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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES  
  
Of the  
  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
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December 6, 2021  
Start: 10:06 a.m.  
Recess: 12:38 p.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING - VIRTUAL ROOM 1  
  
B E F O R E: Mark Treyger,  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
  
Alicka Ampry-Samuel  
Inez D. Barron  
Joseph C. Borelli  
Justin L. Brannan  
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.  
Eric Dinowitz  
Daniel Dromm  
Oswald Feliz  
James F. Gennaro  
Barry S. Grodenchik  
Ben Kallos  
Brad S. Lander  
Stephen T. Levin  
Farah N. Louis  
I.Daneek Miller  
Kevin C. Riley

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

2

COUNCIL MEMBERS: (CONT.)

Ydanis A. Rodriguez  
Deborah L. Rose  
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.

A P P E A R A N C E S

Lawrence Pendergast  
Deputy Chief Academic Officer for Teaching and  
Learning

Maria Palma  
Executive Director of Arts and Special Projects

Seth Schoenfeld  
Senior Executive Director Public Schools Athletic  
League

Katherine Jedrlinic  
Chief of Staff

Trenton Price  
Director of Operations Office of Art and Special  
Projects

Mario Asaro  
New York City Art Teachers Association

Ellen McHugh  
AHRC

Keith Kaminski  
BRIC, and New York City Arts and Education  
Roundtable

Ava Kinsey  
Brooklyn Academy of Arts and New York City Arts  
and Education Roundtable Member

Kati Koerner  
Lincoln Center Theater

Judith Insell  
Bronx Arts Ensemble

Kimberly Olsen  
New York City Arts and Education Roundtable

Lynda Kennedy  
Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum

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4

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

Edward Miller  
Arts Connection

Lorraine Goodman  
Broadway Bound Kids

Toby Boshak  
Exploring the Arts Inc.

Cathy Hung  
Young Audiences New York

Katie Palmer  
Together in Dance

Cheryl Warfield  
Advance More Opera

Sarah Bukowski  
Dance NYC

Richard Souto  
LEAP Inc.

Latasha Wright  
BioBus Inc.

Khin Mai Aung  
Generation Citizen New York

Rae Wilson  
Teaching Artist at PS 295 Courtesy of Brooklyn  
Arts Council

Laura Bozzone  
Performing Arts Program Manager at New York Edge

Kwame Brandt-Pierce  
After School Program Manager at Brooklyn  
Children's Museum in Crown Heights

Jillian Carucci  
Associate Artistic Director of Theater Works USA

Michelle Gall  
Digital Girl, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

5

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

Tricia Patrick  
MCC Education

Jamie Hastings  
Executive Director of the Arthur Miller  
Foundation

SERGEANT HOPE: According to the computer in progress.

SERGEANT POLITE: Recording to the Cloud all set. Good morning and welcome to the Remote Hearing on Education. Will Council Members and staff, please turn on their video at this time. Thank you.

To minimize disruptions, please place all cellphones and electronic to vibrate. To send testimony, you may send testimony to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Once again, that's [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Chair Treyger, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. Good morning and welcome to today's Virtual Education Hearing. I am Council Member Mark Treyger, Chair of the Education Committee. This hearing represents my last as Chair of this Committee as we conclude the 2018-2021 legislative session. I am proud of the legacy we leave behind. During this time, this Committee has vigorously met its oversight mandate over the Department of Education, both in-person and virtually, this Committee has held hearings on a wide range of topics including adult literacy and diversity and school integration, students with

1  
2 disabilities, social and emotional learning, class  
3 size, teacher preparation, students in juvenile  
4 detention, students in temporary housing,  
5 accessibility in our schools, and all things  
6 correlated to name a few.

7       We have been fair to the DOE in giving credit  
8 where credit is due but we never hesitated to call  
9 out issues needing redress by the Department and the  
10 Administration. In some areas, we now have greater  
11 transparency and have closed some gaps. In other  
12 areas, there still remains much to do.

13       Soon, this city will have a new Mayor,  
14 Chancellor, and Council with more than 30 new members  
15 joining the body. I hope the new Education Chair  
16 builds on the legacy we have built to continue to  
17 build on the gains and to continue to highlight those  
18 areas that need more resources, time, attention and  
19 focus.

20       Today's hearing focuses on the impact of the  
21 pandemic on arts instruction, extracurricular and  
22 school related social activities and it is fittingly  
23 end our long run on this topic. Each play their part  
24 in contributing to a well rounded student. Each play  
25 their part in creating more engaged students. Each

1  
2 play their part in increasing academic learning and  
3 mitigating COVID related learning loss. Bottomline,  
4 arts instruction, extracurricular and school related  
5 social activities all play their part in helping  
6 students become capable individuals sharpen critical  
7 skills and enhance the overall school experience.

8       The COVID-19 impact on these is real and must be  
9 addressed through next years budget and made a  
10 priority by the next administration. And I also want  
11 to say that you know there's a real, real equity  
12 issue here as well. One of the many reasons why I  
13 sponsored the bill and passed it on the PTA fund  
14 raising bill was to highlight the deep inequities in  
15 our city. Uh, where certain zip codes, certain  
16 school communities can raise one million dollars or  
17 more that enhances extracurricular options and  
18 opportunities for kids, while other zip codes have to  
19 rely on a go fund me page for basic supplies. And  
20 those children cannot have those opportunities as  
21 they do in wealthier zip codes.

22       So, they rely on us, the government to really  
23 level the playing field to ensure that there's  
24 equity, opportunity for all kids, regardless of what  
25 zip code they are from. And as a former teacher, I



1  
2 know personally the impact of the arts and  
3 instruction. Those of you who know the story of  
4 Anthony Ramos, he came from the school where I  
5 taught. Where arts and theatre basically saved him  
6 and catapulted him into the phenomenal career that he  
7 is experiencing right now. It was his theatre  
8 teacher that really you know inspired him in open  
9 doors. We need to ensure that every kid from every  
10 zip code has those same opportunities. That's really  
11 critical here.

12 So, I want to thank everyone from the DOE who is  
13 testifying today in addition to our public witness  
14 who are here today to contribute to this conversation  
15 about the importance of arts education, especially  
16 during this pandemic. I want to thank the Council  
17 Staff for all the work they put into today's hearing.  
18 Malcom Butehorn, Jan Atwell, Chelsea Baytemur, Masis  
19 Sarkissian, and Frank Perez. I just want to thank my  
20 own staff, great staff, Anna Scaife, Vanessa Ogle,  
21 Maria Henderson, Janine Karaketti(SP?).

22 I also want to recognize prior Committee Staff  
23 that have had an impactful and lasting legacy on the  
24 work we have done. Council's Shamitta Dismoc and  
25 Beth Goel(SP?), Policy Analyst Kalima Johnson and

1  
2 Aliyah Reynolds and Financial Analyst Elizabeth  
3 Hoffman and Caitlin Novagan(SP?). I want to  
4 acknowledge the work of Central Staffers Johanna  
5 Castro(SP?) and Michelle Odis(SP?) who have been  
6 spearheading the monumental task of taking this  
7 Council remote and ensuring that we have been able to  
8 continue our legislative and oversight functions in  
9 this new Zoom world.

10 Finally, I want to also thank the fantastic  
11 Sergeant's at Arms, whether in person or remote, they  
12 have always ensured the smooth and safe running of  
13 Committee hearings. And for that, we are forever  
14 grateful. And just another plug for the outstanding  
15 staff, both my staff in my office and the wonderful  
16 staff at this Committee. I am nothing without staff.  
17 This Committee is nothing without staff. We have the  
18 best. We have the best. Prepared for every hearing,  
19 oversight, follow-up. After hearings we fight on  
20 individual cases to help kids and families get the  
21 results which they rightfully deserve. I'm very  
22 grateful to the City Council Staff, so I want to  
23 thank you all very much.

24 But we have a lot more work to do, so I will now  
25 turn it over to Malcom Butehorn. Thank you.

1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Treyger and  
3 just for the record, we want to acknowledge that  
4 we've been joined by Council Members Barron, Borelli,  
5 Brannan, Kallos, Miller and Riley.

6 Good morning everyone, my name is Malcom  
7 Butehorn, Counsel to the Education Committee. Before  
8 we begin testimony, I just want to remind everyone  
9 that you will be on mute until you are called on to  
10 testify. After you are called on, a member of our  
11 staff will unmute you and Zoom will prompt you to  
12 accept the unmute. I will be calling on public  
13 witnesses to testify in panels after the conclusion  
14 of the administrations testimony and Council Member  
15 questions. So, please listen for your name to be  
16 called.

17 Council Members who have questions should use the  
18 raise hand function in Zoom. You will be called on  
19 in the order with which you raised our hand after the  
20 full panel has completed testimony. We will be  
21 limiting Council Member questions to five minutes.  
22 For public panelists, please listen for the Sergeant  
23 at Arms to give you the go ahead to begin your  
24 testimony. All public testimony will be limited to  
25 two minutes. We ask that you also submit your full

written testimony to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). It will be accepted for up to 72 hours following the close of this hearing.

We will now call on the following members of the Administration to testify, Lawrence Pendergast Deputy Chief Academic Officer for Teaching and Learning, Maria Palma Executive Director of Arts and Special Projects, Seth Schoenfeld Senior Executive Director Public Schools Athletic League, Katherine Jedrlinic Chief of Staff, and Trenton Price Director of Operations Office of Art and Special Projects.

I will first read the oath and after, I will call on each of you individually to respond. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth before this Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member questions? Lawrence Pendergast?

LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Yes.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Maria Palma?

MARIA PALMA: Yes.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Seth Schoenfeld?

SETH SCHOENFELD: Yes.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Katherine Jedrlinic?

KATHERINE JEDRLINIC: Yes.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Trenton Price?

TRENTON PRICE: Yes.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Mr. Pendergast,  
whenever you are ready to begin.

LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Thank you. Good morning  
Chair Treyger and all the Members of the Education  
Committee here today. I am Lawrence Pendergast,  
Deputy Chief Academic Officer for Teaching and  
Learning at the New York City Department of  
Education. I am joined today by Maria Palma,  
Executive Director of the Arts and Special Projects  
and other DOE colleagues.

We are honored to be with you all today to  
discuss the important topic of arts education and  
extracurricular activities in New York City public  
schools. This Administration is committed to  
providing all students with a rigorous, robust,  
culturally-responsive instruction with a full  
complement of course offerings that includes arts  
education.

The arts, including dance, moving image, music,  
theater, and visual arts, are essential elements of  
our students' learning experience. Arts education  
provides powerful opportunities for our youth to

1  
2 explore and express themselves. Explore their  
3 creative voices, cooperate, concentrate, problem-  
4 solve, and other crucial, personal and interpersonal  
5 life skills and prepare students for their careers  
6 and life ahead in society. Perhaps most importantly,  
7 in coping with the pandemic, the arts play an  
8 important role in nurturing students' social-  
9 emotional well-being and connectedness to ensembles  
10 or other communities of peers. We are grateful to  
11 the City Council for its support of our schools and  
12 students, as well as your advocacy for the importance  
13 of arts education. And Chair Treyger, we are very  
14 familiar with your support for schools in your  
15 district and so, moving aside from the testimony for  
16 one moment, I do want to say thank you in this last  
17 year and you really do need to be acknowledged for  
18 your support for the arts. We notice and we  
19 appreciate it.

20 Since the start of this Administration, we have  
21 prioritized equitable arts education for all of New  
22 York City's students. The DOE's Office of Arts and  
23 Special Projects, within DOE's Division of Teaching  
24 and Learning, works tirelessly with our arts content  
25 directors and borough-based staff to maximize

supports for schools and students. The Arts Office supports citywide content, standards, and professional learning, and student programming.

The Borough Arts Directors and Coordinators also work with schools and provides customized supports to superintendents and school leaders to help bolster the quality of all arts programming. Beginning in 2014, we launched a \$23 million city-wide arts education initiative. With the additional annual investment, the Office of Arts and Special Projects was able to expand many successful programs to increase learning opportunities in the arts and foster more equity in access to arts. The cornerstone of quality arts education is found in the robust combination of certified arts teachers, instructional resources, dedicated arts spaces, and partnerships. Here are some of the most effective ways that we have deepened opportunities for arts education across the city: When it comes to certified arts teachers, as with all academic content, certified teachers are key to student success and the anchor for arts education in any school.





Our wildly popular Arts Partnership Grants allocate millions of dollars to schools each year, enabling them to partner with arts and cultural organizations that provide direct services for students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and families. The resources and expertise of these organizations have done much for our students. And just last week, the Office of Arts and Special Projects announced this year's Arts Partnership Grants, which will enable 223 schools across the five boroughs to partner with 80 different arts and cultural vendors. And that number includes 26 projects in District 75 schools.

To strengthen instruction, the Office of Arts and Special Projects expanded support for arts teachers and leaders, with more than 200 professional learning opportunities serving over 2,000 arts educators each year. Including robust instructional resources; content-based professional development; new teacher workshops; teacher professional learning communities to sustain effective teaching practice; resources and professional development for educating students with disabilities and multilingual learners in arts classroom; 3K, Pre-K and Kindergarten arts learning

1  
2 through Create, a collaboration between the Office of  
3 Arts and Special Projects, and the DOE Division of  
4 Early Childhood Education, and four leading arts  
5 organizations with expertise in the early learning  
6 arts.

7 Create was made possible with generous support  
8 from Jody and John Arnhold, the New York Community  
9 Trust, and Agnes Gund.

10 Our office's professional development offerings  
11 gained national attention when the office was  
12 selected as the recipient of a four-year federal  
13 grant for Professional Development for Arts Education  
14 that focused on blended Professional Development.  
15 This award proved especially timely when the pandemic  
16 necessitated a pivot to virtual learning. Along with  
17 the National Arts Education Association, that office  
18 has just been awarded a new five-year grant to lead  
19 professional development focusing on equity,  
20 diversity, inclusion, and social-emotional learning  
21 in the arts classrooms.

22 With regard to the impact of COVID, of course,  
23 the global spread of COVID-19 in March 2020 created  
24 enormous challenges for our arts education efforts,  
25 both fiscally and operationally. Despite the

1  
2 challenges, arts teachers managed to do what they do  
3 best, they create and innovate, and students  
4 continued to learn. Despite the monumental  
5 challenges of remote instruction, arts teachers  
6 engaged New York City's students in dance, media,  
7 music, theater, and visual arts from their living  
8 rooms on Zoom. For a glimpse into what remote arts  
9 learning looked like uh over the past year and a  
10 half, we would love it if you could take a look at  
11 this short video.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, bear with me one  
13 second. (15:46-17:33)

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Malcom, is there a way to  
15 fix the sound and get this?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: It's - you can't hear the  
17 sound. Uhm -

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay, although I am - it's  
19 looking great, so.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uhm, okay, it looks like -  
21 could you hear it Chair? No? No. Uhm, okay, so  
22 Larry, we'll go back to your testimony and I will try  
23 to figure out.

