the
21 pandemic to ensure that there are more responsive
22 ways that students can plan. We also administer a
23 senior survey each year where we are asking our
24 students, our seniors, to give us feedback both on

2 the plans they have and the supports that they've had
3 to work towards that plan for post-secondary.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you for that.

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I'd like to turn
6 it over to Council Member Narcisse for questions.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Good afternoon
8 and thank you for being here, and I love CUNY, and it
9 shows with all the Council Member we appreciate the
10 work you're doing. Thank you so much. And if I have
11 a quote for you, I will say you are the heartbeat of
12 the higher education in New York City. You're holding
13 us, you know, together, especially people that are in
14 lower income that want to have the dream of going
15 college. I'm one of the CUNY graduate as well, so
16 thank you. You just mentioned, I think that was you
17 that mentioned, that the professors at the College
18 Now that teaching our young folks from high school to
19 college for the two-year are well-credentialed. You
20 have all the credential. They have doctorate and the
21 lowest is master's, right? Am I correct? So, why do
22 we have difficulty with four-year college in our city
23 saying they're not taking those courses like when
24 people are trying to transfer? They're saying it's

2 level 200 to-- 100 to 200, while they expect to get
3 400. So, can you tell me a little bit about that?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Your
5 question may be more related to the ability for
6 students to take their CUNY credits and transfer them
7 into--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: [interposing] To
9 the college.

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: any CUNY
11 institution. So, we-- when the general education,
12 the pathways courses that we predominantly offer in
13 College Now, those are universally accepted across
14 CUNY as part of CUNY's work in 2013. So those are
15 guaranteed wherever the student took and passed that
16 class, they are transferable to any CUNY college.
17 It's-- the courses that students may struggle to
18 transfer are sometimes specific courses to a program,
19 and it's not just College Now to--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: [interposing]
21 All across CUNY.

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: It's all
23 across CUNY. And this is a priority for our current
24 Chancellor and Executive Vice Chancellor, and our
25 board just passed a resolution on seamless transfer

2 to-- with some pretty tight timelines to ensure that
3 those courses that a student takes a community
4 college or as part of the College Now program will
5 transfer seamlessly to one of the senior
6 institutions. So it's-- it's a huge issue for CUNY
7 that they are addressing. Issue meaning it's an
8 important area for them to address.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: It's very
10 important because it's just not-- not-- I just used
11 College Now like for the young folks, but I'm talking
12 about regular folks that spend their money in CUNY
13 trying to transfer, for example, any four years in
14 our city and they were saying they're not taking them
15 because they're not to the level that they can take
16 in the four years. They have to retake the courses
17 and end up to be the same curriculum, the same book,
18 and like you said, all the professors are professors
19 are credentially [sic] to teach even in the four
20 years college. So to me, that is slap on people's
21 faces after they go to CUNY and they cannot be
22 accepted. For example, if they're going to peer
23 program from taking all those course in the CUNY.

24 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: You're
25 absolutely correct. They-- so what has been put into

2 place now is a board of trustees' resolution which
3 creates a policy infrastructure that's necessary to
4 ensure that we can see this through. The work-- some
5 of this work has been done by bringing disciplinary
6 groups of faculty together and currently what is
7 happening with this policy background and
8 infrastructure, CUNY is looking at six of its largest
9 degrees, business, accounting, education,
10 engineering, and one other one. To-- these faculty
11 will develop exactly what you've talked about is how
12 the credits taken at a community college or one of
13 the other CUNY colleges will transfer with credit so
14 these students will move from community college to be
15 a junior upon standing.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: But you did not
17 mention health which is health is the biggest things
18 that we're dealing with right now when it comes to
19 nursing, P.E. [sic] or mental/social.

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Right.
21 Yet,-- some of these programs such as nursing, they--
22 because they're a national state accreditation
23 requirements, those students do not have as much
24 difficulty, but a general program like AS and Health
25 Sciences can be different from college to college.

2 That will probably be in the second round of
3 programs. So CUNY's starting with six and then
4 moving on.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: I'm looking
6 forward to make sure that we have the seamless
7 process because we have a lot of folks that can
8 easier, especially when they're raising kids, to go
9 to a two years and trying to make it to the four
10 years. Now, how many high schools do we have in the
11 City of New York?

12 CHIEF GRIEVE: 519.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: 519, so we're
14 at 470. How many?

15 CHIEF GRIEVE: Sorry, 519 and then
16 there's also 78 charters, charter school.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Okay, so I
18 heard Chair Rita mention that-- Chair Joseph, I
19 should say last name-- 470 school we have now. So I
20 mean, we have to speed up the process, because idle
21 hands, idle minds, that's the reason that we're in
22 the problem that we are here today in the City of New
23 York. So we have to speed up the process to make
24 sure we reach the under-served communities that

2 [inaudible] to make sure we do better in educating
3 our young folks.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: I think I-- my
5 time is up? So, I'm going to leave it as that. So I
6 thank you and I appreciate your work, because-- I
7 have to say thank you, too, because the presentation
8 was well-organized. That's me, a perfectionist at
9 delivering them. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: thank you, Council
11 Member Narcisse. Council Member Lee?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Hi, everyone. Thank
13 you so much for being here today. Sorry, I'm here.
14 I know it's like the voice from above. So, I just
15 wanted to ask a little bit more, because I chair the
16 Mental Health, Disabilities and Addiction Committee,
17 and so I was really interested more on the
18 disabilities pieces, because what we've heard and the
19 feedback that we've heard through so many parents is
20 that, you know, often times there is a drop when they
21 go from high school to college or a two-year program,
22 and so I just wanted to know if you could speak a
23 little bit more detail. I know you had mentioned-- a
24 couple of you had mentioned the disabilities
25 community. But how many students are in each of

2 these programs, particularly for College Now and
3 Early College? And what's-- what does that hand-off,
4 I guess the baton handing off look like, if you could
5 go a little bit more into that?

6 CHIEF GRIEVE: Thank you for your
7 question. I can speak to-- just give you a sense of
8 the number of students with IEPs that are in those
9 two programs that you mentioned. So, in College Now
10 and I think actually Doctor Soonachan mentioned this
11 in her testimony, 8.6 percent of students with IEPs
12 in that program, and then in the Early Childhood
13 initiatives for the high schools, that's 18.3
14 percent.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, and that's
16 compared to the general body students, right? But do
17 you have also a comparison of overall-- in the
18 disabilities community in the high schools, like
19 however many students there are, you know, how many
20 of those folks are you capturing, I guess is my
21 question? Because I know that the numbers here are
22 for the ones that are in your program, but then do
23 you have a sense of how many folks perhaps are not in
24 that catchment area that we could be reaching out to
25 and what is the strategy around that?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: Thank you so
3 much, Council Member. We can follow up with some of
4 our colleagues to get the specifics--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: [interposing] Okay.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: on more broadly
7 across students with IEPs when we're looking middle
8 and high schools. I think for the specific CUNY
9 programs, right, we're thinking about the citywide,
10 you know, 20.6 percent of our students are students
11 with IEPs. And so you can see that, you know, within
12 the Early Childhood high schools we have a fairly
13 proportionate number of students with disabilities.
14 In College Now that percentage is lower and is part
15 of a specific area of continued collaboration for New
16 York City public schools and CUNY. I guess there's--
17 it's important to name just some of the other
18 strategies and we'll follow up on the broader kind of
19 data question. We've been building on I think
20 similar to the response to Chair Joseph around some
21 of the innovation in recent years. We've shared that
22 there's a Bridge program that every one of our
23 students graduating with an IEP, right, has access to
24 their Bridge coach, and their Bridge coaches are
25 trained to ensure that they understand how students

2 can advocate to receive the services that they're
3 entitled to once they transition to either CUNY or
4 another institute of higher education. Our Bridge
5 coaches are also trained to refer, to refer students
6 to the appropriate services on the campus or the
7 program that they might be participating in. we also
8 work very closely with the transition college access
9 centers which is working very closely with CUNY-- I
10 will forget the name of the specific office. It's
11 the CUNY's Office of Disability and Accessibility
12 Services to be precise, so that there are joint
13 presentations in multiple languages for students and
14 families about the process of transition to CUNY.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay.

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: And so those are
17 some of the places that we've been building and in
18 addition to the services that students are entitled
19 to as part of age 12 up, as you may know about our
20 schools, and certainly areas to expand on for follow-
21 up.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: And you kind of
23 touched upon my other follow-up question which was
24 around-- not to add a more complicated layer, but
25 then there's a lot of language barriers, of course,

2 and there's huge stigma at least in certain
3 communities around disabilities as well as on top of
4 that. You add the complication of language and how
5 to reach out to the parents. And so just wondering
6 how that has been and what language-- how many major
7 languages do you have capacity for on the staff side
8 as well?

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: So, our-- I
10 would say that all of our transition resources that
11 are typically translated into at last our 10 most-
12 spoken languages.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay.

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: And there's also
15 for live events where there might be information
16 sessions interpretation is leveraged. I'll say one
17 of the successes of the Bridge program is that a
18 student can be matched with a coach who speaks their
19 home language, right? And I would steal an example
20 from my CUNY colleague Laura Meyers [sp?] here about
21 a student who got support from their Bridge coach
22 primarily over, you know, text and Zoom in Bengali to
23 ensure that they were-- you know, they were able to
24 complete what can be complex processes to transition
25 into higher education.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Awesome. And then,
3 sorry, just one last quick question, because I have
4 QCC, Queensborough Community College in my district,
5 and I love-- well, I love CUNY in general, but
6 especially that particular school because it happens
7 to be in my district, but it is so diverse. And I--
8 when I was actually at the CUNY Legislative
9 Breakfast, one of the statistics that Doctor Mangino
10 [sp?] who's the president there had brought up which
11 I thought was so crazy was that, you know, if a
12 student has any kind of debt, maybe credit card or
13 whatever debt of 500 dollars, often times for-- like
14 if their family has a debt of 500 dollars, then the
15 percentage of students that do not go to school
16 because of that 500 dollar debt is very high, and I
17 wish I had remembered the number. I wrote it down.
18 It's in my office. But just out of curiosity because
19 we know that a lot of the students who are coming are
20 perhaps newer immigrants, lower income, they're not
21 as well-established, so how on the high school end of
22 things do you track that? And I know that there
23 definitely programs that are being offered in terms
24 of scholarships for a lot of these programs, but how
25 many of the folks either go through the financial--

2 I'm assuming that the financial piece is there as
3 part of the evaluation, but then, you know, how does
4 that follow them, I guess, through their transition
5 if there's further assistance needed?

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: Sure, I can-- I
7 can start. Thank you for the question, and I can
8 pass to Kristen. I will say that in recent years one
9 of the important metrics that we ask school leaders
10 and district leaders to track when they look at the
11 health and the performance of their school or their
12 district is FAFSA and TAF [sic] completion. And so
13 we have been growing more sophisticated in how we
14 think about readiness and preparation for our upper
15 classmen, in particular, in high school. I'd like to
16 pass it to Kristen to speak more on the types of
17 financial advising that's available.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: And I guess just to
19 add to that, like if they do drop out for that reason
20 and if you're able to capture that data, how do you
21 get them back in? Like is there a follow-through?
22 Right? Meaning like, not just losing them and having
23 them drop out, but you know, doing it an active
24 reach-out to make sure that we get them back.

2 KRISTEN HARRIS: So, I can pass the how
3 we get back to my CUNY colleagues, but I just want to
4 say as far as financial aid awareness, financial aid
5 access, we update and print a FAFSA guide every year,
6 and it is delivered to schools in both English and in
7 the students' home language so they're able to be
8 able to take that resource and that document and
9 school advisors/school counselors are able to have
10 those conversations with students and families,
11 specifically in their home language. So it is
12 accessible. We've also in the past had webinars and
13 presentations in all of our DOE languages, so that is
14 both culturally responsive approach to delivering
15 that sensitive and anxiety-producing content, as well
16 as being able to help them as they're making those
17 plans. And then once they get to college and if they
18 run into those situations, then CUNY supports them
19 with that.

20 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. Thank
21 you, Council Member Lee. I want to note we've been
22 joined by Council Members Restler and Gutiérrez.
23 Next for questions is Council Member Stevens.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Well, first off,
25 I didn't realize that was Kristen sitting over there.

2 So, hey girl. We worked together when we were in the
3 trenches a very long time ago. So happy to see you
4 here at this table. [inaudible] I know a lot of
5 people. That's how she does a good job. She's
6 great. She's amazing. So we actually did work
7 before. I said it on the record, too. so, I just
8 want to just start off, I know Council Member
9 Narcisse has started off talking about like the
10 transferring of credits, and I wanted to just make
11 sure I cleared something up, because I know you said
12 you're working on some things to ensure that when
13 students are transferring that the credits are being
14 transferred and when they're graduating from two
15 years. But I want to make sure we're distinguishing
16 that, because I'm finding more and more of that--
17 yes, the credits are transferring, but students are
18 still required to take courses over. So yes, they'll
19 have a whole bunch of credits and they'll have all of
20 those, but I know for a fact students, like for
21 example, they'll transfer from Hostos to let's say
22 Baruch and they took calculus and now they're taking
23 calculus again because it's not respected or
24 whatever. So I just want to make sure that is
25 cleared up because you were like, oh, no, we're

2 working on making sure credits are transferred, but
3 that's not what the issue is. So I just want to make
4 sure that that's cleared.

5 DEAN SOONACHAN: Yeah, I think just to
6 add to that clarification, as Joanne was saying, the
7 specific challenge is transfer within majors and
8 programs, right? So we have several years ago
9 instituted pathways so there's a common core general
10 curriculum that transfers universally. The next step
11 of work that our board has just supported us working
12 on is really looking, digging into at the program and
13 major level how courses transfer. That's really
14 where students get hung up because--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: [interposing] So
16 what is the work that's being done to actually have
17 that happen? Because what you're saying is great and
18 fine, but how are we making sure if they're in a two-
19 year college, and they're like, "Hey, this is the
20 pathway I want to go," or "this is happening," that
21 those things are being aligned because there's a
22 clear misstep and people are wasting their financial
23 aid and money and time to now have to, you know, take
24 courses over and do these things. And so I just want

2 to-- I want to clear it up because it kind of sounded
3 like semantics before.

4 DEAN SOONACHAN: I can assure you it's a
5 very real initiative, and the Chief Academic Officers
6 are really leading that, so I'll hand it off to
7 Joanne.

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: So,
9 again, the policy infrastructure was very important
10 for us to be able to develop uniformed policy across
11 CUNY to support transfer, and you're absolutely
12 correct, we are speaking about transferring credits
13 into a program, and the policy actually reads that
14 the students should transfer in as a junior on
15 standing. So just like a native student there. I'm
16 the Provost at Kingsborough Community College, so
17 this is very dear to me as well. I want our students
18 to be able to transfer all of their credits towards a
19 program as you have said at the senior institution.
20 Historically, we've developed articulation agreements
21 which are done between colleges so that students know
22 how their credits will transfer, but CUNY is now
23 looking at this globally, and it is a very important
24 initiative to the Chancellor and the Executive Vice
25 Chancellor. So in addition to the policy that

2 created these six working groups of faculty who will
3 develop these pathways, and they also have put into
4 place a Transfer Policy Committee, again, to ensure
5 that what is put into place is supported by policy
6 that can't be changed by individual colleges.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: So, how long is
8 this going to take? Because currently we have
9 students who are suffering from this.

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Right.
11 The policy-- the Board of Trustees has put in a
12 December 2024 deadline.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: so we'll
14 definitely make sure we follow up to make sure this
15 is happening. And just, I guess my last question is
16 just more around like-- I know we've been talking
17 about students with disabilities and even some of the
18 programs we're talking about that specifically, you
19 know, students who are doing a lot better in schools,
20 but I would love to talk more about like that meaty--
21 the meaty students, like they're in the middle,
22 because I think sometimes we forget about those
23 students, and thinking about the students who get
24 stuck in remedial classes and loses encouragement,
25 and those are lot of the folks who drop out and

2 things like that. Can we talk about like what that
3 partnership between, like, DOE and CUNY is to ensure
4 that students aren't getting stuck in like this
5 remedial roller coaster, because especially students
6 that I worked with for a number of years, that has
7 been one of the biggest challenges where they can't
8 get out of remedial math or these things. So can we
9 talk a little bit about that, please?

10 DEAN SOONACHAN: Sure. As of this
11 semester, CUNY has fully phased out non-credit
12 remedial courses. So all students enter immediately
13 into credit-bearing courses. Students whose high
14 school tests or GPA indicate that they have
15 additional skills need will get a co-requisite
16 course, which means they'll get some additional non-
17 credit but mandatory supports alongside those first-
18 year courses in Math or English and Writing. And we
19 have started to introduce those co-requisite course
20 in our College Now programs across the City so that
21 we can start to work with high school students even
22 before they get onto our campuses to be fully ready
23 for credit-bearing courses.

24 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you, Council
25 Member Stevens. I have a question here from Council

2 Member Brewer who had to leave-- I'm not going to do
3 impression of her, I'm just going to read it. It
4 would be a very good one, but I won't do it. So I'm
5 going to reward it, and you'll understand why I'm
6 saying that. "As one of the founders of Hunter
7 Science in Manhattan in the Martin Luther King, Jr.
8 High School complex, I'm a huge supporter of CUNY/DOE
9 high schools. What would your opinion of CUNY taking
10 over most of the DOE high schools so that they were
11 model CUNY is describing? What would the cost be?
12 Apology to the DOE, Gale."

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Told you. A
14 takeover--

15 DEAN SOONACHAN: We have not developed a
16 cost model for that. I think we really like--

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: [interposing] Just
18 for the record.

19 DEAN SOONACHAN: The work that we talked
20 about here in the diversity and types of programs and
21 models really speak to the ways in which we think
22 there should be a diversity of on-ramps and access
23 points for all the different types of students across
24 the City. So initiatives like Future Ready are
25 important to us because they're really thinking about

2 those career-connected opportunities which are
3 different than some of the traditional College Now
4 academic-- the accelerated pathways, those co-
5 requisite pathways that I just talked about. So we
6 really see the future of this work as continuing to
7 expand all those different on-ramps to college
8 experiences to students, not a single model for the
9 entire city.

10 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So, not taking
11 over DOE schools. What is your opinion of that, DOE?

12 CHIEF GRIEVE: Thank you for the
13 question. [inaudible] I can also confirm--

14 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [interposing] Thank
15 Gale. I mean thank Council Member Brewer.

16 CHIEF GRIEVE: [interposing] we don't have
17 a cost model for that. I would reiterate what Doctor
18 Soonachan has shared that actually what you've heard
19 from both of our testimonies today and the nature of
20 the programs that we've shared is actually that
21 really deep partnership and that we are ensuring that
22 we can provide a range of different opportunities for
23 students depending on their interests and needs. So
24 right from the kind of Early College high school
25 models that we had and we've talked about in 19

2 schools in partnership with CUNY. And we-- and
3 College Now, we've mentioned kind of across 470
4 schools, and that have this new effort to really
5 continue to grow the number of high schools, the
6 number of students that are getting access to those
7 Early College credit programs, but that we're doing
8 that in a really comprehensive way that wraps around
9 the student advising and supports that it's aligned
10 to where we know there's opportunity. So we think
11 there's a lot of potential in our continued
12 partnership, and we-- that program Future Ready is in
13 close partnership with CUNY and we've already made
14 some public statements about our intent to grow that
15 next year to 90 high schools.

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I will pass the
17 message along. Thank you.

18 CHIEF GRIEVE: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Council Member's
20 watching. In 2017 CUNY evaluated the impact of Early
21 College on students who were enrolled in schools
22 between 2006 and 2012. Did CUNY conduct a follow-up
23 to the 2017 study? If not, are there any plans to do
24 so?

2 DEAN SOONACHAN: We do have an active
3 research agenda around dual enrollment broadly,
4 College Now, but also of any of the questions that
5 we're asking in these new initiatives. What's the
6 right combination, of course, is how different
7 student populations are differently impacted by
8 participation.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So we'll be able to
10 get a copy of that?

11 DEAN SOONACHAN: Absolutely.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you so much.
13 Early College high schools have different structural
14 models, including following grade configurations from
15 grades six to 12 schools, grades nine to 12 and
16 grades nine to 13 schools, and nine to 14 schools.
17 Can you explain the reason for rationale for the
18 different grade configurations? How many schools are
19 in each of these configurations?

20 DEAN SOONACHAN: Sure. The different
21 models really have to do with sort of the different
22 origins of those programs. So there were a number of
23 Early Colleges that launched before 2000 in
24 association with other initiatives, the National
25 Middle College Consortium, for example, as well as

2 individual CUNY campus partnerships. The Early
3 College initiative central office was only formed in
4 2000 with support from Gates Foundation, actually, to
5 create a more centralized approach and build out some
6 of those six through 12 models. And then in 2011, we
7 partnered again centrally with the Department of
8 Education on the P-Tech model which was, again, a
9 specific new model that was being launched both
10 locally and nationally. And when we launched P-Tech,
11 that additional two years was really about the
12 integration of those career experiences, industry-
13 recognized credentials, and that longer on-ramp for
14 students knowing they were entering in 9th grade with
15 a diverse range of academic need. So that's really
16 behind by the origins of the different-- why we have
17 all of the different models in place.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, what are the
19 advantages of each? And how many, and how did they
20 defer-- and what's the differences in the models,
21 basically?

22 DEAN SOONACHAN: The 10 P-Tech have
23 industry partners, largely culminate and apply to
24 associates degrees and also offer those industry-
25 recognized credentials. The six through 12, again,

2 offer that longer on-ramp to college readiness
3 starting in sixth grade. So students are starting
4 often taking their college courses sooner in their
5 high school career and getting up to that full
6 associates by senior year.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Great. Thank you.
8 So, how are students traditionally the under-
9 represented in the higher education made aware of
10 Early College high schools? Are these students
11 specifically recruited?

12 DEAN SOONACHAN: Yeah, the recruitment
13 for the high schools happens both through the
14 citywide fairs and then locally, Joanne or Les can
15 speak to. They each have partner high schools on
16 their campuses.