24 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Yeah, that's fine.  
25

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Maybe we could play it at the end of your testimony before questions. So, I'll do a little texting while you continue.

LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: And if not , we'll send the members the link.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay.

LAWERENCE PENDERGAST: Because it is a tremendous video and it celebrates our kids and teachers. So, first of all, just thank you for trying to make it happen. We appreciate it and hopefully we can get to them soon.

In the summer of 2020, the Office of Arts and Special Projects provided guidance to schools about instructional practices for in-person arts learning. And throughout the pandemic, we have followed all the latest guidance from the CDC, including social distancing, individualized art materials bins, masks, and prioritized instruction that presented less physical risk, such as music literacy or dance criticism. These precautions proved safe and successful, and we are thrilled that we were further able to restore in-person band this year with the proper PPE, distancing, and ventilation.

The Office of Arts and Special Projects supported teachers throughout the pandemic with online Professional Learning Communities, weekly office hours, on-demand support, technology assistance for remote learning, and leadership assistance. Weekly instructional resources for teachers were posted on TeachHub for dance, music, theater, visual arts, and media as they transitioned to remote and blended teaching.

Videotapes of performances and catalogs of student artwork were put online and celebrated virtually. New initiatives, such as the Songwriters of Tomorrow Scholarship, were initiated during the pandemic. Examples of student artistic work and achievements during remote and blended learning can be found on the DOE's website.

In spring of 2021, in collaboration with the Department of Cultural Affairs, the Office of Arts and Special Projects launched a grant program to expand arts programming for students and partner with artists during the Summer Rising program. Artists engaged students in the creation of incredible murals and innovative outdoor pop-up performances. And these grants were catalysts for students and

community engagement and provided a vital outlet for students to process their experiences from the last year through creative expression.

As a result of the pandemic, the New York State Education Department Arts Learning Standards were waived last school year. As we looked to the full return of students this year, it is our Blueprints for the Teaching and Learning in the Arts, along with the New York State Education Department Arts Learning Standards, that continue to guide the Department and our teachers with a path to follow for developing culturally-responsive curricula in all arts disciplines. They convey benchmarks for what children should know, understand, and be able to do in dance, moving image, music, theater, and visual arts.

In addition, they provide school administrators with the tools they need to share students' accomplishments in these areas with parents. New York State instructional guidelines and requirements for the arts provide the baseline for our ArtsCount measurements. At the elementary school level, the State Commissioner's Regulations state that every student in every grade should receive annual

instruction in all four major branches of the arts: music, theater, dance, and visual arts. They also recommend that 20 percent of instructional time be devoted to the arts in grades one through three, and ten percent in grades four through six.

While we fully support these recommendations, we also recognize that they are demanding and we have deepened our efforts to help more schools successfully meeting them. At the middle school level, the State requires one semester each of music and visual arts instruction to be provided by a licensed arts teacher over the course of seventh and eighth grades, theater and dance instruction do not fulfill those requirements.

For high school students, the State requires completion of two semesters of study in any art form. We have made significant strides towards meeting this guidance and these requirements throughout this administration. Having all of our students back, in-person, with additional and significant investments in the arts goes a long way towards enhancing this work.

With the return to full-time in-person learning this fall, arts teachers welcomed back students to

1  
2 the performing and visual arts classrooms. Our  
3 preliminary data shows that the vast majority of arts  
4 teachers are again teaching the arts, and we have  
5 seen a significant rebound from last year in both the  
6 number of teachers and the variety of instruction  
7 offered. Schools are returning to their dedicated  
8 arts spaces where possible, providing students with  
9 the opportunity to again create and rehearse together  
10 in shared settings. Schools and educators are  
11 following DOE guidance, and as a further precaution,  
12 extracurricular arts activities such as school  
13 musicals and after school marching bands, require  
14 students to be vaccinated.

15 To support our students' academic recovery in the  
16 arts, the DOE proudly dedicated 20 percent of the  
17 \$350 million academic recovery funding to arts  
18 education for this school year. That is the single  
19 largest investment in arts education in New York  
20 City's history. This funding was allocated  
21 progressively, weighing community needs and COVID  
22 impacts, so that more funds support schools and  
23 communities hit hardest in the last year and a half.

24 Schools can spend this critical funding on after  
25 school and weekend student arts programs; arts



1  
2 education direct student services and residencies  
3 from arts and cultural organizations; professional  
4 development for teachers in arts education; part-time  
5 certified arts teachers to enhance arts course  
6 offerings; and Art-making materials and equipment,  
7 including instruments.

8       One example being the central grant we have that  
9 is currently accepting applications to supply  
10 additional music instruments to schools and students  
11 that need them. The federal stimulus funding has  
12 also allowed the DOE to fully restore investments in  
13 the city-wide arts education advancement budget. And  
14 that will enable the restoration of student programs,  
15 teacher and leader professional development, and  
16 individual school funding, including Arts Partnership  
17 Grants. The Office of Arts and Special Projects  
18 continues to lead professional development for arts  
19 teachers and school leaders in the targeted and  
20 strategic use of ARPA funds to support academic  
21 recovery, students' social emotional well-being,  
22 culturally-responsive instruction, and re-engaging  
23 parents in the school community.

24       In addition, with the fully realized investment  
25 bringing schools' per capita Fair Student Funding to

100 percent, schools have increased funding to hire full-time certified arts teachers. Our preliminary data show 2,766 certified arts teachers in New York City schools in the 2020-2021 school year.

We are proud of this once in a generation investment made possible towards equitable arts education across our city, and we are enormously grateful to all of our arts educators and school leaders for leading this work with our students. I want to take a moment to acknowledge that these successes are built upon the foundation of the remarkable accomplishments of our friend and colleague Paul King, who brilliantly led the Office of Arts and Special Projects for 11 years before his passing in February of 2020. He was a tireless and effective advocate for students' arts education.

In addition to our core curriculum, we recognize the importance of extracurricular activities and our academic recovery plan advances our goal of serving the whole child. We have given dedicated funding for expansions in sports and community schools. In addition, with Fair Student Funding being fully funded, schools finally have the funding they deserve and the discretion to use that towards supporting

students and the extracurricular activities that interest each school community.

In looking towards the future, the arts and arts education are essential to New York's economic recovery, and we mean essential. According to a 2019 Comptroller report, the Creative Economy, "the creative sector accounts for thirteen percent of the city's total economic output.

In total, one out of every eight dollars of economic activity in the city that's \$110 billion in 2017, can be traced directly or indirectly to the sector." The arts are also a robust career pathway for New York City's students, as well as a generator of lifelong skills that enable them to thrive and gain enjoyment throughout their adulthood.

Our Arts Strategic Plan, which was developed over the course of a year with feedback from diverse stakeholders, including parents, students, teachers, school leaders, and representatives from higher education institutions and arts and cultural organizations, provides a forward-facing blueprint for fully realizing equitable access to a high quality, and sequential arts education.

1  
2       It underscores the centrality of increased hiring  
3 of certified arts teachers, who are the cornerstone  
4 of a high-quality arts education for all of our  
5 students. Thoughtful investment in school  
6 partnerships with local art and cultural  
7 organizations are also essential. And we are already  
8 taking steps to put pieces of this plan in motion,  
9 which must be coupled with dedicated funding to  
10 ensure that a quality arts education is a reality for  
11 all students from Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. I thank  
12 you for the opportunity to offer this testimony, and  
13 I look forward to answering any questions that you  
14 may have.

15       COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I think I figured out how to  
16 do it. Thank you Google, so just give me one second,  
17 I will try this one more time. And Chair, if you  
18 can't hear, just type in right away and let me know.  
19 [PLAYING VIDEO 27:58-30:50]. That was really good,  
20 back to you Chair.

21       CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I have to tell you Malcom  
22 that uh, and folks watching, in addition to my coffee  
23 this morning, I needed this this morning. This was  
24 awesome. So, big virtual round of applause for the  
25 amazing, extraordinary kids, students of our school

1  
2 system and their educators and all the organizations  
3 and everyone that really helped make that possible.  
4 That was really, that was really great.

5 Of course I love that scene with the Senators.  
6 That, we want our kids to become our leaders, that's  
7 wonderful. Really, really, great, powerful stuff.  
8 And now the task before us, is how do we ensure that  
9 these opportunities are equitable and across the  
10 entire city? Across every zip code? That's the work  
11 before us.

12 So, I will get right into questioning. Malcom,  
13 any additional members have joined us before I begin?

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Feliz,  
15 Gennaro, Rose and Louis.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Great, great, thank you.  
17 Thank you Malcom. So, I'll begin. Inadequate  
18 funding for arts education is a chronic problem that  
19 seems to have worsened in the past few years. In  
20 response to the fiscal uncertainty brought on by the  
21 pandemic, \$470.1 million was cut from DOE's Fiscal  
22 2021 budget including a \$15.5 million cut to middle  
23 and high school arts contracts that was not restored  
24 in the Fiscal 2022 budget. And while art  
25 supplemental funding through fair student funding

1  
2 totaled \$67.76 million in Fiscal '20. That  
3 allocation has decreased to \$65.35 million in Fiscal  
4 Year 2022. Can you give us the total amount of  
5 centrally allocated funding for arts education for  
6 Fiscal Year 2022?

7 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: It's the funding that makes  
8 it happen. It's essential to make the arts happen in  
9 our schools and we really are proud of the \$70  
10 million that was made available and of the \$350  
11 million academic recovery funding that went to  
12 schools as part of their academic recovery SAM this  
13 year, we were able to have \$70 million carved out and  
14 dedicated specifically to the arts in schools, not  
15 only do we believe the arts are essential but we  
16 believe we have to – that means we have to fund them  
17 if they are essential.

18 So, that's 20 percent of schools allocations.  
19 But with regard to the \$15.5 million that had been  
20 cut, and you're correct, it was cut to the Office of  
21 Arts and Special Projects. We advocated to have it  
22 restored and it was and again, that was cut when the  
23 city was as you are aware, in a severe fiscal crisis  
24 and there was a desire to try and minimize any impact  
25 on schools.

1  
2 And so, the central Office of Arts and Special  
3 Projects budget was cut. However, a lot of that  
4 money goes through us and goes directly to schools.  
5 So, we advocated strongly for its reinstatement and  
6 we're proud to say it was. Also, bringing the per  
7 capita Fair Student Funding to 100 percent this year,  
8 schools have increased funding to hire full-time  
9 certified artist teachers and we are seeing they are  
10 making the efforts to do so.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes, uhm, it was very -  
12 it's difficult to relive what the budget situation  
13 was a short time ago and we also were fighting very  
14 hard to save educator positions when many were on the  
15 verge of being lost, nowhere. But that it makes it  
16 that much more important that we're using the added  
17 resources from Washington opening the right way. So,  
18 can you provide a breakdown of any federal pandemic  
19 way of funding that has been allocated to arts  
20 instruction.

21 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Again, I would say that the  
22 stimulus funding, the ARPA funding, that \$70 million,  
23 that's one in every five dollars that was allocated  
24 directly to schools has been -there's a requirement  
25 that the school spend it on the arts. It's uh, I

1  
2 believe that it's essential to kids recovery and  
3 their social emotional wellness and we've never had  
4 anything like that before. We really are grateful to  
5 Chancellor Porter for making sure that that money  
6 happened for our schools. Uhm, that is entirely  
7 federal money that came through.

8 I'm going to defer to Trenton and Maria, our  
9 Executive Director of the Office of Arts and Special  
10 Projects and our Senior Director of that office to  
11 add any additional information.

12 MARIA PALMA: Thank you Larry and thank you Chair  
13 Treyger for your support along with your colleagues.  
14 It has meant so much to us and to our schools and to  
15 our students. I think that when Larry talks about  
16 the \$70 million, again, as somebody that has labored  
17 in the field of arts education for many, many years,  
18 I cannot begin to tell you how absolutely seismic and  
19 historic this investment has been. And it has really  
20 put us back on track and allowed school leaders to  
21 put the programs back on track in individual schools.

22 So, I think that's really very, very important to  
23 note and not only to put them back on track, but also  
24 to begin to grow them, which is what we want to be  
25 able to accomplish in order to meet our goals around



1 equity and universal access to a quality arts  
2 education for all of our students. The \$70 million  
3 investment is going to go directly toward student  
4 programs, towards materials and resources, toward the  
5 hiring of part-time and F-status teachers, toward  
6 professional learning for arts educators, for  
7 programs that may happen outside of school  
8 procession, costs. There are many students that do  
9 participate in after school activities, whether it be  
10 a play or a course, so it will cover that as well as  
11 rehearsals and practices.  
12

13 The wonderful performances that you saw in that  
14 video, which are really just a little snapshot of the  
15 incredible, incredible creativity and talent of our  
16 students citywide and the dedicated arts teachers who  
17 have worked so hard and committed school leaders who  
18 have really ensured that this happens in schools on  
19 behalf of their students.

20 Uhm, Trenton, is there anything else you want to  
21 add. I mean, I think it's also important to remember  
22 that there are other resources that are put together  
23 strategically in order to meet our end and goals  
24 around serving our students and ensuring them a full  
25 complement diverse education.

1  
2       So, for example, I know the City Council  
3       contributes significant funding in terms of the  
4       [INAUDIBLE 38:12] grants. Also, we were very blessed  
5       and fortunate this year in the city Artist Corp and  
6       Commissioner Casals, who granted \$6.5 million towards  
7       Summer Rising sites for mural and pop up arts  
8       performances. And that was really, really a catalyst  
9       to it bringing students back to in-person learning.

10       And I think really a very good example of what  
11       the partnership of interagency offices in the  
12       government, as well as legislative counsel and the  
13       administration can do when we put our heads and  
14       hearts together to work on behalf of our students.

15       Trenton, is there anything else we want to add in  
16       terms of budget points?

17       TRENTON PRICE: I'll just add one detail and that  
18       is, as Larry mentioned in the testimony that the \$70  
19       million ARPA funding in addition to the after school  
20       programs Maria mentioned and procession and direct  
21       student services and part-time teachers, is also an  
22       investment and able to be spent on materials,  
23       resources and equipment for student arts making.  
24       Which is a really sizable investment in ensuring for  
25

example, band programs can safely reopen with the number of instruments needed to do so.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So, just to kind of follow-up on that and I appreciate the answers. Do you have a sense that this federal funding is sort of trying to build back or to kind of reinforce support arts programs that were preexisting in school, in certain schools prior to the pandemic? Rather than talking about dramatic expansion of arts programs and the hiring of licensed art teachers to more schools? Are we kind of building back and reinforcing programs that were impacted in certain schools that had existing programs prior to the pandemic? Or are we talking about a dramatic expansion of new programs to new school across the city, particularly in under resourced communities?

LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: So, the funding is primarily about academic recovery for our kids. And this recovery for our city and that's the driving force. When we put together the allocation, the school allocation memo and we weighted the formulas, we weighted the distribution so that schools that were hardest hit, neighborhoods that were hardest hit, populations that were hardest hit by the

1  
2 pandemic, would receive more and equitable funding  
3 match their challenges.

4       How the schools are using it, and they do have  
5 flexibility as we indicated in our testimony. They  
6 can increase core instruction to students. They can  
7 purchase instruments. They can hire arts partners  
8 and work with vendors. Uhm, that is ongoing and I  
9 again, defer to Maria as to ways schools are  
10 approaching the use of funding.

11       MARIA PALMA: Thank you Larry. Absolutely  
12 accurate and correct, and I would like to add that we  
13 value and respect the ability of our school leaders  
14 to make those decisions that are best suited and  
15 responsive to their students and their school  
16 communities. So, we support those decisions. The  
17 arts office has been working very, very actively to  
18 provide the best possible guidance and support as  
19 school leaders make those decisions. And I believe  
20 that in part Chair Treyger, school leaders are doing  
21 both. I think that they're maintaining and bringing  
22 back those programs that may have been diminished a  
23 little bit but during the COVID and during the  
24 pandemic as well as taking the opportunity to grow  
25 and expand.

1  
2       So, the ARPA funding, the academic recovery  
3 funding, this again, historic, all caps, bold face,  
4 big headline, is not only being able to do that but  
5 let's remember as Larry mentioned, Fair Student  
6 Funding also has been raised. And I know that the  
7 Council worked very hard to bring those resources  
8 back to our schools. Those funds school leaders may  
9 be able to make full-time hires. And we are getting  
10 inquiries and our borough arts directors work one on  
11 one with school leaders in making those decisions and  
12 supporting them and seeing where they need to grow  
13 and expand their arts programs in order to provide  
14 greater equity for all students in all of the art  
15 forms at the elementary level. And according to  
16 state requirements at the middle and high school  
17 levels.

18       CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right.

19       MARIA PALMA: We have worked to be very specific  
20 in helping school leaders. We've created a one stop  
21 shopping so to speak, set of resources and links to  
22 help school leaders around understanding what the  
23 budget and the funds could be used for. The hiring,  
24 professional learning opportunities, a full  
25 compliment a suite, really anything you might need to

1  
2 know or have to do in order to grow your arts  
3 program. And again, the arts office and our borough  
4 arts directors and everyone are available to provide  
5 direct and ongoing support for school leaders and our  
6 arts teachers. This is so very, very, very  
7 important.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I appreciate those answers.  
9 It's just you know I'm familiar with Fair Student  
10 Funding. We fought very hard to get it to 100  
11 percent for every school, it's just that fair student  
12 funding is tied to enrollment has been impacted in  
13 some of our school communities. It's also tied to  
14 the average teacher salary. So, if a school you know  
15 and we want to retain our season veteran teachers.  
16 That's a good thing for school communities but as the  
17 salaries go up, so does the cost in terms of Fair  
18 Student Funding. So, in order to keep those  
19 teachers, they have to pay them, you know the school  
20 - the Fair Student Funding gets you know eaten up a  
21 little more.

22 So, that's why in my old high school when we were  
23 able to get them an increase a couple years ago in  
24 Fair Student Funding, it was mainly used just to  
25 retain the teachers that they already had. They were

1 not really able to hire that much more. Although now  
2 we do have some more resources and I'm interested in  
3 knowing because what I hear anecdotally and that's  
4 why I'd like to get some kind more factual empirical  
5 data is that, in some cases, the City Council CASA  
6 grants are the only arts program a school might have.  
7 And if folks have a different answer or a different  
8 picture on that, please let me know because uhm, I'll  
9 phrase it this way. You know besides centrally  
10 allocated funding for arts education, schools can  
11 receive grants for arts programming from a variety of  
12 sources, including cultural, afterschool, adventure,  
13 CASA funding from the City Council, support from PTA  
14 fund raising and other funding sources.

16 The differential funds that schools receive for  
17 the arts inevitably leads to disparities in program  
18 offerings. What is DOE doing to address inequities  
19 in arts program offerings among schools?

20 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Okay, again, addressing the  
21 inequities with this, with the \$70 million we did try  
22 to make sure that uh, not trying to make sure. We  
23 made sure that funding the schools was distributed on  
24 an equitable basis by building in weight that took  
25

1  
2 into account needs and those hardest hit by the  
3 pandemic.

4       There are other ways as well and Trenton and  
5 Maria, I know you have notes on this but we, through  
6 the Office of Arts and Special Projects, the programs  
7 are designed to help support those schools that  
8 struggle with, sometimes struggle meeting their arts  
9 requirements. And our Borough Arts Directors,  
10 prioritize those schools that have fewer resources  
11 but Maria?

12       MARIA PALMA: No, absolutely and I think it's  
13 important to note Chair and you know we take to heart  
14 the fact that we want each and every school and each  
15 and every student to be able to have what really is  
16 their birth right in terms of a robust arts  
17 education.

18       LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: That's right.

19       MARIA PALMA: I think that particularly just  
20 going back to the academic recovery money for a  
21 moment, even though those schools may not just  
22 because of the federal guidelines or a full-time arts  
23 teacher with that, they are able to strengthen and  
24 expand and grow their arts partnerships. Our  
25



1  
2 cultural partners are really an integral part of our  
3 plan to provide a quality arts education.

4       They work very closely with our school leaders  
5 and our school communities. They are an important  
6 part of the school community. And it also is  
7 important because there are opportunities for arts  
8 partners both large and small in every zip code to be  
9 part of the life of a school and of students in that  
10 community.

11       So, those funds could very clearly be used to  
12 grow existing arts instruction. And again, just  
13 going back to the idea of the certified teacher, it's  
14 so important to have that certified arts teacher in  
15 the school, because they are the anchor for arts  
16 education.

17       But in terms of addressing the equity issue, just  
18 a few things that I want to call to mind. First, we  
19 do produce over the last decade an annual arts in  
20 schools report. We have a survey. We have  
21 aggregated and disaggregated data which is made  
22 available to the City Council as per Local Law 123  
23 every February. We use that data and work closely  
24 with the Office of Compliance in analyzing it and  
25 focusing and targeting supports around those schools

1  
2 that may need that just to address exactly Chair what  
3 you are talking about.

4 In addition, every school has an individual arts  
5 report that's on their website, that's public facing.  
6 That becomes an opportunity quite honestly for even  
7 funders or arts partnerships to identify those areas  
8 that might be in need of additional supports. So,  
9 thereby, we're able to kind of drop in some extra  
10 supports to address some of those inequities.

11 We're also working on so many programs and I  
12 don't want to be tedious around this but there are so  
13 many aspects of addressing the needs of our students  
14 that we're attempting to address. We're working on  
15 the certified arts teacher fund. We've worked in  
16 District 31 this past several years around a pilot  
17 program to earn supplemental certification in the  
18 arts for cluster teachers that were not certified.  
19 Which we think is a really, really extremely  
20 important initiative that we would love to have  
21 support going forward to bring to every borough.

22 In addition, Larry mentioned the Arts Matter  
23 Initiative, which addressed the problems in the gaps  
24 in our middle schools. Because of course those are  
25 promotional requirements and very important. We've

1  
2 also in terms of addressing the equity issue, we've  
3 developed a middle school arts audition boot camp for  
4 Title One students to enable them to be prepared to  
5 audition for seats at audition high schools. That  
6 has been hugely successful. The placement rate has  
7 been over 90 percent of students who participated in  
8 that in terms of access.

9 I think too, it's important to recognize the  
10 important role that our funders and philanthropists  
11 play, in helping to catalyze those areas that can  
12 help us to think about further strategies in order to  
13 bring us closer to that equity goal post.

14 I would like to call out also Jody and John  
15 Arnhold Foundation and all of their extraordinary  
16 commitment to arts education in our city among other  
17 funders such as Paul Simon Family Foundation, Sobha  
18 Foundation and Miller Foundation and Studio in a  
19 School. The Arnhold is an excellent example because  
20 it really is a PreK to actually doctorate level  
21 support of dance education. And it becomes a very  
22 smart and strategic way to couple resources to  
23 maximize and leverage the results for students.

24 So, the Arnhold new teacher for Arts Supports for  
25 example will support a new dance teacher with

1 mentoring, with funds for a partnership grant to  
2 bring in particular genre of dance education that a  
3 new teacher might not be familiar with. So, it both  
4 bolsters their own content professional learning as  
5 well the experiences for our students.  
6

7 Uhm, Trenton and Larry spoke about the ArtSPACE  
8 grants. Those funds could be used to retrofit or  
9 build a new dance studio, so that our students have  
10 that dedicated space in which to learn.

11 So, that's really just an example of how the  
12 partnership can really work and certainly Chair  
13 Treyger, you spoke about your own investments in the  
14 Utrecht High School in the auditorium. And you know  
15 what, absolutely. That's a really wonderful story  
16 and a really great snapshot of what together we can  
17 do to meet these goals because your investment in the  
18 Utrecht High School is going to allow other Anthony  
19 Ramos's to come forth, alright.

20 And not only the stars and not only the  
21 celebrities because of course we want the students  
22 that want to follow that path as well but enabling  
23 each and every student to take for the rest of their  
24 lifetime an appreciation of the arts. And of the  
25 skills that you so eloquently Chair mentioned as the

contributions that Arts Education makes to our students around critical thinking, engaging students in academic achievement.

We also work with our MLL and students with disabilities around — we have pilot projects, we also the Arts Partnership Grants are specifically designated those resources to help schools develop programs and partnerships with our arts and cultural partners who are again outstanding in supporting the needs of MML students or students with disabilities. And also, family engagement grants, which we also think we want to involve our family. Nothing is a greater affirmation of a welcoming inclusive environment that everybody in a school community belongs to than when parents and families can come to a school building and see their students perform. Seeing dance, see their student art work in an exhibit. It is truly joy and joy is not a four letter word. Even though arts may be a four letter word.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: That's a really very powerful response and answer and just to be clear, I taught in Utrecht and the Anthony Ramos story inspired me to put in a big investment in John Dewey

1  
2 High School. Where they're building a state of the  
3 art Broadway inspired theatre auditorium that's in  
4 addition to a culinary arts center. And I think the  
5 story of Dewey needs to be shared more because when I  
6 took office, Dewey was on the verge of closure and I  
7 do want to acknowledge that the partnership with DOE  
8 and my office and the leadership at DOE but the  
9 school because of the investments in the arts,  
10 culinary arts, they have a beautiful culinary  
11 kitchen. A Broadway theatre that's in the works and  
12 other great projects and the great staff. Their  
13 enrollment, it used to be 600 kids back in 2014.  
14 Their enrollment is now over 2,400 students and that  
15 is with the investments in the arts, investments in  
16 our school communities. Dewey is thriving because we  
17 did not give up and we invested in our school.

18 So, that's - it's a very powerful story to share.  
19 Can someone just - if they have data, does every  
20 public school in New York City have at least one  
21 licensed art teacher?

22 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: We are close. I don't  
23 think - Trenton, do you have the exact numbers there?

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You're unmuted Trenton but I  
25 hear a little static coming.

1  
2 TRENTON PRICE: I apologize, can you hear me  
3 better now?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, thank you.

5 TRENTON PRICE: Uhm, the vast majority of our  
6 schools do have certified arts teachers. So, looking  
7 here at the numbers, it looks like about 25 percent  
8 of elementary schools do not have a certified arts  
9 teacher. Seven percent of middle schools and nine  
10 percent of high school, so a total of 17 percent  
11 across the system, which is something we are  
12 continuing to work on and I think we've seen huge  
13 growth over the last number of years, especially with  
14 the investment from this Administration Arts  
15 Education and there's certainly more work to do with  
16 that.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And I would just that I  
18 don't think just from my advantage point, I don't  
19 think we can rely simply on Fair Student Funding to  
20 get that done. As I mentioned before, Fair Student  
21 Funding is tied to enrollment and one of the first  
22 priorities is to you know ensure that they keep the  
23 staff, which they have, especially the veteran  
24 experienced educators. And also, to be more blunt  
25 about it, uhm, the way that the system is structured

1  
2 you know one of the reasons why the Utrecht brought  
3 us to teach, how to challenge in the theatre program  
4 was because resources were not always provided but  
5 New York State and the government kept asking about  
6 its Regents scores and the Regents examination.

7       So, things were tailored towards compliance in  
8 terms of where, you know I have a saying that my  
9 staff hears me say. You know, if it's being  
10 measured, it's going to be invested in. I'll say  
11 that again. If it's being measured, it's going to be  
12 invested in. And so, the arts, when New York State  
13 sends you know what's called a Joint Intervention  
14 Taskforce or JIT it was called. Or when the big  
15 shots came in from the city, there were not questions  
16 about the arts. You show them auditorium where  
17 Anthony Ramos's career was born, there was no you  
18 know, box to check on a principals performance you  
19 know checklist. They asked about you know Regent  
20 scores, how many ninth graders moving to the tenth  
21 grade and so forth.

22       So, if we really want to invest meaningfully in  
23 the arts and schools in a sustainable fashion, we  
24 need to kind of measure it. We need to ensure that  
25 this is here for the long haul. And that's something



1  
2 that's a part of a conversation between the city and  
3 the state quite frankly because there needs to be a  
4 sustainable path of funding to ensure that we really  
5 care about the arts across all schools. Because with  
6 CASA just to kind of give you further context, I know  
7 it very well because we've given CASA's in my  
8 districts and I'm proud to report that all the  
9 schools in my district, we were the hardest hit  
10 before the pandemic. Everyone has a CASA, my  
11 elementary schools in Coney Island but they limit how  
12 many kids can participate in the program due to the  
13 funding on that. So, they can cap it to like 100,  
14 150 kids when more kids want to be a part of the  
15 program and they are wildly popular programs.

16 So, I have always and I thank my colleagues in  
17 the Council who have always been supportive of CASA  
18 but we need to have more than just CASA. We need to  
19 have a sustainable stream of funding dedicated to the  
20 hiring of licensed art educators, programs across the  
21 board.