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: They're
18 really recruited as part of the DOE process. Do you
19 want to-- and I believe-- you can speak to the
20 difference between the sixth grade recruitment and
21 the ninth.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yeah, how does--
23 what does that look like?

24 UNIDENTIFIED: So, in speaking about the
25 high school recruitment, again, these are all public

2 high schools so we do have them as part of our high
3 school fairs. In the past few years, we did have to
4 move to virtual fairs. All of these are also made
5 available with interpretation for families so that
6 multilingual learners can participate. Every Early
7 College high school runs their own open houses so
8 that they are reaching into their community, reaching
9 out to the middle schools that they work closely with
10 so that they are able to provide information about
11 their programs for students. We also have on our
12 website myschool.nyc high school directory where we
13 do have a tag on it where parents and families can
14 search by Early College so that they can identify
15 schools that are closest to them or based on their
16 interest there.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I noticed that in
18 your data I was looking to see that there were more
19 women enrolling in these courses versus the males.
20 What's behind that, and how do we plan on addressing
21 that? I have four boys. I gotta know the trick.

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: So, I'll
23 start, and then perhaps Andrea can speak about, you
24 know, strategies to encourage more men in these
25 College Now courses. ECI is a little bit more even

2 because those students are full-time in high school
3 as well, but College Now it is a bit troubling that
4 we've seen this trend of higher percentage-- lower
5 percentage of men, I'd say, and we also see it
6 college, and now we're beginning to see it in the
7 employment sector.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Correct.

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: The news
10 came out this last week. So we've tried just locally
11 to bring men on campus in these disciplines or
12 fields, and also bring men from our men's resource
13 center to try to connect with men. with additional
14 funding we could probably-- you know, something I've
15 always wanted to do is really have a continuum
16 between the Black Male Initiative and the high school
17 and the college that would support these men
18 throughout, but we're doing it kind of on our own
19 right now, but not with program funding.

20 DEAN SOONACHAN: Yeah, I can just add
21 sort of university-wide and in term of how I think
22 about the approach to all of the K-16 programs, the
23 one-- the emphasis that we have on our work on Near
24 Peer Mentorship across multiple programs is really a

2 critical lever for us. We know our DOE students need
3 to see students that look like them--

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: [interposing]

5 Correct.

6 DEAN SOONACHAN: who have been
7 successful, and that's why we employ hundreds of CUNY
8 students annually, and Tutor Corps and Bridge and our
9 new advising fellows program. That's one really kind
10 of critical strategy for us. The other is, again,
11 the partnership work that we've launched to diversify
12 what the college prep experience is for students
13 through programs like Future Ready, really thinking
14 about we reimagine and present to students, diverse
15 groups of students, a more compelling vision of what
16 preparing for college looks like and feels like, one
17 that is career-connected, one that has hands-on
18 learning components, and even maybe what they imagine
19 college work to be and really see that it's possible
20 for them and that they can be successful there.

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I know you mentioned
22 the mentoring program. Have you ever thought about
23 maybe having black men mentor these young people to
24 show them the path and that could be part of your
25 recruitment? I'm going to ask a question about a

2 unique population that's near and dear to my heart.

3 I didn't see a lot of plans in place for students in

4 foster care. I didn't see that. Let me know if I

5 need to come in and sit with you and work on that

6 component. I didn't see that support. And we know a

7 lot of our black students go through-- especially

8 black boys go through the foster care system, and

9 they usually wind up getting in touch with the

10 criminal justice system. How do we prevent that?

11 How do we get them into these colleges and making

12 sure that once they arrive into your doors, how do we

13 support them?

14 DEAN SOONACHAN: I might defer to DOE

15 colleagues on this, because we don't actually--

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: [interposing] I know

17 the DOE now has a foster care office, so they should

18 your extension to you.

19 DEAN SOONACHAN: Often when we're

20 recruiting for programs, we're not seeing that full

21 suite of data from our partner high schools. So

22 that's where that partnership piece comes into play

23 with really working with the staff on the ground to

24 identify and recruit students.

25

2 KRISTEN HARRIS: So, wanted to give a
3 little bit of context, and yes, that is an area that
4 now we have an established office.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Oh, yes.

6 KRISTEN HARRIS: So, lots of work to do,
7 and so this is definitely an area that continue to
8 grow and think about, create--

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: [interposing] No,
10 we're going to continue building that office--

11 KRISTEN HARRIS: more robust programming.
12 I appreciate that. For sure. One thing we can say
13 about both students in temporary housing and students
14 in foster care is we have small scale pilots where
15 we're trying to learn about what are the direct and
16 very specific resources and supports we need to
17 create within the existing ecosystem that we have.
18 So we have our Student Success Centers, and we're
19 looking specifically at our students in temporary
20 housing and how we can add and expand what current
21 exists into Student Success Center campus models to
22 add those resources so we can look at what needs to
23 happen and have those conversations. We do have
24 school-based liaison for our students in temporary
25 housing in all of our schools, and so there is

2 somebody who is there to support that work within the
3 newly-formed foster care team, and they're providing
4 wrap-around supports for students enrolled in foster
5 care and creating that robust support infrastructure
6 that we can continue to share and connect with our
7 colleagues that are doing that work.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How are you
9 supporting them? You have a middle school component
10 that is part of the CUNY system. How are you
11 supporting that, at least the middle school students
12 for now that are in foster care? I know about the
13 office. I advocated for that.

14 KRISTEN HARRIS: Yeah.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: She'll tell you. I
16 advocated for that office to be there because it's
17 near and dear to me. So when-- students in foster
18 care have a unique-- if you look at their stats,
19 their least to graduate. They all have IEPs. They
20 get suspended the most, and they move around the
21 most, and they have the highest absenteeism rate.
22 How do we retain and how do we support them in these
23 programs, and how do we make sure we're supporting
24 them?

2 : Sure. We also, within our Bridge
3 program, we make sure that they are connected. Our
4 Bridge coaches have training and they're connected to
5 the offices that support students in temporary
6 housing and our foster care students. There is a
7 Foster Care initiative within CUNY that we make sure
8 that students are aware of and our Bridge Coaches
9 have training about the different offices within CUNY
10 and the resources therein. And again, we can follow
11 up with our colleagues who are supporting that office
12 directly to share. Our Student Success Centers are
13 in six middle schools. So we do have those resources
14 in six of our--

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: [interposing] How
16 many students you have in temporary housing that are
17 enrolled in Early College and foster care?

18 KRISTEN HARRIS: I would have to get back
19 to you with that stat. I don't have it right here.
20 We do have it.

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Mark Treyger didn't
22 tell you?

23 KRISTEN HARRIS: One second.

24 CHIEF GRIEVE: Just one moment, we--
25

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: Chair Joseph,
3 what we have today is the foster care student's
4 enrollment for our Early College high schools, we
5 don't have it broadly across all of our programs, but
6 that is something that we could follow up on.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, how many--

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: [interposing]

9 But we could--

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: do you have for
11 foster care?

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: Steal her book.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: This is for College
14 Now or Early College?

15 CHIEF GRIEVE: This is for the Early
16 College.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Both of them?

18 CHIEF GRIEVE: For the Early College
19 schools, for the 19 Early College high schools. So,
20 there's-- this is for last year. There are 40.
21 Sorry, for-- yeah. Forty in foster care, 881
22 students are in temporary housing.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How many?

24 CHIEF GRIEVE: 800-- sorry, 881, and then
25 239 in shelter.

2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And College Now, do
3 you have that as well?

4 CHIEF GRIEVE: We don't have that data
5 with us today.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You'll get back
7 with?

8 CHIEF GRIEVE: We could-- we can get back
9 to you.

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, definitely.
11 Alright, I'm passing it along to my colleagues.

12 CHIEF GRIEVE: We-- just one other thing
13 to add to that, we'd also welcome the chance to talk
14 with you more about those programs--

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: [interposing]
16 Absolutely.

17 CHIEF GRIEVE: and the initiatives, so
18 we'd love to do that. I think you also asked earlier
19 about the number of Early College schools in those
20 different structures. So I wanted to just quickly
21 answer that, because I think we gave you some of that
22 and not the whole picture. So there are six of the
23 six to 12, two of the nine to 12, two of nine to 13,
24 and then nine of the nine to 14 which is the P-Tech.

25 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Following up on
3 what Chair Joseph-- does CUNY have that information,
4 the number of students in foster care? Microphone,
5 please.

6 DEAN SOONACHAN: We do not. We can work
7 with our colleagues at DOE to get-- you asked for
8 College Now specifically students in temporary
9 housing and foster care.

10 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I think that the
11 data they just provided at the request of Chair
12 Joseph was the Early College.

13 DEAN SOONACHAN: Right.

14 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And they shared 40
15 students in foster care, 881 temporary housing, 239.
16 Before today, was that information that CUNY had?

17 DEAN SOONACHAN: The individual high
18 schools would have that in the Early Colleges because
19 as Kristen said, they're working really closely with
20 those students to support them, and we probably have
21 that data on like an annual basis from DOE.

22 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Probably?

23 DEAN SOONACHAN: Yeah, I can follow up
24 with you and--

2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [interposing] Yeah,
3 no, please.

4 DEAN SOONACHAN: [inaudible] and
5 indicator that we're looking at regularly.

6 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Right, and those
7 area the sorts of indicators I think we're interested
8 in. but to me, meaning that if DOE has data and
9 populations of students beyond what-- you know,
10 beyond what you provided in your testimony which we
11 appreciate-- excuse me-- this data as well I think is
12 vital to have, especially to know the impact of these
13 programs on some of our most vulnerable students, and
14 I think that it's data that should be included in
15 your updated report that we're looking forward to
16 having, right? I want to do a follow-up on what
17 Council Member Lee was asking and probably to do with
18 the Bridge program. I'm honestly a little confused.
19 I'm hopefully-- hopeful that some people can provide
20 clarity. So, the-- it used to be that the Bridge
21 program, it's a coach trained to help students and
22 it's for students who graduate in June who are
23 already accepted to CUNY-- not already accepted to
24 CUNY. It's students who graduated in June.

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: It's for every
3 student graduating our schools each year.

4 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So the number you
5 gave was 50,000+ students graduating, and you said
6 199, right?

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: 199 so it's about--
9 so it's about a ratio of one to 250, one person for
10 every 250 students, is that right? Did I get that
11 right?

12 DEAN SOONACHAN: Yeah, I'll pass it off
13 to my colleague Laura Meyers who runs the program.
14 She can definitely describe how it works.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yes, please, thank
16 you. Hello.

17 LAURA MEYERS: Good afternoon. Yeah, so
18 there's a ratio of about one to 250, and so those
19 coaches are doing weekly outreach to students via
20 email and text and offering times to meet and sending
21 resources and connecting them to listers [sic] or
22 resources on campus as well, so that like thinking
23 about some of the students who have some vulnerable
24 experiences that they can be able to do some outreach
25 and make sure that they are learning about what the

2 supports are on a CUNY campus or across the City like
3 the P-Tech programs as well.