22 I want to get very quickly to in addition to the  
23 arts, extracurricular activities and I know that  
24 we've also been joined by Seth, who I have much, much  
25 respect for. Particularly, Seth has a history in

Lincoln High School in Southern Brooklyn and appreciate that.

Seth, we, uh high school sports programs were shut down when schools closed in well, physical buildings March 2020 but they resumed in April 2021. Are PSLA teams and programs back up and running with a full component of teams or has there been a reduction in teams and sports offered?

SETH SCHOENFELD: Thank you Chair Treyger for that question and thank you for your continued support of PSAL and the scholastic sports throughout the city. It's been amazing over the course of my time here to be able to work with you, the Committee, our advocates, specifically our students advocates on building robust interscholastic sports programming throughout the city.

I am happy to say that at this point, all of our sports and all of our programs are active. We have brought a full array [INAUDIBLE 1:01:05]. Uhm, and we work extremely closely with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to ensure that our schools will be some of the safest places to be during the pandemic because of our multilayered safety measures to bring sports back to our school community safer.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Seth, good answer. And also, I think if someone is not unmuted, just because the answers are coming in a little bit fuzzy.

Uhm, Seth, we were able in the last budget to provide an allocation of – a greater allocation towards PSAL with the goal of insuring that you know every school, every community has access to PSAL program. I also want to say for the record, we still have more work to do. I've said it then, I'll say it again. I think we need even more money into PSAL if we really want to have true and lasting equity.

But Seth, can you give us kind of just an update from where you see things from your end of the world about ensuring that every school has that opportunity. Every kid from every zip code has the opportunity to participate in PSAL program?

SETH SCHOENFELD: Again, Chair Treyger, I would not be telling the full story if I didn't pause for a second and say thank you so much for that support in getting those resources and the work with those student advocates and advocates in this community to make sure that they have the resources that were planned, that ensured every school enrolled in grades

1  
2 nine through twelve, general high school, did have  
3 access and do have access to sports programming.

4 Uhm, the new budget is allowing us to add 200  
5 teams as well as introducing or scaling our All  
6 Access program, which includes shared models where a  
7 number of schools in closed geographic proximity to  
8 come together to participate on one PSAL program, as  
9 well as individual access, where a student can opt in  
10 to playing on a team of their choice, even if their  
11 home school or program does not have that sport  
12 normally or traditionally available to them.

13 This All Access program, with the support of the  
14 resources just mentioned, will allow for every  
15 student not only to have access and I think that this  
16 is a really important point. Not only are we getting  
17 access to every student enrolled in those 912 high  
18 schools, but also robust access. So, it's not just  
19 about saying we checked the box and got a team to  
20 them but we're also creating innovative ways to make  
21 sure they have access to a robust offering of  
22 interscholastic sports and we have started that work.  
23 We have started delivering those teams. We started  
24 delivering new programs to those schools that  
25 historically have had limited to access and we're

excited to scale up that work over the course of the next three years.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And Seth, if I heard you correctly, you mentioned that there are 200 new teams as a result of these resources. Is that correct?

SETH SCHOENFELD: Over the next three years, we will offer 200 new teams.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Uhm and are these — these are for schools that previously — are we capturing the schools that previously did not have a PSAL program? Is that right.

SETH SCHOENFELD: Yes. Yes and not just had no program but had limited to access to programming. So, we have a group of schools who did not have access that are now have all been contacted and either already have new teams and programs going or in the process of getting their new teams. As well as focusing on a number of schools that have had programming but limited access to programming and increasing them since they are being offered through new team allocation as well as shared access.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And Seth and we're ensuring that these are, these are — can you give me some examples of what kind of teams we're talking about,

ensuring that these are also; they are girls teams?

Boys? Can you elaborate on that?

SETH SCHOENFELD: Yeah, so I think that that's a great question because we really revamped the way new team allocation happens. Historically, a new team application was conducted by school administration who felt that they wanted to bring a new team to their school community.

Uh, and then based upon available resources of the PSAL teams were approved or denied. And usually the available resources could only approve approximately ten percent of the annual funding available for new teams. What we've done now, is we are using data informed decisions – sorry data to go out to the schools with the most limited access to sports teams.

Focus on the schools that have historically had no or limited access and we're saying to them, we want to give you new teams. What we ask is that you survey your students. Let the student voice, what the interest of the students are in what teams should the school have be the driving force behind what teams we offer.

1  
2       Once we have the data based upon the student  
3 surveys, we talk to school administration. We're  
4 focused on Title nine compliance, making sure that we  
5 have equitable distribution of teams for both our  
6 mail and female team allocation. Making sure that  
7 the team will adequately meet the needs of the school  
8 community and to the best of our ability, ensure high  
9 participation rates.

10       CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well, that's - I appreciate  
11 that answer Seth and also, on the topic of Dewey High  
12 School, again, I go back to my district but very  
13 proud. We have a very successful girls soccer group  
14 at DOE called the Dragons and they also showed me the  
15 conditions of their field, which is not in great  
16 shape. We put an allocation of \$3 million for a  
17 brand new field for the Dewey Dragons to have a great  
18 soccer program and other great programs but thank you  
19 Seth for that answer and also, again for the record,  
20 to my colleagues, now and in the next Council, next  
21 administration and also, I am not retiring. This is  
22 in my blood. We need more money for PSAL. We need  
23 more money for the arts and extracurriculars. This  
24 is a top, top priority for a variety of reasons but I  
25 also think that if there's one connective tissue that

1  
2 connects whether it's a sports program, the arts,  
3 extracurriculars, you name it. To hear our kids say,  
4 this is the program. This is what kept me in school.  
5 This is why I kept coming back to school. This is  
6 what saved me and was a turning point in my life.  
7 So, I really hope for the day that we almost stop  
8 referring to them as extracurricular and just refer  
9 to them as the lifeblood of the school. That a  
10 school cannot function without these critical  
11 programs in place. That's how critical they are.

12 Uhm, just a quick follow-up question to the panel  
13 and if any of my colleagues have questions  
14 afterwards. Uhm, question about uhm, we know that  
15 extracurricular activities such as student  
16 government, student newspapers, cultural groups,  
17 student clubs, are created, funded in one by  
18 individual schools.

19 Uhm, does the DOE track the number and type of  
20 extracurricular activities offered at schools?

21 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: We do not Chair track it  
22 essentially. As you know that it's driven by student  
23 interest that evolves and faculty capacity and  
24 availability. Uhm, so that the schools themselves do  
25 of course carefully track it and it's identified in



1  
2 the high school directory etc., and other you know  
3 admissions materials. But centrally, because of the  
4 ever evolving nature of those activities, currently  
5 we don't track them.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah, and I would just  
7 respectfully add to that, that generally speaking,  
8 students are interested in these critical activities  
9 and programs.

10 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Yes, they are.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: The issue has always been  
12 funding and that's where again, you know there's an  
13 equity concern question here because there are  
14 certain schools that could raise \$1 million through  
15 PTA fundraising and there are many schools that  
16 cannot. And that will you know, because that leads  
17 to my next question. There are events and activities  
18 that are highly motivational for students such as  
19 school trips, dances, talent shows, carnivals,  
20 competitions, which they compete in and do you keep  
21 track of those types of offerings in schools? Or you  
22 are saying no to as well?

23 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Centrally, we don't keep  
24 track. Essentially, we do support both of those  
25 right. So, whether that's through say, MSQI, which

1  
2 has been generously supported by the Council; I'm a  
3 witness to that at their debate activities have been  
4 tremendous and really need that continued support.  
5 There are other debate activities as well right in  
6 the civics for all, office within our broader  
7 teaching learning office.

8 That pushes all of the extracurricular activities  
9 you are referring to. As far as overall tracking,  
10 central tracking. No, to answer your question, that  
11 doesn't happen centrally but the support does.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: This you know, trying to  
13 frame this carefully. Uhm, some might feel well,  
14 Treyger, you know why does this matter? Why does the  
15 school trip matter? Why does a school club or a  
16 competition matter? It matters for a lot of reasons.  
17 Again, it reconnects kids to their school community.  
18 It builds a sense of community in their school.

19 Uhm, it adds to school culture and it positively  
20 shapes school climate, which are all factors in  
21 keeping kids in school, increasing attendance rates  
22 and improving academic social emotional outcomes.

23 So, it's all connected. It does matter. The  
24 concern of the issue is that not every school offers  
25 these opportunities and I do think at DOE, at

1  
2 minimum, we should have a better sense of what's  
3 happening because uhm, there's a real equity concern  
4 here. And I do think that we have a role to play in  
5 ensuring that these opportunities – because there are  
6 certain schools that could raise money in one night  
7 to send their kids to Europe for competitions and  
8 there are certain schools that have to go to Go Fund  
9 pages for basic things. Uhm, and that does concern  
10 me.

11 I have a question also about graduations and  
12 other types of celebrations. Graduation ceremonies  
13 and accompanying celebrations, such as proms were  
14 cancelled entirely in 2020 due to the pandemic. This  
15 was particularly you know; this had a great impact  
16 for high school seniors who were unable to celebrate  
17 this once in a lifetime milestone event with family  
18 and friends. New guidance was issued in April 2021,  
19 permitting graduations to resume effective May 1,  
20 2021, with restrictions depending upon type of venue  
21 or capacity.

22 Considering that many schools are already booking  
23 venues or trying to book venues already at this time,  
24 for the spring, does DOE know how many schools held  
25 in-person in ceremonies in 2021? Are you aware of

any problems that arose from the guidelines? And where are schools at for next spring, if you have any information on that?

LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Uh, throughout the pandemic, we've been committed to supporting schools and finding meaningful ways to celebrate their students. We absolutely want them to have their proms. We absolutely want them to have their graduations. We are not aware of issues that arose last year but we — and as far as to your question about the exact number in nature of the different events, we can get you that information. Superintendents to have it, so we're happy to get back to you with that.

And obviously, we want these and expect these events to happen to happen in the spring. We're really excited about it. Yes, we may need to continue with some of the mitigating efforts that we put in place to make sure our extracurricular activities, PSAL, our arts programs continue. Some of those may continue but we want our — everyone back and celebrating appropriately and that includes in-person proms and in-person graduations this spring.

1  
2 And to your point sir, if I may go back. You  
3 mentioned Dewey and the success of Dewey, and to your  
4 point, like what gets funded gets measured and what  
5 gets measured gets funded and you know, we received  
6 quite a bit of guidance from the federal government  
7 around out funding and flexibility. And we did  
8 receive guidance about the importance of mask  
9 intervention, academic intervention, English but  
10 there was not a requirement to support the arts. So,  
11 we created that and we thank just – we really need to  
12 thank Chancellor Porter for making sure that  
13 happened. And we need to continue telling stories of  
14 Dewey. The arts and supports programs, they're a big  
15 factor in the school turn around. They really are.

16 Thank you for mentioning it. Thank you for  
17 supporting it and we need to keep telling that story,  
18 so thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Oh, believe me, those who  
20 know me, I will keep telling the story from every  
21 format, every meeting.

22 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Please.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Uh, because I've seen it  
24 firsthand. We didn't have reinvent the wheel. We  
25 just invested in a school and never gave up on the

1  
2 school. And again, I am — it's not the extras you  
3 know. If I was to — those who follow me on social  
4 media, I sometimes share what students at Dewey are  
5 working on, even after school hours; baking, like  
6 making gourmet meals. These are like five star  
7 restaurant quality creations happening where kids are  
8 choosing to stay in their school even after school  
9 finishes. They are choosing to do this because  
10 they've built a sense of community and they are proud  
11 to showcase that work and when the new feeder comes  
12 up, as Anthony Ramos would explain to me, there's no  
13 other place he'd rather be than be on that stage  
14 rehearsing with his fellow peers.

15       So, we had kids engage in meaningful programs,  
16 building a network and friendships and Seth knows and  
17 Seth's father knows who is a coach at Lincoln as  
18 well, who we know. How many players turn to their  
19 coaches that became like a father figure to them?  
20 And kept — and I was a high school teacher, coaches  
21 would come to my class and say, how is this student  
22 doing? Let's make — Treyger, if he's not doing his  
23 homework, you know, they checked in on them.

24       That's what we're talking about here. It's so  
25 much more than just — it needs to be the lifeblood of

1  
2 the school. That's the key part and uh, but I would  
3 say this Mr. Pendergast that, I do think that it does  
4 make a difference when someone from DOE comes into a  
5 school and asks, well, let's talk about what program  
6 offerings we have. Because as you've pointed out, if  
7 it's not measured or discussed, it's rarely really  
8 invested in. And these are the types of – these are  
9 questions that really typically don't happen.

10 I have sat through a number of visits from the  
11 powers that be, so to speak. I've never rarely, this  
12 is going back to my teaching days. This was before  
13 this current Administration but I would rarely hear  
14 questions about the arts being asked and it was  
15 mainly about compliance and so forth.

16 So, I – just, I think it's important to note that  
17 and I also want to give a shoutout and applaud for  
18 Chancellor Porter because I – and I was saving this  
19 towards the closing of my hearing but I'll say some  
20 remarks now, that she took on this role during an  
21 impossible time and she made a lot of choices to  
22 double down on investments and support for children.  
23 And is a believer in the public school system. And I  
24 want to repeat that again. She is a believer in  
25 public schools. That might sound like a simple

statement, but we cannot under estimate the gravity of that statement because we've had people historically have not always been believers in the public school system.

And so, I certainly want to acknowledge her service to the city and from -- she came from the bottom to the top. Educator to become Chancellor our school system. We thank her immensely for her work particularly in this moment that we're in. To kind of get schools the support which they need during this challenging time. Uhm, and so, I do want to publicly acknowledge and thank her for her service and to her team.

And with that, Malcom are there any members or colleagues that have any additional questions?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Well, we were joined by Council Member Dinowitz and Ampry-Samuel and there are no Zoom hands raised.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Okay, so, we have a lot more work to do folks. I think those who know me, I, as I mentioned in my opening statement, I will give credit where it's due but I am going to go very -- I'll go very intense in terms of areas where we have to do better. And I want to thank the panel for



1  
2 their service. We have a lot more work to do on this  
3 front and I will never stop pushing for more money to  
4 have a sustainable stream of funding to support these  
5 programs across every zip code in New York City.

6 Thank you all for your service. Thank you for  
7 your time today.

8 LAWRENCE PENDERGAST: Thank you Chair.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair, now we are  
10 going to turn to the public portion of our program.  
11 I just want to remind every one that you will called  
12 on. A member of our staff will unmute you and Zoom  
13 will prompt you to accept the unmute. Everyone will  
14 have two minutes to give the salient points of their  
15 testimony. We ask that testimony in full be emailed  
16 to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov) and we accept it for up  
17 to 72 hours after the close of this hearing.

18 So, for panel one, we have Mario Asaro, the New  
19 York City Art Teachers Association, Ellen McHugh  
20 AHRC, Keith Kaminski, BRIC, also New York City Arts  
21 and Education Roundtable and Ava Kinsey Brooklyn  
22 Academy of Arts, New York City Arts and Education  
23 Roundtable member. I'm going to first turn to Ava  
24 Kinsey if we can go ahead and unmute her because she  
25 has to step out in just a few moments.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

AVA KINSEY: Good morning. Excuse me, I just lost my words. Good morning. New York is a home for artists. A home for students. An ecosystem of arts education has fed and nourished our students and our city and I come before you today just to let you know that funding like ARPA funding continues to keep that ecosystem alive. Continues to make sure that our young people are heard, seen and felt in their classrooms. By their teachers and also by vendors, teaching artists and arts educators who continue to sustain, support and aid the work being done by classroom teachers.

Again, I'm from the Brooklyn Academy of Music and in 2020, the Brooklyn Academy music's education department was the anchor and the cornerstone of our institution.

This was because as we know stages were hit hard at that time, and so several of our shows were postponed due to the pandemic. However, our education department was continued and was allowed to thrive because our young people continue to show up and many of them stated that this type of virtual communication and connection helped them to have some

1  
2 type of normalcy during the pandemic. It centered  
3 them and made them feel seen both in our in school  
4 residencies and our afterschool programs. And it  
5 continued to help them to process what it is that was  
6 happening during the pandemic.

7 I come to you today to appeal to you to continue  
8 funding like ARPA for arts education. This ecosystem  
9 that I speak of starts in this room today, this Zoom  
10 today. We can continue to fund and nurture programs  
11 like those of them and those that my colleagues are  
12 also representing.

13 I thank you for your time and I just want to  
14 continue to undergird that New York is a home for  
15 artists and it starts in the classroom. Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ava and next, we  
17 will turn to Mario Asaro, the New York City Art  
18 Teachers Association UFT.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 MARIO ASARO: Hi, thank you. Can you hear me?

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can.

22 MARIO ASARO: Alright, good morning and thank  
23 you. My name is Mario Asaro, I currently serve as  
24 the Executive Chair of the UFT's Art Education  
25

Professional Committee, the New York City Art Teachers Association.

In 2020 and 2021, we had two separate citywide student initiatives, artists in masks that was cosponsored with COPE NYC and the Brooklyn Borough Presidents Office. Eric Adams was our incoming mayor, as well as an exhibitor for students work called Inside Outsides, which allowed young artists to respond to the COVID pandemic through their art and writing.

We saw over 300 art educators participate in our citywide survey of going back to school after the pandemic and their concerns, fears, hopes and challenges were shared and addressed both by Karen Rosner of the Office of Art and Special Projects as well as the UFT. All of these initiatives can be found on our website which is nycata.com.

Today, I want to talk about what is important. One thing is crucial for the arts, as for arts positions for licensed teachers and of course classroom supplies. I thank our city leaders who are working to secure that and safeguard such funds. But the point I'd like to make today is that the pandemic has made it clear that class size is also a public

1 health issue and it hasn't been since 1938 at the  
2 last time that the city actually set limits for class  
3 size in New York City.

4 I'd like to uhm, excuse me. I want to urge our  
5 city leaders and policy makers to support legislation  
6 that will have the greatest impact on classroom  
7 teachers. Teachers who are conspicuously absent from  
8 today's hearings because they are doing what I have  
9 done and we all have done for years, which is  
10 teaching.

11 The issue has always been class size and the  
12 frustration on how to reach and engage students and  
13 have engagement for over 30 plus students in -

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 MARIO ASARO: 30 minute block. So, I am urging  
16 middle school - as a middle school art teacher myself  
17 for over 30 years, I would urge our City Council to  
18 think about legislation, which has always made the  
19 biggest difference. It hasn't been just our salaries  
20 and budgets and materials; it's been the frustration  
21 of having to deal with large groups of children who  
22 look to you to engage and to make their lives more  
23 meaningful and connect them to school. And it's  
24 almost impossible in today's day and age, as well as  
25

1  
2 with the issues of health and safety, to do that on a  
3 large scale way. And as a teacher for over 30 years  
4 and a representative of the Art Teachers Association,  
5 I would say that class size is the one thing that  
6 would have made my job of 30 plus years in the New  
7 York City school systems the most important thing and  
8 the most effective way to connect to students and to  
9 have them engaged. Thank you for your time.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next if we can  
11 go ahead and unmute Ellen McHugh, we'll turn to  
12 Ellen.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 ELLEN MCHUGH: Good morning and thank you for the  
15 opportunity to talk about this. I want to give you  
16 my personal experience as the parent of an individual  
17 with a disability who participated in sports teams at  
18 Telecommunication High Schools. Without that social  
19 and emotional support, he would have been isolated in  
20 that building. He was one of only three children who  
21 had a hearing loss. And that made all the difference  
22 in his high school experience. It even allowed him  
23 to find the date. Which as a mother, you sometimes  
24 worry about but the issue is that he felt that he was  
25 part of a community.

Continuing the funding for sports programs and expanding that funding would be a gift and a half to put it mildly but I would urge all of you who are there to make an extra effort to include those individuals who are not always included. Children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, children with autism. The programs for those children are small and I would urge you to look to include them of course would also mean that if this is an after school program for many of these children, they would be busing.

So, there are complications to this but creating a social and emotional support, especially at this time would certainly be a benefit in all cases for all children and I appreciate the effort. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And Ellen, I want to thank you for always being a voice for all our kids and its been an honor, I mean it, an honor to work with you and we'll continue to work together and also, just to note, uhm, for those who follow my social media, I occasionally post a picture of the amazing creations from the Dewey Culinary Kitchen.

1  
2       What I'll add here, is that Dewey has what's  
3       called an Aces program where children with IEP's are  
4       involved there. They are creating and again, as a  
5       foody, I'm a foody. They are creating master pieces.  
6       Not just creations, they are master pieces and that's  
7       why as a teacher, I feel this in my bones, that kids  
8       who have been labeled with special needs really have  
9       special talents that our system must work to bring  
10      out. And that's the task before us. So, thank you.  
11     Thank you so much for your work and your advocacy.  
12     Thank you so much.

13       COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ellen. Next, for  
14      this panel we will hear from Keith Kaminski BRIC,  
15      also New York City Arts and Education Roundtable.

16       The following panel, just so people can get ready  
17      will be Kati Koerner Lincoln Center Theater, Judith  
18      Insell Bronx Arts Ensemble, Kimberly Olsen New York  
19      City Arts and Education Roundtable and Lynda Kennedy  
20      Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum. We will now turn  
21      to Keith Kaminski.

22       SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

23       KEITH KAMINSKI: Good morning all and thank you  
24      for this opportunity. I come to you today wearing a  
25      few different hats: I am the Senior Director of



1  
2 Education and Family programs at BRIC, a Board Member  
3 of the New York City Arts in Education Roundtable,  
4 and also a CUNY grad student completing a thesis  
5 project focusing on the relationships between city  
6 agencies and arts and cultural nonprofits for arts  
7 education services in public schools.

8 For over 20 years, it has been my sincere  
9 pleasure to work to help expand opportunities for  
10 learning in the arts for the city's students and  
11 families. When schools shut down back in March of  
12 2020, we reached out to our school and community  
13 partners to see how we could be of service. In June,  
14 BRIC launched One Brooklyn TV, a project in  
15 collaboration with the DOE to broadcast 15 hours per  
16 week of educational content on our HD cable channel.

17 This work continues, and to date, we have  
18 broadcast well over 800 hours of content for students  
19 and families. At the same time, we were notified by  
20 the DOE that all existing purchase orders for arts  
21 residencies would be halted for the remainder of the  
22 school year and that the process of renewing our MTAC  
23 vendor contract would also be paused. This has  
24 caused significant loss of revenue we had been  
25 counting on and our vendor contract has still yet to

be finalized now over two years after submitting our proposal.

Since this summer, we have also seen a significant slowdown in the processing of DOE fingerprinting clearances for staff, which has been a serious issue. We understand that we are all continuing to navigate through difficult times, and that these challenges have had negative consequences, not only for my organization, but also the field at large.

With the ARPA funding and the restoration of city budget cuts this year, now we are seeing increased demand for services. This means a lot more work for teaching artists, which is great because they experienced many of the worst financial impacts of the pandemic, but it also means increased workloads for administrative staff and more pressure on our own fundraising efforts. The funds we receive from the DOE and DCLA for arts education programs require that we supplement with our own revenues, in order to have adequate resources for successful program delivery.

As a field we are used to some degree of fluctuation –

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1  
2 KEITH KAMINSKI: I urge you to consider  
3 reinstating the practice of a dedicated line item in  
4 each school's budget, previously known as Project  
5 ARTS. I also urge the DOE to prioritize funding for  
6 schools that do not have a certified arts teacher on  
7 staff or those without existing cultural  
8 partnerships. NYC is the center of arts and culture;  
9 we absolutely should not have public school students  
10 in our city who do not receive arts instruction.  
11 Thank you again, and I look forward to sharing  
12 additional findings from my thesis research project  
13 in the near future.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and I just want to  
15 remind Council Members that are still present in the  
16 Zoom, to use the Zoom raise hand function if you have  
17 questions for any of the panelists. We'll call on  
18 you after the conclusion of the panel.

19 The next panel we are now going to go to uhm, we  
20 will first hear from Kati Koerner from Lincoln Center  
21 Theater.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 KATI KOERNER: Hi, my name is Kati Koerner and I  
24 am the Hiltz Director of Education at Lincoln Center  
25 Theater. Like Keith, I'm also a Board Member of the

1  
2 New York City Arts and Education Roundtable, and a  
3 parent of an 8<sup>th</sup> grader in a New York City public  
4 middle school.

5 I'd really like to thank Chair Treyger and the  
6 Education Committee for this opportunity to testify  
7 and for your strong support of arts education in our  
8 schools. I'd also like to thank Chancellor Porter  
9 and the Department of Education for their foresight  
10 in earmarking \$70 million of federal ARPA dollars  
11 specifically for arts education. These critical  
12 resources are making it possible for organizations  
13 like Lincoln Center Theater to use the arts to  
14 address the ongoing academic and social-emotional  
15 impact of the pandemic on the 4,800 young people in  
16 35 middle and high schools who Lincoln Center Theater  
17 will serve this year.

18 As we all know, students in New York City's  
19 schools are still processing so much loss while  
20 having to adjust to an ever-shifting series of new  
21 normals. As Souleymane, a student from Emma Lazarus  
22 High School who arrived in the United States from  
23 Guinea-Bissau two and a half years ago and who we  
24 worked with on a semester long project, to help Emma  
25 Lazarus fulfill an arts requirement for their

1  
2 students in spring 2021 told us, "Theater can help  
3 you deal with your anxiety, something that I'm still  
4 dealing with."

5 The arts are a means for students like Souleymane  
6 to process difficult emotions, engage with their  
7 school communities, develop a sense of craft, and  
8 deepen their academic engagement. So, like schools,  
9 theaters are doing everything to keep people safe.  
10 However, right now, the lack of a vaccination  
11 requirement in schools effectively bars students from  
12 accessing cultural institutions such as Lincoln  
13 Center Theater that require proof of vaccination for  
14 entry.

15 The current DOE field trip guidance is unclear  
16 and inequitable, as not all students are able to  
17 access extracurricular field trips due to work or  
18 family commitments, or because it's simply dangerous  
19 for them to travel home after dark. A vaccination  
20 requirement for students would ensure —

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 KATI KOERNER: That young people can once again  
23 receive equitable access to live theater and  
24 integrate that experience in their academic learning.  
25 Thank you so much.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Kati, I apologize for mispronouncing your name. Uhm, next we will turn to Judith Insell, the Bronx Arts Ensemble.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

JUDITH INSELL: Chair Treyger, honorable members of the City Council, thank you for allowing me to speak today. My name is Judith Insell and I am the Executive Director of the Bronx Arts Ensemble.

As a cultural arts partner, Bronx Arts Ensemble provides contracted services to annually 40 plus New York City Department of Education schools in the Bronx, presenting culturally responsive arts education in the four arts disciplines of music, dance, theater of visual arts, and upwards of 5,000 of primarily BIPOC students and employing 60-80 primarily BIPOC professional teaching artists.

Arts education is essential. During the height of the pandemic, BA quickly modified its curriculum making it possible to present students with more than 25 diverse course offerings online and in person.

Unfortunately, it was at that point that arts education was deemed nonessential regarding funding and school principals disengaged would be as an AIE vendor on a large level, which required BA to

1  
2 terminate services to approximately 30 public school  
3 partners and furlough 80 percent of our teaching  
4 artist staff.

5 With the introduction of the American Rescue Plan  
6 ARPA Act, BAE has been able to return to our  
7 prepandemic services of 40 plus Bronx schools,  
8 engaging with returning and new DOE partnering  
9 schools. Bronx Arts Ensemble urgently asks the City  
10 Council to aid the DOE in maintaining the high level  
11 of the budgetary funds needed to engage the  
12 approximately one million public school students  
13 systemwide.

14 As reported in a February 2019 study prepared by  
15 the Rice Kinder Institute for Urban Research,  
16 researchers found arts learning experiences benefit  
17 students –

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

19 JUDITH INSELL: In terms of reductions in  
20 disciplinary infractions increases in compassion for  
21 others and improvements in writing achievement.

22 Furthermore, arts education experiences improve  
23 school engagement and college aspirations. As our  
24 city continues to tackle the challenges of an ongoing  
25 pandemic, we know that our Bronx students are healing

and learning to move forward with their lives through experiencing the rich support of social, emotional learning through arts education.

We also know that if there is to be a future of culturally diverse art making in New York City, we need to ensure that our most underserved populations of Black and Brown students have access to arts education.

Please seriously consider the great need to continue the highest level of funding possible for our arts education programs. Again, thank you for allowing me to present my statement today.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Judith and next we will turn to Kimberly Olsen, New York City Arts and Education Roundtable.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

KIMBERLY OLSEN: Great. Thank you Chair Treyger and the Committee on Education for your leadership and commitment to arts education. A special thank you to also Maria, Trenton and the entire Office of Arts and Special Projects who work tirelessly for our young people.

My name is Kimberly Olsen and I am the proud Executive Director of the New York City Arts and



Education Roundtable and also a Teaching Artist working at P396K in Brownsville.