4 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So, I just want to
5 highlight one concern of mine that I-- this program
6 sounds great and I'm sure it's net positive, but
7 here's a concern of mine, as was outlined in Ms.
8 Mac's-- Ms. Or Doctor? Okay, sorry. I realize there
9 are a lot of Doctors on the panel, I wanted to make
10 sure I-- it was probably-- so Ms. Mac, I'm also a not
11 doctor, so we're in the same boat. Ms. Mac's
12 testimony-- we just passed legislation that, you
13 know, requires the DOE to share certain information
14 because in part there was this gap where we know-- or
15 CUNY in your own testimony was saying it's about 20
16 percent of our students probably have a disability,
17 but we're only capturing 10 percent. So what that
18 means to me is even with this Bridge program, that
19 the idea that the coaches are trained to help
20 students advocate for themselves for their IEP, there
21 are still gaps in the services that the students are
22 actually acquiring, not just IEP's, but all sorts of
23 counseling services and you know, all sorts of other
24 things that would really support in those students'
25 success. So I'm wondering how it's possible for one

2 student's advocate-- I don't know their title-- one
3 Bridge mentor, one Bridge mentor to work with 250
4 students. And then when you say they do all sorts of
5 outreach, what are your numbers of students that are
6 actually reaching back out? Because I could send a
7 mass email to, you know, a hun-- you know, 250
8 students also. It doesn't mean anything if they're
9 not reaching back out and there's no human
10 engagement.

11 LAURA MEYERS: I think you bring up a
12 great point, which is how we're able to have the case
13 load of that size knowing that not everyone is going
14 to write back. So you might not have 250 who are
15 responding on that day. We see that about 35 percent
16 of students are having a meaningful engagement with
17 their coach every summer, and that's-- a meaningful
18 engagement means that they are using that coach to
19 help them through the enrollment process in some way.
20 We also see a higher-than-that number of students who
21 are reading the messages even if they're not
22 responding. We did a survey at the end of this year
23 where we asked the students, the 50,000 students who
24 were served, how they got benefits from the program,
25 and multiple wrote back to the survey and said, "I

2 never responded to you, but I used your resources,"
3 or "because of that information I followed up with my
4 campus, and I got to enrollment even if I never wrote
5 back." And so I think there's a broad level of
6 impact that we can see for all 50,000+ students and
7 then a deeper level of impact for those 35 percent
8 who engage with their coach to work through a problem
9 or a challenge, or a question that they have about
10 their enrollment process.

11 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And I think this
12 goes back to sort of some of the data that Chair
13 Joseph was asking about students in foster care,
14 temporary housing, and in shelter, because to me, if
15 I'm looking at a population I'd actually want to do a
16 little more-- a little more effort to students who
17 have systemic barriers that are getting in their way,
18 and if those-- if those data don't exist for your
19 bridge mentors, it makes it hard to provide those
20 services. And we know from these hearings that CUNY
21 has things available. They have disability services
22 available. They have whatever the single-stop
23 successor programs are for food support, for housing
24 support, healthcare support, but my guess is the 35
25 percent of the students who have meaningful

2 conversations are probably the students who were more
3 predisposed to finding those services anyway.

4 LAURA MEYERS: Our data actually shows
5 that our greatest impact is on community college-
6 bound students, Black and Latinx students and
7 Spanish-speaking students, and also students from
8 low-income backgrounds. And so I think we see that a
9 lot of those students that are reaching out and
10 engaging are coming to July, and they're like did I
11 miss my chance, right? I've graduated, and maybe I
12 wasn't as engaged in my college process as my
13 counselor wanted me to be, and how I graduated on
14 time in a way that I didn't expect or now I'm
15 thinking about this in a different way because I've
16 graduated and I'm reaching out for support now. And
17 so we actually see the greatest impact on some of the
18 most vulnerable students.

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: That's
20 encouraging. And when you say most vulnerable
21 students, I would like to include-- it sounds like
22 you don't have the data now, but I think, again, we
23 would like to see the impact on the other
24 populations, not just language barriers, not just
25 ethnic data, but living conditions and students with

2 IEPs, which I'm guess will be more systemically
3 shared within the next 165 days, I think, is the time
4 since the bill was signed into law. And what other
5 steps are being taken to increase that 35 percent?

6 LAURA MEYERS: Yeah, I think we've seen a
7 huge increase in our connections based on really
8 effectively using the data that we have to be able to
9 send messages that help a student feel seen, right?
10 So if I am not planning to go to college, if I get a
11 message that says, "Hey, did you do FASFA?" I'm going
12 to disregard this, this text. This isn't going to
13 feel supportive to me. So we really work to make
14 sure that we're sending messages in a timely fashion
15 to the right types of students so that they're
16 getting the message that they feel seen by and are
17 more likely to respond to.

18 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And does that
19 include personal phone calls?

20 LAURA MEYERS: We do phone calls for
21 students who haven't engaged in the program about
22 mid-way through the summer--

23 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [interposing] Who
24 have not engaged in the program?

2 LAURA MEYERS: Those who have not yet
3 responded we do mid-way through the program instead
4 of phone calls to try and reach out to them more
5 actively.

6 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay, I remain
7 concerned, and you'll hear-- I want to get to Council
8 Member Restler, but I do think it's an important
9 program. I think that 35 percent have meaningful
10 engagement. I think that number can be increased
11 especially for those other groups of vulnerable
12 students that we've spoken about today. Council
13 Member Restler?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so
15 much, Chairs Dinowitz and Joseph. It-- I just will
16 say it really does make a difference to have teachers
17 in the council and like your lived experience and the
18 thoughtfulness of the questions you ask is just
19 different. So I just appreciate it. I appreciate
20 the opportunity to listen and learn from you guys
21 when we're in hearings together and just as
22 colleagues. And I want to thank the CUNY team for
23 joining. This is a little bit off-base, and I wish
24 that Rita wasn't so busy and that we could have done
25 this together, but I had the privilege of visiting

2 one of my school in my district this morning that's
3 doing an AP African-American Studies course, and it
4 was just beyond inspiring. I had-- I-- of all the-- I
5 mean, I've done 50 something classroom visits in my
6 first year in office, and this was by far the most
7 compelling, and I want to see us expand the
8 availability of this course at schools across our
9 district. But the reason I raise it is not-- because
10 I know who's sitting on the panel, is because one of
11 the things they mentioned to me was that the College
12 Board has never created a Latino or Latin-American
13 Studies AP class, and I imagine that this is
14 something that, you know, if a bunch of Council
15 Members make some noise about and we did some
16 advocacy with our students, maybe we can make some
17 progress there. But I also just wonder if there is
18 an opportunity for CUNY to partner with the
19 Department of Education on curricular development to
20 think about how we on an interim basis, because the
21 College Board is a big national bureaucracy, think
22 about stepping in to do more faster. And the
23 importance of highlighting experiential education
24 that relates to the lived experience people in the
25 classroom that their families, their communities --

2 it's so important. And so I just wanted to make that
3 as a comment. I don't know if I'm fully talking to
4 the right people or if I'm just talking about
5 something that happened to me today and I care about.
6 So, I apologize if it's just that, but it is. But
7 it's real. So, moving on to the purpose of today,
8 the-- I want to commend CUNY for getting rid of
9 remedial education which was a really horrible system
10 for blocking our students from graduating from
11 associates degrees, and it was in my opinion the
12 primary contributor to the very low graduation rates
13 that we saw in our community colleges. And forgive
14 me, I'm just not yet familiar with co-requisite kind
15 of model that you all are now employing. So, just to
16 make sure that I understand correctly. A student
17 comes into City Tech in my district or any of our
18 community colleges, enrolls in a co-requisite course
19 that is not-- does not generate credits, correct?

20 DEAN SOONACHAN: Co-requisite courses
21 grant credit.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: They do grant
23 credit toward graduation.

24 DEAN SOONACHAN: Yes.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And they are net-
3 - they are required courses that you have to take,
4 but you are in-- you are allowed to take other
5 courses while also taking these co-requisite courses?

6 DEAN SOONACHAN: Right, they are all
7 pathways, core general education courses. They--
8 alongside that credit-bearing course, you would have
9 non-credit bearing, but required hours of additional
10 support.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Could you
12 clarify on how many hours of non-credit bearing
13 additional support somebody may be required to take?

14 DEAN SOONACHAN: It's going to vary a
15 little bit by course. Joanne probably can give some
16 examples.

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: So,
18 there's a couple of models of doing this. One would
19 be to have-- I'll use English Composition as an
20 example. You might have-- we typically have a four-
21 hour English Composition course that grants credit,
22 and the class enrollment is 25. Seventeen of those
23 students are eligible right away for college level,
24 eight are not, but they're all in the same classroom
25 setting, same time. Those eight have two hours just

2 before or after the credit-bearing class to assist
3 with assignments and questions and support that those
4 students would have. The outcomes are quite good.
5 the--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing] So,
7 just, I'm just trying to zero in on the requirement.
8 So, you're in a credit-bearing English Composition
9 course. There's two hours of additional work--

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL:
11 [interposing] Right.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: if you are
13 required to take this co-requisite that you have to
14 complete on a weekly basis in addition to the co-
15 requisite course to potentially be on a trajectory
16 toward being eligible for ultimately graduation.

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yeah, the
18 co-requisite means that it-- it refers to those two
19 hours that are required in addition to the four
20 hours. So the students actually registers for six
21 hours of classroom instruction per week, and when
22 they're successful at the end, they still earn
23 college credit.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And you're not
25 permitted to take additional courses.

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes, you
3 can.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: You are.

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Up to--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing]
7 That are credit-bearing.

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yeah.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And is the-- are
10 the math requirements-- because my recollection was
11 on the remedial education front. Math was more
12 widely required for incoming CUNY students, remedial
13 math education, excuse me. Is that the same and is
14 it a same two-hour-ish requirement a week?

15 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes. The
16 policy, CUNY's policy, required that a student must
17 be eligible to take a college credit math course upon
18 entry that is suitable for their program of study.
19 So most colleges have a Liberal Arts math course that
20 we have, for example, it's six hours. Again, these
21 are-- in this particular model all those students
22 needed the additional support, so they're all in the
23 same class, but they earn college credit. Typically,
24 colleges will have a Liberal Arts Math, a Statistics

2 course, and then a College Algebra-type course that
3 are built in this way.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay.

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Two hours
6 additional.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [inaudible]

8 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: I just wanted to add,
9 I'm not sure if it was clear. CUNY has a proficiency
10 index. You're aware of that, that the high school--
11 based on the high school record.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Yes.

13 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: If the proficiency
14 index is not--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing]
16 Yes.

17 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: up to a certain level,
18 those are the students who--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing]
20 Yes, that's what we're talking about.

21 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: Okay.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you. And
23 my recollection was that it was like three-quarters
24 to four-fifths of students coming in to our
25 associate's-- to our community colleges had been

2 required to do remedial education. What are-- what
3 percentage of students are being required now to go
4 through this co-requisite model?

5 DEAN SOONACHAN: In the fall of 22, 24
6 percent of CUNY freshman who were New York City
7 public schools graduates were assigned to at least
8 one course, one subject of co-requisite. So that's
9 math or English or both.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: One-quarter had
11 at least one requirement for a co-requisite. And are
12 we yet seeing shifts in the matriculation data at our
13 community colleges? My understanding is there's been
14 a transition period on this, or is it too soon for
15 you to share?