The Roundtable is a nonprofit service organization working to improve and advance arts education here in New York City schools and beyond. First and foremost, we wish to thank Chancellor Porter for her historic investment in standard spaced arts education at via the academic recovery.

By prioritizing arts education, the DOE helps to ensure that our city's young people have the rigor encouragement and inspiration that they need to thrive and learn in today's classroom. Now, while we celebrate this as a step forward, we recognize that it is a temporary one. It has been 20 years since the No Child Left Behind Act defined the arts as a core academic subject, and six years since Every Student Succeeds Act declared the arts as part of a well-rounded education.

However, in this great city of New York, we have not yet defined how to sustain arts education for all students. After this school year, what next? Under-investment in Arts Education has been recurrent. Prior to COVID, 67 percent of principals noted funding for the arts was generally insufficient. And

65 percent of New York City middle schoolers were not meeting the state requirements in Arts Learning by the end of their eighth grade year.

And currently, there is no requirement that schools must spend that Arts Supplemental Funding for Fair Student Funding on the arts, it's only a recommendation. We seek City Council's help to make it possible for all students to receive an education that they need and deserve. To achieve universal access to arts education, we believe that the city must work with the DOE to reinstate required fundings for arts learning similar to Project Arts. Prioritize funding the Office of Arts and Special Projects Strategic Plan to set us on the path for closing the equity gap.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

KIMBERLY OLSEN: Increase accountability by mandating that the arts be part of every school's Comprehensive Education Plan. And establish a policy to increase the hiring and availability of certified arts educators. Every school deserves a certified arts teacher. Thank you so much for your time and consideration today and for hosting this hearing.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Kimberly and finally on this panel, we will hear from Lynda Kennedy, Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

LYNDA KENNEDY: As the VP Of Education and Evaluation at Intrepid and as a New York City public school parent, I want to thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony and let me also say how much the support of the Department of Education Office of Arts and Special Projects, the DCLA and the City Council is appreciated.

While we are not usually thought of as an institution that delivers arts instruction, Intrepid Museums programs regularly integrate the arts. We see history, science and art as interconnected for inspiring curiosity, wonder and creative solutions to 21st century challenges. We see ourselves as part of the educational ecosystem in New York City for both in school and out of school time programming.

Like many others here, during COVID, we had launched virtual programs including school focused classes serving 13,000 students and teachers and drop-in virtual family programs serving over 11,000 kids and parents who were hungry for things to do.

1  
2 We offered virtual CASA programs for ten schools,  
3 delivered a free virtual summer program for girls  
4 exploring stem and steam content and careers. And a  
5 virtual maker camp for students with developmental  
6 disabilities, including autism.

7 We continue to offer our theater based program  
8 completely redesigning the ten session research  
9 writing and performance residency to be delivered  
10 remotely. And we hosted the Department of Education  
11 to discovery days for families to visit the museum  
12 for free programs. This past summer, we offer  
13 training for Summer Rising staff on engaging students  
14 with content in our specialty areas.

15 By last spring, like many others, we saw the  
16 impact of Zoom fatigue, stress and general  
17 disconnection of students, particularly in areas of  
18 the city where students and their families were  
19 facing more intense COVID related challenges and  
20 where schools already struggled with other issues.

21 The advantage for students who live in New York  
22 City is the array of cultural organizations like  
23 Intrepid Museum, that offer opportunities and  
24 resources. The challenges and unevenness among those  
25 who know how to make use of these resources, the

problem is often awareness. Not only is the much appreciated funding needed to support these programs but a clear and explicit statement needs to be made —

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

LYNDA KENNEDY: To school leaders and families about how important it is to fold these cultural resources into learning experiences in order to address learning laws to enliven and enrich the learning experience and reengage teachers and students with the joy of learning, no matter what the zip code. Thank you for your time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Lynda and the next panel that we are going to call will be Edward Miller from Arts Connection, Lorraine Goodman Broadway Bound Kids, Toby Boshak Exploring the Arts Inc., Cathy Hung Young Audiences New York, Katie Palmer Together in Dance.

And the panel after that will be Cheryl Warfield Advance More Opera, Sarah Bukowski Dance NYC, Richard Souto LEAP Inc., Latasha Wright BioBus Inc. and Khin Mai Aung Generation Citizen New York. We will first turn to Edward Miller from Arts Connection.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

1  
2 EDWARD MILLER: Hi, my name is Edward Miller and  
3 I am a Program Manager at Arts Connection. Since the  
4 start of the pandemic, Arts Connection has been  
5 working to deliver arts programming to New York City  
6 school children who have been traumatized by COVID-19  
7 and related chaos. I personally have seen during  
8 COVID that engaging students in projects that allow  
9 them to tell their own stories, participate in  
10 culturally relevant arts activities and work in the  
11 arts on a differentiated basis has helped students  
12 deal with their trauma by giving them control over  
13 their narratives, allowing them to have agency and  
14 providing them in an environment that allows each  
15 individual to have success.

16 I've had direct experiencing witnessing the  
17 healing power of the arts. In the winter of 2020, an  
18 Arts Connection Remote family event at PS68R, allowed  
19 students and their families to gather together for a  
20 multidisciplinary arts experience in which everyone  
21 took part in a visual arts project by making a  
22 dancing stick, then used that to participate in  
23 learning culturally specific dances from Jamaica,  
24 China, and India, and then reflected on the  
25 experience with the teaching artists.

Federal, state and city funding has been critical in delivering programs like these. There is no question in my mind that the pandemic has severely and negatively affected arts and cultural organizations across the city. It's felt like a wild fire.

EDWARD MILLER: With the financial help to

struggling organizations that might prove impossible

1  
2 to provide essential arts programming across the city  
3 without that funding. Thank you very much.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry about that, had the  
5 wrong window up. Thank you Edward. Next, we are  
6 going to hear from Lorraine Goodman Broadway Bound  
7 Kids.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 LORRAINE GOODMAN: Hi, oh my script just  
10 disappeared. Hi, my name is Lorraine Goodman and I  
11 am the Executive Director at Broadway Bound Kids. A  
12 small nonprofit with the mission to inspire youth  
13 through the performing arts with a focus on enhancing  
14 social emotional learning, confidence, connection,  
15 mindfulness and creativity.

16 I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak  
17 to you today. As you all know, the COVID related  
18 shutdown caused widespread difficulties, especially  
19 for organizations like BBK that primarily provide in  
20 person programming to underserved communities. When  
21 the schools close, some were unable to quickly switch  
22 to virtual programming forcing them to cancel our  
23 contracts. These cancellations were doubly  
24 challenging as many related expenses for props,  
25



1  
2 costumes, stuff like that had already been paid for  
3 and could not be refunded.

4 The greater loss however was within these  
5 vulnerable populations we serve. Students lost  
6 ground across competencies. Yes, but arts and  
7 education programs help students learn across  
8 competencies by tackling many of the emotional issues  
9 that were brought on by this remote learning.

10 Bringing BBK's programs back into schools once in-  
11 person classes resumed would have been impossible  
12 without funding from ARPA. We are now providing our  
13 programming in nine new under resourced schools.  
14 Many of which have never previously had any kind of  
15 theater programming, without ARPA, none of these  
16 schools would have access to these programs that aid  
17 students recovery from these pandemic related trauma.

18 We have heard educators and school staff that BBK  
19 students leave classes feeling better than they did  
20 before with greater ability to concentrate in their  
21 other classes. These are the impacts are the best  
22 part of the ARPA funding or APRA funding.

23 There were challenges especially in setting up  
24 payment processing, doing the fingerprinting and more  
25

1  
2 issues that were exacerbated by the shutdown. I'm  
3 going to submit some written testimony that will –

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 LORRAINE GOODMAN: Explain that in detail and I  
6 want to thank you again for your time. You can check  
7 us out at Broadway Bound Kids. Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Lorraine. And next  
9 we're going to hear from Toby Boshak Exploring the  
10 Arts, Inc..

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

12 TOBY BOSHAK: Hello, I am Toby Boshak, Executive  
13 Director of Exploring the Arts and a New York City  
14 public school parent, three times over. I am happy  
15 to be here to speak with you today.

16 First, I'd like to express our appreciation for  
17 the city's support of arts education. We are proud  
18 allies in the endeavor to ensure that all students  
19 have equitable access to high-quality, sequential  
20 arts education and arts opportunities. We're  
21 delighted to work with OASP, the Roundtable, and our  
22 art and cultural partners in this endeavor.

23 There is a wealth of documentation about the  
24 negative effects of the pandemic on students,  
25 teachers, and families including learning loss and

socioemotional and mental health decay.

Counteractively, there is substantial data proving that kids engaged in vibrant arts programs have markedly better academic and social emotional outcomes. Thanks to ARPA funding, ETA is receiving additional support for our in-school programming through DCLA.

This year, we welcome six new schools to our roster of partner schools helping them to create plans for developing, expanding and refining their arts programming: College Point Collaborative in Queens North, High School for Contemporary Arts in the Bronx, and in Brooklyn, John Jay School for Law, McKinney Secondary School for the Arts, Williamsburg High School of Art and Technology and The Young Women's Leadership School of Brooklyn.

The additional funds are also helping us build the capacity of all our 37 partner schools in all five boroughs through classroom teacher professional development opportunities and peer learning community gatherings to share resources and practices. But we are facing a number of challenges. Field trip guidance ambiguity has thrown a wrench in schools'

1  
2 Fall plans to take students to live performances and  
3 museums as part of their learning.

4 The perception that guidance will continue to  
5 shift without clear understanding of when or why  
6 means that it's also difficult to plan for the  
7 spring. Also, with little clarity around the high  
8 school admissions process or timeline, our critical  
9 work to support middle-

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 TOBY BOSHAK: To high school pipelines. For  
12 example, for young musicians in the Bronx, a focal  
13 area for our work in partnership with the Kennedy  
14 Center Turnaround Arts Program, it's difficult to  
15 collaboratively plan with our middle and high school  
16 leaders and families. And the issues with  
17 contracting and fingerprinting further complicate in-  
18 school arts residencies that we proudly fund as a  
19 vital component of our work to support partner  
20 schools' capacity building in the arts.

21 For example, a hip hop dance residency at a  
22 middle school in Queens seems to be on indefinite  
23 hold for the moment. We appreciate your attention to  
24 these issues as we all work together to find creative  
25

solutions to help our community heal, rebuild, and thrive. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will hear from Cathy Hung, Young Audiences New York.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

CATHY HUNG: My name is Cathy Hung. I am the Executive Director for Young Audiences New York, a 70-year-old nonprofit organization in New York City and one of the oldest, who dedicated its mission to arts education. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your support on arts education in our school.

While we are trying to untangle the equity issue, I would like to say that Arts Education is the best equalizer for our children today, particularly for the vulnerable ones. During the lockdown, YANY quickly pivot everything to online learning and as schools reopened to in-person learning, we were the first there to bring the arts to our students and to provide customized arts classes to support principals and classroom teachers in the constantly changing environment today.

YANY never close the door of cultural learning with any of our school partners. Our more than 60

1 professional working artists travel to hard-to-reach  
2 neighborhoods in all five boroughs to enlighten  
3 students, and understandably there are at different  
4 priorities in the school. In the war it was global  
5 pandemic today, but the indefinite delay on the  
6 procurement process has a tremendous impact on our  
7 financial situation.

8  
9 Currently, YANY has two community school  
10 contracts and couple of CASA, plus a grant from DCLA.  
11 It is almost a million dollars in our earned revenue.  
12 In the previous Fiscal Year, we didn't see the first  
13 dollar of those funding until May. Most likely, it  
14 will be the same situation this year, which means  
15 that we will have ten months of gap in our finance.

16 Last year, we were able to make by because of the  
17 PPP loan. This year, we won't be able to survive  
18 with the same delay. I would like to ask the  
19 Committee to help improving the streamline of the  
20 procurement process and to consider our children's  
21 mental health and their better and equitable future  
22 be one of your priorities –

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 CATHY HUNG: By providing dedicated resources to  
25 our school principals and cultural partners like

1  
2 YANY, and a policy to protect our working teaching  
3 artists. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And next, we will  
5 hear from Katie Palmer, Together in Dance.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

7 KATIE PALMER: Hello everybody, my name is Katie  
8 Palmer. I am the Executive Director of Together in  
9 Dance, a small creative movement and musical theater  
10 arts education not-for-profit operating in New York  
11 City for 21 years.

12 Firstly, thank you very much for all of your time  
13 today and for your service to our city. And  
14 congratulations to those of you who have held your  
15 seats for eight years, or possibly more. I hope you  
16 enjoy these last few weeks representing our  
17 incredible city and wish you luck on all your next  
18 endeavors.

19 Like everyone else here, the pandemic hit  
20 Together in Dance really hard. But I want to take my  
21 two very short minutes to share two personal stories  
22 about the value and need for arts education and arts  
23 education funding.

24 One of our schools on the border of Woodside and  
25 Elmhurst in Queens, really went through it last year.

1  
2 Their beloved Assistant Principal passed away in the  
3 winter, their long-term Principal left, and many of  
4 the parents of the students are essential workers and  
5 under many stressors. Through this shifting and  
6 grieving, and their budget being decimated and  
7 completely uncertain, Together in Dance was able to  
8 offer the only arts partnership program of the year.  
9 Together in Dance provided a few weeks of movement,  
10 creativity, and laughter through Zoom, and the  
11 students lit up. They came to class eager to move  
12 and connect, turning the potential limitations of  
13 space and distance into a field of discovery and  
14 invention. Everyone could feel the lift in the  
15 students and the teachers, and Together in Dance was  
16 able to provide a bright spot in an otherwise very  
17 dim school year.

18 And my second story is possible because of the  
19 ARPA funding that we've all been talking about.  
20 Because of that money, one of Together in Dance's  
21 former partner schools is able to reestablish  
22 programing this year. The elementary school, located  
23 in Canarsie, Brooklyn, was a long-term partner and  
24 had to stop working with us several years ago due to  
25 a complete lack of funds. But with this influx of



ARPA money, we can now provide ten to eleven weeks of dance and musical theater programming to every student in every grade K through five.

That was literally impossible for the previous five years, and now it is possible. This money is a game changer –

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

KATIE PALMER: This money is a game changer and life changer. Thank you so much.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next panel that we're going to hear from Cheryl Warfield Advance More Opera, Sarah Bukowski Dance NYC, Richard Souto LEAP, Latasha Wright BioBus, and Khin Mai Aung Generation Citizen New York. Following them, we will hear from Rae Wilson, Laura Bozzone, Kwame Brandt-Pierce, Jillian Carucci, and Michelle Gall. We will first turn to Cheryl Warfield Advance More Opera.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Times starts now.