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: The
17 colleges have differed in how quickly they've
18 converted all their courses. So we're seeing
19 promising results in some colleges already with
20 regard to students completing so, our measure would
21 be completion of that gateway math, that first
22 college-level math in their first year. And so--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing] Is
24 that the right measure, or is it graduation rates?

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Well,
3 that would--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing] I
5 mean, ultimate--

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL:
7 [interposing] It would be a leading measure. So, if
8 they're successful in completing--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing]
10 Fair enough.

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: a
12 college-level math or English, we know that's a
13 determining factor in graduation.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Well, this all
15 sounds promising. I appreciate-- I really do
16 appreciate CUNY moving away from the remedial
17 education model which was a huge-- CUNY is the place
18 for social and economic mobility in New York City,
19 and we had thousands of people entering CUNY every
20 year and not getting the degrees that they need
21 because of the remedial education model. So I'm
22 hopeful that you've figured something out that's
23 better, and we'll be very eager to review the data in
24 the months to come. Thank you. And thanks to Chair
25 Joseph and Dinowitz.

2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you, Council
3 Member Restler. I want to provide a formal invitation
4 for you to join my committee. In fact, we had a
5 hearing on remedial education about a year ago. You
6 would have loved it.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I would have
8 loved it. If you can get me off of one of the 7,000
9 committees I currently serve on, I would love to join
10 yours.

11 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: 7,001.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: But not
13 education.

14 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I--

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: [interposing] Don't
16 try to recruit my members. Another data line, how
17 many students participate in College Now that are
18 English language learners?

19 DEAN SOONACHAN: 10.3 percent.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: 10.3 percent, thank
21 you. If students are struggling academically, what
22 type of support do you provide for that student?

23 DEAN SOONACHAN: Sure. Les or Joanne can
24 talk a little bit more about what that looks like
25 course by course. College Now programs provide

2 tutoring, office hours, lots of wrap-around supports
3 for different types of courses, and those usually
4 happen really in partnership with the high schools as
5 they're building out their programs each semester.

6 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: All the instructors
7 are paid-- hired for an extra 15 hours, at least an
8 hour per week extra time that they provide. The
9 instructors provide support for students who are in
10 need, and we also have some support work-- support
11 workshops offered synchronously or asynchronously
12 where the students can get help online and in a way
13 that's connected to the syllabus, you know, online
14 support materials that connect to the syllabi. But
15 since most of the classes are at the high school, we
16 don't have the tutors going out. Yeah, it's a little
17 complicated.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Students coming back
19 from remote learning, are they struggling more
20 academically than before if you were to compare?

21 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: I'd say
22 in general all our students are struggling more after
23 remote learning, and some of it is they're just not
24 engaging in the same way they were prior to the
25 pandemic, probably because of the isolation. So we--

2 you know, for all our students we're working on so
3 many strategies to try to engage them in the
4 classroom, reach out to them when it seems like
5 they're disconnecting. It's a big learning curve for
6 some of the faculty.

7 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: At York, we-- during
8 the pandemic, we didn't see a drop in outcomes and
9 success rates and so on.

10 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Right.

11 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: Maybe in enrollments a
12 bit. And now transitioning back, some students like
13 the remote, want to stay. Some would rather come
14 back to the classroom, the college-- at the high
15 schools, our class at the high school, they all are
16 live, because as soon as the high schools went back
17 live. The campus was slowly transitioning. There's
18 a lot of vaccination issues and other things that
19 we're trying to work with.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Are you providing
21 mental support for students that are coming back?

22 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: We--

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: [interposing] It's a
24 lot. I was teaching during remote--

2 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: [interposing] It's a
3 lot of-- I mean, it's just--

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: [interposing]
5 pandemic, too.

6 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: Yeah, yeah, I mean,
7 again, the-- since our program, all the students who
8 are coming back were recruited by the liaisons, the
9 college advisors, the AP's and so on. They get a lot
10 of background support from them. And again, most are
11 not-- very few are coming to the campus at this
12 point. Once they come back to the campus, yes. And
13 three or four or five years ago we had much more
14 campus support for the schools. But--

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I just want to
17 wrap up with questions on CUNY Tutor Corps. I see
18 big smiles which means you must love the program very
19 much.

20 DEAN SOONACHAN: Yeah.

21 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So, I like it very
22 much, too. I like the idea of it. I love the idea of
23 CUNY students getting paid to help our city and to
24 help our students. One thing I want to point out
25 before I ask questions is that I would recommend you

2 take a look at the website which lists the CUNY Tutor
3 Corps schools. It is not accurate, and I mean,
4 that's something that we've spoken about with
5 different representatives from CUNY throughout the
6 CUNY website that there's a lack of data or
7 misinformation on the CUNY website. So I would just
8 do a little audit of that, because I spoke to some of
9 the high schools listed there and they don't have any
10 CUNY tutors and they haven't for a while. So it's--
11 if it is old data--

12 DEAN SOONACHAN: [interposing] Right, the
13 school--

14 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: it is very old
15 data.

16 DEAN SOONACHAN: The schools change
17 annually. So, yeah--

18 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [interposing] Then
19 the website should too.

20 DEAN SOONACHAN: Whatever's on the
21 website doesn't reflect the current year, or
22 potentially doesn't even reflect last year. I don't
23 know when it was last updated.

24 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Just want to point
25 it out to you. So this year-- and your testimony

2 stated there's 100 CUNY Tutor Corps students, or
3 tutors, this year and there were 366 last year?

4 DEAN SOONACHAN: We have a hundred tutors
5 launching this year in a special initiative in
6 partnership with New York City public schools.
7 That's not our total number of tutors for this
8 academic year. Just highlighting-- in the spirit of
9 our partnership, that we're really working to launch
10 some new high-impact initiatives in some high-needs
11 schools and particularly in Algebra.

12 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So, are those 100
13 additional students in addition-- tutors in addition
14 to the 366 that you had, assuming the number is
15 consistent from 2021-2 and 2-3?

16 DEAN SOONACHAN: I would have to follow
17 up with you to confirm our total projected staffing
18 for this academic year, fall and spring yes. The 100
19 is part of our total for the year, though. So our
20 total is probably still in that 350 range including
21 that 100.

22 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. Yeah, no, I
23 just-- would be good to have those numbers. 2021-22
24 is 366 tutors, and you said you will be placing 100
25 tutors in 21 high schools, but would love to have

2 this year's data. And you used the phrase high-
3 impact tutoring, and so my question is what is the
4 impact?

5 DEAN SOONACHAN: In that initiative we're
6 really working closely with superintendents and
7 principals to use data to identify the students who
8 most need small group and high dosage tutoring and
9 work towards specific improvement targets in Algebra.
10 I can pass it off to my colleagues to elaborate a
11 little more on sort of the goals across all the
12 schools.

13 CHIEF GRIEVE: Firstly, just to say
14 these-- so these will be launching soon, and so we'd
15 be happy to come back and talk more about how that
16 initiative is going with the specific focus in ninth
17 grade Algebra, just given how important that is to
18 student readiness and opening up strong college
19 pathways for young people. So we'll certainly be
20 wanting to see that the small group tutoring model,
21 providing that instruction and additional support
22 inside schools is obviously lifting student
23 proficiency and helping them move through that year,
24 and with [inaudible] the staff would be happy to

2 share more data once that initiative has been
3 completed.

4 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: so, for example,
5 do you track data such as when a student takes CUNY--
6 has a CUNY tutor in ninth grade, they are X percent
7 less likely to take a co-requisite, or if it was a
8 few years ago, CUNY Math Start or a remedial course
9 are they a certain percentage more likely to pass
10 their Regent's Exam, a certain percent more likely
11 not to repeat a course? And I would add just
12 circling back to what we said about resources,
13 therefore not likely-- if they don't need to repeat a
14 class, they don't need to take resources during high
15 school, and that frees up the high school teachers to
16 teach more electives, and it frees up that high
17 school student to take more electives and move on
18 with their schooling?. So is that-- any of that
19 data tracked?

20 DEAN SOONACHAN: We haven't done
21 longitudinal studies of Tutor Corps like that, that
22 would look at students who are tutored then impact
23 upon college matriculation. We'd look within the
24 year that students are tutored, individuals course
25 pass rates or Regent's pass rates depending on the

2 course they were tutored in. So we're happy to
3 follow up with some of that data over the last few
4 years, but we do not have that long-- we have not
5 done longitudinal students on tutor Corps.

6 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Right. I mean, I
7 think it's an important question to know. Students
8 who had a strong start, you mentioned specifically
9 math, they had a strong start in ninth grade Algebra,
10 it would be good to know if those students then did
11 not need to take those co-requisite remedial courses
12 four years later. I mean, I think that's a really
13 important piece of information, and of course,
14 breaking it down by disability status, ELL status,
15 foster care, temporary housing, shelter to see the
16 impact of high-impact, high-dosage tutoring. And
17 would-- and again, getting back to the numbers, would
18 like to know how many of them, how many tutors there
19 are, and then why this-- again, why this program
20 seems successful according to you? What efforts are
21 being made to expand it, and to expand it to more
22 high schools? Is that incumbent upon the high
23 school? Is that an effort of DOE central? Is it
24 CUNY central? Is it an individual CUNY campus
25 reaching out to high schools and sharing their

2 tutors? I mean, talk a little more about how you're
3 looking to expand it to more CUNY students and to
4 more high schools.

5 DEAN SOONACHAN: I think the partnership
6 that we have with the 100 tutors this spring is part
7 of that work and sort of aligning priorities with DOE
8 and seeing how tutors can be core to their academic
9 accelerations strategies. I think my DOE colleagues
10 can elaborate on a broader set of tutoring strategies
11 that are in place. They are also working with CUNY
12 Reading Corps, looking at supporting reading and
13 literacy across grade levels and a whole range of
14 other tutoring partners. Tutoring is most-effective
15 in those very small groups and in high-dosage, and so
16 given the size of the system we do think it's
17 effective for our DOE colleagues to have a range of
18 partner at the table for tutoring, that Tutor Corps
19 is an important part of that strategy, but not the
20 entirety of it.

21 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: right, well let's
22 just focus on Tutor Corps for now so we can, you
23 know, do one thing at a time, and I would just ask
24 real quickly what is a proper ratio for high-impact--

2 or more individualized attention? What does CUNY and
3 DOE consider that proper ratio?

4 DEAN SOONACHAN: We're trying to keep the
5 group size between three and five students in a small
6 group for tutoring.

7 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. For some
8 reason I wrote down the ration of 9.3 to one. I
9 forget why. I think it did some division. Yeah,
10 300-- 3,399 students divided by the 366 tutors,
11 unless there's other-- 9.28 something, something.
12 Well, I rounded.

13 DEAN SOONACHAN: So, that's probably not
14 representing when a tutor's in a school for four-hour
15 work session. They're probably rotating through
16 different groups of students in that time.

17 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. Okay,
18 so going back to the previous question about, you
19 know, more tutors and engaging more schools, making
20 this opportunity available to more schools.