CHERYL WARFIELD: Greetings. Thank you, Chair Treyger and the Committee on Education Members for this opportunity to testify. I am Cheryl Warfield, a Professional Opera Singer, a 20 year Teaching Artist and a proud New Yorker. I run a small nonprofit, that delivers educational and cultural programs for K

1  
2 to 12 students throughout the five boroughs,  
3 especially in underserved communities.

4 Arts learning builds stronger community ties,  
5 improves academic achievement, and provides the  
6 skills needed to thrive in life. The time is now for  
7 New York to make a positive impact on the emotional  
8 and intellectual wellbeing for future generations  
9 through the power of arts and culture in education by  
10 making the arts a vital part of the everyday school  
11 experience. Ensuring arts education funding is  
12 adequate and equitable. Expanding arts education  
13 collaboration, arts partnerships, and recruitment,  
14 including small nonprofits and BIPOC led  
15 organizations.

16 In April 2020, my organization pivoted quickly to  
17 virtual programming. By July 2020, we partnered with  
18 Summer in the City, a coalition of arts organizations  
19 to provide eight weeks and 19,000 hours of free  
20 virtual programming to over 1,000 New York City  
21 public school students. My program, Black Lives  
22 Matter, Songs for George, the Music of Protest,  
23 provided an emotional outlet for students where they  
24 wrote music and lyrics about themselves and explored  
25

their feelings about what was going on in their world.

One student with disabilities wrote an original song about losing a beloved teacher to COVID-19.

Another student wrote new lyrics to the song "Lean on Me" —

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

CHERYL WARFIELD: About coping with anxiety. It was a cathartic experience for all. Universal access to arts education is an issue of equity. Every student who attends a public school in New York City should have the opportunity to participate in quality arts education programs as part of their regular school day.

I wish to thank Chancellor Porter and the Department of Education for their historic \$70 million investment in arts learning and urge leaders to continue to support comparable funding in the future fiscal years. Our children deserve it and our future depends on it. Thank you for your time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will hear from Sarah Bukowski Dance NYC.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

1  
2 SARAH BUKOWSKI: Good morning. I'm Sarah Cecilia  
3 Bukowski Research & Advocacy Assistant at Dance NYC,  
4 we're a service organization dedicated to the dance  
5 workforce in the city. We thank the Chancellor and  
6 DOE for their historic \$70 million investment of ARPA  
7 funds toward arts learning and with gratitude we  
8 believe there are continued investments to be made in  
9 order for every student to reap the benefits of arts  
10 education.

11 First, make the arts as a core subject in New  
12 York City schools. New York is one of only 19 states  
13 that do not include the arts as a core subject,  
14 despite the fact that 91 percent of Americans believe  
15 that the arts are a vital part of a well-rounded  
16 education. Students are recovering from the impacts  
17 of the pandemic, and arts education is a key to this  
18 recovery process and beyond. By supporting social  
19 and emotional wellbeing, communication and critical  
20 thinking skills. Arts partnerships and after school  
21 programs support students and their families to  
22 participate as engaged members of their communities  
23 and New York City schools can lead the way by making  
24 the arts a core subject.  
25

1  
2 Second, we ask to prioritize funding for the  
3 Office of Arts and Special Projects Strategic Arts  
4 Plan to secure equitable access to high quality  
5 universal arts education. We know that gaps in  
6 student achievement run along racial and  
7 socioeconomic lines and these are long standing that  
8 have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

9 Equity in education as a whole can't be achieved  
10 if quality arts education is only available to some  
11 students. So by championing equity in the planning  
12 and execution of universal arts education, the city  
13 sends a message that the arts are a viable pathway to  
14 success for all students, which supports the cultural  
15 diversity of the arts workforce and the economic  
16 health of the city's creative industry.

17 And third, we ask to adequately and sustainably  
18 fund arts education services through DCLA and DYCD.  
19 Budget cuts have limited schools capacity to deliver  
20 quality arts education and sustain partnerships with  
21 arts organizations.

22 The ARPA funds helped increase access to the arts  
23 education and this level of funding must continue  
24 beyond —

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1  
2 SARAH BUKOWSKI: And increase overtime in order  
3 to ensure the long-term capacity for schools and arts  
4 organizations to provide robust and equitable arts  
5 education.

6 We thank you for your consideration and commend  
7 your leadership in these ongoing efforts to support  
8 students, educators and arts workers to make the arts  
9 an essential part of a well rounded education. Thank  
10 you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Sarah and next we  
12 will hear from and I apologize if I mess up the name.  
13 Richard Souto from LEAP.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

15 RICHARD SOUTO: Thanks, good afternoon. I'm  
16 Richard Souto and I'm the Executive Director of LEAP.  
17 Thank you to the member of the Committee, the  
18 leadership of the DOE and OASP in particular and to  
19 the Arts and Education Roundtable for making sure  
20 organizations like ours are represented here today.

21 We know programs in the arts are extremely  
22 beneficial to childrens learning and development and  
23 the written briefing shared with the Committee  
24 explained that beautifully, I won't try to do better  
25 there.

1  
2 But I'm here to amplify the need for these  
3 programs for children in schools that have been  
4 historically under resourced. And who are now  
5 disproportionately impacted by the effects of the  
6 pandemic. And also, to share how this period has  
7 effected partner organizations like mine and maybe  
8 reiterate some of those that spoke before me.

9 LEAP's a nonprofit founded in arts organization.  
10 It was practically nonexistent in the city's poorest  
11 school communities. 40 years later, we provide arts  
12 programs that promote access and equity for students  
13 underserved in the arts. In over 150 schools per  
14 year and reach about 20,000 students with these  
15 programs and about \$3 million in funding from the  
16 Department of Education. As well as funding from  
17 DYCD and lots of other private sources.

18 In March 2020, LEAP was forced to suspend all  
19 school programs and we released over 300 staff  
20 including hundreds of teaching artists and  
21 professionals that were dedicated to the youth we  
22 serve.

23 At that time, the Department of Education  
24 abruptly ended arts partner programs resulting in a  
25 loss of over one million dollars in annual expected

revenue and delayed payments on outstanding invoices which was really devastating to partners like LEAP.

More importantly, thousands of students hopes of appearing on stage or presenting their art projects to their families were shattered. Children who also immediately lost the very unique connections to their peers that were available in our programs as well as the relationships of the talented and caring adults that work in our creative youth programs.

LEAP responded with the development of our first remote programs and these programs ended up reaching hundreds of children within weeks of the school closure and became the basis for our virtual art rooms that serve many more enthusiastic children throughout the hybrid school year.

We saw young people experience joy, hope, and a feeling of excitement for learning that was probably pretty hard to generate in online learning. However, the reduction of funding from the DOE during that school year meant we were only able to fund fully a small fraction of the in-school programs we've provided in the past.

This year in the fall, we were thrilled with the program opportunities that were offered by the OASP



1  
2 partner grants. And children responded with so much  
3 enthusiasm and some really amazing art work. And we  
4 have the hope that that level of funding will  
5 continue in the coming school year. In fact, it  
6 must. I ask the Committee to support increases in  
7 DOE funding for arts programs with an emphasis on  
8 grants and funding that allow the school and partners  
9 to plan the most relevant and responsive experience  
10 for the students. So that grants and funding for  
11 these programs may not be so specifically regimented  
12 that they could actually open up opportunities for  
13 schools and partners to work on culturally responsive  
14 and timely responsive ways of learning.

15 We also asked the Committee to consider two other  
16 factors. That they might work with partners to  
17 identify creative solutions to address the personnel  
18 related challenges we're all facing. We think that  
19 is possible that partner organizations and the  
20 Department of Education, maybe other institutions  
21 throughout the city could work together to address  
22 arts related staffing needs.

23 And also that the Committee proposed to the DOE  
24 to review contract terms and payment processes under  
25 which partner organizations like ours are

1  
2 compensated. To consider making them more timely and  
3 more partner friendly.

4 So, I thank everyone who's here. I thank the  
5 dedication of the Committee to these issues and I  
6 thank you all for the opportunity for me and my  
7 organization to share some of our perspective.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll hear  
9 from Latasha Wright, BioBus.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 LATASHA WRIGHT: Thank you for the opportunity to  
12 present. My name is Latasha Wright, I am the Chief  
13 Scientific Officer of BioBus. So, BioBus is a  
14 science outreach organization that specializes in  
15 hands on inquiry-based exploration using arts as a  
16 way to connect science to the students every day  
17 life.

18 So, in March 2020, we needed to move all of our  
19 programs online. So, we understood that the  
20 communities that we needed, needed us more than ever.  
21 So, to do this, we deconstructed our laboratories and  
22 brought them into every scientist that had a  
23 microscope in their own home. And so, instead of  
24 having a mobile lab visits, we provided virtual field  
25 trips with scientists joining class rooms by video

1  
2 conference and the class kept the key BioBus  
3 components of student driven exploration even  
4 virtually.

5 With students telling the scientists when to zoom  
6 in and out and what the focus on in microscopes and  
7 we routinely included follow-up art projects for the  
8 students that contained their learning.

9 So, through constant feedback with parents and  
10 students, we learned what they needed through what  
11 they wanted to know. So, definitely one of things  
12 that people really wanted to know was about COVID.  
13 So, we formed these You Tube live events, so our  
14 scientists could come and students could ask  
15 questions and more than 2,000 people attended those  
16 You Tube live events. And then we also recruited  
17 regenerative scientists to come in and talk about the  
18 monoclonal antibodies and then over 1,000 people came  
19 to those events as well.

20 So, BioBus continued to promote science and hands  
21 on inquiry by producing three minutes theme challenge  
22 videos with the corresponding worksheets and  
23 activities so students could get away from the screen  
24 and do hands on science from the safety of their own  
25 homes.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

LATASHA WRIGHT: So, we wanted to thank you so much and we are continuing to stay in touch with our communities and we want to make sure that science and art is continued to be funded. Thank you so much.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we're going to hear from Khin Mai Aung, Generation Citizen New York.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

KHIN MAI AUNG: Thanks so much Chair Treyger and the Committee for allowing me to testify today. I'm Khin Mai Aung, the Executive Director at Generation Citizen New York, and I'm also a New York City public school parent of three.

Generation Citizen is really thankful for the City Council's \$500,000 investment in our programming and youth civics education through the Civic Education in City Schools Initiative. When faced with pandemic-related disruptions starting in spring of 2020, Generation Citizen nimbly shifted to remotely supporting teachers in implementing our programming. We used Google Classroom to allow teachers access to our curricular resources, coordinated video calls for students to interact with

virtual guest speakers, and provided frequent, structured coaching to help teachers compile class-specific research and civics resources.

We also created online resources for educators as well as caregivers to engage young people through our entirely online Kick Start Action Civics program, which is still available in English and Spanish.

In the disrupted 2020-2021 school year, our programming provided students with a really critical chance to connect and collaborate although many were either entirely unable to meet in person or could only meet in person intermittently. In classes advocated on a variety of relevant social issues. These included curricular concerns, like the need for a more engaging science curricula, school conditions, like the lack of outdoor space and gym use, school cell phone policies, and broader community issues, like police relations, homophobia and bullying in schools, and the need for expanded extracurriculars.

Some classes focused on COVID specific themes like racism amplified by pandemic disruptions, as well as mental health issues, anxiety, depression, and drug abuse in our communities. And so, it was

just so gratifying to see that in this disrupted time

—

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

KHIN MAI AUNG: Connect to connect together.

Thank you so much to the City Council for this opportunity.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And next, we're going to turn to Rae Wilson.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

RAE WILSON: One of the smartest things they did this year was to bring you Ms. Rae. This comment was made by a fourth grader.

In February of 2020, I began working as a Teaching Artist at PS295 courtesy of Brooklyn Arts Council. When Schools closed in March, the students used instructional videos and parents were able to attend our performance online. When I reunited with these kids in April 2021, I knew their regular PE teacher had left at the end of the school year, their new teacher had quit halfway through the semester, and they had a sub that was new on the job. These students were grateful for familiarity and stability, but they also understood that our brief time together

in dance class meant an opportunity for self-expression and self-exploration.

First graders at PS164, ESL students, many of which who already felt self-conscious about their English language skills found a new form of freedom in taking diverse children's books and bringing them to life by acting out. Theater helped these students play the part of confident English speakers. Online and in person, shy students used the arts to communicate and those with anger issues use the arts for healing and hope. I've watched a fifth grader dismissed getting suspended for fighting. He didn't care about that. He was upset that he was going to this dance class and that he had broken his promise to me as a teacher.

The arts can and should be inclusive. Some students will never get the thrill of seeing a Broadway show without a fieldtrip to a theater. The arts industry makes up a substantial part of New York City's economy. New York City is a leader in the arts from fashion film, painting, theater and music. It only makes sense that New York City DOE continues to financially support the arts, as this is a reinvestment in creating the artists of tomorrow.

Thank you for allowing me to speak today.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And also for the record, we just want to acknowledge we were joined by Council Member Salamanca and Council Member Grodenchik.

Next, we're going to turn to Laura Bozzone.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

LAURA BOZZONE: Thank you so much for this time. I am the Performing Arts Program Manager at New York Edge, which is an after school non-profit organization serving over 40,000 New York City public school students in mostly underinvested communities.

When we went remote back in March 2020, we also transitioned all our art classes to an online platform. In one of our middle school dance classes, students learned pop culture dances as well as dances from various generations. Each class ended in a big dance party and it was a great way to connect and feel moments of joy as well as for students to feel a physical release at a time when they were confined to their homes.

We had one student named Skye who signed on to our dance class every single day and I watched her



1  
2 express herself so fully and freely. After the first  
3 week of our dance class, the director from her school  
4 at MS57K emailed me the following and I quote: " Hi,  
5 I wanted to reach out and share my appreciation for  
6 putting together the e-learning for our students. I  
7 know we are all struggling to get students online and  
8 attending and that there are a million reasons why it  
9 is difficult for many, but I wanted to share a small  
10 indication of the impact these art classes can have.  
11 Our student Skye has attended every single dance  
12 class with Ms. Brittney this week and this is after  
13 she lost her mother to COVID-19 last Friday. These  
14 classes have served as a source of comfort for her  
15 and really highlights the impact we can have at a  
16 time like this."

17 Skye continued to join every virtual dance class  
18 we had that month. And although she never expressed  
19 what she was going through in words, she expressed  
20 what she needed to by dancing and knowing she had a  
21 space and a community which gave her comfort during a  
22 horrific time. This is just one example of how life  
23 saving an arts class can be, and yet we continue to  
24 have to advocate for them in schools and in after  
25 school programs.