21 CHIEF GRIEVE: so, thanks for the
22 question. I would just re-- just share again just
23 some of the initiatives that actually are underway
24 this year that represent expansion. So, that
25 specific initiative that we've just been talking

2 about with the 100 tutors in Tutor Corps is focused
3 on Algebra, that's new, and so that is an expansion
4 for this year. As you shared in your questions,
5 we'll obviously, you know, want to make sure we
6 evaluating the impact and understanding the impact of
7 that and what that might look like in the future. I
8 also mention at the start that we-- that we're also
9 it's more broadly across New York City public schools
10 are starting the planning phase of a new high-impact
11 tutoring initiative which is funding tutoring in
12 kindergarten through to grade two literacy, and grade
13 six through grade eight math. So those are two new
14 strategies that are underway in this school year.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Alright, that's
16 wonderful. I would have-- I would have loved to have
17 some tutors in my classroom, some CUNY students, and
18 I bet there are CUNY students out there who would
19 love to spend time teaching in their community,
20 making some money, which is great. And how is this
21 program being advertised to CUNY students? And is
22 there a limit on the number of seats that are
23 available?

24 DEAN SOONACHAN: We work closely with
25 STEM departments and career offices on our campuses

2 to actively recruit and attend career fairs on
3 campuses and career events, and then also social
4 media and connections, again, to those STEM
5 departments. They're working with their students in
6 the majors, and we I think consistently have more
7 interest than we have available jobs in a given
8 semester.

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Do you know how
10 many students who applied for CUNY Tutor corps?

11 DEAN SOONACHAN: OH, I don't. I can get
12 you that, in an average semester, the applications to
13 hiring ratio.

14 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah. I would,
15 you know, certainly be interested because that would
16 also tell us, you know, how many more seats-- how
17 many more tutors we should be hiring, but also if
18 there are not that many more than 366 students
19 applying it would also tell us how good a job the
20 departments, the individual schools, the professors
21 are doing in advertising. This has also been a sort
22 of theme throughout these committee hearings, that
23 there are incredible programs, incredible initiatives
24 that CUNY engages in, and it's very often the case
25 that students don't know about them and that's, you

2 know, also something that we've heard in the
3 Education Committee, but I hear it a little more at
4 CUNY because I'm a little more involved there. And
5 so I really-- I'm interested to know what that
6 advertising, what that outreach looks like, because I
7 worry that we have a lot of students out there. CUNY
8 students would be thrilled to tutor, and they just
9 don't even know this program exists, and so I would
10 be-- I would be looking forward to getting that
11 information. With that, do you have any other
12 questions?

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Just a quick
14 question on parent engagement. How does that look?
15 Like, what's the engagement? And when you do meet
16 parents, is language access available for them?
17 How's the parent engagement? You can just give me an
18 idea as to--

19 DEAN SOONACHAN: For College Now, the
20 campus staff are working closely with the high school
21 staff to schedule recruitment events and awareness
22 events, often with Parent Teacher Associations or
23 with guidance counselors. So they're really working
24 with the high school staff to make sure there's a
25 full range of language or translation services

2 available and representation in developing those
3 kinds of resources. I don't know if my campus
4 colleagues would want to elaborate on, you know, what
5 that looks like in more detail.

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: I think
7 you represented it well. We host parent days when
8 the students and parents come to find out more, but
9 it is done in collaboration with the guidance
10 counselors at the schools.

11 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: At York, we regularly
12 send out our coordinator to parent evening sessions.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: In PTA's?

14 DIRECTOR RAPHAEL: Yeah, but also our
15 liaisons at the school are very well trained and very
16 loyal to the college and very understanding of all
17 the ins and outs, and so they present College Now as
18 well at all their parent conferences and parent
19 initiatives. So, yes, we are reaching out quite a
20 bit.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: Chair Joseph,
22 could I build--

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: [interposing] Sure.

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAC: [inaudible] I
25 think that some areas of like recent investment, and

2 I agree with what Council Member Restler said about
3 having educators on the panel. I appreciate both of
4 you-- and on the committees. With family engagement,
5 the build out of the New York City Schools Account
6 has been something that we've overseen what the
7 college and career planning portion of that looks
8 like so that as early as kindergarten, a family can
9 start to get right-- first, it's Save for College
10 information, right? I have a first grader so last
11 year we were in the Save for College year, all the
12 way through to 12 grade, what information is
13 available there. With the development of the
14 messenger of the parents as well. There's huge
15 potential. We've already been able to push messages
16 about Save for College and really think that that's
17 the beginning of how we can get more information
18 accessible to families at the time that they are
19 available to receive it in the language that is, you
20 know, most accessible for them. So, those are two
21 areas we're connecting that broader, like,
22 communication infrastructure to college and career
23 opportunities as an area that we're building and
24 growing.

2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. because
3 some of these kids are-- some of the students are
4 first generation going to college, who'll ever step a
5 foot in college, so we want to make sure that we
6 empower the parents, they have the right toolkits to
7 help the children navigate the system. So thank you
8 for that.

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I would like to
10 thank this large panel for coming today, for your
11 testimony. Chair Joseph and I are very much looking
12 forward to that extended data that we've requested to
13 help address some of the gaps and really support the
14 programming that helps both our CUNY students, our
15 high school, middle school students, and really our
16 city as a whole. Thank you. We'll be calling up our
17 first-- our next panel in a second. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Thank
19 you so much.

20 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Our first panel
21 that'll be coming up is Salimatou and Danielle. Two
22 things before we begin, I want to highlight that CUNY
23 and DOE are still here, and they'll be listening to
24 your testimony, and second is, before you speak, just
25 make sure you state your full name for the record.

2 Okay, and Salimatou, you may begin, and please again
3 state your full name for the record.

4 SALIMATOU DOUMBOUYA: Okay. Good
5 afternoon everyone. My name is Salimatou Doumbouya.
6 I am a student at the New York City College of
7 Technology where I am also the Student Government
8 President. I am the Chairperson of the CUNY
9 University Student Senate, the CUNY Student Trustee,
10 and I live in Harlem. Very interesting conversation
11 today, almost makes me want to revise my complete
12 testimony, because I learned a lot as well. So I want
13 to say that I believe it is necessary to show the
14 importance of building a solid road to higher
15 education from public schools and ensuring that
16 funding is provided in fulfilling that vision.
17 However, it is equally essential to the current
18 students and prospective students of this University
19 of New York that we receive adequate funding to help
20 us be the driving force in the workforce across the
21 industries in our city and state. I would also like
22 to say that the University Student Senate fully
23 supports the K-16 initiatives to help students enter
24 our university, but at the same time, higher
25 education is a vital lifeline for all communities

2 across our great university, and those students who
3 enter our university need support to stay in the
4 university. In multiple meetings I've had with the
5 students of the University Student Senate that is
6 composed of Student Government leaders from all 25
7 campuses-- we are about 80 students-- we did focus on
8 this issue a lot. But our conversations usually go
9 into when we have these students, how do we retain
10 them. The idea of retention is really important. I
11 have done CUNY Tutor Corps, and I have a lot of my
12 peers who are also tutors in CUNY Tutor Corps, and as
13 much as the students care about Algebra, they went to
14 learn, they also want to know how is college going?
15 How is it like to be a college student? And these
16 personal experience that we share with them is really
17 valuable as much as what we share with them in terms
18 of the curriculum, in terms of what we're teaching
19 them. So I have a few recommendations and how all
20 these different initiatives that are great could be
21 better. As a student myself and in all the students
22 that I've interacted with, because I've also been a
23 mentor at BMCC because I was in a community college--
24 I have dealt with students in College Now in that
25 great program where I was in. I have never heard

2 about a lot of them, although I know that CUNY's
3 making a lot of efforts to bring them out there. So
4 I would say that it is important to provide some
5 synergy in how these programs are administered. I
6 understand that it's 25 campuses. It's a lot of
7 people. It's a lot of bureaucracy, but how do we
8 create something constant where wherever you go you
9 know this is the one system that you follow. This is
10 where you find College Now, and this how it works. I
11 think that it will be very valuable. Because from
12 being a transfer student and dealing with other
13 transfer students, you can see how experiences can
14 vary a lot. My second recommendations will be that
15 we cannot deal with CUNY pre-pandemic the way we're
16 dealing with CUNY and education in general after the
17 pandemic. Why would students go to CUNY? I know
18 that the conversation and enrollment is really
19 important. We're wondering why students are leaving,
20 but it's maybe because students are having different
21 priorities now. As much as it is important to train
22 students to enter the job market, maybe the students
23 of today want to build a new job market. Maybe they
24 want to become entrepreneurs. How is CUNY engaging
25 in that? In my role I've had multiple conversations

2 with the CUNY Administration because they focus a lot
3 on career readiness, and that is a big thing. And
4 the last thing is going to be the conversation of
5 campus climate and student leadership. We've always
6 believed and I think it is still the case that when
7 you are part of a community, you thrive. So,
8 understanding how the creation of different-- more
9 leadership programs that we're involving at the same
10 time in all of these different programs can benefit
11 students, not only to come to CUNY but also stay in
12 CUNY and enjoy their experience so that they're not
13 just entering a hole where they are not going to
14 become the best version of themselves. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. I just
16 have a follow-up. You said the synergy and constancy
17 [sic]. Are you speaking about-- and you said you
18 said College Now. Are you speaking about a synergy
19 and a constancy between different high schools or
20 just CUNY in general?

21 SALIMATOU DOUMBOUYA: Yes, I'm speaking
22 about CUNY in general, right? Because when we deal--
23 when a student is in high school and then he comes to
24 CUNY-- I've mentored students like that. Oh, I was
25 in College Now, right, which is great. But I think

2 that when I talk about consistency, I mean how these
3 different programs are administered everywhere.

4 Like, College Now in one place looks like College Now
5 in another p lace, and the support that you get when
6 you come from College Now to another campus looks the
7 same as the support you would get when you come from
8 College Now to another campus.

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So you've seen--
10 as a mentor, you've seen sort of the tail end of it,
11 right, not how it-- I guess you see different
12 students from different high schools and different
13 boroughs who've done College Now and different CUNY's
14 come in and they have different experiences. And do
15 you get a sense that there are certain schools that
16 are doing it right and then there are certain schools
17 that have room for improvement?

18 SALIMATOU DOUMBOUYA: I think that all
19 schools have room for improvement, and all the
20 schools are doing their best, but I think that
21 facilitating a conversation and studying best
22 practices on all the colleges to bring this
23 consistency would make things even better.

24 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I love hearing
25 that. You're speaking about something that we've

2 spoken about consistently, not just today but
3 throughout the past year at these hearings which is
4 sort of consistency throughout the CUNY system and
5 what role central has in making-- you hear a number
6 of Council Members talk about even things like
7 transferring credits which you would think would be
8 a-- excuse me-- you know, an important big initiative
9 that's already addressed, but what seems like so tiny
10 is so impactful, and in the case of credits, you
11 know, negatively impacting a lot of students. And so
12 from your perspective, the College Now program could
13 use more centralized coordination from CUNY?

14 SALIMATOU DOUMBOUYA: Probably, yes.

15 College Now and multiple other programs, not only in
16 this context but also other contexts. I think it's
17 important that we study all of these different things
18 and see where we could bring some synergy because I
19 understand the challenge in creating consistency in
20 25 different institutions with all different kinds of
21 people, bureaucracy and rules, and even the different
22 campuses always focus on different things. But I
23 think there is room where we could find the points of
24 agreements and have some little points of central
25 effort.

2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I'm looking right
3 behind you at CUNY and DOE.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: They are here.

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: they are here and
6 I know they're listening and we're taking notes.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You mentioned
8 something about campus climate, what did you mean by
9 that?

10 SALIMATOU DOUMBOUYA: I mean how you feel
11 when you are on a CUNY with your peers. Some
12 students are isolated. We spoke about mental health
13 multiple times here. Some students, isolation, they
14 feel like they don't belong or they feel like they
15 cannot create a community, right? It's-- CUNY does a
16 great job focusing on curriculum. Student Affairs
17 does a great job on focusing on campus life, but I
18 think at maybe some point these two things can come
19 together.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Maybe a holistic
21 approach--

22 SALIMATOU DOUMBOUYA: [interposing] Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: to-- you have
24 students that come on campus which we know are living
25 in shelters.

2 SALIMATOU DOUMBOUYA: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: They are facing food
4 insecurity. So how do we bring all of that goiter
5 to-- I've always believed in the holistic model,
6 never-- or nor the cookie-cutter model either. I
7 don't believe in that. So, what could we do to
8 support that?

9 SALIMATOU DOUMBOUYA: CUNY has the
10 resources that's for sure. CUNY is investing in
11 making sure the sources are there. The big challenge
12 now stays how do students find out about them, and
13 are students taking advantage of these different
14 resources. In the spaces I have been on with other
15 people, I've always noticed that students who engage
16 in extracurricular activities tend to know more about
17 all of these things. They tend to be more engaged.
18 They tend to be more in-tuned with what's offered to
19 them in terms of support. So maybe CUNY can tap into
20 that resource, working with students to make other
21 students thrive, which is being done already, but I
22 feel like we could do it in a larger scale.

23 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: You know what they
24 could do? I'm a broken record. You could invest

2 like a few hundred dollars in advertisements on
3 social media or on search engines.

4 SALIMATOU DOUMBOUYA: Didn't you see the
5 CUNY ads in the subway lately?

6 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: The what?

7 SALIMATOU DOUMBOUYA: The CUNY ads on the
8 subway.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: New York City public
10 schools need to do that.

11 SALIMATOU DOUMBOUYA: Yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I told them that.

13 SALIMATOU DOUMBOUYA: I see them
14 everywhere.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yeah, I don't.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I'm just saying.

17 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I understand. The
18 one train doesn't come down to City Hall. What I'm
19 saying is that CUNY with whatever advertising budget--
20 - this is also come at many hearings-- you know,
21 spending money on different avenues like social
22 media. I know they mentioned a social media account,
23 but social media advertising is a relatively
24 inexpensive way to target students and let them know
25 about the programs, because you're sharing something

2 which we've heard a lot about, that a lot of students
3 don't know about these programs, programs which you
4 acknowledge are pretty good. If only more students
5 knew about them.

6 SALIMATOU DOUMBOUYA: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, this is where we
8 come in with the awareness, access, and equity. If
9 we want to do all of that, awareness has to be number
10 one. So maybe, I don't know. Elementary school we
11 did robocalls. We called everybody's home until you
12 pick up the phone or we text you, or there has to be
13 away, a creative way as to how do we get those
14 students to come and how do we retain them. I've
15 always felt like even in the coming into the middle
16 school programming, the Early College, College Now
17 how do we retain them and how do we get them to move
18 over to becoming matriculated students. So maybe we
19 can use some of those best practices to help those
20 students retain and capture that audience that you
21 need to capture. Maybe roundtables? Maybe make it
22 one-on-one. Everything doesn't have to be on social
23 media. We are living the new norms now. Things are
24 not done. We don't want to go back the old ways. We
25 always say that, that they do not work. So maybe we

2 need to go grassroots and make it-- and engage those
3 students that we need to engage.

4 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Some elected
5 officials know how to do campaigning. Knock doors,
6 make phone calls.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yeah, knock doors. I
8 know a CUNY President that does that.

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Stand on a street
10 corner.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: She knocks doors and
12 she goes to the student's homes. I'm not going to
13 say who she is.

14 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I'm glad my
15 professors never did that. I'd like to move on to
16 Danielle.

17 DANIELLE GUINDO: Thank you, and thank
18 you for your testimony. Thank you for having me.
19 I'm Danielle Guindo. I'm the Executive Director of
20 Read Alliance. Read Alliance is actually submitting
21 a request for 100,000 dollars to the City Council
22 initiative funding to support our critical dual
23 impact program which serves the five boroughs of New
24 York City and we have for 22 years. In FY 24 we plan
25 to enroll between 1,200 and 1,500 kindergarten,

2 first, and second graders who are striving to read on
3 grade level and employ between 600 and 800 teen
4 leaders as their paid individual literacy tutors.

5 Over the 22 years of our history, data has shown that
6 after just one program cycle elementary school

7 participants average more than a full years' growth
8 in foundational reading skills, and the teens not

9 only gain meaningful paid work experience while

10 they're in high school, but they also participate in

11 structured teen leadership enhancements that promote

12 post-secondary success. In FY 23, Read enrolled 548

13 striving readers and it-- has enrolled 548 striving

14 readers to-date, up to this point, and employed 354

15 unique teen leaders in all five boroughs of New York

16 City. We're partnering with 27 different elementary

17 schools, more than 100 different high schools, 17

18 from which are core partners where we recruit more

19 than 20 teams every year. By the end of this year,

20 we will have enrolled at minimum 1,280 early

21 elementary students in afterschool and summer school

22 high dosage tutoring programs. So, but during the

23 Fall of 2022, we began planning with urgency for a

24 pilot that aims to concretely connect Read Alliance

25 team leader's work experience with opportunities for

2 higher education and post-secondary experience
3 working in a classroom. As you know-- we all know in
4 this room, the value of BIPOC educators brings to
5 students of color that they teach despite rampant
6 teacher shortages. So this initiative will help young
7 people, especially young people of color, identify
8 and pursue the educational and career opportunities
9 aligned with their high school experience as a Read
10 Alliance team leader. So as part of this work we've
11 connected with and nurtured relationships with high
12 school, college, and community-based programs focused
13 on equity and access and post-secondary pathways
14 around education. One of the most robust
15 relationships to-date has been with the College of
16 Staten Island. We have a very large footprint on the
17 island and so it makes a lot of sense to work with
18 them to ensure that we're providing a pathway to
19 teaching careers for those students. And really
20 exciting development just two weeks ago, 16 Read
21 Alliance team leaders from all five boroughs of New
22 York City started taking Hunter College's Urban
23 Education College Now course on Saturdays. They were
24 identified from a cohort of teens who have
25 articulated an interest in exploring a career in

2 education. There was a substantial enough interest
3 in the course that Hunter College added actually a
4 separate section dedicated to Read Alliance team
5 leaders so that they could work in the Read Alliance
6 program during the week and take the course on
7 Saturdays. So thank you very much. I'd like to add
8 that I'm also the daughter of two public schools
9 educators of New York City and the mother of proud
10 two-- of two public schools students.

11 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: But are they
12 reading tutors?

13 DANIELLE GUINDO: They are reading tutors
14 and math tutors.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Then you've done
16 your job. So how do you-- I'm interested to know how
17 you--

18 DANIELLE GUINDO: [interposing] Yeah.

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: recruit students?

20 DANIELLE GUINDO: Teens you're talking
21 about or the children?

22 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: The teens.

23 DANIELLE GUINDO: We build relationships
24 with the high school that are located near the
25 elementary schools that we're partnering with and we

2 find, you know, the advisors, the nonprofits working
3 in the building, the APs that can be our liaisons and
4 advocates that either facilitate like an information
5 session or hand-picked students. They say they think
6 this is going to be a good opportunity for them.

7 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So I asked the
8 question in the wrong order. How do you pick
9 elementary schools?

10 DANIELLE GUINDO: Mostly word of mouth.
11 I mean, we really do want and idealize a situation
12 where we would have more of a cooperative
13 relationship with the district leaders, but for the
14 most part it's been word of mouth, schools that we've
15 historically worked with over the course of time. A
16 lot of our partners are decades long, but some are
17 relatively new and they come to us through different
18 avenues. We're part of the Pinkerton, New York City
19 Read's Initiative, and so that relationship with LINC
20 [sic] and other nonprofit partners that are all
21 working in south Jamaica, East New York and East
22 Harlem helps to develop relationships with schools in
23 those districts that express an interest in being a
24 part of it. That's one example. There are many
25 other avenues that schools can come to us.

2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How are students
3 trained?

4 DANIELLE GUINDO: The receive, initially,
5 four hours of training on a level phonics-based
6 curriculum. So they learn not only, you know, just
7 basics of phonics, and some of the teens relearn that
8 themselves, but also the strategies around
9 implementation, behavior management, ways to engage
10 the young child, and also data collections. So we
11 collect data. We train the teens to collect data
12 every single day, and there's always a young person
13 who's called a Senior Team Leader who's a little bit
14 more experienced and trained to ensure that the data
15 collection is, you know, meeting standards. And so,
16 we also have refreshers if we have, you know,
17 students that come to us new or we notice that there
18 may need to be a refresher of some kind. And in
19 addition, we've been fortunate enough to build in
20 four additional hours on average per student so that
21 they could be paid to participate and complementary
22 programming. So that's career exposure, college
23 readiness, leadership development, and other
24 enrichment opportunities. So it's not only that

2 they're paid for the training, the work, but also
3 their participation and other enrichment.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: You should add
5 dyslexia screening in your future.

6 DANIELLE GUINDO: So, we're looking into
7 that. We've met with-- the name escapes me, but
8 there is a screener that is funded by one of our
9 partners, funding partners that we did look into and
10 one of the advantages that we've always had is that
11 because we're embedded in afterschool and we employ
12 teachers in our program, so we work really closely
13 with the teachers to ensure that the teachers are
14 helping to identify students that might have other
15 learning differences including dyslexia. But that is
16 something that we're thinking about, like how to
17 integrate in a way that would make sense, you know,
18 for teens to help with.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: A future educator--

20 DANIELLE GUINDO: [interposing] That's
21 right, you got it.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: that's one of the
23 skills. Thank you.

24 DANIELLE GUINDO: We are in one of the--
25 we're at PS 161X where I know the Literacy Academy

2 Collective is also piloting, and we partner with them
3 as well. We don't overlap. We don't serve the same
4 kids. We work in the same sandbox.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Wonderful. Thank
6 you.

7 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: How much do you
8 pay the--

9 DANIELLE GUINDO: [interposing] Minimum
10 wage at minimum, and then the Senior Team Leaders
11 earn two or three dollars more, and then we have an
12 avenue to continue progressing. So we have other
13 positions that have helped us with our expansion
14 where the teens continue to earn more, even while
15 they're in college. They might earn 21 or 22 dollars
16 an hour to help oversee a program if one of the staff
17 can't be there that day. So, at minimum, it's 15
18 dollars an hour.