As students like Skye are processing the trauma of the pandemic, art programs are essential because they provide students a space to express complicated feelings, to build self-management skills, to practice decision making and to find comfort in relationships and community. Thank you again so much for this space.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will hear from Kwame Brandt-Pierce.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

KWAME BRANDT-PIERCE: Okay, here I am, okay. Hi, my name is Kwame Brandt-Pierce and I am the After School Program Manager at Brooklyn Children's Museum in Crown Heights. I currently manage a K-5 program for the museum at PS189 in Brownsville. And this city funded program serves about 250 children annually and is offered entirely free of charge.

Our educators provide arts, science, and academic enhancement through activities such as animation, creative writing, and engineering. We also provide social emotional learning programs teaching children effective ways to communicate, resolve conflict, and deal with frustrating or fearful emotions. This work

has always been important to our community, but never more so than during the pandemic.

In the summer of 2020, when many programs were closed, Brooklyn Children's Museum ran a full-day, in person summer camp from 8:00am to 6:00pm Monday through Friday. The Museum also offered a remote and in-person after school program at PS189 during the school year of 2020-2021, as most parents were returning to work. This program is essential to our families. Most of our parents can't afford safe and reliable childcare and the 2:30pm school dismissal time makes it difficult for them to consistently pick up their children while also holding down a full time job. Demand for our program at PS189 has always been high and we currently have a waiting list of over 200 children for the present school year.

This past summer, BCM operated a free summer camp at PS189 as part of Summer Rising. While the city funded us for 77 camp slots, more than 400 families submitted applications to the program. In an effort to serve as many children as possible, BCM expanded its program to 102 students with good faith assurances from the city that they would compensated for additional staff and materials.

1  
2 To date however, the city has not made good on  
3 their promise to compensate us for this work. It is  
4 imperative that organizations like BCM, that provide  
5 essential services for families, be paid for their  
6 work in a timely manner so that we can continue to  
7 serve as many children as possible –

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 KWAME BRANDT-PIERCE: With high-quality arts,  
10 culture, and science programs. I also just want to  
11 take this moment to thank City Council Member Alicka  
12 Ampry-Samuel and Farah Louis for their support of  
13 programs at our museum, and Council Members Mark  
14 Treyger and Brad Lander for their support of BCM's  
15 work as part of the Brooklyn delegation. So, that  
16 concludes my time. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Kwame. Next, we're  
18 going to hear from Jillian Carucci.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

20 JILLIAN CARUCCI: Good afternoon and thank you  
21 all for your service to the field and for the  
22 opportunity to speak today. I am the Associate  
23 Artistic Director of Theater Works USA, where we  
24 envision a world in which theater gives rising  
25 generations a reason to look up and explore

1  
2 themselves in their communities with optimism and  
3 hope.

4       Since 1961, Theater Works has addressed the  
5 disproportionate accessibility of art for young  
6 people. Through the pandemic, we pivoted to offer  
7 more than 100 virtual theater courses to students  
8 across New York City and beyond. In the summer of  
9 '21, we had the opportunity to bring in person  
10 programs to New York City schools and camps through  
11 our partnership with New York Edge. We received more  
12 than 20 program requests.

13       After nearly 18 months of remote learning and  
14 Zoom fatigue, we were excited to expand and engage so  
15 many students in person especially as they process  
16 the trauma of the pandemic. As noted by my  
17 colleagues today, evidence-based research shows the  
18 impact of arts education on students social emotional  
19 wellbeing and mental health and now more than ever  
20 continued and expanded arts funding is vital for our  
21 students healing.

22       Unfortunately, due to contract delays and a  
23 bottleneck of fingerprinting availability at DOE,  
24 several of our summer programs were unable to run on  
25 time or at all and we were not able to reach as many

1  
2 students as we were prepared to serve. Additionally,  
3 many of our teaching artists effected by these delays  
4 were unable to obtain clearance on time and thus lost  
5 those wages.

6 The teaching artist community is among the most  
7 effected by the pandemic and the instability of this  
8 clearance process further contributed to their  
9 delayed return to work and ongoing financial  
10 hardship.

11 Resolving these onboarding challenges is vital  
12 for Theater Works to provide access to quality arts  
13 education to as many New York City students as  
14 possible and to provide reliable work for our  
15 community of arts education professionals. We  
16 understand the city is still in crisis and are eager  
17 to work together to move forward.

18 I'll leave off with a quote from a third grade  
19 student in one of our classes. I'm usually really  
20 shy and since I learned about –

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

22 JILLIAN CARUCCI: These strong brave characters,  
23 I think I can be strong and brave in real life, just  
24 like them. Now more than ever, the arts can help our  
25

1  
2 students heal and look to the future with hope once  
3 again. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Jillian. And next,  
5 we will turn to Michelle Gall.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time starts now.

7 MICHELLE GALL: Hello, good afternoon. Thank you  
8 so much for having us and Digital Girl, Inc. and  
9 allowing us this platform to share our story on how  
10 the pandemic has impacted Digital Girl, Inc.

11 Digital Girl, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit  
12 organization, dedicated to empowering inner-city  
13 youth, particularly girls, to pursue careers and  
14 studies in Science, Technology, Engineering and  
15 Mathematics. Last month, we celebrated our seventh  
16 anniversary. In January 2020, DGI had in place  
17 After-School or Summer School Enrichment Programs  
18 with 15 schools or community based organizations.

19 As quickly as the pandemic put the world on  
20 pause, Digital Girl, Inc. shifted programming online  
21 and created the DGI Virtual Hangout. It was important  
22 to us that we continued to provide programming,  
23 create some sense of normalcy for our students;  
24 continue to offer employment for our staff of over  
25 13, and provide internship opportunities for the

1  
2 eight interns we had working with us. And also, to  
3 continue to be a resource for over extended parents,  
4 many of whom were working for home and managing  
5 students too.

6 We were successful in offering consistent classes  
7 in Game Design, Digital Marketing and Website Design,  
8 Introduction to Computer Science, App Design, Digital  
9 Responsibility and Census Awareness and support  
10 virtually, five days a week. Additionally, we  
11 provided Chromebooks for children as some had  
12 received iPads from the Department of Education to  
13 complete online study yet the software necessary for  
14 some classes was not compatible with iPads or  
15 Tablets. Over the last 20 months, DGI has pushed  
16 through COVID-19 sickness, pregnancy through a  
17 pandemic, participant disconnection due to Zoom  
18 fatigue and mental and emotional overwhelm, staffing  
19 challenges stemming from reasons including the Mass  
20 Exodus and resistance from COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates.

21 —

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 MICHELLE GALL: And of course loss of funding due  
24 to the shutdown. Without the funding received from  
25 the City Council, specifically the Committee on



1  
2 Education Members Barron, Ampry-Samuel, Louis,  
3 Cornegy Jr. and the Digital Inclusion and Literacy  
4 Initiative, our plight would be exceptionally harder.  
5 Your support allows us to continue to be the resource  
6 New York City communities need and the reason we were  
7 created in the first place.

8 Parents have told us that our programming and  
9 technical support helped to get them through the  
10 pandemic and students as well. Thank you so much  
11 again for helping us to provide and educate through  
12 distraction from the overwhelmingly scary world our  
13 young people had to endure through and we employ you  
14 continue that support. Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Michelle. Uhm,  
16 there have been many people who have come in and out  
17 of the Zoom today. So, if you have not testified  
18 yet, if you could please use the raise hand Zoom  
19 function and we will call on you in the order with  
20 which you raise your hand.

21 Uh, okay, if we can go ahead and please unmute  
22 Tricia Patrick. Tricia, you should be unmuted now.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 TRICIA PATRICK: Sorry, I need to put myself on  
25 video. Hi, thank you so much.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You're welcome.

TRICIA PATRICK: Uh, good morning and thank you.

This year MCC Education, we were fortunate to continue to offer arts programs to all four of our partner schools. At one of our partner schools, we were invited to create curriculum and lead activities for several welcome back days at the start of the school year.

We were able to work with each of the high school grades, a first for us. This in turn led to higher program enrollment during this year and increased teacher engagement because they were more familiar with who we are and got a taste of the kind of work that we do. Consistent funding of programs continues to be an issue with all of our partner schools. In a survey that I sent out earlier in the school year, teachers still cited funding as a major barrier to participating in extracurricular activities such as school field trips and engaging in arts partnerships.

This year, with ARPA funds, I witnessed a teacher delight in the fact that he could now pursue multiple options and programs for each of the grades in his school. It was like watching a kid in a candy store. Then the reality sets in that this funding appears to

1  
2 be granted for this year only and that schools will  
3 not be able to make long term investments in arts  
4 partners and programs that could stand multiple years  
5 of recovery that we all know will be necessary.

6 Because of the ARPA funds, we were able to  
7 schedule not just programs that our schools could  
8 afford but fund a program that fully met the needs  
9 and the desires of the teachers and students. It is  
10 vital that access to funding is consistent and  
11 accessible to all the schools that need it.

12 Thank you to the school Chancellor and the DOB  
13 for the investment of the federal stimulus funds to  
14 the arts programs and investment in arts education is  
15 an investment in our students and in the arts in our  
16 city as a whole.

17 It is my greatest wish that this investment not  
18 only continues but it grows. Thank you so much for  
19 your time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Tricia. And next,  
21 we will turn to Jamie Hastings, the Arthur Miller  
22 Foundation.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 JAMIE HASTINGS: Thank you so much. I am the  
25 Executive Director of the Arthur Miller Foundation.

1  
2 We are a nonprofit organization that honors the  
3 legacy of the great playwright Arthur Miller. And he  
4 is in New York City Public School Educating in both  
5 Harlem and in Brooklyn. Our organization was founded  
6 by Arthurs daughter writer and film maker Rebecca  
7 Miller and on behalf of Rebecca and AMF, we'd like to  
8 convey our sincere appreciation to Chair Treyger and  
9 the City Council for the value you place on arts  
10 education as a core educational experience for our  
11 1.1 million New York City public school students.

12 We are providing 50 percent scholarships to the  
13 City College of New York's graduate program and  
14 educational theater for educators committed to  
15 receiving their theater certification with the goal  
16 of teaching theater in the DOE full-time in an effort  
17 to increase and diversify the pipeline of theater  
18 educators. We're also very proud that 78 New York  
19 City DOE Theater Teachers are part of the Arthur  
20 Miller Foundation Fellows program in partnership with  
21 the Office of Arts and Special Projects with whom we  
22 have been in partnership for seven years.

23 So, over the last six years, the Arthur Miller  
24 Foundation has contributed approximately 1.5 million  
25 to our Theater Education Program. Program

1  
2 participants, theater teachers, name Arthur Miller  
3 Fellows, receive over \$30,000 in dedicated support to  
4 build sustainable theater programs at their schools  
5 at the elementary middle and high school levels  
6 through professional mentorship, cultural partner  
7 residencies, teaching resources, class room  
8 materials, Broadway tickets for students when theater  
9 is live and ongoing professional development.

10 The program is now impacting nearly 40,000 public  
11 school students across all five boroughs in New York  
12 City.

13 Our fellows are extraordinary as they belong to  
14 one in about 20 percent of DOE schools with a  
15 certified theater teacher. We hope that our fellows  
16 will see no change in their employment status for the  
17 current years and the coming years. And I am here to  
18 request that any budget cuts we faced –

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 JAMIE HASTINGS: Theater teachers in our public  
21 schools. We believe it's time to deem arts education  
22 an essential component of a core academic education  
23 for our youth and we recognize that because of the  
24 pandemic, our students received such help throughout  
25 their remote learning experiences. Thank you for

1  
2 recognizing that arts education is a right not a  
3 privilege. We are here to work together as a  
4 community but can only do that if we ensure that the  
5 Office of Arts and Special Projects and Arts  
6 Education Infrastructure is not lost. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Jamie and seeing no  
8 further hands Chair, after three years being your  
9 Counsel, this is the last — we conclude the last  
10 hearing for this session.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: You know, thank you Malcom  
12 and thank you all for your very informative, powerful  
13 subtenant testimony here today and I think it's very  
14 fitting that we're closing out this hearing session  
15 on a topic that really centers on connection with our  
16 kids, connection to students. And ensuring that they  
17 have every opportunity to succeed, grow, bring out  
18 their talents and to kind of reconnect them  
19 meaningfully to their school community. In the face  
20 of so much uncertainty and challenges with this  
21 pandemic.

22 There was a lot that we wanted to continue to  
23 kind of dove into prior to the pandemic but we have  
24 to tackle this challenge head on and when folks ask  
25 me about the challenges that our school system faces

1  
2 and there's a plethora of challenges but we must you  
3 know remember that we're here for the children. You  
4 know my principal who I used to work in the school  
5 always said, Mark, it's about the kids. And so, with  
6 all the uncertainty, with all the challenges, we need  
7 to go back to that central climates. It's about the  
8 children and what's best for them. And right now, we  
9 need to move heaven and earth to meaningfully  
10 reconnect our children to a school system that did –  
11 not to go back to the way things were prior to –  
12 things were not equitable and things were not truly  
13 fair and just for many of our kids. But to really  
14 now use this opportunity with the unprecedented  
15 amount of resources from Washington and Albany and we  
16 have to push for more and sustained, to really build  
17 a school system that is worthy of our kids. Where we  
18 center their needs, their talents, their abilities  
19 and you must have the arts in that conversation in  
20 all these programs that we're hearing about. The  
21 arts, extracurriculars, clubs, athletics, they have  
22 to be kind of woven into the daily day to day  
23 function of a school and that's the challenge and  
24 task before us.

1  
2       So, I want to thank everyone that testified  
3 today. Folks can still email us. I want to take  
4 this opportunity to also, as I mentioned before to  
5 thank the incredible City Council staff, my staff  
6 Anna Scaife, the extraordinary Chief of Staff. I've  
7 very grateful Vanessa Ogle, my Policy Director, thank  
8 you for your great service and Maria Henderson,  
9 Jeanine, every one who helped out and the  
10 extraordinary team in the City Council and Central  
11 Staff, Malcom, Jan, everyone, Chelsea, Masis, I'm  
12 going to get in trouble now. The entire family that  
13 again, this Committee could not be anything without  
14 the incredible work of the staff that works day and  
15 night to make things happen.

16       I want to thank you all and as those even know  
17 me, I always say there's a lot more work to do. I'm  
18 not giving up on this. We have a lot more work to do  
19 and we will continue to hold the DOE accountable to  
20 the best of our ability and regardless of whatever  
21 capacity that we're in to ensure that our kids get  
22 the very best, which they rightfully deserve.

23       It's been an honor, privilege but there's more  
24 Treyger to come and I appreciate you all. Thank you  
25 so much.



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 January 15, 2022