19 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And do you have
20 any-- I know you mentioned that you have students
21 going to the Hunter College Now program, but do you
22 have any sort of partnership or information sharing
23 form CUNY to your students? So, for example, just--

24 DANIELLE GUINDO: [interposing] Yeah.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I imagine that
3 students who tutored in high school--

4 DANIELLE GUINDO: [interposing] Yep.

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: may want to then
6 become CUNY Tutor Corps students.

7 DANIELLE GUINDO: Oh, that is-- I didn't
8 read my whole testimony, but yeah, we are developing
9 that relationship so that if we do have students that
10 are part of this pathway that enter one of the CUNY
11 schools, that they are led to the Tutoring Corps as
12 another avenue to earn while they're in college. I
13 mean, that's not happened yet, but that is absolutely
14 something we've started.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Love to hear, and
16 then I think-- you know, I think one of the
17 challenges being, as I mentioned earlier, this-- it
18 was mentioned on this panel, actually. There's
19 always some confusion about what's done centrally and
20 what's done by each individual college. That's--
21 even CUNY central is sometimes not sure--

22 DANIELLE GUINDO: [interposing] Yeah.

23 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: what's them and
24 how much autonomy they give to colleges. But it
25 sounds like the CUNY Tutor Corps program is sort of--

2 made recommendations by each individual campus, and
3 so I'm sure as part of your challenges is going to be
4 relationship both with CUNY central and with each
5 individual university--

6 DANIELLE GUINDO: [interposing] Right,
7 there may not be-- I mean, what we're noticing is
8 obviously we want to make sure that we are-- for this
9 particular pathways initiative that we're developing,
10 we want to make sure that there's a connection to
11 CUNY that-- to CUNY's that have an education school,
12 you know, like that we want to simplify it that way.
13 Obviously we're specifically focused on ensuring that
14 the pathway is paved for those who are interested in
15 pursuing a career in education. But obviously we are
16 helping like, there's been now I think it's 22 or 25
17 young people that we've provided scholarships for
18 when they were juniors so that they could participate
19 in the Ascenders program where they're paired with a
20 College Readiness Advisor one-on-one, where you know,
21 they wouldn't otherwise have gotten, you know, 1 to
22 250 students. Not everybody has the access to a
23 college advisor, and we want to make sure that we
24 help that along. Even, you know, college access is
25 not our lane, but we have access to the teens and can

2 help them get the help that they need if we
3 understand that that's a need of theirs.

4 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. Thank
5 you both so much for your testimony. You can clap.
6 It's alright. They did well.

7 [applause]

8 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: I'd like to call
9 our next panel. Our next panel is on Zoom. Nazrea
10 Nahar [sp?], and we also have on the list Brooklyn
11 Adams, although Brooklyn does not appear to be logged
12 on. So the first speaker will be Nazrea [sp?].

13 NAZREA NAHAR: Good afternoon. My name
14 is Nazrea Nahar and I'm a freshmen at [inaudible]
15 College [sic]. I'm here as a Young Advocate Alum of
16 the Young Invincibles. I want to thank the City
17 Council, especially the Committee on Education and
18 Higher Education for the opportunity to testify at
19 today's hearing. I graduated from a Queen's public
20 schools that offered both AP and College Now courses.
21 Access to this college credit courses has played a
22 big role in my pursuit of [inaudible] college
23 education. As an immigrant students unfamiliar with
24 the public schools system, I was unformed about
25 these opportunities to earn college credit through

2 dual enrollment and AP courses. I had to go above
3 and beyond to learn about the available programs
4 through online research. Without the help of a
5 guidance counselor, I was left alone and stressed.
6 Had I been contacted by a counselor, I would have had
7 the opportunity to challenge myself and earn more
8 college credit. Similarly, I have many immigrant
9 peers who had also experienced a lack of contact,
10 resources, opportunities and information. School
11 teachers and administrators must actively extend
12 information to students in an inclusive manner to
13 ensure that they're well-informed. Moreover, there
14 were barriers to my placement within AP and College
15 Now courses. Despite having met the pre-requisites,
16 I was unable to join a class due to a lack of AP
17 classes and available seating. Because I had learned
18 of these classes later, I was barred from taking my
19 desired advanced coursework. It was usual for a
20 traditional student to face the barriers I had. In
21 the two AP classes that I took, I had to self-teach,
22 find resources through College Board, and buy
23 materials to ensure that I would pass the test and
24 earn the college credits. The teachers teaching AP
25 classes were often under-resourced to teach the AP

2 course materials and were limited by funding
3 restraints to provide us with extra test prep
4 materials. It is imperative that high school
5 teachers be trained and equipped with resources
6 needed to teach AP and college-level courses.
7 Fortunately, a high school teacher of mine also
8 taught a College Now course offered at my high school
9 and she informed me of the requirements and demands
10 of the courses. Additionally, my school offered
11 College Now on the school's campus which aided me
12 greatly in earning crucial college credits that
13 helped me fulfil my college elected requirements and
14 other pre-requisites. It has helped me financially
15 saving money from not having to buy materials for
16 these classes and giving me the time to work part-
17 time alongside college as many CUNY students
18 frequently do. The high school to college transition
19 can be overwhelming with the lack of college
20 readiness and financial stability. Lack of academic
21 readiness and insufficient financial aid has been
22 cited as two of the major reasons behind college
23 students dropping out. It is crucial to keep College
24 Now classes and AP courses funded and accessible to
25 students to help in their pursuit of college

2 education, as it's helped many including myself being
3 college-ready. We must also expand the availability
4 of classes and lift barriers such as limited seating
5 that keeps students from the opportunity to enroll in
6 such courses. I urge City Council to understand the
7 benefits of having accessible College Now courses on
8 high school campuses as it gives students the
9 opportunity to earn college credit without the
10 barriers of transportation and food insecurity.

11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you. I first
13 want to apologize. I misread one of the letters, and
14 thus, I mispronounced your name and I apologize for
15 that. It sounds like you worked extremely hard to be
16 successful and to be where you are. Did you say you
17 were at Queen? I want to make sure I heard you. You
18 said you were at Queens College?

19 NAZREA NAHAR: No, I graduated from a
20 Queens public schools. I'm currently at Baruch
21 College.

22 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Oh, you're at--
23 okay. I didn't hear. Okay. Queens public school,
24 now you're at Baruch. And so you laid out a lot of
25 issues and room for improvement, and one of the

2 things you mentioned was sort of outreach and support
3 for students in, you know, either during high school
4 and then transitioning to college. Did you have a
5 Bridge peer mentor?

6 NAZREA NAHAR: I did not.

7 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: You did not. And
8 may I ask what year you graduated high school?

9 NAZREA NAHAR: Yes, I graduated in 2022.

10 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Oh,
11 congratulations, you just graduated.

12 NAZREA NAHAR: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So, we heard
14 earlier testimony that every-- all high school
15 seniors had some sort of outreach provided to them
16 from July through September before to help them guide
17 them through the process of, you know, registering
18 for classes and other programs that are available.
19 So you didn't utilize the service, or you never
20 received a text message or an email or a phone call
21 about--

22 NAZREA NAHAR: I di-- so the Bridge
23 mentor I think now that I'm thinking about it, I did
24 get a text message from someone named Tanya--

2 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [inaudible] say
3 their name.

4 NAZREA NAHAR: and it was a-- it was--
5 so, the struggles I faced was during my junior year
6 about College Now courses, but do you-- the struggles
7 was not getting admitted into college, like the
8 application process, because I remember getting
9 helped about SYEP and like-- oh, like if I needed
10 help in transitioning from a high school environment
11 to a college environment. My problems were strictly
12 with College Now courses and AP courses during my
13 junior year and like senior year from my high school
14 coursework.

15 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And it was-- okay.
16 It was get-- and I just want to make sure I hear--
17 it's getting into the College Now courses and getting
18 all the information about them--

19 NAZREA NAHAR: [interposing] Yes, yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: from your local--
21 from your Queens high school.

22 NAZREA NAHAR: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: And so what I'm
24 hearing and I just want to clarify, that you think
25 the DOE needs to ensure that each individual school

2 is informing students of all the opportunities that
3 are available to them, particularly College Now.

4 NAZREA NAHAR: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. So it's--
6 I, you know, I want to thank you for that. I think
7 that's sort of theme that we're hearing, and I'll
8 just repeat again, all of these programs that are
9 really impactful-- and everyone acknowledges they're
10 good, but if no one knows about them, they're kind of
11 useless to a lot of the students. Chair?

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: What do you think
13 they should be doing differently to improve the
14 program?

15 NAZREA NAHAR: I believe for me, I-- the
16 only reason I knew about College Now courses was
17 because one of teachers who was teaching another
18 regular high school class was teaching a College Now
19 course. So she send me-- she personally informed me
20 of a College Now course, and that's how I started
21 doing College Now classes. I had friends who did not
22 know about College Now courses, because often they
23 would send emails, and we know students, like high
24 school students, they don't usually read emails.
25 They should be informed about it during classes. Like

2 a teacher should inform the students, like, we offer
3 College Now courses. And this is-- and this is how
4 you like enroll into one and this is what a College
5 Now course demands of you.

6 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: So, you think if
7 there had been a-- like a presentation to you from--

8 NAZREA NAHAR: [interposing] Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. Like a
10 person-to-person in-class free captive audience
11 presentation, that would have spoken to you and that
12 would have been a way to transmit information to you
13 that you would have been receptive to and would have
14 like, you know, gotten, right?

15 NAZREA NAHAR: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Okay. Are there
17 any other ways you would improve, specifically these
18 college-- things like College Now and the CUNY
19 initiatives?

20 NAZREA NAHAR: I think making College Now
21 accessible on high school campuses is very important,
22 because I was-- I did have an opportunity to enroll
23 in a College Now program in Queens [sic] College, but
24 I was not able to do so because of the
25 transportation. It took me an hour and a half to go

2 to Queens College even though I lived in the borough.
3 So it would be at seven in the night when I would be
4 coming back from College Now course, because it would
5 be after school. It's an additional course, and that
6 is not realistic. And so I feel like I was able to
7 do it because it was on my high school grounds that a
8 College Now course was like done. So that should be
9 made more available, because I know most College Now
10 courses are offered on community college grounds and
11 like college campuses instead of high school
12 campuses.

13 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Alright, thank
14 you. That was, I think, very helpful suggestions,
15 very informative. Thank you for your testimony. I
16 just want to try one more time. Is Brooklyn Adams
17 logged onto Zoom? Is there anybody else on Zoom
18 who's interested in testifying? If so, please
19 virtually raise your hand. Alright, well I want to
20 thank everyone. I want to thank CUNY, the DOE,
21 everyone who testified, especially our students and
22 my co-chair for this hearing, Chair Joseph. I'm not
23 sure there's anything more important than providing
24 quality education and quality supports for our
25 children, our future of our city, and making sure

2 that we have a holistic approach, that we are
3 connecting all age groups, and ensuring we provide
4 every opportunity for success to them is of paramount
5 importance to me to this Council, and to the future
6 of New York City. And we look forward to working
7 with CUNY and the DOE to make sure that these
8 programs are expanded and are successful so that
9 every student has every opportunity to succeed here
10 in New York City. And with that, this hearing's
11 adjourned.

12 [gavel]

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1 COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION WITH COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION 179

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date February 16, 2023